

Workshop:

Industrial history as a frame for sustainable cultural preservation: The case of Gothenburg

Time: Friday November 11, 2022, 10.00–16.30

Place: The Swedish National Archives, Arkivgatan 9A, Gothenburg

The workshop is open to anyone with an interest in the topic, but it is essential to pre-register.

For inquires and registration, please contact: Susanna Fellman, susanna.fellman@econhist.gu.se

Theme and objective

This is the third and final explorative workshop in a series funded by NOS-HS to develop a Nordic-Baltic collaboration discussing industrial cultural heritage in the 2020s.

The overall theme of the series is the changing perception, meaning and significance of industrial heritage in the globalized economy. In the 21st century, industrial heritage and heritage culture are shaped by the simultaneous processes of deindustrialization and globalization, but also by reindustrialization and revitalization. With (economic) globalization, ownership has dispersed and become increasingly international and faceless. Corporate owners' connection to local society has therefore become weaker. Growing subcontracting and transnational supply chains have led to the transfer of traditional manufacturing processes to distant parts of the world. Although manufacturing still forms an important part of economic activity also in high-income countries, its share of GDP has declined. Many activities classified as manufacturing production are also quite different from before, due to eg digitalization and automatization. Manufacturing is not what it used to be.

The manufacturing industry's altering role in modern capitalism, combined with the changing characteristics of industrial production, have had extensive industrial, economic, political, social, and cultural repercussions. These transformations have also affected the perceptions of what industrial heritage is (or should be) and of its role in modern society. This is the core theme which is addressed in these workshops.

Gothenburg is an excellent location to revisit and discuss these questions. The city's identity has largely been shaped by industry, and it has a long history of international trade and global connections. At the same time, globalization and deindustrialization have hit the city hard and changed its industrial base. The shipyards are gone, workplaces are outsourced, institutional investors and foreign owners have taken over several of the Swedish "crown jewel" companies. On the other hand, much is also persistent and manufacturing remains important. Gothenburg and its surroundings are marked by strong entrepreneurship and innovative start-ups, and the region is currently one of the fastest growing in Europe. Deindustrialization brings about reindustrialization and revitalisation.

The city's identity as an industrial and port city is clearly visible in heritage preservation and is nurtured by both the city and private actors. The port, the former shipyards and some of the most famous Swedish engineering companies, such as SKF and Volvo, are imperative in the city's history writing, while the large companies have built their brands on their roots in Gothenburg, a city often labelled as Sweden's "face to the west".

Industrial decline, but also restructuring and revitalisation, has affected the city's self-perception and heritage culture, and this will be the core topic of discussion in the seminar. We will discuss changes in the understanding and use of the city's industrial heritage during the last decades but also in relation to previous periods. How do local actors (firms, civil society, and city/region) perceive the value of industrial heritage? How is heritage used by the city and by companies when preparing for future developments? How do these actors understand preservation, and how do they use and/or exploit the city's industrial heritage? How has the companies' connection to the place/locality and their views on preservation of industrial heritage changed? How has the heritage been used in city redevelopment (for example on Norra Älvstranden) and to what extent is it connected to, for example, sustainable city planning and land-use? How do the new entrepreneurs connect to the industrial heritage? We will also address the role of archives in preservation and use of the industrial heritage. Which impact do archives have on industrial heritage and how can archival practices meet the needs of sustainable preservation?

This workshop is a collaboration between the project Nordic Industrial Heritage Culture in the 2020s, the Unit of Economic History, University of Gothenburg, and the Swedish National Archives.

Presentations

10.00–12.00 *Block I. Globalization, industrial restructuring and changing perceptions of industrial heritage*

Susanna Fellman (University of Gothenburg) & Maths Isacson (University of Uppsala): *Welcome and Introduction*

Per Hallén (University of Gothenburg): *How well are past industrial sectors reflected in today's urban landscape?*

Mart Kalm (Estonia Academy of Arts): *Digital economy and industrial heritage*

Discussion

12.00–13.00 *Lunch break*

13.00–14.30 *Block II. Archives supporting industrial heritage preservation*

Karl-Magnus Johansson (The Swedish National Archives, Gothenburg): *Archives as industrial heritage – use and values*

Ulrika Ågren (Volvo AB): *Volvo Historical Archive – a legacy to future generations*

Birgit Karlsson (University of Gothenburg): *Working with company archives – problems and possibilities*

14.30–15.00 *Coffee break*

15.00–16.30 *Block III. Local actors and the use and reuse of industrial heritage in a changing world*

Sanja Peter (City Museum, Gothenburg): *TBA*

20th century industrial Heritage - development of modern industries and the rise and fall of modernism in Gothenburg.

Johannes Daun (Industriarvet i Väst/Association of Industrial Heritage in Western Sweden): *TBA*

Anders Houltz (Center for Business History, Stockholm): *Concluding remarks*