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Reutilization of industrial buildings and sites in Greece can act as a lever for the development of special interest/alternative tourism

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Abstract

The current study aims to highlight the impact that reutilization of industrial heritage monuments can have on the development of local economy, culture, quality of life and special interest and alternative forms of tourism in Greece.

In addition, the study illustrates how reutilization of industrial spaces contributes to the strengthening of the junction between the urban and rural environment, proposing communication strategies, through various networks, that will facilitate the aforementioned junction.

Finally, the content of academic courses focusing on such topics is also presented, combined with examples distilled from the Author's personal experience on delivering lectures in this context, for the students of the department of Interior Architecture, Decorative Arts and Design (IADAD) of the Technological Educational Institute of Athens (TEI-A).

The present study thus attempts to address the following questions:

- Why is the development of special interest and alternative forms of tourism essential in Greece?
- How does reutilization of industrial spaces affect the development of special interest and alternative forms of tourism in Greece?
- Which are the potential new functions of former industrial spaces?
- How can the junction between urban and rural environment be strengthened through the reutilization of industrial spaces?
- How and to which extent can undergraduate academic education sensitise today's students-tomorrow's citizens/space managers?

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1. Introduction

Abbreviations

GCET	The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
IADAD	Interior Architecture, Decorative Arts and Design department
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
NTUA	National Technical University of Athens
TEI-A	Technological Educational Institute of Athens
TICCIH	The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage
UNWTO	The World Tourism Organization

The current study aims to highlight the impact that reutilization of industrial heritage monuments can have on the development of local economy, culture, quality of life and special interest and alternative forms of tourism in Greece.

Therefore, a reference to the evolution of tourism and the future prospects of special interest and alternative forms of tourism in Greece will be made in the first place.

Thereinafter, a brief historical overview is provided on the industrial development, industrial heritage and on the way it has been treated up to now in Greece. Moreover, emphasis is laid on the effect that the reutilization of industrial heritage monuments can have, with regards to the development of special interest and alternative forms of tourism.

In addition, the study illustrates how such a reutilization strategy of industrial spaces contributes to the strengthening of the junction between the urban and rural environment, proposing communication strategies, through various networks, that will facilitate the aforementioned junction.

Finally, it points out the great importance of education in the preservation and utilisation of industrial heritage; a reference is also made on the contribution of undergraduate education provided by the department of IADAD of the TEI-A in this direction.

2. The evolution of tourism in Greece - the special interest and the alternative forms of tourism

The present study addresses tourism following the approach of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); UNWTO regards tourism as ‘a driver of economic growth inclusive development and environmental sustainability’ (UNWTO, 2014).

The study is also based on the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) which “is needed to help minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and on cultural heritage while maximizing the benefits for residents of tourism destinations” (Frangialli, 1999)

During the last 50 years in Greece, mass tourism has been developed, being supported by various individual business ventures and driven by market demand (Liakara, 2010). This has caused the deterioration of the natural and cultural environment that is sometimes irreversible, incurring a considerable negative impact on the local economies and communities. It is clear that further development of this mode of tourism cannot be sustained, posing big threats for local communities and hindering all other attempts for the establishment of alternative sustainable forms of tourism.

Thus, the way forward is the adoption of a structured and systematic development strategy for special interest and alternative forms of tourism, which will bring multiple benefits, acting as a lever of growth for the Greek local economies. In fact, such a strategy can bolster economic growth and strengthen sustainability in the long-term; in addition, benefits will be realized in quality of life, development of culture, preservation of local history and cultural heritage and the protection of natural environment in accordance with the articles of GCET. However, the question

that arises and needs to be answered next is obvious: what are the intrinsic characteristics of special interest and alternative forms of tourism?

Special interest tourism is developed in places of special interest, where a unique element or attribute related to that place exists. Thus, it is this exact element/attribute that motivates tourists to visit and indulge in exploring the place. (Karasoula, 2010)

Alternative forms of tourism are part of special interest tourism. They do have as a starting point the natural living which is directly linked with the protection of natural environment, the contact with the local communities, the customs and traditions and the preservation of cultural heritage; furthermore, such tourists also encourage the establishment and development of businesses owned and controlled by local residents (Karasoula, 2010). At this point it is important to note that visitors interested in alternative forms of tourism are usually sensitized in environmental and cultural issues, being well educated and respecting local customs and traditions; In addition they are interested in exploring the local culture and in making contact with local communities, sharing their experiences and supporting local businesses (Liakara, 2010). It is obvious that, through the development of such tourism, multiple benefits arise for all stakeholders involved.

Greece is a country which, despite its small area, has enormous wealth: natural, environmental and cultural. Consequently, this wealth, if exploited responsibly, it can act as a lever of growth, providing real benefits intertemporally and for all. However, if these benefits are to be realized, cooperation between public and private parties involved is a prerequisite. In addition, a robust plan and a clear strategy for the development of special interest and alternative forms of tourism should be in place, providing the framework upon which all efforts will be based.

3. The reutilization of industrial heritage in Greece

The present study is based upon article 4 and paragraph 2 of the GCET, which addresses industrial heritage, (UNWTO, 2001). It is also based on the Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage, which was originated by TICCIH and it was introduced in July 2003 in the city of Nizhny Tagil in Russia (TICCIH, 2003).

The industrial heritage is an integral part of the culture and history of each country. It conveys valuable insights and information, useful for many distinct fields, including the social sciences (Sociology, History, Economic and Political sciences), Engineering and Technological sciences, Industrial Architecture and the Aesthetics.

The industrialization in Greece began in the second half of the 19th century, i.e. 100 years after the rest of Europe, and it continued until the mid-20th century.

The sites where new industrial units were to be built were selected according to various criteria, depending on the type of each unit. For example, such criteria would include proximity to urban areas, low land-acquisition costs, availability of natural resources and other factors that benefit industrial development (mineral wealth, rivers, agricultural production that drives the establishment of new industries for processing agricultural products), good transportation links (proximity to the sea, ports, highways and railway networks) (Tsagarakis, 2010).

The first signs of decay in the Greek industrial centres appeared in the mid-1960s. The crisis then continued for another 30 years which led to the de-industrialization of the country and had a considerable negative impact on the Greek economy and society, which is still apparent. The period following the collapse of industrial activity in Greece resulted in the abandoning of a large scale of industrial infrastructure; all such facilities and technology have then become inactive, constituting Greece's industrial wealth and heritage (Tsagarakis, 2010).

The first attempts for re-visiting and protecting/preserving this heritage were recorded in the wake of 1980. Awareness was gradually starting to be raised, driven by accumulated experiences and knowledge sourced from other countries by foreign visitors, scientists specializing in various disciplines that returned back after their studies abroad, artists who appraised the aesthetic value of these monuments and also Greek tourists that, as prosperity in Greece was rising, had the opportunity to travel internationally.

Nowadays, in most of the European countries, the wealth of industrial heritage is highly valued and has been preserved as an integral part of local culture. In addition, through well-laid-out reutilization strategies it can provide the backbone for the development of local economy, culture, quality of life and special interest and alternative forms of tourism.

Similarly, if such strategies are applied to Greece, the wealth of its industrial heritage can be strengthened and promoted, acting as a lever for the development of special interest/alternative tourism.

The efforts that have been made up to date are noteworthy. However the way that this legacy is being managed lacks robustness and consistency. In most cases, efforts for reutilization of the industrial heritage in Greece have failed, due to lack of fundamental knowledge and economic motives.

Various approaches that have been followed in recent years in this direction are summarised below (Polyzos et al, 1998):

- Many sites were demolished, some of which even before being registered (e.g. the FIX ice factory in Patisia, the Dilaberis' brick and tile factory in Kokkinia etc).
- Others were partially damaged due to the upgrading of their machinery and building structure (e.g. Steam-electric Power Station of St. George in Keratsini etc).
- In other cases, where a radical change of use occurred, only the building's structure was preserved as a shell, while all its internal facilities/machinery were removed and maintained separately (e.g. former headwear factory of Pouloupoulos in Petralona which now houses the Cultural Center Melina Mercouri etc). However, the industrial building together with its machinery, both form the industrial unit and should not be separated.
- In other cases, parts of the buildings and their equipment were used as decorative elements. There are examples where the facades of industrial buildings have been preserved, and new buildings have been constructed behind them.
- Various authorities and scientists specialized in different disciplines have formulated and adopted a scientific approach, which regards industrial buildings together with their equipment as a single piece. These pieces synthesize the historical identity of the facility that will be seamlessly integrated with its potential new uses. (e.g. the Electric Station of the French Company at Lavrion that was transformed into the Technological-Cultural Park of Lavrion, by NTUA, is one of the few examples in the Greek area). This approach is very robust and provides a positive boost to culture. It conveys the historical identity of the building even after the change in its use and benefits sciences, broadens the insights of those having a particular interest in this field and at the same time, the site remains vibrant through its reutilization.

The new use of such industrial spaces is –in most cases- linked with culture. For example, such spaces are being transformed into museums, exhibition halls, educational spaces, art and technology workshops/labs, libraries, conference centers, multipurpose spaces that can host theatrical performances, film screenings, musical events and hotel accommodation facilities. They are also used to house athletic and dancing facilities, workshops for crafting local products, entertainment spaces such as coffee shops, restaurants, bars etc. Typical examples are presented below:

- National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), located in Syngrou Avenue, housed in the premises of the old Fix brewery, a fine example of post-war industrial architecture designed by Takis Zenetos (EMST, 2014).
- Athens School of Fine Arts, which since 1993 is housed in the former textile industry of Sikiarides, located in 256 Pireos Street (ASFA, 2014).
- Museum of Industrial Olive-Oil Production in Lesvos (MBEL): The Agia Paraskevi complex has been transformed into a museum reflecting its former function as an oil-mill. Both its architectural and mechanical features have been restored to their original condition (MBEL, 2014).
- Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive Oil in Sparta: it aims to highlight the culture and technology of the olive and olive production, which is inextricably linked with the Greek and Mediterranean identity. Unique in Greece, it is located in the heart of Laconia, one of the main olive producing locations in Greece (MBES, 2014).
- Open-Air Water Power Museum in Dimitsana (Peloponnese): is a thematic museum revealing the importance of hydraulic power in traditional communities (Open-Air Water Power Museum, 2014).
- 'Scholion', by Irene Pappas, located in 52 Pireos Street, in a site where the industrial unit of 'Sanitas Hellas' formerly operated. 'Scholion' houses a theater and will soon be housing a drama school and the center of international art exchange along with other cultural venues. This is expected to attract a large number of special interest tourists (Kathimerini.gr, 2008).
 - Former industrial venues have also been used to host festivals, primarily during the summer. The festival of Athens is a renowned event that is being hosted with great success in the industrial site of the former furniture factory Tsaousoglou, on Pireos road. Pireos road is the main thoroughfare of the former industrial area, which

evolves into one of the major new development axes of Athens and Piraeus, through the re-use of the industrial buildings. Their new uses are primarily linked with culture and higher education. Each year, a great number of special interest tourists visit this festival.

At this point, a particular reference is made to the festival of Aeschylia, which has been housed since 1975 in the industrial facilities of the city of Eleusis, located 20 kilometers northwest from the city-center of Athens.

In the ancient times, Eleusis had been one of the five sacred sites of Greece for 2,000 years (1600 B.C. - 400 A.D.). It was renowned throughout the ancient world for the ‘Eleusinian Mysteries’ and also as the birthplace of the great tragic poet Aeschylus.

Its industrial development began in the 1880s and many industries were established, such as: the Eleusina Olive Press and Soap Works (1875), the Oinopoietike (subsequently the Hellenic Wines and Spirits Company), the cement factory TITAN (1902), the BOTRIS (1906) and the KRONOS (1922) wineries and the IRIS varnish-paints factory (1925). Later on, the steel industry, oil refineries and shipyards were settled there (City of Eleusis, 2014).

The industrial activity was developed arbitrarily, with no specific plan and respect towards the city’s rich cultural heritage. As a result, air pollution and the associated environmental impact of uncontrolled industrial activity has become a great concern among local residents (City of Eleusis, 2014).

In the 21st century which is the era of sustainable development, the archaeological history together with the recent industrial history shaped the image of contemporary Eleusis. The industrial heritage of Eleusis is currently a highly valuable asset of the city. Moreover, its industrial buildings serve as indicative samples of the development of Industrial Architecture through the years.

The ‘Aeschylea Festival’ is the most renowned cultural event of Eleusis in modern times and is continuously gaining prominence among other cultural events in Greece. It is held annually, every September, as a tribute to Aeschylus. The selection of September as the month to celebrate the ‘Aeschylea Festival’ is all but random; in ancient times, the ‘Eleusinian Mysteries’ took place in the exact same period. During the ‘Aeschylea Festival’ there are numerous theatrical performances, concerts, musical events and exhibitions that take place in Eleusis, that attract a growing number of visitors. In addition, the ‘Summer School of Ancient Drama’ is also hosted in the context of this festival, together with various other artistic interventions (Aeschylea, 2014).

The festival has been housed in many different former industrial sites of Eleusis during the recent years. It was initially housed in the industrial buildings of the BOTRIS and KRONOS wineries. Nowadays, the Aeschylea Festival is housed in the buildings of the Eleusis Olive Press and Soap Works, or as this facility is commonly known, ‘the Old Oil Mill of Eleusis’. The local authorities are trying to reutilize all the abandoned factories and to reuse them, housing there the ‘Aeschylea Festival’ and other cultural festivals and exhibitions, in a harmonic coexistence with the contemporary industrial and the technological history of the area.

All in all, the reutilization of Eleusis’ industrial heritage is expected to have a very positive effect on the development of local economy, culture, quality of life and special interest and alternative forms of tourism (City of Eleusis, 2014).

4. The contribution of reutilization of industrial spaces to the formation of a junction between urban and rural environment

As has already been mentioned, the reutilization of industrial buildings and sites in Greece can act as a lever for the development of special interest and alternative forms of tourism.

Greece’s industrial heritage is currently scattered between its historical centers and urban and rural environments. The task of creating records listing all former industrial spaces that are currently being reutilized and reused, which synthesize Greece’s industrial heritage, is of paramount importance. As the 21st century is the century of information and services:

- With the aid of today’s advanced technology, this study proposes that thematic digital maps are created, depicting where significant monuments representing Greece’s industrial heritage are located. Such a map would also visualize the inter-connections between these monuments and the urban and rural centers. In addition, the classification of all former industrial spaces by date or type/category would become possible. Information regarding their current state and use could also be provided, conveyed by text, images and other media. Updates

would also be easily incorporated into such a digital map, reflecting the most recent developments. In addition, ease of use would be a great advantage, allowing users from all over the world that have access to the worldwide web to extract whatever information is most relevant to their needs when considering which destinations to visit.

- In addition, it is hereby proposed that all existing networks that tie these monuments together are promoted and new networks are built, at all scales, including but not limited to: pedestrian ways, cycle paths, pathways, traffic calming roads, public- and private-interest transportation networks and connections by air and water. All such networks would be illustrated and promoted within the aforementioned maps.

All digital and non-digital networks should be useful and easily accessible by a wide audience, in a context of parity, autonomy and security.

This proposal will facilitate the junction between the rural and the urban environment, thereby driving the growth of special interest and alternative forms of tourism and creating realizable benefits, equally and for all parties involved.

At this point, a reference is made to the role of a volunteer team based at the Greek island of Zakynthos, which, by exploiting the capabilities that modern technology offers, is attempting to create a very first digital map of the island. This map, after its completion, will depict all industrial monuments that were built during the pre-industrial and industrial era, together with their inter-connections. The team comprises scientists of different specialties and representatives from local authorities. Its main goals include:

- The promotion of the results of comprehensive ongoing in-situ research, conducted by volunteer researchers.
- The protection, preservation and reutilization of all Zakynthos' industrial monuments.
- Tightening of the bonds between the urban and rural environment.
- Raising awareness for the ongoing destruction and damage of the sites, resulting from the development of mass tourism.
- Encouraging the development of special interest and alternative forms of tourism.

5. Sensitising today's students-tomorrow's citizens/space managers: academic education provided by IADAD TEI-A

As has already been mentioned, ignorance is one of the prime factors that negatively affect the way Greece's industrial heritage is being treated. Education at all levels should provide knowledge and sensitize tomorrow's scientists and citizens in promoting and reutilizing this valuable legacy. Such promotion and reutilization actions involve various and distinct disciplines of science; as a result, collaboration between scientists with different specialties is a prerequisite.

In the various Schools of Architecture in Greece, the subject of evaluation, restoration and reuse of historic industrial buildings and units has been introduced in the curriculum.

In the Interior Architecture, Decorative Arts and Design (IADAD) department, of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design of the Technological Educational Institute of Athens (TEI-A), the aim of the 'Interior Architecture' module, taught in the 5th semester, is to provide students with fundamental knowledge on how to design cultural and entertainment spaces in the interior of pre-existing buildings. During the last 10 years, students are tasked with redesigning the interior of abandoned industrial units, where the shell of the buildings remains intact. This project aims to sensitize students in issues related to Architectural and industrial legacy and industrial building reutilization and reuse.

In the context of the module, various lectures and presentations are held by academics on these grounds and examples of Greek or foreign former industrial units that have been reutilized are illustrated. Moreover, discussion between students and academics is encouraged and is followed by the completion of a relevant individual research project by each student.

In addition, visits to all assigned former industrial sites are planned. Students spend a considerable amount of time in these premises in order to become familiar with the site and to explore all the elements that convey its former use as an industrial unit. They are also expected to identify the development stages of the site, the construction mode, the materials, its surroundings and exterior space and to capture the state of the buildings by

taking photographs. Moreover, they become familiar with the machinery and equipment and discover the traces of machines and humans, recording the stimuli for almost all their senses by observing, hearing, smelling and touching. They also discuss with each other and record testimonies of locals, perceiving the incredible value of this legacy. All this information can be used as a source of inspiration for the creation of a new space. Then, they visualize and design this new space.

Students have shown great interest and, despite the complexities inherent in this project, they work with great devotion and integrate the new features and functions of the space with inspiration and respect to the pre-existing facilities. Finally, they deliver and promote their proposals as revival opportunities for those abandoned buildings.

Later on, many students often opt for related topics when choosing the subject of their theses. Raising awareness of students from various specialties on matters involving the promotion and reutilization of industrial heritage, through academic education, is indeed very encouraging.

Today's students are tomorrow's scientists and citizens. From their future positions, armed with knowledge and awareness, they will be capable of addressing such challenges and issues aiming on the development of local communities, culture and quality of life in general.

6. Conclusion

The promotion of special interest and alternative forms of tourism represents a new developmental opportunity for Greece today that may also be used for cultural promotion and communication (Kavoura & Bitsani, 2013).

In this framework, the utilization through the re-use of Greece's significant industrial heritage, which also reflects its renowned cultural and historical legacy, can play a primary part in promoting special interest and alternative forms of tourism and contribute to the formation of a bond between rural and urban environment, providing multiple benefits for all parties involved. The present study also proposes that a digital map hosting details for all the industrial monuments is created. This platform will encourage the exchange of information between scientists and will raise the interest of visitors, providing -at the same time- an interactive framework which will synchronize the efforts to preserve Greece's valuable legacy and at the same time, promote and communicate Greece's branding in regard to its heritage (Kavoura, 2013).

Education at all levels should provide fundamental knowledge and attempt to sensitize tomorrow's scientists and citizens in matters concerning the promotion and reutilization of industrial heritage monuments. By all means, such a development would benefit local economy, culture, quality of life and special interest and alternative forms of tourism in Greece. National tourist organizations may employ new technologies and social media in their marketing communication strategies to promote industrial buildings and sites since research has shown that their implementation is effective in different sectors (Vlachvei and Notta, 2014; Chatzithomas et al., 2014; Stavrianea and Kavoura, 2014; Yasa Özeltürkay and Mucan, 2014; Királová, and Malachovský, 2014; Sakas, Vlachos and Nasiopoulos, 2014; Kavoura and Stavrianea, 2014; Amaral, Tiago and Tiago, 2014); the creation of networks and synergies may also enhance organizations' communication with the public (Kavoura, 2014). Implementing new software systems or applications in organizations can be a difficult task; nonetheless, efforts are worthwhile for branding (Stalidis and Karapistolis, 2014; Greve, 2014; Schmidt and Baumgarth, 2014).

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