

TOURISTIC EFFECTIVENESS IN CULTURAL SPACES OF INDUSTRIAL ORIGIN. AN ANALYSIS OF THE TOURISTIC POTENTIALITY USING INDICATORS

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There are many representative cases about industrial elements that after the cessation of their activity have been transformed into cultural spaces that increase the cultural offer of Madrid. Despite its undeniable heritage value, its strategic location in the city and the quality of the cultural events that it programs, its integration into the urban tourist dynamic as a tourist product reveals itself to be very limited (Figure 1).

The hypothesis that is handled in this research indicates that there are certain factors that favor the tourist operation of the cultural spaces while others drown the transformation of these cultural resources into tourist products and therefore they restrict their integration in the tourist offer of the city. But what factors are these? What influence do they have in the tourist operation of cultural spaces of industrial origin? Can they be quantifiable? Are they able to explain the tourist reality of these cultural resources? In order to clarify these aspects, this research has as main objective to analyze the tourist operation of cultural spaces of industrial origin through the application of a series of indicators to determine what factors are blocking their transformation into tourist products and their integration in the dynamics of the Madrid.

In order to reach these objectives, this study proposes a work methodology based on a descriptive statistical analysis of indicators. It is a question of 20 items which are divided into 5 large groups (accessibility, legal conditions, web information, urban landscape and tourism potential), applied to the 18 cultural spaces of industrial origin, inventoried and characterized in this research. The first block, “accessibility”, aims to determine the degree of accessibility of public and private transport to the cultural space, as well as the possibility of free parking in the area. With the set of indicators “legal conditions”, the

administrative protection of the industrial heritage, as well as its integration in the tourist and cultural planning of the city, is graded. The “web information” block evaluates the “on-line” portals of cultural spaces, not only if their contents are basic and advanced but also if they develop commercial activities through the web. Through the indicators of “urban landscape”, the relationship between the cultural space and the surrounding urban landscape is analyzed, as well as the proximity to other cultural spaces of industrial origin. Finally, “tourism potential” allows us to determine the relationship of the cultural space with key elements of tourism, such as the complementary tourism offer, public-private tourist promotion and marketing, or its proximity to the most representative tourism resources of the city.

These indicators have been designed on purpose due to no research has been detected using indicators of tourism operability. Of course, other methodologies close to sustainable tourism have been considered in the inventory and evaluation of tourism resources. Once applied to the selected cases, a descriptive statistical study was carried out taking as reference the scores obtained in a matrix of tourist operation. This analysis, supplemented by graphic material (tables, graphs and figures), has made it possible to make a diagnosis of the situation, as well as outline a series of improvement proposals.

Data obtained confirm the hypothesis pointed out at the beginning of this investigation. Indicators reveal a very precise reality of the situation of cultural spaces of industrial origin from the perspective of the tourist effectiveness. There are two groups of differentiated factors: some are driving the transformation of these cultural resources into tourist resources and, therefore, the possibility of creating products that can be commercialized that are integrated in the tourist offer of the city, while others restrain and obstruct the possibility of materializing this process. Among the factors that contribute to the tourist dynamism of these spaces, five sets of indicators stand out due to the high scores obtained: the “rehabilitation of buildings integrated in space”; the “proximity to public transport”; “access to road traffic”; the “proximity to transport nodes”; and finally, the “basic web information”.

“Rehabilitation of buildings integrated in space” is the aspect that most influences in the effectiveness of tourism in industrial spaces. This is because the rehabilitation project to adapt the building to new cultural uses ensures its conservation and it is the starting point to become a cultural resource and, later, a tourist resource. However, it is worth stressing at this point that some interventions, such as the one carried out at the “Caixa Forum Madrid”, have been excessively interventionist and the facade is scarcely as a vestige of the original architecture. The second group of indicators that stands out for its high score are those related to location (proximity to public transport, access to road traffic and proximity to transport hubs). Most of the cultural spaces are concentrated in the districts of Centro and Arganzuela, very close to the main tourist resources of the city, an exceptional situation to attract tourist flows and to initiate actions of promotion and joint tourist marketing. Finally, the third indicator that achieves a higher score is the “basic web information”. If the rehabilitation of the building was the starting point for transforming the elements of industrial heritage into cultural and tourist resources, the information is to promote these cultural spaces and to launch more dynamic webs that offer more information and even integrate tools of Marketing online.

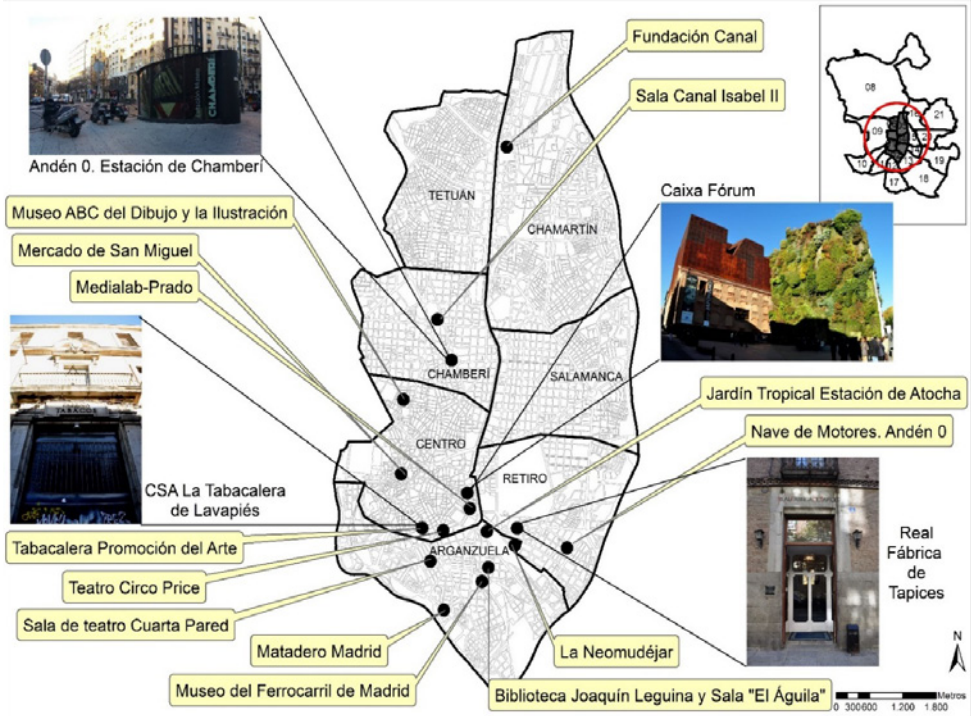
The results of the matrix also confirm the existence of factors that reduce the tourist operation of industrial spaces. Among those who have obtained a lower score are “free parking nearby”, “integration of cultural space into tourism plans,” marketing of cultural space through public and private bodies” and “possibility of e-commerce”. The “integration of cultural space into tourist plans” and the “commercialization of cultural space through public and private bodies” are the factors that most strangle the tourist operation of cultural spaces of industrial origin since they manifest a very serious absence of tourism planning and emphasize the inexistence of a common strategy to try to promote and commercialize this type of spaces. The Madrid City Council’s Strategic Tourism Plan 2012-2015 made no reference to this type of cultural heritage, nor to its possible integration into cultural tourism modalities. Currently, tourism is not a priority policy of the municipal council, so we will have to wait for the drafting of a new plan, hopefully, more sensitive to these types of cultural spaces and their potential tourism. In a similar situation is the cultural planning, the recent change of municipal equipment leaves this topic on the air.

Another aspect that considerably reduces the tourist operation of cultural spaces is the low promotion that public agents make of this type of elements, both individually and collectively. The information on these spaces is scarce and in few occasions, it is affected in its industrial character. No attempts have been detected to jointly promote cultural spaces under a possible theme of Madrid’s industrial heritage. More grave is the very serious problem of commercialization. Not only are there no tourism products based on these cultural spaces, but also their integration into the city’s tourist offer is non-existent.

As a general diagnosis, it could be affirmed that there is no structure of industrial tourism in the city despite having the first order cultural resources for it. There are no tools that favor their transformation of these industrial spaces into tourist resources that increase and diversify the offer of cultural tourism existing in the city. In addition to this weakness, there has been a clear lack of interest or knowledge of the municipal public administration to integrate the cultural spaces of industrial origin in the tourist offer of the city. Taking these aspects into account, a series of priority proposals are proposed to finalize this article and, if applied, could reverse this situation:

- Proposal 1. To sensitize the municipal administration about the possibility of implementing an urban tourism based on cultural spaces of industrial origin.
- Proposal 2. Integrate industrial spaces into municipal tourism and cultural planning through actions, for example, link coherently dispersed industrial elements to create circuits or routes that explain the industrialization of the territory
- Proposal 3. Promote the cultural spaces of industrial origin of the city from a public and private point of view.
- Proposal 4. To make known to the tour operators of the city the tourist potential of cultural spaces of industrial origin.
- Proposal 5. To interpret the cultural spaces by showing their industrial past.
- Proposal 6. To incorporate ICTs into the web portals of cultural spaces of industrial origin favoring the implementation of electronic commerce tools.

Figure 1
MAP OF LOCATION OF CULTURAL SPACES OF INDUSTRIAL ORIGIN



Source: Authors.