

# **The Contribution of Industrial Heritage Revitalisation to Urban Regeneration: the Experience of the Warsaw Region**

**Anna Pawlikowska-Piechotka**

University of Physical Education  
Institute of Tourism and Recreation  
34 Marymoncka Street  
00 968 Warsaw  
Poland

Tel: +48 (22) 839 02 78  
Email: arch.piechotka@interia.pl

## **ABSTRACT**

In Poland since the 1989, the process of deindustrialization has been commenced. [Misztal, 1998; Niezabitowska, 2005]. The first urban regeneration projects, implementing new values to the post-industrial compounds, have been already completed in many cities of strong, dominating industrial function in the past (Silesia Region, Łódź). Interestingly, these projects were mostly aimed to meet the growing needs of local community such as culture, education, leisure and rarely became an arena of purely commercial investments activities [Nappi-Choulet, 2006].

Using the example of Warsaw's industrial heritage revitalization projects, we examined already modernized historic buildings, which were aimed to respond the tourist and leisure needs (museums, art galleries, cultural centers). We were interested in their new functions and meanings for urban space quality. We wanted to consider how much revitalized architecture help to change (socially, culturally, economically) declining areas and their painful image of "inner city". [Thorns, 2001]. Our research (carried in 2005-2006) covered nine historic industrial compounds, already converted and having new functions.

Results of our inquiry polls (taken in 2005-2006) confirmed the thesis, that revitalized historic industrial architecture might enrich urban space with values visible in many dimensions: social, historical, aesthetical and economic. [Evans, 2005]. Although selected and studied cases in Warsaw were not completed equally successfully, due to the objective barriers or carelessness at the planning process, all show good results in space quality and cultural services improvement, appreciated by the local community members and visitors relevantly.

Once neglected run-down Warsaw's districts (Wola, Praga) now take benefits of new identity meanings, attracting tourists and enhancing local community sense of belonging and well-being. Similar cases were described by scholars after studies in other European cities [Jones, 2006].

Unfortunately recent debates over Warsaw Master Spatial Plan (2006) revealed that the further governance of the subsequent projects might be difficult. Although formally are recommended mainly cultural/education functions for the revitalized historic industrial compounds, due to the rapid rise of real estate prices in Warsaw and developers strong pressure, many investors are interested in the purely commercial

projects, neglecting the social-cultural functions these historic buildings might have. Significant is the case of the 19th century industrial compound in Warsaw (“Koneser Factory”), which is an example of purely commercial approach to the urban regeneration performance. There are doubts, if so mono-functional and only free-market determined urban development might have been a good contribution to the sustainable, competitive city shaping. [Evans, 2006; Turok, 1992].

**Key Words: industrial heritage, urban space quality, tourism**