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Deterritorialization and Reterritorialization: Sustainable Industrial Heritage Tourism

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As industrial heritage is regarded as a steadily diminishing resource, the milieus of industrial complexes and their potential reuse for leisure, tourism and entertainment have gained prominence worldwide, particularly in Europe, where “culture of pleasure” is appreciated and supported at all walks of life. Industrial heritage is perhaps one of the most effective resources for socioeconomic development in that have severely affected by deindustrialization and globalization. Heritage illustrates how history suffuses the present while industrial sites have gradually transformed into a new cultural landscape. The consensus is that industrial heritage is an integral part of the culture and needs to take appropriate measures for sustainable development.

The purpose of this paper is threefold. Firstly, it discusses the concepts of three stages, e.g., territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization drawn from postmodernism and poststructuralism. The proposed cycle entails an epistemological transformation in searching content and forms of industrial heritage and it went along with making viable heritage sites. Secondly, it compares the LX factory in Lisbon, Portugal and the Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, encompassed by each stage of the model, in order to construct a progressive relationship with respect to tourism development. Thirdly, the paper aims to be a basis for a form of management tool, helping understand and monitor change in the context of European industrial heritage tourism.

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Both LX factory and Westergasfabriek were occupied former factories, la fabrique des lieux, but been transformed into an island of culture and arts, something useful, beautiful and fun. Both sites aim to create genuine cultural identities of obsolete spaces and make value-added heritage sites concurrently. Public awareness of industrial heritage is strong and the memory of industrial interlude deserves to be fostered.

They incorporate a great variety of leisure and entertainment elements ranging from bars, restaurants, retail spaces to arts studios. Industrial heritage become localized at points where accessibility is dependent on public transport and a strong association between arts and entertainment is omnipresent. In addition, industrial heritage has been linked to community cohesion implying management that values cultural diversity and evolutionary heritage practice. It makes a significant contribution to sustainable development whose purpose is long term, holistic and participatory. LX factory and Westergasfabriek show how industrial heritage conservation can take on a new product-led dimension, where a balance of intervention and façade preservations has created favorable settings for tourism and arts performance.

The comparative study shows that territorialization is the initial phase of land use, as the term "industrial area" describes a present state of industrial activity.

Deterritorialization reflects the abandonment of the old functionality of the sites. It is an "in-between" bearing the traces of the past and designating a space that has become cultural attraction. Relative deterritorialization is always accompanied by reterritorialization. What I argue for the significance of deterritorialization is that industrial sites have gone through a series of modification, transformation, and expansion that exemplifies industrial heritage has become increasingly commodified, constructed and contested.

In this context, the meaning of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is spatial manifestations of contemporary changes under way in the relationship between socioeconomic life and its territorial moorings, constantly evolving in relation to its period, environment and stakeholders.