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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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Keywords: Industrial Architecture; industrial heritage; culture; special interest tourism; alternative forms of tourism; Architectural Education; Interior Architecture.

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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

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