

## Acknowledging the Industrial Heritage of the Socialist Self-Management System in North Macedonia

**Abstract :** This research explores the acknowledgment of industrial heritage in North Macedonia as a strategy for preserving the identity of a social group that went beyond nationality and ethnicity but relied on labour as a unifying factor instead. Therefore, this paper will also discuss how values are assigned to cultural properties in North Macedonia, whose cultural heritage and ideology are being nurtured, and to whom it is relevant. The results of this research heavily rely on analyses of semi-structured interviews conducted with several corresponding representatives of governmental institutions responsible for cultural heritage protection, civil society organizations and syndicates.

This paper explores the acknowledgement of industrial heritage legacy in North Macedonia as a strategy for preserving the identity of a social group that went beyond nationality and ethnicity, but relied on labor as a unifying factor instead. On a global level industrial heritage has been repurposed, reinterpreted and analyzed through the lenses of a variety of disciplines, however that is not the case in North Macedonia. As a country that was part of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, at the time under the name Republic of Macedonia, was also contributing to the Socialist Self-Management system with the expansion of the industry for the needs of SFRY. Established in the 1950s as a way of transferring economic management from the state to the workers, it came along with a certain lifestyle due to the benefits of the system itself. The Socialist Self-Management system of SFRY lasted until shortly before its breakup, as R. Macedonia came out as the poorest republic. In the following period the transition caused privatization of the industry, leaving many workers without jobs and many factories in decay. North Macedonia has a long history of identity disputes. In an attempt to solve this, the previous government implemented cultural policy that forced ideological narratives through reinvention of the past in order to achieve a political aim, yet a recent narrative of vast industrialization and deindustrialization remains unacknowledged. Therefore, this paper will also discuss how values are assigned to cultural places in North Macedonia, whose cultural heritage and ideology is being nurtured and to whom it is relevant. In order to approach the issue of the intangible industrial heritage critically and from multiple perspectives, this research follows, connects and applies several streams of thought and literature. Firstly, to demonstrate the value of the intangible segment of industrial heritage in North Macedonia, the research will refer to literature from the conservation and restoration discourse for industrial heritage. Secondly, the research looks at the literature from the field of economy, to specifically analyze the Socialist Self-Management system of SFRY in-depth. Thirdly, the paper will refer to literature which explores the roles and positions of the social groups through identity politics discourse and memory studies. To respond to the task of exploring the working-class identity and the intangible industrial heritage of the Socialist Self-Management system in North Macedonia, I will use a mixture of methods. Most of the data will come through desk research of statistical inquiries and documents, archival records, reports and largely from in-depth interviews with former employees, representatives of governmental bodies, civil society organisations and decision-makers. To understand the importance of industrial patrimony in the country, I will also conduct a survey on the working-class culture with purposive sampling. The relevance of this paper lies in the lack of critical perspectives and scientific inquiries into this discourse. The amount of literature available and generated on the topic of industrial heritage in North Macedonia at the moment is almost non-existent. Great deal of the accessible materials are

master theses by architecture and urbanism students as case studies for adaptive re-use of certain factories. In fact, the first initiative for mapping of industrial objects and implementation of preservation and repurposing was started just two years ago by a local CSO. In that sense, this research will provide relevant insights that will enrich the dialogue on industrial heritage in both the research and professional community.