



TEXTILE INDUSTRY OF LESKOVAC IN TOURIST POSTCARDS

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ABSTRACT: *In this paper, the author examines the representation of textile factories from Leskovac and its surrounding area on tourist postcards. Tourist postcards were once highly popular both in Serbia and worldwide; however, with the development of electronic communication technologies in recent decades, they have been largely pushed into the background. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a renewed interest in sending and collecting postcards, indicating a revived cultural and tourism value of this medium. Tourist postcards play an important role in presenting the natural, cultural, and industrial characteristics of specific areas, contributing to the promotion of tourist destinations and the preservation of collective memory. Special emphasis in this paper is placed on postcards featuring motifs of textile factories in Leskovac and its surroundings. Numerous old postcards depicted textile factories, thereby representing the city known as the “Serbian Manchester,” due to its once highly developed textile industry. The paper briefly describes the types of tourist postcards that were once produced in Leskovac, as well as their contemporary forms of production. Special attention is given to the importance of preserving postcards related to the textile industry and ethnological motifs of this region of Serbia as part of cultural and industrial heritage. The empirical part of the study is based on a survey conducted among adult respondents. The research analyzes respondents’ attitudes toward tourist postcards and textile factories, as well as their perception of the interrelation between them. The obtained results are presented and analyzed using statistical methods, including tabular and graphical representation of relative values.*

Keywords: *textile industry, tourist postcards, textile factories, industrial heritage, Leskovac.*

TEKSTILNA INDUSTRIJA LESKOVCA NA TURISTIČKIM RAZGLEDNICAMA

APSTRAKT: *U ovom radu autor se bavi predstavljanjem tekstilnih fabrika iz Leskovca i okoline na turističkim razglednicama. Turističke razglednice nekada su bile veoma popularne, kako u Srbiji tako i širom sveta, dok su sa razvojem elektronskih komunikacija u poslednjim decenijama potisnute u drugi plan. Ipak, u novije vreme ponovo raste*



interesovanje za njihovo slanje i sakupljanje, što ukazuje na obnovljenu kulturnu i turističku vrednost razglednica. Turističke razglednice imaju značajnu ulogu u predstavljanju prirodnih, kulturnih i industrijskih obeležja određenih područja, doprinoseći promociji turističkih destinacija i očuvanju kolektivnog pamćenja. Poseban akcenat u radu stavljen je na razglednice sa motivima tekstilnih fabrika u Leskovcu i njegovoj okolini. Na brojnim starim razglednicama prikazivane su tekstilne fabrike, čime je predstavljan grad poznat pod epitetom „Srpski Mančester“, zahvaljujući nekada izuzetno razvijenoj tekstilnoj industriji. U radu su ukratko opisane vrste turističkih razglednica koje su se nekada izrađivale u is Leskovcu, kao i savremeni oblici njihove produkcije. Posebna pažnja posvećena je značaju očuvanja razglednica povezanih sa tekstilnom industrijom i etnološkim motivima ovog područja Srbije, kao dela kulturnog i industrijskog nasleđa. Empirijski deo rada zasniva se na anketnom istraživanju sprovedenom među punoletnim ispitanicima. Istraživanjem su analizirani stavovi ispitanika o turističkim razglednicama i tekstilnim fabrikama, kao i percepcija njihove međusobne povezanosti. Dobijeni rezultati prikazani su i analizirani primenom statističkih metoda, uz tabelarni i grafički prikaz relativnih vrednosti.

Ključne reči: tekstil, turističke razglednice, tekstilne fabrike, industrijsko nasleđe, Leskovac.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourist postcards represent an important form of visual communication and one of the most recognizable souvenirs of tourist destinations. For more than a century, they have served as a means of transmitting messages, as well as a way of presenting the natural, cultural, historical, and economic values of specific areas. In addition to their communicative function, postcards today have significant documentary value, as they testify to the appearance of settlements, economic activities, architecture, and social conditions of the period in which they were created. With the development of modern information and communication technologies and digital forms of communication, the use of tourist postcards has significantly declined. However, in recent years there has been a renewed interest in their collection, study, and use in tourism promotion. Postcards have become an important historical source that enables the reconstruction of the past and the preservation of collective memory within local communities. Industrial facilities and economic complexes occupy a special place among motifs on tourist postcards. Their representation on postcards indicates the importance of industry in the economic and social development of individual cities. In this context, Leskovac represents a particularly interesting example. Thanks to the strong development of the textile industry during the first half of the 20th century, the city earned the nickname “Serbian Manchester” and became one of the most important industrial centers in Serbia. Numerous textile factories, production plants, and industrial complexes were frequent motifs on tourist postcards, which simultaneously



represented the city and its economic strength. The subject of this paper is tourist postcards featuring motifs of the textile industry of Leskovac and its surroundings. The aim of the study is to highlight the importance of these postcards as testimonies of the city's industrial development, as well as their potential as a means of preserving and promoting industrial heritage in the function of tourism development. Special attention is given to the analysis of postcards depicting textile factories, as well as to examining public attitudes regarding their significance and connection with the tourism offer. The research uses content analysis of tourist postcards, the descriptive method, and a survey conducted among adult respondents. The obtained results were processed using appropriate statistical methods and presented in tables and graphs. The findings may contribute to a better understanding of the role of tourist postcards in preserving industrial heritage and its contemporary tourism valorization.

1.1. Subject and Aim of the Research

The subject of this research consists of tourist postcards featuring motifs of the textile industry of Leskovac and its surroundings, as well as their significance in preserving and presenting industrial heritage. Special attention is given to postcards depicting textile factories, production complexes, and other facilities that testify to the economic development of Leskovac during the period of the most intensive growth of the textile industry. The research is based on the assumption that tourist postcards represent a valuable historical and documentary source, enabling insight into the appearance and importance of industrial facilities in the past. At the same time, they may play an important role in contemporary processes of cultural and industrial heritage preservation, as well as in promoting the tourism values of the local community. Sustainability is based on the principles of the long-term and stable functioning of its components, which do not generate errors or cause harm, thereby contributing to the efficient and effective achievement of process outcomes [1]. The main aim of the paper is to analyze tourist postcards with motifs of the textile industry of Leskovac and determine their significance as testimonies of the city's industrial development and as a potential tool for tourism promotion. A specific objective is to examine the attitudes of adult respondents regarding tourist postcards, textile factories, and their interrelation in the context of industrial heritage preservation.

1.2. The Importance of Tourist Postcards in Promoting Tourist Destinations

Tourist postcards are one of the oldest and most widespread visual media in the promotion of tourist destinations. Their primary function is the presentation of space, natural and cultural values, and specific characteristics of a place in a concise and visually attractive manner. Thanks to the combination of image and short message, postcards have played an important role in shaping the tourist image of destinations. In addition to their promotional role, tourist postcards also have an important communicative and documentary function. They enable the dissemination of information about destinations over wide geographic areas, contributing to their recognition and attractiveness among potential tourists. At the same time, postcards often become visual symbols of places, influencing the formation of destination identity. In contemporary conditions, although digital media dominate tourism



promotion, postcards retain their value as a traditional and authentic form of representation [2]. They are increasingly regarded as part of cultural heritage and as collector's items, which further enhances their significance in tourism valorization. Due to their long-term use and visual recognizability, tourist postcards remain an important instrument in the preservation and promotion of tourism values, especially when used to represent specific thematic areas such as industrial or cultural heritage.

1.3. Research Methodology

This study applies a multi-methodological approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. The theoretical part is based on the analysis of relevant scientific literature and available tourist postcards featuring motifs of the textile industry of Leskovac. The qualitative approach includes content analysis of postcards, focusing on visual and thematic elements, particularly representations of textile factories and industrial facilities. The descriptive method is also used to examine the historical and social context of textile industry development in Leskovac. The quantitative part is based on a survey conducted among adult respondents. The questionnaire included closed and semi-open questions aimed at examining attitudes toward tourist postcards, the importance of the textile industry, and their interrelation in tourism promotion [3]. Collected data were processed using statistical methods and presented in tables and graphs.

General hypothesis: Tourist postcards featuring motifs of the textile industry of Leskovac represent an important medium for preserving industrial heritage and may contribute to its contemporary tourism promotion and valorization.

2. TOURIST POSTCARDS AS PART OF CULTURAL AND TOURISM HERITAGE

This chapter discusses tourist postcards as an important part of cultural and tourism heritage, with special emphasis on their historical development, typology, and role in contemporary tourism communication [4]. Postcards represent a specific visual medium that has played an important role in presenting space, cultural values, and economic activities [5]. Figure 1 shows a tourist map of the city of Manchester, England, from the early 20th century, showing textile factories.

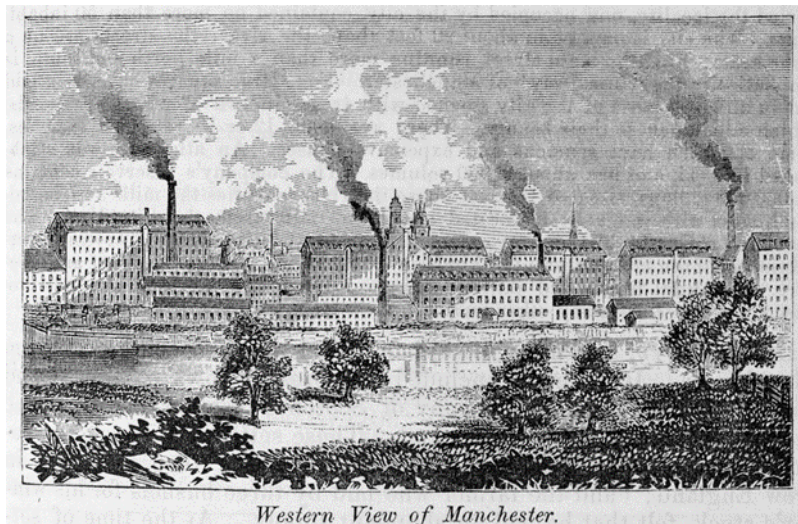


Figure 1: Old postcard – Manchester in England

2.1. Historical Development of Tourist Postcards

Tourist postcards emerged in the second half of the 19th century during the intensive development of postal services, photography, and early mass tourism. Their origin is linked to the need for fast and simple communication, as well as the desire to visually present distant places and destinations. Initially, postcards were simple in design, often monochromatic and with limited visual elements [6]. With the development of printing techniques, especially lithography and later offset printing, their quality significantly improved. The introduction of color postcards in the 20th century contributed to their popularity, making them one of the most widespread tourist souvenirs [7]. The first half of the 20th century represents the “golden age” of postcards, when they were used not only for tourism but also as a means of personal communication. In that period, postcards became an important medium for presenting cities, landscapes, architecture, and industrial facilities. With the development of digital technologies in the second half of the 20th and early 21st century, their use declined, but they gained new roles as collectible items, museum exhibits, and cultural-historical sources.

2.2. Types and Characteristics of Tourist Postcards

Tourist postcards can be classified according to content, production technique, and function. Based on content, they include natural landscapes, urban spaces, cultural monuments, ethnographic motifs, and industrial facilities. According to production technique, they are divided into photographic, illustrated, and combined postcards. Photographic postcards provide realistic visual documentation, while illustrated postcards emphasize artistic interpretation. The absorbency of textile materials represents one of the most significant properties contributing to the comfort of textiles intended for widespread



use [8]. Combined postcards integrate photographs, graphics, and textual information. A key characteristic of postcards is their ability to convey destination identity in a limited format, making them an effective promotional tool.

2.3. Role of Postcards in Tourism Promotion and Cultural Heritage Preservation

Tourist postcards play a multiple role in tourism communication, including promotional, informational, and documentary functions. They enable fast presentation of destinations and contribute to their visibility and attractiveness. They also serve as “visual ambassadors” of destinations and are important sources for cultural and historical research, enabling reconstruction of urban and social development. In modern conditions, postcards retain their value as part of cultural heritage and as tools for interpreting local identity, particularly in the context of industrial heritage [9].

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN LESKOVAC

The development of the textile industry in Leskovac represents one of the most significant segments of the economic history of southern Serbia. Due to its favorable geographical position, developed trade, and entrepreneurial spirit of the local population, Leskovac grew during the 19th and first half of the 20th century into one of the leading industrial centers in the region. Textile production became the foundation of the city’s economic development and an important factor in its urbanization and modernization.

3.1. Beginnings and Development of the Textile Industry in Leskovac

The beginnings of textile production in Leskovac date back to the end of the 19th century, when craft production gradually transformed into early industrial production. Initially, small workshops and family enterprises dominated, producing fabrics, yarn, and various textile products. The development of trade relations and the emergence of the first mechanized facilities enabled faster industrialization and expansion of production.

During the first half of the 20th century, the textile industry in Leskovac experienced significant growth. Larger factories were established, modern machines were introduced, and production capacity increased. The city became known for the quality of its textile products, and its industry gained regional and national importance. This period represents a key phase in shaping the industrial identity of Leskovac.

3.2. Leskovac as “Serbian Manchester” – Historical and Economic Context

Leskovac is often referred to in domestic and foreign literature as “Serbian Manchester,” highlighting its exceptional importance in the field of textile industry. This name originates from the period when the city, similar to Manchester in England, was strongly industrialized and focused on textile production as its dominant economic sector. Industrial development was accompanied by rapid urbanization, population growth, and the formation of the working class. Textile factories were not only economic centers but also important social institutions influencing everyday life. In this context, Leskovac became a

recognizable industrial city whose identity was strongly linked to textile production. Figure 2 shows a old tourist postcard of Leskovac in Serbia, showing a textile factory.



Figure 2: Old postcard – Leskovac in Serbia

3.3. The Most Important Textile Factories and Their Contribution to Economic Development

The development of the textile industry in Leskovac was based on several major factories and industrial facilities that played a key role in the city's economic progress. These factories employed large numbers of workers and produced significant quantities of textile goods for domestic and international markets [10]. They also influenced the social structure of the city, the development of education, and the formation of industrial culture. Their existence contributed to infrastructure development, housing construction, and overall urban development of Leskovac. Although the textile industry declined in the late 20th century due to economic and transitional changes, its heritage remains an important part of the city's identity. Today, its potential is increasingly recognized in the context of industrial tourism and cultural valorization, particularly through historical sources such as tourist postcards.

4. TEXTILE FACTORIES ON TOURIST POSTCARDS

Tourist postcards featuring motifs of the textile industry in Leskovac represent an important visual and documentary source for studying the city's industrial development. They serve not only as a means of tourism promotion but also as valuable historical

material enabling reconstruction of industrial facilities, urban space, and the economic strength of Leskovac during its most intensive industrial development.

4.1. Analysis of Visual Motifs and Depictions of Textile Factories

Visual analysis of tourist postcards shows that textile factories were frequently presented as representative symbols of Leskovac's industrial strength. Postcards commonly depict factory buildings, chimneys, production halls, and industrial complexes within urban or semi-urban landscapes [11]. The representation depended on the period of origin. Older postcards emphasize monumentality and industrial significance, while newer ones tend toward a more documentary and realistic photographic approach. In both cases, factories are presented as symbols of progress, modernization, and economic power [12]. Industrial facilities were often placed in the foreground of the composition, emphasizing their central role in the identity of Leskovac as an industrial center. Picture 3 shows the old touristic map of the town of Leskovac in Serbia, on which many textile factories with their chimneys can be seen in the background [13].



Figure 3: Old postcard – Leskovac in Serbia

4.2. Tourist Postcards as Documentary Evidence of Industrial Development

Tourist postcards represent a valuable documentary source for studying the industrial development of Leskovac. They provide visual data on factory appearance, infrastructure, and urban space in different historical periods. In the absence of systematic photographic and archival documentation, postcards often serve as the only or supplementary source for

reconstructing the city's industrial past. Beyond architectural characteristics, postcards also testify to the economic importance of the textile industry, which was a driving force of Leskovac's development during the 19th and 20th centuries. In this way, postcards transcend their tourist function and become an important historical source enabling interdisciplinary research in history, tourism, cultural studies, and industrial heritage. Picture 4 shows the old tourist information centre in the town of Leskovac in Serbia, with the fair building visible. This building, called Šajkača, after the famous Serbian hat, has hosted many international textile fairs.



Figure 4: Old postcard –the Šajkača building, the international textile fair

4.3. Importance of Industrial Postcards in Tourism and Cultural Valorization

Postcards with industrial motifs are increasingly significant in contemporary tourism and cultural valorization processes [14]. Industrial heritage, long neglected in tourism offerings, is now recognized as an important resource for cultural and urban tourism development. In this context, tourist postcards serve as a medium for interpreting industrial history and making it accessible to the wider public. They contribute to awareness of industrial heritage and its role in shaping local identity [15]. They also have an educational function and can be used in museum exhibitions, displays, and tourist presentations as visual evidence of historical development. Modern tourism trends, which increasingly integrate industrial heritage into tourism products, further enhance the importance of such postcards, connecting past and present development. Picture 5 shows a tourist postcard and a building in Vuče near Leskovac. The building is known as the Teokarevic villa, named after one of the great textile industrialists of the early 20th century.

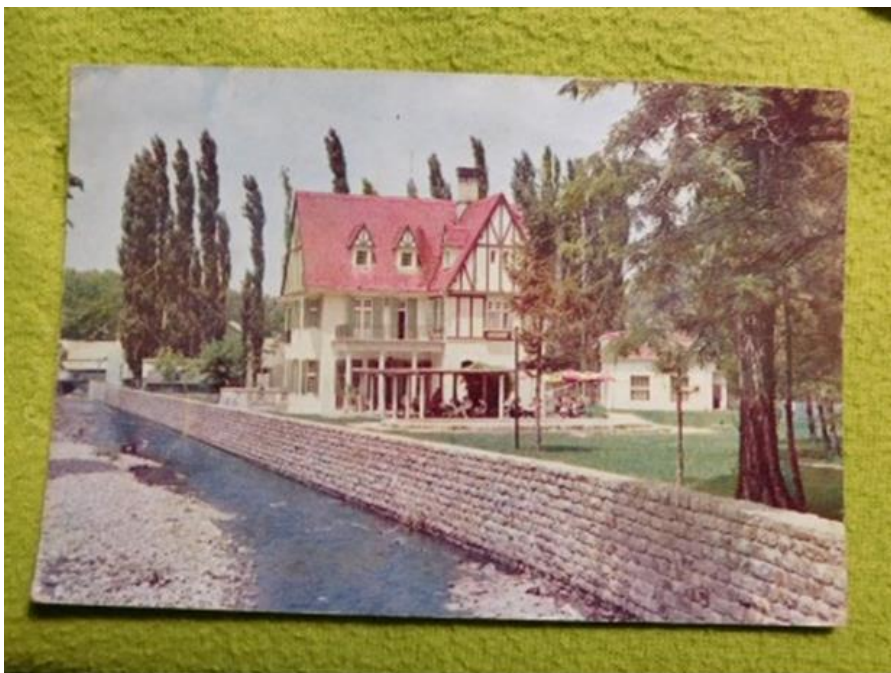


Figure 5: Old postcard – the Teokarevic villa, Vučje near Leskovac

5. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY RESEARCH

The empirical part of the study is based on a survey conducted among adult respondents. The aim was to examine attitudes toward tourist postcards, the importance of the textile industry in Leskovac, and perceptions of their interconnection in the context of tourism valorization of industrial heritage [16]. The total sample included 100 respondents of different gender, age, and educational background. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods and presented in tables and graphs.

5.1. Structure and Characteristics of the Sample

The sample was evenly distributed by gender and age groups, ensuring relevant interpretation of results.

Gender structure of respondents

- Men: 48%
- Women: 52%

Age structure of respondents

- 18–30 years: 35%
- 31–50 years: 40%



- 51+ years: 25%

The sample shows a predominance of middle-aged respondents, contributing to the relevance of attitudes toward the research topic.

5.2. Analysis of Attitudes Toward Tourist Postcards

Results show that most respondents have a positive attitude toward tourist postcards as a cultural and tourism medium.

- 72% consider postcards to have cultural and historical value
- 18% see them as an outdated form of communication
- 10% have no clear opinion

Additionally, 64% stated they would use or collect postcards again if they were thematically modernized.

5.3. Attitudes Toward the Importance of the Textile Industry in Leskovac

Results indicate that respondents recognize the importance of the textile industry in the historical development of the city.

- 80% consider it a key factor in Leskovac's development
- 12% partially agree
- 8% do not recognize its significance

5.4. Perception of the Connection Between Postcards and Industrial Heritage

- 68% believe there is a strong connection
- 22% see a partial connection
- 10% see no significant connection

Furthermore, 61% believe that industrial postcards could be an important part of the city's tourism offer.

5.5. Discussion of Results

The results indicate a high level of awareness regarding the importance of the textile industry in Leskovac's historical development, as well as a positive attitude toward tourist postcards as a cultural medium. Most respondents recognize the potential of integrating industrial heritage into tourism promotion. This suggests opportunities for developing new tourism products based on industrial heritage, including thematic postcards, exhibitions, and museum displays [17]. The results confirm the initial hypothesis that tourist postcards featuring motifs of the textile industry represent an important medium for preserving and promoting industrial heritage and may contribute to its tourism valorization.

6. POSSIBILITIES FOR VALORIZATION OF TEXTILE HERITAGE IN TOURISM

Industrial heritage is increasingly recognized as a valuable resource in contemporary cultural and urban tourism development. In this context, the textile industry of Leskovac, which played a key role in the city's economic and social development, is increasingly seen as an important part of local cultural identity.



6.1. Industrial Heritage as a Resource for Cultural and Industrial Tourism Development

Industrial heritage includes both tangible and intangible traces of industrial development, such as factory buildings, infrastructure, technological systems, and cultural patterns of working-class life. Leskovac possesses significant potential for industrial tourism development. Former factories and industrial complexes can be interpreted as tourist attractions, contributing to diversification of the city's tourism offer. Valorization involves protection, presentation, and integration of industrial heritage into tourism flows.

6.2. Role of Tourist Postcards in Interpreting Industrial Heritage

Tourist postcards are an important medium for interpreting industrial heritage, enabling visual representation of historical structures and processes. Postcards of textile factories in Leskovac have documentary value as they depict industrial complexes at the height of their development. They enable reconstruction of industrial history and contribute to understanding the role of textile production in shaping urban and economic identity. They also serve an educational purpose in museums, exhibitions, and tourism presentations.

6.3. Guidelines for Improving Tourism Offer Based on Industrial Heritage

The development of Leskovac's tourism offer can be improved through integration of industrial heritage into tourism products. One approach is the creation of thematic industrial heritage routes including former factories, museum exhibitions, and cultural sites. The development of thematic souvenirs, especially modern postcards with historical factory motifs, can enhance local identity and tourism attractiveness. Additionally, exhibitions, digital archives, and educational programs can improve visibility and understanding of industrial heritage. By involving the local community and institutions, sustainable development models can be created based on preservation and promotion of industrial heritage.

7. CONCLUSION

Based on theoretical analysis and empirical research, it can be concluded that tourist postcards featuring motifs of the textile industry represent an important segment of the cultural and historical heritage of Leskovac. They document industrial development and urban space, while also serving as a medium for interpreting the past and promoting local identity.

Survey results show that respondents largely recognize the importance of the textile industry and the cultural value of postcards. Most support linking industrial heritage with tourism development. The findings indicate potential for contemporary tourism valorization through thematic postcards, exhibitions, and educational content. The initial hypothesis has been fully confirmed.



Tourist postcards, although a traditional medium, remain relevant today through their role in preserving cultural memory and promoting industrial heritage. Leskovac has significant potential for further development of cultural and industrial tourism based on these resources.

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