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**INTERPRETATION AND UTILIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE
VALUES: VANADZOR CITY, ARMENIA**

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management

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INTERPRETATION AND UTILIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE VALUES: VANADZOR CITY, ARMENIA

by

Lilit Manukyan

(Armenia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University Private University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research,
Policy, Management.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

Chair, Examination Committee

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I, the undersigned, **Lilit Manukyan**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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ABSTRACT

Vanadzor is one of the many urban communities in Armenia experiencing deindustrialization since the early 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The following thirty years were a period of social and economic decline turning the once active factory buildings scattered throughout the urban landscape. The local government has presented its vision on the future of the city in urban development documents, but they do not have any strategic approach towards the vacant and redundant industrial places. So far, no research has been done to explore how the locals perceive these material remains of the industrial past in terms of urban heritage and their role in the present city. The aim of this research is to explore the values and meanings the locals attribute to former industrial sites and buildings, and to map their visions and suggestions on how to utilize the industrial remains for community needs.

The research is based on interpretive methodology and uses qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews and an online survey were conducted with community members representing voices of former workers, the younger generation, municipality officials, tourism stakeholders, architects, and urban planners. History books, social media content as well as policy documents were also analyzed to reveal various values attributed to and approaches towards the industrial heritage of Vanadzor.

The study found out that former industrial buildings and sites evoking memories of the industrial past are evaluated by locals in terms of their urban and personal biographies, communal and professional identities. Many ideas and practices of current and potential, future re-use of the buildings were identified.

Based on the locals' values and visions and the experience of how similar sites have been re-used outside Armenia, the thesis concludes with a set of suggestions on how to include the concept of industrial heritage into the urban development plans in Vanadzor and how to

establish a multi-stakeholder collaboration to re-use the assets of industrial heritage for current community needs.

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INTRODUCTION

When passing by or walking along the streets of the third largest city of Armenia, Vanadzor, the first things that catch a visitor's eye are the abandoned factory buildings and the material remnants of the former industrial complexes in the urban landscape. Vanadzor became an urban settlement mainly due to the industrial activities in the first half of the twentieth century, attracting thousands of people from the neighboring settlements. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, most of the industries of the city also collapsed. However, their material remains as well as the local community with their memories of the industrial past did not disappear.

While this city shares the experience of deindustrialization with many other communities around the world, it is different in terms of how and whether the industrial past with its physical remains is perceived as a part of cultural heritage. Since the mid-twentieth century many industrial regions from Europe to Australia, from Japan to the United States have experienced deindustrialization resulting in serious economic and social problems for communities whose historical formation and development had been based on industrial activities. The consecutive decades were a period of realization that the industrial past and its material remains are part of the heritage of humankind, which is worth interpreting, preserving, and using as a resource to build a new, post-industrial future.

About thirty years have passed since the deindustrialization of Vanadzor; however, the material remains in the urban landscape are still left abandoned without any association with the perspectives of cultural heritage studies. The official understanding of heritage in Armenia is mainly confined to pre-industrial buildings and cultural practices. Whether it is a monastery, administrative building, or traditional craft, all of them are recognized as heritage expressing national identity. Even in Vanadzor, which became a modern urban settlement due to the industrialization, pre-industrial monuments make-up the majority in its present-day heritage

list. Though some buildings of late Socialist modernism are listed, no former industrial building is recognized as heritage in this form. Neither has been any research done so far, among the community to identify the intangible aspects of industrial heritage.

Research Aims and Questions

This thesis addresses the above-mentioned gap by 1) mapping the values and meanings locals attribute to the former industrial sites and buildings in terms of heritage, 2) exploring the ideas and practices of the residents connected to the former industrial buildings and sites, 3) based on the research results and informed by the inspirational cases from outside Armenia, giving suggestions on how to recognize the notion of industrial heritage and make use of these assets for the current and future socio-economic needs of the community.

Thus the questions this research seeks to answer are the following:

1. What meanings and values do locals attribute to the industrial legacy?
2. How can memories of the industrial past and its material remains be utilized to address current socio-economic issues in the town?
3. What role can industrial heritage play in the future of Vanadzor?

Relevance

During the last decade, discourse and policy on industrial heritage in the academia and at the level of national and international organizations have focused on the ways local communities engage in heritage interpretation, and its use to address for their socio-economic needs. Conferences on large-scale platforms such as those of “The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage” inform on the current dominant approach to industrial heritage: a resource for the present and future needs of communities, the carriers of that legacy.

The policy and funding frameworks of the European Union and other international organizations encourage communities to identify and harness their heritage values for their future sustainable development. Many regions around the world have found that the tangible and intangible assets left behind by their former industrial activities are a useful resource to be integrated into the urban development plans.

While in the recent decades the concept and definition of industrial heritage, its management and practices of its re-use have actively been debated and reconsidered worldwide, in Armenia the discourse on industrial heritage and its possible benefits for present-day communities is almost absent in the academic, governmental, and public sphere.

Thus, by this research I wish to contribute to an alternative conceptualization of heritage, and to raising awareness about the redundant former industrial sites and the meanings locals attribute to them. I intend to demonstrate that these are heritage worth considering and making use of when addressing various aspects of urban problems. The outcome of the thesis will therefore be a mixed genre that includes an academic interpretation of industrial heritage as well as a set of recommendations to the local municipality, grass-root initiatives, local civic activists, and other stakeholders. Both parts of the thesis will be based on a bottom-up approach, i.e., informed by the ideas of community members. Local ideas will be put in dialogue with inspirational examples from some European countries where the significance of industrial heritage has been recognized, and there are good practices of valorizing this heritage.

Methodology

The methodology of the project will follow the four steps of investigate - interpret -suggest - practice. The core of the research is the qualitative analysis of twenty in-depth interviews conducted with community members representing voices of various segments; former workers, the younger generation, municipality officials, stakeholders in tourism, architects,

and urban planners. Urban development plans, touristic websites, journalistic articles have also been explored to reveal various values and approaches toward industrial heritage. Visual materials - documentary films, photographs created and circulated by community members on social media - are also considered as sources of data which highlight heritage values. A survey was also conducted with mainly open-ended questions that the participants (130-158 community members) have filled in online. This was analyzed with quantitative methods. The survey does not claim to be representative for the whole city considering the factors of research space, sampling, and the number of participants, however the open-ended questions generated quite diverse opinions and suggestions. Moreover, the survey answers multiplied the various perceptions and evaluations expressed by individual interviewees.

The Structure of the Thesis

In the first chapter, I will present how the notion of industrial heritage has evolved since the second half of the twentieth century in the scholarly discourse and at the level of international heritage organizations and their policies. The second chapter offers contextual information about how (de)industrialization and the related processes shaped the heritage of urban Vanadzor. The history of the industries and the associated communities in the city provides a background to understand the relevance of discussing the notion of industrial heritage for this case. The second part of the second chapter will present the municipal approach to former industrial sites and buildings as well as the emergence of this concept in academic and NGO circles in Armenia, particularly in Vanadzor. These approaches will be situated within the dominant heritage discourse in Armenia to understand why there is no active discourse on industrial heritage in the city. The third chapter is about how the local inhabitants perceive the former industrial sites and buildings. It will explore how people feel about, evaluate, and make meaning of the industrial legacy. Various local visions and initiatives about what to do

with former industrial sites and buildings will be presented to demonstrate the many ways the various stakeholders imagine these material remains of the industries serving the urban needs. The fourth chapter will offer a set of recommendations to the municipality, policy makers on how to incorporate the concept of industrial heritage in urban development plans. I will make suggestions how partnerships could be established among various stakeholders interested in the re-use of industrial heritage: urban planners, municipal decision-makers, factory owners, tourism agencies, and community members who need a space for their social and cultural activities. As a result of these partnerships, any former factory building can be adapted and re-used to address the social and economic issues the community is facing.

CHAPTER ONE - THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE DISCOURSE

1.1 The First Steps in Recognizing, Defining, and Studying Industrial Heritage

The concept of industrial heritage has been constantly challenged and expanded since the second half of the twentieth century. The discourse on industrial heritage emerged first in the UK, which is not surprising considering the significant industrialization processes there since the eighteenth century. The material remains of the industrial past attracted especially the archaeologist's attention already in the 1950s. Arguing that some of the remaining structures of the industrial era are evidence of important historical events as well as are aesthetically pleasing, they advocated for their recognition and protection as historical monuments in the same way as the monuments of the Middle Ages or Prehistory were preserved. In 1973, an international assembly convened in England was already concerned with the conservation of industrial monuments.¹

In France, the criteria of selecting and protecting industrial buildings and sites as heritage were outlined in 1994. These were a) the historical criterion - industrial sites associated with a particular historical or technical event and being influential for industrial and social development, b) the criterion of noteworthiness - buildings exceptional for their architectural design, their engineering, or the prominent individuals related to the site, c) the technological criterion - a distinctive technological innovation or industrial process which took place there.² Many industrial buildings and sites were included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage List based on the above criteria as well

¹ Barrie Trinder, "Industrial Archaeology: a discipline?", in James Douet (ed), *Industrial Heritage Re-tooled: The TIICH guide to Industrial Heritage Conservation* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2012), 24.

² Paul Smith, "Choosing what to preserve", in James Douet (ed), *Industrial Heritage Re-tooled*, 92.

as the ones defined later. For example, The Ironbridge Gorge in the UK (1986), the Mining Area of the Great Copper Mountain in Falun in Sweden (1985), Nord-Pas de Calais Mining Basin in France (2012), etc., were among the industrial sites and buildings listed at the level of UNESCO World Heritage.³

Since 1999, The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) became the world organization to promote international cooperation in investigating, documenting, preserving, conserving, interpreting, and advancing education on industrial heritage. In 2002, the organization adopted the Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage which provided the following definition:

Industrial Heritage consists of the remains of industrial culture which are of historical, technological, social, architectural, or scientific value. These remains consist of buildings and machinery, workshops, mills and factories, mines and sites for processing and refining, warehouses and stores, places where energy is generated, transmitted, and used, transport and all its infrastructure, as well as places used for social activities related to industry such as housing, religious worship, or education.⁴

This definition relies on expert knowledge: archaeologists, landscape architects, historians, and other specialists examine the material objects and landscapes before defining them as heritage. In this definition, heritage is seen as something which should be identified and examined with scholarly methods. Heritage values are identified by studying the material objects and their history. For example, industrial archaeologists would research former industrial landscapes, buildings, machinery through excavations, surveys, recordings, and archaeological analysis methods. Thus, in the early stage of industrial heritage studies, the main goal of scholars was to record, document and preserve. In 2011, a new framework document was accepted which supported the same approach. It was signed between TICCIH and the International Council for

³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Heritage List, Industrial heritage, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/?search=industrial+heritage&order=country>

⁴ The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH), The Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage/ July, 2003, accessed January 5, 2021, <https://ticcih.org/about/charter/>

Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and entitled “Joint Principles for Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas, and Landscapes” (Dublin Charter).⁵

A year later, TICCIH made another declaration, “The Taipei Declaration for Asian Industrial Heritage” which expanded the definition of industrial heritage.⁶ The novelty in the declaration was that it recognized the differences between the West and Asia in terms of their industrial development. It also put more emphasis on the intangible values of industrial heritage than the previous documents. The involvement of the locals and the role of industries in local identities were stressed:

We recognize that industrial heritage in Asia, witnessing the process of modernization, contributes to the identity of regions and countries, and forms an integral part of history. Furthermore, the achievement of industrialization in Asia is always achieved with the help of hard-working local people. Industrial heritage is closely associated with the life history, memories, and stories of local people and social changes. (TICCIH, 2012, p. 5)

The first fifty years of discourse on industrial heritage was mainly preoccupied with the history and archaeology of technology, and it primarily focused on material objects. Since the early 2000s, with the changes in the overall heritage discourse, the industrial heritage discourse also broadened talking intangible aspects too.

1.2 Industrial Heritage in the Context of Critical Heritage Studies and Labor History

The notion of industrial heritage was expanded incorporating new values when in heritage studies a shift was made in the focus from expert knowledge to the knowledge of laypeople. The interpretation of ordinary people about what makes their heritage and why became a focus of scholars’ attention who adopted anthropological and sociological methods to engage with

⁵ Joint ICOMOS – TICCIH Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes (The Dublin Principles), adopted by the 17th ICOMOS General Assembly on 28 November 2011, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://ticcih.org/about/about-ticcih/dublin-principles/>

⁶TICCIH, Taipei Declaration for Asian Industrial Heritage, accessed May 3,2021, <https://ticcih.org/about/charter/taipei-declaration-for-asian-industrial-heritage/>

community members. This was a process within a critical turn in heritage studies that began in the early 2000s and became a distinct direction in the field.⁷ This critical approach to heritage studies questioned the idea that heritage is something that can be discovered and analyzed by scientific methods, thus, questioning the assumption that it is something true or objective. Instead, scholars in critical heritage studies argue that the concept of heritage is created and interpreted in a discourse, firstly as a mental construct by certain actors, which then is expressed in material realities. Therefore, the definition of heritage can vary depending on who defines heritage, whose past is represented, and for what purposes.

One of the most influential scholars in this field, Laurajane Smith, distinguishes two types of discourse in the field of heritage: authorized heritage discourse (AHD) and subaltern heritage discourse. The AHD represents an official discourse of heritage and is focused on aesthetically pleasing and monumental assets. The experts, such as archaeologists or historians have the legitimacy to define what is heritage based on the age, history, aesthetic qualities, architectural uniqueness of the place/building. In contrast, subaltern heritage discourse emphasizes the legitimacy of communities in defining heritage as well as its interpretation and management. In this case, heritage values are connected to human experience, collective memory, local/communal identity. In both discourses, heritage serves as a symbolic representation of identity; however, the former is mostly about national identity, whereas the latter is about local, sub-national identities. Different groups/communities define their values, hence identities on various levels. To make sure heritage is studied and interpreted in all its depth and layers, those various groups should take an active part in the definition and interpretation of heritage.⁸

The sub-discipline of labor history developing between the 1950s and the 1970s with the working classes and labor movements in the focus, contributed to the development of critical

⁷ The earlier and main contributors to Critical heritage Studies were Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, London: Routledge, 2006; For later discussions on the topic see Tim Winter and Emma Waterton, "Critical heritage studies", *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19(6) (2013): 529-531.

⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 87-194.

industrial heritage studies.⁹ This bottom-up approach to history writing has worked with workers' oral stories, their perceptions, and descriptions about the events in the industrial past as well as their experience of post-industrial conditions. In the post-Soviet context, for example, Daniel Walkowitz and Lewis Sigelbaum explored the history of miners from Donbas city, Ukraine based on workers' own narrations.¹⁰

Scholars in critical heritage studies emphasized former workers' stories processed by labor historians when engaging in discussions about industrial heritage.¹¹ Communities who experienced industrial life were of utmost importance in this perspective, and not just industrial buildings and technologies. Smith would bring new insights into identifying what makes industrial heritage for people visiting industrial museums. Many people were motivated to visit the museum because there they could remember the past of their family members and confirm their sense of belonging to the community of industrial workers. Focusing on laypersons' interpretations of what is heritage, Smith went beyond the expert-driven, scientific explanations of heritage values and developed alternative notions. Heritage is not only museum objects and narratives but also the way people engage with them, evaluate, feel about, remember, and connect to their personal, family, community identities.¹² Following this approach, a recently published research in Lota, Chile, points out the emergence and crucial role of local grassroots initiatives of ex-coal miners in industrial heritage tourism by building on working-class, indigenous, gender memories, hence working towards a new identity for their city from below.¹³

⁹ For detailed information of the sub-discipline of labor and social history see website of The International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Accessed May 7, 2021, <https://iisg.amsterdam/en/about/history/detailed-history-iish>

¹⁰ Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lewis H. Sigelbaum, *Workers of the Donbas Speak Survival and Identity in the New Ukraine, 1989-1992* (New York: SUNY press, 1995).

¹¹ Laurajane Smith draws on labor/social historians while discussing labor heritage/industrial heritage. Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 195-275.

¹² Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 197-236.

¹³ Magdalena Novoa, "Gendered nostalgia: grassroots heritage tourism and (de)industrialization in Lota, Chile", *Journal of Heritage Studies*, (2021) DOI: [10.1080/1743873X.2020.1867561](https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2020.1867561)

Industrial Heritage has been discussed in the frame of socio-economic structural changes caused by deindustrialization processes: how heritage-making processes take place in deindustrialized regions, particularly, how different actors create dominant narratives of industrial pasts through commemorating and re-using former industrial sites and buildings. The Ruhr Area is one of the most frequently discussed cases of how industrial heritage can serve as a means of (self)representation or expression of local and regional identities.¹⁴ The problem of being selective when using memory and representation of heritage was recognized too in this context, when dominant narratives exclude memories and experiences of many other social groups that can be defined based on gender, class, ethnicity, etc.¹⁵ The memories and events related to various underrepresented social groups received special attention in the industrial heritage discourses and practices.¹⁶

Nostalgia as a form of memory is especially interesting in a post-industrial context due to its role in creating specific versions of the industrial past and industrial heritage. Scholars writing about nostalgia are divided into two broad groups: the ones who see nostalgia as no more than a simplistic, romanticized sentiment that people cherish about the past. Remembering the past in an idealized way and longing for it due to these positive memories is seen problematic as it triggers discontent over the present.¹⁷ When used in industrial heritage tourism, nostalgia is blamed for creating “reactionary conservative forms” representing only the glorified memories of the past.¹⁸

Another group of scholars, emphasizing the progressive aspects of nostalgia, think that this type of remembrance has more layers of meaning and can be a useful resource for social

¹⁴ Christian Wicke, Stefan Berger, and Jana Golombek, (eds.), *Industrial heritage and regional identities*. (Oxford: Routledge, 2018); Berger, Stefan, (ed.), *Constructing Industrial Pasts: Heritage, Historical Culture, and Identity in Regions Undergoing Structural Economic Transformation*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020).

¹⁵ Stefan Berger and Steven High, “(De-) Industrial Heritage: An Introduction” *Labor* 16.1 (2019)1-27.

¹⁶ Paul Shackel, “Introduction” in *Remembering Lattimer: Labor, Migration, and Race in Pennsylvania Anthracite Country*, (University of Illinois Press, 2018), 1-6.

¹⁷ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York: Basic books, 2008).

¹⁸ David Lowenthal, “Nostalgia tells it like it wasn’t”, in Chase M. and Shaw C. (Eds.), *The imagined past: History and nostalgia* (Manchester University Press, 1989), 18-32.

change.¹⁹ If people are nostalgic but, at the same time, able of critical self-reflection, they will not produce merely idealized memories but rather ask themselves why they remember that way. This way of engaging with the past will help people develop a critical understanding of their present socio-economic and political situation and mobilize their nostalgic memories of the industrial past in service of their present needs.²⁰ The above - mentioned study of grassroots initiatives in heritage tourism in Chile demonstrates how nostalgia allows various community members to express their own narratives of the past and imagine an alternative development for their city.²¹

1.3 Dialogical and Future-Oriented Approaches to (Industrial) Heritage

While agreeing on the main points of Critical Heritage Studies presented above, some scholars also emphasize the importance of finding how actors concerned with heritage studies and management can collaborate, particularly scholars with critical concepts and heritage practitioners concerned with preservation issues. The main goal of this bridging approach is to combine the definitions and practices of the two, often distinct areas, to release the positive impact of heritage on present and future sustainable development.²²

Rodney Harrison is one of the pioneers in promoting this approach. While sharing the arguments by critical scholars about the discursive character of heritage and its knowledge/power effects, he proposes to go further and set a broader critical agenda for heritage studies. According to his dialogical model to identify and evaluate heritage, we should

¹⁹ Laurajane Smith and John Goulder Campbell, "Nostalgia for the future", *Memory, nostalgia and the politics of class. International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23.7 (2017): 612-627.

²⁰ Maria O'Donovan, "Nostalgia and Heritage in the Carousel City: Deindustrialization, Critical Memory, and the Future." *Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage*, 6 (4) (2019): 272-282

²¹ Magdalena Novoa, "Gendered nostalgia", 3-5.

²² Tim Winter, "Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19.6 (2013): 532-545. Accessed January 15, 2021. 10.1080/13527258.2012.720997

Christoph, Brumann, "Heritage Agnosticism: A Third Path for Study of Cultural Heritage" *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, 22.2 (2014): 173–188, Accessed January 15, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12068>

search and find heritage in the relationship among people, objects, places, and practices. Moreover, all these aspects of heritage should be discussed considering current social, economic, political, and environmental issues. Therefore, it is not enough to value something we have from the past but we need to see what its benefit is for people living today and looking towards the future. Hence, this dialogue should help to reveal the meanings of the past relevant to the present and the future.²³

Following this approach, questions about the role of heritage in future making have been introduced to the academic discourse in the recent years.²⁴ The issue is discussed in two interconnected formulations: the future of heritage and the heritage for the future. Scholars state that even though “preserving the past for the future” has been a kind of slogan for the heritage sector, so far there have been no serious discussions of what we exactly mean by future, and whether all we preserve as heritage will actually matter for the future. Hence it is necessary to critically engage in whatever we consider heritage and envision its role in the *actual* future. We should define and create possible scenarios of the future to be able to integrate heritage into it in the present. The future should be intentionally shaped by drawing on the past and considering cultural heritage as a resource for a better life. Thus, present interpretations and decisions on cultural heritage should be based on future consciousness.²⁵

As for industrial heritage, conferences and congresses organized by The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) are informed of and address the concepts and theories discussed above. For instance, the title of the upcoming conference, “Industrial Culture for Future - Paving the Way for a New Charta of Industrial Culture,” and the main questions the conference is concerned with, demonstrate that the

²³ Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

²⁴ The latest contribution to the topic of heritage and future, see Harrison, R. et al., *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices*, (London: UCL Press, 2020).

²⁵ Cornelius Holtorf and Andreas Höglberg, “Contemporary Heritage and the Future.” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), 509-521.

interests of TICCIH are not only limited to study and conserve industrial buildings and sites but include conceptual issues being discussed in the most recent academic discourse, revealing the intangible aspects of industrial heritage and its place in the future. Some of the questions the conference participants will address are “How narratives about the industrial past shape our future? What are the key questions on the way to a diverse, sustainable, and digital society, to which an engagement with industrial culture provides answers? To what extent should industrial museums as community forums take into focus the future-related topics of (post-) industrial society, and how are they capable of doing so? Which common narratives require critical examination and further development? How does industrial culture relate to, or is immersed in power structures?”²⁶

1.4 From Heritage Theory to Policy and Practice

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015, presents 17 economic, social and ecological Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calling on the world to take action to realize them.²⁷



Figure 1: The 17 SDGs with their logos

Source: Wikipedia: Sustainable Development Goals, accessed May 6, 2021, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

²⁶ TICCIH- The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage, *Industrial culture for future (IC4 future): Paving the Way for a New Charta of Industrial Culture*, an upcoming conference, November 4-5, 2021, accessed May 5, 2021, <https://ticiph.org/cfp-industrial-culture-for-future/>

²⁷ Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations, accessed May 6, 2021, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

The idea that heritage interpretation and management should be in line with sustainable development, i.e., address the present needs of communities without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, was declared on the international level, even before the advent of SDGs. In 2012, the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention gave a floor for meetings and workshops around the world focused specifically on the topics of sustainable development and the role of local communities.²⁸ Following the formulation of the SDGs, experts in heritage from around the world gathered in the framework of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) SDGs Working Group, prepared a Policy Guidance document consisting of 17 sections, each demonstrating how heritage can address a specific SDG with a ‘Case Study’ highlighting an example of practical implementation strategies.²⁹ Appreciation and inclusion of the knowledge, experience and skills of local community members while dealing with any goal - from poverty reduction to the creation of sustainable cities and communities - was emphasized in the document.

Understand and acknowledge the existence of different values attributed to heritage by different categories of stakeholders and promote participatory and inclusive urban management strategies.

Harness the potential of heritage to enhance the cultures, identities, and sense of belonging of local communities, create job opportunities and sustainable livelihoods, stimulate dialogue across different communities, and encourage social inclusion, especially of the most vulnerable and marginalized.
(Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals, ICOMOS, 77)

The significance of the re-use of heritage buildings and sites through the participation of all possible stakeholders to meet any of the sustainable goals was also a central point.

Promote and facilitate the reuse, rehabilitation, restoration, and regeneration of existing buildings, green and public spaces, and neighborhoods, as well as the

²⁸UNESCO, “Report of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention”, accessed May 5, 2021, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/report-40th-Anniversary/>

²⁹ Labadi, S., Giliberto, F., Rosetti, I., Shetabi, L., Yildirim, E. (2021). Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals: accessed Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors. Paris: ICOMOS, accessed May 6, 2021, <https://www.icomos.org ›Secretariat› 2021 ›SDG>

use of traditional typologies, technologies, and local materials in historic urban landscapes, to encourage circular economy, resource efficiency, and affordable housing.

Encourage the implementation of integrated and participatory urban and territorial development plans with a holistic and cross-sectoral approach, to support the participation of all stakeholders in the conservation and management of the historic urban landscape
(Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals, ICOMOS, 77)

Finally, the role of heritage practices in promoting partnerships for SDGs was also stressed.

Promote partnerships at all levels between actors within and outside of the heritage sectors, including those with both shared and competing interests in heritage protection.

Empower and encourage heritage communities and groups to engage in timely and informed participation.

(Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals, ICOMOS, 113)

All the above-mentioned discussions around (industrial) heritage are manifest in the European Union policies which in turn encourage new research in the field of heritage studies. The Framework Programs for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe 2021-2027) recognize cultural heritage as an “economic, social, and environmental driver”³⁰ Therefore, experts of the programs recommend, for example, supporting municipal leaders to use heritage as a means of regenerating their towns and introduce participatory approaches in heritage governance. In projects supported within this framework, industrial heritage appears in the context of adaptive heritage re-use by and for the local communities.³¹

1.5 Approaches and Concepts Applied in the Thesis

The thesis, following the idea that heritage is a discourse, will explore the various meanings and values different groups attribute to the industrial past and its material reminders today.

³⁰ Anna Zygierewicz, “Cultural heritage in EU discourse and in the Horizon 2020 programme”. Technical report (EPRS|European Parliament Research Service, 2019), accessed May 8, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337919325_Cultural_heritage_in_EU_discourse_and_in_the_Horizon_2020_programme

³¹ Open Heritage: Organizing, Promoting and ENabling HEritage Reuse through Inclusion, Technology, Access, Governance and Empowerment, accessed May 8, 2021, <https://openheritage.eu/>

To put it in Laurajane Smith's terms, my study will contribute to a subaltern heritage discourse as industrial legacy with its material and immaterial aspects is not part of the national or dominant heritage discourse in Armenia including Vanadzor city. Industrial heritage values will be mapped according to the interpretations local community members give to their industrial past when being asked about the abandoned factories. The concepts in critical heritage studies such as the association of heritage with memory/nostalgia, experience, local/regional identity, will be applied to interpret heritage values. Then, drawing on the broader definition proposed by Rodney Harrison, I will make use of the idea that heritage is an active process involving people, ideas, objects, and practices in a specific time and space.

The idea of heritage as a resource to address current needs, adopted in recent academic works as well as at the level of international organizations and in the policy and practice of some European countries, will be in the focus of the thesis. This understanding will be used when formulating suggestions to the Vanadzor municipality and other interested actors on how to recognize and re-evaluate industrial heritage for the social and economic benefits of the urban communities. Commencing from the premise that heritage is a process rather than a static thing, and that it generates meanings and values people give to their past in the present, I see my own engagement with the community under study as a process of heritage making. By aiming to explore heritage values through different interest groups in the city, this thesis promotes a more democratized, inclusive, activist approach to heritage, hence a shift from a top-down, officially declared notions of heritage to diverse perceptions emerging from the community.

CHAPTER TWO – CONTEXTUALIZING THE NOTIONS OF ‘INDUSTRIAL’ AND ‘HERITAGE’ FOR VANADZOR



*Figure 2: Map of Armenia with Vanadzor city and the neighboring countries.
Source: Google Maps.*

The first part of this chapter presents the industrialization of Vanadzor city to demonstrate how this process shaped the urban settlement and identities at different levels. Then, I will briefly describe the socio-economic condition in the town since the collapse of industries. The second part will demonstrate the discourse on industrial heritage in local governmental, NGO, and academic circles to understand how (and whether) (de)industrial experience of the community with the former industrial buildings and sites are perceived in terms of heritage. Overall, this chapter provides a contextual basis to understand the relevance of discussing the concept of industrial heritage for this city. The exploration is based on history books, urban development plans, and analysis of projects and discussions on NGO and academic levels.

2.1 Industrialization and Urbanization

Vanadzor is the third-largest urban community in the northern part of Armenia. It has 2599.33 ha territory 1353 meters above sea level, located in the valley between the Pambak and Bazum

mountains, and with Pambak, Tandzut, Vanadzor rivers flowing through. The city is a transportation hub connecting the railway lines between Armenia and Georgia. The city is the administrative, economic, cultural, and educational center of Lori Province, with a population of 77,600.³² Vanadzor is mainly characterized by Soviet - period housing estates and other buildings mostly constructed after the 1950s. The urban landscape is defined by a combination of green areas and vast lands of former industrial sites and unused factories.



Figure 3: A view from Vanadzor city, 2019. Source: Միասին Ճանաչենք Վանաձորը [Let Us Know Vanadzor Together] Facebook group, accessed April 23, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/Vanadzorhistory/photos/2387983157914821>

If this thesis had been written in the 1980s, the following numbers would have been relevant: back in 1988, the city had 173,000 inhabitants and 37 industrial enterprises, being the second

³² Vanadzor Municipality, The Republic of Armenia, Lori Province, “The Passport of Vanadzor Community”, accessed 11 March 2021, https://vanadzor.am/hamaynqi_anznagir/

Armenian industrial city after the capital Yerevan.³³ The period of the Soviet Union (1921-1991) shaped many modern towns which were based on various industries. The accelerated industrialization focused on the heavy industry was a Soviet policy being implemented in all socialist countries.

Urban planning with all the infrastructure resulted from a top-down approach; plans were created and implemented by experts in state planning institutes. Vanadzor city in Armenia is one of the characteristic examples. A rural settlement named Gharakilisa, was urbanized around 100 years ago by the Soviet centralized regime. The process of establishing a new socialist city started in 1924 when the settlement was given an urban status. In 1935, Gharakilisa was renamed Kirovakan after the prominent communist Sergey Kirov. The general urban plan was drawn up by 1939 already determining the two main aspects of Vanadzor's profile; it would become a recreational and industrial city.

Though the climatic and natural conditions of the settlement were (and still are) favorable for the recreation industry, such as summer camps for kids and sanatoriums, these activities were not a significant factor in the urban formation and development. Instead, the settlement became the second largest center of Armenian industrial production after the capital city Yerevan. Industrialization became a decisive force for the urbanization processes for the following decades. The examination of the local history books written in the Soviet period also shows that the city's history is presented primarily as a narrative of its industrialization with all the details.³⁴

³³ [Samson Qaryan, Karlen Danielyan, Janibek Ghukasyan], Սամսոն Քարյան, Կարլեն Դանիելյան, Ջանիբեկ Դուկասյան, *Վանաձոր: Պատկերասրահ պատմություն* [Vanadzor: Pictorial History] (Yerevan: Noyan Tapan Press, 2012), 67.

³⁴ [Kozmo Kozmoyan], Կոզմո Կոզմոյան, *Կիրովական* [Kirovakan] (Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences press, 1960); [Samson Qaryan, Karlen Danielyan, Janibek Ghukasyan], Սամսոն Քարյան, Կարլեն Դանիելյան, Ջանիբեկ Դուկասյան, *Վանաձոր: Պատկերասրահ պատմություն* [Vanadzor: Pictorial History] (Yerevan: Noyan Tapan Press, 2012).

The first phase of industrialization in Vanadzor took place before the Second World War, between the 1920s and the 1940s. The manufacturing productions of food, clothing and construction materials was turned into machinery-based industries. The factory of Fur and Coat was the first one of this type in the Soviet Union. The sheep wool from all over the country was processed here and turned into warm coats, hats, and socks. The heavy industry began developing after the foundation of the Dzoraget Hydropower Plant, the biggest of this kind in the region.

The most significant achievement in the first phase of industrial construction was the foundation of the Chemical Plant in 1929. This was the first plant in chemical production in Transcaucasia, boosting the migration of thousands of workers and the urbanization of the settlement. Even the construction works were an enormous enterprise involving 2000 constructors from different Soviet republics as well as volunteers from the nearby villages.³⁵ In the literature of this period, it is described as a great achievement, the fruit of long years of hard work.³⁶ The plant was under the supervision of the Ministry of the Chemical industry of the Soviet Union and its products were used in various sectors of the economy, such as in agriculture, in producing precision machine tools, in health care and in other spheres. The chemicals were exported to fifty countries. In 1977, in the USSR Exhibition of the Achievements of the National Economy, the artificial stones produced by the plant won silver and bronze medals. In 1979, the Chemical Plant was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labor.³⁷

³⁵ [Qaryan], *Վանաձոր։ Պատկերագրող պատմություն*, 166.

³⁶ [Kozmoyan], *Կիրովսկան*, 70-87.

³⁷ [Qaryan], *Վանաձոր։ Պատկերագրող պատմություն*, 165-166.

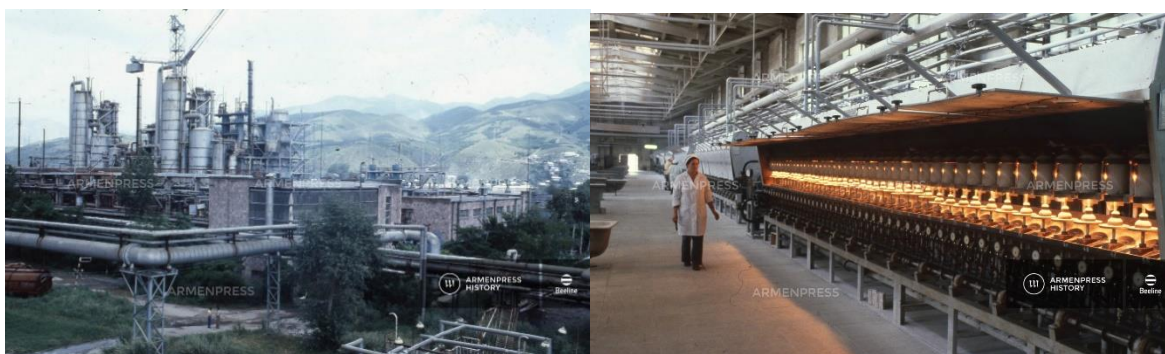


Figure 4: The Chemical Plant after Alexander Myasnikyan, Kirovakan, 1984.

Source: ARMENPRESS/HISTORY, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://history.armenpress.am/>

The second phase of industrialization took place after the Second World War, from the 1950s to the 1980s. The newly established plants for sewing, the production of shoes, furniture, and carpet enriched the light industrial sector of the city. The newly founded Microfibers Factory extended the range of chemical products. As for the heavy industries, a few new plants were established specialized in the production of machinery. The “Avtogenmash” plant became the most famous one exporting machine tools exporting machine tools all over the Soviet Union and forty other countries. The “Avtomatika” factory produced electrical measuring tools. The Heaters Factory was the only one of this type in the Soviet Union producing high-temperature heaters, widely used in electro-technical production.³⁸



Figure 5: The workers of the research institute of “Avtomatika” factory, 1958.

Source: Հայկական Գանձարան [Armenian Treasury], accessed April 25, 2021, <http://treasury.am/hy>

³⁸ Ibid., 171-172.



Figure 6: The Microfibers Factory of Kirovakan, after the 1950s (no other available date).
Source: Հայկական Գանձարան [Armenian Treasury], accessed April 25, 2021, <http://treasury.am/hy>



Figure 7: During the work process of the Microfibers factory of Kirovakan city, 1978.
Source: ARMENPRESS/HISTORY, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://history.armenpress.am/>

Industrialization brought about significant changes in urban development. The neighboring rural settlements were merged with the city expanding the residential and industrial areas.

New housing, roads, and utility networks were constructed in an accelerated manner. The population grew from 6427 in 1922 to 75,000 by 1968, reaching its peak, 173,000 in 1988.³⁹



Figure 8: Views from Kirovakan city in 1972 (now Vanadzor)

Source: ARMENPRESS/HISTORY, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://history.armenpress.am/>

³⁹Ibid., 67; [Kozmoyan], *Kirovakan*, 260.

2.1.1 The Formation of Industrial Identities

In parallel with founding new plants and, creating new districts, Vanadzor was also experiencing the process of identity formation within the Soviet Union from the level of the state to that of urban districts. The Socialist propaganda and ideology was dominant in any initiative forging collective identities among workers in the Soviet republics. As an example, to contribute the transnational, socialist identity building, when narrating the construction of the Chemical Plant in Kirovakan, history books built on the narrative of brotherhood among the socialist nations and the participation of 2000 constructors from different countries. Visits by experts from countries such as China, Poland, and Romania, the exchange of knowledge, and collaboration with the local experts were emphasized in the history of the plant. Finally, stating that the chemical products were exported to fifty socialist countries was also a way to connect the city and its industrial output to the platform of the broader socialist world. The competition among the collectives of chemical workers from various states was served to strengthen among them this transnational socialist identity.⁴⁰



Figure 9: The museum of the Chemical Plant in 1978, exhibiting the achievements of the workers.
Source: ARMENPRESS/HISTORY, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://history.armenpress.am/>

⁴⁰ The books referred above are the typical examples; [Kozmo Kozmoyan], *Kirovakan*, (Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences press, 1960); [Samson Qaryan, Karlen Danielyan, Janibek Ghukasyan], *Վանաձոր: Պատկերասրահ պատմություն*, (Yerevan: Noyan Tapan press, 2012).

Together with forging a common identity at the transnational level of socialist workers, a strong local identity was created too. This process was boosted by events such as the donation of an award to the chemical workers of Kirovakan by the Ministry of Chemical Industry of the Soviet Union in 1957 for overdoing the production plan. The workers received other financial awards and medals too, collectively and individually, for their professionalism, devotion, and long years of work.⁴¹ All these recognitions strengthened their collective professional identity.

Identities on the local urban level were also shaped. The everyday living and working experience was even more decisive in creating communal and professional identities than the omnipresent socialist propaganda. Workers' housing was usually clustered in designated parts of the city, forming districts based on the industrial work. Buildings and sites of public services, such as health care, education, trade, recreation, and culture, were established around the residential blocks and houses, thus creating self-sufficient neighborhoods.



*Figure 10: One of the working collectives of the Chemical Plant, 1980.
Source: attained from a former worker Jemma Simonyan's personal archive.*

⁴¹ [Kozmoyan], *Կիրովական*, 124-127.

Socializing within one neighborhood after work would strengthen the ties among the workers and contribute to a communal identity based on the shared job and dwelling place. The Chemical Workers District was a typical example for that. Together with establishing the Chemical Plant, a new residential area was also created for the workers. The plant had its special construction team that built industrial complexes, residential blocks, and public buildings in the district. The first constructions in the 1930s were workers' barracks made of wood and in poor conditions. Later in the 1950s, houses and multifamily blocks were erected. Gradually all the necessary social service centers emerged, forming a compact neighborhood called Chemical Workers district, also known as Khimzavod (from Russian химический завод- chemical plant) among the locals. The district started from the vicinity of the Chemical Plant and extended up to the Kirov central square.

Each collective activity in the neighborhood area would strengthen the workers' communal identity. Public spaces in the neighborhood would range from yards of multifamily blocks or houses to parks, from cultural, educational, health centers to shops and canteens for workers. These were places to socialize after work. The most famous public building was the Palace of Culture of Chemical Workers (1946) located in the park and even named after the chemical workers. There was a club of songs and dances with the workers of the Chemical Plant as its members who would perform in the city and workers' clubs in Moscow.⁴² The Chemical Workers' park became a place of games, concerts, and just for relaxed walks. After the Second World War, a monument was erected in the park in the memory of those chemical workers who fell victim to the war.⁴³

⁴² Ibid., 234

⁴³ [Suren Babayan], Մուրթն Բարսյան, *Կիրովական* [Kirovakan] (Yerevan: Parberakan press, 1989), 13.



Figure 11: The park after Chemical Plant workers during the Soviet period, accessed Vahagn Vardanyan's Facebook account.⁴⁴ Accessed April 27, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100004988923534&sk=photos>

The interviews with former workers contain stories about how they would organize cultural leisure events in front of the residential blocks or how workers' families living in cottages would share the small yards for coffee and chat.⁴⁵

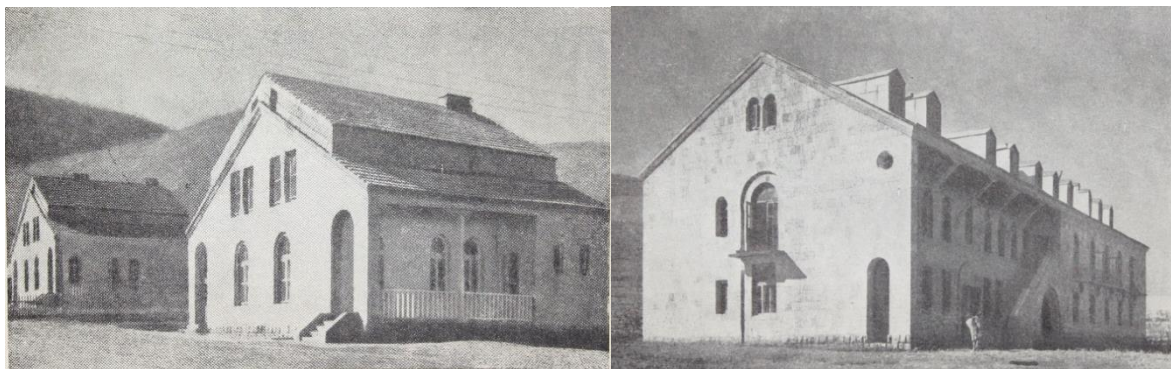


Figure 12: Cottages and multifamily blocks for workers, 1946-47.
Source: [Sergei Yaralov], *Сергей Яралов, Города Армении*
[The cities of Armenia], (Moscow: 1950).

Celebrating holidays and participating in parades was another way of spending time together and strengthening identity based on profession. These holidays were devoted to the Socialist

⁴⁴ Vahagn Vardanyan took this photocopy of the original image from National Library of Armenia. However, he could not remember the exact source and date.

⁴⁵ An interview with Alvard Petrosyan, a former worker at the Chemical Plant, April 17, 2020.

regime, workers and the city. One of the respondents remembered quite vividly how they took part in these events:

The workers from all the production units of the Chemical Plant would gather with flags, posters, and balloons. Once we were at the square, we would let the balloons in the air. All the city people would stand on sidewalks and greet us. Then the man with a microphone would call the worker's collectives by names, including chemical workers. Holding our children's hands, we would walk along the square... then each plant collective with family members would do parties in the nature or in restaurants.⁴⁶

The district life with all the above activities was destroyed by a devastating earthquake on December 7, 1988, with a magnitude of 8-10. The shock occurred in the northern region of Armenia, causing more than 25,000 deaths, including 1200 people in Vanadzor. The earthquake destroyed many housing estates of the Chemical Workers Neighborhood, and some of the locals were given flats in a newly built district. Many people, left jobless, migrated to the capital or to other countries. The primary job provider, the Chemical Plant operated only on a small-scale level until its permanent closure in 2008. Currently, the plant is bankrupt not being able to pay employees. The future status is being discussed by a special committee in charge of bankruptcies.

2.1.2 Deindustrialization: socio-economic problems

The city's industry was first hit by the 1988 earthquake damaging 45% of the 37 industrial enterprises.⁴⁷ The collapse of the Soviet system in 1991 marked the end of most of the industries. Armenia became independent and made a prominent political and economic shift, from state socialism to parliamentary democracy and from a unified command economy to a market economy. Across Vanadzor and the other cities in Armenia as well as the entire former Soviet Union, deindustrialization was dramatic. The one-time economic exchange among the former Soviet Union countries reduced, the production was deprived of its costumery markets.

⁴⁶ An interview with Jemma Simonyan, August 19, 2020.

⁴⁷ [Qaryan], *Վանաձոր: Պատկերագրի պատմություն*, 67.

The privatization of state-owned industries was the main feature of the economic change. As in other Soviet countries, in Armenia, this process was quite rapid and spontaneous, with lots of errors with the shadow of corruption still lying over it. The new owners did not manage or lacked the willingness to sustain the former operation; industries mostly disappeared or significantly decreased. Only a few factories in the light sector continued to operate to date but with reduced activity. This devastating decline in industries left the city with large brownfields, abandoned industrial plants, and thousands of unemployed people. Joblessness accompanied by low living standards resulted in mass migration; the number of the inhabitants was decreased by around 55 percent.⁴⁸

In the past three decades, the main problems faced by the community have been unemployment, migration (especially of young people), inadequate urban infrastructure, and the emergency state of residential and other buildings caused by the earthquake. In 2011, the number of employees in the industrial sector was 2230, while before the quake and the Soviet collapse, 29, 260 people were employed; their number reduced more than 13 times.⁴⁹

2.1.3 The Current Economic State and Development Strategy of Vanadzor

The urban development plans created by the municipality state the impossibility of re-opening the former big industrial enterprises due to the lack of demand and their poor technical condition. Instead, the focus is on smaller industries that currently continue operating. These are specialized in garment manufacturing, building materials, and dairy products. According to the Strategic Development Plan of Vanadzor for 2012-2022, recreation and tourism represent another large sector of the economy. The city has a sanatorium with 10,000 visitors

⁴⁸ Vanadzor Municipality, The Republic of Armenia, Lori Province, The Passport of Vanadzor Community, accessed March 11, 2021, https://vanadzor.am/hamaynqi_anznagir/

⁴⁹[Qaryan], *Համաձայն: Պատկերասրահը պատմություն*, 174.

per year from other parts of Armenia. Tourism and the development of the summer recreation based on the current infrastructure is among the items on the agenda for the city's future economy. The historical and archaeological monuments (some of them listed as part of the UNESCO World Heritage) and favorable geographic and climatic conditions are considered essential factors for developing tourism.

The Strategic Development Plan and the short-term development plans, such as the Development Plan of Vanadzor Community, 2018-2050, highlight the vision of the municipality in terms of the directions the city should go in the future.

In 2022 Vanadzor is known for developed small and medium scale enterprises and vital sports infrastructure. The locals and visitors enjoy a clean, beautiful, and peaceful environment and a high-quality life.⁵¹

The perspectives of the community development are the followings; to turn Vanadzor green, clean, with developed educational, cultural, and recreational infrastructure, a city of trades and service, suitable living conditions for the locals, and attractive for tourism.⁵²

The sections following these general statements point to various aspects of urban life; to develop medium and small-scale enterprises with the focus on light industries and IT technologies, to develop a partnership between municipal and private entities, to promote professional sports, add new green parts, promote various types of tourism, such as eco, health, cultural, etc. As for external relations, their aim is to turn Vanadzor into a regional (Armenia-Georgia) economic center, promote the investment of foreign capital, and collaborate with international donor organizations.

⁵¹ Vanadzor Municipality, *The Strategic Development Plan of Vanadzor Community, 2012-2022* [Վանաձոր Համայնքի Ռազմավարական Չարգացման Ծրագիր], accessed March 11, 2021. <http://vanadzor.am/downloads/2012-2022.pdf>

⁵² Vanadzor Municipality. *The Republic of Armenia, Lori Region, The Development Plan of Vanadzor Community for 2018-2021* [Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն, Լոռու Մարզ, Վանաձոր Համայնքի 2018-2021 Թվականների Չարգացման Ծրագիր], 64, accessed March 20, 2020. <http://vanadzor.am/downloads/qaramya/2018-2021.pdf>

2.1.4 Municipal Approach to Industrial Sites and Buildings

In the development plans of Vanadzor city, the deindustrialized landscape and vacant factories are mentioned in one or two sentences. They appear in the “weaknesses” and “threats” sections in the relevant sections of the SWOT analyses. The plan created in 2014 states the former industrial sites take a significant part of the urban landscape and should be “developed” and “improved.”⁵³ In the “weaknesses” and “threats” sections of the SWOT analysis of the 2018-21 development plan, the “closure of the former Chemical Plant” and “the tailing of the former Chemical Plant” are mentioned while addressing the issue of former industrial sites.⁵⁴ One of the projects proposed without any further details in the Strategic Development Plan, related to developing small and medium enterprises, is “utilizing the abandoned or unused former factory sites” in 2012-2018, with 25,000 Euro investment, 10 percent of which is municipal investment.⁵⁵ The interviews with municipality representatives demonstrated absence of any clear understanding of this plan, and it has never been realized.

To get more insight into the municipal approach to former industrial sites and buildings, I interviewed two representatives of the municipal government, Suren Abovyan, the head of the Department of Architecture and Urban planning, and Krist Marukyan, the member of Vanadzor City Council. The interviews were focused on how the representatives value the industrial sites and buildings in terms of their role in urban development programs.

As mentioned by Suren Abovyan the Chemical Plant with its surrounding site has always been in the focus of the municipal and the state governmental. As he stated, in the 1998 master plan of Vanadzor city, the Chemical Plant area was planned to be demolished, and the site would have been used for residential buildings and public spaces. However, the plan was not realized,

⁵³ The Development Plan of Vanadzor City. Asian Development Bank. 2014. [Վանաձորի Բարգաւաճման Չարգացման Ծրագիր, Ասիական Չարգացման Բանկ], 113, accessed March 20, 2021. http://www.mtad.am/u_files/file/erkrordayin%20qaxaqneri%20zargacman%20cragir/20141108%20CDP%20VANADZOR%20V0_ARMdocx.pdf

²³ The Development Plan of Vanadzor Community for 2018-2021, 63.

⁵⁵ The Strategic Development Plan of Vanadzor Community, 2012-2022.

and in 2017, while drawing a new master plan for Vanadzor, this site again became the focus of attention of governmental bodies. The prime minister invited an urban planner from Italy who worked with the local experts on the master plan. According to the plan the Chemical Plant site (around 110ha) would be transformed into an industrial tourism zone.⁵⁶

As Krist Marukyan, the member of Vanadzor City Council stated, there is no common municipal strategy towards the former industrial areas. From his perspective, the sites and buildings are not beneficial for the city and distort the aesthetics of the cityscape. Therefore, he suggests demolishing them if they are not re-used. He attributes some economic/industrial values to the sites and thinks that it might be possible to re-use them for that purpose. Some areas can also be turned into “historical or cultural attractions following similar experiences in Eastern Europe”⁵⁷

The head of architecture and urban planning of Vanadzor mentioned the architectural values of the former industrial buildings. The production structures and the administrative construction of the Chemical Plant are examples of Stalinist architecture, worth preserving or re-using as concert and sports halls. He suggested to keep some parts of the plant as a museum. As a “transitory solution,” he favored the idea of presenting the place to tourists and telling them about its past until investments are found for the long- term re-use.⁵⁸

Both municipal representatives identified the main obstacles for not implementing any re-use projects for the former industrial sites in a) the lack of investment, b) the buildings and sites are in private hands c) the unresolved legal issues related to their ownership, d) the contaminated areas of the Chemical Plant.

⁵⁶The project has not been implemented so far. As the head of urban planning and architecture mentioned, the project exists in municipality on paper album format. No more details were not found on this project.

⁵⁷ An interview with Krist Marukyan, August 20, 2020.

⁵⁸ An interview with Suren Abovyan, August 16, 2020.

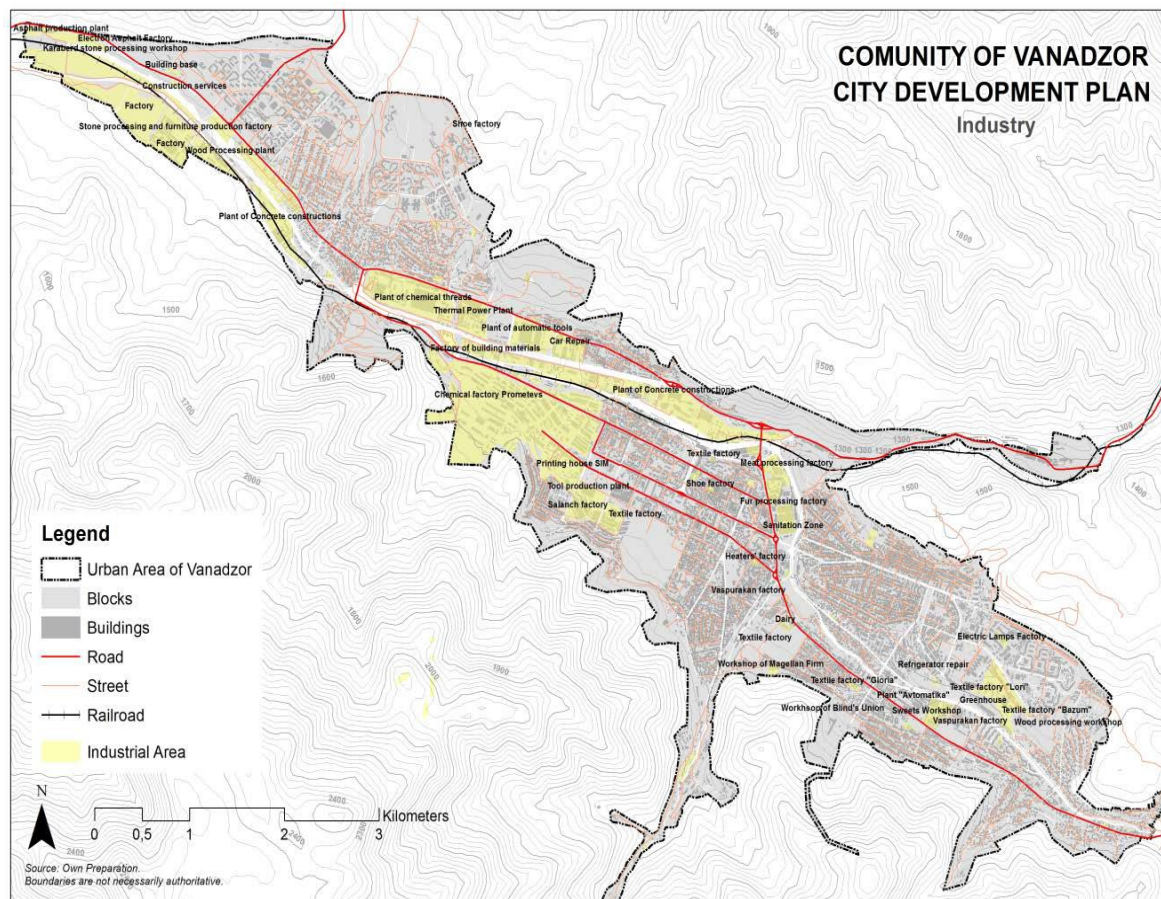


Figure 13: Industrial area of Vanadzor; mostly un-used and vacant buildings and sites

Source: *The Development Plan of Vanadzor City*, written by Fernando De Markos, Asian Development Bank, (Yerevan, 2014):26, accessed March 20, 2021,

http://www.mtad.am/u_files/file/erkrordayin%20qaxaqneri%20zargacman%20cragir/20141108%20CDP%20VANADZOR%20V0_ARMdocx.pdf

2.2 (Industrial) Heritage Discourse at Official, Academic and NGO levels

To understand whether the industrial past and its material remains are attributed any heritage value, it is essential to look at the dominant discourse about what heritage is and what its function is. In Armenia (as in many other countries), (cultural) heritage, be it an ancient archaeological site, monument, or a dance or cooking tradition, is mainly interpreted and used to represent national identity. In the official heritage discourse, those things are counted as national cultural heritage, which have ancient history, symbolize events important for the national identity and buildings and sites which have architectural, artistic value. Heritage

registers of every urban or rural community ratified by the government illustrate this point. Notably, the 158 monuments of history and culture in the official heritage list of the Vanadzor community primarily represent the ancient, medieval, and pre-industrial history of the settlement primarily. The buildings and monuments are listed due to their archaeological, architectural, artistic values, and mainly those which carry symbolic meanings associated with national narratives.⁵⁹

While industrial activities shaped many modern cities of Armenia in the Soviet period, there is no conception of “industrial heritage” in any law or official heritage registers in the country, including Vanadzor. Discussions about why industrial heritage is not considered as part of cultural heritage at the official level are not present in academic circles either; some scholarly interest has emerged in the recent years though. Archaeologist Lori Khatchadourian, exploring the ways people interact with material remains of industries in different cities of post-Soviet Armenia, raises the question of why industrial buildings and sites are not seen as heritage in Armenia or whether they should be considered as such, drawing on dominant perceptions about heritage and industrial buildings:

... for one thing, they are not old enough... modern sites are still in formation... they are not fossilized... because they are made of concrete, steel, iron instead of stone and mud-brick, they don't have the aura of ruins or the past... they are unsettling, dark places, they sometimes remind us of pages of recent past that we would rather not remember... they are not national sites, they are not distinctly ethnically Armenian... so perhaps we have a hard time thinking of the heritage of sites that are not distinctly associated with the particular ethnic community...⁶⁰.

I consider all these assumptions relevant for Armenia considering the dominant or, in Smith's terms, “authorized heritage discourse.”⁶¹ This discourse in Armenia is about aesthetically

⁵⁹ Cultural Heritage Monuments in Vanadzor, Lori, accessed March 1, 2021, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Cultural_heritage_monuments_in_Vanadzor,_Lori

⁶⁰ Lori Khatchadourian, “Industrial Ruins”, a series of online video lectures in collaboration with Urbanista-Urban Development NGO in Yerevan, accessed March 3, 2021, <https://urbanista.am/industrialdecay>

⁶¹ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 87-113.

pleasing, monumental buildings assessed by experts in terms of their architectural, artistic, or historical values and usually express national identity. Industrialization was a plan of the Soviet regime, hence testifying more about Soviet achievements and identity. While being in search of strengthening national identities, many post-Soviet and post-Socialist countries of Eastern Europe would erase or ignore events and buildings (even some which may have some architectural value) reminding of the Soviet past.⁶² Meanwhile, the identities at different other levels, such as local urban, class, family, seem to be ignored by this discourse.

One of my research findings shows that when it comes to community members considering industrial past and sites as heritage, sometimes they had a hard time telling what heritage is and what is not. On the one hand, they are influenced by the authorized heritage discourse; on the other hand, they have their own values and attributed meanings based on their personal experience about industrial activities and sites, which shaped individual, family and class identities for many of them.

In recent years, some non-governmental organizations, including architects, urban planners, journalists, and other civic activists in Armenia, began to discuss Soviet-period buildings, including the industrial ones, in terms of modernist architecture, industrial heritage, and their role in urban development issues.⁶³ In 2016, the “Engage Vanadzor” project was carried out for six months by the urbanlab think-do-share lab (based in Yerevan) supported by the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) organization. The project aimed “to promote the reevaluation of the modern tangible and intangible heritage Armenia’s third largest city, Vanadzor and to advocate for its preservation through community engagement.”⁶⁴

⁶² Anca M. Pusca, *Post-Communist Aesthetics: Revolutions, Capitalism, Violence* (London: Routledge, 2015) 59-81. For post-Soviet countries see Dea Gigauri, “The late Soviet Architectural Heritage in Georgia: Use, Abuse, Re-Use”. (MA Thesis, CEU, 2018); Gulnoza Khazanova, “Visual Representation of Dushanbe: A City that Never Gets Old. (MA Thesis, CEU, 2020).

⁶³ Urbanista, “About Us,” accessed May 15, 2021, <https://urbanista.am/aboutus>
Urbanlab, “Who Are We,” accessed May 15, 2021, <https://urbanlab.am/hy>

⁶⁴ Urbanlab, “Engage Vanadzor” project, accessed March 26, 2021, <http://blog.urbanlab.am/2016/07/engage-vanadzor.html>

Dedicated to exploring and mapping, as the initiators put it, “heritage sites” with the help of local volunteers, they identified and recorded around hundred structures representing the industrial and modernist architecture of Vanadzor. A documentary film based on the visual representation of Vanadzor’s industrial sites and accompanied by stories of (post)industrial Vanadzor was another outcome.⁶⁵ To raise awareness, they joined the European Cultural Heritage Days when local rock bands gave a concert nearby the former Chemical Plant. The initiators aimed to address the locals and raise the idea that industrial sites should also be considered part of heritage. This project was the first to name the vacant and dilapidated industrial buildings and sites a part of the local urban heritage.

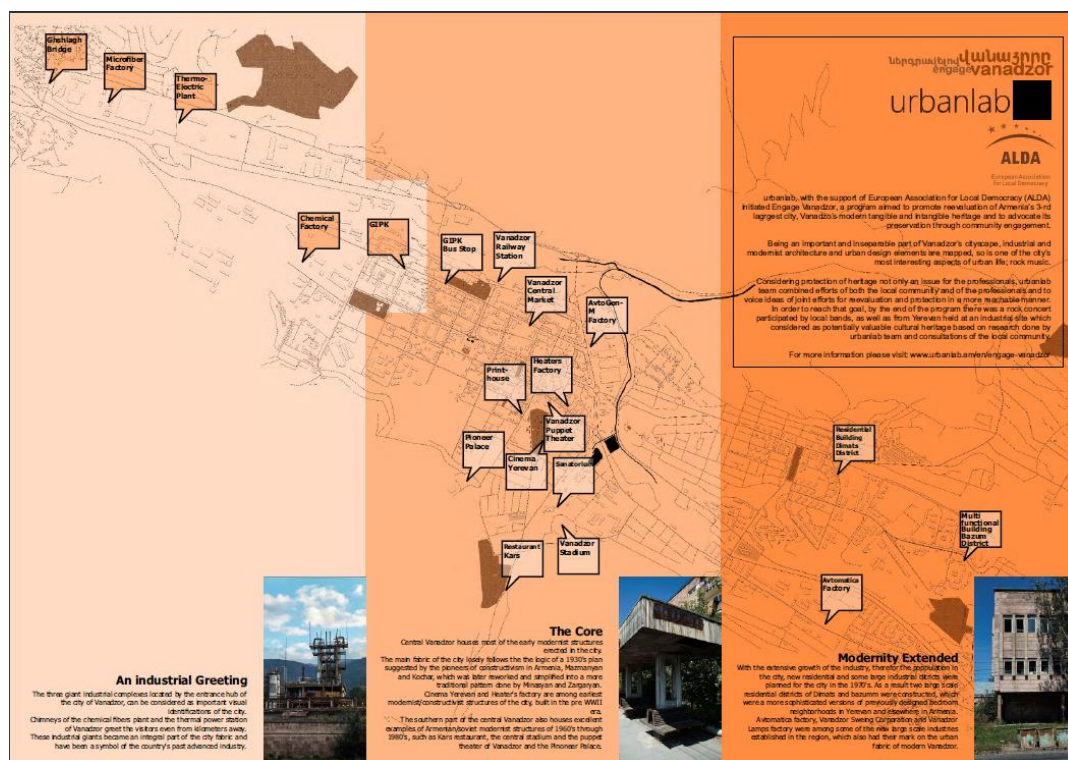


Figure 14. “Engage Vanadzor” project: The ground plan of Vanadzor pointed with the buildings of former factories, residential blocks, and other buildings presenting as urban industrial and modernist heritage. Source: urbanlab, Yerevan, <https://www.urbanlab.am/files/wareshelf/1/14980310973497.pdf>

⁶⁵ Urbanlab, “Engage Vanadzor” film (CD Baby Sync Publishing, 2017), accessed March 26, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ic_dFXSnF2s

CHAPTER THREE- MAPPING INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE VALUES AS PERCEIVED BY THE INHABITANTS

This chapter aims to answer the main research questions:

- 1) Which meanings and values do the inhabitants of Vanadzor attach to the former industrial buildings and sites? How do they perceive them within the current urban landscape? What thoughts and emotions do they evoke? Do people perceive them as something worth preserving and presenting to visitors?
- 2) How do people imagine the future of these buildings in the context of the social-economic development of the community? What are the locals' suggestions concerning the utilization of the sites? What are the already existing initiatives in this respect? The chapter is mostly based on interviews, an online survey; therefore, first the research methods will be presented, then the interpretation of the findings.

3.1 Methods of Data Collection

The contextual information about Vanadzor city as presented in this thesis does not come just from history books, articles, and interviews. I had known the town and community before they become the study case. I repeatedly visited and stayed in the city, walked along the streets, made observations, talked with the locals over many years. Back then, I worked as an interviewer and used to visit households to conduct interviews and surveys on different topics concerning their socio-economic life. During all these visits, I would encounter memories about the “great” industrial past and today’s de-industrialized conditions. I also have friends and acquaintances among the inhabitants who are interested in the industrial legacy of the town. These contacts were a great support in gaining insight into the town before the actual research and access to other community members during the investigation. That is why contextual

knowledge had a crucial role while conducting interviews, collecting online data, and then analyzing them.

3.1.1 Interviews

In August 2020, I conducted twenty individual in-depth interviews. They were completed in Armenian via online video call, lasting from 30 to 60 minutes each. The interviews aimed at understanding the meanings and values people attach to the industrial past of the town and the current de-industrialized state. They also addressed how they imagine the future of this legacy. Depending on the group of interviewees, the interviews varied in their character:

- The people who worked in the Chemical plant in the 1970s and 1980s or have lived in the Chemical Factory workers' district. These men and women were from various occupations: former engineers, people from administrative staff, plant workers, etc. Interviews with former workers were unstructured and mainly focused on getting accounts based on personal working life experiences. To some extent, these were life history and oral history interviews.⁶⁶ They started to tell about their work and life experience in the factory and outside, ending with accounts on the present-day deindustrialized town.
- Another group of respondents with who I did unstructured interviews, represented the younger generation born and raised in the deindustrialized town since the late 1980s. These were men and women either from the former workers' families or just representatives of the youth from various social and educational backgrounds.

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted on specific topics with respondents representing the following groups.

⁶⁶ Valerie Raleigh Yow. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005); David E. Russell. *Oral History Methodology, the Art of Interviewing* (Santa Barbara, California, 2013).

1. People who represent tour companies or work at the tourism department of the municipality and are interested in the industrial legacy of Vanadzor due to their activities in tourism. The general questions were the following: what do they present to tourists; how do they create tours and get information about places; why do they include the industrial past and buildings in the tours; what are the values they attribute to these?
2. Architects and urban planners' perspectives on the industrial heritage values are reflected by interviews with professionals currently collaborating with the municipality and the ones operating in NGOs.
3. Representatives of the municipal authority, particularly the head of the urban planning and architecture department and a member from the municipal council.

The purpose of the interviews with the latter two groups was to understand the expert and official/municipal approach to former industrial sites and buildings within the policies affecting current urban life and development policies.

3.1.2 Questionnaire

In May 2020, in two weeks' course, I accessed community opinions through an online survey. The survey aimed to get a general impression about the meanings and values of former industrial sites for the community members and their opinion on what to do with the disused buildings. The summary of the questionnaire shows that 169 people opened it.⁶⁷ However, the number of those who responded vary between 130-158 depending on the question being asked. Consequently, when presenting the answers, the number of respondents to specific questions might differ, so it is specified in each case. The age of the respondents ranged from 20 to 67.

⁶⁷ Survey: An attempt to reevaluate the industrial heritage of Vanadzor, an online survey conducted by Lilit Manukyan, May 17-June 17, 2020, accessed May 14, 2021, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1KYJfZwG7Nh2r9dFywajyS1LLlziL9yRTXsdANaDvqK4/edit#responses>

Females presented 69.7% (104 answers), males 33.3% (52 answers). Half of the respondents' age range between 45 and 67, the other half represents the age group between 20 and 44. People of the first group are supposed to have firsthand experience with the industrial past from before 1990, when the industries collapsed, while in the second group, people either spent their childhood years or were born in the de-industrialized town.

The questions were written in Armenian, made accessible through Google Forms, and were open to anyone who considered themselves a community member of Vanadzor, mostly living in Vanadzor. The questionnaire was spread through the snowball method. I built on my network on Facebook, asking them to share with relevant people. Mainly two Facebook groups, “Միասին Ճանաչենք Վանաձորը” (Let us Know Vanadzor Together)⁶⁸ and “Լոռվու Հումոր” (The Humor of Lori),⁶⁹ increased the rate of responses considerably.

3.1.3 Methods of Data Analysis: Qualitative Content Analysis

The survey results, transcribed interviews, municipality policy documents were analyzed with the qualitative content analysis method.⁷⁰ This means that the primary goal of the analysis was to identify and interpret the main concepts through which the residents or municipality members make meaning of the former industrial sites and buildings in the interview or the policy document.

Open coding was the first step in the process of qualitative content analysis. This means that the preliminary concepts were identified based on the words and expressions the participants used. Then the concepts were grouped into categories or abstract concepts, which lead to

⁶⁸ [Getting to Know Vanadzor Together], Միասին Ճանաչենք Վանաձորը/ Vanadzor, Facebook group, accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/Vanadzorhistory>

⁶⁹ [The Humor of Lori], Լոռվու Հումոր, Facebook group, accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/884242735041593>

⁷⁰ Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative text analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software* (London: SAGE, 2014).

defining the main themes and ideas. The abstract concepts mainly overlap with the ones widely accepted in scholarship. For example, the concepts such as *sense of place identity* or *nostalgia*, identified among my data, have already been discussed in other scholarly works. The transcribed interviews were first analyzed individually, and then by searching for similarities and differences among some interviews, a generalized analysis was done to reach more theoretical conclusions.

Visual sources such as photos and screenshots from documentary films will be complementary materials to explore how people remember and reflect on the industrial past and post-industrial present. The visuals are collected from Facebook private and group profiles of community members, tourism companies, and the websites of urbanists and architectural NGOs. These visuals will illustrate and complement the opinions expressed in interviews or official documents.

3.1.4 Limitations

One of the main limitations of this research is that it was done remotely. Due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, onsite fieldwork and face-to-face interviews were not possible to conduct. As a result, I got the answers of those who have internet access and the ability to use a digital questionnaire. While I managed to identify some potential respondents through the personal network, I could not manage to reach them remotely.

I did not include the occupation and educational background of the respondents in the survey, which proved to be a gap in the data during the analysis. This variable would have added more contextual knowledge when interpreting the respondents' opinions. The problem caused by this lack of information was mitigated by the qualitative in-depth interviews, which allowed me to get a thorough contextual knowledge about the respondents.

Most of the interviews with the older generation or witnesses of the industrial period were done with former workers of the Chemical Plant. Only one interview was done with a resident who had never been engaged in industrial work and neither his family members. While this interview is quite helpful in exploring different perceptions of the former industrial Vanadzor, more interviews with this type of respondents would have provided a more comprehensive picture in this respect.

Considering that this is the first research ever carried out on the industrial heritage in Vanadzor, it opens several questions to address by further research. Some of these questions will be raised in the concluding chapter.

3.2 Ambiguous Perceptions of Industrial Sites and Buildings as Heritage

The respondents mostly did not name the objects and ideas about industrial legacy as part of cultural heritage. Following the logic of dominant or, in Smith's terms, authorized heritage discourse,⁷¹ aesthetically pleasing buildings and sites were mentioned as such heritage rather than disused or dilapidated industrial buildings and sites. At the same time, the interviews and survey showed how meaningful the industrial past and deindustrial present could be for the inhabitants even without naming them as cultural heritage. According to the critical approaches,

It is value and meaning that is the real subject of heritage preservation and management processes, and as such all heritage is 'intangible' whether these values or meanings are symbolized by a physical site, place, landscape... (Smith 2006, p. 56).

Thus, exploring how locals make sense of their past and present by referring to the former industrial sites and buildings is about revealing and interpreting their heritage. The act of remembering the past, emotions evoked by the present de-industrial conditions make part of the current industrial heritage process in Vanadzor.

As a part of the locals' daily life, these sites and buildings have various values and meanings, often ambivalent and ambiguous. On the one hand, they still stand as reminders of a once-prosperous industrial city: these sites have as symbolic value as locals would relate urban formation and history as well as their professional and communal identity with these materialities. On the other hand, the industrial remains cause anger and resentment for their current condition: half-dilapidated buildings and industrial sites remind people of the poor socio-economic state of the community and the inability of the owners to revitalize them after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While evoking pride in a once-powerful industrial city, plant

⁷¹ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 87-192.

buildings are currently seen as landmarks in the town and distorters of the aesthetics of the cityscape. The industrial legacy is not only in people's memories but in their material surroundings, in their daily lives.

Most of the survey respondents see former factory buildings and industrial sites as a significant part of the urban landscape. To the question about what they mainly see when passing by or walking along the streets of Vanadzor, almost half of the participants (52 out of 130) mentioned the industrial buildings and sites with various formulations: "the silence of the industrial city," "zombie condition of former factories," "industrial ruins," etc.

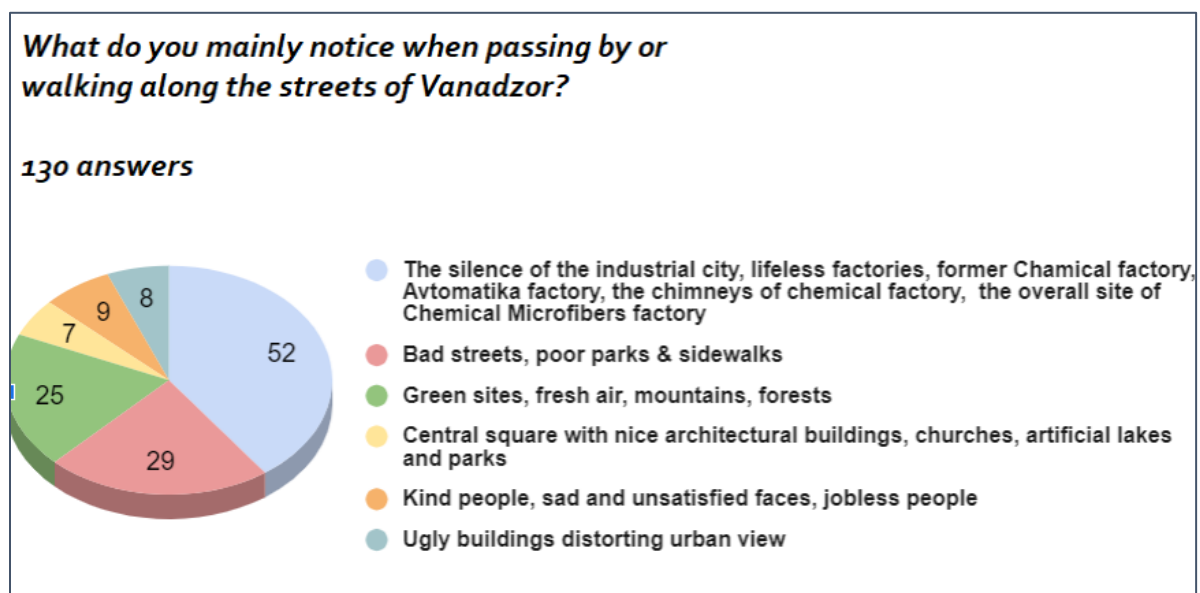


Figure 15: Response analysis about what people mainly see when passing by or walking along the streets of Vanadzor

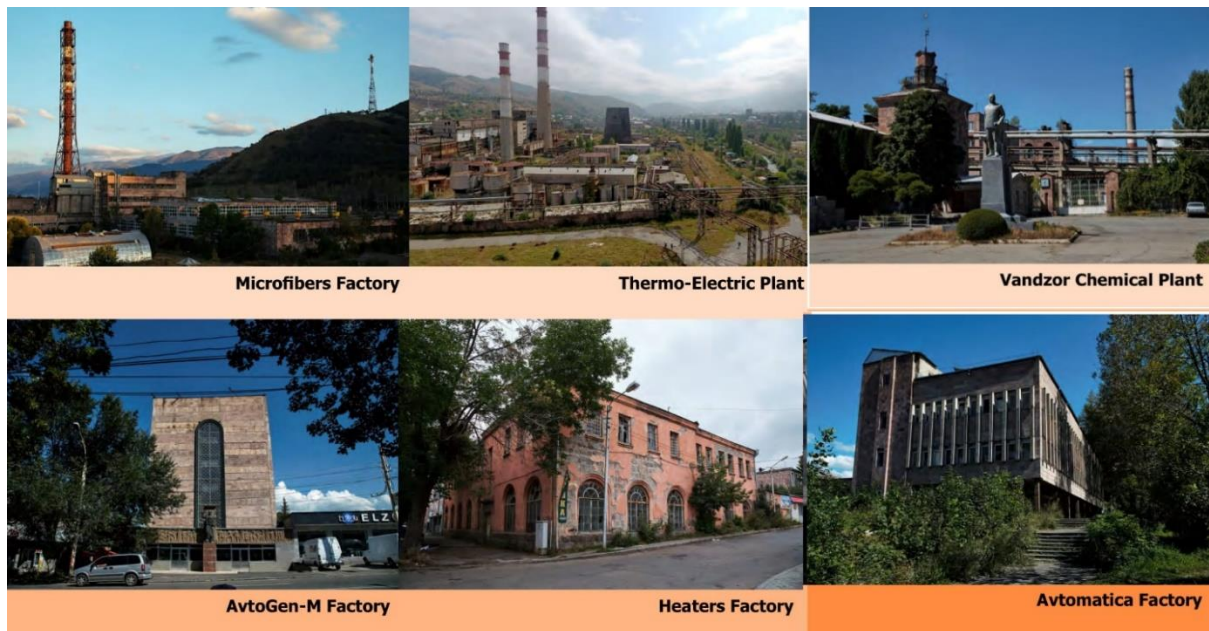


Figure 16: Some of the former industrial buildings and sites of Vanadzor city, 2016.
Source:urbanlab, Yerevan, <https://www.urbanlab.am/files/wareshef/1/14980310973497.pdf>

3.2.1 Industrial Buildings and Sites Creating Sense of Place

The concept of ‘sense of place’ is used to discuss the way people experience, use and understand the place they inhabit.⁷² In this case, it is about the locals’ attachments and sense of belonging to former industrial sites and buildings. Living among these sites and buildings, people develop certain emotions and thoughts. For some, they become a source of artistic creations, for others landmarks. The facilities and empty sites evoke anger, shame, resentment, regret, fondness, pride, and hope. While speaking about these emotions, the respondents almost always made a comparison between the industrial past and the deindustrialized present. Alvard Petrosyan, a former engineer in the Chemical Plant would tell:

It feels so painful when I pass by the laboratory. I remember I worked on the third floor, where my cabinet was. And now it is in ruins, and it is in ruins, nothing has remained, everything was sold or stolen.⁷³

⁷² About various understandings of “sense of place” see Helen Graham, Rhiannon Mason, and Andrew Newman *Literature Review: Historic Environment, Sense of Place, and Social Capital Commissioned for English Heritage*, International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies (ICCHS), (Newcastle University:2009), 14-19.

⁷³ An interview with Alvard Petrosyan, May 2, 2020.

In this case, the present unsatisfactory conditions of the sites make them nostalgic. As discussed by some scholars, nostalgia has more meanings than just romanticized sentiment towards the past.⁷⁴ For many of my interviewers, nostalgia was not a simple sentiment either, as people were quite interpretive of why they remembered that way. The present poor conditions, the mismanagement of the economy, the corruption cases after the deindustrialization maintained nostalgic memories. In this sense, nostalgia becomes a mood to enable a critical engagement with the present and express desires for the future.

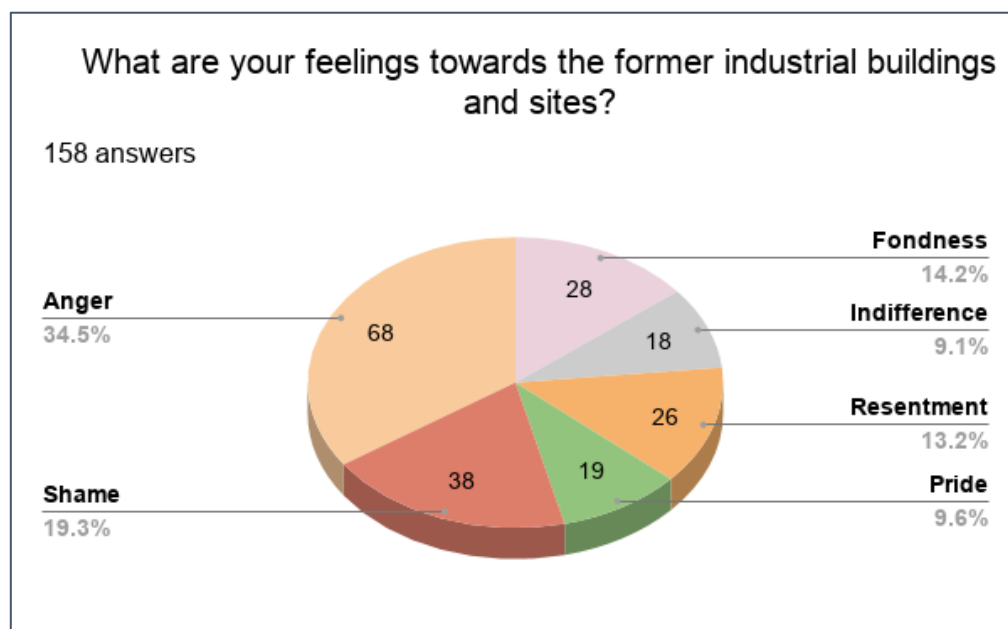


Figure 17: Survey response analysis about the feelings former industrial buildings and sites evoke among the inhabitants of Vanadzor

Other perceptions shared frequently are about the ‘silent’ and ‘empty’ streets in the city, especially in the former industrial district of chemical workers, and direct comparison to the ‘lively’ streets back in the industrial period.

These emotions and perceptions have become the topic of artworks. For 25-year-old Astghik Aslanyan, though vacant and dilapidated, these places are meaningful, as she spent her

⁷⁴ Tim Strangleman, “Smokestack Nostalgia,” “Ruin Porn” or Working-Class Obituary: The Role and Meaning of Deindustrial Representation.” *International Labor and Working-Class History* (2013): 23-37.

childhood there. In a documentary film, she walks along the streets of the Chemical Workers District (known as Chimzavod among locals), visiting abandoned parks and the Chemical Plant area, taking the viewers to these places with her. During her walks, she rarely provides any explanation. One of the vivid descriptions is the following:

The former Vanadzor is associated with two things: the stories about the earthquake and the vibrant life of the Soviet- period industries and culture. Both stories give a ghost town effect to Vanadzor.⁷⁵

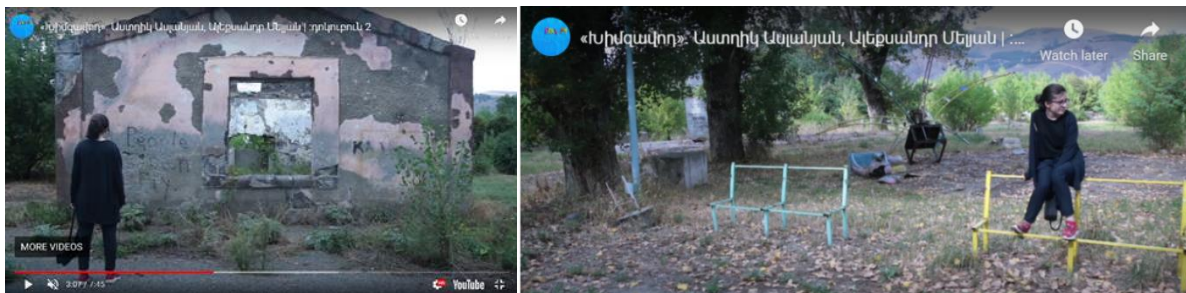


Figure 18: Screenshots from *Խիմզավոդ* [Khimzavod] film.

Source: Yerevan: Boon TV, 2009, accessed April 11, 2021, <https://boon.am/khimzavod/>

Another young filmmaker, Grigor Poghosyan, in his fiction-documentary entitled “Where we are going”, depicts the de-industrial Vanadzor city, with its hardships and youth with a little prospect.⁷⁶ While talking to Grigor, he mentioned Detroit and compared it to Vanadzor. Although these sites do not evoke positive emotions in him, he appreciates their power to make him think and create art:

Imagine, every day, I look at the factories while sitting on my balcony and drinking a coffee. They became a prism through which to view the world. You realize how bad is all this environment, and you want to cry, however, you somehow like it. Since early childhood, we have looked at the ruins in the background of the green areas and began to like it. They became a source to create art... influenced by the movie since childhood we would imitate *Stalker* in those buildings.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Astghik Aslanyan, Alexander Melyan [Աստղիկ Ասլանյան, Ալեքսանդր Մելյան], *Խիմզավոդ* [Khimzavod] (Yerevan: Boon TV, 2009), the film was accessed on March 30, 2021, <https://boon.am/khimzavod/>

⁷⁶ Grigor Poghosyan, *Where are we going?* (fiction documentary film), 2017, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO0buIVyPnQ>

⁷⁷ An interview with Grigor Poghosyan, August 15, 2020.



Figure 19: Scenes from the movie *Where Are We Going*
 Source: Armenian National Committee of America, accessed April 11, 2021,
<https://ancawr.org/young-filmmakers-in-vanadzor-ask-where-are-we-going/>

Locals' attachment to former industrial sites and buildings can be noticed through observing how they have turned them into urban landmarks⁷⁸ as part of their daily navigations. When survey participants mentioned they mostly saw the former industrial sites and buildings in everyday life (52 out of 130 answers), many of them specifically mentioned names of the former factory buildings, such as "Avtogenmash," "Chimzavod," "Avtomatika," "Heaters" plants, etc.⁷⁹ Some interviewees mentioned they used those sites for their daily navigation and meetings. They tell the taxi drivers to take them to Chimzavod (Chemical workers neighborhood). The former Chemical Plant's name appears even on the list of stations of the public minibuses.



Figure 20: Chemical Workers' district name on a public transport in Vanadzor city. Source: taken and provided by Vahagn Vardanyan

⁷⁸ A research on how people perceive and remember distinct elements in built urban environment, see Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, (1960, Cambridge: MIT Press).

⁷⁹ Survey: An attempt to reevaluate the industrial heritage of Vanadzor, an online survey conducted by Lilit Manukyan, May 17-June 17, 2020, accessed May 14, 2021, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1KYJfZwG7Nh2r9dFywajS1LLIziL9yRTXsdANaDvqK4/edit#responses>

The “Engage Vanadzor” project also turned them into the welcome features to the city:

The two giant industrial complexes located by the entrance hub of the city of Vanadzor can be considered as important visual identifications of the city. Chimneys of the chemical fibers plant and the thermal power station of Vanadzor greet the visitors even from kilometers away. These two industrial giants became an integral part of the city fabric and have been a symbol of the country’s past advanced industry.⁸⁰



Figure 21: Vanadzor Thermal Power Plant Chemical microfibers plant of Vanadzor
Source: *An Industrial Greeting*, urbanlab think/plan/share, accessed April 10, 2021
<https://blog.urbanlab.am/2016/09/industrial-greeting.html>

While in the industrial period, plant buildings or ironworks would represent a prosperous, modernized city, now, in a dilapidated form, they are posted on social media by some community members to evoke nostalgic memories and reflections about their past and present. In the image below, posted on social media, residents express both nostalgic memories and anger and resentment for the present state of the building criticizing private owners and former the former ruling political party and presidents who did not manage to maintain the industries.

⁸⁰Urbanlab, “An Industrial Greeting”, within “Engage Vanadzor” project, accessed March 30, 2021, <http://blog.urbanlab.am/2016/09/industrial-greeting.html>

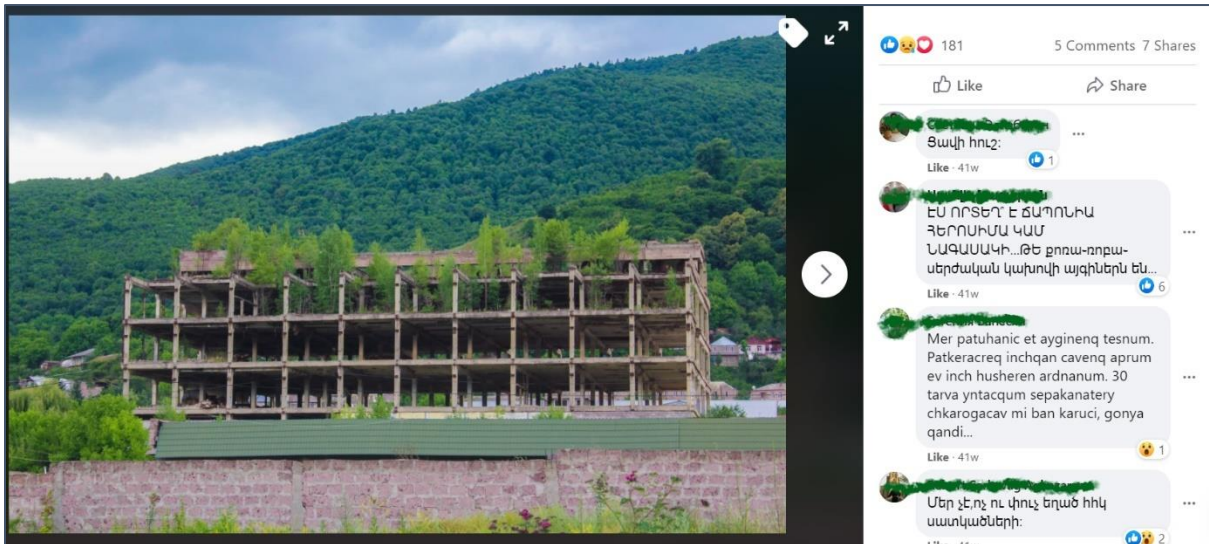


Figure 22: One of the vacant industrial buildings posted and discussed on social media.
Source: Taken by Vahagn Vardanyan, Facebook page,
accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100004988923534>

To collect memories of the industrial-era Chemical Workers' neighborhood, the local youth created city stickers and posted on the community Facebook group asking people to recall stories about the neighborhood. Again, the plant chimneys served as signs to identify the neighborhood.



Figure 23: As city sticker created by local youth: in Armenian reads Chimzavod standing for the Chemical Workers neighborhood with the Chemical Plant.

Source: Միասին նախաչենք Վանաձորը [Let us recognize Vanadzor together] Facebook group, accessed April 13, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/Vanadzorhistory/posts/1556177717762040>

Artashes, one of the local young persons, born in the post-industrial city, described the relationship between former industrial buildings as being

some part of our identity... one can conflict or be in peace with them, whatsoever, they are part of our reality. We recognize our reality [the city] also through them. Imagine that you get up and see your shelf is missing and your bed is a different one. Wouldn't you feel discomfort?"⁸¹

Thus, the former industrial neighborhood with de-industrialized sites and buildings evoking negative and positive emotions are a part of the inhabitants' place identity.

3.2.2 Perceptions of the Industrial Past as Urban History and Identity

The emotions of fondness and pride towards former plant buildings were accompanied by memories and evaluations of their role in the urban history and identity. One of the questions that opened space for evaluations was whether it is worth presenting the industrial buildings and telling their stories to visitors. For most of the positive answers (70 out of 116), former industrial buildings were reminders of industrialization, a decisive factor in the formation and development of the city.

It is our historical heritage. (female, 28y)

It is the biography of Vanadzor. (female, 60y)

You can not erase your history (male, 45y)

It is history; Vanadzor is a new city, does not have old history; therefore, factory histories make the powerful past of the town. (female, 22y)

We had a mighty industrial city, and the industry was an essential thing in the history of our city. (male, 64y)

While considering the historical importance of industries, many locals would describe the advent of industries as a threshold between urban and rural settlements.

Due to them [industries], since the 1930s, the village Gharakilisa became a city. (male, 30y)

As described in the second chapter, back in the industrial period, life in and out of the factories would create the workers' sense of belonging to certain workers' collectives and neighborhoods. The former workers of the Chemical Factory often remembered the activities

⁸¹ An interview with Artashes Sergoyan, August 16, 2020.

and places where they communicated with each other and established strong ties. Although now they do not share these former common activities, many still have that sense of belonging to the Chemical Workers' District and the former coworkers. This experience is the basis of a perception of not only urban history and identity but also personal and family identities. This is why sometimes their accounts combine these two levels:

Each of them [factories] has its story, which all make part of the city's biography; they make part of the album pages of thousands of families; they are monuments. (female, 50y)
It is our past, the struggles, and achievements of our parents; if we keep them, they will also become monuments over time. (female, 42y)
They are part of Vanadzor's history. When you have a guest in your home, don't you show them some of your childhood/youth photos and tell them about yourself? (male, 55y)

However, not all the respondents evaluated the former industrial buildings and sites as worth presenting to visitors. 20 people out of 136 would not favor this idea because of the poor condition of the buildings and their surroundings, evoking sadness and shame, or just because they do not see them as something historically valuable.

It is a shame to show redundant, plundered buildings. (female, 54y)
It is a shame as we didn't do anything to preserve them; they are in a disastrous condition. (female, 55y)
They don't represent any architectural and artistic value; they are typical Soviet buildings. (male, 30y)
They show a sad scenery; I think a tourist needs more positive feelings. (female, 67y)
It is not proper to turn the ruins into a historical culture. (female, 48y)

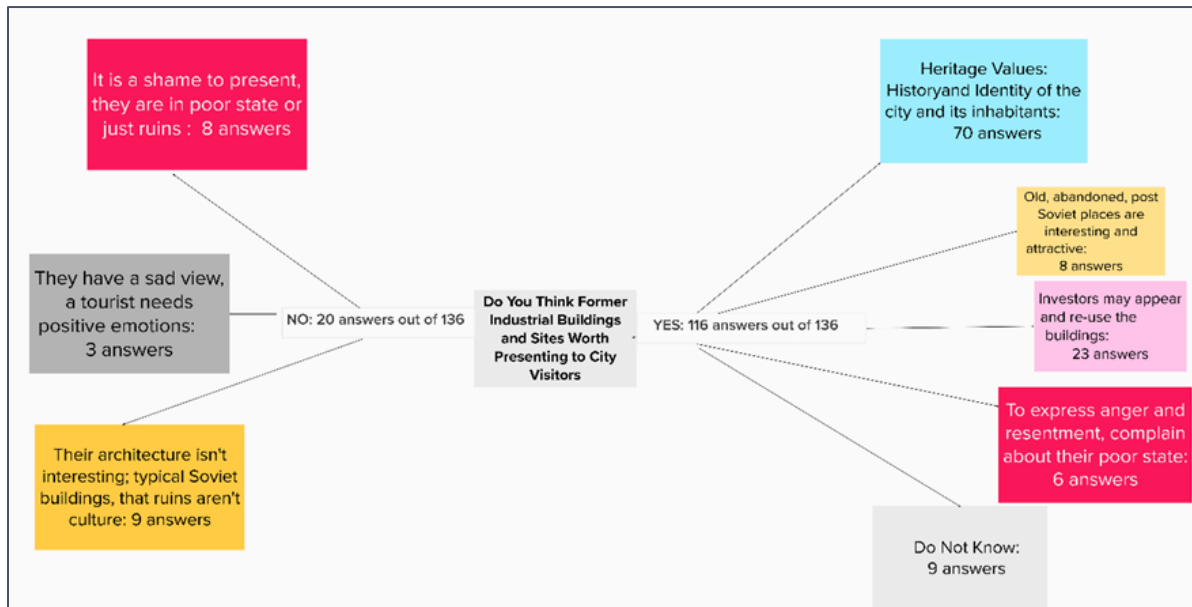


Figure 24: Survey response analysis: opinions whether former industrial buildings and sites should be represented to city visitors or not.

Source: A summary of the online survey by Lilit Manukyan, accessed May 14, 2021, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1KYJfZwG7Nh2r9dFywajyS1LLlziL9yRTXsdANaDvqK4/edit#responses>

3.3 Ideas and Initiatives of Utilizing Industrial Heritage Values

The questions to respondents about what to do with the former industrial sites and buildings and their potential in terms of improving the socio-economic conditions and to create a more pleasant urban environment revealed diverse and contradictory viewpoints and visions. The majority expressed a wish to reuse the buildings and sites. While most of the former workers would favor the idea of reoperating former industries (at least on a smaller scale than before), the younger generation with different expertise and occupations (architects, urbanists, artists, tourism specialists, etc.) would suggest more diverse ideas from industrial museums to spaces for city market and artisans' workshops, from sports and leisure parks to cultural event venues. Accordingly, the values attached to the buildings were different and contradictory.

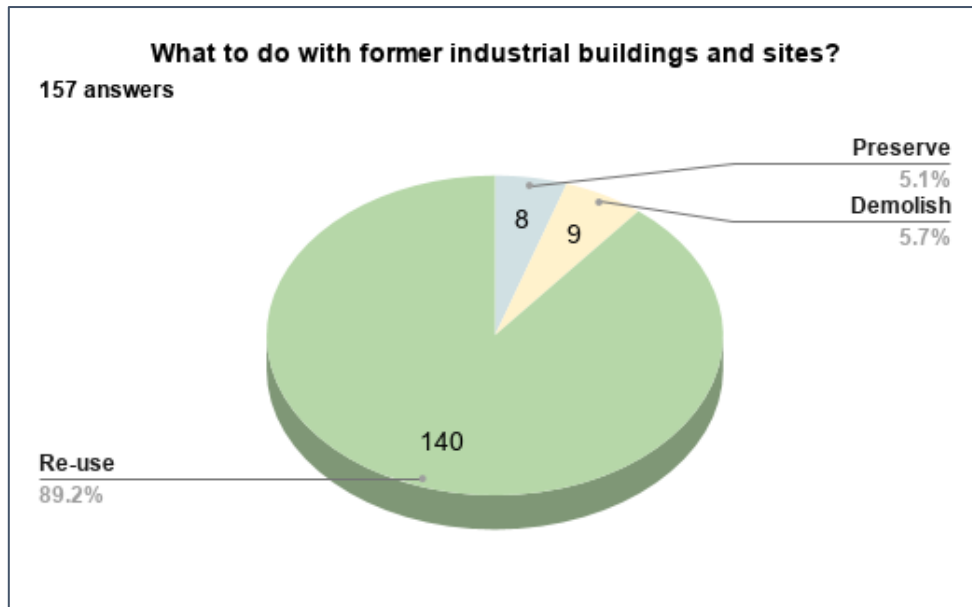


Figure 25: Survey response analysis: opinions on the future of former industrial buildings and sites

The ones who want to reoperate former industries evaluate the buildings and sites as economic assets and job providers for former industrial workers. Hence, they expressed their hope that due to some new investments, they may reopen. In light of the high level of unemployment in the city and the poor socio-economic conditions, it is more understandable why most survey participants express their wish about reusing the former factory buildings for production and just as workplaces. However, when it comes to shifting from a wish to practice, most of them are pessimistic, mentioning the obstacles and seeing a slight possibility of re-establishing industries there. Describing the decay, the abandoned state of the plant buildings, the sale of the production machinery, the contamination of some areas, the unwillingness of the owners to re-establish industrial production, they can hardly imagine any change. Filled with nostalgic memories and sadness, some of them do not see any prospect. “It is such a pity to see how the buildings are decaying, and trees are growing on them; in ten years, nothing may be left,” – told one of the 60-year-old male respondents.

Although some representatives of the older generation were aware of adaptive re-use cases in other countries, they cannot imagine the relevance of the same practice for Vanadzor. They stated that the problems concerning the current basic needs of people are not solved, and a

proper urban infrastructure is lacking. At the same time, in countries such as Germany and France, these issues are not urgent, so they have the resources and time to turn former mines into museums or industrial sites into parks.

I have seen how in European countries old industrial places are turned into workshops for painters or artisans... for Vanadzor, this is impossible at least in the upcoming 50 years. There are not even public toilets, how do you imagine a tourist enjoying the city and taking a look at the industrial ruins?⁸²

Others, just stressing the importance of industries, did not see any promising benefit from turning the former buildings into heritage or touristic sites. As one of the former production managers of the Chemical Plant would state, “No one cares about the Chemical Workers’ neighborhood to become part of UNESCO reports, what one cares about is that we wasted a huge industrial potential by our own hands.”⁸³

Answers such as re-use for “new workplaces,” “alternative places,” “do not know” indicate that many locals do not have specific ideas but want the buildings and sites to be re-used to somehow benefit the city and its inhabitants.

At the same time, 16% (22 answers out of 139) of the survey participants and nine respondents in interviews came up with various ideas and suggestions on how to reuse the former industrial buildings and sites.

⁸² An interview with Samvel Arakelyan.

⁸³ An interview with a former production manager of the Chemical Plant.

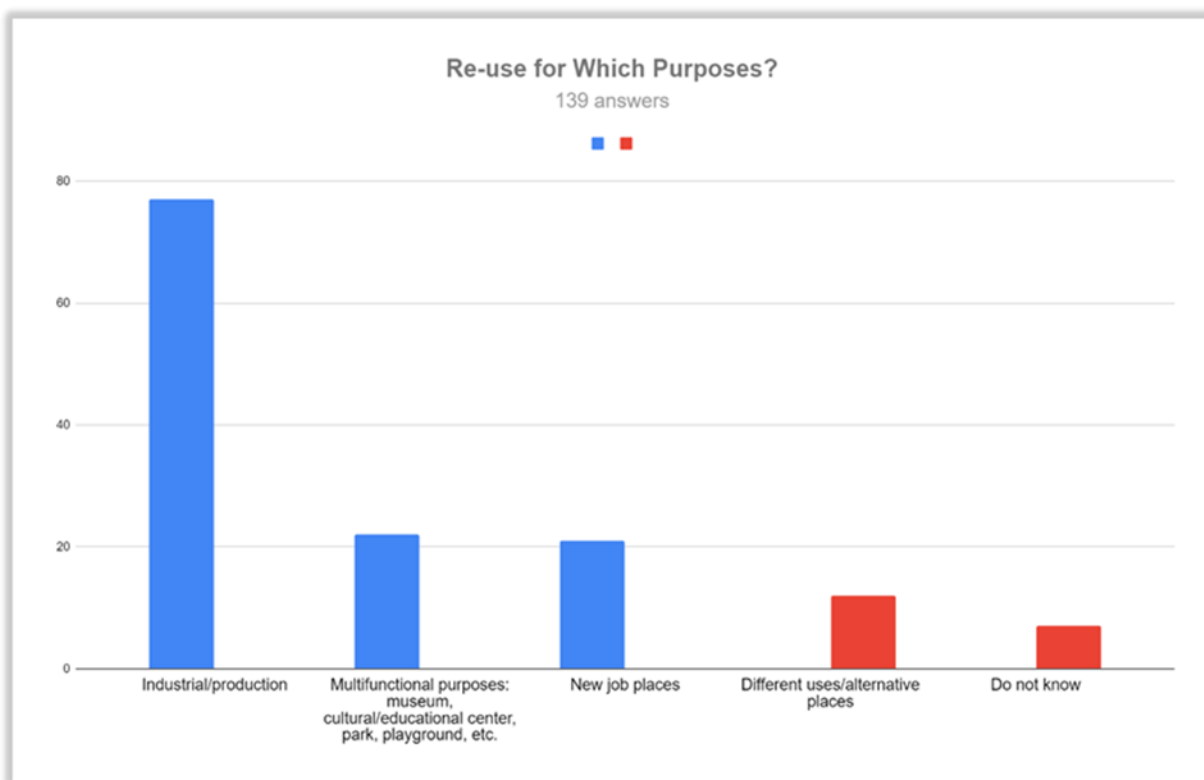


Figure 26: Survey response analysis: Suggestions on how to re-use former industrial sites and buildings

A Museum of the Chemical Workers' neighborhood

This idea was suggested by Vahagn Vardanyan, who wants to create a museum on the location of his former school and build a miniature model of the Chemical Workers' neighborhood with all the images and stories he collected. Having been raised in a working family, he has lived in this neighborhood since his birth, 1974. After the earthquake in 1988, many buildings were destroyed including his school. For some years, he has been searching for photos of the school and its football field named after the chemical workers. Though he did not find these, he found many images of other buildings of his neighborhood and the industrial-period Kirovakan. He collected these images on his Facebook account, which became a virtual platform for other community members to engage with their past experiences remembering the places and activities. Every photograph posted of different buildings and sites evokes memories and inspires discussions among the community members. Thus, the future museum can become an

example of a bottom-up community initiative of re-creating and remembering their common past and heritage.⁸⁴



Figure 27: The absent school and football field in the Chemical workers' neighborhood. Imagined as a location for a future museum by Vahagn Vardanyan. Photo by Vahagn Vardanyan, sent by him via Facebook.

Industrial buildings and sites as museums and monuments

Emphasizing the importance of the industrial past and its structures for the history, identity, and architecture of Vanadzor, some suggested preserving the latter as monuments and museums. The head of urban planning and architecture of Vanadzor municipality stated:

To conserve all the industrial sites is not reasonable in using the urban land resource, but some parts of the Chemical Plant can be turned into museums. Collections from other factories can be obtained and taken there too and exhibited in one place... many buildings of the Chemical Plant, especially the administrative unit with the monument of Alexander Myasnikyan, displays interesting architecture and can be turned into a museum of our industrial past.

This idea was heard from a few young respondents too.

Vanadzor is not an old city, and the Chemical Plant has been present in the big part of its history and became a symbol of the town for many years...there are exciting things there, it would be cool if it became accessible to the public. I do

⁸⁴ Vahagn Vardanyan, Facebook account, accessed April 5, 2021 <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100004988923534>

not imagine that site as a leisure place; it is better to preserve and turn it into a monument. (Astghik Aslanyan, 25y, female, lawyer).

Sevada Petrossian, an architect and the director of the “Engage Vanadzor” project, valued the industrial buildings as part of Vanadzor’s modernist architecture. Hence, together with other reuse ideas, he stressed their importance as a tangible aspect of Vanadzor, and that the buildings are worth preserving.



Figure 28: The entrance of the former Chemical plant with the statue of Al. Myasnikyan, after whom the plant was named. Source: urbanlab think-tank, Yerevan, <http://www.urbanlab.am/en/>, provides the image.

Industrial buildings and sites for sports and culture

Ideas of turning the sites and buildings into venues for extreme sports, adventure parks, playgrounds came from young people. Some of them had a detailed vision of how to organize those activities. For example, Grigor Poghosyan explained how the former Chemical Microfibers’ Plant site is suitable for drag racing. Moreover, he mentioned the basketball courts built still in the Soviet era belonging to the same plant. As he says, it just needs some cleaning and can become a place of training and games again. Former production buildings with high ceilings were imagined to be turned into concert and exhibition halls and venues for sports

activities. Albert Isahakyan, a singer of the local rock band “Clocker,” being informed about the cases of adaptive reuse in other countries, imagined the same for Vanadzor.

I am going to Yerevan for concerts, many of my artist friends have also left the city... it would be better to have a proper place here and make cultural events active in Vanadzor. It is vital for the city’s development, and more tourists will visit the city.⁸⁵

As mentioned in the second chapter, the “Engage Vanadzor” project organized the first rock concert near the former Chemical plant to engage locals into thinking about unused industrial spaces in a new way. However, right now, no building is available for local artists to re-use.



Figure 29: A view from the concert nearby the Chemical Factory, organized by “Engage Vanadzor” project in the frame of European Heritage Days, 2016.

Source: urbanlab, *Tangible meeting intangible*, part 2, accessed April 25, 2021, <https://blog.urbanlab.am/2016/10/2-tangible-meeting-intangible-part-2.html>

Former industrial buildings and sites as artisan’s workshops and marketplace

When speaking about the values of vacant industrial buildings, an architect Sevada Petrossian suggested:

First, they have the material/economic value. We do not use this vast built environment once created for the city. If they do not serve for their former function, they should be re-used for other purposes... for example, I know guys who make musical instruments in their bedrooms or woodworkers’ making furniture. For instance, they need a working space... for example, the former Heater’s Factory, now being locked and decaying, can become a multifunctional space – from workshops to a co-working space.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ An interview with Albert Isahakyan, a singer and composer of “Clocker” band in Vanadzor.

⁸⁶ An interview with Sevada Petrossian, the manager of “Engage Vanadzor” project.



Figure 30: The Former Heaters factory in Vanadzor. Suggested to be re-used as a working space.
Source: urbanlab, <http://www.urbanlab.am/en/>.

Artashes Sergoyan, who has been actively involved in NGOs dealing with local youth issues, civil society, and community development projects, had ideas on how to connect current urban problems with the re-use of the former industrial buildings. He suggested giving the places to small entrepreneurs - stonemasons, blacksmiths, car mechanics, traders, who now do not have proper spaces to work and use their garages, storages, or the courtyards of residential blocks. They make noise and disturb the neighbors. Moreover, many sidewalks of the city streets are occupied by garages for repair workshops, which were initially designed as public areas. The same refers to the city's open-air market, occupying public places and causing a chaotic situation. According to him, the empty factory sites and buildings can host all these activities.⁸⁷

Former industrial buildings and sites in architectural projects

Vanadzor's disused ex-industrial areas have become a project topic for graduate students in architecture and urban planning. Their primary approach is to reorganize and redevelop the planning structure of the city, targeting either one complex or the most significant part of the former industrial zone. The primary value they attribute to these sites are economic or material, while the heritage component is not acknowledged when coming up with suggestions on changing their function. As Levon Hakhinyan states, the buildings are not monuments of history and culture, so any intervention is possible. His project is about turning the former

⁸⁷ An interview with Artashes Sergoyan, August 16, 2020.

Chemical Microfibers Plant into a multifunctional youth center containing spaces and facilities for sports, culture, arts, leisure, and a hotel.⁸⁸



Figure 31: The former Chemical Microfibers Plant of Vanadzor.

Source: urbanlab, “Engage Vanadzor” project, accessed April 6, 2021, <http://www.urbanlab.am/en/>



Figure 32: Levon Hakhinyan's project of turning the former Chemical Fiber Plant into a Youth center

Source: National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia, accessed April 6, 2021, <https://nuaca.am/archives/competition-project/hakhinyan-levon>

Serob Gyulkhanjyan's project, encompassing the former 160 hectares of the industrial zone, is a larger project aiming at increasing urban green areas and creating multifunctional recreational public sites and buildings grouped into a) an industrial tourism zone (museum, cultural zone, entertainment park, etc.), b) a sports zone c) a resort zone d) and a technopark.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ An interview with Levon Hakhinyan, 17 August 2020. His project: Hakhinyan Levon, The Project of a Youth Centre in Vanadzor city, National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia, Accessed 6 April 2021, <https://nuaca.am/archives/competition-project/hakhinyan-levon>

⁸⁹ Serob Gyulkhanjyan, “Regeneration and modernization of Vanadzor city industrial zone”, ARCHITECTUR4EVER, accessed April 10, 2021, <http://archnouri.eklablog.com/regeneration-and-modernization-of-vanadzor-city-industrial-zone-a117733628>



Figure 33: Serob Gyulkhanjysn's project.

Source: *Regeneration and modernization of Vanadzor city industrial zone*, ARCHITECTUR4EVER accessed April 10, 2021, <http://archnouri.eclablog.com/regeneration-and-modernization-of-vanadzor-city-industrial-zone-a117733628>

As Hakhinyan states, it can take decades in a country like Armenia to implement these types of projects. Firstly, the legal status and ownership issues are complicated. Secondly, it is not possible to attract one significant investment so it can only be done gradually. All these projects and ideas are just on paper or in the digital sphere; none of them have been put into practice so far.

The use of industrial buildings and sites in touristic representations

By 9% (8 answers out of 116) of the survey respondents and some of the individual interviewees, Soviet industrial buildings were considered exciting and alternative touristic

sites. Over the last couple of years, some city tour programs were started which including Soviet-era structures. Since industrial buildings and the stories about them make a big part of the Soviet urban past and present, they became the objects of touristic presentations. “Discover Vanadzor on Two Wheels” is a grassroots tour project suggesting bike tours around the city, including former industrial sites.⁹⁰ The content of the tour texts is based on local history books and oral histories or memories of the older generation.



Figure 34: City tour information images: depicting factory and other dilapidated buildings.

Source: Discover Vanadzor on Two Wheels tour company, Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/events/2635222646756142/>

Working in the Lori Information center,⁹¹ a group of local youth has created a city tour program- “Soviet Visuals in Vanadzor: Guided Tour Around Vanadzor, Exploring the Soviet Era Heritage of The City”- including factory buildings.

The interviews with the organizers of these tour projects, Ani Maloyan from the “Lori Information Center” and Emma Petrosyan from the “Vanadzor on Two Wheels” travel company, revealed, that on the one hand there is a personal interest to explore and show the abandoned buildings as part of the urban history and present-day landscape, on the other hand, they are also aware of the industrial heritage tourism, Socialist-era tourism outside Armenia and find that it is interesting for certain types of tourists.

⁹⁰ Smithsonian. My Armenia. “Vanadzor’s Soviet Heritage on Two Wheels.” Accessed April 28, 2021. <https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/vanadzors-soviet-heritage-two-wheels/>

⁹¹ Lori Visitor Information Center, accessed April 7, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/LoriVisitorInformationCenter>

They mentioned public inaccessibility as the main challenge to the implementation of their tour programs. They cannot take tours inside the buildings and their privately owned surroundings. While some of the owners are reluctant to open them, others even do not live in the city. They believe the municipality can somehow mediate and help in solving this issue.

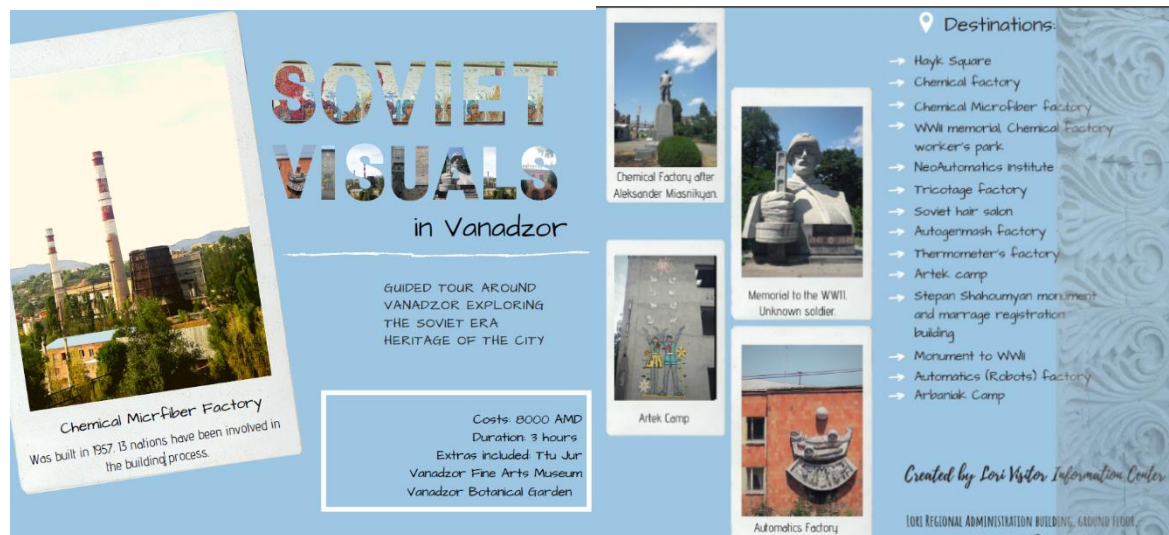


Figure 35: The tourist brochure for a city tour around Vanadzor's Soviet-era monuments, buildings, and sites, including factories.

Source: Lori Visitor Information Center, <https://www.facebook.com/LoriVisitorInformationCenter>

CHAPTER FOUR - SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO UTILIZE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE VALUES FOR COMMUNITY BENEFITS

As discussed in the first chapter, the thesis is based on two main approaches to heritage. On the one hand, it follows Smith's idea that *(industrial)heritage* is about *meanings and values people attribute to objects*; on the other hand, Harrison's suggestions that heritage should be observed in the frame of *dialogue among people, objects, ideas, and practices*, and studies should be carried out within a *dialogue between heritage and socio-economic, environmental aspects of life*. Then, in the second and third chapters, I described various people, ideas, objects, and practices related to the industrial past and deindustrialized present of Vanadzor city. All the emotional attachments, evaluations, perceptions, suggestions about the former industrial buildings and sites are *industrial heritage elements* of this city. However, *awareness and recognition* of this understanding of heritage and the concept of *dialogue* are the main issues that are absent.

Thus, the fourth chapter will come up with some recommendations for policymakers, municipal governors, locals concerned in civil activism and community development on *expanding the notion of heritage* by introducing the concept of *industrial heritage* when dealing with people, objects, ideas, and practices associated with the industrial past and deindustrialized present. Making the *discourse* on industrial heritage active will help the existing practices described above to develop and new ones to be introduced.

I will also make some suggestions on how to initiate a *dialogue* or collaboration between the different ideas, people, practices, and things *to use and enhance the values* of industrial heritage for adaptive re-use of the buildings and sites. The suggestions are informed and inspired by experiences and good cases from European countries including some from the post-Soviet region. This chapter will not give directions and detailed instructions on how to re-use a specific

building since there is not enough research done on any specific place to do that. Leaving this idea for future research, this chapter will suggest more general steps as a prerequisite to adaptive-heritage reuse and outline the possible benefits this practice can entail for the community.

4.1 Raising Awareness and Dialogue on Industrial Heritage Values

The general attitude towards heritage and the language of its description should be revised. This change should occur both in official documents and the public discourse. As described above, in the urban development plans the material remains of the industrial past are described as burdens, weakness, and not appreciated as part of the urban heritage. However, various evaluations of this legacy by the locals revealed that they are intangible and tangible assets being associated with local identity and assessed as an economic resource for multifunctional re-use. Hence, following the inhabitants' opinions, creators of development plans and policymakers should consider industrial heritage as a *resource instead of a burden* or an opportunity instead of a threat. Thus, integrating the concept of industrial heritage into the community development plans and including its *values* in the actual projects should be one of the first steps in re-evaluating and renaming local heritage.

As mentioned earlier, not all the research participants would call their memories and evaluations industrial heritage. Because people follow dominant heritage discourses, even what is valuable for them is not always termed as cultural heritage.

The experience of other de-industrialized communities outside Armenia shows that the change in the discourse at public level takes time. The experience of communities in western Germany, the Ruhr Region, is one of the earliest and successful examples. The concept of industrial heritage emerged there in the 1970s; intellectuals, academics, and local people began to record industrial life's tangible and intangible aspects and claim its preservations as a heritage. At the

same time, the former industrial sites and buildings were converted into industrial museums and multipurpose spaces dominated by green areas. This movement aiming at recognizing, preserving, and re-using industrial heritage was driven by the realization of the role of industries in local history and identity formation.⁹²

While acknowledging the differences in the political and socio-economic history between Germany and the former Soviet Union, including Armenia, the research findings show that industrial experience shaped identities for both communities. The main difference is that in Germany, the industrial heritage discourse has been created, and it is active, while in Armenia, Vanadzor city, this is a newly emerging discourse. Further research, like this thesis, based on local processes, should contribute to the emergence of the idea that industrial heritage is part of the local cultural heritage. Making the discourse active may, in the future, lead to changes in heritage regulations on official and legislative levels.

(Industrial) heritage processes and projects in European communities, including some in the former Soviet republics, can be inspirational and helpful to understand how vacant and disused industrial buildings can be valued as part of local heritage and become a space of collaboration among various actors interested in re-use. These practices demonstrate how activities in and around these buildings can lead to social and economic benefits for communities. Many of these initiatives have created networks, such as Trans Europe Halles, a transnational network established in 1983 and uniting 127 community socio-cultural centers operating mostly in former industrial buildings in 36 countries from Spain to Ukraine, from the UK to Georgia.⁹³ Many other inspirational cases can be found in the frame of the “Open Heritage” research project (2018-2020).⁹⁴ Identifying and analyzing sixteen “Observatory

⁹²Stefan Berger, Christian Wicke, and Jana Golombek, “Burdens of Eternity? Heritage, Identity, and the “Great Transition” in the Ruhr”, *The Public Historian*, Vol. 39, No. 4, (2017): 21–43.

⁹³ Trans Europe Halles, “About Us,” accessed April 27, 2021, <https://teh.net/about-us/>

⁹⁴ Open Heritage, People, Places, Potential, accessed April 27, 2021, <https://openheritage.eu/>

cases” of adaptive heritage re-use across Europe, the researchers convey successful stories about how various stakeholders can collaborate, find financial means, to re-use heritage buildings, and how this activity can have economic, social, and cultural benefits for communities.

As for the Vanadzor community in Armenia, local actors can take these good cases as a knowledge resource while remaining relevant to local conditions. These cases are successful combinations of analysis and practice some of which are available on the Open Heritage webpage with reports and videos.⁹⁵ I will bring some examples from a few cases that can make the discourse on industrial heritage more active on the local level and help to get involved in a broader, international network. Furthermore, these cases give some ideas about possible public-private partnerships among various stakeholders when re-using buildings. The selected cases are from Los Santos de Maimona, Spain (La Fábrica De Toda La Vida), Lisbon, Portugal (Largo Residências), Stockholm, Sweden (Fargfabriken), Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Marineterrein - Navy Yard), and Lviv, Ukraine (Jam Factory).

As these cases inform, **initiating a dialogue among local inhabitants, including civic organizations** is crucial because they will contribute to raise awareness and change the heritage discourse. Secondly, successful collaborations are a key to re-use of a former industrial building. As this research identified, there are many locals in Vanadzor with ideas and initiatives to utilize values of industrial heritage; however, these interested parties are not always aware of each other. Hence, it is crucial to get to know each other, gather and discuss these issues. Especially the youth concerned with community issues should be a driving force. Engagement of the older generation into the process can be the most challenging part, however over time, and it will be possible. The experience of the Spanish youth gathered around the re-

⁹⁵ “The Observatory Cases,” including videos and detailed analyses, can be found on the Open Heritage website, accessed April 27, 2021, <https://openheritage.eu/practices/>

use of a former cement factory (La Fábrika De Toda La Vida) is a good case to mention in this respect. Some of them, being educated abroad, came back to their rural community and initiated meetings and discussions among residents on the former cement factory, recognizing it as a “forgotten heritage” that can become a creative cultural center.⁹⁶

Urban planners, architects, policymakers should adopt a participatory and inclusive approach for identifying and interpreting heritage. In this regard, grass-root initiatives should be in the focus of any project. As this thesis shows, the values are hidden in the thoughts and initiatives of various community members interested in the re-use of the buildings. This means that as many voices as possible should be heard and considered when making plans. For example, while designing urban regeneration projects based on industrial zones, planners or architects should be aware of the values and suggestions coming from the local inhabitants. To mention an inspirational case in this respect, the locals in Stockholm, gathering in the former paint factory (Fargfabriken), discuss urban problems with architects, urban planners, and other stakeholders.⁹⁷ Another initiative in The Netherlands (Marineterrein - Navy Yard in Amsterdam) can also be inspirational in terms of how the local inhabitants’ ideas and suggestions on un-used heritage buildings and sites can be integrated into urban revitalization projects. The specific project was about giving a new function to the area of former warfare ships’ construction. Local enterprises with different profiles- restaurants, hotels, educational centers, digital start-ups - were given a space to operate there with a short-term contract. The aim was not only to make the area just functional and active but also to give a chance to community actors to participate in the project, bring their visions on how an unused area can

⁹⁶ For more details, see the report and video on “La Fábrika De Toda La Vida” case, *Open Heritage*, Accessed May 17, 2021. <https://openheritage.eu/2018/11/22/la-fabrika-de-toda-la-vida/>

⁹⁷ For more details, see the report and video on “Fargfabriken” case, *Open Heritage*, Accessed May 17, 2021. <https://openheritage.eu/2018/11/22/fargfabriken/>

be transformed.⁹⁸ These inclusive and participatory approaches reinforce the **idea of heritage as a common good and as a shared resource**.

Following the logic of these initiatives, the urban development projects of Vanadzor should **Integrate the inhabitants' ideas and suggestions about industrial heritage re-use into the development plans concerning various aspects of urban life**. The main finding from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this thesis was that community members' suggestions for reusing former industrial buildings and sites address the issues the urban development plans prioritize too. The research participants discussed ideas and initiatives in line with the urban socio-economic, cultural, sports and tourism development issues the municipality is trying to deal with.

The visual below highlights this finding.

⁹⁸ For more details, see the report and video on “The Navy Yard, Amsterdam” case, *Open Heritage*, Accessed May 17, 2021, <https://openheritage.eu/2018/11/22/the-navy-yard-amsterdam/>

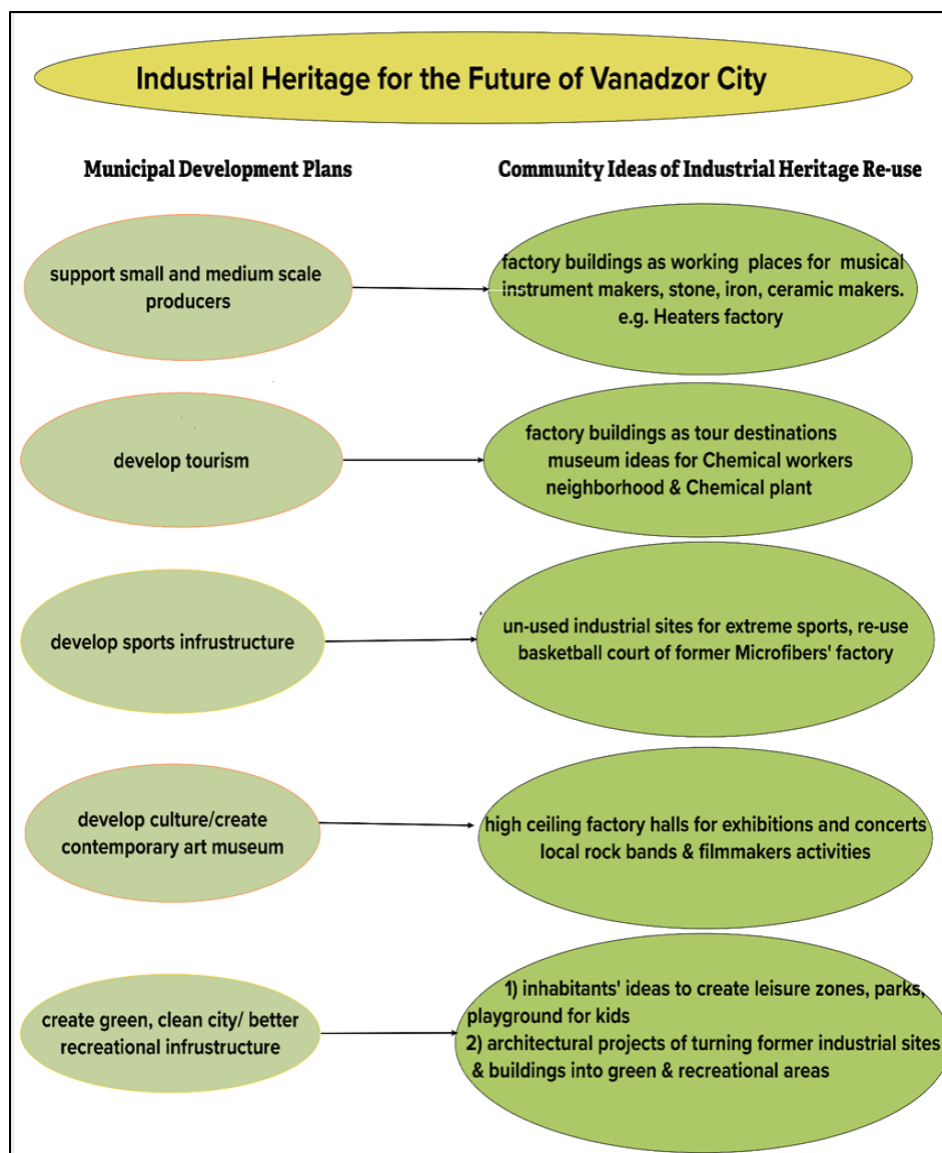


Figure 36: The link between urban development issues and suggestions by the locals about re-use of former industrial places

Source: Made by the author based on the urban development plans and research participants' ideas/practices described in chapters two and three

Maintaining heritage values with positive emotions: The possible re-use of any former factory building can connect the heritage values to a physical location, maintain peoples' sense of place, and change negative associations and emotions with positive ones. As described in the third chapter, former industrial buildings and sites are closely connected with urban history and identity. They evoke nostalgic memories of the industrial past among many locals as part of their urban, communal, personal identities. They are also perceived as part of the urban landscape serving as landmarks. At the same time, currently vacant and dilapidated, they evoke

negative feelings of anger, resentment, and sadness. Thus, the practice of re-using formerly abandoned buildings for community benefits will create conditions among locals to feel and think about these places in more positive terms and constructive ways.

Launching a placemaking process by adaptive re-use: Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. It is an outcome of local community's values, ideas, and potential, aimed to creating quality public places that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.⁹⁹ The above-mentioned inspirational cases from various countries show that locals make them meaningful by new practices while re-using the former industrial places, such as organizing meetings and discussions about community-related issues. For instance, the initiative of La Fábrika De Toda La Vida (Spain), while re-using a former cement factory and raising awareness of the forgotten industrial heritage in their community, changed the connotation to the space in a more positive direction. They worked with a building that, since its closure, for many decades, has evoked negative feelings among the locals, and used it “as an opportunity to rewrite a history of industrial failure.” Since 2009, the building began to be associated with creative cultural space, with future-oriented ideas for the community. The former industrial area in Stockholm (Fargfabriken) also stands as an excellent example of placemaking by letting locals engage with experimental artistic expressions, educational projects, and ideas on how they want to see the future of the area. Thus, adaptive heritage re-use practices promote not only the preservation of a building and the symbolic values it carries from the past (place history/memory, social experience, place identity, etc.), but this practice also gives space for the emergence of new social networks/communities with new cultural practices and values.

⁹⁹ Project for Public Spaces, “What Is Placemaking?”, 2007, accessed April 19, 2021, <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

4.2 Establishing Partnership Among Various Stakeholders

In the above section, I described the importance of integrating people in civil society or non-profit organizations or just community members in industrial heritage re-use projects. They make one big group of stakeholders. Here I will state the importance of other actors to partner with each other: municipal managers, private owners of buildings, individual donors, and international donor organizations.

As the third chapter informed, some projects are challenged when facing the absence of all necessary stakeholders. For instance, the “Discover Vanadzor on Two Wheels” tour project still faces challenges due to the lack of access to former factory areas, while being a good case of multi-stakeholder initiative (a few young local enthusiasts, donor organizations – Smithsonian and USAID – as well as anthropologists who collected oral stories from heritage carriers- former workers and others). As all the former industrial buildings and sites in Vanadzor are in private property, **private owners** should also appear as partners in any project. **The municipality** should take up the responsibility as mediator and negotiator between private owners and the other stakeholders. The municipal development plans state the importance of fostering collaboration with the private sector. Thus, this recommendation is in line with the current vision of the municipality. The municipality should also show interest and initiative in working with the locals’ ideas on re-using buildings for industrial heritage tourism and as working space, as they are in line with the agenda of the municipal strategic development plan: encouraging small and medium enterprises as well as tourism are among the aspects emphasized in the programs.

The European cases mentioned above reveal examples of how different actors can be present in one re-use project. In Lisbon (Largo Residências), when a group of people created a cultural and civic association and rented the former ceramics factory to re-use it as a hostel and space for artist-in-residence, the municipality took part in easing the communication between the

private owner and the local cultural association.¹⁰⁰ In the case of La Fabrica in Spain, the site was in public ownership, so the local youth was granted the right to its use by the municipality without any rent payment. They could use the land and decaying former cement factory in exchange for the cultivation and renovation of the space. In the case of Vanadzor, though factory buildings belong to private entities, the latter do not benefit leaving the buildings under the threat of decay. Hence, local small-scale entrepreneurs, artisans, and people in the creative industry could be granted the space for use in exchange for its renovation. If the space produces financial benefits over time, then a rental agreement can be signed with private owners.

In some other cases of adaptive reuse, **individual investors** play the central role. Jam Factory, a former food processing enterprise in Lviv (Ukraine), due to an individual donor, is being turned into a center of contemporary art based on experimental practices. The donor was interested in the buildings' architecture, bought it, and collaborating with local artists, repurposed it.¹⁰¹ Asking support from individual donors is relevant for Vanadzor too. For example, social entrepreneur Ruben Vardanyan has financed a project of doing experimental art to re-evaluate a former factory heritage in Dilijan city (Impuls factory), not far from Vanadzor.¹⁰² Though the project was short-term, and the factory building continues to be vacant and unused, this event could be a precedent for a practice when a private donor is interested and involved in heritage reuse projects.

¹⁰⁰ For more details, see the report and video on “Largo Residências” case, *Open Heritage*, Accessed May 17, 2021, <https://openheritage.eu/2018/11/22/largo-residencias/>

¹⁰¹ For more details, see the report and video on “Lviv Jam Factory” case, *Open Heritage*, Accessed May 17, 2021, <https://openheritage.eu/2018/11/22/lviv-jam-factory/>

¹⁰² The details of the project in Impuls factory as a way of re-using the building and its intangible heritage values, see, Lilit Manukyan, “Arts Experiments in Impuls factory, Dilijan, Armenia”, a sway story written as a student assignment, CEU, CHSP, Adaptive Heritage Reuse: Policy and Practice 2019/20 Winter, accessed April 28, 2021, <https://sway.office.com/6QxA1n3eFd4xvHPx>

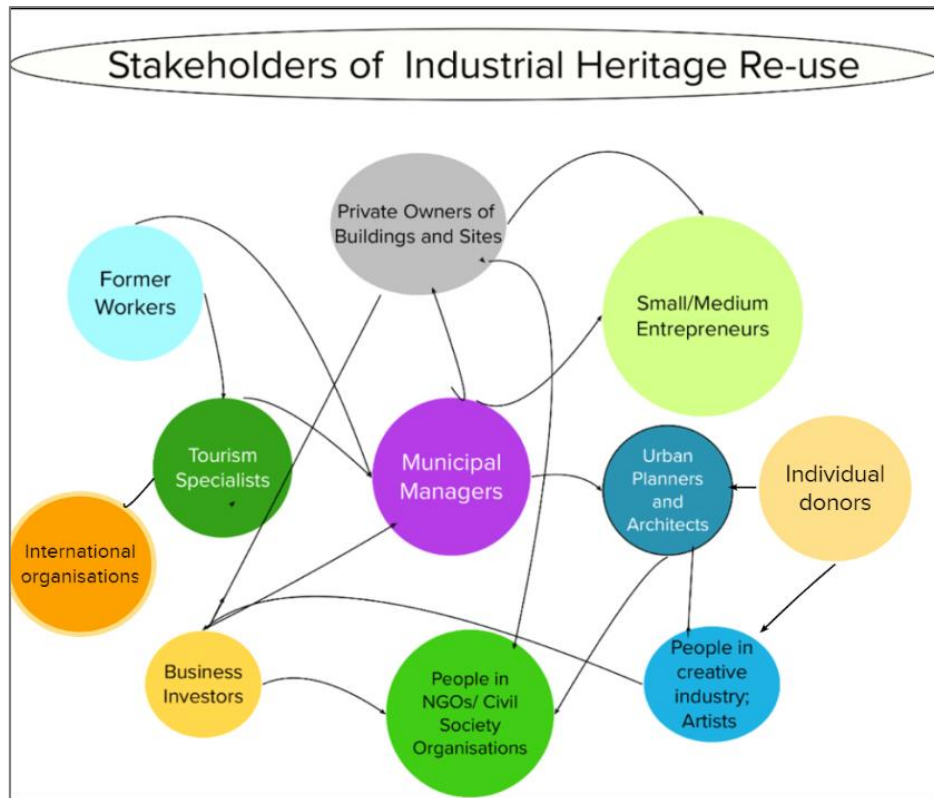


Figure 37: The primary stakeholders and possible partnership combinations for industrial heritage re-use project. In Vanadzor.

Source: made by the author.

International funding organizations concerned with community and cultural heritage development projects are also important actors. For example, the “Engage Vanadzor” project was realized with the help of the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA). Collaboration with this organization is beneficial for strengthening local grassroots initiatives and community participation. The initiators of the “Discover Vanadzor on Two Wheels” tour project got support when collaborating with the “My Armenia” project (financed by USAID and Smithsonian Institution).¹⁰³ Aiming to promote the social and economic development of the communities by research and the utilization of living heritage, this project helped identify heritage values from post-Soviet, post-industrial communities, including Vanadzor. Thus, it is

¹⁰³ The details about “My Armenia” program and its support to “Discover Vanadzor on Two Wheels” project can be read here: Smithsonian, My Armenia, Vanadzor’s Soviet Heritage on Two Wheels, accessed April 28, 2021, <https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/vanadzors-soviet-heritage-two-wheels/>

helpful to apply for support from funding organizations interested in community development through citizen participation and heritage at the local level.

Engagement with international networks of heritage re-use projects outside Armenia is also a necessary step for a) knowledge exchange and capacity building for local initiatives b) collaborating with other initiatives in the EU to apply for EU funding projects. For example, the project “Factories of Imagination: Investing in Cultural Changemakers” (2017-2021), initiated by Trans Europe Halles and funded by the EU, aims to engage newly emerging initiatives reusing heritage buildings and cultural-creative activities in Eastern Partnership countries, including Armenia. The sub-program Startup Support provides free strategic consultancy and training promoting the newly emerging initiatives.¹⁰⁴

Local initiatives in Vanadzor city can reach out to this international network with the help of one of the member centers located in Ukraine (Isolyatsia: Platform for Cultural Initiatives), as one of the coordinators of EastHub, Isolyatsia has taken the role of engaging with initiatives of heritage buildings re-use in the Eastern Partnership countries, including Armenia.¹⁰⁵ Thus, getting in touch with this cultural center will help to connect to the network of Trans Europe Halles, take part in their meetings, share the own challenges and goals, find opportunities for possible collaborations and the co-creation of artistic programs, as well as get consultancy about how to make the first steps in partnerships between stakeholders, how to apply for funding, etc.

As the interview with the development director of Isolyatsia cultural center informed, after the end of the “Factories of Imagination” project, Trans Europe Halles will initiate a new one. Moreover, members of the Trans Europe Halles are currently discussing expanding the

¹⁰⁴ Trans Europe Halles, Factories of Imagination: Investing in Cultural Changemakers, accessed April 27, 2021, <https://teh.net/project/factories-of-imagination/>

¹⁰⁵ Trans Europe Halles, EastHub meeting, accessed April 29, 2021, <https://teh.net/event/easthubmeeting/>

geography of their membership, allowing centers outside the EU to become members.¹⁰⁶ The membership will also ease the process of applying for EU funds. Thus, local grassroots initiatives in Vanadzor can consider these opportunities as a way of being associated and involved in a broad and international network in the future.

¹⁰⁶ An interview with Mykhailo Glubokyi, the development director of Isolyatsia: Platform for Cultural Initiatives,. April 27, 2021.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis commenced from the problem that the industrial legacy of Vanadzor city has not been interpreted and managed in terms of heritage thus its potential benefits for the community development have been ignored. Informed by the international experience of defining and utilizing industrial heritage values, I aimed to explore the values and meanings locals attribute to the industrial past and former factory buildings and sites, then to explore the practices and offer some suggestions on how these could benefit for current socio-economic needs of the community.

I started to represent the long way the notion of industrial heritage has been passed through academic and international organizations' platforms to demonstrate the significance of this notion and the main approaches and concepts associated with its definition, interpretation, and utilization. For this thesis, I selected the approaches which emphasize a) the discursive nature of heritage, b) the importance of interpreting and managing heritage in dialogue, i.e., engaging all the actors or creators of the heritage, c) the potential of heritage to be utilized for present and future needs of communities.

The second chapter contextualized the idea of industrial heritage for Vanadzor city by describing how industrialization and deindustrialization processes shaped an urban community with a sense of belonging to industrial activities. Then, the chapter explored the current discourse on industrial sites and buildings by the local municipality and NGO, and academic circles. No conception of heritage values towards former industrial buildings and sites was found in urban development plans. Instead, they were described in terms of weakness and threat for the present urban community. At the same time, initiatives in the frame of NGO's/think-tanks being informed by the experience of communities outside Armenia have started to discuss

the concept within heritage discourse. Moreover, academic interest is also emerging and raising the relevance of industrial heritage for Armenia.

By exploring the discourse on industrial heritage in the community, the third chapter presented the emotions, values, and meanings various community members attributed to the industrial past and current deindustrialized condition, focusing on the vacant and dilapidated factory buildings and sites. The chapter's main findings are that the inhabitants have active engagement with the industrial past and present. The main point is that even if former industrial buildings and peoples' evaluations were not always perceived in terms of (cultural) heritage, the values and meanings are about local's heritage, however not being recognized. These material reminders of the industrial past still define locals' sense of place, perception of urban formation, and history. Furthermore, having had long years' experience with industrial work, many inhabitants' personal, professional, and family identities are closely linked with the industrial past and ex-industrial buildings.

Many of the respondents showed active engagement with these material remains, imagining them in industrial heritage tourism, as a workspace, as well as for cultural and sports activities. Thus, it can be concluded that meanings and values are not only intangible connected to memories and identities but also to tangible aspects, such as built heritage convenient for various activities. By attributing values to former industrial buildings and suggesting ideas for their possible re-use, research participants demonstrated their vision, how they see the role of industrial heritage within the urban issues.

Based on these research findings and inspired by good practices from other countries, in the fourth chapter, I come up with suggestions to all local decision makers to consider all these evaluations as industrial heritage values and integrate the concept into urban development plans. The thesis demonstrated that the re-use of vacant buildings suggested by many respondents addresses the issues targeted in urban development plans. As for all the interested

actors dialogue among them and collaboration with international networks is a prerequisite of successful projects for industrial heritage re-use.

As far as this thesis was the first research on industrial heritage on Vanadzor city, it ends with many questions unanswered or not explored enough. Thus, it lays a foundation for further studies to be carried out. For example, the question of why industrial buildings and their intangible values are not officially and legally recognized, needs more research in the frame of a broader discourse; the attitude to the Soviet period on official and academic levels, heritage expressing national identity, and the relevance of industrial past and deindustrialized present for that identity. Secondly, projects concerned with the re-use of certain buildings should be done based on further research that will do value assessment of a building and analysis on its technical condition to give suggestions and detailed instructions on how to re-use it as a heritage site. Finally, there are plenty of research issues connected to the practical management of former industrial buildings and sites.

Leaving these and other questions for future explorations, I consider the primary goal of this thesis realized. Through the help of local community members, I demonstrated the ways the concept of industrial heritage can be interpreted for Vanadzor city, revealing the values and meanings important for locals and the ways they can serve to present community needs.

APPENDIX 1- SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Age

Gender

Are you living in Vanadzor now?

How long?

1.What do you see when passing by or walking along the streets of Vanadzor city?

2.In what extend do the abandoned factory buildings and industrial sites make part of the city?

- a. Not at all
- b. Slightly
- c. Fairly
- d. Very much

3.What are your feelings towards the abandoned factories and industrial sites?

Pride

Shame

Anger

Resentment

Fondness

Indifference

Other (please specify)

4. Do you think former factory buildings should be

- a. Preserved
- b. Demolished
- c. Left to decay
- d. Re-used

5. If re-used, for what purpose?

6. Do you think the former industrial life and the present buildings are worth to be told about and presented to visitors to Vanadzor?

Yes

No

7. Why? (in both cases)

For the original questionnaire in Armenian with the summary of the answers.

(there are questions not analyzed within this thesis), see

“An Attempt to Re-evaluate the Industrial Heritage of Vanadzor.” Google Forms survey conducted by Lilit Manukyan, May 17-June 17, 2020. Accessed May 14, 2021. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1KYJfZwG7Nh2r9dFywajyS1LLlziL9yRTXsdANaDvqK4/edit#responses>

APPENDIX 2- THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWEES

| Name | Surname | Gender | Occupation/profession | Contact Facebook or LinkedIn |
|----------|------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Albert | Ishkhanyan | Male | Musician The vocalist of the “Clocker” rock band | https://www.facebook.com/buch.albert |
| Alvard | Petrosyan | Fem. | Former worker: Engineer. Worked in the Physics Laboratory of the Chemical Plant | https://www.facebook.com/narine.simonyan.9 (daughte-in-law’s profile) |
| Anahit | Markosyan | Fem. | Former worker in the Chemical Plant | https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100014010453213 (daughter’s profile) |
| Andranik | Dalaloyan | Male | Former worker: Chemical Plant production shift manager | https://www.facebook.com/andranikdalaloyan |
| Ani | Maloyan | Fem. | Works at <i>Lori Information Center</i> Co-created “Soviet Visuals” tour program | https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100008137387162 |
| Armine | Ayvazyan | Fem. | Former worker at the Chemical Plant | https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010060028957 |
| Artashes | Sergoyan | Male | Project manager/coordinator currently engaged in community development projects in Vanadzor | linkedin.com/in/artashes-sergoyan |
| Astghik | Aslanyan | Fem. | English Teacher Co-producer of [Chimzavod] <i>Խիմզավոդ</i> documentary film | linkedin.com/in/astghik-aslanyan-452a6a1a8 |
| Emma | Petrosyan | Fem. | The founder of “Discover Vanadzor on two wheels” NGO organizing city tours | https://www.facebook.com/emmafiox.petrosyan |
| Jemma | Simonyan | Fem. | Former worker at the Chemical Plant | https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100049501222260 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grigor | Poghosyan | Male | Filmmaker | https://www.facebook.com/gansgt.a.grig |
| Krist | Marukyan | Male | Member of the Vanadzor City Council Public Administration | linkedin.com/in/kmarukyan |
| Levon | Hakhinyan | Male | Architect Head of Architecture and Construction Department, Lori Regional Administration | https://am.linkedin.com/in/levon-hakhinyan-873201106 |
| Lusine | Sargsyan | Fem. | Journalist News editor at Lori TVR | linkedin.com/in/lusine-sargsyan-24763011 |
| Samvel | Arakelyan | Male | Painter Manager of an arts and crafts shop | https://www.facebook.com/KzherSA |
| Sevada | Petrosyan | Male | Architect, Director of the “Engage Vanadzor” project | https://www.linkedin.com/in/sevadapetrosian/ |
| Suren | Abovyan | Male | Architect, Head of the Architecture and Planning Department, Vanadzor Municipality | linkedin.com/in/suren-abovyan-21092651 |
| Vahagn | Vardanyan | Male | Photographer | https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100004988923534 |
| Vache | Matinyan | Male | Journalist Creator and admin of “Let’s know Vanadzor together” Facebook group | https://www.linkedin.com/in/vache-matinyan-082240137/ |
| Information about one respondent, a former worker is not provided given his wish to stay anonymous. Overall 20 respondents. | | | | |

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