

# **The process of industrial heritage reuse as a future-making practice**

The case of Ivrea and Olivetti's industrial patrimony

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Erasmus School of History, Culture, and Communication

Nicolò Luigi Morando

626012

Supervisor: D. Hoebink

14-06-2023

MA Tourism, Culture, and Society

Final Thesis

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the reuse of industrial heritage and its implications for future development, focusing on the case of Olivetti industrial heritage in Ivrea, Italy. The research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining semi-structured interviews with 11 key stakeholders and ethnographic fieldwork. By exploring the synergies between values and the physical industrial spaces, this study seeks to explore the narratives about the future of Ivrea's industrial heritage. The findings reveal that tourism and its potential to generate economic advantages for the area play a significant role in shaping these narratives. However, the study also shows that, beyond the economic benefits, the actors involved in the reuse process draw inspiration from the intangible values of Olivetti's company. They recognise the potential of these values to enhance community well-being and contribute to the long-term development of the town. This study sheds light on the significance of considering both tangible and intangible aspects when designing policies for industrial heritage reuse. Moreover, this research contributes to the existing literature on industrial heritage reuse by examining the process as it unfolds. It goes beyond the mere analysis of issues and successes of industrial heritage reuse to investigate the ongoing making of the process. By doing so, it can provide valuable insights and helpful recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders involved in similar projects. Overall, this thesis presents a comprehensive analysis of the reuse of Olivetti industrial heritage in Ivrea. It underscores the importance of understanding the multiple values associated with industrial heritage and their role in shaping future narratives. The findings can contribute to developing effective policies that harness the synergies between physical environments and people reusing them.

**KEYWORDS:** *industrial heritage, reuse, values, intangible, physical environments*

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Literature review.....	5
2.1 Industrial heritage and repurposing.....	5
2.2 Industrial heritage reuse and the Authorised Heritage Discourse .....	8
2.3 The importance of materiality .....	9
2.4 Industrial heritage as a highly contested terrain of values .....	11
2.5 Futuring and Nostalgia .....	14
3. Methodology.....	17
4. Setting the context .....	22
5. Results and discussion .....	26
5.1 Nostalgia, a double edged-sword .....	26
5.2 Organisational and bureaucratic complexity .....	42
5.3 Dialogue as a need.....	46
6. Futuring Industrial Heritage.....	49
6.1 Moving on from Olivetti, the Unesco promise.....	49
6.2 Tourism as future.....	55
6.3 Tangible Restrictions, intangible inspirations .....	62
Conclusions.....	68

# 1. Introduction

The city of Ivrea, in the northwest region of Piemonte in Italy, was the place of birth of an iconic company, Olivetti, involved in producing typewriting machines and mechanic calculators. The company became a centre of innovation in the production of hardware and the first years of computer development and electronics between the 1950s and 1970s (Peroni, 2016). During the administration of Adriano Olivetti, between 1932 and 1960, the company thrived, with many shops and factories in Italy and many other parts of the world. During this period of economic boom for Italy, Olivetti was considered a model of efficiency and innovation, capable of combining economic progress with the community's well-being. The best Italian architects were called to design factories, offices, workers' houses and buildings for community service in the city of Ivrea (Peroni, 2016). However, starting from the abrupt death in 1960 of its 'illuminated administrator' Adriano Olivetti, the company began to suffer a crisis in production. Because of the difficulties in keeping pace with bigger competitors and new technologies, like the recently invented personal computer, the company entered a period of decline, which culminated in the 1990s with the downsizing of the company and the consequent abandonment of many buildings (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d).

The story of Ivrea is typical of Western Europe in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays, many industrial companies previously located in Western city centres no longer function or occupy a place with modern and more competitive facilities. Rapid changes in production and the general socio-economic context have been the driving forces of this evolution: industrial enterprises have been closed or relocated and redevelopment of former industrial areas became one of the answers to the problem, as well as a tool for the economic improvement of depressed areas and the well-being of the inhabitants. In Ivrea, the buildings that used to be part of the industrial complex of the Olivetti company as both production and services sites have been reused and repurposed for other uses.

The practice of repurposing and reuse of former industrial sites has become very common as the number of decaying and abandoned structures started to considerably grow. Since the 1970s, disused industries have begun to be considered as resources to help convert degraded brownfield areas into appealing locations from an economic, social, cultural, architectural, and tourism point of view (Benito del Pozo, P., 2014). Nowadays, in fact, industrial heritage has come to represent a heritage asset with universal value, through which people can understand and discovery the importance of industrialisation in human history (Falser, M., &

Yang, M., 2001). In fact, in many cases, the practise of reuse of former industrial production sites has been directed in transforming these spaces into museums (Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

Industrial heritage reuse has developed in the past two decades, until becoming a successful tool in promoting urban regeneration and sustainable urban renewal (Han and Zhang, 2022). In a similar way, as mentioned by Merciu et al. (2017), industrial environments have been highly considered by projects led by creative industries and cultural-led initiatives to turn degraded areas into new hubs of economic and social development. The potential of these relatively recent structures in attracting investments by private and public stakeholders have made them protagonists of a number of projects in which sustainability, urban renewal and socio-economic development constitute the main targets.

However, some issues about industrial heritage reuse were found in previous studies. Some of them highlight the multiplicity of different stakeholders involved in the projects of industrial reuse as one of the main barriers against their success (Liu et al., 2022). Industrial heritage reuse projects indeed include a wide range of different values and interests referred to the inhabitants directly involved by the regeneration of the area, to the communities of ex-workers of the industrial sites as well as the land owners and urban planners involved (Liu et al., 2022; Frisch, 1998). Industrial heritage regeneration entails an intense process of renegotiation of meanings and representation of the sites, which involves decision-maker stakeholders as well as the population of the city. With the transformation and the further utilisation of an industrial heritage site, its identity is negotiated, and transformed, leading to its re-conceptualization and re-definition, giving it new meanings and representations.

The mentioned issues connected to industrial repurposing can to be connected to the particular nature of industrial heritage, which from one hand stands to represent an important moment in human history and thus should be conserved and protected (Falser, M., & Yang, M., 2001; Pendlebury, 2013), but from the other hand it holds multiple possibilities of being modified to serve new aims and purposes. Pendlebury (2013) and Wu and Song (2015) investigate this particular standing of industrial heritage by looking at policy documents around its definition and management. They highlight how conservation values based on concepts like authenticity might underlie a powerful discourse which privileges physical and monumental features of industrial heritage, while hiding forms of immaterial connections between people and industrial sites and objects.

None of these studies, however, manage to paint a complete picture of industrial heritage reuse as a process. The mentioned literature result to be either highly theoretical (Pendlebury, 2013; Wu & Song, 2015), or either too practical (Han and Zhang, 2022; Merciu et al., 2017). On the one hand, the mentioned authors tend to highlight the different developments that industrial repurposing can generate, as well the problematics it can encounter. On the other hand, they tend to exclude from the discussion the future narratives that repurposing can underlie for the buildings and the community involved. In addition, besides recognizing the presence of a multitude of values ascribed by the stakeholders to industrial heritage, none of the authors mentioned considers the physical environment characteristics through the potential to have an influence over the decisions are taken about the reuse of industrial heritage.

Therefore, the main question this study aims to answer is: “To what extent is industrial heritage used to construct future-oriented narratives on and about Ivrea's economy/society, and what values play an important role in the process?”.

Throughout this study, the process of heritage-making in which industrial heritage reuse is involved is seen in its capacity to make temporalities live together in the same space. The disposal and management of industrial heritage and its artefacts are thus considered processes aimed at conserving objects from the past to ensure their existence in the future (Walsh, 1992). By adopting an approach based on values (Macdonald, 2020), the reused industrial spaces of Olivetti in Ivrea are seen through the values they express and manifest, and for which they were kept and preserved until today. These values can refer to memories of the past and to a feeling of nostalgia (Smith and Campbell, 2017), or to more practical aspects that make industrial heritage valuable for future uses.

Moreover, in the present research, ‘place’ is approached as a socio-material product, determined by the interaction of people with the built environment: advances in architecture and the relationship with buildings reflect the ideas and values of society, while at the same time, society changes its social patterns through time, as well as its cultures and values, influencing the relationship with the built environment. The built industrial environment and its artefacts have been approached using the concept of the ‘assemblage’ (Harrison, 2013), in which industrial heritage is considered as a network composed of human (stakeholders, people involved in its re-use) and non-human actors (artefacts, the spaces and environments), both contributing to the negotiation of the former industrial spaces and the meanings attached to them.

To answer the research question, a multi-method qualitative approach has been implemented, including on-site ethnographic fieldwork at the former industrial complex of the ICO Workshops and the Social Service Building in Ivrea<sup>1</sup> and semi-structured interviews with 11 individuals who are actively participating in activities and projects in and around the reuse of the industrial zone<sup>2</sup>. This study seeks to contribute to the literature about industrial heritage reuse by giving a more original look at it as a process in which the industrial past and its values blends with present circumstances to generate possible future narratives. By approaching industrial repurposing through a value-based analysis, the present research can give new insights about further research in which the heritage-making process of the industrial past is investigated in its unfolding. Moreover, by giving a close look to the interactions between the human and the non-human components of heritage, the present research can add to the literature about the topic, in which synergies between environments, objects and human beings are often unnoticed.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 4 for a description of the sites.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Industrial heritage and repurposing

The modern era of industrial production started with the First Industrial Revolution in Great Britain during the eighteenth century. Thanks to technical advances, natural and urban landscapes were rationalized and re-planned to extract materials and energy to feed facilities apt to produce ready-made objects of consumption (Storm, A., 2008). This productivist order started its decline in Western societies after the Second World War, when societies based on industry began to shift to service-based or knowledge economies (Kamitake, Y., 1990). Deindustrialisation was the process which gave the start to an abandonment of industrial sites because Western societies began a shift from a product-related economy to a more service-based economy. In the 1970s, developments in technology and communication led to better living conditions for consumers, which were induced to use services. The manufacturing industries then, naturally for certain economists, started their decline (Rowthorn and Ramaswamy, 1997). On the one side, economies needed more people involved in the service sector, while on the other hand, technologies and lower work prices in developing countries made it possible for industries to move their production abroad and leave their countries of origin, which led to growing unemployment and abandoned production facilities.

In the following decades, many regions in Europe, such as the Ruhr Valley in Germany or the iron extracting sites in Wales and Belgium began a process of rehabilitation of the former industrial sites (Benito del Pozo, P., 2014). Since the 1970s, concepts of industrial heritage have thus been introduced in the heritage discourse, bringing to the creation, in 1978, of TICCIH (the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage), the first international society dedicated to the identification, evaluation and management of industrial heritage. On 17 July 2003, The Nizhny Tagil Charter was signed and adopted by TICCIH, as the first international charter for the recognition of industrial heritage. From here the official and internationally recognised definition of Industrial Heritage was developed as follows:

Industrial heritage consists of the remains of industrial culture of historical, technological, social, architectural, or scientific value. These remains consist of buildings and machinery, workshops, mills and factories, mines and sites for processing and refining, warehouses and stores, places where energy is generated, transmitted and used, transport and all its



infrastructure, as well as places used for social activities related to industry such as housing, religious worship or education. (The Nizhny Tagil Charter, para. 1).

From the definition above it is possible to define the concept of industrial heritage as the collection of buildings and objects produced by societies using labour and considered important enough to preserve for the benefit of future generations, presenting a unique and extraordinary nature of the period of modernity in human history (Falser, M., & Yang, M., 2001). Authors such as Kevin Walsh (1992) see industrial heritage as part of *heritagisation*, which he uses to describe processes such as the listing of national and international registers of heritage sites, as the evolution of museological modes of collection, both linked to the management of objects, buildings and sites considered valuable and unique and connected to the risk of decay. This movement of things and sites from anonymity to the realm of heritage is associated by Rodney Harrison (2013) with the widespread creation of new categories of place as a practical response to the material excess of ruins.

Especially when talking about physical remnants of industry, the *heritagisation* of mines and factories that were becoming unused due to deindustrialisation can be seen as a way of giving them a second life. For many abandoned industrial sites for which simple preservation presented many objective difficulties, it was decided to attribute new functions to them. In many cases this new function was becoming a museum or other kind of cultural institution. Another strategy used was to give former industrial sites a commercial purpose, a phenomenon commonly referred to as ‘adaptive re-use’. Harrison describes this as such: “... the reworking of existing heritage sites and buildings to give them a new, often commercial function secondary to their primary function of preservation as heritage” (Harrison, 2013, p. 83).

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) linked this process to the new ways of portraying and displaying heritage that developed with the global economy and the abandonment of economic systems based on industry. She proposed that *heritagisation* can be connected to a new method of cultural creation that aimed to breathe new life into objects, locations, and practices that had become unprofitable in the late modern era. Authors like Ryan and Silvanto (2011) argued how the profitability of heritage, especially the World Heritage List, has made heritage a marketable commodity out of heritage, causing its expansion worldwide during the past decades. Besides the new purposes industrial heritage can acquire, whether commercial or educational, the reconverted spaces have to adhere to specific rules or recommendations.

When talking about the repurposing of industrial heritage, one of the most important aspects stakeholders have to take into consideration is the preservation of the authenticity of the site, paying attention to maintaining as much as possible the original materials and the structure. As prescribed in the Dublin Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites of 2011 “new uses should respect significant material, components and patterns of circulation and activity. Specialist skills are necessary to ensure that the heritage significance is taken into account and respected” and “dismantling and relocating are only acceptable in extraordinary cases when the destruction of the site is required by objectively proved overwhelming economic or social needs” (*ICOMOS – TICCIH Principles*, art. 5, para. 4.). In essence, the transformation of industrial heritage entails a series of prescriptions that mainly protect its material authenticity and aesthetic value. As Han and Zhang (2022) point out in their study of research done on industrial heritage reconstruction and reuse from 2017 to 2022, there is a global tendency to focus on two aspects: the integrity of tangible industrial heritage and its preservation. Moreover, they highlight how in most cases, the reuse of former industrial spaces is carried out with the priority of avoiding modifications to the layout of the buildings, their main structure and style.

In the context of reuse, in which spaces used for industrial production are adapted for new purposes, focusing on the integrity of the physical spaces and aesthetics can influence the decision-making process around future projects involving industrial heritage. Harrison (2013) refers to this focus on authenticity as a part of the ‘consumer sensibility’ of developed experience economies, as heritage has been seen more as an ‘experience’, authenticity has become a mark to distinguish what is ‘original’ to what is ‘fake’. As pointed out by Silverman (2015) and Harrison (2013), underlying the concept of authenticity in the definition of heritage there is a modern historical consciousness originating from Romanticism and the Enlightenment, a way of thinking and aestheticising that tends to favour monumentality and material construction over immaterial practises and traditions that do not necessarily produce tangible artefacts.

This claim is based on the fact that tangible remnants and artefacts represent material assets whose authenticity and aesthetic qualities can be objectively measured by experts and thus categorised as heritage. Therefore, this attitude towards the tangible aspects of heritage would “deny the value of vernacular heritage”, whose authenticity cannot be easily discernible by scientific claims (Wu & Song, 2015, p. 42). In this view, authenticity as a measurable heritage quality and criterion can be considered a discursive construct that privileges tangible assets whose value can be assessed. Thus, the concept of authenticity is not

only a descriptor of the material state of things but can also be interpreted as a carrier of power. This point will be further explored in the following section.

## **2.2 Industrial heritage reuse and the Authorised Heritage Discourse**

From a theoretical perspective focused on the interrelations between power and language, the norms and attitudes regulating the management and conceptualisation of industrial heritage can be framed as an authorised or authorising heritage discourse, in short, AHD. Heritage scholar Laurajane Smith, inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, refers to AHD as a dominant Western discourse about heritage, a set of ideas about the nature and the meaning of heritage that works to privilege certain assumptions and practises over others (Smith, 2006). Smith's argument is based on the claim that typical Western narratives that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as nationalism and modernism, helped create a canon of heritage that relies upon technical expertise. The AHD is institutionalised because its power of persuasion works through normative documents and policies published by state authorities and heritage agencies.

For Smith, AHD focuses on aesthetically pleasing and monumental objects, thus on material things and places, leaving out the intangible bond between the people, the artefacts, and other related immaterial practices (2006). Therefore, the authorised heritage discourse is considered self-referential because it is reluctant to embrace different ideas of heritage and broaden itself to include wider cultural communities. In addition, the professionalisation and bureaucratisation of heritage work towards excluding the general public from defining and managing heritage. In other words, the decisions about what does and what does not constitute heritage and its management are made only by experts. In Smith's view, these professionals act as the only legitimate 'interpreters' of heritage, and they tend to promote the values of the higher social classes as well as an idea of heritage that "privileges monumentality and grand scale, innate artefact/site significance tied to time depth, scientific/aesthetic expert judgement, social consensus and nation building" (Smith, 2006, p. 11).

Heritage scholar Rodney Harrison points out that an official and hegemonic Western set of ideas and practices about heritage is based on the concept of risk and the idea of scientific progress developed during the nineteenth century (2013). In his view, the modernist idea of the past and its objects as relics of a more primitive era is the basis of the aforementioned process of *heritagisation*. Protecting the past and its artefacts is the concept at

the base of listing and categorising heritage as a form of control over the natural passing of time. For Harrison, these practices and narratives, associated with the increased professionalisation and bureaucratisation of the field of heritage, contributed to relegating the past to an object of exposition. In other words, to manage uncertainty, heritage has been put in the hand of an ‘expert system’, which through its knowledge, preserve the remnants of the past to grant its existence for future generations. Following this line of reasoning, heritage appears paralysed in a crisis, given by the task of managing the threat of the passing of time, while at the same time “make(ing) decisions in the present that also hold open the possibilities of different futures in which those decisions may be rendered incorrect” (Harrison et al., 2020, p. 34).

Industrial heritage sites then, by nature, can be caught in the tantrum of this ‘paralysis’ because, on the one hand, they hold universally recognised heritage values that ensure their preservation. On the other hand, they can be potentially modified and then reused for other purposes. With a work that focuses on the definition and management of urban heritage in the context of British industrial repurposing and urban renewal, Pendlebury (2013) compares the AHD and the conservation principles that govern these processes. By putting an accent on examples of industrial heritage remnants in urban planning and transformation, he points out that the policies guiding the renewal are guided by principles of conservation, which share some common values with the Authorised Heritage Discourse as developed by Smith (2006). He describes three values that AHD and the English conservation principles share: the authenticity value, the aesthetic value, and the historical value (Pendlebury, 2013). The author explains that the three mentioned values are associated with the notion of continuity of the material and physical appearances of the buildings. The privileging of the architectural merit and historical significance of the physical aspects provides limited space for non-conforming understandings of heritage, like the ones related to sentimental associations or the ones related to social meanings assigned by a community of ex-workers. Thus, as Zang and Han (2022) pointed out and in the context of industrial heritage reuse, a limited and unidirectional understanding of heritage can undermine the forms of heritage that diverge from the conventional categorisations (AHD) uses in heritage renewal.

### **2.3 The Importance of Materiality**

Although AHD theory excels at unravelling power/knowledge relations in the way heritage is conceived and managed, it can be argued that the concept of discourse does not consider the

role of material ‘things’. While discourse analysis has been helpful in bringing out of shade more representational or intangible aspects of heritage, Harrison (2013) believes that focusing on this approach has brought heritage literature to pay little attention to the affective qualities of heritage objects. He argues that the material aspects of heritage and the various physical relationships between them and people are aspects to consider to understand our relationships with the artefacts, places and practices of heritage. In this way, heritage can be seen not only as the work of humans in ‘collecting things’ for the sake of preserving them or as a process that works only in a discursive manner but also as one that involves a range of material beings who stand like co-producers of heritage alongside people.

By drawing on the work of Manuel de Landa’s (2006) reflection on Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘assemblage theory’, Harrison (2013) proposes a more “relational or dialogical model, which sees heritage as emerging from the relationship between a range of human and non-human actors and their environments” (p. 205). He uses the term ‘assemblage’ to refer to a network in which the human and material world interaction is the product of their particular histories and their relationships with other parts of the assemblage. In this way, thinking of heritage as an assemblage of heterogeneous groupings of human and non-human actors has the effect of flattening the modernistic hierarchy that divides the material from human, mind from matter and nature from culture. Viewing heritage as an assemblage allows for a focus not only how individuals and organisations engage with each other and the narratives they either uphold or reject but also on the arrangements of old and modern materials, tools, texts, and technologies that are utilised to establish heritage through interaction with these other entities (Harrison, 2013). In order to give justice to the material world and its role in the creation of meaning in what we called heritage assemblage, it is necessary to consider the issue with an approach that does not focus on discourse but on the actual relationships between human actors and materialities in the process of heritage creation.

It has been mentioned previously (see Chapters 2.1 and 2.2) that what we call heritage nowadays can be considered the result of *heritagisation*. To become ‘heritage’, said objects and sites had to pass through processes of listing and categorisation, through which they were ascribed to a set of values that determined the decision to preserve them for future generations. Although academics have paid increasing attention to cultural heritage values over the past decades (Smith, 2006; Silverman, 2015), little work has been done to provide alternative systems for describing values with a focus on the process leading to their creation, modification and assemblage.

As Harrison et al. (2020) points out, most of the existing classifications of values related to heritage have as a point of reference the economic model of value, possibly leaving out other forms. Therefore, for this study, I decided to interpret the physical environments of the reused industrial spaces of Ivrea as a manifestation of a system of values. Focusing on the values people attribute to the material remnants of the past can make us reflect on the affective qualities of the physical world and, therefore, the agency that objects possess in heritage creation and signification. When industrial heritage is used for other purposes, spaces and artefacts infused with values deriving from their physical characteristics, age, financial worth, or past uses can be re-negotiated by the influence of new values deriving from the activities carried inside.

## **2.4 Industrial heritage as a highly contested terrain of values**

In this light, the work of Sharon Macdonald (2020) can be helpful in addressing the manifestation of values in the process of industrial heritage reuse. Her research treated the problem of *profusion* of material things and discussed the processes through which people in everyday life, as well as museums, decide to keep or discard a certain object or artefact. She argued that judging and selecting what is worth keeping for the future is effectively a constitution of value. Furthermore, she emphasises that the determination of whether something should be kept or discarded is subject to a combination of values and factors, which are frequently permeated with sentiments and emotions. Throughout the study, Macdonald (2020) identified seven main values influencing people in their decision-making process regarding what to keep for future uses and purposes.

The first is called memory value, and it identifies objects as bearers of “significant personal or collective memory” (p. 242) and thus, they are kept to be preserved for future holders. Given the broad range of meaning that memory can convey, memory value can be subdivided into two other subcategories: place-value, which defines the objects that carry memories connected to a specific place, and event-value, which characterises an artefact whose memories are connected to specific moments.

The second value Macdonald (2020) defined is the obligation value, which is the value given to an object which one feels obliged to keep for a certain reason. An object can have “relational links to people, which means that getting rid of something could feel like a disrespect for that relationship” (p. 242). This sense of obligation can be given by the fact that

the object was a gift or might relate to things that had been kept for a long time and now one feels obliged to keep.

The third, the materiality value depends on the physical qualities of the object, which dimension or weight, for example, can impede or make it easier for it to be moved.

The fourth value is the use-value, which centres around an object's functionality. The decision to keep or discard an object often hinges on its current or potential usefulness. Objects that serve a practical purpose or hold the potential for future utility are more likely to be retained, while those deemed no longer functional may be discarded.

Rarity or age-value represents the fifth value. The mere fact that an object is old or rare can contribute to its preservation and the desire to safeguard it for the future. Objects with historical or cultural significance due to age or scarcity are often considered valuable and worth preserving.

Aesthetic value, the sixth value, depends on an object's beauty or aesthetic appeal. Objects can be evaluated based on aesthetic judgments that may not adhere to conventional or “canonical criteria of beauty” (p. 242). Personal tastes and preferences come into play, as objects that are visually pleasing or evoke a sense of admiration are more likely to be kept.

Finally, financial value, the seventh value, is closely tied to the reason for acquiring an object rather than discarding it. However, the monetary value of an object can be relevant when evaluating whether to keep it or not. Objects that have gained financial worth over time due to their age or rarity may prompt individuals to consider their preservation from a financial standpoint.

In summary, Macdonald (2020) highlights how deciding to keep or discard objects is a multifaceted process influenced by a combination of values. The memory value, obligation value, materiality value, use value, rarity or age value, aesthetic value, and financial value all contribute to our perceptions and choices regarding the objects we possess. Thus, they can be seen as the connection between human and non-human actors of the industrial heritage assemblage. These values reflect the complex interplay between sentimental attachments, practical considerations, and personal judgments when determining the disposal and future uses of objects and artefacts. Moreover, because narratives like AHD work by determining heritage values, this value system can be helpful to reveal the narratives governing the definition and management of the industrial heritage of Ivrea.

Throughout this study, the system of values developed by Macdonald (2020) is used as an analytical framework, through which the remnants of the industrial past of Ivrea are captured during the process of meaning-making. Industrial heritage sites represent a good case

study to dig into this phenomenon. As mentioned in Chapter 2.1, industrial heritage constitutes a pretty recent form of heritage category, as we can take The Nizhny Tagil Charter for the recognition of industrial heritage, signed in 2003, as its official entrance into the heritage realm. As heritage, industrial spaces and artefacts acquire new meanings, and to them are attributed different and new values. In addition, industrial heritage differs from more ancient forms of heritage for which preservation and protection are the only way to ensure their presence in the future. Industrial heritage can sometimes be modified and adapted to new uses.

Many scholars have discussed this particular standing of industrial heritage. Pendlebury (2013), for example, sustains that the values placed on industrial heritage are different from other types of heritage sites, which creates different relationships and opportunities for reuse. These values can be linked to previous uses of the location, the value placed by the community, financial value, age or the specific architecture. When industrial heritage is involved in projects of reuse, this specific configuration of values often leads to conflictuality. Han and Zhang (2022) and Liu et al. (2020) highlight that in renewal project of industrial buildings and artefacts, the inability to deal with the convergence of all these values referred to industrial heritage is accompanied by issues regarding the economic and social sphere, like financial disbalance and gentrification. Moreover, as underlined by Merciu et al. (2017), the consistent volumes of economic interests that industrial reuse project usually attract can put in series difficulties policy-makers and bureaucratic apparatuses, whose instruments often result unsuitable to efficiently govern such processes.

Industrial heritage results then as the place of encountering a wide range of values ascribed by various groups of interest. Micheal Frisch (1998) uses the term *industrial heritage terrain* to define industrial heritage, as describing the “huge range of projects, initiatives, approaches, and models that can be collectively gathered around the notion of industrial heritage” (p. 242). The author considers the field a contested space, the meeting space of a series of actors whose visions and ideas about the use of industrial heritage often “converge in the symbolic public space of industrial heritage projects” (p. 245). We can rephrase this in Macdonald’s terms: industrial heritage is a contested space in which different values given to heritage objects constantly clash. From this perspective, the process of *heritagisation* of industrial material remains is not only defined and shaped by experts that work to conserve and categorise them to protect their disappearance. In the process of definition and interpretation of industrial heritage also contribute a wide range of values that said heritage



manifests for the actors involved in its management and reuse, which can vary from more emotionally related factors to more practical and financially-related ones.

## 2.5 Futuring and Nostalgia

The process called *heritagisation* is not only about the past, but is typically understood as involving the uses of the past for the purposes of the present. As we mentioned in Chapter 2.2, heritage has been defined by management practices intended to control uncertainty and identify, define and secure the existence of their subjects into the future. It can therefore be said that time and temporality have always been central in the valuation of heritage. As we mentioned in Chapter 2.1, the role of heritage conservation and preservation in resourcing the future was reinforced by the establishment of a range of international conventions, such as the TICCIH (the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage) and protocols for the protection and maintenance of industrial heritage sites, which were understood to represent universal and universally valued resources, “the protection of which was undertaken for the interest of both present and future generations“ (Harrison et al., 2020, p. 7). Harrison et al. (2020) argue that these practices intervene and contribute directly to assembling specific future worlds. Through this point of view, heritage-making and management correspond to an act of *futuring*. When keeping an object or deciding to preserve and protect a building, people act to ensure their position in their future lives or the future of later generations.

Making and disposing of heritage can represent a way of creating future narratives. We can think of a narrative as a story that organises meaning in useful ways for human communities, incorporating historical and geographically specific meaning. In her work about the role of culture in the regeneration of a postindustrial region in Norway, Inger Birkeland (2017) discusses the role of future-related narratives in developing areas touched by deindustrialisation's consequences. She argues that in territories or cities where industry meant development and wealth until the recent past, the making of heritage around industrial remains served in the construction of narratives that, starting from the past, try to make sense of the present to be able to front future challenges (Birkeland, 2017). Industrial progress in Western countries resulted in economic expansion, improved living conditions, and increased access to education for many people. However, this advancement also caused problems such as economic instability, social inequality, cultural decay, and environmental damage. Communities involved in the process of deindustrialisation have, in addition, suffered for loss

of jobs and of the commercial and social activities deriving from the industrial presence in the area.

Indeed, it is not uncommon to find in the literature that industrial heritage is identified through sentiments of nostalgia. Svetlana Boym (2007) defines nostalgia as “a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed” (p. 1). For her, nostalgia is associated with loss and can be seen as a cognitive and affective way of seeing and thinking about the past. The author further specifies that nostalgia can manifest in human behaviour in two opposing ways: restorative and reflective (2007). Restorative nostalgia is deeply associated with idealization. It occurs when the past is perceived as a golden age, a state of happiness and peacefulness that far surpasses the current circumstances. This form of nostalgia tends to be confrontational because it compares an idealised and positive past to a perceived inadequate present. For Byom (2007), this sense of superiority through which restorative nostalgia looks to the present makes it an impediment to progress as it dwells on one’s desire to restore the past lost virtuousness and “attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home” (p. 7). Reflective nostalgia instead does not try to recreate a perfect version of a selected past. This second type takes on a more ironic and innocent narrative because it does not romanticise the past but centres around personal memories and the flow of time. It examines historical events and individual experiences with distance, with the knowledge that the past cannot be undone or brought back (Byom, 2007). In both cases, nostalgia is perceived as an un-progressive look at the past. It can be more active and reactionary, like restorative nostalgia, or more calm and still, like reflective nostalgia.

As noted by Smith and Campbell (2017), industrial heritage can be associated with “a nostalgic yearning for a return to an unattainable past and a lost working life” (Smith & Campbell, 2017, p. 615). It would be normal to think that a sentiment of nostalgia connected to the industrial heritage and past would constitute a narrative that looks back to what is lost. However, through their study, Smith and Campbell (2017) stress how nostalgia can be an instrument to positively address the traumas connected to deindustrialisation and be centred on the present and the future. They call it “progressive nostalgia”, as the active and conscious aim “to use the past to contextualise the achievements and gains of present-day living and working conditions and to set a politically progressive agenda for the future” (Smith and Campbell 2017, p. 613).

Even if possibly connected to traumatic experiences, industrial heritage remains can be used in the present day in the construction of future-oriented narratives. As pointed out by Birkeland (2017), “heritage develops through narrative organisation of the development of

place where there is a past and a present and also where particular meanings concerning the role of the future appear” (p. 64). Through the reuse and modification of industrial heritage, the disposal of its artefacts and objects and the assemblage and disassemblage of values, human and non-human entities collaborate to develop narratives that contain a vision of the future.

Ivrea can be considered a heritage assemblage in which human actors (public and private investors, the public, commercial activities) are in an ongoing interaction with non-human actors (the sites, policy protection documents, archives) in the process of meaning-making. Thanks to the interplay of these actors, the industrial heritage site, its identity, function and the meanings and representations it encompasses are transformed, leading to its re-conceptualization and re-definition. In the deindustrialised context of Ivrea, this transformation entails the re-interpretation of its industrial history to research new future roles for these buildings and new future visions.

With this in mind, this study researches the meanings and narratives underlying this transformation with the aim of answering the question: to what extent is industrial heritage used to construct future-oriented narratives on and about Ivrea's economy and society, and which heritage values play important roles in this process?

### 3. Methodology

The guiding question for this qualitative study is “To what extent is industrial heritage used to construct future-oriented narratives on and about Ivrea's economy and society and what values play an important role in the process?”. As highlighted in the theoretical framework, answering this question requires looking at all the actors involved in the process of meaning-making around Ivrea's industrial heritage, humans (actors involved in the re-use of the sites) and non-humans (documents, objects and places). A methodology encompassing both spectrums, the human and the non-human, was needed to consider heritage as an assemblage, where non-human actors collaborate with people to create meanings and narratives. To do that, it was necessary to tackle these heritage components separately to be then able to analyse their interaction (Morse, 2010). Therefore, it was decided that combining qualitative methods and thus designing a qualitative mixed-method approach was the optimal way to answer the proposed research question. The qualitative methods chosen for this study are site analysis (visual analysis), semi/structured interviews and a content analysis of pictures, documents and other written texts that were directly observed and obtained at the sites. This multi-method approach is needed to provide information that may be inaccessible or overlooked when using one method alone, thus supplying the research with a reliable data set (Morse, 2010).

The chosen site of the research is the Officine ICO and the Social Service Building in Ivrea, which comprise a total of five buildings: the Red Bricks Factory, the New Officine ICO, its third and fourth extensions and the so-called Social Service Building (see Chapter 4). These buildings were chosen for various reasons among the industrial infrastructure left by the Olivetti company. Firstly, since the abandonment of industrial activities in its insides, this group of sites has been modified and reused by both public and private stakeholders: the Red Bricks Factory and part of the First Extension are now at the centre of a project that aims to renew it to turn into a multi-purpose space as well as a hub for private investors development in the field of technology; another part of the First Extension of the ICO Workshops has been turned into an info point dedicated to host visitors of the UNESCO sites (*VISITOR CENTRE UNESCO*, n.d.); the Second and the Third Extensions house multiple associations and businesses in the field of culture while the Fourth extension hosts the department of Nursing Sciences of the public University of Turin as well as a restaurant, a gym. Finally, the Social Service building is now used to host a private management and leadership school.

### **Sampling and data collection:**

In this research, this group of buildings is considered the material representation of the ‘industrial heritage contested terrain’ conceptualised by Frisch (1998), as the symbolic place of convergence of a multiplicity of actors. Furthermore, the industrial patrimony of Ivrea is composed of about 27 heritage assets, with only 66% re-used, most of them for housing purposes (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d, p. 200). Because of this and for the time limitation of the field study, only the industrial complex of ICO Workshops and the Social Service Building have been considered.

To acquire the data, an extensive on-site field study and active observation of the buildings mentioned above were necessary. This ethnographic work took place in the time-span of two weeks and a half, between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2023, during which I visited every building multiple times during different times of the day while taking notes about my observations. Repeatedly walking through the area and inside the buildings helped me get a better sense of the spaces. By doing that, I discovered elements that were previously unknown to me and thus expanded my knowledge about the sites.

In addition, I documented my visits by taking photographs. An approach that included photography was important given the interest of this research in the former industrial environments and their relationship between their old and new uses, particularly the furnishing, the display of artifacts, images and textual elements. As Pink (2004) reminds, photography as a visual research method is never just visual but is almost always accompanied by the words, as the medium of expression for both the research participants and the researchers themselves.

Therefore, this mixed method approach also includes semi-structured interviews. The subjects were chosen following a set of criteria: they had to be actively engaged in the process of repurposing of the former factories of Olivetti in Ivrea by managing or carrying out an activity inside the spaces in analysis. In the case of this research, the people actively carrying out the reuse of the industrial heritage of Ivrea represent the human component of this heritage assemblage. Hence, they contribute actively to the re-negotiation of the industrial sites by attributing their values and meanings to the buildings and artefacts. As Bryman (2012) points out, “in purposive sampling, sites, like organizations, and people (or whatever the unit of analysis is) within sites are selected because of their relevance to the research questions” (p. 616). A big advantage of this combined method approach was that it included

interviewees insights and real-time observations. The field notes provided data that helped to put the opinions and statements from the interviews into context. The aspects discussed in the interview therefore are strengthened by first-hand observations that were collected on-site.

To get a full image of the heterogeneous network of reuse of Ivrea's industrial heritage, it was important to choose respondents who represented the variety of projects, actors and social sectors involved in the industrial repurposing process. The main goal was to show the diversity of the actors involved; thus, all the chosen participants have different professional backgrounds and belong to various stakeholder groups (see appendix A).

To gather a diverse group of interviewees, I conducted extensive online research and engaged directly with potential respondents in the field. A total of 11 respondents were found, all of them involved in projects and activities concerning the Officine ICO and the Social Service Building in Ivrea (see appendix A). Interviews took place between March 20<sup>th</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup> of 2023 and lasted, on average, 45 minutes. All the interviews were done in person and inside of the same buildings where the respondents worked, in order to make room for the interviewees to also visually guide the researcher through the spaces. This means that the researcher seeks to collect data in naturally occurring situations and environments, as opposed to fabricated, artificial ones (Bryman, 2012).

### **Analysis and operationalization:**

The interview method was beneficial for this thesis because it allowed me to ask the interviewees about their opinions, attitudes and motivations in regard of the process of reuse of the former Olivettian spaces, for which open-ended questions were necessary, just as prompting and follow-up questions. A total of eighteen questions were prepared in advance, most of which were open-ended (see appendix B). There was room for follow-up questions and for participants to take over the conversation at times. The interview questions were designed in a way which allowed the interviewee to have "a great deal of leeway in how to reply" (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). Throughout the interviews, the subjects were asked to explain the activity they are carrying out on the sites, their ideas about its reuse and their personal opinion about the future vision entailed by the regeneration process of Ivrea's industrial heritage. To get an insight into the transition of industrial heritage in Ivrea's future vision and the role it is meant to occupy, it was be important to understand the commonalities and differences of the activities of reuse. This helped me to get insights into the ideas of the

stakeholder involved in the reuse and the narratives involved in the interplay between their activity and the sites themselves.

For the site analysis, the value system described by Macdonald (2020) was used as an analytical framework. The material remnants of the Olivetti industrial past of Ivrea were interpreted as the physical manifestation of the aforementioned value system composed of seven main values: memory value, materiality value, obligation value, use value, rarity value, financial value and aesthetic value (Macdonald, 2020). This interpretative ethnographic method was chosen to offer a critical view on the affective agency of material artefacts in the heritage-making process. All these spaces were analysed by putting emphasis on the values they manifested according to Macdonald (2020) value system. To do that, the material and textual components of the sites were examined. With the context of Olivetti in mind, certain important aspects were investigated to answer the research question. Such components are related to questions such as what elements of the industrial past of Olivetti are present? What is their role in the new use of the spaces? Are there material connection between the former industrial use and the new uses of the spaces?

The analysis of all the data sets was mainly based on two processes. First the data from the transcriptions from the interviews were revised through “open coding” (Flick, p. 309). This was done to facilitate having an overview of the findings, to see which themes were mentioned by multiple people, which themes co-occurred and also to give insight into differences in themes between the different interviewees. This process was done using ATLAS.t.i. While reading the raw data set several times, important passages were marked and termed with a specific ‘code’. Although this process was relatively open, the theory on industrial heritage and reuse of Chapter 2.2, the theory on Authorised Heritage Discourse of Chapter 2.3 and on values of Chapter 2.6 were used to connect the data to relevant concepts like authenticity, nostalgia and industrial contested heritage terrain (see appendix C).

These codes were used in a subsequent inductive phase in which categories were formed based on their fitting to the aforementioned ethnographic analysis based on the value system developed by Macdonald (2020). An example of this phase can be that elements from interviews that directly referred to the history of Olivetti or to memories connected to the objects and spaces seen and photographed during the fieldwork, were associated to the memory-value described by Macdonald (2020). The code groups or categories that resulted constituted the basis for the analysis and discussion of the results of the study (see Codebook in appendix D).

**Ethical aspects:**

Each participant was informed before the interview about the research goals and the university program it was for, and they all had the opportunity to ask more questions about it. It was also made clear to the participants that they did not have to answer any question they did not want to answer. Before the interview started, they were asked for permission to record and analyze the interviews and they signed a consent form. All respondents are Italian speakers, so the interviews were held in Italian. To ensure their privacy, fictitious names were used throughout the thesis.

Regarding the fieldwork, the photographs were taken after verbal consent from the manager building or from the owner of the object. The ethnographic work was done with having care to not interrupt or disturb the activities that was carried out on the site.



#### 4. Setting the context

This study examines the case of Ivrea, a town in the northwest region of Piemonte, Italy. This city's history and development are strongly linked to the life of a single large company, Olivetti. In 1908 Camillo Olivetti founded a company specialised in precision machines and later successfully launched the production of typewriters, favouring the growth process of Ivrea. After this period, the town's history was shocked by the events linked to the Second World War, which led to the setback of many industrial activities (Storia Olivetti - Typewriterstory, 2020). The town's economy restarted in the post-war period when, after the death of Camillo, the company was guided by his son, Adriano. Considered to be an eclectic and visionary "illuminated entrepreneur" ("Adriano Olivetti, l'imprenditore", 2023), Adriano launched an industrial model based on the diffusion of culture and on advanced welfare politics reserved for the workers based on the motto "A factory cannot look only at its profit margin. It must distribute wealth, culture, services and democracy. I think of the factory for the man, not the man for the factory" (*The Entrepreneur: Adriano Olivetti and His Humanistic Approach to Responsible Business - Sofidel*, 2020).

He also tried to get into politics with the "Community Movement" party, which was oriented towards challenging development issues in the area and its surroundings by promoting sustainable development and innovation to reduce unemployment and rural depopulation and open the area up to cooperative approaches. Adriano's vision for welfare and the company's progressive approach to exploring new markets and finding innovative solutions led to a company-wide restructuring. This resulted in the introduction of new products and the creation of new spaces for employees and social and cultural services for them and their families (*Storia Olivetti - Typewriterstory*, 2020).

In 1960 the city was shocked by the sudden death of the visionary leader Adriano. Despite that, the company continued to thrive and positively affect the city and its population. In the following years, Olivetti entered the electronic sector by producing calculators and the first prototypes of personal computers. The advent of information technology during the 1970s paved the way for the company's new development. In Ivrea were conveyed skilled professionals and researchers to participate in this new wave of technological advancement, which led Olivetti to launch on the market advanced personal computers (Peroni, 2016).

However, by the end of the 1980s, the city experienced a setback due to the national personal computer market crisis and Olivetti's struggles to innovate and compete globally. Despite maintaining its focus on the IT sector, Olivetti also invested in other sectors such as telecommunications, during the 1990s as part of a transition to the post-industrial economy. Ultimately, the company lost its brand and gradually decreased production and employment, causing a significant rupture with the town that still struggles to come to terms with the loss of its primary economic actor. For many years, Olivetti not only served as the leading economic force, but also as the key driver for social services, cultural events, and urban policies (Giliberto, 2016).

In the past two decades, the Olivetti buildings stock was divided in many properties and the spaces went under a process of regeneration and reuse by a diverse range of actors. This research focuses on some buildings positioned along a street called Via Iervis, which take a temporal span of fifty years, since the start of the company in 1908 until the end of the 1950s.

The first building is placed at the start of the street, designated in the map below with the number 1 (see fig. 1). This building, called the “Red Brick” building, was designed by Camillo Olivetti and it is the first site of production of the company, in which the first typewriters and calculators were assembled. The building is two floors high and is characterised by the use of bricks, which makes it similar to other industrial workshops of the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d). This building forms part of a complex of a complex of buildings called Officine ICO, or ICO Workshops, which can be individuated on the map below as following the Red Brick Building to the left (see fig. 1).

The *first extension* of the ICO Workshops was built between 1934 and 1936 and is connected directly with the Red Bricks building. Even if placed in parallel with the first production site and connected to it, the First, the Second and the Third extensions represent a more rationalist and modern architectural style, as they feature a glass facade consisting of two parallel glazed walls and it rises for three floors above the ground (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d).

The *fourth extension*, also named New ICO, was built between 1955 and 1958 named New ICO. It is a four floor building which used to host the Olivetti Mechanics Offices, which was originally a covered spaces used to house automatic lathes for the production of mechanical parts of typewriters and calculators (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d). This area is characterised by a covered metal structure made of shed roofs of twelve meters sides (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d). This building figures in the map below as detached

from the other extensions as divided by the Strada di Monte Navale. In reality but in reality is united to the Third Extension by a construction that allows the passage of people and vehicles in the street as it is suspended above the street level.

The last building, called Social Services Centre, was built between 1955 and 1959 and is placed on the opposite side of the street, facing the First and the Second Extensions of the ICO Workshops. On the map below it corresponds to the number 2 (see fig. 1). The building used to house a cultural centre, the infirmary of the company as well as other social services. It is made of two blocks of hexagonal shape, which are connected by an independent vertical building. On the side facing Via Iervis, the buildings present a portico which is characterised by slits and holes to open the covering the light and rain for the vegetation placed in below. The first of the two blocks of the building was the library and the social services office and the other the infirmary and over time it also hosted other social services activities including the services of the children's summer camps.

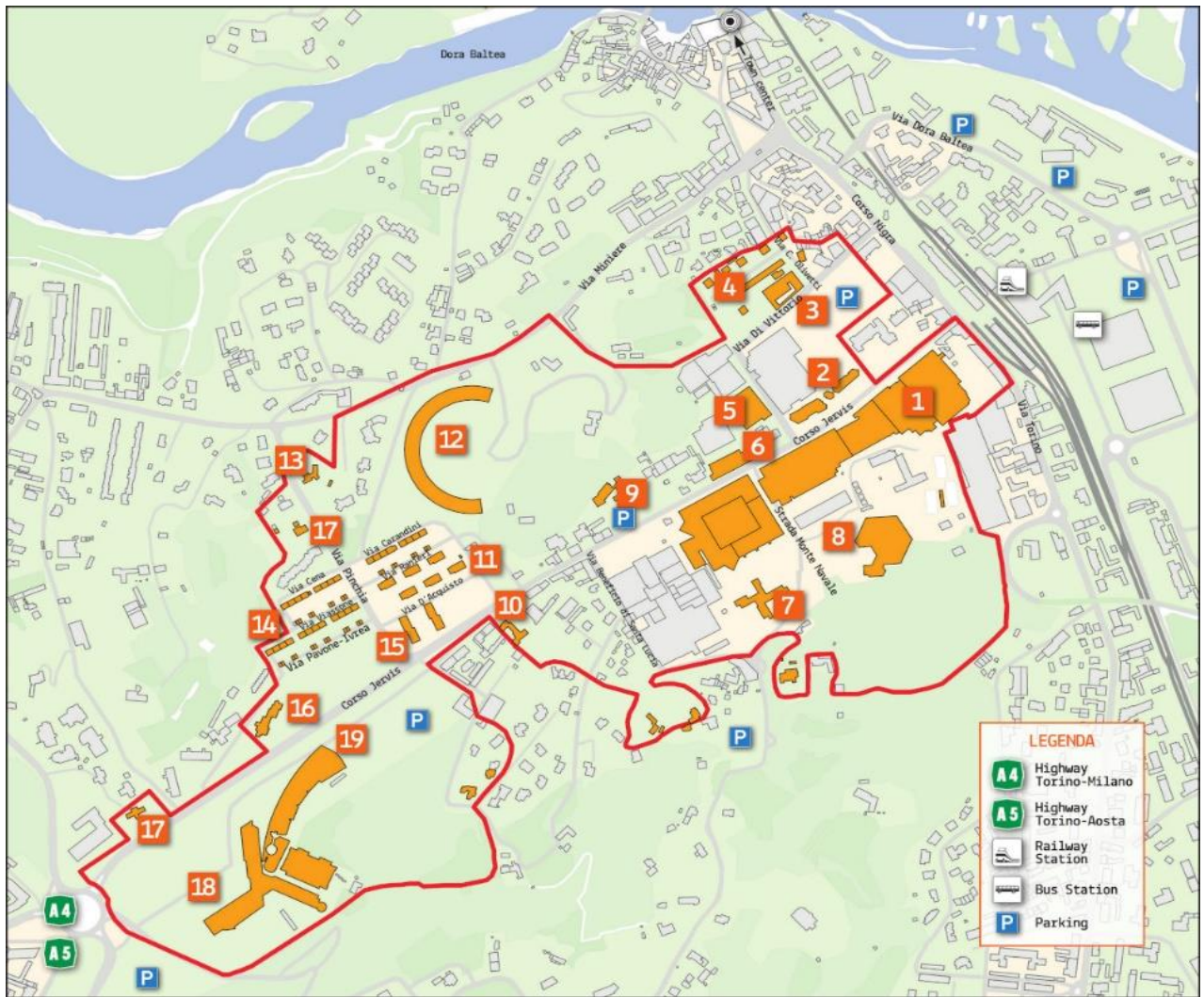


Figure 1

([Map of the Unesco Buffer Zone of Ivrea], n.d.)

## 5. Results and discussion

### 5.1 Nostalgia, a double edged-sword

Imagine a street of a little city in the Italian north-west province of Turin, which the famous French architect Le Corbusier described in 1936 as “the most beautiful street in the world” (Bragaglia, 2019) where on a tag is written: “This new line of buildings, placed in front of the factory, is here as testimony that is with the diligent efficiency of the multiple instruments of cultural and social action that man lives his long day in the factory, his humanity cannot be hidden behind a working suit”<sup>3</sup>.

In Ivrea, the sentiment of pride and longing for a glorious industrial past is very present. The innovative ideas of the two main leading characters of the Olivetti innovative type machine and computer industry, Camillo and Adriano Olivetti, are portrayed on many corners of what once was the living centre of their manufacture, Jervis Street. Nowadays, with industrial activities ceased, the street seems suspended in a nostalgic yearning for the past.

The data yielded from field visits and interviews show that in the context of the reuse of the industrial facilities of the Olivetti company, the present is influenced by the double-edged sword of an important past and a present sense of failure. As Smith and Campbell noted (see Chapter 2.5), industrial heritage can be identified with “a nostalgic yearning for a return to an unattainable past and a lost working life” (Smith & Campbell, 2017, p. 615).

In the case of Ivrea, the memory of the industrial past is inevitably connected to the one of the Olivetti family and the company they created and is, in many cases, accompanied by a sense of sorrow for the end of its story. This sentiment is often manifested by expressions typical of what one would use for the loss of a loved person, or a relative. Marco, who is part of a group of associates that bought many spaces of the ICO Workshops, now in the process of renovation for new uses, associated the memory of Olivetti with the one of a lost mother:

---

<sup>3</sup> “*Questa nuova serie di edifici posta di fronte alla fabbrica sta a testimoniare con la diligente efficienza dei suoi molteplici strumenti di azione culturale e sociale che l'uomo che vive la sua lunga giornata nell'officina non si cela la sua umanità nella tuta di lavoro.*”- (Translated into English by the author, as are all the following Italian texts).

*“Because there was Olivetti who was doing everything. She was the mother of everyone. When the mother died. Everything died.”<sup>4</sup>*

Moreover, he stated to have captured this feeling of sadness once he opened for the first times the acquired spaces to the public:

*“When people discovered that I and other businesses were operating in these offices, people called me by saying: “Let me in, let me in to have a look!”. And I saw people crying here. “Because I have spent 40 years here inside and I never entered again after”.<sup>5</sup>*

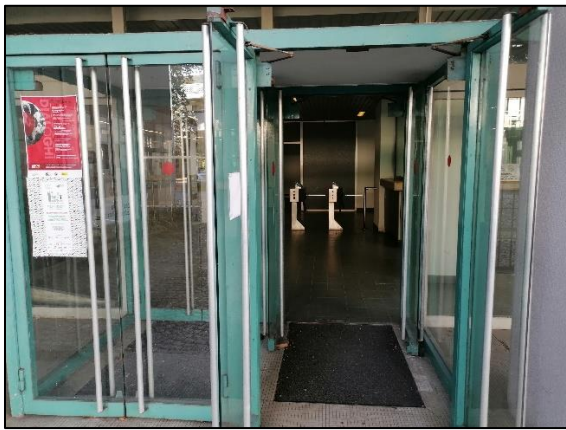


Figure 2



Figure 3

The photos (fig. 2 and 3) show the entrance of the First Extension of the ICO Workshops and the hall called *Salone dei 2000*<sup>6</sup>, as the atrium where the workers used to be welcomed by the founder Camillo when the company only had two thousand employees. The memorial value given to these places by the citizens and former Olivetti workers is associated with the company’s failure and job loss. For Marco, the sense of nostalgia regarding the present absence of Olivetti has to be associated with what it represented for the workers and their families and the heritage it left. He argued that the fact that Olivetti meant wealth and prosperity for many generations of inhabitants of Ivrea contributed to infuse uncertainty on the present projects involving the former factories. Marco further emphasised the sorrow surrounding Olivetti’s absence in the present times. The painful memory of the absence of

---

<sup>4</sup> *“Perché c’era l’Olivetti che faceva tutto. Era la mamma per tutti. Finita la mamma. Morto tutto.”*

<sup>5</sup> *“ Quando la gente ha scoperto che io e altre società operavamo in quell’ufficio (le Officine ICO), mi telefonava “Fammi entrare, fammi entrare a vedere”, io ho visto gente piangere qua dentro. “Perché io ho lavorato 40 anni qui dentro e non ero più entrato!”.*

<sup>6</sup> *Hall of the Two Thousands.*

Olivetti in the present is for him so powerful that he stopped announcing the future project that he has in mind for the old factories. He is sure that if he would speak publicly about them, he would be critically received by the citizens:

*“Because we’ve heard of the sentences of uncertainty in the city: “Now here they begin, and then who knows”. We don’t want to announce anything, nor on the project we have, which we are completing, which is very ambitious. So we don’t want to announce such things because then we know this city very well [...] Only when the first stone is put in will we say that the business is running. Because otherwise, I know that they would kill us, they would massacre us.”*<sup>8</sup>

What Marco is describing is the feeling of uncertainty left by the failure of Olivetti, which in his opinion, is still influencing the panorama of new initiatives involving the industrial remnants of Ivrea. He then explained to understand the feeling because, thanks to Olivetti, “there are people that made a house for them and their sons”<sup>9</sup>. The dichotomy between the sense of pride connected to Olivetti and the benefits generated to the community of the town, and on the other side, a feeling of mourning for its failure, is presented well by the words of Federico:

*“Let me say that the story of Olivetti has a big strength and a big weakness. The big strength is the fact that Olivetti was a unique story of the nineteenth century, unique from the point of view of the management [...] Olivetti made something that is still modern today. Let alone how it could be considered during the 30s or the 50s [...] It has the big flaw of being an experience of failure.”*<sup>10</sup>

This quote contains an element that emerged in most of the interviews: the history of Olivetti is something significant because it was innovative and futuristic. Marco reinforces this idea by talking about Olivettian buildings:

---

<sup>8</sup> *“Perché a noi ha già dato morti parecchie volte. Perché noi abbiamo sentito le frasi in città, le frasi di incertezza: “Qua cominciano e poi chissà”. Noi non vogliamo fare annunci, né sul progetto che abbiamo in mente, che lo stiamo completando, che è molto ambizioso. Quindi noi non vogliamo dire queste cose perché poi questa città che la conosciamo bene [...] Solo quando ci sarà la pietra, diremo che l'azienda si è insediata. Perché se no so già che ci ammazzano, ci massacrano.”*

<sup>9</sup> *“Perché qui c'è gente che si è fatta la casa per lui e per i figli”.*

<sup>10</sup> *“Allora diciamo che la storia di Olivetti ha un grosso pregio e grosso difetto. Grosso pregio è il fatto che l'Olivetti è stata una storia unica nel Novecento, unica per come sia dal punto di vista della gestione aziendale [...] qualcosa che ancora oggi ha del moderno. Figuriamoci negli anni 30, gli anni 50 [...] Ha il grosso difetto però di essere di fatto un'esperienza di fallimento.”*

*“They built these buildings with attention and far-sightedness, using materials and solutions with innovative techniques. They did it by uniting beauty, art and industry. It is something that, back in the day, was impossible to imagine. Even today would not be achievable.”<sup>11</sup>*

Nevertheless, the attribute of “modern” associated with the story of Olivetti by Federico, is related to the uncomfortableness of a past that “is still modern today” and to a feeling of failure. These characteristics of the industrial past and its achievements, like the “far-sightedness” of Olivettian architectural solutions are compared to the present day, in which said past “would not be achievable”. What emerges from these interviews is that the relationship with a past of wealth and achievements is imbued with a sense of reverence and inferiority. In this view, Olivetti was ahead of time, innovative, and visionary, which are characteristics that Ivrea has lost since Olivetti failed.

As stated by Samuel, the memory of Olivetti can even result in being uncomfortable:

*“I am convinced that Olivetti was born a century too early because the ideas that he developed between the 50s and, after the war, during the 60s, were maybe ahead of its time of 50-60 years. They were not understood back in the day. And now they are very actual, even to result uncomfortable for us.”<sup>12</sup>*

The memory of Olivetti projects a cumbersome weight in the eyes of the people living today because it is connected to the advance reached by the company when it was still in activity. In this sense, the industrial memory of the city is associated with a past that was so prosperous that is impossible to match nowadays. The backdrop of such a heavy history and the feeling of sorrow associated with Olivetti created the impression in some respondents that the city is sleeping under a shadow of nostalgic fixity. Elena, gave a practical example of this feeling:

*“From the beginning, I noticed a feeling of reverence for the past, which, when we started, made me feel like we were already starting with a disadvantage. There is always this shadow of sadness. I notice it when we see tourists that do not know where to go to eat. Last summer, to buy some water*

---

<sup>11</sup> *“Quando sono stati costruiti questi edifici hanno avuto un'accortezza e una lungimiranza e hanno già usato materiali e soluzioni con tecniche all'avanguardia. Hanno fatto la roba coniugando la bellezza, arte e metalmeccanica. Che era una roba a quei tempi e non potevi neanche immaginarla, e forse neanche oggi.”*

<sup>12</sup> *“Io sono convinto che Olivetti sia nato un secolo dopo presto, perché le idee che lui ha messo in campo fra gli anni 50 e gli anni, quel dopoguerra, gli anni 60, erano forse in anticipo dei tempi di 50-60 anni. Non capiti allora. E oggi molto attuali da risultare scomodi per noi forse.”*



*bottles, we had to walk two kilometres under the sun because there was nothing nearby to buy them. Many shops have closed, and other activities are not opening.*"<sup>13</sup>

The feeling of melancholic grieving I could detect in the interviews was often infused with a feeling of stillness. Many respondents associated the nostalgia of the industrial past of Ivrea with notions of sorrow and failure, as they merely reflected on what is gone and that there is nothing to return to.

Nevertheless, in their study about nostalgia, Smith and Campbell (2017) point out that viewing nostalgia merely as a conservative practice can make us forget about the complexity and ambiguity of this emotion. They argue that nostalgia can incorporate “both a strong sense of loss, while at the same time a sense of hope or longing for a better future” (p. 616). Later in this Chapter, this concept of a more “progressive” nostalgia will be further highlighted.

In Chapter 2.4 we saw that, in line with the findings of Macdonald, S. et al. (2020), heritage could be considered as the result of a disposal process, through which individuals or communities choose to conserve and protect something because it holds specific values. These values make individuals decide what to keep, conserve, and protect for the future. In the process of regenerating and reusing the industrial manufactures of Olivetti, the actors decided to display or keep several objects and artefacts pertaining to the Olivettian past of the buildings. I called this phenomenon a *crumble path of memory* because it resulted primarily in the physical manifestations of the memory-value as carriers of “significant personal or collective memory” (Macdonald, p. 242)

Yet sometimes, this value manifested in its subcategories, like place-value and event-value, while on other occasions, it entangled or clashed with other of the mentioned values described by Macdonald (2020).

I began to follow this path made of material evidence from the industrial past of Ivrea from the Fourth Extension or New Ico plant. This building, which in the past was used to host the mechanical presses to produce the pieces of typewriters, is nowadays used by Department of Nursing Sciences of the University of Turin.

When entering the Faculty, at first glance, the environment did not appear to be industrial. Once inside, I got caught by the vision of a series of numbered yellow cabinets on

---

<sup>13</sup> “*Ho notato che c'è una sensazione che ho avuto all'inizio è una sensazione di reverenza, di sguardo al passato, come se già si parta in svantaggio. C'è sempre questo alone un po' sbiadito diciamo, di scontentezza. Ma me ne accorgo anche quando vediamo i turisti che non sanno dove andare a mangiare, la scorsa estate per comprare delle bottigliette d'acqua abbiamo dovuto fare due chilometri sotto il sole perché non c'era niente di aperto. Hanno chiuso molti negozi, attività non ce ne sono*”.

both sides of the entrance (fig. 4). The impression of being inside an educational facility became more vivid. In front of the doors, a desk welcomed the visitor, with tags and signs signalling the aulas and where the classes take place. The new activities have incorporated the features of the former factory into their new function, using every characteristic of the building for their new purposes.



Figure 4

Alongside the walls of the front were disposed the different university aulas, with the seats giving the back to a vertical series of windows from which the light enters in the light days (fig. 5).

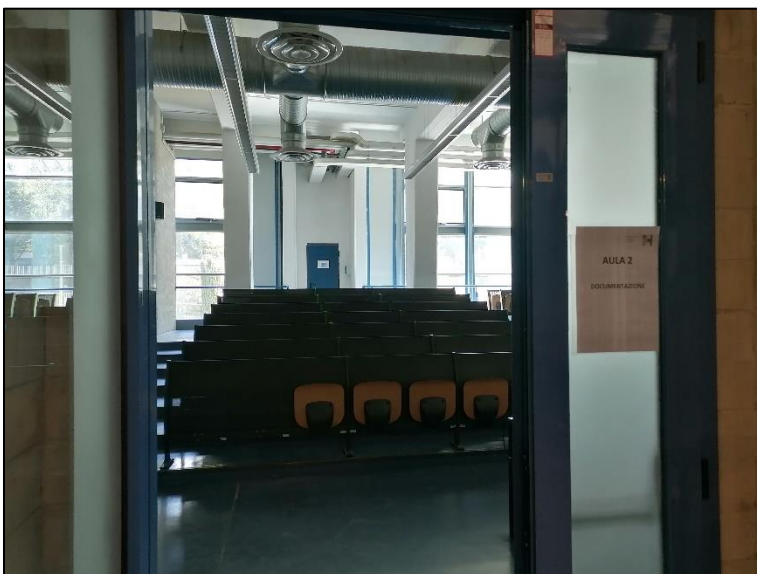


Figure 5

Even if not explicit, some physical features dating back to the former industrial use of the Fourth extension were present, but I could not notice them. Samuel, the coordinator of the

faculty, explained that the Olivetti workers once used the yellow cabinets at the entrance to leave their belongings at the beginning of their shift and that the mechanisms to open the windows at the top of the study zone were used to change the air with the external environment. Inside, the air was very heavy due to the oils and gasses exhaled by the lathes used in the production of typewriters (fig. 6). The director also explained to me that Adriano Olivetti, son of the founder Camillo, ordered the construction of the aeration system after he recognised that the working conditions inside the building were not optimal for the workers.

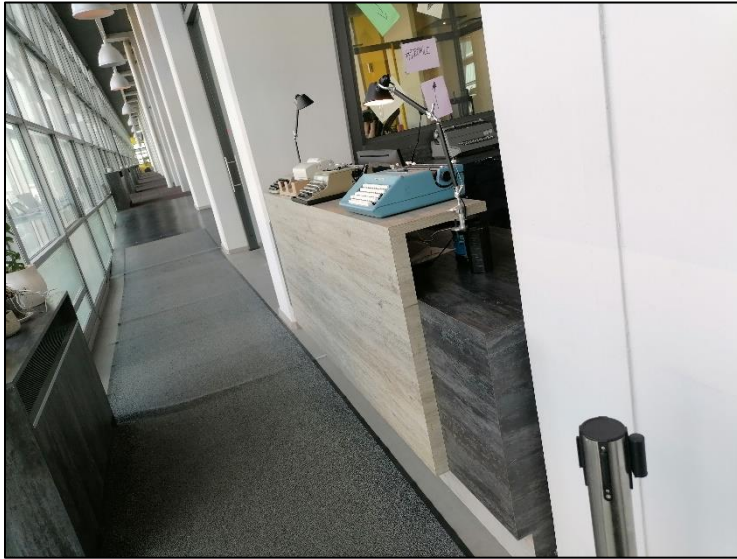


Figure 6

These elements were left and are still used today merely for their functionality. They were useful once, and they are still today. They exist along the new function of the building with no other apparent meaning than its current purpose. They were kept because manifestation of their use-value, because they are still useful. Yet, they could represent the memory of work, the everyday life of Olivetti's workers and their struggles. Here it was possible to notice the entanglement of two the memorial value and the use value: on the one hand, the aeration system and the cabinets were kept because they are a reminder of the everyday efforts of the workers and therefore, they hold memorial value; on the other hand, even if old-fashioned, these objects kept their functionality. These artefacts of industrial use manifest two values that work together in synergy for the new purposes for which the building is now used.

By visiting the other reused industrial spaces, I noticed that the *crumble path of memory* continued. On the opposite side of the building, one can access a wellness centre. A tall, windowed entrance welcomed the guest into a long and five meters tall linear environment, in which three spaces were divided by glass walls. First a reception, then a highly equipped gym and then a restaurant. I was firstly caught by the tallness of the ceilings, highlighted by a series of white columns running along the left side of the building, next to the windows. To connect the spaces, there was a long raised corridor which runs along the

straight profile of the building until the end. The feeling was the same I noticed in the University: every inch of the old factory was used to accommodate the new function. This time, however, since entering the building, my sight has been attracted by a series of objects one would not expect to see in a gym or a restaurant: typewriting machines. Alongside the squared reception, next to the modern computer used by the receptionist, some exemplars of typewriters were exposed, without any name tag signalling the year of production or any text with further technical or historical explanations (fig. 7).



*Figure 7*

The same pattern repeated along the corridor connecting the reception to the gym and the restaurant. On the left, between the corridor and the window, more memorabilia of the Olivetti's past production and design, like calculators, personal computers and keyboards, accompany the guest along the space. At the end of the corridor, one could step into the restaurant (fig. 8 and 9).



Figure 8



Figure 9

Here the material heritage of the company artefacts did not stop but was even incorporated into the new function of the space as an object of decoration on the tables of the restaurant (fig. 10) as well as on the surrounding walls (fig. 11).

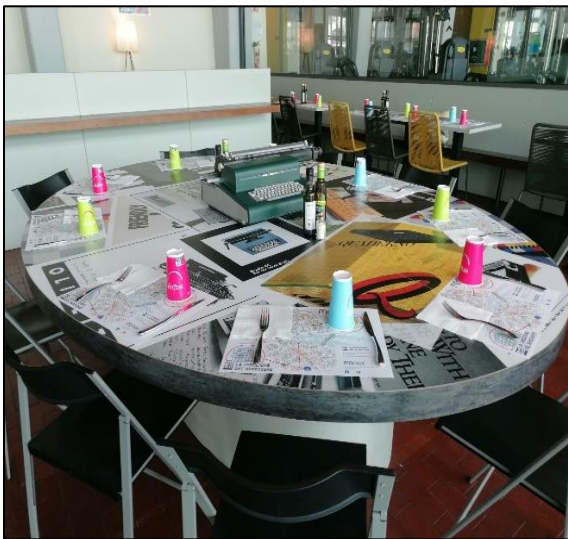


Figure 10

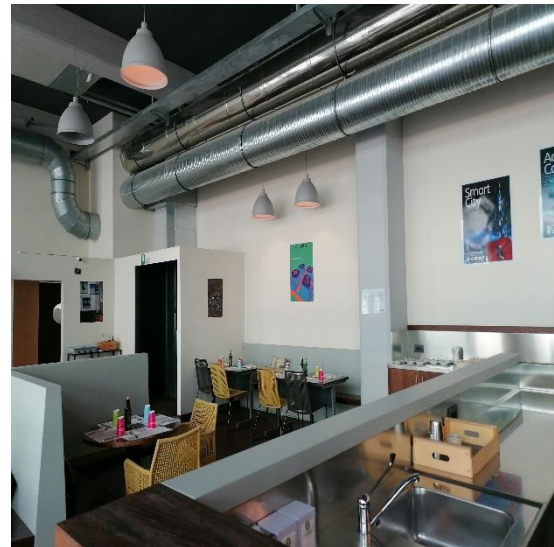


Figure 11

In this case the finite products of Olivetti, the typewriters, computers and calculators, along with the Olivetti advertisements placed on the walls and the tables, were the manifestation of the aesthetic value. Because of their position as objects of decoration and display, they have been kept because they relate to certain aesthetic judgments. Yet they also manifested the memory value. The objects were not accompanied by written text or tags reminding the guest of the former use of the place, or the history of the object. They did not interact in an ‘active’ way with the new function of the spaces but functioned rather as reminders, as *silent mnemonic entities* connected to Olivetti’s production. The objects

observed manifested the synergy between aesthetic-value and the memory-value. Giulio, the director of the facility, confirmed then my observations when he was asked what pushed him to display these artefacts in his facility:

*“To make sure people understand what was being done here. Here they manufactured the pieces, they used to produce the screws. Here there was the foundry, where people used to produce the screws, and the pieces of the machines, here every piece was manufactured. There wasn't China producing everything for everybody. Back in the days, everything was produced here. That means making people understand where we started. If we don't acknowledge the past, we won't understand anything about the future.”<sup>14</sup>*

Here the memorial value manifested by the finite products of Olivetti stand to represent for the respondent a valuable moment in the history of the place, which was highlighted through the comparison with the present. The objects acquired rarity value not just because of their age but also because they symbolise pride and happiness, which are emotions deemed rare today according to many respondents. The value they reflect can therefore be connected to the subcategory of the memory-value called event-value, for which an object is kept because holds memories that trace back to a certain moment of the past (Macdonald, S., 2020).

Moreover, as in the spaces used by the university, I was made conscious of the presence of other less explicit reminders of the industry. Giulio pointed his finger to the columns and made me notice that sixty to eighty centimetres from the top and bottom of them are grey, different from the rest, which is bright white. Then he pointed to the red paved

---

<sup>14</sup> *“Per fare capire che cosa veniva fatto qua dentro. Costruivano i pezzi, perciò fondevano le viti. Dietro c'era la fonderia, qui le assemblava, si costruivano le viti, si costruivano i braccetti della macchina, cioè veniva costruito tutto. Non c'era la Cina che costruisce per tutti. All'epoca qui veniva costruito tutto. Perciò per far capire dove siamo partiti. Se noi non sappiamo il passato, non capiamo niente del futuro.”*

ground to a series of holes and marks (fig. 12 and 13).



Figure 12



Figure 13

He then explained that the coarse parts of the columns are there to show the space where the workers of Olivetti used to carry out their daily jobs, while the holes in the ground are the places where the machines were attached to the ground. He added that he left these testimonies of the industrial work to send a message to his clients: no matter if they are training in the gym or having a meal, they should remember that they stand in the place where people worked to provide for their families. Here the memorial value was fundamentally related to the place. The visual representation of work was intrinsically connected to this hall. This time, however, while the aesthetically pleasing objects displayed in the corridor and the restaurant showed a longing for a moment in history when Ivrea was successful and therefore expressed the glorification of the company per se, the columns and the paved ground were infused by a memory which has to serve a purpose in the present. The objects were reused in a celebratory way. They portrayed a story of success, the one of Olivetti, which is not to be mourned but to be an inspiration for the people of today to do better, and to follow the example. The entanglement of memory-value and aesthetic-value manifested by the material testimonies of Olivetti helps the visitors to use the industrial spaces in a transformative way. The sign of the industrial past can help the users to acknowledge the effort of the people that worked inside those spaces to produce the objects that they can see, and make use of his memory in their activities.

However, I have to point out that without an explanation by Giulio, I would have overlooked the less obvious signs of Olivetti's past, like the columns and the signs of the ground. So, it is more likely that a common visitor of the centre would do the same.

The sentiment of nostalgia refers to a past that no longer exists, so it can only be inspiring. This sentiment of missing a past that no longer exists in the present is embraced by some respondents with a celebratory but proactive attitude. It becomes what Smith and Campbell (2017) call “progressive nostalgia”, because it “works to negotiate the social and political narratives and values that address the needs of the present” (p. 616). This type of nostalgia, differently from the more grieving form described at the beginning of the chapter, works towards managing the trauma given by the failure of Olivetti. It has a connection with the reflective form as described by Byom (2007), because it recognises the inevitability of the end of Olivetti, but it fronts it with a purposive attitude. At the same time it does not dwell on the past as an idyllic state of being or wants to bring it back like in Byom’s conceptions of restorative nostalgia (2007). Progressive nostalgia instead, as described by Smith and Campbell (2017), interprets the element given left by the experience of the industrial past to create narratives in which the future has a way to be imagined.

Other respondents expressed this more active attitude towards nostalgia. Simone, for example, who works for OLI, a private school. He argues that for their activity, the industrial past represents for them only a starting point for changing the present:

*“The community of Ivrea’s DNA has inside many Olivettian things. We have it inside of our mentalities. So we cannot say, let’s keep everything as it is, but it is also wrong to say to eliminate everything. Everything we do, in general, we people of Ivrea, has this strong Olivettian identity. We only have to transform it into something useful that does not bring immobilism, but to make dynamic everything we have inside.”<sup>15</sup>*

In the words of Simone, the innovative vision left by Olivetti is associated with the identity of the city and its citizens. From his point of view, the industrial heritage is linked to the mentality of the inhabitants of Ivrea and has to serve as a useful driver to confront change and not give up on immobilism. OLI is situated in the Social Services building. Simone describes this building as a “sanctuary” because it represents the respect and care Olivetti had for their workers. In this building, workers of Olivetti could recover from injuries and get access to the library during their free time. It was also a place where social workers could take care of the employees’ children during working hours at the expense of the company. Simone underlined the importance of their full name: ‘Adriano Olivetti Leadership Institute’ (fig. 14).

---

<sup>15</sup> *“Il DNA della comunità canavesana è, come dire, ha al suo interno molte cose Olivettiane. Ce l’abbiamo dentro nelle nostre mentalità. Quindi non possiamo dire, è sbagliato dire teniamo tutto com’è, ma è sbagliato anche dire eliminiamo tutto quanto. Tutto quello che facciamo di fatto, in generale noi canavesani, ha in sé questa forte identità Olivettiana. E poi bisogna solo trasformarla in qualcosa di utile che non porti a immobilismo, ma a rendere dinamico tutto quello che abbiamo dentro.”*



He emphasised the fact that it is the only business of the area that used the name of Adriano Olivetti for their purposes:

*“Because this was the cultural centre of the social project of Olivetti, for this reason, we decided to put our centre here. Another reason is that a strong idea of empowerment characterises our approach. Then mobilisation from below. There is then a strong link between the idea of Olivetti and us.”<sup>16</sup>*

For Simone, the memorial value attributed to the name and the figure of Adriano Olivetti and the place-value manifested by the function the building had in the past is a symbol of the company’s resilience towards uncertainties. Just as with the environment of the Fourth Extension described above, the elements of the Olivettian past presented by the Social Service Building stand as *silent mnemonic entities*, as symbolic reminders of the identity of the inhabitants of Ivrea. For Simone these elements, connected to identity and the intangible values connected to Olivetti’s history, are useful to interpret the past in a way that can help to build the future.

---

<sup>16</sup> *“Perché questo era il centro culturale del progetto sociale dell'Olivetti, per questo abbiamo deciso di mettere qui la sede. Un'altra ragione è anche legata alla tipologia di approccio che si caratterizza per una forte idea di empowerment. Quindi la mobilitazione dal basso. E quindi c'è un link molto, come dire abbastanza stretto a quella che era l'idea Olivettiana”.*



Figure 14

Also for Giovanni, who works for a cultural enterprise which is now reusing some spaces in what once was the First Ico Workshop, the memory of Olivetti as an innovator in the past has to be used as an instrument in the present:

*“Often the theme of Olivetti as an anticipator is recalled because what he used to do in the 1950s can come back and be actual, or anyways, an element of stimulus and positive benchmarking, a model to look and to be inspired by and learn from. So, we look at these spaces and their requalification, trying to revitalise and reuse those ingredients that are strong here because they lean on a history that has already been proved to be beneficial.”<sup>17</sup>*

For Giovanni, the mere look at the past as something gone and unattainable in the present day is detrimental. For him is important to keep the future-oriented philosophy of

---

<sup>17</sup> *“Spesso si richiama il tema di Olivetti come un anticipatore, eppure è quello che lui faceva negli anni 50, torna probabilmente ad essere attuale o comunque elemento di stimolo e di benchmarking positivo, un modello a cui guardare a cui ispirarsi e da cui trarre insegnamenti. Per cui si guarda a questi spazi qua e alla riqualificazione di questi spazi qua, provando a rinverdire e a usare gli ingredienti che magari qua sono forti perché appunto si poggiano su una storia in qualche modo già vissuta.”*

Olivetti. What Olivetti materially left as objects, buildings and artefacts is important in the way it symbolically reminds us of the way the company used to work in imagining new possible futures. What the company represented in the past as a company able to resist changes and look at the future with new innovations are the elements of Olivetti that, for Giovanni, should be kept. A passive attitude towards the past can result, for him, in a blurred future vision:

*“Looking back at the past is never useless because it is stimulating. This said, only looking back is not something that pushes you forward. This is why we are certainly trying to learn from what the Olivettian history was. Olivetti, from the beginning, was a company that was more looking forward than backward, so it already had a character of making the future, innovating, and experimenting.”<sup>18</sup>*

The memory-value manifested by Olivetti for Giovanni is symbolic. It does not refer to any material aspect or object of the industrial past, but is intangible. What Olivetti has to stand for in the present, which has to be kept, is the company’s past ability to look forward and to be dynamic and innovative. Failing to do that in the present, in the places holding the memory of Olivetti, would mean being unfaithful to that same memorial value.

In this section, I followed what I called the ‘crumble path of memory’ in the reused industrial buildings of Ivrea to show how the material remnants of Olivetti are connected to several values which drove people to keep and display them. From the fieldwork and the interviews, I could detect how the present is influenced by the dualistic form of nostalgia, the first representing a reflective, grieving attachment to a past that cannot be brought back (Byom, 2007). This type of nostalgia is mostly linked to the memorial value and place, associated to what the Olivetti spaces represented in the past and now does not anymore: wealth and job opportunities. The second type is a proactive, progressive and future-oriented look to an experience that can teach how to absorb failure and inspire change (Smith and Campbell, 2017). Also this kind of nostalgia is mostly connected to the memorial value, but differently from the former, is linked to the characteristics of the company that made it different from the others in terms of adaptation, progress and innovation. Moreover, occasionally the memorial value intertwined with the use value, when the material past of

---

<sup>18</sup> *“Lo sguardo al passato ma non è mai inutile, perchè stimola chi guarda. Però sicuramente non è concepito per lanciarsi proprio e vedere in avanti. Ecco, noi il tentativo che invece vogliamo provare a fare è certamente attingere a quella che è stata la storia Olivettiana. Olivetti già mentre faceva le cose era un'azienda che guardava più avanti che indietro, quindi aveva già una forte propensione nel fare impresa al futuro, all'innovazione a sperimentare.”*

Olivetti appear to have the same function in the present; and to the aesthetic value, when the finite products of the company were used to show its achievements.

To summarise, despite some cases in which the reflective stare at the past seemed to represent a block to the present action in reusing the industrial heritage, the use of the spaces and the respondents' answers indicated the intention of keeping the past as a source of inspiration.

Although, however the actors are willing to use the past as a powerful source to move on from a nostalgic, static narrative, practical matters like bureaucracy and space fragmentation present the main source of difficulties in the reuse of the industrial heritage of Olivetti.

## 5.2 Organisational and bureaucratic complexity

Since the abandonment of many of its factories between the 1980s and 1990s, Olivetti's properties in Ivrea have been sold and further divided between a wide range of owners. This heterogeneous network of owners consists of both private and public investors, who have to be consistent with norms and bureaucratic procedures which often differ from sector to sector. The size of the different ownerships further complicates this diverse context: from little businesses led by a couple of associates to larger non-profit associations, from businesses comprising a dozen people to major companies of thousands of individuals. Many respondents referred to the difficulties given by these various levels of complexity in the framework of the reused industrial sites of Ivrea.

On the one hand, the high number of different actors involved was mentioned by many respondents as the cause of the lack of coordination in the actualisation of many projects. Federico, who works in the Municipality of Ivrea to manage the projects connected to the industrial Unesco sites, gave an overview of the hierarchical, complex bureaucratic framework through which the diverse range of initiatives is coordinated:

*“The governance is constituted by a steering committee that represents the Ministry of Culture, the Piemonte region, the city of Ivrea, the municipality of Banchette, the cultural foundation of the city of Ivrea and the Foundation Adriano Olivetti. The City of Ivrea governs this steering committee as the referent subject. [...] But together with it, there are all the other stakeholders [...] the Historical Olivetti Archive, the National Archive of the Cinema of Enterprises, the Cappellaro Foundations, the Museum Tecnologicamente, the Golden Olivetti Pins. So we can say that is a pretty complicated governance structure.”<sup>19</sup>*

Federico then also gave me the example of the ownership history of a part of the ICO Workshops. He associated the scattered and confused ownership of some spaces by big companies with difficulties connected to the start of new projects:

*“The ownership changed. You have to imagine that the 45 thousand square meters of the Red Bricks and the three ICO Extensions, were divided during the 1990s. Telecom kept some parts, the others*

---

<sup>19</sup> *“La governance è costituita da uno steering committee che rappresenta il Ministero della Cultura, la Regione Piemonte, a città di Ivrea, un edificio del Comune di Banchette, la Fondazione quella che la fondazione culturale della città di Ivrea e la Fondazione Adriano Olivetti. Questo steering Committee è governato dalla città di Ivrea come soggetto referente. [...] Ma insieme a questo ci sono tutti gli stakeholder [...] l'Archivio Storico Olivetti, l'Archivio Nazionale del Cinema di Impresa, la Fondazione Cappellaro, il Museo Tecnologicamente, le Spille d'oro Olivetti. Quindi diciamo che la governance è una governance un po' complessa.”*

*were divided between asset management companies and real estate funds [...] You have to understand that these asset management funds use square meters as assets for their balance sheets. They don't care about their reuse and conservation.”<sup>20</sup>*

Many of these spaces have been used in the past just for their financial value on the market by significant investment funds. This has meant that the municipality has had little decisional power on the use of these spaces and slowed down the repurposing process. This situation was mentioned in many interviews. Giulio, for example, denounces the lack of continuity in the process of regeneration, given the fact that many parts of Ivrea's industrial heritage are in the hands of foreign investments funds:

*“There is not an overall continuity. You know, we are here today on a property owned by a fund from Singapore. Ahead in this same street is Prelios, who is connected to an Arabic fund. It seems like a joke.”<sup>21</sup>*

A prevalent myopic vision aimed at a quick financial profit held by private investors is often discussed in the literature as a critical factor in the process of the reuse of industrial heritage. As Crisina Merciu et al. (2017) pointed out, the regeneration of industrial buildings can be subject to a process called “capitalization of industrial heritage” when buildings and objects of outstanding value become subject to actions only based on interests of economic gain. In the case of Ivrea, industrial heritage has also been used by some big private investors as just a valuable economic asset. For them, these industrial buildings, even if unused, constitute a valuable financial resource to use as leverage.

These issues, which are connected to the financial value of the industrial buildings, also invested the spaces that are still under the process of renovation. Some interviewees described their efforts to restructure and renovate some industrial spaces as a “challenge” or a “risk”. For some of them, interestingly, the financial risk was contrasted by a sense of obligation. For instance, Marco explains that, besides acknowledging the risks connected to his investment, he did it because of the memory-value connected to the place:

*“Yes, let me say that the romantic aspect is present. Like, my father used to work here so I opened my business here. So, we began to buy these spaces. We decided with our guts, and we have the goal to*

---

<sup>20</sup> *“I proprietari sono cambiati nel senso che, se lei pensa che questi 45.000 metri quadri di Mattoni Rossi e i tre frammenti ICO, verso la metà degli anni 90, sono stati divisi. A parte i beni che si è tenuta Telecom, gli altri sono stati ripartiti tra società di gestione del risparmio con il loro fondi immobiliari [...] Capisci che i fondi di investimento usano i metri quadri come degli asset a bilancio. A loro non importa del loro riuso e conservazione.”*

<sup>21</sup> *“Non c'è una continuità d'insieme. Sai, qui oggi noi siamo di proprietà di un fondo di Singapore. Più avanti, sembra le barzellette, più avanti ci sono Prelios che è legata al fondo arabo.”*

*make this place come alive again in five or six years thanks to us, to our work. There are efforts, responsibilities and problems. The surprises can be so many that this became practically a mission.*”<sup>22</sup>

The renovation and the future reuse of the spaces acquired were described as a “mission” to bring back to new life a building that has an affective value because connected to the memory of the work of a relative. For him, the efforts, the monetary investments and the obstacles encountered along the way were minimised when confronted with the future satisfaction of seeing those places reused, thanks to his action and work.

On the other hand, when speaking to public and non-profit institutions, money constitutes a problem because of its scarcity. The lack of funds, or the difficulty of getting access to them, has been a major setback to starting new projects. For Anna, whose association is self-financed, the only source of income for future projects comes from winning public tenders, whose procedures are often very complicated:

*“We participate in public tenders. We were able to win some of them, but I believe it would be way simpler. The tender, instead, is not that easy. I mean, it is not that easy to understand the mechanism. It is a completely different language. Is not that simple, and I saw many people having this type of difficulty”*.<sup>23</sup>

Han and Zhang (2022) and Merciu et al. (2017) have indicated that the primary obstacle to reconstructing and repurposing industrial heritage sites is insufficient financial resources. Additionally, they have suggested providing industrial heritage repurposing initiatives with accessible and practical financial instruments must be a priority of the institutional actors involved.

Next to causing problems for entrepreneurs using the Olivetti sites, the organisational fragmentation also caused problems for tourism operators, to which we will now turn. They are challenged by the everyday struggle to access relevant Olivettian buildings owned by some big and powerful companies. This limitation obliged them to create a more flexible regime of visits, making their work more difficult. Because of these limitations, Elena explained that they had to reduce their visit offer:

---

<sup>22</sup> *“Sì diciamo, c'è l'aspetto romantico. Del fatto che tipo, mio papà lavorava qui e quindi io metto l'azienda qui. Abbiamo cominciato a comprare. Abbiamo fatto un investimento di pancia e per esempio io come tanti altri, abbiamo come obiettivo dire, tra cinque e sei anni dire che questa roba qui rivive grazie a noi, al nostro lavoro. C'è l'impegno, gli oneri e i fastidi. Le sorprese sono talmente tante per cui è quasi quasi una missione”*.

<sup>23</sup> *“Partecipiamo ai bandi. Alcuni bandi li abbiamo anche vinti, per carità, ma credevo fosse molto più semplice. Il bando, invece, non è così banale. Intendo riuscire a capire il meccanismo. E' un linguaggio completamente diverso. Non è così semplice e ho visto che tanti incontrano questo tipo di difficoltà.”*

*“We are trying to obtain the opening of certain buildings to internal visits because most of the time we can only show the external parts. Piece by piece, we are getting there [...]it’s not always easy to get access, so for now, visits are not standardised. It depends time by time on the requests of the clients. For example, if a group of architects comes, we try to make them see the internal spaces, at least the ones which remained the same as they were built once or that anyways have an aesthetic meaning.”<sup>24</sup>*

I could personally observe this issue when I participated in a guided visit to the Unesco sites. Talking with the tourists following the guide with me, some were annoyed by the impossibility of seeing certain buildings from the inside. One of them, a retired architect, was interested in visiting the Offices Palace to admire the stairs, one of the most famous architectural features of the Unesco site. The guide informed him that the visit was not possible because of the security policies of the company owning the building, and, apologised that he was obliged to show them using some photos taken from the internet.

Many respondents mentioned the difficult coordination between the numerous entities as a challenging factor in the regeneration and reuse of the buildings. Many of them share a part of their space with others or take part in activities and projects with similar functions or themes as others, and therefore risk stepping on their work. Simone underlies this aspect. For him, the solution would be an entity that embraces and coordinates every association and business that operates in the area:

*“This fragmentation of the various institutions is a big problem because everyone wants to satisfy its mission. So, it becomes difficult if there is not a subject that somehow embraces everyone and gathers everyone. Is difficult to operate with this fragmentation. This is the major difficulty of this area.”<sup>25</sup>*

In the composite environment of the industrial heritage of Ivrea, the process of reuse undertaken by the different actors is influenced by financial value, which often overflows, impacting the daily necessities and activities of the users and their willingness use the memories of Olivetti in a proactive way highlighted in Chapter 5.1.

Moreover, the multiplicity of the entities involved in the reuse and their heterogeneity relates to a lack of coordination between the parts. This complex network of reuse of the industrial heritage of Ivrea reflects the image of *contested industrial terrain* as conceptualised

---

<sup>24</sup> *“Quello che stiamo cercando di fare e stiamo ottenendo un po' alla volta è l'apertura di certi edifici alle visite interne, perché la maggior parte delle volte avviene dall'esterno. E un po' alla volta stiamo avendo questa possibilità. [...] non è sempre facile ottenere il permesso, per cui diciamo che adesso la visita non è standardizzata, ma si va anche alle richieste dei clienti. Ad esempio se vengono degli architetti, chiaramente cerchiamo di fargli vedere il più possibile interni, almeno quelli che hanno senso, quindi che o sono rimasti come quando sono stati progettati o che comunque hanno un senso estetico.”*

<sup>25</sup> *“Questa frammentarietà dei vari enti, è una grande difficoltà perché ognuno vuole soddisfare la propria missione. E quindi, come dire, diventa difficile se non c'è un soggetto che in qualche modo abbraccia tutti quanti e raccoglie tutti quanti. Quindi diventa un po' difficile con questa frammentarietà. Questa è la grande difficoltà del nostro territorio.”*



by Frisch (1998), as multiple actors with their initiatives and activities come together in the same spaces.

However, as we can see in the following chapter, the heterogeneity and multiplicity of entities in this environment, and the difficulties posed by bureaucracy can be conceived as push factor for increasing dialogue inside of the network.

### 5.3 Dialogue as a need

Although lack of coordination and bureaucratic complexity was a relevant theme as emerged from the interviews, the theme of dialogue emerged as its strong counterpart. Interviewees underlined how dialogue came to be a necessity in light of a diverse and multi-layered network. Strengthening the communication with the other stakeholders using the Olivetti industrial heritage and collaborating with them on projects and events constitute a means to deal with the barriers created by the complex bureaucracy and the physical and economic fragmentation of the sites.

For those who work in tourism, collaboration and dialogue with other actors reusing Olivetti's spaces constitute the only way to access many spaces and showcase the industrial heritage. On the other hand, the actors opening their spaces can benefit from the visibility their activities can potentially get, as stated by Simone:

*“Anyways, it is an equal exchange. We take care of the visits to the Olivetti Library for the Visitor Center. We collaborate with many because we also want to be part of this place and to make people understand that we are here, that they can come to visit us whenever they want.”<sup>26</sup>*

Creating forms of informal collaboration within the strict circle of the stakeholders involved in this reuse helps them to support each other in coordinating the efforts for the reuse and organising events and activities related to the industrial past of the city. Often these connections reach outside of this network and involve citizens, as well as associations or businesses, who are not directly involved in efforts of repurposing. Some spaces of the First Extension, which are now used now as tourist info point, collaborate with the Olivettian Archives and other museums in the city to sell their publications. The Service Building in front instead, which is now used as a place of private education, often organises events and workshops in which young students from the high schools of Ivrea are involved. The industrial spaces, besides their new specific function, be it educational, recreational or retail, become sites of encounters of various realities.

---

<sup>26</sup> *“E’ comunque un equo scambio. Per Visitor Center gestiamo noi praticamente le visite nella biblioteca Olivetti. Però collaboriamo, diciamo con in più, anche perché vogliamo essere parte di questo territorio, e far capire che siamo lì, che possono venire a trovarci quando vogliono.”*

The Fourth Extension and the Faculty of Nursing Sciences is a perfect example of this: thanks to the collaboration between various local actors, it became a polyfunctional space. Right after the facility's entrance, the University hosts Radio Spazio Ivrea, a web radio station that broadcasts music and other contents and hosts guests from the local artist community on a daily basis. Moreover, this space also houses the Ivrea Dementia Friendly Community, which helps people affected by, or working with, dementia (including caregivers, students, police officers and firefighters) to get a better understanding of it and learn how to deal with it. At the same time the organisation offers people with dementia a safe space to express themselves.

In addition, the faculty dedicated an entire aula to the FabLab, a laboratory equipped with a 3D printer open to students who want to work on a project (fig. 15).



*Figure 15*

No space is left unused: on the grey concrete walls of the corridors, various reproductions of masterpieces from the Renaissance are hung, covered by a thin hard layer of plastic. It is the result of a project called V.A.S.A.R.I., developed in accord with the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, through which people affected by Alzheimer's can connect to the paintings and recognise emotions or project their feelings by writing directly on it or by applying stickers (fig. 16).

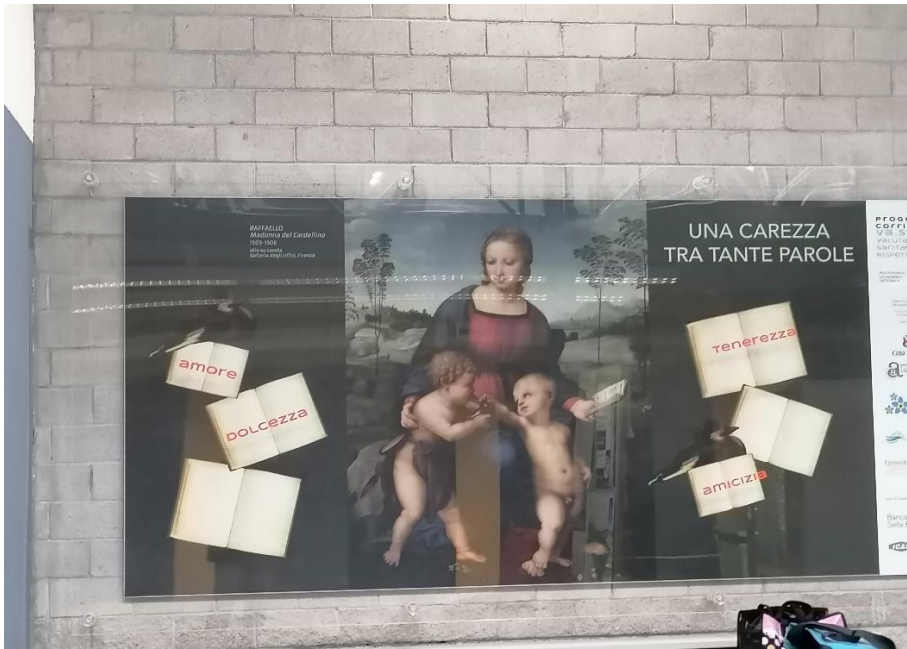


Figure 16

Reaching out to the neighbouring businesses and forming alliances to deal with the organisational fragmentation is transformed into a strength, an occasion to contaminate their spaces with different ideas and new projects. As we mentioned in Chapter 2.4, industrial heritage can be interpreted as a *contested terrain* (Frisch, 1998), where numerous actors with different aims claim their space with their projects and activities.

Some interviewees highlighted how this seemingly forced dialogue between different parts of the heterogeneous network has instead given impulse to unique forms of cooperation. Giovanni, for example, stated:

*"I think it represents a strength because it can become a process in which private and public interests converge. I mean, the polyfunctionality of the spaces stressed the theme of the dialogue between the public sector, private entrepreneurs and culture. It gives the occasion to experiment with innovative collaborations."*<sup>27</sup>

Samuel, as another example, proudly enumerated the number of associates they had so far:

<sup>27</sup> *"Credo che adesso possa diventare anche un punto di forza il fatto che possa diventare un processo dove convergono interessi sia privati ma anche pubblici. Cioè questa polifunzionalità degli spazi mette al centro il tema del dialogo tra pubblico o privato, tra le imprese e la cultura. Questo fa sì che ci sia l'occasione anche per sperimentare delle collaborazioni in modo innovativo."*

*“We came to have 72 partners of various type who attend the faculty, in terms of aulas of education, seminars, conventions. An open space that everyone can use is actually the perpetual motor that creates these synergies, sometimes spontaneous, sometimes governed.”<sup>28</sup>*

Therefore, it can be noticed that in possible conflictual, *contested industrial heritage terrain* like the one of Ivrea, the necessity to cope with a difficult fragmentation of spaces and a multilevel bureaucratic apparatus, has been transformed into the possibility to forge new alliances and experiment new forms of dialogue and collaboration.

If looked through the dialogical model provided by Harrison (2013), it is possible to notice the influence of the non-human actors of the Olivetti heritage network on the new users. The fragmentation of the spaces influenced the human actors in creating polyfunctional spaces where new forms of collaboration can occur.

This said, although these technical issues had the positive effect on enhancing the dialogue in between the stakeholders, it can be noticed that they also contributed to focus the actors' attention on ways of solving the present troubles connected to them. By looking at ways of dealing with present circumstances, their vision of the future might appear less defined and divided. However, over the course of the interviews and fieldwork, I noticed that a more unified and precise future narrative appeared when associated to the Unesco designation of Ivrea as “Industrial city of the XX Century”.

## **6. Futuring Industrial Heritage**

### **6.1 Moving on from Olivetti, the Unesco promise**

When talking of the industrial heritage left in Ivrea by the Olivetti company, most interviewees identified their future vision with the Unesco designation of Ivrea as an “Industrial city of the XX century”. Indifferently from the type of activity they carry on, the respondents associate Unesco's name and international image with hopes of change, economic possibilities and generally a wealthier future. We have seen in Chapter 2.1 how adaptive reuse projects have aimed to repurpose abandoned objects, locations, and customs by highlighting their heritage value, which is perceived as a scarce, endangered, and non-

---

<sup>28</sup> *“Siamo arrivati ad avere 72 partner di vario genere che frequentano il Polo in termini di aule di formazione, seminari, convegni. Uno spazio sempre aperto dove tutti possono fruire degli spazi di fatto è un motore continuo che crea queste sinergie, a volte spontanee, a volte governate.”*

renewable asset that can be promoted, showcased, and made accessible to visitors. This can be framed as the process called *heritagisation*, through which heritage has begun to be considered an asset or a commodity. Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter 2.2, *heritagisation* can be considered part of a movement that brought to the professionalisation and specialisation of the heritage realm, culminating in the development of heritage lists.

For Harrison (2013), the World Heritage List of Unesco, whose first example is the Convention for Protection of Natural and cultural heritage of 1972, worked as a model for defining these inventories. Since then, the number of sites and properties inscribed in the World Heritage inventory has grown considerably during the 1980s and 1990s, and is still growing today (Harrison, 2013). As mentioned in Chapter 2.1, scholars like Ryan and Silvanto (2011) argue that the designation of a site as a universally recognised heritage has become a powerful marketing tool, which is one of the reasons why the World Heritage List has widely expanded in the past decades. The internationally recognised status of Unesco and the advantages it can bring in terms of attracting visitors and contributing to the economy have made the designation of World Heritage a mark of distinction for the sites inscribed.

For some respondents, such as Marco, the status of which a World Heritage site is invested represented one of the main motivations for him to invest in Ivrea Industrial Heritage:

*“It was a status boost. When we understood that the Unesco recognition was a reality, we made an important investment and bought these spaces.”<sup>29</sup>*

Some of the respondents, knowing that the industrial heritage of Olivetti was likely to become a World Heritage Site, decided to invest in it. For them, if the area that is now the Unesco buffer zone of Ivrea was not worth attention because abandoned, since it received the award, the situation changed. Most interviewees have identified the designation as the main propulsor of change and transformation for the Industrial Heritage of Ivrea. For some, the possibility of working for the future of the former Olivetti spaces became a reality once Unesco gave the title to the sites. As stated by Federico:

---

<sup>29</sup> *“Un boost di immagine. Capito che andava in porto il riconoscimento Unesco, abbiamo fatto un investimento importante e portato a casa questi edifici.”*

*“More than 40-50% of the buildings were under-used or un-used at the moment of the Unesco recognition. Since then, the property configuration changed. New activities began to enter the buildings, brought by the image of Unesco.”<sup>30</sup>*

The prestige that the image and the name Unesco carried mobilised people and actors in investing and imagining new futures for the area. Even before the inscription of Ivrea in the Unesco list in 2018, the chance of it to happen came to represent per se something that would positively affect a business or an activity. Anna, for instance, explains how her association for the promotion of Ivrea, when the intention of becoming World Heritage was made clear, decided to be involved: and adopt the name *Club Unesco of Ivrea*:

*“We were born as an association in 2016, even before the Unesco site, hoping that Ivrea would become a World Heritage site. We could also just be an association for promoting Ivrea, not the Unesco site. Luckily the two things eventually combined.”<sup>31</sup>*

Anna’s hope for Ivrea to get the Unesco title represents how the prestigious recognition can serve as a branding instrument for the activities around the valorisation of the alleged candidate sites, the entire territory, and the community of Ivrea. For her, this recognition can be a stimulus to make citizens understand that they have to take care of the town, as it holds this important title:

*“We have to make people understand the importance of Unesco. Make them understand that acting for the future and the community is important, not only with words and congresses but with actions. We are trying to do this for now. Unesco can be an incentive for people to act, we hope.”<sup>32</sup>*

As Ryan and Silvano noted, “the first point of influence exercised by the WH Committee is the power to confer, or refuse to confer, the WHS designation” (2009, p.8). In this case, from the words of Anna and Federico, it is possible to acknowledge said influence, as they based their actions on the possibility of Ivrea being accepted as a World Heritage Site. Moreover, from the point of view of some respondents, Unesco implicitly worked towards increasing the

---

<sup>30</sup> *“Più del 40%, forse quasi il 50% degli edifici al momento dell'iscrizione al patrimonio mondiale erano under-used or un-used. Intanto è un po' cambiata la configurazione delle proprietà, in secondo luogo sono hanno incominciato ad entrare nuove attività proprio portate anche dall'immagine che il sito Unesco si porta dietro.”*

<sup>31</sup> *“Siamo nati nel 2016, addirittura prima del sito tutto sommato, sperando che lo diventasse. Cioè noi potremmo essere semplicemente club per Ivrea e non per il sito Unesco. Per fortuna le due cose si sono abbinare.”*

<sup>32</sup> *“Il fatto di far prendere coscienza dell'importanza di cos'è l'Unesco. Nel senso che ci si adopera per il futuro, per loro e anche per la comunità, insomma. Ma non a parole, perché di conferenze ne puoi fare a iosa, ma l'operatività, secondo noi. Adesso ci stiamo provando insomma, è quella che più dovrebbe prendere. Secondo me potrebbe essere un incentivo, o perlomeno questa è la nostra speranza.”*

reputation of spaces by attracting more people and customers to the activity carried out inside. Giulio, associated the rise in the number of users with the fact that the business is placed inside a World Heritage Site:

*“We are the only gym in the World inside a Unesco site. This is something very particular. The post-pandemic data speaks clearly: we have more than 300 clients under 18 years old who frequent the gym. This gym is normally for adults because is not cheap. These people then prefer to spend something more but still come here. It is amazing.”<sup>33</sup>*

Speaking with the people involved in reusing the industrial heritage of Ivrea, I could detect how the entrance of Unesco in the field of regeneration was welcomed with hope and faith. The interviewees have welcomed the events and initiatives connected to Unesco as a powerful force, an opportunity for the city of Ivrea to move towards the future. It represents the point of reference for future narratives that nowadays are being generated.

Moreover, it can be said that Unesco represents a construction of a future narrative able to be a counterpart and move forwards from that form of static nostalgia mentioned in Chapter 5.1, which was associated with the event of the loss of Olivetti. About the meaning of Unesco for the city, Federico stated:

*“It means to bring back, to switch the light again on a city. To enlighten something that represented a strong story and must be freed from nostalgia”.<sup>34</sup>*

If the company in the past has meant for the inhabitants of Ivrea the generator of future narratives, now Unesco is implicitly working to take its place, or at least to rehabilitate the Olivetti futuristic vision in the present days. In the respondents' view, Unesco can mean the reactivation of the former factories of Olivetti, which, before the nomination as a World Heritage site, were afflicted by abandonment and decay. Therefore, the reputation associated with the World Heritage title would be an enhancer of what the heritage of Olivetti can still give to Ivrea. It was common to find this association in the respondents' answers about Unesco and its role in Ivrea. Barbara, for example, stated:

---

<sup>33</sup> *“Siamo l'unica palestra al mondo in un sito Unesco, e questo naturalmente è una cosa molto particolare. Raccontando i dati post-pandemia: avere più di 300 under 18 che frequentano la palestra, che è una palestra da adulti e quindi non è la più economica, è eccezionale. Loro preferiscono spendere qualcosa in più ma fare palestra qui.”*

<sup>34</sup> *“Questo significa aver riportato, riacceso la luce su una città. Riportare la luce su qualcosa che ha rappresentato una storia forte e che deve essere liberato dalla nostalgia.”*

“Unesco’s brand is not Ivrea’s brand. Ivrea’s brand is Olivetti. We have to integrate them. Unesco’s brand can be a frame of Olivetti’s brand.”<sup>35</sup>

This way, the World Heritage designation does not stand de facto as a future vision for the city of Ivrea or its industrial remains. It means instead something that can contribute to re-evaluating Olivetti and its legacy. Mario and Barbara, for example, stated that Unesco expresses what Olivetti was able to build in the past but that it would be important to highlight that from the ashes of the company, many other still-existing entrepreneurial activities grew up. Mario, for instance, made this remark:

“It is a recognition that has acknowledged the things we already had. [...] Thus Unesco just certified that Ivrea deserves the title. It is our responsibility to use this instrument in new ways. For example, we must remember that there are many realities in this area, many companies that worked for Olivetti in the past and keep doing well. They go from the IT sector to packaging.”<sup>36</sup>

In this regard, Barbara gave me a copy of the news bulletin of her association (fig. 17). She explained to me that every year they organise the assignment of the *Premio Camillo e Adriano Olivetti all’impresa innovativa e responsabile* (Camillo and Adriano Olivetti Prize for the innovative and responsible enterprise).

Ora	Speaker	Argomento
14,30-15,00		Caffè di Benvenuto
15,00	Presidente	Saluti, Significato del Premio e dati seconda edizione.
		Illustrazione del Programma odierno e delle iniziative a seguire.
15,10	Flavio Serughetti	Sintesi dei criteri di assegnazione e della fonte dei dati su cui si è basata l'assegnazione.
		Principali della società selezionata.
		Esposizione in ordine alfabetico, conosciuta Premio dalla Presidente autorepresentazioni.
	Flavio Serughetti	Segnalazione di prossima iniziativa del Premio nel settore delle Start up innovative nel territorio.
16,00	Federica de Bortoli	Spazio libero suggerito ai temi legati all'impresa.
16,30	Laura Sabelli	Presentazione del panel odierno come evento in sé o come punto di partenza di "R&D - Foto delle aziende innovative e responsabili".
		Presentazione dei partecipanti.
16,40	Federica de Bortoli	Domande proposte al panel delle aziende premiate nella prima e

Figure 17

<sup>35</sup> “Il marchio Unesco non è il marchio di Ivrea. Il marchio di Ivrea è quello dell'Olivetti. Bisogna integrarli. Il marchio Unesco può fare da cornice.”

<sup>36</sup> “E' stato un riconoscimento che, non c'è dubbio ha riconosciuto queste cose che noi, come ho detto prima, avevamo[...] l'Unesco non ha fatto altro che certificare che Ivrea si merita il titolo. Ora sta a noi cercare di usare questo strumento attraverso varie forme di pensiero. Per esempio attraverso il fatto che in Canavese ci sono molte realtà, ci sono delle aziende che lavoravano per la Olivetti e continuano ad andare avanti bene, aziende che vanno dal settore informatico al settore dell'imballaggio.”



This reward is intended to valorise the entrepreneurs who “demonstrated effort and originality in the creation of innovative products, who showed sensibility in the relationship with the workers and the territory” (Salveti, 2022). In our talk, Barbara emphasised her hope that the Unesco recognition will show the fertile ground Olivetti paved for companies of the territory that are now flourishing. In her opinion, Unesco can help remind the people of Ivrea, that the town and the surrounding area can still provide a successful future in production and innovation.

For the actors reusing the Olivettian industrial heritage in Ivrea, Unesco became a way to move on from a static narrative concerning the past and an occasion to build the future. The interviews highlighted how the designation of Ivrea as a World Heritage Site is perceived as something that reinforced the sentiment of pride that the people already felt for the Olivettian past. It can be said that, in the eye of the respondents, Unesco can be the sparkle giving energy to the city of Ivrea to reinforce the future-oriented vision that Olivetti used to have. If, for the respondents, Ivrea was considered as the fertile ground cultivated in the past by Olivetti, Unesco represents in the present a new fertiliser, capable of infusing new life in the abandoned field of its industrial heritage.

If we look at the Industrial heritage of Ivrea as an assemblage, thus a network shaped by the interaction of human and non-human entities (Harrison, 2013), the World Heritage designation of the Olivettian heritage can be seen as a non-human actor. By attributing the industrial remains relevance and status, Unesco is actively interacting with the non-human and human actors in the interpretation and reuse of the former industrial spaces.

Although it is clear that the World Heritage Designation awarded to Ivrea as *Industrial City of the XX century* sparked enthusiasm in all the actors involved in the process, there is a field for which this title took a prominent position in imagining the future. This sector is tourism.

## 6.2 Tourism as future

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Unesco World Heritage designations have become an opportunity for many cities and territories to improve their economic conditions by marketing their heritage sites. As highlighted by Ryan and Silvanto (2009), World Heritage has become a mark of distinction, a symbol of quality for visitors and tourists attracted by the internationally renewed status of Unesco. The interviews showed how the arrival of Unesco in the small town changed how people considered their heritage. The city of Ivrea changed its status, becoming a touristic city, as stated by Federico:

*“Is a city that became a tourist destination, officially added to the list of Italian cities with a tourist appeal because it is a World Heritage site. For no other reason than this.”<sup>37</sup>*

As emphasised by Federico, Unesco alone allowed Ivrea to become a tourist attraction, and to be, among other Italian cities, a point of interest for international tourists. Unesco itself put Ivrea on the map by promoting the industrial heritage sites in a way that impressed most respondents. Samuel, who is not directly connected to the tourist sector, emphasised the increase in tourists since the World Heritage arrival:

*“The tourist flows in Ivrea are impressive. Not even the people of Ivrea can notice that the city has become a touristic attraction.”<sup>38</sup>*

For him, not even the inhabitants of Ivrea have acknowledged how the city has turned into a tourist destination. Anna confirms this:

*“Is always full of tourists. I mean, every time I go around the city I meet German, English and Dutch people that read somewhere that Ivrea was a World Heritage Site, so they decided to have a walk through the city. It is shocking for me but in a good way.”<sup>39</sup>*

In this statement, Anna highlighted her surprise at meeting people from abroad walking through the streets of Ivrea. She also mentioned that the tourist she met decided to come to Ivrea because *they read somewhere* that Ivrea was a World Heritage site. The fact that Ivrea is

---

<sup>37</sup> *“Una città che è diventata turistica, inserita nell'elenco di città turistiche italiane solo perché ha il sito Unesco, non per altro.”*

<sup>38</sup> *“I flussi turistici di Ivrea sono impressionanti. Manco l'Eporediese si accorge di quanto sia meta turistica Ivrea.”*

<sup>39</sup> *“Ma è sempre pieno di turisti. Cioè siamo rimasti piacevolmente scandalizzati del fatto che tutte le volte che andiamo troviamo tedeschi, inglesi, olandesi che hanno letto da qualche parte che Ivrea è Patrimonio Unesco e si sono fatti un giro per la città.”*

evolving into a tourist destination and that the Unesco designation had a prominent part in it is visible by the presence of the World Heritage Emblem around the city. Panels signalling visitors about the World Heritage designation are placed in front of the Olivettian buildings and on the road signs, maps and doors of businesses outside the Unesco core zone (fig. 18, 19 and 20).



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20

As highlighted by Ryan and Silvanto (2009, 2011), the value of the World Heritage Emblem is a symbol of the World Heritage brand and acts by pointing to visitors the presence of a World Heritage site and highlighting the place's visitability. Tourism entered Ivrea thanks to Unesco's status and its power to generate tourist streams that did not exist before. The industrial heritage of Olivetti, thanks to Unesco, was able to attract eight thousand tourists in the year 2022 and, from the data given by the respondents, from January to March 2023, the number has already doubled (Canavese, 2022). It can be noticed how heritage tourism in Ivrea acquired an important role in shaping the hopes of the people reusing the Olivettian industrial spaces. From the interviews, it emerged that all the actors involved in the reuse, and not only the ones working in tourism, were knowledgeable about the increase in visitors.

Francesco, who works for the info point placed inside of the First Extension of the Officine ICO, emphasised their will to use the World Heritage designation as a branding instrument:

*“Our target is to develop, promote and valorise the site. Thus we want to make Ivrea a tourist attraction not only for its naturalistic and cultural beauties that already exist but especially by focusing on Unesco and its power of attracting visitors.”<sup>42</sup>*

The nomination of Ivrea as a Unesco World Heritage site has made the actors involved in the regeneration and reuse of the Olivettian buildings understand its potential as a tourist attraction. By highlighting the numbers and the figures connected to the tourist flows generated around the sites, the respondents made a clear connection between the industrial heritage of Ivrea and the financial revenues it can produce. Therefore, it can be said that heritage tourism connected to Ivrea’s industrial past manifests its financial value, as the economic value of something that gained financial worth (Macdonald, 2020). In the value system developed by Macdonald (2020), the financial value of an object or artefact can be connected to the fact that it gained value over time, or because of its rarity. In the context of Olivettian industrial heritage, the monetary value of the site can be associated with the Unesco inscription of Ivrea in the list of World Heritage sites in 2018.

Heritage tourism emerged from almost all the interviews as the protagonist in developing the reused spaces of Olivetti but among the spaces taken in analysis, the info point placed in the First Extension of the Officine ICO is the only activity dealing directly with tourism. Its role is to provide an overview of the Unesco property of Ivrea and be the starting point of organised guided tours during the weekends. For the guided tours and visits, the info point workers are generally contacted by tourists interested in the architecture and design of the Olivettian buildings. In this regard, Elena stated:

*“Our visitors are mostly people interested in the architecture. Industrial archeology is a niche sector. [...]Here we have a type of tourism which is culturally elevated. The tourists we have are people interested in design and architecture. So mostly are architects or designers.”<sup>43</sup>*

---

<sup>42</sup> “Abbiamo come obiettivo, quello di sviluppare, promuovere e valorizzare il sito e quindi far diventare Ivrea una meta turistica non soltanto per le sue bellezze naturalistiche e culturali già esistenti, ma soprattutto puntare su Unesco come motivo di attrazione turistica.”

<sup>43</sup> “I visitatori che abbiamo, sono persone che sono interessate all'architettura. Perché l'archeologia industriale è una nicchia, di settore. [...]Però noi qui abbiamo un turismo culturalmente molto elevato perché sono persone interessate o all'architettura, quindi o sono architetti o designers.”

The fact that most of the visitors attracted by the site are composed of *culturally elevated* people interested in the *niche sector* of industrial archaeology, as Elena pointed out, pushed the info point to design their bookshop and guided tours for this specific audience:

*“For example, we are structuring our bookshop to meet these type of interests. We have a section dedicated only to architecture, to urbanism. We try to meet the needs of the tourist even with our guided tours. Sometimes, we organise tours with a certified guide who is an expert in architecture and helps the other less expert guide.”<sup>44</sup>*

As I visited this space, I noticed that architecture was the main theme displayed. The space develops mainly in one wide room, where the Unesco property is reproduced in scale on a table to help the visitors orient around the sites. All around the room, the 27 buildings composing the Unesco site are explained with a great deal of technical and specialised notions about the architectural features of the Olivetti buildings (fig. 21 and fig. 22).

---

<sup>44</sup> *“Infatti il nostro bookshop, per esempio, è sempre più strutturato per accontentare queste esigenze. Abbiamo una sezione dedicata solo all'architettura, all'urbanistica, come pure i nostri tour guidati a volte hanno una guida certificata, a seconda di quello che il privato mi chiede perché sente l'esigenza di un esperto di architettura, abbiamo un esperto che si accoppia con la guida.”*

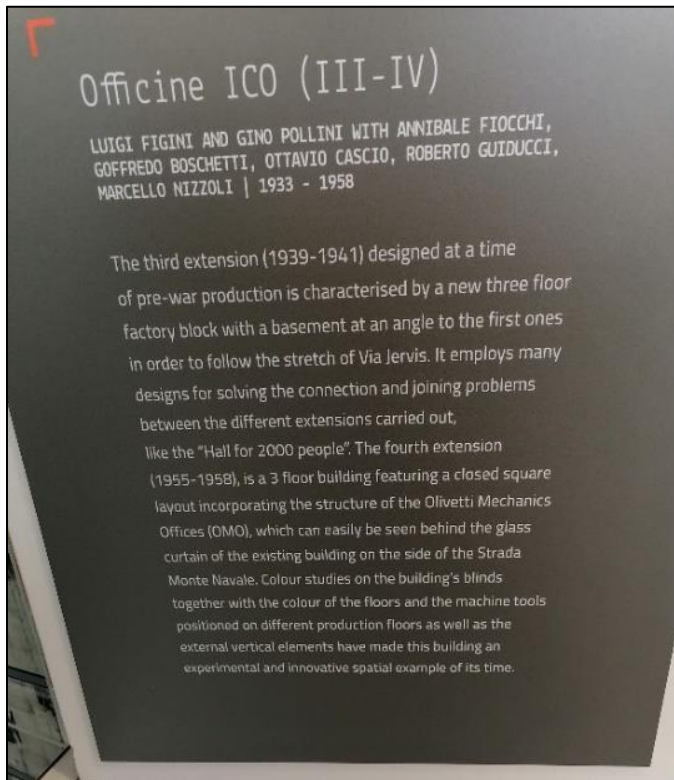


Figure 21

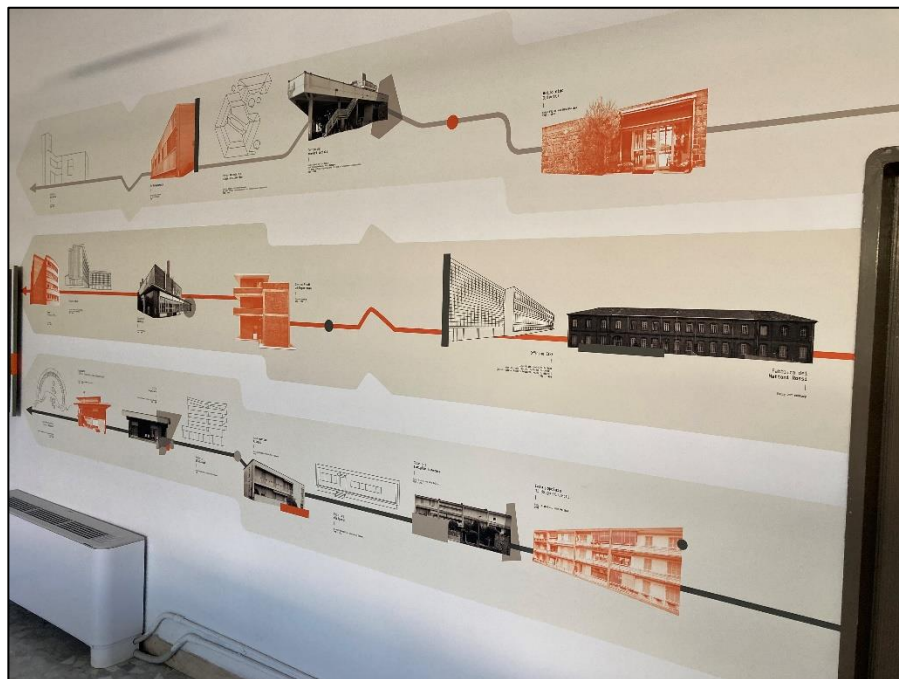


Figure 22

In the explanatory panels, the history of Olivetti is explained throughout its architectural development, with photos and schemes showing the strategies and styles used by its designers. Some iconic products of Olivetti are also present, such as the first typewriter

developed by the company, M1, and the Programma 101 (fig. 23), considered one of the first desktop computers ever invented.



Figure 23

The Unesco site is presented through the aesthetically pleasing lines of the modern architecture of the industry complexes and the design of some material artefacts of the Olivetti production. These elements are the physical and visual manifestation of the aesthetic value (Macdonald., 2020). In this case, the aesthetic value reflected by the products and architectures of the Olivetti heritage follows criteria of beauty that especially experts in architecture or design can appreciate.

Finally, inside the facility, some panels are dedicated to the welfare system created by Adriano Olivetti for the workers, the Community Movement he created to integrate industry and social development. These elements are mostly connected to the intangible aspects of the industrial heritage of Ivrea but are a visible minority compared to the information displayed about the architecture and the building's structural characteristics.

Therefore it appears that the development of tourism as a future narrative is strictly connected to a focus on the tangible and aesthetically pleasing elements of the Olivettian heritage. In the heritage assemblage of Ivrea's industrial heritage, its tangible elements are taken more into consideration, perhaps to answer to the market logic of tourism and respond to the needs of a specific type of audience.



### 6.3 Tangible Restrictions, intangible inspirations

The Unesco designation of Ivrea as *Industrial City of the XX Century* had clear implications for creating a future narrative with heritage tourism as its protagonist. The *haritagisation* process in which the heritage of Olivetti in Ivrea was involved, contributed to turning objects, artefacts and buildings of the industrial past into marketable and visitable assets. As we said in the previous chapter, the tangible and beautiful material features, like the architecture and design of the buildings and products of Olivetti, are the aspects that are taken more into consideration to make the industrial heritage of Ivrea visitable and profitable.

However, the focus on tangible aspects of the Olivettian heritage could also be connected to the expectations of the institutions about the management and care of the industrial heritage. When asked about the difficulties connected to the reuse of the industrial heritage in Ivrea, some respondents claimed that the laws imposed by legislation about the physical modifications they could apply to the spaces were too stringent. For them, the requirements to protect the value of authenticity of the physical remnants of the Olivetti buildings imposed by national and international actors like the Superintendence (the Italian organ of Protection and Valorisation of Heritage) and Unesco have meant unexpected changes in their projects and therefore an impact on their work. This issue concerns both the destination use of the spaces and material modification that would allegedly affect the integrity of the industrial building. As Harrison (2013) suggests, listing a site as a World Heritage by Unesco creates a series of expectations about its conservation, management, curation and care. As we mentioned in Chapter 2.1 and 2.2, at the base of the listing and categorising of heritage is the will to protect objects and artefacts of the past from decay (Walsh, 1992; Harrison, 2013). In the context of reusing the industrial heritage of Ivrea, the intention to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the buildings by policies appears to be excessive.

Many interviewees expressed this complaint by comparing the Olivetti buildings with other more ‘classical’ monuments of the Italian heritage, such as the “Colosseum” in Rome or the “Scrovegni Tower” in Bologna. They claim that focusing on protecting industrial heritage as monuments is detrimental to their potential future uses. Marco, for example, stated:

*“Unesco puts us limits that we have to respect. For example, if we decided to fix the external walls or change the windows ourselves, they would put us in jail. If we wanted to modify something like that,*

*we would have to do it in a specific way, and call Unesco to do it. We cannot call a blacksmith ourselves to change the windows.*"<sup>45</sup>

Elena instead, claims that Unesco imposes limits regarding the destination use of the industrial buildings:

*"We had to avoid to cover the original setup of the main room and in the other as you see. Everything was done to avoid doing modifications and not to cover the original materials and tiles. Because here there is an ongoing monitoring from Unesco, which puts certain limits."*<sup>46</sup>

Hence, for some of the interviewees, there is an excessive focus of the legislation on protecting the integrity and original aesthetics of the buildings, which, therefore, would clash with the potential use value they express. Literature on industrial heritage reuse supports these assumptions, "the bureaucratic burden related to the classification of industrial buildings as historical monuments has had a negative impact on a process of industrial heritage reconstruction and reuse" (Han, S. H., and Zhang, H., 2022, p. 9). Papers dealing with the regeneration process of Ivrea's industrial heritage claim that the legislation concerning the protection and the conservation of such heritage reflects a traditional approach to conservation, resulting too reductive when dealing with such complex heritage (Giliberto, 2016). In this light, the heritage management of Ivrea seems to be caught in the Authorised Heritage Discourse as developed by Smith (2006), as it privileges monumentality and aesthetics over other values. In this case, it is possible to notice that the aesthetic value manifested by industrial architecture, connected to its material integrity, clashes with the use value, associated with their future usefulness (Macdonald, 2020).

It is worth noticing, however, that not all respondents agreed in this regard. Some of them, for instance, claimed that the limits imposed by the institutions represent only negotiable recommendations. Giovanni, for example, stated:

---

<sup>45</sup> *"Unesco ci pone dei limiti ai quali noi dobbiamo sottostare. Più che ti faccio un esempio paradossale: se volessimo aggiustare le pareti esterne e togliere i vetri da soli ci mettono in galera. Non lo faremo mai evidentemente, però nel momento in cui andiamo a toccarle noi dobbiamo toccarle in un certo modo e chiamarli in anticipo. Non possiamo chiamare un fabbro, ripristinare, cambiare i vetri."*

<sup>46</sup> *"Abbiamo dovuto evitare di coprire l'allestimento voluto dal Comune nella sala principale ma anche in questa e come vedi, infatti, tutto ciò che è stato messo è stato messo in atto per coprire e non sovrastare l'allestimento, perché comunque qui c'è un monitoraggio continuo da parte dell'Unesco che pone certi limiti di uso."*

*“You can read in any document of the past years and you’ll discover that Unesco and the others heritage institutions are the first ones who want to find an equilibrium between conservation and reuse. They are totally available to discuss about a smart management of the site. Unesco knows it well. In fact, to make an example, here in Ivrea they talk about living heritage, thus about protection and conservation but with a logic of transformation and reuse.”<sup>47</sup>*

He believes heritage institutions normally pressure the actors to protect the integrity of the spaces, but they do not impose limitations. For him, Unesco and the other heritage institutions are working towards creating an equilibrium between the conservation and transformation of the industrial buildings of Ivrea. Indeed, as stated in the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.), neither Unesco nor the World Heritage Committee exercises any form of legal or administrative control over the sites. This confusion might be related to the lack of coordination and the bureaucratic multilevel context mentioned in Chapter 5.2 and to a conception of heritage that privileges monuments and aesthetically beautiful tangible elements, called Authorised Heritage Discourse (Smith, 2006).

However, the perceived overcare of heritage institutions on the tangible features of the industrial heritage of Ivrea, which I name *tangible limitations*, risk hiding the fact that for the actors reusing the former industrial buildings of Olivetti, the values connected to the intangible element of its industrial past are taken into great consideration. As shown by the *crumble path of memory* of Chapter 5.1, many respondents mentioned Olivetti’s innovative and modern vision, manifested by what materially lasted to these days, like the architecture and the products connected to industrial production. In addition, the “civic” and “cultural work” that Olivetti did through the years by giving wealth and prosperity to the territory and its communities, by creating services and social spaces for the workers, took up a lot of space in the interviews. Indeed, the human and caring image of the factory that Olivetti left in people’s memory, evaluated as futuristic, emerged as a fundamental intangible value worth keeping in the present.

For instance, Samuel emphasised the inspiring values of Olivetti’s past that he wants to convey through his daily job:

---

<sup>47</sup> *“Tanto che sia il FAI, che l’Unesco, sia le Soprintendenze, tu puoi leggere qualsiasi documento degli ultimi dieci anni, sono i primi che in qualche modo vogliono trovare un equilibrio. Se si tratta di discutere una gestione intelligente, loro ci sono. Lo sa benissimo l’Unesco, tanto che, ad esempio qua, sul sito di Ivrea, per farti un esempio è molto chiaro, si parla di living heritage, cioè di una trasformazione, di una tutela, di conservazione di questo patrimonio, ma con una logica che ne preveda il riutilizzo.”*

*“The Olivettian idea of civic engagement. Olivetti made culture its strong brand, which had positive effects on productivity. There is a statement by Camillo Olivetti that for me is very important: “Every job needs an intellectual component to be well done”. This sentence can be associated with deontology, work ethics and the cultural competence of the person.”*<sup>48</sup>

As Samuel, many respondents have mentioned “culture” and “work ethics” as elements connected to Olivetti’s past that can be re-interpreted in the present. In this light, as mentioned in Chapter 5.1, the material component of Olivetti’s past can be seen as *silent symbolic entities* of an industrial experience in which the care of the workers, cultural and social aggregation and civil commitment fuelled technological innovation, urban development and production. Federico reinforced this idea by highlighting the immaterial aspect of the industrial heritage of Ivrea:

*“It is clear that here on this site, we have two components. The same name of the site speaks for it because it is not ‘Ivrea, city of industrial architectures’, but ‘Ivrea, industrial city of the XX century’. Thus is clear that architectures hold great value, but the theme is also the work, the way of doing business that developed in these spaces. Besides architecture, the most important topic is the enterprise culture. It is an intangible element of the history of Ivrea.”*<sup>49</sup>

As he suggested, the intangible aspects connected to Olivetti’s past are as important, if not even more, than the tangible elements. For her, the title given to the World Heritage site comprising the industrial remnants of Olivetti contains both elements, which should be equally valorised. Federico expressed his opinion about the immaterial heritage of Olivetti by giving it a role in the future development of the town:

*“How come the valorisation of this site can be a resource for the area? On the one hand, it is the conservation of the buildings’ features, but on the other hand, many things can be done regarding its cultural aspects.”*<sup>50</sup>

The interviewees highlighted the idea that the valorisation of the immaterial cultural aspects of the company should be seen as a priority as much as the conservation and

---

<sup>48</sup> *“La natura civica proprio. L’idea è quella olivettiana. Cioè Olivetti comunque faceva della cultura il suo brand forte che poi si traduceva in ricadute positive sull’attività produttiva. Come diceva Camillo in una sua frase che per me è un aforisma importante: “Ogni lavoro, se fatto bene, richiede una competenza intellettuale”. Quindi c’è la deontologia, l’etica del lavoro e la competenza culturale della persona.”*

<sup>49</sup> *“Qui è da subito evidente che abbiamo insieme due componenti e lo dice la stessa definizione del sito, cioè ‘La città industriale del XX secolo’, non dice ‘Ivrea, città delle architetture industriali’. Risulta chiaro che hanno grande importanza le architetture, ma qua il tema è il lavoro, è il tipo di modello di fare impresa che si è sviluppato in questi luoghi e quindi altrettanto se non più importante delle architetture è di tutta la cultura d’impresa, elemento immateriale della storia di Ivrea.”*

<sup>50</sup> *“Quanto a come la strategia di valorizzazione di questo sito possa diventare risorsa per il territorio c’è sia la parte di conservazione degli edifici, ma c’è anche tutta una serie di cose che hanno più a che fare con un lavoro di tipo culturale.”*

protection of the material heritage of Olivetti. Valorising and transmitting the intangible features of Ivrea's industrial past is important because of the value they hold for the present and future developments of the area and, more in general, of the city. The innovative character of Olivetti's "enterprise culture", already highlighted by some respondents, is the key to understanding the potential use value expressed by the immaterial elements of Olivetti's industrial heritage. Giovanni makes an example by mentioning Olivetti's corporate welfare:

*"Here in these Olivettian spaces the theme of work was already handled with the corporate welfare. Themes like this can be brought back and applied by reasoning in new, different ways."*<sup>51</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 5.1 with the concept of *progressive nostalgia* developed by Smith and Campbell (2017), for the people involved in the reuse of the Olivettian buildings, the memory connected to the former industrial spaces can help to front the trauma of its abandonment but also to rethink its present and imagine its future. The memory value manifested by the innovations in the field of work ethics, culture and welfare in the industrial context of Ivrea work in synergy with the potential use value that the reuse of the physical Olivettian heritage can express. In this view, the intangible values expressed in the past by Olivetti with cultural, social and workplace policies can still be useful today and guide the decisions and aims of the actors involved in valorising the industrial heritage of Ivrea. The memory value connected to the intangible elements of Olivetti and their important role in the future of Ivrea are well highlighted by Giovanni:

*"We are talking something that has little more than one hundred years of life and that has been built to answer to challenges about the theme of work. Therefore it would be stupid not to continue to do the job Adriano Olivetti did. How does the job world change? So how does it change the building where jobs are carried on?"*<sup>52</sup>

In the case of Olivetti's heritage in Ivrea, the values conveyed by the company in the past are seen by the actors responsible for its reuse as a tool to help redevelop its spaces in the present day. The same intangible values that sustained the company's development in the past

---

<sup>51</sup> *"In questi luoghi Olivettiani quel tema era già in parte affrontato attraverso quell'idea di welfare aziendale. Queste cose possono essere riproposte e riprese ragionando in modi chiaramente nuovi."*

<sup>52</sup> *"Parliamo di una cosa che di suo ha cent'anni, poco più di cent'anni di vita che già era costruita in risposta a sfide, al lavoro. Allora sarebbe stupido non continuare a fare quel lavoro che già di quello faceva Adriano Olivetti. Come cambia il lavoro? Allora come cambia l'edificio che ospita il lavoro?"*

can be made actual and serve for future developments. The immaterial elements and values connected to Olivetti are important because they represent the capability of the company to think ahead of time and adapt to the changing of society. The capability of Olivetti to innovate its approaches in regard to the everyday life of workers and their families by creating social services, a welfare system and a rich cultural environment around its factories represent aspects that are still needed.

The interviewees made clear what guides the efforts in valorising the industrial heritage of Ivrea through its reuse, which are *intangible aspirations* connected to the memory of Olivetti and the immaterial aspects that allowed it to have a positive impact on Ivrea's society during the past. In a context like the Ivrea of today, which is still suffering from the consequences of losing its more influential company, the more immaterial values associated with Olivetti have a fundamental role. The intangible aspects guided the company to successfully answer past transformations and challenges. As such, they should be valorised and used to shape the regeneration of the former industrial Olivettian spaces to have an impact in the future.

Following the dialogical model of Harrison (2013), in which heritage is conceived as an assemblage of human and non-human actors, it can be said that the physical remnants of Olivetti equally contribute in defining and shape the reuse of the buildings taken in analysis. As also discussed in Chapter 5.1, it is possible to notice that decisions taken by the participants regarding these spaces are associated to what these buildings stand to represent. The particular history of the spaces observed, their material environments and the objects they contain have an influence on the human component of the assemblage, on their decisions and aims about the reuse. By choosing to valorise the intangible aspects of the Olivetti heritage, the respondents demonstrate their bond with the former industrial environments as well as the role that these spaces have in defining their future aspirations.

## Conclusions

In this thesis, the central topics for the study were the heritage values underlying the process of industrial heritage reuse in the city of Ivrea and their role in constructing future-oriented narratives. Throughout the paper, human and non-human actors comprising the heritage assemblage of the former industrial buildings of Olivetti were considered equally. This interpretative point of view allowed building a narrative account of the reuse of the buildings considered, which started from a more external perspective on the organisational and bureaucratic complexity of the sites towards the inner world of the values and meanings that people attribute to industrial heritage. The research question: “To what extent is industrial heritage used to construct future-oriented narratives on and about Ivrea's economy and society, and which heritage values play important roles in this process” can be answered concisely by saying that there are four central values: the memory value, the financial value, the aesthetic value and the use value. These values contribute in shaping future-oriented narratives for Ivrea's industrial heritage. The memory value, associated to the memories of the respondents about Olivetti's history, mainly represents their driver of future inspiration. The financial value is instead connected to the economic advantages that the industrial heritage of Olivetti can provide. The aesthetic value is related to the physical qualities ascribed to the objects connected to the Olivetti production (typewriters, computers, advertisements) as well as to the architecture of the buildings. Finally, the use value is given by the potential use that the artefacts and spaces can express.

The four mentioned values create synergetic relationships as well as contrasting ones depending on the actual uses made of the ex-industrial spaces and on the future view that the stakeholder involved imagined for these buildings. The data retrieved from the interviews highlighted how the financial value of the ex-industrial complex, meaning its monetary value as properties on the market, is highly involved in the process of reuse as it collaborates to create a fragmented environment which is challenging to manage.

Moreover, the diversity and heterogeneity of the stakeholders, along with a stratified and complicated bureaucratic system pose severe difficulties to the actors when it comes to defining the use value of such heritage for present and future projects. However, from the fieldwork and interviews, it was possible to notice how this financial and bureaucratic

complexity and space fragmentation is turned into a strength through official and unofficial collaborations between the stakeholders. The reused industrial spaces of Olivetti are being adapted and shaped by the necessity to cope with fragmentation and financial limitations by connections reaching actors involved directly in the reuse of the industrial building but also reaching outside of this spectrum.

These findings align with previous studies about industrial heritage regeneration and reuse (Han & Zhang, 2022; Merciu et al., 2017), in which profit-oriented strategies, outdated and inadequate bureaucratic systems and a *terrain* contested by multiple stakeholders are underlined as the most challenging characteristics that industrial heritage reuse projects have to front. Although these studies mentioned forms of multisubject collaborations between stakeholders in industrial reuse projects, none of them showed how the industrial spaces are materially shaped and modified because of said alliances and collaborations. In this view, this study can help raise awareness of the need to develop practical bureaucratic instruments that allow the stakeholders involved in industrial heritage reuse to reduce fragmentation and systematically collaborate.

Outside of the bureaucratic point of view, the financial value of the industrial remains of Olivetti is responsible for creating future-oriented narratives, especially when put in synergy with the aesthetic value of the former factories. The aesthetic value, associated with the integrity of the physical environments and their structural/architectonic beauty, and the financial value connected work together as industrial tourism and the monetary profit driven by it to Ivrea's economy strongly contribute to orient of the reuse of the spaces. The possibility of making the industrial remains of Ivrea attractive for tourists represents a future narrative in which the interviewees and the physical environment are involved. Displaying and valorising the physical and aesthetically valuable features of Olivetti, for the respondents, equals raising the attractiveness of the spaces for tourists and raising the financial value they possess.

For the successful entanglement of these two values in defining a future vision, Unesco plays a vital role. The field analysis and interviews show that the designation of Ivrea as a World Heritage in virtue of the industrial past of Olivetti constitutes the element that is powering the efforts of reuse towards a touristic orientation. In this context, Unesco represents a *sign of promise* for the future of the industrial heritage of Ivrea. The visual presence of the symbol of Unesco and the World Heritage emblem confirms what Ryan and Silvanto (2009, 2011) point out. Thanks to its universally recognized status, Unesco has become a marketable tool, a brand capable of attracting tourists and general economic benefits to an area.



On a contrasting note, the role of Unesco in Ivrea is connoted by a misunderstanding. Some respondents lamented that the focus of Unesco on the authenticity of tangible assets of the Olivetti heritage represents an obstacle to the reuse of the former industrial spaces. Although the fact is not confirmed, as Unesco cannot impose limitations but only recommendations for managing and valorising World Heritage Sites, this misunderstanding appears to influence how the industrial heritage sites are portrayed. A focus on the tangible and aesthetically pleasing elements of Olivetti's past can generally be found throughout the former industrial environment, while little attention is given to the intangible aspects of the industrial past of Ivrea. This attitude is perhaps an effect of the influence of the Authorised Heritage Discourse (Smith, 2006), as the way of defining heritage only by criteria of authenticity, monumentality and aesthetic beauty, which is deeply embedded in Western societies. Moreover, it has to be mentioned by some respondents that the protection of the aesthetic integrity of the buildings and their insides conflicted in some cases with their use value. The physical transformation of the spaces, in fact, was in some cases denied to favour the conservation of their original aesthetic features.

However, the results showed that although more attention is officially paid to Olivetti's material and aestheticized products and architecture, the reuse of the industrial heritage of Ivrea is fueled by the *intangible aspirations* of the respondents. Here is where the memorial value manifested by the physical environments of the Olivettian buildings plays a vital role in shaping the future narratives around the new uses of these spaces. The memories connected to the spaces and objects of the industrial past are indeed connected to the immaterial aspects of the work in the factories at the time of Olivetti and to the qualities that made this company loved and remembered by the citizens of Ivrea. The innovative and resilient character of Olivetti, together with the care and services given to the workers and their families, are the aspects the respondents care to keep for the future.

These immaterial aspects of Olivetti heritage highlighted by the respondents underlie the bond that was created between the two components of the industrial heritage assemblage: the actors and the material environments. These buildings were designed to put in relationship production and innovation with culture and beauty, technological progress with social and civic endeavor. In the present context the synergy the Olivetti buildings were designed to create between non-humans and human actors is manifested by the intangible values that are guiding their present and future reuse.

By adopting an approach based on values (Macdonald, 2020), it was able to reveal the interconnections that exist between objects and environments of industrial heritage and the

human actors that are using them but also to understand which values mainly contribute in building the future oriented narratives in which this assemblage is involved.

Present studies about industrial heritage repurposing (Han and Zhang, 2022; Merciu et al., 2017) tend to have a focus on the practical and financial problems connected to the field, or on issues connected to the multi-level stakeholders network that develops around this kind of projects (Frish, 1998; Liu et al., 2022).

This study, instead, dealt with industrial heritage reuse by adopting a more holistic approach, that unites both stakeholders and the environment in a dialogical way. By investigating the field through an analytical approach based on values, the present research can be useful as it manages to give a close look to the environment's role in the material transformation as well as giving a voice to the aims of actors involved. As showed in Chapter 5.1 and 5.3 in regards to the spaces of Fourth Extension of the ICO Workshops, some industrial features that made those environments work spaces were re-evaluated to be adapted to their new function. For example the fragmentation of the environment to create aulas and laboratories for the Nursing University, or the extension of the room to create an open space, as in the case of the gym and restaurant. The environments showed to be protagonists also in the designation of their new use, as carriers of symbolic value. As showed in Chapter 5.1, the Social Service Building has been reused as a space of education to honor and continue the same cultural role it had in the past.

Moreover, on another note, this study can be useful to complement the research that deals with industrial heritage as discourse. As mentioned in the theory chapters, authors like Pendlebury (2013), Wu and Song (2015) and Silverman (2015) highlight how a dominant way of managing and defining heritage can be detected in the field of industrial heritage as it appears in policy documents and institutional conservation practises. This overarching discourse, considered in this thesis in the form of Authorised Heritage Discourse (Smith, 2006) is problematized and applied to the context of Ivrea and the Olivetti industrial complex. The studies mentioned above, AHD is seen through its imposing power that excludes and silences other ways of dealing with heritage. This study has showed that, even if a similar discourse over heritage is present, as in the context of Ivrea, the actions and aims of the respondents might steer the discourse and negotiate the values AHD tries to convey. Indeed, as Chapter 6.3 has highlighted, the actors demonstrated their awareness about the dual nature of Olivetti's heritage, which is both tangible and intangible. They did it in a direct way, as for example Federico and Giovanni, who clearly addressed the need for a balance in the valorisation of both the components. But most of them did it indirectly, as Samuel, who

stressed the immaterial values inspired by Olivetti that guide him through his everyday use of the former industrial spaces he now manages.

Finally, this study puts in evidence how the current way of managing and organizing the industrial heritage reuse of Ivrea struggles to display and recreate the heterogeneous interaction and synergy between elements such as the sites' environments, their past and the values they convey and their new uses and activities developed inside of them. It appears that the synergy between these elements is hidden by an organization which consists of self-contained parts that not collaborate between each other. As showed in Chapter 5.3, people themselves have being able to recreate and re-evaluate these synergies, but mostly with personal initiatives. In this regard, the present research can perhaps inspire or help to develop policies or bureaucratic strategies that support these connections, making then the reuse of the industrial heritage of Olivetti more harmonius and balanced.

## Bibliography:

- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. (4th Ed), Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- Boym, S. (2007). Nostalgia and its discontents. *The Hedgehog Review*, 9(2), 7-19.  
<https://hedgehogreview.com/issues/the-uses-of-the-past/articles/nostalgia-and-its-discontents>.
- Canavese, P. I. (2022, November 28). Turismo a Ivrea, quanti sono i visitatori del sito Unesco? [Tourism in Ivrea, how many are the visitors of the Unesco site?] *Prima Il Canavese*.  
<https://primailcanavese.it/cultura/turismo-a-ivrea-quant-sono-i-visitatori-del-sito-unesco/>.
- Falser, M., & Yang, M. (2001). Industrial heritage analysis. *World heritage list and tentative list. Is industrial heritage under-represented on the world heritage list?*
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research*. (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) Sage Publications.
- Frisch, M. (1998). De-, Re-, and Post-Industrialization: Industrial Heritage as Contested Memorial Terrain. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 35(3), 241–249. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3814656>.
- Giliberto, F. (2016). Between Conservation and Transformation: Involving the Local Community of Ivrea, Italy. The UNESCO World Heritage and the Role of Civil Society, 124. In, Doempke, Stephan (ed.), *The UNESCO World Heritage and the Role of Civil Society: Proceedings of the International Conference Bonn 2015*, (pp.124-127). World Heritage Watch e.V.
- Han, S. H., & Zhang, H. (2022). Progress and Prospects in Industrial Heritage Reconstruction and Reuse Research during the Past Five Years: Review and Outlook. *Land*, 11(12), 2119. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11122119>.
- Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Harrison, R., DeSilvey, C., Holtorf, C., Macdonald, S., Bartolini, N., & Breithoff, E. (2020). *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices*. University College London. <https://doi:10.1353/book.81872>.
- Bragaglia, D. (2019, November 6). Ivrea, Città Industriale del XX Secolo. [Ivrea, Industrial City of the XX Century]. Mondointasca. <https://mondointasca.it/2019/11/06/ivrea-citta-industriale-del-xx-secolo/>.
- Liu, Y., Jin, X., & Dupre, K. (2022). Engaging stakeholders in contested urban heritage planning and management. *Cities*, 122, 103521. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103521>.
- Joint ICOMOS-TICCIH Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes. (2011). Retrieved from [http://www.icomos.org/Paris2011/GA2011\\_ICOMOS\\_TICCIH\\_joint\\_principles\\_EN\\_FR\\_final\\_20120110.pdf](http://www.icomos.org/Paris2011/GA2011_ICOMOS_TICCIH_joint_principles_EN_FR_final_20120110.pdf).
- Kamitake, Y. (1990). THE PROCESS OF DE-INDUSTRIALISATION IN MODERN ECONOMIC HISTORY: LESSONS FROM BRITISH HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE. *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, 31(1), 49–59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43295905>.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1998). *Destination culture: Tourism, museums, and heritage*. University of California Press.

- Macdonald, S., Morgan, J., Fredheim, H. (2020). Doomed?. In University College London eBooks (ed.), *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices*. (pp. 238-248). University College London. <https://doi:10.1353/book.81872>.
- Merciu, C., Merciu, G., Paraschiv, M., Cercleux, L., & Ianoş, I. (2017). Culture-led Urban Regeneration as a Catalyst for the Revitalisation of the Romanian Industrial Heritage. *ISR-Forschungsberichte*, 42, 403–418. [https://doi.org/10.1553/isr\\_fb042s403](https://doi.org/10.1553/isr_fb042s403).
- Adriano Olivetti, l'imprenditore illuminato che sognava la «fabbrica a misura d'uomo». [Adriano Olivetti, the illuminated entrepreneur who dreamt the «factory on human scale»]. (2023, February, 27). *Millionaire*. <https://www.millionaire.it/adriano-olivetti-limprenditore-illuminato-che-sognava-la-fabbrica-a-misura-duomo/>.
- Morse, J. M. (2010). Simultaneous and Sequential Qualitative Mixed Method Designs. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 483–491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364741>.
- Pendlebury, J. (2013). Conservation values, the authorised heritage discourse and the conservation-planning assemblage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19(7), 709–727. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.700282>
- Peroni, M. (2016). Edizioni di Comunità (ed). *Ivrea. Guida alla città di Adriano Olivetti*.
- Pink, S. (2004). 'Visual Methods', in C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium, and D. Silverman (eds), *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage.
- Rowthorn, R., & Ramaswamy, R. (1997). *Deindustrialization: its causes and implications* (Vol. 10). Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund. <https://doi.org/10.5089/9781451975826.001>.
- Ryan, J. T., & Silvanto, S. (2009). The World Heritage List: The making and management of a brand. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 5(4), 290–300. <https://doi.org/10.1057/pb.2009.21>.
- Ryan, J. T., & Silvanto, S. (2011). A brand for all the nations. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(3), 305–318. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634501111129266>.
- Salveti, L. F. (2022, October). Premio alle imprese. Periodico Dell'Associazione Spille D'Oro Olivetti [Enterprise award. Periodical of the Golden Pins Association], 2. Retrieved from [http://spilleoro.altervista.org/Notiz2022\\_02.pdf](http://spilleoro.altervista.org/Notiz2022_02.pdf).
- Silverman, H. (2015). Heritage and Authenticity. In: Waterton, E., Watson, S. (eds). *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137293565\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137293565_5).
- Smith, L., & Campbell, G. H. (2017). 'Nostalgia for the future': memory, nostalgia and the politics of class. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23(7), 612–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1321034>.
- Storia Olivetti - Typewriterstory. (2020, June 26). Typewriterstory. Retrieved from <http://www.typewriterstory.com/olivetti/storia-olivetti/>.
- Storm, A. (2008). Hope and rust : Reinterpreting the industrial place in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (PhD dissertation, KTH). Retrieved from <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kth:diva-4638>.
- The entrepreneur: Adriano Olivetti and his humanistic approach to responsible business. (2020, August 27). Retrieved from <https://www.sofidel.com/en/softandgreen/circular-economy-and-industry/the-entrepreneur-adriano-olivetti-and-his-humanistic-approach-to-responsible->



### Appendix A: Participants Overview (anonymized)

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Relation to the former industrial site</b>	<b>Interviewee's stakeholder group - field</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Samuel	61	Nurse University department coordinator	Works inside of the Fourth Extension of the ICO Workshops	Public sector – Health and Education	22 <sup>nd</sup> of March
Anna	53	Professor President of a Club for the valorisation of the Unesco sites in Ivrea	She organises cultural activities inside of the First Extension of the ICO Workshops	Civil society- Education Heritage	23 <sup>rd</sup> of March
Giulio	52	Entrepreneur- manager of a wellness centre inside of an Olivettian structure	He works inside of the Fourth Extension of the ICO Workshops.	Private sector - F&B	27 <sup>th</sup> of March
Federico	47	Site manager for Ivrea's UNESCO World Heritage Site	Actively manages the Info Point inside of the First extension of the ICO Workshops	Public sector - Administration and heritage	20 <sup>th</sup> of March
Simone	26	Worker of a private school developed inside of an Olivettian building	He works inside of the Social Service Building	Private sector – Divulgateion and education	21 <sup>st</sup> of March
Marco	60	Entrepreneur	He is regenerating the spaces of the Red Bricks Building and	Private sector	21 <sup>st</sup> of March

		Co-founder of a multi space hub for innovation .	the First and Second Extension of the ICO Workshops		
Elena	50	Worker of the Unesco Info Point	She works and manages the Info Point inside of the New Ico building.	Tourism – Private sector	8 <sup>th</sup> of April
Mario	86	Former Olivetti employee  Collaborates with museums the associations and activities for the valorisation of the Unesco sites in Ivrea	He worked all his life in Olivetti and currently helps by holding conferences and seminars in the Social Service buildings and in the Third Extension of the ICO Workshops.	Civil society	6 <sup>th</sup> of April
Giovanni	48	Co-founder of cultural management business	He works inside the Third Extension of the ICO Workshops.	Private sector – Cultural economy	1 <sup>st</sup> of April
Barbara	75	Former Olivetti employee  Member of an association for the valorisation of Olivetti’s memory	She organises the activities of her association inside of the spaces of the Second and Third Extensions.	Civil society	30 <sup>th</sup> of March
Francesco	38	Worker of the Unesco info point	Works inside of the First Extension of the ICO Workshops	Tourism- Private sector	2 <sup>nd</sup> of April



## Appendix B – Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me about the activity you manage here? What is the new purpose of this building?
2. When did this project begin?
3. In your experience, were there some factors that more than others influenced this transformation? If yes, which ones?
4. What are for you the main reason using industrial heritage for your project?
5. What is the image you have of these spaces before their reuse?
6. Did you find the physical heritage left by Olivetti accommodating for the purpose of regeneration?
7. Are there aspects of the building that facilitated the transition to a new function? If there are, are there some that enhance its new function?
8. What does it mean for you to work in a former industrial site?
9. Did you collaborate with the other stakeholders of the Olivetti Heritage in the project plan? If yes, in which phase(s)?
10. How can you describe your relationship with the other stakeholder present in the building/site?
11. Did you involve the inhabitants of the area/city in the project? If yes how?
12. Are there some issues you face between carrying your activity here and industrial heritage?
13. Are there debates around Olivetti's Heritage repurposing in Ivrea? If yes, which ones?
14. Do you have memories of this place before its transformation? If yes, what kind of image did you have of this place before?
15. In your opinion, was there a particular image these spaces had before the regeneration started?

16. Besides the function of this building now, do you think that the combination of architecture, industrial history and the activity you carry here attracts people to come?
17. How do you think this activity can help the future of Ivrea?
18. Do you think there are aspects of the industrial past that helped their transition to the present uses? Or aspects that can help in the future?

### Appendix D - Topic list with related concepts

Topic	Concepts/theory related	Sources
<p><b>Management issues with stakeholders</b></p>	<p><b>Urban planning and heritage as a contested space:</b></p> <p>Liu et al. (2022) defines urban planning process involving industrial heritage as a contested space. The contestation can be caused by internal and external factors, but the key element of it is the presence of multiple stakeholders. Disagreements between stakeholder can cause tensions and conflict over heritage use and management.</p> <p>The conflicts among stakeholders are caused by stakeholders' differing interests, unequal power relationships and the clash of values.</p>	<p>Liu, Y., Jin, X., &amp; Dupre, K. (2022). Engaging stakeholders in contested urban heritage planning and management. <i>Cities</i>, 122, 103521.</p>
<p><b>Regeneration – the repurposing of industrial site</b></p>	<p><b>Place narrative and heritage as a future-making process:</b></p> <p>Narratives are stories that organize meaning in useful ways for humans, incorporating historical and geographically specific meaning. Place heritage develops through narrative organization of the</p>	<p>Birkeland, I. (2017). Making sense of the future: Valuing industrial heritage in the Anthropocene. <i>Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism</i>, 14(2), 61-70.</p>

	<p>development of place where there is a past and a present and also where particular meanings concerning the role of the future appear.</p> <p>Place heritage, understood as a social process, invests new meaning and values in a place, comprising elements of the past, present, and future.</p>	
<p><b>Interaction with physical space and objects</b></p>	<p><b>Assemblage theory- Interrelation between human and non-human actors</b></p> <p>Assemblage theory sees heritage as a socio-material network of human and non-human components. This theory provides the means to conceptualize heritage a symmetrical network and therefore provide non-human actors with a sort of agency. In assemblages theory giving objects' agency is not to be understood as an 'act of will', so compared to human's agency, but has to be understood in a complex and multilayered web of relations in which human and non-humans act ruled by contingency.</p>	<p>Harrison, R. (2013). <i>Heritage: Critical Approaches</i>. London: Routledge.</p>

## Appendix 4 - Codebook

Per section of the Results:

### 5.1: Nostalgia, a double edged-sword

- Traumatic past, loss
- Past as idillic
- The future was in the past
- Unicity of the past
- Moving on against fixity
- Inspirational memories
- Duality of Olivetti's history  
Modernity of Olivetti
- Bringing back to new live
- Pride

### 5.2: Organisational and bureacratic difficulties

- Challenges in reuse
- Different levels of planning
- Funding difficulty
- Heterogeneity of the properties
- Investment as a risk
- Material division, fragmentation
- Too much power of bureaucracy
- Many stakeholders, many functions

### 5.3: Dialogue as a need:

- Events with multiple partners
- Polyfunctionality of the spaces
- Collaboration with locals
- Creating bonds to survive  
Official collaborations
- Unfficial collaborations
- Bond between different sectors

### 6.1: Moving on from Olivetti, the Unesco promise

- Boost for new activities
- Factor of change for all the city
- Valorisation
- Marketable experience
- Unesco as a brand
- Economical development
- Attractiveness
- Recognition and pride
- Prestige

### 6.2: Tourism as future :

- Architecture and beauty
- Industrial past as a brand
- Ivrea as tourist destination

- Tourism niche
- View on tourism: increasing numbers
- View on tourism: adaptation to the visitor
- View on tourism: great appeal on people from abroad
- motivation for tourism: economic development

### 6.3: Tangible limitations, intangible inspirations

- Unesco limitations
- Conservation of integrity
- Comparisons with ancient heritage
- Not only architecture
- Civic engagement
- Past as a root / identity
- Work ethics
- resilience
- local community
- place-marketing