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Socio-economic transformation of small towns in East Germany after 1990 – Colditz case study

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Abstract. The article presents the main demographic and social, as well as functional and spatial changes that took place in Colditz after 1990. The town is inhabited by 4,870 people (2009) and is situated in Saxony, in the area of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). The aim of the article is to present the main changes, which took place there after East and West Germany reunited in 1990. The author describes demographic and social changes in the population size, population growth, migration balance, unemployment, and other elements of urban community. Moreover, the article presents the changes in the economic-functional structure, such as de-industrialisation, succession of urban functions, and tourism development, as well as the main spatial changes in Colditz, such as architectural revitalisation and reconstruction of urban infrastructure. In the conclusions, the author briefly presents potential directions in the future development of the town.

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1. Introduction

The article regards a small town of Colditz in the eastern part of Germany, i.e. in the area of the former German Democratic Republic. After Germany

capitulated in May 1945, it was divided into four occupation zones: American, Soviet, British, and French. In 1949, as a result of this division, two separate German states were established – the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in September and the

German Democratic Republic (GDR) in October. The German capital was also divided – into East and West Berlin.

In 1953, the GDR citizens rose against the communist regime, but their rebellion was bloodily suppressed. The consequence of the growing social unrest and frequent defections to the West was the Berlin Wall, erected in 1961 and separating the eastern and western part of the city, as well as the strict isolation of the GDR. The following years brought mounting economic problems and a growing social dissatisfaction, which peaked in the 1980s. In 1989, following the *perestroika* in the USSR and the socio-political changes in Poland, Hungary, numerous anti-government demonstrations shook the GDR and later Czechoslovakia. East Germans started to flee to the FRG through the embassies in Poland and Czechoslovakia. In 1989, in many cities of East Germany, demonstrators demanded democratisation, the right to travel and economic reforms. The government of East Germany was unable to control the growing social unrest (Die Bundesregierung, 2010).

In October 1989, Chairman of the Council of State, Erich Honecker was removed from power. A new government was formed, which opened the borders with the western countries. The Chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Kohl, announced a 10-point German reunification program, and the negotiations began. As a result of those talks, on 3rd October 1990 the GDR Lands were officially joined to the FRG (Die Bundesregierung, 2010). The process of transformation of the areas of former East Germany began. In 1990, the Treuhand (Trust agency) was established, overseeing the privatisation of the formerly state-owned East German enterprises. In 1990–1994 the German Unity Fund financed the transformation of the former GDR (Weindenfeld, Korte, 1999). The eastern Lands (federated states) received about 82 billion Euros, which went to the budgets of individual municipalities. The money made it possible to rebuild the infrastructure, repair houses, support entrepreneurship, develop medical services and school system, etc. In 1995–2004, about 100 billion Euros was invested in former East Germany. The money came from the aid package provided by the state, from the first solidarity package (*Soliderpakt I*). In 2005, German authorities implemented the second solidarity package (*Soliderpakt II*). It is to provide the total of 156 billion Euros by 2019 (Die Bundesregierung, 2010).

The scale of transformations in the former GDR after 1990 is huge; they include not only a general reconstruction of the infrastructure or housing resources, but also serious social changes. People working in

the management, judiciary and administrative sectors were partly replaced by experts from West Germany. The legal system was completely changed, adopting western standards and legal regulations. Despite huge investments, the economic development in the eastern Lands is much slower than in the western ones, with the exception of large cities, like Berlin (its function as the German capital was restored), Dresden or Leipzig. Research also shows that despite several years of economic and social changes, the area of the former GDR still faces serious demographic and social problems. The old border between the East and West Germany is particularly noticeable when we look at the demographic situation. The area of the former FRG has a more favourable migration balance, higher population growth rate and a better population age structure, while in the majority of the former GDR area all the indexes are much lower (Szymańska et al., 2008).

A phenomenon which is particularly unfavourable for the former GDR is heavy migration (concerning mostly young people) from most of the eastern Lands westwards, caused by the push factors in the east, such as a high unemployment rate and lower salaries. The pull factors in the Lands of the former FRG include better work and career prospects, as well as a higher standard of living. The processes described above are currently weakening and some parts of the former GDR are becoming attractive (e.g. the Berlin region). However, the migration balance in the east of Germany is still worse than in the west (Szymańska et al., 2009). The eastern Lands are also facing a difficult social problem of the Nazi movement revival. The NPD party (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*), based on the tradition of National Socialism and extreme nationalism, plays an important role in some German regions (Gertoberens, 2004; Fischer, 2006).

2. Material and research methods: the object of study, research material and description of the studied area

The subject of this article is the transformation that took place in the town of Colditz, in Saxony, after the unification of East and West Germany. The aim of the analysis is to present the main socio-demographic, functional and spatial changes in Colditz after 1990. The author referred to the materials obtained in the survey conducted at the Colditz Town Hall, Club Courage e.V. (a non-governmental organisation), as well as to his own observations. He also used the

statistical data from the Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen (Saxony Statistical Office); the statistical analysis based on it referred to the period of 1998–2008. Apart from the sources listed above, the author used the information obtained during numerous non-standardised interviews with the inhabitants of Colditz, town clerks, entrepreneurs and members of local organisations (*verein*). In the 1990s, the author cooperated with one of such organisations – Club Courage e.V., which allowed him to make a lot of observations, later used for the purposes of this article.

Colditz is a small town, covering the area of 33.6 km², with 4,870 inhabitants (31st December 2009). It is situated in the eastern part of Germany, on the Mulde River, between Dresden and Leipzig, in Saxony (Freistaat Sachsen), the Land established in 1990 (Fig. 1). Saxony is one of the German Lands; its capital is Dresden and other large cities include Leipzig and Chemnitz (formerly Karl Marx Stadt). Saxony borders with other German federal states, i.e. Bavaria, Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, and Brandenburg. In the east it borders with Poland and the Czech Republic (Zentraler Broschürenversand der Sächsischen Staatsregierung, 2005). In 2008 Saxony was divided into three administrative districts: Dresden, Leipzig and Chemnitz. Within the districts there are urban counties and rural counties (*landkreis*). Colditz, discussed in this article, is an urban municipality (*stadt*) in the Leipzig county (www.colditz.de).



Fig. 1. Location of Colditz

Source: Author's compilation

The first Slavonic settlement in the area of today's Colditz appeared in the 7th century. In the 11th century a fortified Germanic hamlet was built there. The first mention of the Colditz castle dates back to 1046, and in 1265 the settlement was granted municipal rights for the first time (Priemer, Stadler, 1993: 4). After that, the town market square was delineated, and the construction of its frontages and the walls surrounding the town began. Today, the entire market square complex (*Markt*) is under conservator's protection (Priemer, Stadler, 1993: 14). A significant event in the history of the town was the fire in 1504, which destroyed most buildings in the market square and a part of the castle. After the fire, the town was rebuilt, and the castle was repaired and enlarged. It was surrounded by a garden for wild game, the first of this type on German land (*tiergarten*) (www.schloss-colditz.com/). In the 16th century, the first paper factory was erected on the Mulde River. At the same time the municipal brewery was built in the market square, which functioned until 1996 (www.colditz.de). In the 17th century Augustus II the Strong, the Saxon elect and the king of Poland, transformed the Colditz castle into his hunting residence. In the next centuries, the town was growing while the owners of the Colditz area changed many times.

At the turn of the 17th and 18th century, the extraction of high quality kaolin clay for porcelain production began in the vicinity of the town. In 1804 the first porcelain factory, Steingutfabrik Thomsberger&Hermann, was opened in Colditz (Priemer, Stadler, 1993: 37). Opening a direct railway connection with the town in 1875 was of most importance for Colditz (Stadler, 2005: 46). In the 19th century the town slightly declined economically and a shelter for the poor from the Leipzig region was organised at the castle. Later, the castle accommodated the first psychiatric hospital in Germany (www.schloss-colditz.com/).

After Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, his political opponents were held at the castle. In 1939 it was turned into a transitory camp for Polish prisoners of war (POWs). When Germany started the war in Western Europe in 1940, more and more POWs were kept there, mainly British, Dutch and French. The camp was called Kriegsgefangenenlager Colditz Oflag IVc. The Germans chose the castle in Colditz because of its inaccessible location (on a high hill outside the town) and thick walls and ceilings, which made escape very difficult. In 1945, about twenty Polish soldiers of the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa – AK*), captured during the Warsaw Uprising, were imprisoned in Colditz, including General Tadeusz Bór Komorowski. In April

1945 Colditz was taken by American Army troops (Ramsey, 1989). While the castle functioned as an *Oflag*, there were 300 attempts to escape, 31 of them successful. Colditz became a symbol of the fight against the Nazis and the allied soldiers' resistance (Colditz – eine Stadt mit Tradition, 2006). After the war, the castle accommodated an old people's home and a psychiatric hospital, until Germany was reunited. The story of the *Oflag* at the Colditz castle has been told in many books, two films and one computer game.

After World War II, Colditz belonged to the German Democratic Republic. In 1948 the industry nationalisation started and state enterprises were established (*Betriebe in Volkseigentum VEB*). In Colditz, this kind of transformation affected the Ceramics Factory (closed down in 1954), the Braun Cardboard Factory, the Eismann and Stockmann factory, producing grog products, the Schlobach Mill, the Moritz Dietz Brewery, and other enterprises. The town continued to develop as an industrial centre, whose main factory was the VEB Porzellanwerk Colditz (porcelain factory). It was opened in 1958, and based on earlier factories of this type. In 1970 the factory gained a new large section, producing high-temperature dyes, used for dying porcelain tableware. It should be stressed that the factory was highly recognised, both in the country and abroad. It produced tableware used in households and hotels. The factory was the largest enterprise in Colditz, employing about 1,800 workers in 1972 (Stadler, 2005: 47). Following the communist ideology, industry became the *spiritus movens* of the town's development. In the 1970s there were a few large state companies in Colditz. The largest one was the VEB Porzellanwerk (1,800 workers), mentioned above. Others included the VEB Silikatwerk Brandis, Werk Colditz (150 workers, manufacturing ceramic elements), VEB Pappen und Kartonagenwerk (130 workers, cardboard production), VEB Grosskeramik Colditz and Vereinigte Steinzeugwerke Kastner (240 workers, ceramics production), VEB Gummiwaren Colditz (200 workers, rubber products), VEB Nahrungsmittelwerk Colditz (former town mill with about 100 workers, food production), VEB Brauerei Colditz (60 workers, brewery) (Stadler, 2005: 47).

In the pre-unification period, Colditz also developed its social and technical infrastructure. There was a vocational school preparing students to work in the ceramics industry and numerous song and dance ensembles and sports teams, supported by the local industry. A swimming pool was built in 1954 and a new bridge on the Mulde River in 1968; there also appeared multi-family housing estates and a heating station.

In the communism period the population of Colditz was fluctuating, but the general tendency after 1960 was rising. In 1945 the town was inhabited by 9,200 people, including about 3,000 German repatriates, also from Eastern Europe (1). In 1950 the population was about 7,170 and decreased to 6,750 in 1960. This tendency resulted from the outflow of a part of the displaced population, as well as numerous escapes to West Germany before building the Berlin Wall. The next decades brought a population increase to 6,820 in 1970 and 7,320 in 1982. It was not until the second half of the 1980s that the number of Colditz inhabitants started to drop again, to 6,635 in 1990 (Stadler, 2005).

At the beginning of the transformation period in GDR Colditz was an example of small industry based town, specialised in ceramic manufacturing. All important factories were nationalised after World War II and were owned by the state. It must be also stressed that Colditz after 1945 was not demographically strong town. Already in the 1980s the first signs of demographic regression could be seen in Colditz.

3. Demographic and social changes after German unification

After 1990 the Colditz population was gradually decreasing (Fig. 2). In 1990 the town was inhabited by 6,635 people and in 2009 – by 4,870, which meant a drop by 26.6% over the period of 19 years. Between 1998 and 2009 the population dropped by 18.9%. There were two reasons for this situation: a negative population growth rate (Fig. 3) and negative migration balance in the town (2) (Fig. 4). In 1998–2009 the largest difference between the births and deaths was recorded in 1999 and 2003. In those years the values of the population growth rate went below –10‰. The population growth rate slightly increased in 2000–2002 and 2005. The birth rates recorded then were higher than in other years, while the death rates were a little lower (Fig. 3). The end of the studied period (2007–2009) brought a stabilisation of the population growth rate, but unfortunately at a very low level (–8 to –9‰). The low population growth rate was caused by a number of factors. Firstly, East Germany, like the whole of Europe, experienced major civilisation changes. A family model with few children became popular, marriages are contracted less and less often and at an older age. Many people live alone, do not get married or have children. They spend more and more time working, satisfying their own needs and

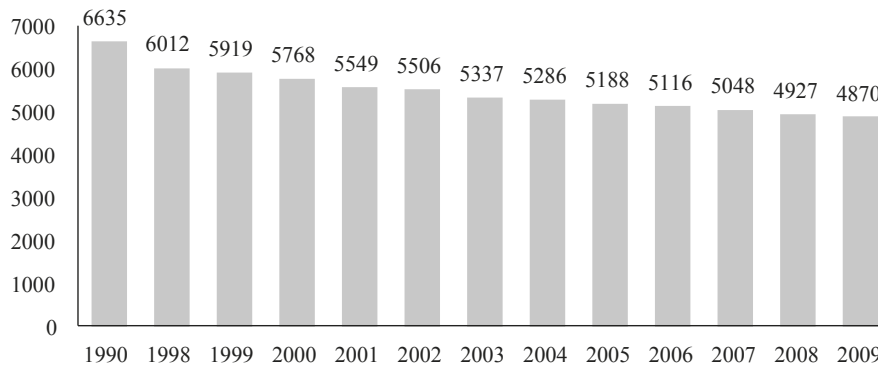


Fig. 2. Population size in Colditz in 1990–2009

Source: Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen (www.statistik.sachsen.de/)

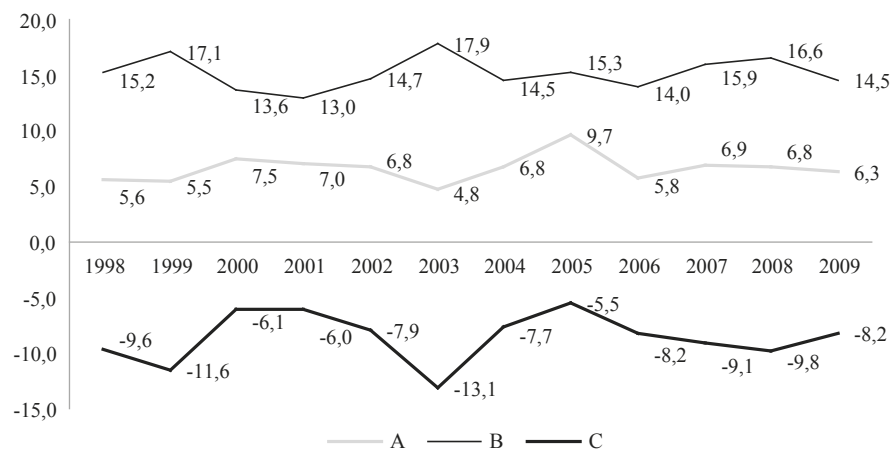


Fig. 3. Births, deaths and natural increase rate in Colditz in 1998–2009 (%)

Explanation: A – births; B – deaths; C – natural increase

Source: Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen (www.statistik.sachsen.de/)

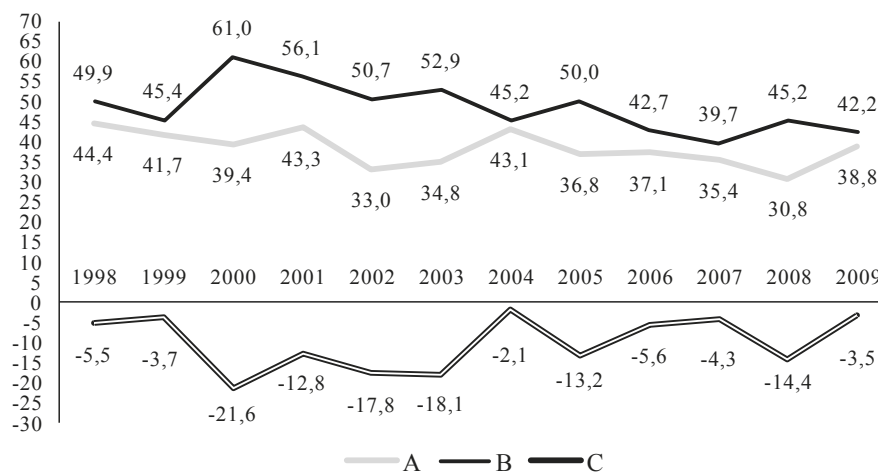


Fig. 4. Migration inflow, outflow and balance in Colditz in 1998–2009 (%)

Explanation: A – inflow; B – outflow; C – migration balance

Source: Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen (www.statistik.sachsen.de/)

pursuing their own interests. In specialist literature, this process is referred to as the second demographic transition (Kotowska, 1998). The second factor responsible for the decreasing population growth rate in Colditz may be the economic crisis, which affected many towns and cities of the former GDR. Its symptom was the decline of industry – all the large factories in Colditz, functioning before 1990, were closed. That brought unemployment, which practically did not exist in the communist times. The problems with finding a job resulted in lower incomes and difficulty in supporting the children. This economic inhibitor of fertility certainly affected the population growth in Colditz. On the other hand, the German government offers significant financial support to families with children, which to some extent relieves their money problems.

The unfavourable demographic situation in the town has been worsened by the negative migration balance since 1998, with the lowest values in 2000, 2002 and 2003 (Fig. 4). The continuously negative migration balance results from the push factors present in the town. The main ones include high unemployment and the lack of development prospects for young people. There are not many opportunities to spend your free time there; there is no cinema, theatre or music club. There are few restaurants and cafes; after 1990 the post office, secondary school and vocational school were closed. Besides, Colditz lies between two large cities – Dresden and Leipzig, which offer many more jobs, and the cost of living there is comparable to that in small towns. The cities undoubtedly attract emigrants from smaller towns in the region. Apart from that, many people emigrating from Colditz and similar places choose to move to better developed and richer cities in western Germany.

In 1998–2009, the population of Colditz rapidly started to age; the percentage of the youngest citizens at the pre-production and production age decreased, while the percentage of people over 65 increased

(Fig. 5). This certainly resulted from the processes of the low population growth and considerable emigration, described above. The low population growth rate is reflected in the decreasing number of young people. Intensive emigration took place mainly among the youth, leaving the town to go to school or university, and persons at the production age (18–64 age cohort) (3), looking for work. Older people did not move out, staying in Colditz because of the relatively good living conditions important for elderly people (a small town, short distance to shops, good access to health and rehabilitation services on the spot), as well as for sentimental reasons. It is also important that in the 1990s and after 2000 a number of houses and housing estates were specially built for the elderly. They attracted a group of people over 65 (immigrants) to the town, which increased the percentage of elderly inhabitants (4).

Between 1998 and 2009 the population sex structure also underwent a certain change. Although the number of women remained higher than the number of men throughout that period, the female domination decreased in 2009. The percentage of men grew from 47.3% in 1998 to 48.1% in 2009. The density of population in Colditz decreased significantly, from 180 persons per 1 km² in 1998 to 145 persons per 1 km² in 2009. It was the result of a noticeable decrease in the total population in relation to an unchanged area (until 2009).

Unemployment is a serious problem in Colditz. It appeared after 1990; earlier it had practically not existed in the GDR. In other communist countries in Europe the situation was similar. There was of course hidden unemployment, i.e. more workers were employed than it was really needed for an enterprise to function well. The same problem occurred in Colditz. After the unification of Germany, in the new economic situation, it was impossible to maintain unprofitable jobs any longer. What is more, all large factories in Colditz were closed after the unification. This

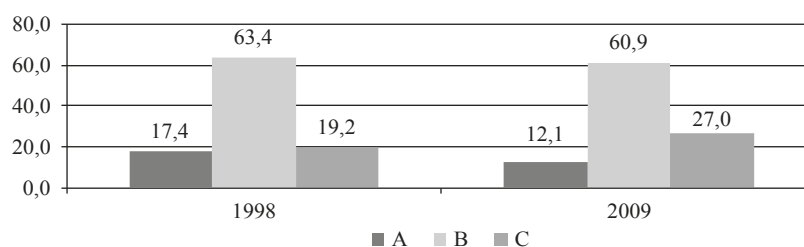


Fig. 5. Population age structure in Colditz in 1998–2009 (%)

Explanation: A – age 0–17; B – age 18–64; C – age 65 and more

Source: Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen (www.statistik.sachsen.de/)

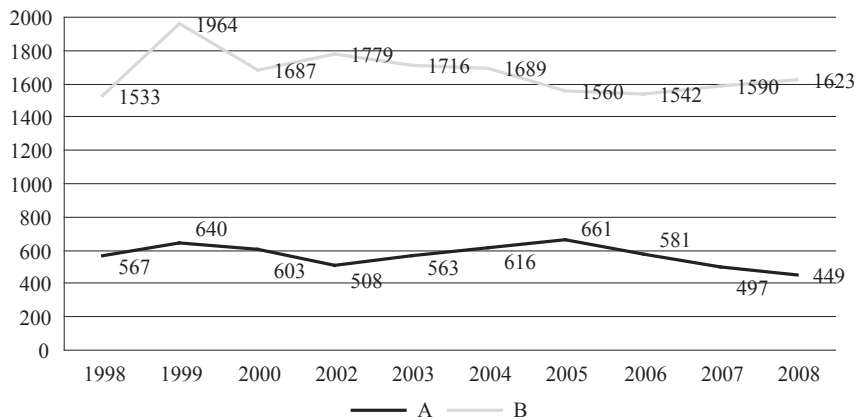


Fig. 6. Unemployed and working inhabitants of Colditz in 1998–2008*

Explanation: A – unemployed; B – working persons; *due to the lack of data, 2001 and 2009 have been omitted

Source: Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen (www.statistik.sachsen.de/)

complicated the situation on the labour market even more as they were not replaced by new large industrial or service enterprises. In 1998–2008 the number of unemployed people was the highest in 1999 and 2005, and the lowest in 2002, 2007 and 2008 (Fig. 6). While in the late 1990s the growing unemployment was accompanied by the increasing number of working people, at the end of 2000 the decrease in the unemployment rate was correlated with an increase in the number of workers (Fig. 6). The unemployed receive considerable financial support from the state: unemployment benefit, social benefit and extra money to pay the rent. Unemployed people with children receive large family benefits. On the one hand, this support is a chance to survive the difficult jobless time. On the other hand, many of the unemployed become in a way ‘addicted’ to social support; having sufficient means to live they are not motivated to look for a job and start work.

Problems with the limited possibility of finding a good job in the former GDR, especially in small towns like Colditz, as well as the necessity to migrate far from home, cause social frustration, particularly strong among young people. The frustration triggers aggression directed against the system and leads to the development of extreme political movements, such as neo-Nazism. According to the report of the German Ministry of Home Affairs, in 2008 there were 4,800 registered members of neo-Nazi groups. Of that number 910 persons (19%) lived in Saxony (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2008). Colditz is also inhabited by some supporters and activists of the neo-Nazi movement, which became obvious after

a number of hooligan attacks at the members of left-wing and social democratic parties during their meeting, or cases of smashing the windows in restaurants run by Turkish immigrants. Towards the end of 2008, during the Christmas and New Year season, neo-Nazis organised demonstrations in the market square in Colditz, during which they vandalised the town hall, e.g. smashing the windows (Winkler, 2009). The problem of neo-Nazism is quite serious in the whole of Saxony, which is proved by the popularity of the NPD (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* – an extremist right-wing party). In order to solve this problem, it is necessary to provide the inhabitants with better working conditions and personal development opportunities (school system, leisure time management).

4. Functional and spatial changes after 1990

The time after unification was economically very difficult for Colditz. First of all, in the first half of the 1990s most large factories were closed, such as those producing ceramics, paper and cardboard, rubber products and beer (brewery) (Winkler, 2009). The largest factory in the town, i.e. the VEB Porzellanwerk Colditz (1,800 workers), producing famous porcelain, was privatised. Regrettably, a few years later the factory went bankrupt. At present, the factory buildings have been destroyed and the premises turned into an unused brownfield (urban fallow). An exception

was the VEB Nahrungsmittelwerk Colditz company, which produced semi-finished food products, e.g. for making ice-cream or sweets. The privatisation of this company was successful; it was returned to its previous owner and prospers under the name of Anona-Nahrungsmittel C.L. Schlobach GmbH, employing about 200 workers. In the 1990s an American company (Ferro) invested in the former porcelain factory premises, Ferro acquired the high-temperature dyes section. The Colditz division of this company is called Magmalor GmbH and produces paints and dyes for industry. The decline of industry caused a smaller demand for transport services. As a result, the direct railway connection and the train station were closed in 2001 (Stadler, 2005: 46). The decrease in the population growth and the falling number of children led to a reduction of the education function, e.g. to the gradual closure of the only secondary school in town, which started in 2003 and was completed in 2009.

Due to the deindustrialisation process, in the 1990s Colditz entered the post-industrial phase. The town authorities decided to focus on the development of services, in particular in tourism (5). It is based on the tourist assets found in and around the town (Winkler, 2009). The main tourist attraction of Colditz is the castle, situated on the hill overlooking the town. The castle comes from the Middle Ages, but was reconstructed in the Renaissance period. It is an architectural landmark, visible from every place in the town. However, the tourist attractiveness of Colditz lies not only in its architecture, but mostly in its modern history. As it was mentioned earlier, during World War II the castle was used as a prison for POWs (*Oflag*). There are wide-spread stories of numerous inventive attempts to escape made by the soldiers of the allied forces. At present, the castle is visited by tourists from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (it is a part of so-called war tourism). Trips to the former so-called *Oflag* at the Colditz castle are offered by some travel agencies. In the UK, there is the Battlefield Tours travel agency, which offered such kind of trips already in the 1990s (www.battlefieldtours.co.uk/).

Tourists visit the place where the Germans imprisoned British and Dutch soldiers during World War II. The castle has a museum dedicated to the war events, a souvenir shop and guiding services. The castle, currently the property of the Saxony authorities, was thoroughly revitalised in 2006–2007. Some of the chambers function as a youth hostel (European Youth Hostel). The music academy (*Landesmusikakademie*), founded at the castle in 2010, organises occasional concerts and music projects in its perfectly equipped

concert hall. The castle is visited by about 20,000 people every year, mostly tourists (6).

Another major tourist attraction of Colditz is the Renaissance architecture of the town square. The most valuable buildings include the town hall, the Schlosscafe building and the house of Johann David Kohler, a famous German numismatist, scientist and one of the founders of German library science. An important historical monument are the remains of the town walls, as well as the 12th century St. Nicholas Church, situated outside the town centre. Another important tourist asset is the Mulde River, which is used for water sports. There are many attractive tourist localities in the vicinity of Colditz, such as the former spa of Bad Lausick, and Podelwitz, famous for its beautiful castle. The vicinity of Colditz is full of hills, vast forests and beautiful rivers, which is a significant value attracting tourists. In order to intensify tourism, the town authorities organised a special department promoting and supporting this activity in Colditz. The financial resources they obtained were used to revitalise the town market square and renovate the castle. After 1990 Colditz gained many new elements of tourist and para-tourist infrastructure, such as the already mentioned youth hostel, a few new guest houses or a new sports hall with a swimming pool (the old swimming pool built in the 1950s was also modernised).

Accommodation and gastronomic infrastructure developed as well. According to the data provided by the Colditz Town Hall, in 2009 the town had seven restaurants, one hotel, two guesthouses, seven B&Bs, one youth hostel and one camping site. Internet websites were created, presenting the town, its tourist valour and the castle from the historical and tourist perspective (7). It should also be stressed that after 1990, about 40 non-governmental organisations and associations (*verein*) were established in Colditz, dealing with sport, culture and tourism matters, taking care of the castle, etc. One of such associations is the Club Courage e.V., whose co-founder was Heinrich Boker. The Club's priorities include supporting tolerance, fighting against neo-Nazism and developing culture. In summer 1995 the association organised a meeting of the Representatives of European Cities (*Europatreffen*). It was a huge cultural undertaking, organised under the auspices of the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hans-Dietrich Genscher. The meeting was attended by guests (officials, song and dance ensembles) from Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, the UK, and German partner towns (Holzwickede and Ochsenfurt). The cultural events accompanying the meeting were attended by

about 30,000 people. It must be stressed that the activity of the Club Courage e.V. and other associations in Colditz contributed to the promotion of the town and the development of the cultural, entertainment and tourist function (8).

The result of the activities described above was the development of tourism; in 1999–2009 the number of visits in Colditz increased from 2,562 to 8,155, i.e. by about 318%. At the same time the number of nights spent by tourists in Colditz rose from 5,448 to 19,477 annually, i.e. by about 357%. The use of hotel beds increased from 16.2% in 1999 to 26.5% in 2009. The average length of stay in the town slightly increased, from about 2 days in 1999 to 2.4 days in 2009 (9).

The figures quoted above show that tourism in Colditz is developing quite fast. In 2011 a new revitalisation and further development strategy was devised and launched. It consists in enriching the small architecture of the market square by installing new street lamps, benches and introducing more greenery. Moreover, the authorities are to subsidise the construction of a new shopping gallery and a hotel in the market square, in the building of the former brewery. The inhabitants may join in by buying plants, flower pots and chests, which are to be used for a new décor of the market square tenement houses (10).

The tourism development, which is an element of the functional transformation of the town, would be impossible without changes in the urban space. Spatial changes began in 1991, when the town was included in the national and regional revitalisation program, called *Bund-Länder-Sanierungsprogramm*. The town council accepted the plan of the town centre revitalisation in 1993; the project was launched in 1994. It included the modernisation of buildings in the town centre, modernisation and construction of new streets and pavements, filling in the gaps between buildings, and strengthening the commercial and service function of the centre. The pavement of the market square and its small architecture was modernised, most tenement houses in the town centre were revitalised, the medieval town wall was partly reconstructed, some streets and pavements were repaired, new public parking spaces were built. The financial means for revitalisation came from central and regional funds, as well as from the budget of the municipality; they covered the cost of public projects and some investments in privately-owned buildings (Colditz. Stadterneuerung im Sanierungsgebiet Altstadt). So far, 9.1 million Euros has been spent on the revitalisation program (11). It must be stressed that it was seriously disturbed by the catastrophic flood, which hit Germany, including Saxony and

Colditz, in 2002. A large part of the town, with the old market square, was flooded. Situated on a river, the town had been flooded before (e.g. in 1954 and 1974), but not as heavily as in 2002. Removing the flood damage slowed down the revitalisation process and generated additional costs. Another problem is that some privately-owned buildings, as well as those whose owners have not been established, are not being revitalised. This is because the owners are either not interested in revitalisation or cannot afford it. As a result, in some places, revitalised and well-maintained buildings stand next to substandard buildings.

5. Conclusions

The aim of the article was to present the process of transformation taking place after the reunification of East and West Germany in Colditz – a small town situated in the area of the former German Democratic Republic. The analysis presented in the article is a case study. The author presented the main socio-demographic, as well as functional and spatial changes taking place in the town of Colditz in the 1990s.

The research shows that Colditz is a locality undergoing profound changes as a result of the transformation in the area of former East Germany after reunification. The first change is the demographic regression resulting from the extremely low population growth rate and the negative migration balance. Although a decrease in the population size was already seen in the 1980s (in 1982–1990 – by about 10%), it was not as rapid as after 1990. There appeared serious social problems, such as unemployment and the neo-Nazi movement. These problems did not exist in the GDR, or were camouflaged, just like hidden unemployment, typical of communist countries.

The next group of changes regard urban functions and economy. Industry practically disappeared from the town, including the largest porcelain factory. Thousands of people lost their jobs and were unable to find work in Colditz due to the lack of new investments. After 1990 many new service companies appeared, but they were usually small businesses. Therefore, a sizable group of inhabitants emigrated to other parts of Germany. It must be stressed that an important element of the functional and economic changes was the dynamic development of tourism. However, the tourist sector alone is not strong enough to secure further development of Colditz. The closeness of two large and prospering cities of Dresden and Leipzig is undoubtedly dangerous for the small town,

because the cost of living in these two large urban centres is similar while the development prospects much better, which encourages many people to move there.

The next issue discussed in the article are the spatial changes in the town. The scale of these changes is considerably large as the majority of the town centre underwent revitalisation. Buildings, transport areas and technical infrastructure were repaired. There appeared new parking spaces and green areas. The money needed for revitalisation was acquired from central and regional funds. Financial support was given to public buildings and spaces, but also private owners could apply for subsidies. It must be stressed the revitalisation is an ongoing process; new investments are being made and new projects devised in order to make the urban tissue more attractive.

The author decided to present potential future demographic, social, functional and social changes. Further directions of the transformation have been divided into positive and negative ones (Table 1). As regards the demographic changes, negative processes, such as the decreasing population size and population ageing, will probably continue to dominate. Perhaps the decrease in population size will not be as rapid as in the last 20 years. As regards the social changes, the positive ones may include a stable number of the unemployed and the activity of local non-governmental organisations (Table 1). In the group of the functional and economic changes, the positive trends may certainly include the progress of the tourist function. Among the main negative trends there may be a shortage of large investments (few new factories) and a strong dependence on the tourist market. As

Table 1. Potential directions of the socio-economic and spatial changes in Colditz

Groups of changes			
Demographic	Social	Functional and economic	Spatial
Directions of changes			
<u>Positive:</u> –	<u>Positive:</u> – stabilised and later decreasing number of the unemployed, – development of local initiatives, e.g. social organisations (verein), activating the ‘social capital’ of the inhabitants.	<u>Positive:</u> – development of home and international tourism, – better use of Colditz tourist potential by developing tourist infrastructure and a better promotion of the town.	<u>Positive:</u> – further revitalisation of the town. – altering the physiognomy of the market square (greenery, new shopping gallery).
<u>Negative:</u> – persistent negative population growth rate, – further decrease in the population size, – further ageing of the community.	<u>Negative:</u> – first, persistent negative migration balance; later, possible oscillation of the migration balance value around zero, – further problems with the neo-Nazi movement, – growing dependence of a part of the town community on social care; lack of motivation to look for a job and start work.	<u>Negative:</u> – lack of new, large industrial investments; it is unfavourable because of the industrial traditions of the town and a large number of inhabitants skilled to work in industry, – shortage of new, large investments in services, – risk of monofunctional economy, based mainly on tourism; such economic structure of the town would be very sensitive to all the problems on the tourist market, – growing dependence on foreign tourists, e.g. from the UK.	<u>Negative:</u> – further degradation of some built-up areas, e.g. not revitalised privately-owned tenement houses or those with owners unknown; closed down railway station, – problems with finding an investor in the premises of the former porcelain factory, forming an urban fallow (brownfield).

Source: Author’s compilation

for the spatial changes, the positive direction will be the further revitalisation of the urban space, and the negative one – further degradation of some buildings (unrepaired privately-owned tenement houses and those with owners unknown) and the premises of the former porcelain factory.

Notes

- (1) The number of Colditz inhabitants who died in World War II is estimated at about 300.
- (2) The statistical data used in this analysis refers to the period of 1998–2009 and was obtained from Statistisches Landesamt des Freistaates Sachsen (www.statistik.sachsen.de/).
- (3) Until 2010 the retirement age in Germany was 65; from 2012, it is rising to 67 for both men and women, by the Bundestag decision.
- (4) The result of the decreasing number of youth was the closure of the only secondary school in town and a decrease in the number of students attending the primary school in Colditz from 232 in 1998 to 127 in 2009.
- (5) After 1990 no new large service companies appeared in Colditz but small services functioned very well. There appeared insurance companies and divisions of several banks, and small trade was flourishing. We should mention a few of the service enterprises (large shops) which employed a larger number of people after 1990: Netto, Edeka, Lidl, Penny, Hagebaumarkt (a supermarket selling construction materials), or Schlecker chemist's shops.
- (6) Data obtained from the Colditz Town Hall.
- (7) In 1990 Colditz gained a large conference and hotel centre, run by the Europahaus Colditz association. However, the association went bankrupt; the building has not been used for several years, going into ruin.
- (8) Club Courage e.V. materials.
- (9) Statistical data regarding tourist traffic come from the Colditz Town Hall; it does not include information about the number of nights spent at the camping site.
- (10) Colditz Town Hall data.
- (11) Colditz Town Hall data.

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