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THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF REGENERATION OF DECOMMISSIONED INDUSTRIAL AREAS IN ORADEA, ROMANIA

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Abstract

Urban regeneration is known to be an experienced but complex phenomenon. Even though, over the years, urban regeneration, in Europe, has been widely used, but in Romania, the concept is still new, many formal industrial spaces are abandoned and there is a lack of interest in bringing these areas back to life. The aim of this paper is to study the concept of urban regeneration, figure out the practical aspects of it and observing the current situation of sites in the city of Oradea, Romania.

Key words

urban regeneration, renewal, industrial sites, urban development, Romaniy.

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1. Introduction

Devastated and abandoned locations in the city of Oradea, so called decommissioned industrial areas, are today one of the most important planning issues. Building lands are a resource that will form the basis for future cities' development, so there is a clear need to systematically address the problem of disused industrial areas through the implementation of Urban Renewal Projects (Weiss, Tribe, 2016) swer.

As a by-product of rapid industrialization, the city of Oradea has a lot of urban areas that have been in distress and degrading. The poorly depleted pockets diminish the city's image, viability and

productivity, areas such as where different factories were once constructed such as: The Oil Factory, The Yeast and Spirit Factory, Oradea. They are usually the result of changes in urban growth and productivity patterns. Rarely, urban regeneration projects are implemented exclusively by the public sector. The need for massive financial resources is a driving factor. However, even if governments and local authorities could provide the resources needed to regenerate urban land, it is necessary to have the engagement of the community and the business sector to ensure the sustainability and viability of regeneration efforts. Consequently, private sector participation is a determining factor in the success of the regeneration of unused land.

2. Urban regeneration

The term “urban regeneration” was officially introduced in Romania through Ordinance number 27, published on the 27th of August for amending and completing the Law no. 350/2001 concerning landscaping and urban planning (2008), under spatial planning and urban planning, being defined as “Bringing urban areas to life with the cooperative effort of the municipalities, owners and other actors involved in order to improve the living conditions, to increase the quality of the environment and the social climate and to strengthen the local economy” (ORDONANȚĂ..., 2008).

Because of the semantic differences in the current vocabulary, the term urban regeneration is rather complex and again polysemantic in itself, often being confused with other terms, but in Romanian language seems to have a close meaning. Many times, the term urban regeneration is confused with the term urban renewal, however, situations caused by the amalgam of meanings may be different. In French, for example, due to its lexical variety and the already accepted and establish meanings of key words and terminology, in the field of territorial development and spatial planning, the notion of urban refurbishment has another meaning in the current national vocabulary (Chaline, 1999). Usually, the term is associated with the partial or complete demolition of buildings in a given territory to make room for new ones, which sits at an almost ethical juxtaposition to the goals and ethos of urban regeneration in the context in which it is being discussed (Couch, 1990).

Urban regeneration has been studied by different international and national authors, being a very complex action. For this paper, the author has studied Ministerial papers, the urban planning of Oradea (Plan Urbanistic General al Municipiului Oradea), but also authors such as Claude Chaline, Guillem Cervera Pascual, John Weiss, Michael Tribe, Christopher Tweed, Margaret Sutherland, and Romanian authors such as Andrei Lakatos, Liviu Chelcea, Sebastian Jucu, Marius Cristian Neacșu.

According to The Ministerial Information Meeting on Urban Development Statement (Reuniunea..., 2010), that urban regeneration needs to be coordinated by different departments, communities and also by the government, in order to have a successful result. It is not only a process that needs doing only by Town Hall or only by investors, but it needs to be a collaboration between everybody involved.

The resources needed to revitalize the area include human, technological, financial and natural resources. Following an examination of the effects of economic globalization and growing challenges in European real estate markets, it turns out that the economic role of the brownfields has become much more important (Trifa, 2015).

3. Urban regeneration in Romania

Urban regeneration is a process of reconversion and bringing ‘back to life’ of former industrial areas by creating attractive environments in close connection with the deindustrialisation process and the transition to a predominant tertiary-industrial economic base (Nae, 2015).

Building rehabilitation, physical improvement and infrastructure modernization are not just requirements essential for the attractiveness of a city, but also for sectors where the need for labor is high and therefore is a new potential source of employment that can help absorb the unemployed, particularly those in the construction sector (which is currently experiencing a major crisis in some Member States) (Lakatoș, 2017).

According to the Ministerial information meeting on urban development statement, the operational tools that could favor integrated urban regeneration are (Reuniunea..., 2010): launching integrated regeneration plans, set urban development guidelines, public fund the projects and strengthening the existing forms of public-private partnerships and the skills to solve economic, social and environmental problems.

The new challenge related to the changes in urban structures emerged at the beginning of the 21st century as, during the 1990s transformation, many former industrial, residential, military, agricultural and other localities lost their original use and were neglected, abandoned, and quickly becoming detrimental factors within the local populous and towards the environment

The causes that led to the reorganization of the industrial activity of the companies were various, which can be synthesized as follows (Lakatoș, 2017):

- lack of orders on the market for products obtained by them;
- the impossibility of adapting to the new market requirements resulting from the specialization for serial production and the realization of an infrastructure adapted to the specificity of the production;

- massive lay-off of the labor force as a result of reduced market orders;
- the need for massive investment in equipment and machinery to adapt to the needs of consumers.

The industrial areas have been gradually incorporated into the cities that were constantly growing, the buildings being built on the outskirts of the city, but due to the expansion of the cities, the majority of factories are located near the center. Revitalizing industrial buildings will be a component of urban revitalization, precisely because of their location.

As they migrated to the market economy, they could not adapt to the rigors imposed by the market economy due to the giant dimensions at which the plants were designed irrespective of their activity profile and more because of the system in which they operated. During the communist era, each factory knew its target market, but after the 90s, due to the economical changes, they did not identify with the market where it was supposed for them to sell their products. This has led, over time, to an acute shortage of culture in relation to the consumer as well as to the relationship with suppliers that are vital in the conditions in which the market operates according to the harsh rules of demand and supply of goods and services (Metodologie de intervenție, ..., 2015)

It is necessary to involve the administrative-territorial institutions for this purpose:

- integrated approach to land use planning (economic development / culture / environmental protection and preservation);
- reducing the costs of access to quality services;
- improving the competitiveness and attractiveness of the space;
- controlled development in relation to the support of the territory;
- organizing the real estate market and diminishing its speculative size.

5. The situation today in Oradea Municipality

In recent years, a large number of integrated urban regeneration projects have been implemented (the Brewery was demolished and on its site there was built a mall and a center for business, Înfrățirea Factory was demolished and on its site there were built residential buildings, malls, shopping galleries (fig. 1, 2, 3)) and most of the former industrial platforms in the central area have been integrated into urban area. The policy of support and redevelopment carried out by local authorities has led to the reindustrialization of the city, raising living standards and

improving environmental conditions (since 2011, Oradea was declared "the green capital city", according to the studies done by Ministry of Environment and Forests of Romania (Planul..., 2014)).

The local industry is currently in a relative decline due to a complex of internal and external factors. Although the heavy and light industry is at present in decline, the city finds an unprecedented explosion of companies involved in the IT & C industry, with a number of them focusing on the production of electronic components and appliances (Flextronix, Hanil, Celestica, Bronx, etc.). During the past years there have been built 3 industrial parks, a fourth one will be built in the future. Three thousand people work in industrial parks, and their number will reach 7 thousand by 2020. Most of them come from neighboring localities (Strategia..., 2017).

There is also a pressing need, and therefore continued demand from investors in the field of information technology and industry for new industrial sites, equipped with the basic infrastructure and located within new Industrial Parks that were created.

At present, there have been implemented a number of urban regeneration projects in Oradea, projects that have been done either by Town Hall or by investors. These are done either on keeping the buildings, and giving them a new function, or demolishing the existing constructions and building new ones. Such projects include Morara Răsărit Mill, where the existing buildings are kept (fig. 4, 5). The investors, at the moment are doing an urban regeneration project, the mill, at present, being an open space for cultural events such as: national and international festivals and fairs, theater performances, concerts and musical events, art exhibitions, private or public conferences and debates, film screenings, video shows, dance performances, workshops, performing arts, etc. Space is bidding on architectural, symbolic, and subject matter for exposure to the art object. The Mill attracts a large number of cultural events and wants to be defined as a space for the most present and authentic art, not only nationally but also internationally.

At present, the City Hall of Oradea has developed an urban planning project for Mill, which proposes the rehabilitation and conversion of the assembly, by building collective dwellings and parking spaces. Rehabilitated and newly built buildings will have economic destinations specific to tourism (accommodation, restaurants, commerce), but especially cultural.



Fig. 1. Image of main façade of Înfrățirea Factory, 2012

Source: Own study.



Fig . 2. Demolition of main façade Înfrățirea Factory, 2015

Source: Own study.



Fig. 3. Image of residential building and outdoor shopping center, Înfrățirea Factory, 2019

Source: Own study.

6. Conclusion

Although urban regeneration is still a new process in Romania, the term being introduced only in 2008, it is of interest for developers and for the authorities, the last trying to implement different actions to encourage the urban regeneration. In the 21st century Romania, most of the

industrial premises that have not been demolished have been abandoned, left in a major state of deterioration. At present, there are a significant number of industrial sites in Oradea that have been demolished for the purpose of land liberation or for the construction of functions such as supermarkets (Furniture Factory), malls (Brewery, Înfrățirea), or for building collective housing



Fig. 4. Exterior image of Moara Răsărit Mill, 2016

Source: <http://moara-rasarit.ro/spatii-disponibile/>



Fig. 5. Interior image of Moara Răsărit Mill, 2016

Source: <http://moara-rasarit.ro/spatii-disponibile/>

(Înfrățirea, Emilia Mill), but also there have been done projects to keep the existing buildings and changing the functionality of them (Moara Răsărit Mill, Rovex Factory). During the past years, there has been an increasing interest in urban regeneration of areas in Oradea, but there are still a lot of sites that are abandoned by investors, areas that could be profitable in the future.

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