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Holistic approach to revitalised old industrial areas

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Abstract

Old industrial centers, especially those in the South-eastern Europe (SEE) which had developed in a different socio-economic system, did not respond to changes in global economic trends of the post-industrial production in a timely manner. Integration in the Common European Market and transition to market economy brought a rapid breakdown of traditional industry sectors. University of Maribor participated in the international project ReTInA – Revitalization of Traditional Industrial Areas within the SEE program. The main aim of the project was to develop a method of Revitalization of old industrial areas in SEE based on a model which results from good practice, case studies and includes engagement of local and regional stakeholders. Socio-political changes in the European area very often resulted in the open question of ownership and the conflict of interests between the public and private sectors. Social responsibility in the initiators of Revitalization is also not developed sufficiently for public funds to be allocated for the preparation of the area (planning, decontamination, spatial plan, etc.) to attract the investors. In the context of the project we came to the conclusion that the SEE countries do not pursue the implementation of the European spatial development perspective policies. We established that a majority of countries do not have adequate strategies to tackle the problem of brownfields. Problems also occur due to the lack of adequate experts. Only the holistic approach to Revitalization of old industrial areas will enable us to assure a new quality to managing urban environment of the degraded cities. The long-term aim of the project is Revitalization of old industrial areas in order to provide new jobs and assure sustainable development, as well as to create synergy between providing quality living, social security and sustainability.

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1. Introduction

The processes of deindustrialization and tertiarization meant the movement of employees from secondary into tertiary and quaternary activities, a fundamental characteristic of the postindustrial period. Due to the achievements of science, the new industrial production increasingly required new information and financial services, and the existing stereotype of industry changed. The industrial giants, once the pride and driving force of development, were confronted with major difficulties. In the most developed countries, this process began at the end of the 1950's and became a problem in the 1960's. Labour-intensive branches of industry could not compete with the rapidly growing »footloose« industry in creating added value (Lorber, 1999). GDP structure shows the industry and agriculture shares are declining and the share of services is growing. Environments that had responded to the new economic trends, stimulated by the effects of globalization, in a timely manner, and which started preventive structural adjustment to the economic sectors on time avoided the effects of negative de-industrialization. The latter has mainly had an adverse effect on old industrial centres where neither local authorities nor economic management detected any danger. Due to inactivity of the economic management the endangered conventional industrial activities did not experience the crucial structural adjustment of the economy in a timely manner. Consequently, that brought the decline of the old industrial areas featuring mainly labour-intensive, energy-wasteful and environmentally problematic manufacturing activities in the second half of the past century. In addition to textile industry and heavy industry, the crisis reflected on primary energy production in particular – coal mining. The reason for that was in the increasingly globalised world economy and, consequently, the development of global maritime commerce, which, in addition to the too high labour costs in developed countries, was the main reason for the decline of the entire individual processing industries.

During the first industrialization stage, the economic location factors were the ones to define where particular industries should be located. Industrial regions were formed in the proximity of coal mines, raw materials deposits and spatially-bound and expensive transportation at the time, as well as due to the advantages of technologically interconnected manufacturing processes. Building up the industrial centres attracted the flow of labour force. Rapid industrialization and urbanization processes changed the physiognomy of the landscape.

Development of science and technology and new energy sources pushed the old industrial regions into a crisis, which reflected in declining income, high rate of unemployed unskilled labour force and in severe degradation of physical space. The crisis began in the United States of America and, during the mid-Seventies, initially continued in Great Britain, West Germany and France. In Europe, its most adverse effects were seen in textile- and coal industries. Unprofitable production was abandoned and coal mines were closed. By way of doing that, abandoned industrial areas, called brownfields appeared. Many of them were also environmentally degraded and were, as such, potentially hazardous for human health. Abandonment of jobs had an adverse effect on social status of the wider area of the desolate industrial locations. Living conditions deteriorated, which, due to the increase of crime rates, had a negative impact on the entire areas.

In the miscellany *Die Erneuerung alter Industrieregionen - Oekonomischer Strukturwandel und Regionalpolitik im internationalen Vergleich* (Hesse, 1988), the authors published their contributions to the project called Regional structural changes, compared on the international level. The contributions discuss the example of old industrial regions: Pittsburgh, ZDA, (Giarratani, Houston, 1988); West Midlands with Birmingham, Great Britain (Spencer K.M., 1988), Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France (Dormand, 1988) and Ruhr region, Germany (Klemmeer, 1988), (Hesse, 1988).

The destiny these regions shared was similar. In the 60's, they started to make structural adjustments to the conventional industry. The method of problem solving was founded on state consensus and national interest in saving old centres of economic power in individual countries. The approaches to tackling these issues were similar.

For Pittsburgh, the planners created a strategy founded on:

- introduction of high technologies, development and research,
- consolidating regional economic basis for metal industry and on organization of an international corporations headquarters (soft loans, low taxes),
- change in land use, restructuring and improving qualifications of labour force,
- ecologization of the industry and revitalisation of degraded areas,
- improvement of quality of living and residential settlements and revival of tourism,

- developing the opportunities to employ more women and people belonging to national minorities.

After 1980, when Reagan's Administration introduced the "threefold" strategy for decentralisation of allocation of funding, implementation of structural changes in the industry became possible. The USA were the first to address this problem by introducing relevant legislation to regulate the method for restoration of brownfields. Their approach was based on the bottom-up doctrine. Local communities had the task to prepare restoration plans and development programmes, while the higher levels of authority provided help with financing and relevant legislation which regulated the area of brownfield restoration.

Pittsburgh and the whole region invested in transportation infrastructure (airport, highways), riverbank restoration, university research focused on advanced technologies. They supported integration of private and public sectors on multiple levels. The federal government financially supported projects of house building and urbanization as well as provided long-term financial help to small and medium-size companies. Pennsylvania state institutions provide soft loans to the region for restructuring or new investments in industry. Regional authorities also support and develop quaternary activities, healthcare and educational system in particular.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the previously closed planned economies of the Eastern European countries started to get involved in the open market economy. Industrial production was typically a major part of the economic structure in the eastern countries and their national economies. Transition time showed that the structure of industry sectors was inadequate and not comparable to the developed countries' structures. All post-socialist countries typically implemented extensive employment policy. This resulted in rapid deterioration of what had once been vital pillars of industrial production whose products were not competitive on the international market. This led to massive collapse of industrial facilities. This way, the SEE countries faced the emergence of desolate industrial areas – the brownfields.

The regeneration of European brownfield sites is an essential part of improving European global competitiveness in a sustainable way. A 'brownfield land dimension' is critical to the pursuit and attainment of many aspects of the EU's structural change. Brownfield Revitalisation is of transnational relevance to South-East Europe. The quality and attractiveness of the urban environment is one of the decisive factors for foreign investment. If SEE wants to position itself at a global investment scale, it must concentrate on solving the brownfield development problem which is more dominant in SEE compared to other EU regions (Auer, Reuveny, 2001). Regrettably, their findings are valid for brownfields in capital cities and the most developed regions in the country.

Brownfield sites present particular challenges to local, national and regional policy makers in terms of bringing the land back into beneficial use. In this respect successful brownfield redevelopment policies and strategies need a complete multidisciplinary approach.

Continuity and change are fundamental, intriguing elements of economic and social processes. One of the salient problems concerning local development is the extent to which economic success is an enduring phenomenon and how it is sustained or reproduced in the same places. The development of towns results from the interaction of various external forces, usually operating on a larger geographical scale, and numerous local factors. Thus the vital question is what local conditions facilitate the reproduction of prosperity of communities in the increasingly competitive national and global economy (Domanski, 2000).

The fact that the developed countries faced the problem of brownfields decades ago and they started dealing with it immediately, helped them recognise new development opportunities in it. Developed countries tackled the problem of brownfields as early as in the period of restructuring their conventional industry in the beginning of de-industrialization. They created adequate legislation based on examples of good practice and supported the development of specialised agencies to help local authorities to systematically plan the revitalisation of brownfields. The approach used was interdisciplinary one from the very beginning. Once the general interested public was also engaged in problem solving (the population of the neighbouring areas), the holistic approach was eventually established and the solutions were more and more in accordance with sustainable development (sustainable development principles).

2. Characteristics in the South East European region

Generally, in the postindustrial age the appearance of brownfield sites can be considered to be a natural process which is triggered by the decreasing importance of certain sectors. The emergence of such sites does not necessarily show unequivocal regional characteristics. The differences are:

- time (e.g. brownfield sites appeared in the former socialist countries mostly after the change of regime while this phenomenon appeared earlier in the Western European countries),
- quantity (e.g. due to the financial-economic crisis the number of the European brownfield sites are likely to increase on the long run),
- certain factors which trigger the whole process (e.g. the earlier intense military presence affects some countries, groups in a more powerful way).

Nevertheless, the most important characteristics of the South East European brownfield sites can be identified by taking into account that the investigated regions cannot be considered to be uniform in respect of brownfield sites (as well). The 16 countries (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, some parts of Italy, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, certain parts of Ukraine) participating in the project can be described partly by different economic, social, political and historical characteristics. Basically, two significant categories can be identified which of course can also contain certain differences within the categories:

- Austria and the northern provinces of Italy constitute unequivocally a separate group since these countries – by joining the northern and western European trends – are ahead with the revitalisation of brownfield sites;
- such countries constitute the most part of this region which bear traces of social industrial installations and military strategic developments that was not always carried out along rational principles (although Greece and the southern provinces of Italy do not have such history they may fall in this category on the basis of earlier experiences) (Lorber, Godina, Polinszky, 2011).

2.1. *Project ReTInA - Revitalisation of Traditional Industrial Areas in South-East Europe*

Brownfield sites present particular challenges to national and regional policy makers in terms of how to improve European global competitiveness in sustainable way in SEE region. In this respect successful brownfield redevelopment policies and strategies need quality research recommendations in setting and meeting public policy objectives and improving practice. Brownfield revitalisation is of transnational relevance to SEE. The quality and attractiveness of the urban environment is one of the decisive factors for foreign investment. If SEE wants to position itself at a global investment scale, it must concentrate on solving the brownfield development problem which is more dominant in SEE compared to other parts of EU (ReTInA working papers).

Geographers at the University of Maribor participate in Transnational Cooperation Programme in the project ReTInA. Expanding the scientific knowledge base and developing a clear understanding of the socio-economical, legislative, environmental and spatial dimension that influence brownfield Revitalisation are important aspects of our research programme. The added value of multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary approaches in research programmes is already demonstrated in other regional projects (Lorber, 2011).

However brownfields are also an enormous challenge. They represent an underexplored economic value, are areas for investment and motors for job creation. There is a great sense of urgency because of the bad influence on city images. This weakens the competitive investment position for the cities and for SEE as a whole.

Maribor (Slovenia) is one of nine partners on the ReTInA project. The partners cities are located in or near urban areas and are subjects to Revitalisation schemes. Regional case studies include industrial areas in Komotini (Greece), Ferrara (Italy) and Iași (Romania), contaminated sites in Galați (Romania), Fidenza (Italy), Csepel, municipality of Budapest, 21st District (Hungary), brownfields in traditional heavy industrial centers in Pernik (Bulgaria) and Košice (Slovakia).

ReTInA imports a fully transnational style of working. The problem of brownfield development is a common problem which requires a joint approach. This is efficient, creates other insights and brings more value for money compared to an isolated approach. Jointly defined methods based on common challenges via bottom up, multi-stakeholder input are implemented at regional level jointly defined tools. Every action mentioned in the work plan

will be based on a joint definition and will be subject to joint monitoring and evaluations. Partners' complementary competences result in efficient exchange and joint development process.

Partners have jointly identified 5 critical factors for revitalisation:

1. Need for integrated (planning) strategies;
2. Need for a strong commitment of relevant stakeholders;
3. Need for professional and up to date management structures;
4. Need to find tailor made legal structures, using all relevant finance opportunities;
5. Need to improve the image of the areas, often related to pollution and lack of positive differentiation between SEE brownfields.

These critical factors are relevant and can be found in an accumulated way in all ReTInA partner cities (ReTInA, draft working papers).

3. Methodological Approach

Brownfields sites generally have a bad image, regarding their status within the realms of urban development opportunists. This is not without foundation. Brownfield sites are often associated with high risks for development, including contaminated land and ground water, structural problems to land and buildings, high costs of remediation and a poor perception amongst local stakeholders. If this is not sufficient to quell enthusiasm for renewing brownfield sites, then the length of time, planning issues, and finding opportunities for reuse present further obstacles.

This series of pessimistic outlooks can be viewed alternatively by a more optimistic approach. This is that brownfield sites present opportunities to realize sustainable development improvements and thus can have a positive impact on the environment, local or regional economy and the social capital of previously blighted areas (Gray, 2007).

ReTInA methodology follows the same cross-sectorial approach that is reflected in the program and in the Commission Communication on 'Cohesion Policy and Cities'. The principal methodological approach of ReTInA is to analyze and evaluate current practice in brownfield re-development via a practical regional case studies (UM a, 2009).

Regional case study (RCS) (UM b, 2009) provide a lot of information concerning the specific needs, weaknesses and existing tools that are used in brownfield regeneration activities. A confrontation of the result of these RCS's allows the project to identify a common approach to be discussed in three thematic taskforces which results in a Brownfield Revitalisation Method. Each Task Force (TF) cover one field of interest for the project:

- TF 1 - Legal Framework
- TF 2 - Urban planning and environment
- TF 3 - Imaging and branding

Within each Taskforce a Transnational Case Studies (TCS) were carried out focused on an intensified development and transfer of know-how. Within the taskforces a system of peer reviews and benchmarks was established, too (Lorber, 2010).

3.1. TF 1 – Legal Framework

Regarding the redevelopment and revitalisation of traditional industrial areas, the spatial strategy at the EU-level, as well as the spatial legislation system at national level provide the basis for strategic and planning documents at regional and local level.

Contrary to the EU-environmental policies, there is no EU-legal framework for physical planning. In the framework of the enforcement of sustainable development, diverse strategic documents promote the need for

analyzing and redeveloping abandoned industrial sites. At EU-level, the main strategic document is the European Spatial Development Perspectives - ESDP (1999), aiming at the provision of general guidelines and objectives to be integrated in national documents, where promoting, recycling and restructuring of underused, abandoned or derelict urban sites represent the most explored issues. Parallel, several specific documents, such as the Territorial Agenda (2007) and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Cities (2007), shall be integrated in national, regional, and local urban development policies. Additionally, diverse EC-programmes and initiatives explore the aspects of new territorial action planning to be promoted and co-financed in practice. On the other hand, the EU has overtaken an emerging role in environmental issues, focusing on traditional elements, and less on Brownfield's' redevelopment. However, several EU-networks have incorporated the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites as the main issue of redevelopment programs and actions (UM, 2010).

Even though brownfield regeneration policies are often reflected in the national and local level strategic plans and sometimes even in the urban planning regulations, it is often extremely difficult to translate these sometimes too general, or more specific brownfield regeneration guidelines into actual development projects. National assistance is very much needed, starting from the planning phase through the implementation of the plans, and even the sustainable, long-term management is needed to be assisted by the local, regional and national level decision-makers. These brownfield sites inherited so many problems during their long industrial past, that the normal redevelopment schemes often fail or more often they are simply not implemented, leaving behind stagnation and driving developers into less problematic, often greenfield sites. It is the common responsibility of all stakeholders to find feasible solutions for the wide variety of brownfield sites in Central and Eastern Europe. ReTInA is certainly a valuable tool, based on holistic approach, how to understand and compare each other's problems and experience, and hopefully it will contribute to the regeneration of the brownfield sites not only in the ReTInA partner cities, but also elsewhere in Europe (MaHill, 2010).

3.2. TF 2 - Urban planning and environment

Transnational study (TCS2) aims to examine and describe from urban and environment viewpoint the state of nine industrial areas suffering from problems of various levels of desolation. We call this type of area a brownfield and it is an unwelcome element in the city organism. But, on the other hand it offers possibilities of creative use and its Revitalisation often introduces better results than the use of a new, not yet touched area which we call a greenfield.

The study is expected to:

- arrange the areas into typological system,
- briefly characterize each area according to selected criteria and defines their common features, areas' problems and will outline their chances and opportunities,
- give examples of successful Revitalisations,
- give examples of EU projects which deal with similar problems in the past,
- serve as basis for Model Masterplan and in conclusion it will provide recommendations for further progress.

TCS2 explores the areas to the extent of information provided by project partners within their regional case studies, SWOT analyses, presentations on meetings, etc. The findings of TCS2 regarding individual area typologies and characteristics are as follows.

These are various types of areas which can be typologically arranged as follows:

- from the viewpoint of functional structure and relation to their surrounding,
- from the viewpoint of location within the country,
- from the viewpoint of location to the host city.

Areas' features according to most important criteria is as follows:

- from the viewpoint of area's technical facilities and transportation,
- from the viewpoint of contamination,
- from the viewpoint of targets set by partner the target appears to be urban.

Opportunities of individual areas are given by one of the following values: valuable cultural heritage, relatively good state of the area including buildings, quality infrastructure and transport facilities, favourable area location, low level of pollution but also factors of politics, national and regional infrastructural investments. It is necessary,

indeed, that the change is always provided as a harmony between the set target with the factors above. Due to the large number of different factors, holistic approach is necessary to implement successful Revitalisation (Lorber, Sitar, 2011).

3.3. TF 3 - *Imaging and branding*

The main aim of the Transnational Case Study (TCS3) regarding imaging and branding is to identify the actual image of the brownfields and to propose the directions in which this image can be developed. In order to do that, the RCS provided by each partner in the project has been analysed with the purpose of evaluating the characteristics of the brownfields, the present image of each brownfield, the image that needs to be created in order to sustain the Revitalisation objectives and, of course, the resources available and needed in order to define and develop the targeted image.

In the ReTInA project there can be identified some common issues that lead to difficulties regarding image and branding. One important problem is the lack of general revitalisation objectives because, as it has been said before, the identity of a place has to be based on the key elements (functions of the area) that will be developed there and without knowing these elements a coherent image is almost impossible to create.

The common factor in the nine cases is the lack of regulations, strategic policies and documents to influence the activities of creating the image of the area.

Main expectations of the inhabitants regarding the Revitalisation process refer to new job opportunities and a clean environment. Regarding the owners expectations from the revitalisation process, they are oriented towards an increase in the economical value of the brownfield (real-estate value, economical activities) and in its image with the objective of attracting foreign or local investors. The public administration is interested in the socio-economical development of the area, reintegration into the city and supporting the development of the entire area (new job opportunities, contributions to PIB, social cohesion).

The main benefit expected from the new image is the attraction of investors towards the revitalised areas. Also common to the majority of the brownfields are benefits regarding the creation of new job opportunities, a clean environment and the harmonisation with the surrounding areas.

Ongoing marketing/communication activities have a direct influence upon the present notoriety and image of the brownfield. Most of the brownfields do not benefit from present marketing and communication activities. The presence of prestigious companies in the Revitalisation areas represents an advantage towards creating a positive image of the brownfield and attracting investors (Vicol, 2011).

SWOT analysis

In case of infrastructural investments it is a more common solution to carry out new, greenfield developments than to revitalize brownfield sites. Primarily it has financial reasons since in case of greenfield investments the regulatory entities do not require from the developers to pay for the caused direct natural and indirect economic and social damages.

However, it is important to highlight the fact that the revitalisation of brownfield sites is basically not a matter of choice (brownfield vs. greenfield development), but a series of activities arising from necessity. It can only be designed with a proper methodology and implemented successfully when the strengths and weaknesses of brownfield sites as well as the opportunities and threats of their utilization are explored and investigated with holistic approach (Lorber, Godina, Polinszky, 2011).

4. Discussion and conclusion

During the ReTInA project, we came to the conclusion that merely the multidisciplinary approach was not enough. What proved to be necessary was the fact that we need holistic approach and, in addition to including the expert public, local and regional authorities, include also the civil society, namely the local interested public.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Brownfield sites: are typically large areas. are often located at a valuable site of the town and embedded organically within the structure of the town. the clearance of contaminated sites and the utilisation of such areas are supported mostly by the local community. generally retain some industrial production or logistic/transport services.</p>	<p>Brownfields sites: the exploration and disposal of contamination sites require significant financial resources and enough time. their location is sometimes unfavourable which limits the range of settlement functions (e.g. close to a residential area, or they are located far away from the inner territory of a given town). mostly have an obsolete infrastructure. the existing physical and technical characteristics can cause constraints and obstacles in the development processes. the ownership status is occasionally unclear. the proprietors are oftentimes public or municipal organisations without any resources. there is no common EU policy framework for brownfield Revitalisation.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>As a result of the revitalisation of brownfield sites... new functions (e.g. public, cultural, educational, social, tourism, recreation etc.) may settle down in the given town, or city site. the affected site can integrate into the economic and social circulation of the town. the public availability of services can be improved. the extent and proportion of the built-up areas stagnate and decrease concerning the city. the use of physical space can become more reasonable.</p>	<p>The risks of revitalising brownfield sites: the site remains further on underused when the functions selected do not match the characteristics of the town. unexplored sources of contamination remain in the area. no adequate public and private sources are available for the execution of the necessary interventions. the area totally changes its function(s) according to the investors' will without reflecting the municipality's and local inhabitants' needs.</p>

ReTInA clearly contributes to the community cohesion policy as well as the Lisbon Agenda providing improved growth potential and higher employment to the cities/regions involved while contributing to the Goteborg Agenda (solutions for pollution). Transnational Cooperation Programme in the project Revitalisation of Traditional Industrial Areas in South-East Europe is coherent with the global objectives of the SEE programme which aims for improvement of territorial, economic and social integration, stability and competitiveness.

The main goal of ReTInA project is create the ReTInA development methodology, which will be focused on legal/finance issues, bottom-up multi stakeholder involvement and integrated master planning. With the ReTInA development methodology, we would like to ensure growth, competitiveness and quality employment in the revitalized areas by preparing series of concrete revitalisation and investments plans to catalyze revitalisation while contributing to a quality urban environment. A special task for the project is to commonly figure out an innovative Brownfield Revitalisation Method (BRM) that prove to be transnationally applicable and flexible enough to suit the requirements and peculiarities of different environments and different phase. In order to develop such methodology, information sharing among partners is crucial. A common understanding and use of tools is indispensable, as much as developing a common know-how to be used throughout the implementation phases. Efficient brownfield revitalisation requires a cross sectorial approaches in which innovative strategies lead to awareness of stakeholders. This in turn leads to putting the theme on the agenda of concerned authorities. This will facilitate a more efficient development of new instruments, to tackle the problem in an holistic approach. ReTInA uses these assumptions to develop sustainable solutions for urban renewals and revitalisation contributing to enhance the management of the brownfield sites, along with the development of sustainable solutions for the future (Lorber, 2010).

Brownfield revitalisation is an excellent example where experiences can be transferred between EU regions, notably between western regions where brownfield revitalisation started in the 80's when urban sprawl resulted in inefficient land use and CEE countries that in most cases start with transition.

It is crucial to each successful individual case of revitalisation of old industrial areas to set up the revitalisation project adequately, to use the existing knowledge and consider the examples of good practices. The main danger of holistic approach is that by considering all the aspects of revitalisation, the implementation of the project can be slowed down and / or made more expensive. The easiest way to avoid this is by using an adequately manned and managed team that is capable of co-operating with the participants involved in the revitalisation process, from the initial stages of defining the aims of revitalisation to productive co-operation with all the participants on all levels until the end. The advantages of holistic approach lie in the solutions which, in addition to purely economic aspects, also consider other social aspects, such as sustainable development and diminishing the risk of gentrification, and which, through new job opportunities, help reduce crime rate and social exclusion.

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