

THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIAL SITES OF ORADEA

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

The present work addresses a current phenomenon: the desire to recapture industrial urban areas, most of which are in decline or abandonment. It is about the city of Oradea in Romania, which is part of today's European space, but with traces of the past. The authors deal with the industrial sites of the past, still present in fact or in the memory of the inhabitants. At the same time, the work highlights the attitude of the inhabitants of the city of Oradea, analyzing the results of a questionnaire launched to them. The subject of the questionnaire is several industrial sites from 1900 onwards, as well as the vision of the population from different areas of the city regarding their perspective. The majority's option coagulates towards various ways of reusing and preserving the memory of industrial sites and their buildings, contrary to the current reality, a striking phenomenon, of erasing them.

Keywords: heritage site, urban, sustainable development, tabula rasa.

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INTRODUCTION

The city of Oradea, located in a geographically favorable area and at the intersection of important trade routes, has always had a strategic geographic, historical and economic position vis-à-vis the west and center of Europe. This aspect has influenced the development of the city in the past as well as in the present. Oradea is a city that developed radially with the Oradea Citadel as "0 point".

The city took shape during the Transylvanian Voivodeship period, in the Medieval Era, when this area entered a stage of much greater development due to the pilgrimage of the faithful.

In the pre-industrial era, the 18th century, craft occupations gradually took the place of agrarian ones. "It is obvious that in this century and a half of the city's history, Oradea has become an economic-craftsmanship and commercial center - if not of the first size, like Cluj or Braşov, at least one of considerable importance" (Borcea & Gorun, 1995).

In 1850 the population of the four cities (Oradea - "Olosig"/ Oradea - "Oraşul Nou"/ Oradea - "Subcetate"/ Oradea - "Velenta") was 18,904 souls (Hungarians, Germans, Romanians, Jews). A purely political unification took place under the same mayor, but the neighborhoods also retain their own administration and well-

defined identity. "Subcetate" and "Orasul Nou" continue their expansion

A first decisive period, the peak of economic development, is around the years 1880 - 1920. "As a relevant indication of the degree of industrialization, in 1892 26 factories operated in Oradea, among which the most important were related to the food industry and beverage manufacturing, construction materials industry, chemical industry, machinery, machinery and equipment industry. Some of them satisfied the requirements of agriculture, such as the mills." (Fleisz, 2010).

A second period of rapid, even forced, development is around the 1940s.

"The urbanization of Oradea was particularly dynamic. Appreciating this period as a whole, she represented for Oradea the period of peace, "la belle époque" (Fleisz, 2010). Thus, in the last decade of the 19th century, there was a boom in the construction of public institution buildings (the archbishopric school, the new town hall, the slaughterhouse, the water plant, the barracks, the cadet school), roads and bridges (two metal bridges over the "Crişul Repede" river), market facilities (place for fairs). The population is growing. A densification of the urban fabric is noticeable (Fig.1.).



Figure 1. Oradea între 1869 – 1887

source: <https://mapire.eu/en/map> (accessed in 04.12.2022)

At the end of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of the Oradea palaces is accelerated, street lighting is introduced, three tram lines are introduced. The transition from classicism to romanticism is made, eclectic influences make their presence felt, and secession takes off in Oradea. The city is still a strong industrial and especially commercial core. It is the Jews who catalyze industry and commerce. This active nucleus is characterized in the interwar period by 8 important industrial categories: the food industry (the most important and characterized especially by the factories of yeast, spirit and alcoholic beverages, milling and baking, sweets and meat processing); chemical industry; the textile one; followed by the printing industry; construction materials industry; that of metallurgy and machine construction; of leather and footwear; forestry and wood processing industry. The development of the industry went hand in hand with the establishment of banking and credit institutions and with flourishing commerce. The economic situation and cultural life in the period 1919-1940 is marked by regression. On the political level, major changes are occurring. After the nationalization of factories, workshops and houses in 1948, five-year plans were introduced. After 1945, in Oradea, units of several industrial branches merged. The chemical industry (after 1948) is concentrated in two factories: "Transilvania", a varnish and paint factory, and "Sinteza", a chemical products factory. The metalworking workshops first become "Phoebus", and after nationalization "Înfrățirea". The state

intervenes by rescuing abandoned enterprises. Since 1962, the industrial area on the western platform of the city has been developing at an overwhelming pace: the Sugar Factory, the "Alfa" Furniture Factory, "UAMT" Oradea, "Alumina" Oradea, "Sinteza" Oradea... This was finally made up of twelve units. The intensive development of the industry leads to an increase in the number of inhabitants and implicitly in the housing capacity. The first blocks appear. Thus compared to 1948, when the number of inhabitants of Oradea was approximately 87,000, there are data that claim that in 1989 - 229,823 inhabitants lived here (Borcea & Gorun, 1995). Rapid urbanization is taking place, a lot is being built. The first draft of the systematization of Oradea appears in 1960, then another in 1970, another in 1976, the latter targeting a city with 1,560,000 inhabitants and 2,787 hectares. The revolution of December 1989 brings great changes in political and economic terms. After the revolution, investments and activity cease, but various programs forgotten during the communist period are reactivated: churches, social-cultural buildings, individual housing and what concerns privatization. The industries disappear one by one, the western industrial platform of Oradea is abandoned. It invests in industrial parks.

The object of this study is several industrial objectives and their historical and urban route towards a sustainable development: "Emilia" Mill, "Rovex" area, "Adria" area, Sugar Factory, "Înfrățirea" Factory.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The authors extracted from the studied documents / references / interviews with witnesses data about the establishment of the industrial sites that are the subject of the study. At the same time, he visited the locations by carrying out photo surveys, used the personal archives of the interviewed witnesses as well as data from the digitized press or found in the archives. Regarding the site development projects, the authors collected data from the competent institutions: Oradea City Hall and the project approval commissions: Municipal Commission for Urban Planning and Spatial Development and Zonal Commission of Historical Monuments. Thus, data were obtained regarding the evolution over time of the five sites, contained in table no. 1:

In order to know the opinion of the society and extract information about the way of perception of the evolution of industrial sites by the inhabitants of the city of Oradea, the authors developed a set of questions focused on the notion of heritage and industrial site, focusing on several sites of interest.

A Google Forms type form was created and distributed online to the residents of the municipality of Oradea. In order to complete it, the respondents had access for one week to the web page from 23.02.2023. The data were processed with the help of two software, the one provided by Google (in the body of Google Forms) and the statistical data processing software SPSS 24.

The questions target not only the respondents' knowledge, but also an emotional component - how they relate to some landmarks of past times. The results are based on the response of 448 people from different backgrounds and age groups between 18 and 75 years, and their processing was done together with an expert in statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the context of the evolution of the industrial sites of the city of Oradea, the data collected for the five sites were processed: "Emilia" Mill, "Rovex" area, "Adria" area, Sugar Factory, "Înfrățirea" Factory, these being included in table no. 1.

Table 1

Attitudes over time towards former industrial premises (data processing by the author)

Industrial objective / site	Year of construction	Approach - year	Site currently 2023	Project stage
"Emilia" Mill	1884-1885 (Emödi, 2011)	<i>Tabula rasa</i> / Total demolition in 2014 Proposals in principle - residential complex / 2021-2022	Vacant land On hold 10 years ago	ATP* rejected by the commission ZCHM**, design in progress
"Adria" Distillery	1915 (Emödi, 2020)	Partial conversion and construction of new bodies, Masterplan – mixed assembly, consultation phase 2020	On hold	ATP phase consultation in the ZCHM and MCUPSD, design in progress
"Rovex" Factory	1870 (Pafka, 2019)	Partial conversion and construction of new bodies / PUD approved in 2021 for the restructuring of the former Rovex premises, Partial demolition in 2023	Site in progress	Site in progress
"Înfrățirea" Factory	1904 1949 (https://www.ebihoreanul.ro)	<i>Tabula rasa</i> / Totally demolished between 2017-2021, Area Town Planning approved in 2016 for building collective housing, Area Town Planning modifier approved in 2019	Partially residential area 1,500 apartments, Prima – Premium Decebal neighborhood, Ișia Nord, Ared, site in progress	Completion of construction works
Sugar Factory	1968 (https://www.ebihoreanul.ro)	<i>Tabula rasa</i> / Proposal for demolition in 2018, Total demolition between 2020-2021	Vacant land	Real estate development project - design in progress

*ATP - Area Town Planning

**ZCHM - Zonal Commission of Historical Monuments

***MCUPSD - Municipal Commission for Urban Planning and Spatial Development

As it follows from it, three of the studied sites had a "tabula rasa" treatment, so there is only the memory of the place. Figures 2 and 3 (results by modeling images from Google Earth) are given as examples:

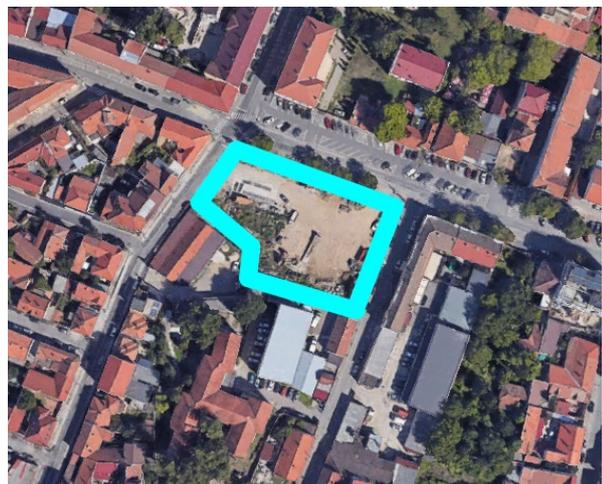


Figure 2. Interventions over time on the premises – "Emilia" Mill (Emódi, 2011)

Development projects are underway on two of the studied sites, in which their buildings are partially maintained, while the the General Urban Plan of the city of Oradea allows a wide variety of functions, especially in the sphere of housing, administrative functions, tourism,

cultural and educational functions on the plots of former industrial premises in the heart of the settlement. Figures 3 show the present location of "Rovex" and presents a development proposal, which is currently not approved.



Figure 3. Rovex existing and proposal (Planwerk, 2020)

Following the distributed questionnaire, it appears that a significant number of people did not address the subject of industrial heritage in educational institutions, during the years of study (figure 4). However, comparing the graphs - interpretation of the answers received to questions, aimed at the appreciation of the industrial heritage, it is found that the majority strongly agrees with valuing it. The questionnaire offers the possibility of expression regarding methods of approach to these premises and buildings, considered suitable. The majority appreciates that the industrial heritage should be reused (figure 5, table 2). If the respondent chose REUSE, they were asked to present what new functions they would propose for these constructions. The answers are presented in figure 6, in the order

of the most common nominations. Table 2 includes only the sites of the "Emilia" Mill, the "Adria" Distillery, the "Rovex" Factory and the Sugar Factory, the site of the "Infrățirea" factory being completely demolished and occupied with

a residential complex (residential blocks and shopping centers).

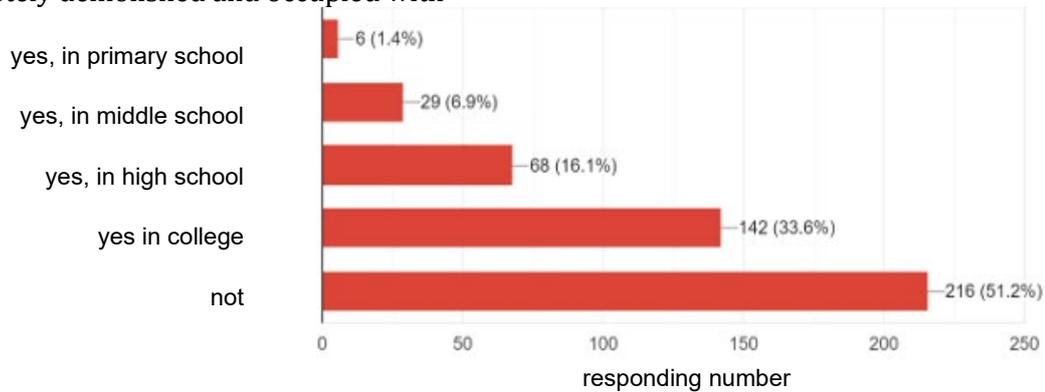


Figure 4. **Industrial heritage - subject of study in education** (data processing by the author), (Prada, 2022)

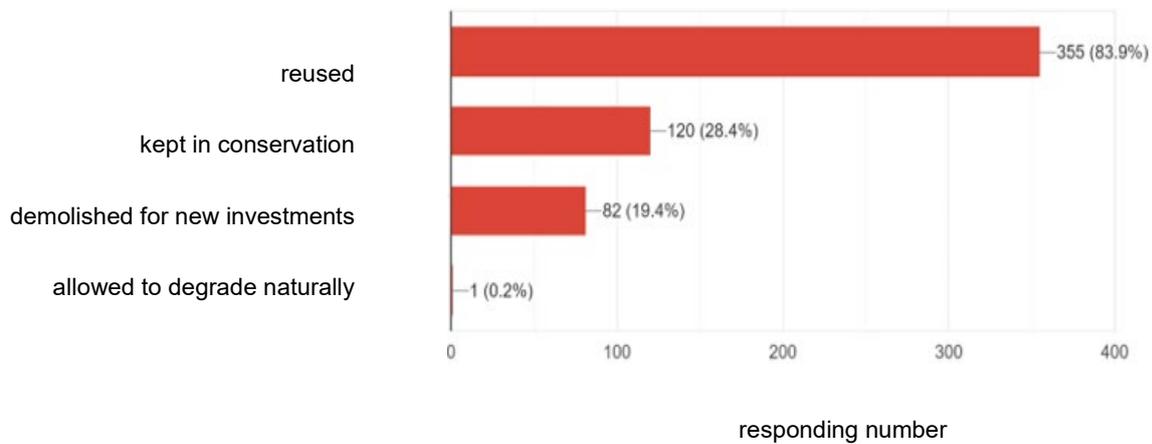


Figure 5. **Industrial heritage - subject of study in education** (data processing by the author) (Prada, 2022)

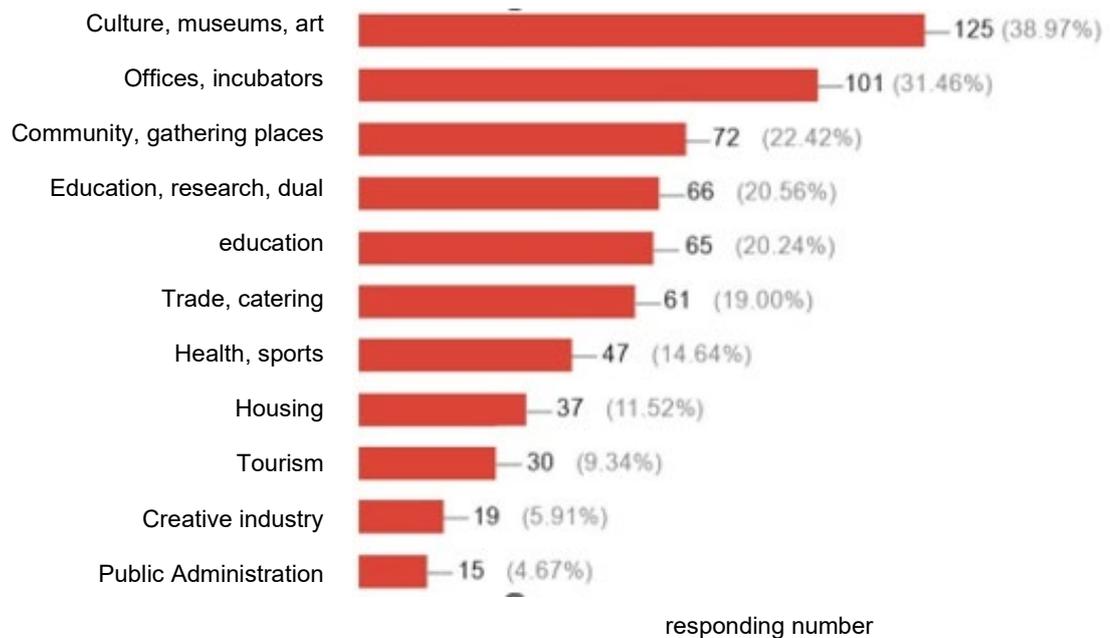
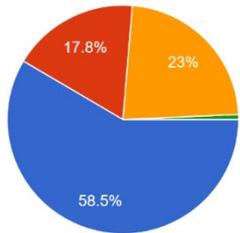
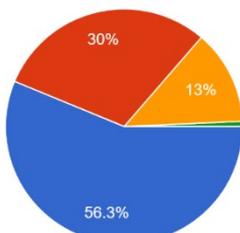
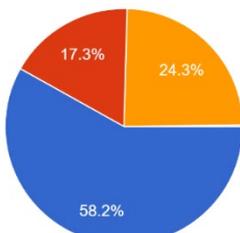
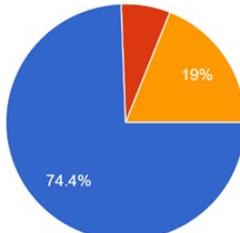


Figure 6. **Functions proposed for the conversion of former industrial buildings in Oradea** (data processing by the author) (Prada, 2022)

Table 2

Opinions of the population regarding the image of former industrial sites in Oradea (Prada, 2022)

Pictures of former industrial buildings (some disappeared)	Opinions of the population for the industrial site ...
	<p data-bbox="954 271 1305 300">"Emilia" Mill - site (Emödi, 2011)</p>  <ul data-bbox="1118 353 1428 533" style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reuse ● Conservation ● Demolition to make way for new investments ● Left to decay naturally
	<p data-bbox="979 600 1279 629">"Adria" – site (Emödi, 2020)</p>  <ul data-bbox="1118 705 1428 884" style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reuse ● Conservation ● Demolition to make way for new investments ● Left to decay naturally
	<p data-bbox="1054 967 1201 996">"Rovex" - site</p>  <ul data-bbox="1118 1059 1428 1238" style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reuse ● Conservation ● Demolition to make way for new investments ● Left to decay naturally
	<p data-bbox="863 1317 1398 1346">" Sugar Factory" – site https://www.ebihoreanul.ro</p>  <ul data-bbox="1118 1431 1428 1610" style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reuse ● Conservation ● Demolition to make way for new investments ● Left to decay naturally

Another important result of the questionnaire is that most of the respondents would work near such a building/industrial site or even live nearby. One of the most valuable results of the questionnaire: asked if this questionnaire had awakened their interest in the subject, 52.8% answered positively, and 35.8% understood better what industrial heritage means. The industrial heritage is a material tool that helps people to remember their past (Prada, 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen that each project outlines a separate identity, supported and ultimately promoted by communities, private investors and the municipality.

In the case of the "Emilia" mill, 75% of the people who answered the questionnaire did not know that it was demolished 10 years ago.

The questionnaire can become a tool and a method of learning and education.

Most respondents understand the value of buildings in terms of the potential they offer – potential for reuse.

There are 3 groups of functions that the inhabitants of Oradea would consider necessary and suitable for these types of structures and premises (most of them located in the heart of the city): cultural functions, offices and social functions - gathering places.

These considerations can be the basis of the decisions of the project approval commissions and of the authorities in the elaboration of the sustainable development strategy of the respective city for intervention on the former industrial sites. At the same time, they can be a starting point in the decision-making management of real estate developers.

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