

Recognition of industrial landscapes as sites of tourism: an achievement for the heritagization of the industry?

Simon Edelblutte

Professor of Geography
University of Lorraine
simon.edelblutte@univ-lorraine.fr

Abstract

This paper questions about the links between industrial landscape, heritage and tourism. First part recalls what are industrial landscapes (which are not only factories). Second part deals with the enlargement of the heritagization process of industry to the scale of landscape. It questions too about the touristic potential of this heritagization of industry at the scale of the landscape, based on several Europeans examples of touristic or semi-touristic realizations combining heritage and territorial regeneration.

Keywords: *Industrial Landscape, Industrial Heritage, Factory Town, Territorial Re-development, Sustainable Development, Tourism*

Introduction and methodology

Historically, “industrial” and “landscape” are two words that were seemingly disconnected from each other. The notion of landscape, initially restricted to the idea of the picturesque, evolved to become a broader object of study during the 19th and early 20th century, although mainly around rural and traditional landscapes. This evolution can be explained as a nostalgic reaction to the Industrial Revolutions changing traditional landscapes. While industrial landscapes were certainly and quite early studied (Hoskins, 1955; Pitte, 1983), their place is still minor in the reference books. It is only at the end of the 20th century, that industrial landscapes are fully accepted as cultural landscapes or, better (as defined by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO), as “organically evolved landscapes”. This delay of the recognition of the industrial landscapes as objects of studies didn’t favored the development of the notion of industrial heritage, even if this heritage is known and sometimes protected since the 1960’s in the United Kingdom (UK) for example (Falconer, 2006).

The notion of heritage is historically linked with the development of tourism in Western societies since the 19th century. Sites of civil, religious or military heritage are clearly

linked with touristic activities and are very attractive to tourists. It is not the case for industrial heritage, and especially for industrial landscapes, due to their poor image. As “industry” and “landscape” were seemingly disconnected, “industrial landscape” and “tourism” long seemed far more disconnected. The reason is that a site of tourism must match to a positive representation in the people’s mind. It has to be attractive, needs to appear as “beautiful” or “dynamic”. But these representations are very subjective, varying according to culture, feelings, social habits of groups of people (Hugonie, 2006). And in the field of representations, industry has still a prevailing negative image. To fight against this image problem, it would be advisable to exceed the “touristification” of a single industrial site with the “touristification” of the industrial landscape as a whole and then to reach the question of a broader and sustainable territorial regeneration or, better, a territorial re-development. So the purpose of this paper is to show than a way to conciliate tourism attractiveness and regeneration / re-development in former industrial territory can go through a landscape approach, because of several reasons:

- The first reason is that the landscape approach allows to study the various elements of industrial heritage as a system, a set of interactive elements directly or indirectly related to industrial production. This includes productive elements as non-productive elements of the system.
- The second reason is that most of those elements of the industrial past are still visible in the landscape even years after the failure of the system, when the system no longer works. In this approach, the landscape is seen as a palimpsest, like these old medieval manuscripts where, under the most recent writings, it’s possible to find what was written before. As F. Béguin wrote in 1995 *“[landscape is] a kind of memory which registers and adds up history of successive human activities on the Earth”* (p. 50). Even if the factory is closed and finally destroyed, the former workers’ houses are still here, the former workers’ gardens, the former crèche, school, shops are still visible in the current landscape.
- The third reason that landscape approach quickly allows to distinguish different models in former industrial landscape (planned or unplanned factory-towns, industrial districts in a classical town, industrial valleys, industrial basins, etc.).

Through the case-study of many examples built upon qualitative analysis of aerial and ground pictures of industrial landscapes especially in Europe, this research aims to show the importance of landscapes in the heritagization and “touristification” of industry. First part recalls what are industrial landscapes, now a mix of ancient and mainly well-known elements (factories, workers’ housing, various infrastructures, etc.) and modern buildings in industrial estates often ignored as elements of industrial landscapes. Second part deals with the very progressive heritagization and “touristification” of the industry. The focus will be on the enlargement of the industrial heritage notion, from a single building to whole

landscapes, to reach a kind of consecration, the UNESCO world heritage list. This part deals too with questions about the touristic potential of this heritagization of industry at the scale of the landscape, based on several European examples of touristic or semi-touristic realizations combining heritage and territorial regeneration.

What is an industrial landscape?

Industrial landscapes are not only factories. It's a combination of many elements, directly or indirectly related to the production process. It's a visual transcription of an economic, productive and spatial system on a territory devoted to industry. Around the factory itself, with all its diversity (tubular factory, north-face roof factory, red brick factory, functionalist sheds, etc.), the archetypal industrial landscape includes (fig. 1):

- Productive elements, i.e. all the buildings and facilities directly build for the production: settling ponds, chimneys, offices and headquarters, water supply channel, railway junctions, etc.
- Non-productive elements, not directly linked to the process of production: workers' housing, shops, social center, social building, gardens, schools, farms, cinemas, stadiums, all these buildings and facilities that paternalistic industrialists build around their factories.



Figure 1: productive and non-productive elements of an archetypal industrial landscape in Laneuveville-devant-Nancy, France

All these elements are constitutive of industrial landscapes, which are mainly urban, even if it exists some isolated and scattered factories or industrial-rural landscapes. Industrial landscapes then could be classified in 2 categories, of unequal size:

- Industrial-urban landscapes are the most prevalent, with two sub-categories:
 - The factory towns, wholly created around one or several factories by the industrialists during paternalistic times. The urban tissue is mainly a mix of factories and workers' housing, including social facilities. The landscape of the factory towns evolves between planned and unplanned poles (Del Biondo & Edelblutte, 2016). First are the heavy paternalistic towns quickly built, especially during the peak of Industrial Revolution, serving a large factory. The model-towns of Bournville around the chocolate factory of Cadbury in the UK, Saltaire in the UK and Crespi d'Adda in Italy around textile mills, the Batavilles (fig. 2) around Bata shoes factories in Czech Republic, Slovakia, France, the UK, etc. are good examples of these planned factory towns, as well as the factory towns of former communist world and era.

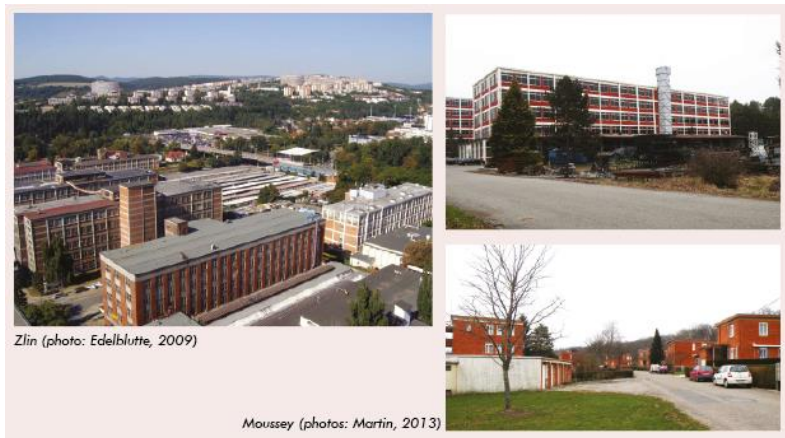


Figure 2: The landscape of planned factory-towns: the Batavilles of Zlín (Czech Republic) and Moussey (France)

Their organization is very consistent and their landscape is very orderly but, over time and with the development of new factories and new activities in the town, they generally evolve to the second pole. Conversely, the unplanned factory towns (second pole) are generally very old, with proto-industrial origins, and slowly built. The landscape of this kind of factory town is a “tangled landscape”, showing this interweaving between the urban frame and the industrial elements (factories,

workers' housing, etc.). The urban tissue is particularly inconsistent, chaotic without a clear city center.

- Second type of industrial-urban landscape is a classical city, with its pre-industrial core sided by an industrial district, generally without workers' housing because there are already housing facilities in the town. In these districts, the industrial landscape is generally too a "tangle landscape", a few consistent mix of factories, various sheds, railways sidings and canals, various housing, retail stores, etc. The differences with the unplanned factory town are that the "tangle landscape" is newer and that it affects only a district of a larger city, with a pre-industrial core, not the whole town. This landscape is now inherited because the factories generally moved, during the postwar economic boom, to the suburban industrial estates, building a new landscape comprised of functionalist sheds.

At a larger scale, these urban forms tend to build industrial basin (grape form) or industrial valleys (linear form).

- Industrial-rural landscapes concern generally small or medium industries, scattered in a rural environment. These industries mainly have proto-industrial origins and they work on similar productions in a competitive environment, on the model of Marshallian district. If they didn't turn to heavy paternalistic industries at the end of the 19th century, they present, sometimes until today, a mixed landscape of complementary agricultural and industrial activities. In this landscape, industrial mark is more discreet, less apparent than in industrial-urban landscapes. With their diversification and their modernization, this kind of territories could evolve to clusters.

Since the times of proto-industry, industrial cycles have succeeded, with phases of crises and development. Some industrial sites have been modernized, adding successive buildings and infrastructures to the original factory; some other sites have been closed down to industrial wastelands while new factories have been built in industrial estates; some others have evolved to a mix of active buildings and wastelands, etc. In a broader perspective, factory towns have lost their industrial heart and have become shrinking cities (Fol & Cunningham-Sabot, 2010) while new suburban estates have substituted old industrial district now in regeneration.

In the shape of globalization and standardization, while deindustrialization is very strong in old industrial countries, the same kind of building (functionalist sheds) is now used for industrial activities as well for all other activities (services, trade, logistics, etc.) all together in suburban industrial estates. This causes a trivialization of industrial landscapes, more and more diluted in banal suburban landscapes. In this process, industrial landscapes are becoming a kind of a mix of many and diverse old buildings and infrastructure more or less

regenerated and more rare new elements included in suburban and periurbans estates. For this reason, the way to heritagization (and much more “touristification”) for industrial landscapes has been – and is still – difficult.

Heritagization and “touristification” of the industrial landscape: a recent process

Even if industry was celebrated at the end of the 19th century as the symbol of modernity, heritage is a notion that did not fit immediately with it, even after the first massive closures. While the religious, military or civil heritages are very early developed, it isn’t the case for the remains of industry, for several reasons:

- First is the lack of interest for an activity considered, during the crises of Fordism at the end of the 20th century, as typical of a declining world.
- Second is the pollution, and more generally the disturbances, linked to the industrial activity.
- Third is the phase of mourning (Grossetti *et al*, 1998) when, after the closure of the factory and its social consequences, the population and the political authorities (local, regional and national) want to erase the remains of what is then considered as a strong failure.
- Last is, especially in Europe, the wide offer of other kind of heritages sites, which are competing the former industrial sites.

All these reasons have delayed the recognition of the industrial heritage even in the most and the older industrial countries and territories (i.e. Northwestern Europe). Despite these delays, some countries such the UK, Belgium or Germany, particularly concerned with the industrial history and where the image of industry was linked to an economic power at its peak, were forerunners in the movement of industrial heritage protection. In the UK, where the first Industrial Revolution was born right from the 18th century, first actions took place around local associations of enthusiasts during the interwar period (Falconer, 2006; Edelblutte, 2009). They were affected by the obsolescence and the closure of industrial sites from the first Industrial Revolution, impacted by economic modernization at the beginning of the 20th century.

While strongly developed from the 1960’s in the UK, the movement began to concern the other European countries (Preite, 2014): from Belgium and Germany in the 1960’s / 1970’s to Nordic countries, then to Latin countries, especially in their old industrial regions (Catalonia, Basque Country in Spain; Lombardy and Piedmont in Italy) during the 1980s. In France, the reference book of M. Daumas, published in 1980, “*L’archéologie industrielle en France*”, symbolically marks the beginning of the interest for industrial heritage. Since the end of the communism in Eastern Europe, the themes of industrial

heritage are developed, especially in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania (Pașcu, 2015) and, but to a lesser extent, in Russia and post-soviet countries.

Outside Europe, associations had been very active in USA and Canada for the conservation of industrial heritage since the 1960's (Douet, 2012), while the movement has occurred in South America and in Asia (especially Japan) since the 1990's, and more recently in North Africa and the Middle-East as showed by communications during the last TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage) congress in Lille, France (2015). This worldwide enlargement goes along with other kinds of enlargements.

The first heritage protections are mainly developed with small museums placed in the old factories (fig. 3) or mines, to conserve, even restore, the memories of the glorious industrial and mining past and to develop attractiveness with cultural tourism. These actions take place after the mourning phase during which the destructions was indeed felt by the population as a second trauma after the closure of the factories.



Figure 3: The small textile museum of Ventron, France

Theses museums protect indeed the former industrial building with the memory of the times of industry, but they only are selected elements of the former industrial-paternalist system. They are not or incompletely connected to the rest of the former system and they are isolated elements not forming a landscape. Moreover, they are not profitable, mostly when the former workers or miners and their families passed away. They mainly survive with public subsidies and scholars visits. These shortcomings gradually pushed to enlarge the notion of industrial heritage, from a single building (a former factory) to other productive elements and non-productive elements as listed above. So if the initial conservation of industrial heritage concerned small and disparate elements, such as the old machines, or better, a former factory, the enlargement is typological (from the machines to the landscapes), chronological (from the ruins of the 1st industrial revolution to the futuristic

sheds of today), spatial (from a single building to a large territory), and in terms of reuse (from museums to lofts or shops). In doing so, industrial heritage is leaving the single perspective of touristic development that was at the heart of its conservation in the early times. The development opportunities of this heritage are now far much wider, while industrial heritage is now fully recognize at a high level.

Delays and enlargement are also apparent in the classification of industrial sites as world heritage by UNESCO. If UNESCO listed a first mining site (Wieliczka and Bochnia Royal Salt Mines in Poland) as early as 1978 in the first group of listed sites, this was an exception and industrial and mining sites were very rare on the world heritage list before the 21st century. Moreover, these first listed industrial sites were mainly single factories¹ or mines and it is only at the very end of the 20th century or at the beginning of the 21st century that several industrial landscapes² are listed by UNESCO, which is clearly an asset for a touristic development. It indeed gives a worldwide visibility to this protected and recognized landscape.

But only the most exceptional sites and landscapes can be listed by UNESCO and, furthermore, the classification is still balancing between sites (Van Nellefabriek in The Netherland in 2014) and landscapes (Fray Bentos Industrial Landscape in Uruguay in 2015). Then many industrial landscapes, inherited or active, can't pretend to be listed by UNESCO. So without this label, the valorization of this heritage can only go through "touristification". Tourism can certainly be a part of the valorization, but not the only solution for a territorial re-development or regeneration. Several ways can be used:

- First way, industrial heritage could be integrated in still active factories, with the organization of plant tours to visit of the production process. This is the case in the Cadbury chocolate factory in Bourneville (UK). The success of the plant tours even led the company to build a thematic park in 1990 just near the factory with reusing some old industrial buildings³. But, to concern the landscape, the main attraction has to be linked with the former non-productive elements of the industrial system, i.e. the factory town of Bourneville.

¹ The Ironbridge Gorge Park (UK), listed in 1986, is a noteworthy exception as it's a network of industrial museums and monuments, not only a single industrial site. So it reached the scale of the landscape very early and it announced futures enlargement of the notion of industrial heritage (see below).

² For example : Factory Town of Crespi d'Adda (Italy) in 1995; Mining Area of the Great Copper Mountain in Falun (Sweden) in 2001; Blaenavon Industrial Landscape in 2000 and Derwent Valley Mills in 2001 (UK); Nord-Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin (France) in 2012; Major Mining Sites of Wallonia (Belgium) in 2012; etc.

³ This site is the first paid tourist attraction in West Midlands in 2013 with 668,000 visitors (www.visitbritain.org).

- Second way, the elements of industrial landscapes can be embedded in a wider urban or rural regeneration process. The former industrial buildings (productive or not) can be reused for housing, commercial activities, leisure activities or environmental reuses... or maybe all at once. In these cases (fig. 4), tourism is not central in the process, but the tourist use can be present.

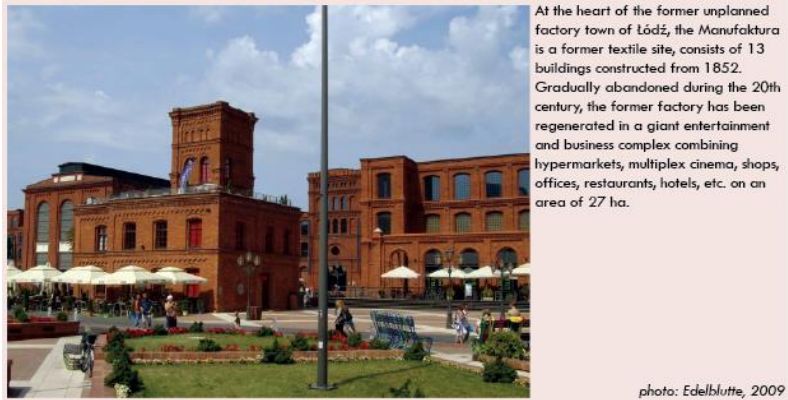


Figure 4: The Manufaktura of Łódź, Poland

- Third way is the realization of networks of former industrial elements or sites to promote this heritage at different scales. At the scale of the former factory, the setting up of walking or cycling paths linking former industrial elements (productive and non-productive), coupled with information boards, is a way to open a single site to its environment and can be a way to attract some tourists. At the scale of a former industrial valley or basin, the networking of industrial museums, parks or monuments can create an emulation to become touristically very attractive. Created in 1967, the Ironbridge Gorge Park (UK) has been designed as a network of relatively small museums. It has become successful with 545,000 visitors a year in 2015, 160 full-time equivalent jobs (and many hundreds indirectly) and is the 12th most visited World Heritage Site in the UK (www.shropshirestar.com, 2016). Its classifying as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986 validates and promotes this choice of re-development through heritagization and tourism. Furthermore, the networking can be set up at a regional (*Route der Industriekultur* in Ruhr in Germany), a national and even an international scale. The European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH), derived from the German *Route der Industriekultur*, is an organization which identifies, inventories and connects various elements, sites and landscapes, active or not, of the European industrial heritage. In 2016, 45 European countries are concerned and 1.315 sites are listed (www.erih.net) and it's another example of a successful

strategy to improve the tourist attractiveness of industrial heritage sites and landscapes.

Summary

The answer to the question in title is necessarily nuanced. On one side, when industrial landscapes are recognized and listed at a high level as a heritage, they really become touristically attractive. So this can be considered as an achievement of the process of heritagization of the industry. On the other side, this successful evolution can concern only a few part of industrial landscapes, even if the year 2015 was especially good for industrial heritage with 6 new properties (mainly landscapes) listed by UNESCO. This way is only one among many others, as this paper tried to show. The fact remains that the scale of landscapes is very important in the view of a sustainable re-development of postindustrial territories such shrinking former factory-towns, or former industrial valleys or basins. Indeed, during the last decades of the 20th centuries, too many deceptions (ephemeral museum, empty leisure parks, empty shops...) were born with the now long list of old industrial sites, regenerated site by site without coherence between them and without consideration of indirect elements of the industrial heritage. So the importance of a paradigm shift on these questions of industrial regeneration and heritage is now admitted (if not practiced everywhere), especially in Northwestern Europe, where industrial culture is very old and where industrial tourism is the most practiced.

Literature

- [1] Béguin, F. 1995. *Le paysage*. Paris: Flammarion.
- [2] CILAC & TICCIH. 2015. *Résumés – Abstracts. Le patrimoine industriel au XIX^{ème} siècle. Nouveaux défis*. Book of abstracts of the XVIth Congress TICCIH Lille Region. September, 6-11 2015.
- [3] Daumas, M. 1980. *L'archéologie industrielle en France*. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- [4] Del Biondo, L & Edelblutte, S. 2016 (publication confirmed for September). Le paysage des anciennes villes-usines européennes : un nouveau patrimoine entre négation, alibi, reconnaissance et complexité des jeux d'acteurs. *Annales de Géographie*. 710.
- [5] Douet, J. (ed). 2012. *Industrial heritage re-tooled: the TICCIH guide to industrial heritage conservation*. Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing.
- [6] Edelblutte, S. 2009. Paysages et territoires du patrimoine industriel au Royaume-Uni. *Revue Géographique de l'Est*. 48(1-2), <http://rge.revues.org/index1165.html> (Downloaded: 23. March 2016)

- [7] European Route of Industrial heritage, www.erih.net/fr/bienvenue.html (Downloaded: 22. April 2016)
- [8] Falconer, K. 2006. The industrial heritage in Britain; the first fifty years. *La revue pour l'histoire du CNRS*. 14: 11, <http://histoire-cnrs.revues.org/document1778.html> (Downloaded: 4. April 2016)
- [9] Fol, S. & Cunningham-Sabot, É. 2010. « Déclin urbain » et Shrinking Cities : une évaluation critique des approches de la décroissance urbaine. *Annales de Géographie*. 674: 359-383.
- [10] Grossetti, M. & Beslay, Ch. & Daynac, M. & Guillaume, R. & Salles, D. & Tautelle, F. 1998, *La construction des politiques locales. Reversions industrielles et systèmes locaux d'action publique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- [11] Hoskins, W.G. 1955. *The making of the English landscape*. Leicester: Hodder and Stoughton.
- [12] Hugonic, G. 2006. Site. *Hypergé*. <http://www.hypergeo.eu/spip.php?article366> (Downloaded: 15. April 2016)
- [13] Observatoire lorrain du tourisme, www.observatoire-lorraine.fr/publications/frequentation-des-principaux-sites-touristiques-en-lorraine-2012 (Downloaded: 27. April 2016)
- [14] Pașcu, G. (2015), *Le patrimoine industriel et minier facteur de développement territorial. Complexité et enjeux en Roumanie, en comparaison avec la France et la Grande-Bretagne*. Timișoara: Universitatea Politehnica Timișoara.
- [15] Pitte, J.-R. 1983 (reissue 2001). *Histoire du paysage français*. Paris: Tallandier.
- [16] Preite, M. (ed). 2014. *Towards a European heritage of industry*. Arcidosso: Edizioni Effigi.
- [17] Shropshire Star, www.shropshirestar.com/entertainment/2016/04/01/ironbridge-gorge-in-top-20-of-uks-most-visited-world-heritage-sites (Downloaded: 19. April 2016)
- [18] VisitBritain & VisitEngland, www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/England-documents/most_visited_20_paid_west_midlands_2013_v2.pdf (Downloaded: 19. April 2016)