

Conference Paper

Culture-led Regeneration of Industrial Heritage Sites in Modern Cities

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Abstract

The basic conceptual characteristics of 'regeneration' are defined in this article, which demonstrates that the declaration of the authors of the project for the regeneration of industrial heritage sites can lead to the use of various methods and techniques, as well as to different results. Clarifying the question of what the meaning of the term culture-led regeneration in different countries is and analyzing specific projects with a culture-led concept, authors show the interdependence of the interpretation of culture and the scope of actions for updating the historical and architectural industrial heritage. It is defined that the term culture-led regeneration arises in specific sociocultural and theoretical circumstances of the rapid degradation of industrial heritage at the time of transition of the world's economies to other forms and structures. It marks a paradigm shift in the attitude of specialists towards industrial heritage. From conservation and museification in increasingly alienating industrial zones, they move on to the actualization of industrial architecture objects by strengthening their ties with all urban processes, primarily sociocultural ones. The most prominent role in such an activity is played by institutional or non-institutional understanding of culture by the authors of the project, experts, administrations, and the community. To clarify the dependence of the culture interpretation and the goals of the regeneration projects, an analysis was made of the culture-led aspects of the rehabilitation of the industrial area of Emscher Park (Germany), the creation of an industrial park on the site of the former industrial zone in Bolzano, the decision to turn the post office building in Buenos Aires into a classical music center. The experience of these projects can be taken into account by the initiators of similar projects in Russia.

Keywords: regeneration, historical and architectural heritage, industrial heritage, culture-led regeneration, culture.

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1. Introduction

At the beginning of the XXI century, the processes of humanization embraced not only scientific, but also design circles. This is noticeable, in particular, in the thesaurus of urban projects on the preservation, conservation, museification (mainly the 2000s) and the actualization, renovation, regeneration (the 2010s) of historical heritage in



cities, including industrial sites. However, specialists with practical goals and an interdisciplinary methodology do not always succeed in achieving logical coherence and systematic professional terminology. Thus, the word 'culture' since the publication of 'The Creative City' by Ch. Landry (1996) has become a frequent and significant element of strategic programs for the development of cities and territories. If Ch. Landry puts a wide variety of meanings into it, from 'pure' creativity to 'management art' [16], then in later interpretations the palette of meanings may narrow. The interpretation of 'culture-led' as the basis for empowering local communities democratizes the processes of urban transformation but does not always allow authors to pay attention to architectural and aesthetic results [2]. The reduction of culture to art that is being overcome today brings major artistic events to the leadership. A combination of urban policy issues has transformed the concept of 'culture' to an idea of the totality of cultural institutions and the formalized actions they initiated. Culture is understood not as the creativity and totality created and lived by people, but only what is written in the plans of urban policy. Such narrowing is permissible, but it inevitably affects the goals and nature of rehabilitation projects. Accordingly, the reaction of specialists and citizens to these projects and their results may be different. The study of existing experience can be taken into account when developing projects for the regeneration of industrial facilities and territories of Russian cities, adapting the cases that are closer in terms of parameters to Russian needs.

Hence, the objective of the article is to analyze the relationship between the interpretation of culture and the scope of actions for the culture-led regeneration of industrial facilities. The empirical basis of the study is the completed projects of different regions of the world.

2. Methodology

The complexity and at the same time productivity of the question put in the title of the work is largely due to the fragmented actions and professional self-reflection of specialists engaged in rehabilitation projects in cities. For Russian authors, the interdisciplinarity of methodology in the study of this topic is rather a desirable than an actual level. The first to speak about it was I. V. Kondakov (1995) [14], but over a quarter of a century academic publications have largely remained faithful to the typological approach, which focuses on the quantitative parameters of objects. This approach is hidden in some foreign sources, when, for example, culture is 'measured' solely by the number of jobs that have appeared or events held [10]. Therefore, works on improving

the quality of life in cities of various sizes are especially important to us: J. Gehl, V. L. Glazychev, A. E. Gutnov, J. Jacobs, A. V. Efimov, K. Lynch, Ch. Landry, R. Florida, C. Ellard, et al. They shift the emphasis from quantitative indicators used during the period of modernism to qualitative ones, such as 'the spirit of the place', 'identity', 'image', 'happiness', etc.

The city and its culture exist as a dynamic self-organizing whole. Against the 'point-like' vision of urban cultural heritage as a simple collection of separate objects the following authors [6, 18] write. I. Di Carlo emphasizes the importance of an aesthetic approach that provides not only the integrity of the look, but also the departure from the functional rigidity of industrial forms [8]. As the analysis of the materials on the most successful Emscher Park project in the Ruhr region (Germany) shows, from the very beginning of this large-scale work, the initiators understood not only the city as a whole, but the entire post-industrial site (about 2 thousand km²). A similar vision is prescribed by P. M. Shulgin, emphasizing in addition the possibility of working with historical local technologies and traditional forms of nature management [25, p. 117].

3. Results

The formulation of the goal of the urban project with the inclusion of the term 'culture-led regeneration' indicates the refusal of specialists from the subject-object paradigm in design and management. A building or territory is no longer considered a passive object of exertion. Their history, meanings, artifacts are taken into account when making decisions about new functions and connections of the object with the city.

All interpretations of culture and culture-led processes by specialists have the right to exist and implement, however, the content and results of the rehabilitation processes of industrial buildings and territories vary significantly depending on the scope of the concept (from conservation to re-profiling).

It is determined that the institutional understanding of culture deprives projects of the necessary systematicity and coverage, isolating them at discrete points in urban space without any connection with the fabric and the 'spirit' of the city as a whole. In addition, the absolutization of the understanding of culture as a 'cultural policy' may lead to decisions that are irrelevant for citizens.

4. Discussion

Culture-led regeneration projects are interdisciplinary, have a complex structure, and are often stretched over time. To fix them in full is almost impossible. Therefore, below we consider a number of terms and cases, in each of which we are interested in the relationship of the interpretation of culture and project results.

4.1. Paradigm changes in relation to industrial heritage

The term culture-led regeneration arises in very specific sociocultural and theoretical circumstances of the rapid degradation of industrial heritage at the time of transition of the world's economies to other forms and patterns. Professionals and actors are quickly becoming aware of the economic and valuable utility of industrial facilities conservation in terms of both urban governance and aesthetics. In conditions when less and less is being said about new cities [24, p. 85], to strengthen the position of those who work with historical objects, the amount of 'invested energy' is calculated and the non-environmental friendliness of the construction of new buildings is proved [15]. There is a movement from an understanding of social value as such to an assessment of the potential secondary effects of the heritage (jobs, investments, population preservation, etc.) [4].

There is no universally accepted definition of the term, and this is precisely what gives rise to a multitude of interpretations and a variety of projects, which ultimately corresponds to the spirit of culture as a unity of diversity. It is no secret that branding or renovation projects often become typical, massive, accelerating the loss of its identity by the territory. So the difference in interpretations of culture-led regeneration, despite their ambiguity in some cases, 'plays into the hands' of cultural diversity of places and territories.

However, if we take a more widespread version (in the spirit of the following: Culture-led regeneration focuses on using culture and cultural activity as a catalyst and engine for regeneration activity [10]), then the word 'culture' is not explained at all in it. A declaration of a greater project openness and place is not accompanied by a demonstration of mechanisms to achieve these goals.

We have previously shown that the term 'culture-led regeneration' implies:

- Avoiding the modernization doctrine that replaces 'the old' with 'the new';

- The transition from static thinking about the object to dynamic one, the emphasis on connections, not on autonomous elements;
- Disclosure of the functional and cultural potential of the building or territory, including personal stories, features of building technologies, etc. [5].

Emphasizing the importance of communication and creativity, inclusion in everyday life and mentality, this circle of concepts is closer to post-non-classical discourse, primarily, to studies of cultural history [3] and similar research areas, though not always paying sufficient attention to the processes of material culture. Besides, it sets the formulation of the question 'How to do this?', while domestic sources confine themselves to saying 'what' is regeneration per se and culture-led regeneration, in particular.

Judging by the concepts and results of specific projects, the term culture-led, on the one hand, expands the meaning and scope of work with the heritage [17], and in this sense indicates strengthening of the heritage status; on the other hand, it leads away from the evaluative 'vertical' inherent in classical restoration and museum activities. It shows the significance of any object for people and culture, including the missing [1]. Professional work with historical and architectural heritage in the 2010s suggests that this is not about individual certified objects with the appropriate status, but about the whole range of historical buildings, namely, buildings of various types, ranging from cult to factory ones, from private mansions to warehouses, shops, train stations, etc. [1, 2, 8]. The idea of the stability of the place is also associated not only with environmental, but social, economic, and cultural processes [23, p. 3].

A number of researchers, although using the concept of value, associate a change in the attitude to the industrial historical and cultural heritage with an increase in tourist flow, thereby: a) to some extent, predetermining the re-profiling of objects only in those forms that are attractive to tourists (and not always for residents); b) inadvertently highlighting the economic performance of a place. It is hard to agree with this position.

In different regions, not only the state of these objects and complexes is different, but also the attitude of administrations, population, entrepreneurs, and tourists towards them [21]. As a rule, in Russia, objects are not combined into any territory with a common sociocultural and urban development function; they are discrete, used 'as it was,' or not used at all; their socio-economic potential in relation to the city as a whole is not sufficiently actualized or even not noticed by specialists. Projects are carried out with the goals of renovation or conservation, which does not add dynamics to the process. Most of the 'point-like' attempts, for example, in Detroit, literally crowded with abandoned

industrial facilities of varying degrees of conservation, but lacking a culturally-oriented concept and system program, look similar to each other [19].

The term 'regeneration' is not fully defined either. Following E. Puchinsh (1980s) and V. Krogius (2006), we mean by it 'the transformation of the historically developed urban development complex by restoring its lost parts, planning and spatial structure, compositional integrity and functional activity' [15]. The strength of this definition is the lack of 'nostalgic' components and all the same vision of urban fabric as a whole.

4.2. More on the experience of Emscher Park. The unity of the principles of regeneration of the territory with a plurality of local projects.

Without describing the entire project, let us dwell on a number of the most remarkable moments, since it was the authors of this pioneering initiative who began to talk about 'industrial culture'. Several important consequences follow from this set.

The most productive in the rehabilitation projects of large industrial territories is the sequential ('homogeneous') planning of a polycentric functional structure, in which rehabilitation is not limited only to industrial zones, but extends to the entire territory [22, p. 195].

As early as at the pre-project stage, K. Ganser and his colleagues consider the whole multiplicity of factors of degradation of the territory, ranging from the lack of bathrooms in half of the region's houses to the number of closed mines, from the number of students to the state of public spaces [11]. In the works and documents of the 1990s the term 'culture' is not explicitly present but the authors' attitude can be safely designated as culture-centric.

A decisive role in the mass rejection of the demolition of industrial facilities was played by art historians' assessment of the architectural quality of the Zeche Zollern mine in Dortmund (arch. P. Knobbe) with modern-style forms [22, p. 190]. Having understood the importance of modern architecture in the formation of the 'spirit of the place,' citizens, and then the authorities, accepted the rest, including buildings of lesser quality from an architectural point of view. In 1966, they wanted to demolish the mine's machine room for the subsequent construction of the highway. A group of intellectuals and artists, in particular, photographers B. and H. Becher, created a petition to save this industrial facility sending a document to the president of North Rhine-Westphalia. Despite the opposition of the owners and administration, the building was saved. By 1973, it became part of the Westphalian Industrial Museum.

T. Sielverts and K. Ganser in one of their articles record the preparatory stages that led to the design of the very idea of a landscape park in Germany [26, p. 31–37]. Interestingly, they take the whole complex of premises, from economic to social, as the basis for distinguishing stages. So, the stage of ‘strong city construction councils’ and ‘strong urban planners’ (dates are not indicated by the authors), are associated with a high level of social consent and trust in specialists involved in urban development problems. The second stage, which began in the 1960s, is associated with the increasing role of scientific planning. Since the mid-1970s, when the third stage of the development of German cities began, the projects became less extensive. At the same time, the intensity of the participation of citizens in projects is increasing, as well as their environmental component of these actions. Finally, at the fourth stage, a planning approach arises, which the authors designate as ‘promising incrementalism,’ when the goals of projects in German cities maintain their scale and are directly stated in the project documents. Furthermore, strategic planning decisions are maximally individualized. The role of economic instruments for project implementation is growing in comparison with legal ones.

R. Guenter understands well that the natural component of the industrial territory is also ‘cultivated’ and that it is impossible to simply talk about the return of the natural landscape components to their original state [13]. Even choosing types of plants for lawns around the former mines, experts strive to find those that look ‘messy’, as it normally happens in industrial areas [22].

The main thing that K. Ganser perfectly understood from the very beginning is the impossibility for Ruhr to return to ‘happy pre-industrial’ times. At this place, industrial zones and the landscape firmly fused with each other literally at every kilometer [11]. Moreover, the irreversibility of industrialization, in his opinion, should be realized in its entirety. It cannot be covered by remarks about ‘a lot of picturesque places’ around or ‘we are still green’, which, one must say, are often resorted to by Russian experts. At the same time, the mining industry is conceived by them not as something that needs to be overcome but as an integral part of the culture and identity of the region.

It is noteworthy that the status of the project was initially determined by K. Ganser and his colleagues as “a workshop for the future of industrial regions” [23, p. 8], that is, in the cultural-creative, and not economic or any other context.

4.3. Culture-led project while maintaining the economic and industrial purpose of the territory: Italy

Let us describe another example more briefly, which is interesting in that the culture in it is also initially understood without opposition to industrial and economic processes — namely, as industrial culture.

In the subalpine North-Italian city of Bolzano, there is an industrial zone, which was especially actively developing during the dictatorship of Mussolini. First of all, it is an aluminum plant (1938) and other enterprises of heavy industry. After the closure of the plant in the 1990s the province acquired a 50 ha land piece on this territory. In 2004 four empty factory buildings received the status of historical monuments, and then the provincial administration held a competition for their re-functionalization. Architect Claudio Lucchin and Architetti Associati have created a technology park on this site, with more than 60 enterprises operating today [20].

Using traditional architectural methods and focusing on working with materials, the authors of the project modernized the factory buildings, making them suitable for production activities in the new conditions. The historicism of the approach was based on an understanding of the style advantages of buildings. New elements are often painted in dark colors, contrasting with the original white surfaces and volumes. With the preservation of certain types of (currently inactive) equipment and the general structural basis of the building, they are certified according to environmental standards. In one of the former transformer stations, there are laboratories and offices. The former water tower today has become a reservoir for the water used to cool and heat the complex. In 2008, it was painted by a street artist from Poland M. Varas. The entire industrial territory works today, transmitting the industrial rational 'spirit of the place' and the spirit of the time of its creation. The contribution of the project to the culture of the region is connected with this. At the same time, the creators of the technopark abandoned the original idea of the museum, replacing it with innovative sites.

4.4. Critique of the absolutization of the culture-led approach by S. Dinardi (Argentina)

S. Dinardi from Argentina provides tough consistent criticism of culture as a panacea for urban, socio-economic and other 'ailments' [9]. The basis of her work is the case of the re-functionalization of the large building of the national post office headquarters in the central part of Buenos Aires in the early 2000s, and the opposition of 'cultural'

and political values of the object becomes a cause for criticism. It was at this time that politics was associated by the public as 'a synonym for corruption and dishonesty'.

The author identifies a political function in culture, adhering to the political interpretation of culture as a whole. In her opinion, marking the regeneration project as 'cultural' provides additional reasons for rhetoric [9]. She emphasizes that "in Latin America, the rhetorical importance attached to cultural policy discourses for urban development is not accompanied by systematic academic approaches that analyze this policy".

The project participants, who gave an interview to the author of the article, spoke about two main reasons for the re-functionalization of the building: the devaluation of its previous function; the need for the city to play symphonic music. The criticism of S. Dinardi is caused by implicit setting by the actors of the music venue process as being more 'valuable' for the city than the industrial one. "The actual filling of the building does not matter if there are politically correct 'shells'", she says [9]. In fact, reprofiling was the sole decision of a high-ranking politician in the late 1990s who saw it as a symbol of the country's 'golden age'. Such personalization is unauthorized, but natural for the 'binomial political culture' of Argentina of that period. Supporters of privatization and marketing of the facility still disagree with it, as well as postal workers do.

It is important that, analyzing the case from Argentina, the author mentions all the political changes of the 2000s and shows that in no case was culture emancipated from politics. Choosing this aspect as the main one, S. Dinardi not only deconstructs the urbanistic discourse of a particular region, but also naturally comes to a rather narrow circle of issues of the sociology of culture, leaving aside stylistic, aesthetic, communicative and other processes. The narrowing of the interpretation of culture turns into a narrowing of the vision of the processes of rehabilitation of an industrial facility.

5. Conclusions

Culture-led regeneration projects of former industrial facilities and territories are becoming more widespread in different regions of the world. Their concept is influenced by the interpretation of cultural authors. Being reduced only to cultural policy, culture formalizes and loses its creative potential, which ensures strengthening of territorial identity and attractiveness of the place for citizens. This proves the material of the projects analyzed in the article. Their results can be taken into account by the initiators of similar projects in Russia.

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