

**ИНОВАЦИИ, РАЗВИТИЕ И УСТОЙЧИВОСТ  
В СЕЛСКИТЕ РАЙОНИ В БЪЛГАРИЯ И В ЕВРОПА**

ОМДА

© ИНОВАЦИИ, РАЗВИТИЕ И УСТОЙЧИВОСТ В СЕЛСКИТЕ РАЙОНИ В БЪЛГАРИЯ И В ЕВРОПА – сборник

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Djura Stevanović, Miloš Arandjelović, Aleksandar Videnović

## INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN THE FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS

### Abstract

Industrial heritage may possess various forms of revitalization. To a large extent, it depends on the needs, but also on other factors of the local area, with the aim of achieving certain material and socio - cultural benefits. That kind of buildings are essentially representing a micro units in a way that can contribute to improving the quality of life of local residents.

The study is basically defined by pointing to possible opportunities to improve life in rural areas. The frequency of changes in social relations inevitably causes a changes in economic structure, which in practice results in abandonment of certain industrial facilities. Special emphasis in this regard is the heritage of socialism in the Balkan countries such as Serbia and Bulgaria.

The aim of the research is the possible redevelopment of industrial buildings that no longer serve a purpose, and that to a large extent can be used in terms of sustainable development. New role in this regard can move beyond the basic economic activity. First of all, as the material evidence it consists of specific spatial and cultural-historical characteristics that can be used in order to engage in some form of tourism, considering tourism as a global topic. Especially having in mind the socialist heritage of the Balkan countries that can be defined and used as a unique tourist offer at international level.

*Keywords: industrial buildings, socialist heritage, village, rural areas*

### INTRODUCTION

Socio-cultural changes in the Republic of Serbia in the early 2000s caused many changes in the economic structure. Policies of economic development now is following the concept of foreign investment, leaving the system of planned economy, which proved to be unsustainable.

The introduction of the neoliberal concept has led to many changes in the society. One of the most important is certainly the decline of large industrial facilities, most of which now ruined.

The subject of research are abandoned industrial facilities that are located in rural areas. In this sense, the question arises about their further destiny. That is whether it should eject the conversion of these facilities and adapt them to the needs of modern society or leave it as such to become physically unsafe for the environment.

In the contemporary context, it is necessary to observe certain parameters that can be used in the direction of economic or cultural development. In relation to the needs of the market, abandoned industrial buildings today mostly represent tourism potential or the center of cultural and artistic events. In addition to the reconstruction and revitalization of these spaces they spiritually and materially enhance the quality of life in the settlements to which they belong.

In the certain way, industrial buildings represent the cultural heritage. The reason for this is certainly the specific socio-cultural context in which they were built. Entire industrial complexes representing material evidence of the epoch, emphasizing the current values that have then influenced the development of society (Timothy, 2011).

The conversion of industrial buildings can stop their further degradation, contributing at the same time to improving the cultural development of local communities. In this case, the industrial facilities would no longer represent a mockery than a central place of cultural and artistic events or tourist destinations.

Research is methodologically defined by analyzing the concept of creative industries and the industrial heritage of socialism, which aimed at the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage that can be given a new purpose. That kind of industrial heritage may be interesting in the way of tourist, cultural or educational terms. As a part of the cultural heritage it certainly represents a potential that can be exploited. It is often the case reusing of such facilities to tourism, but there are examples where the former industrial facilities become art galleries, museums and places which are designed to culture in general.

The conversion of industrial buildings is the ideal way of representing the existing architectural heritage. If they have preserved the physical structure and machinery as such, they can get the status of a cultural good. The aim of the research is to defined precisely possibility of reuse of abandoned industrial facilities in terms of sustainable development. Taking into account the specific spatial units and cultural and historical context, special attention should be paid to tourism as a global topic. Industrial buildings as architectural legacy of the socialist period can be interesting to the modern society, representing the characteristics of its original development.

#### **INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE AS A CULTURAL RESOURCE**

Industrial heritage in rural context, regardless of their creditworthiness, the original purpose and position in relation to the village, represent one of the most important development resources. If there is no more need for the development and improvement of their original purpose there is a possibility of putting them into another function. Every development model is acceptable if it prevents further deterioration of built structures.

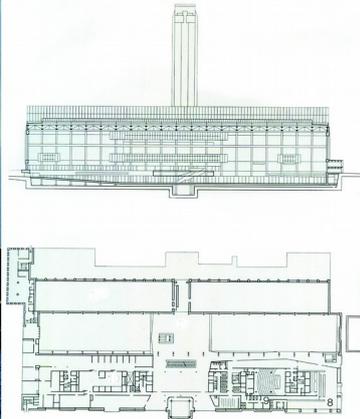
In the context of social changes Ulrich Beck points out that it should give up of social forms that were corresponded to the previous social system. The uncertainty of modern society requires individual creativity which is aimed at providing financial resources. In this way, a process of individualization of society is making individual to determine his own way of life planning [Beck, 1993].

A clear and defined concept of development would mean in concrete terms the improvement of living conditions in certain areas where the introduction of new contents in the function of such as tourism (service-commercial, educational and cultural, etc.). Abandoned industrial buildings in that way would become an indispensable segment of public life.

Examples from abroad usually represent the practice of conversion of industrial facilities in the exhibition halls, galleries and museums (Figure 1). The reason for this is a comfort space that have this buildings and which are therefore suitable for variety of amenities. The conversion purposes in this regard is not only economic but also environmental imperative [Schittich, 2003:9].

Construction of industrial facilities in the socialist countries was the result of planned economy and intensive industrial development [Arandelović, 2016:221]. In some cases, factories were built where there was no basic raw materials meant for. A good part of industrial factories was failed and reasons for that was leaving the socialist pretensions.

Figure 1. Battersea Power Station, London, UK.



Source: Schittich, C. 2003. (ed.) *In Detail: Building in Existing Fabric*. Birkhauser, Basel-Boston, Berlin, pp139.

The so-called period of transition, accelerated devastation of the industry as a whole. Residual technologies and lack of material resources prevented the further

development as well as maintenance of existing capacity of the factory. The collapse of social values and the disintegration of the common state of Yugoslavia has left to decay a large number of different industrial factories in the Republic of Serbia.

By changing the social system a major challenge in former socialist countries now represent an property relations. This situation to a large extent disables or completely prevents possibly planning and revitalization. Questions of restitution of ownership or rights to the land on which factories were built, affects that for certain cases simply do not exist adequate solutions and as such they remain ruins.

### CREATIVE CONVERSIONS

Abandoned industrial facilities in the contemporary context are gaining in importance as a multivalent spaces whose function can range from primarily industrial to cultural or educational. Forming a creative space of the abandoned industrial facilities in the foreground emphasizes the concept of creative industries.

Creative industries are actually a collection of creative activities that sublimate the cultural and artistic expressions with a common goal of economic and cultural development [Hartley,2005:5]. Creative industries basically allows the creation of new meanings.

Culture in this sense can play a key role in improving social cohesion. On the other hand, Charles Leadbeater and Kate Oakley [Hartley, 2005:299] believe that precisely art and culture allows easier integration of people at all levels, especially in the more frequent social differences of the modern world.

The development of culture should be used in the function of realizing certain business goals. It can play a key role in understanding the potential not only to abandoned industrial facilities, but also a broader context.

The Republic of Serbia has a considerable number of abandoned industrial facilities located within the rural settlements. Once they employed a large number of the working class who came from the countryside, but today they are functionally and physically ruined. As such, they have become unsafe areas where the collapse of certain parts of constructions can negatively affect to the population living in the vicinity.

In Eastern Serbia, along the border with the Republic of Bulgaria, there are several of these facilities. The research on this occasion is an example of abandoned industrial complex in the village of Vina near Knjazevac. Abandoned building used to be in the function of the mine exploitation and among other things there were houses for the workers, the mine administration building and other objects which accounted functional center of the village. A certain number of these objects, in the physical sense, has been preserved (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Administrative building of the mining complex in the village of Vina, Eastern Serbia**

**Source: Photo archive of authors**

A similar fate is also characterized the Kalna village in the municipality of Knjaževac, Serbia. At the time of the socialist government in early 60s here were opened industrial facility for processing uranium ore. Following the example of socialist practice it was built the entire village from the production facilities to residential buildings for workers [Arandelović, Videnović, 2016:69]. After less than five years the mine was abandoned and many buildings from that time have no purpose today.

Analyzing from the aspect of creative conversion it should take into account other resources that may be in the function of repurposing industrial facilities. For example, in this case, proximity of the archaeological site of ancient Roman imperial palace (Felix Romuliana) may affect the formation of a unique tourist offer, which would be based on the development of cultural tourism and the industrial heritage.

On the other side of Stara Planina mountain in Bulgaria there are also that kind of buildings. An example of socialist development of rural areas and intensive industrialization represent an abandoned facility "Hlebozavod" in the rural village Čuprene (Figure 3). Perhaps consolidating of similar (tourist) activities on both sides of Stara Planina mountain could achieve certain economic and cultural cohesion at international level. As focal points of cultural and artistic events they could become carriers of cultural and economic development. They can encourage the development of services in the wider context of rural settlements.



**Figure 3. Facility of food industry, Čuprene, Bulgaria**

**Source: Photo archive of authors**

**Those industrial facilities actually are historically significant buildings. Since they were planned and built in the period of socialism they can be an interesting tourist destination. Especially for tourists who come from countries that were not advocates of socialist ideology.**

**Visitors of these areas will get certain knowledge and information about historical events related to particular facilities, but also a information for the chronology of the development of the village and get acquainted with natural and cultural values of the site. Over time, these places could became the central place of promoting natural and cultural values, with the purpose of economic development.**

**We should also keep in mind spatial and functional complexity of industrial facilities which in addition to basic production units consisting of administrative, support, warehouse, etc. objects. Their hybrid structure, enables easier and better adjustment to various activities.**

**Creating attractive content of the abandoned industrial facilities it would go in favor of the overall improvement of life in local communities. Examples from other countries indicate that states often stimulate investment in old and abandoned factories in such a way that the tax exempt investors. This practice is more common for factories that are located in cities (the so-called *Brownfield*). Tax incentives are mainly related to the lease of land at a low price, and in some cases without compensation. In this sense it is possible to apply a similar concept to abandoned industrial facilities in rural areas.**

**Contemporary social context requires the resolving the status of these buildings. There are possibilities for their reuse of which would be in line with some of the new demands of society. The creative aspect of conversion in essence is reflected in the creation of a new economy, which would be based on a larger number of participants.**

**In the case of developed countries such as USA, UK and other European countries, it can be concluded that creative activity (industry) outweigh the primary industries (chemical, mechanical, agricultural production and so on.), presenting basically the sustainable concept. Due to modern technological development of society, it is easier placement and representation of products and contents. The contribution of all lies in the**

mentioned simultaneous development and improvement of the service sector, which are important for ensuring the material and social existence of the local population involved in this process.

## CONCLUSION

The development of creative industries is not only the conversion and integration of new contents in a particular social context. The essence lies in the synergy and sustainable development that combines various industrial activities, the arts and culture with the common idea that can provide better living conditions to the population that is directly or indirectly involved in the process. Maintaining cultural events, exhibitions, seminars and art colonies it makes room for the improvement of the administrative, commercial and service activities in the settlements.

Deterioration of abandoned industrial buildings in Serbia, will have a negative impact on the environment. Pollution of the building or agricultural land will leave a huge consequences to the village where these factories belong. The collapse of some parts of buildings, on the other hand, may pose a danger to users of the surrounding area.

Creative methods of conversion means necessary field research and analysis of archival materials and other documents. Primarily it must be determined historical, cultural, political or other character of building, or the context in which it was built.

The conversion of industrial facilities in this constellation gives them new purpose and a new life. Loss of their original and gaining new features, influenced on the fact that they are becoming carriers of economic development of the context to which they belong. Improving the physical condition of the buildings there is a space to create a new identity as a center of social and cultural life in the countryside.

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