

Deindustrialization, Heritage, and Representations of Identity

Stefan Berger and Christian Wicke

Like nations, cities and regions enjoy a certain degree of freedom to choose their historical legacies,¹ albeit from a somewhat limited identity repertoire. In the second half of the twentieth century, deindustrialization processes deeply affected a great range of places and groups in the industrialized West. They have been perceived as threats to collective identities, while also opening opportunities for heritage and memory activism.² Over recent decades, industrial heritage has developed the potential of becoming an important emblem in public representations of place identity. However, while some deindustrializing regions have enjoyed a highly developed “heritagization,” not everyone is willing to recognize, preserve, and represent the industrial past, as the case studies in this special issue will show. From a global perspective industrial heritage remains very much contested.

In comparison to industrialization and the so-called “industrial revolutions,” deindustrialization has played only a minor role in the grand narrative of the modern era. Tim Strangleman recently encouraged scholars, for good reason, to reread industrialization narratives and apply them to processes of deindustrialization; as he states, “These historically discrete epochs can be thought of as two bookends of what was an industrial era.”³ At one end, the transition towards industrial modernity has been thought of as going hand in hand with new conceptions of time and space that differed from those of traditional society. This era has been associated with the making of new collective identities and the popularization and politicization of historical consciousness. New forms of collective memories and identities were required for the functioning of economic, social, and political life in the rapidly growing cities of the modern states and the globalizing economy. Museums, monuments, literature, mass media, the sciences, and

¹ Linde Egberts, *Chosen Legacies: Heritage in Regional Identity* (London: Routledge, 2017).

² Jenny Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

³ Tim Strangleman, “Deindustrialisation and the Historical Imagination: Making Sense of Work and Industrial Change,” *Sociology* 51, no. 2 (April 2017): 466–82, quote 467.

other realms of memory and invented traditions promoted the formation of these new modern identities.⁴

At the other end, deindustrialization reconfigured the memory spaces haunting the development of modernity. Against the dramatic effects plant closures have had around coalfields, steel mills, shipyards, car factories, and other heavy industries, it yet remains to be fully understood what *deindustrialization* has actually done to collective memory and identity. How have the large-scale processes of deindustrialization since the second half of the twentieth century affected public representations of the past? Such questions should be especially intriguing to public historians. Starting in the 1960s, scholars of various disciplines have been studying the transformative processes towards postindustrial society.⁵ Deindustrialization studies, which have grown strong particularly in response to the effects of the neoliberal politics in North America and the United Kingdom, have highlighted social, cultural, personal, and psychological as well as urban and geographic dimensions of change and decline at macro and micro levels.⁶ Especially since the turn of the millennium there has been a noticeable call for a closer look “beyond the ruins” of industrial decline, and to bring forward the memory of the working classes and their misery caused by deindustrialization.⁷ Steven High and others have criticized the middle-class voyeurism of postindustrial aesthetics.⁸ Laurajane Smith has focused more specifically on the official instrumentalizations of industrial heritage that are formative to identities and yet often divorced from the

4 See, for example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and extended ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Stefan Berger with Christoph Conrad, *The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” in “Memory and Counter Memory,” special issue, *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24; Xosé Manoel Núñez and Eric Storm, eds., *Regionalism and Modern Europe: Identity Construction and Movements from 1890 to the Present Day* (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

5 For early predictions of a postindustrial society, see Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1974); Alain Touraine, *The Post-Industrial Society: Tomorrow's Social History: Classes, Conflicts and Culture in the Programmed Society* (New York: Random House, 1971).

6 For valuable overviews, see Steven High, “‘The Wounds of Class’: A Historiographical Reflection on the Study of Deindustrialization, 1973–2013,” *History Compass* 11, no. 11 (November 2013): 994–1007; Tim Strangleman and James Rhodes, “The ‘New’ Sociology of Deindustrialisation? Understanding Industrial Change,” *Sociology Compass* 8, no. 4 (April 2014): 411–21.

7 See, e.g. Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, eds., *Beyond the Ruins: The Meaning of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2003); Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969–1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Steven High and David W. Lewis, *Corporate Wastelands: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2017).

8 For a discussion of such critique, see Tim Strangleman, “‘Smokestack Nostalgia,’ ‘Ruin Porn’ or Working-Class Obituary: The Role and Meaning of Deindustrial Representation,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (Fall 2013): 23–37.

perspective of working-class individuals.⁹ And Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo have emphasized the relationship between the meaning of labor that has been performed by workers and their conceptions of place identity.¹⁰ Recent oral histories of those directly affected by deindustrialization are following this call to give real people a voice in the construction of historical cultures.¹¹ The election of Donald J. Trump as president of the United States following a campaign in which he promised a reindustrialization of the Rust Belt might well draw further scholarly attention to the problems of deindustrialization.¹²

Deindustrialization is a highly place-dependent phenomenon. The effects of globalization are felt usually at the very local level.¹³ National governments and ideologies have traditionally played crucial parts in mediating the global causes and local effects of prolonging, managing, and also accelerating deindustrialization processes. In the neoliberalism of the Anglosphere, Rhenish capitalism in Germany, and the collapse of state socialism in central and eastern Europe, we can find different approaches to deindustrialization management. The management of industrial heritage and the associated historical cultures differ tremendously from case to case. Thus deindustrialization, just as industrialization, cannot be universally historicized as a significant experience of modernity. From a public history perspective, as this special issue will show, it is fascinating to see how differently the industrial past, and its decline, has been represented in deindustrial spaces. There now seem to be as many bookends as there are beginnings.

When the stories of industrialization and deindustrialization begin and when they end is also highly place dependent. Can we actually speak of two historically discrete epochs? In fact, in global historical perspective, it is more accurate to speak about overlapping epochs ranging from the eighteenth century to the present day, where one place can experience industrialization at the same time as another place

9 Laurajane Smith, *The Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 195–236.

10 Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo, *Steeltown USA: Work and Memory in Youngstown* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002).

11 For influential studies, see, for example, High, *Industrial Sunset*; David Kideckel, *Getting by in Postsocialist Romania: Labor, the Body and Working-Class Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); Arthur McIvor, *Working Lives: Work in Britain since 1945* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Alessandro Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Since 2014 the German Mining Museum and the Institute for Social Movements in Bochum, Germany, have run the oral history project “Digitaler Gedächtnisspeicher: Menschen im Bergbau,” <http://isb.rub.de/sbr/drittmittelprojekte/gedaechtnisspeicher.html.de>. In Sesto San Giovanni, Italy, a group of scholars has also produced an oral history documentary about managers of the former Falck steel company: Riccardo Apuzzo, dir., *Il polline e la ruggine. Memoria, lavoro, deindustrializzazione a Sesto San Giovanni (1985–2015)* (2015).

12 Sherry Linkon, “The Half-Life of Deindustrialization: Why Donald Trump Is Just a Symptom,” Moyers and Company website, August 18, 2016, <http://billmoyers.com/story/half-life-deindustrialization-donald-trump-just-symptom/>.

13 Christopher H. Johnson, “Introduction: De-industrialization and Globalization,” in “De-Industrialization: Social, Cultural, and Political Aspects,” ed. Bert Altena and Marcel van der Linden, special issue, *International Review of Social History* 47, supplement 10 (2002): 3–33.

undergoes processes of deindustrialization.¹⁴ Both processes have been dependent on climatic changes and geographic opportunities, technological innovations and financial investment, transport and communication, trade and competition with others, war and peace, as well as religious, cultural, social, and political conditions. The beginning of the industrial age is usually associated with the “industrial revolution” that started in eighteenth-century England.¹⁵ Heavy industries were an important part of the first industrial revolution in the West, and they dominated landscapes and the life of people and their families working in those industries, both in the West and in other parts of the world, where they migrated over the course of the twentieth century.

When moving towards global comparisons, it makes sense to understand the process of deindustrialization not as linear and holistic but rather as uneven and diffuse, with different ideologies, identities, and very particular circumstances determining its *gestalt*. We are thus not suggesting a teleological account of the history of the industrial age, with separate and distinct temporalities of the preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial. Theorists of history have recently pointed to the fallacy of neatly delineating time into past, present, and future.¹⁶ Their insights arguably still have to be applied to histories of industrialization and deindustrialization. Processes of deindustrialization have not superseded industrialization, and it remains generally unclear to what extent collective identities in amorphous modern societies are fundamentally different from particular situations in premodern societies. Both industrialization and deindustrialization are highly uneven and can operate parallel to, and intertwined with, each other. One cannot universally determine when the industrial era has or will come to an end. When traveling highly developed countries today, one may come across vast deindustrialized spaces as well as booming industries. And while industrialization remains unfinished in developing societies, people in particular areas of highly industrialized nations have faced often-dramatic industrial decline. Its beginnings and ends, peaks and pauses have been strongly dependent on the particular context of the particular place. All this makes us wonder about the linearity of industrial modernity and its future narrations and representations.

That the historical cultures in many regions of heavy industry only began to be self-reflexive about the relationship between industrialization and a sense of place at the moment of deindustrialization confirms the problems of constructing time as

¹⁴ For a study incorporating both bookends in one place, see Christopher H. Johnson, *The Life and Death of Industrial Languedoc, 1700–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁵ The classic study is Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: The Economic History of Britain 1700–1914* (London: Methuen, 1969).

¹⁶ For a recent critique of periodization and the separation of temporalities in history, see Chris Lorenz, “Der letzte Fetisch des Stamms der Historiker: Zeit, Raum und Periodisierung in der Geschichtswissenschaft,” in *Zeitenwandel: Transformationen geschichtlicher Zeitlichkeit nach dem Boom*, ed. Fernando Esposito (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 63–92. See also the contributions in Chris Lorenz and Berber Bevernage, eds., *Breaking up Time: Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

linear.¹⁷ The mindscape of the industrial past was shaped by a deindustrializing present, in which that industrial past was reconfigured to fit diverse imaginations of the future.¹⁸ In post-Communist societies, for example, deindustrialization after the fall of Communism often delegitimized class narratives that had been groomed by Communism, as they did not fit the post-Communist constructions of the future.¹⁹ In capitalist societies, where deindustrialization processes were accompanied by massive struggles of working-class people for their jobs and their communities, narratives of deindustrialization tended to be highly polarized, as was the case in Great Britain during and after the Margaret Thatcher years. In capitalist societies where deindustrialization processes were negotiated relatively peacefully between different political, economic, and social actors in corporatist ways, the mindscape of the past tended to become thoroughly romanticized. In those circumstances, past class conflict was either scripted out of the story or condemned as the result of the antagonistic class politics of the past.²⁰

During industrialization, a strong working-class culture developed in all regions of heavy industry, around the steel mills and coal mines as well as in the respective working-class neighborhoods.²¹ Yet none of these regions was an exclusively working-class area, as significant numbers of people identified as middle class, from employers, managers, and school teachers to members of the medical profession and shopkeepers also living in those regions.²² These middle-class cultures in dominant working-class regions cannot be ignored for they also shaped those regions' images and representations during industrialization and deindustrialization; much of the culture of industrial heritage can also be described as

17 On the concept of "historical culture" see Maria Grever and Robbert-Jan Adriaansen, "Historical Culture: A Concept Revisited," in *Palgrave Handbook of Research in Historical Culture and Education*, ed. Mario Carretero, Stefan Berger, and Maria Grever (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 73–90.

18 In that respect histories of deindustrialization could also usefully engage with the literature on "past futures." See for example Lucian Hölscher, *Die Entdeckung der Zukunft* (Cologne: Wallstein, 2016).

19 Juliane Tomann, *Geschichtskultur im Strukturwandel: Öffentliche Geschichte in Katowice nach 1989* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017).

20 South Wales and the Ruhr would be good respective examples of those different narrativizations of deindustrialization in capitalist societies. For a comparison, see Stefan Berger, "Representing the Industrial Age: Heritage and Identity in the Ruhr and South Wales," in *The Invention of Industrial Pasts: Heritage, Political Culture and Economic Debates in Great Britain and Germany, 1850–2010*, ed. Peter Itzen and Christian Müller (Augsburg, Ger.: Wißner Verlag, 2013), 14–35.

21 The making of those industrial "communities" has often been deeply romanticized in literature. See the example of the making of the South Wales industrial communities and their hugely influential literary evocation in Raymond Williams's literary works, especially his three volume *Border Country*. See also Dennis L. Dworkin and Leslie G. Roman, *Views beyond the Border Country: Raymond Williams and Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993).

22 For the case of South Wales, Andy Croll has pointed out that histories of these middle classes are largely lacking in the historiography of industrial Wales. See Andy Croll, "People's Remembrancers' in a Postmodern Age: Contemplating the Non-crisis of Welsh Labour History," *Llafur: The Journal of Welsh Labour History* 8, no. 1 (2000): 5–17.

a middle-class project. Hence, both current cultural representations as well as the early origins of high culture in regions of heavy industry can often be traced back to the middle-class elements of culture, including theaters, urban parks, and art galleries.²³ In fact, many of these regions of heavy industry tried to escape a branding as purely industrial regions, as the latter carried negative connotations. Instead, regions such as the Ruhr championed pastoral images and quaint rural-looking housing in their self-representation, whereas in Asturias, for example, the pre-Romanesque churches and the ancient kingdom of Asturias long played (and arguably still play) a much larger role in the branding of the region than does its industrial past as the most important coal-mining region of Spain.²⁴ While cultural images of regions of heavy industry were to a large extent determined by these regions' middle classes, research has tended to ignore them and instead concentrate on the working classes and their cultures. Of course, regional images also depended on the importance of the middle classes in those regions and whether or not they self-consciously identified with them. Where they did, their cultural influence was stronger than in areas where they were either absent (i.e., absent owners) or rejected the region (in the case of middle-class professionals). Nevertheless, it is high time that stories of industrialization and deindustrialization started to talk about the middle classes.

The perception that the industrial past was something to be ashamed of and sidelined only began to change (in some cases) with the onset of deindustrialization. In some cases, actual deindustrialization went hand in hand with the industrialization of the cultural mindscape of the region. Former sites of industry, hitherto excluded from (middle-class) definitions of culture, were revalued and presented as the backbone of regional culture. This valorization of industrial heritage in the West took place against the background of a major push towards democratizing various aspects of society that is associated with the aftermath of the worldwide student protests of 1968.²⁵ In the realm of culture this meant a rethinking of the traditional prioritizing of high culture over popular culture and a valorization of working-class culture that benefited the move from active industries to industrial heritage.

²³ On culture as catalyst for urban developments in former regions of heavy industry see Jürgen Mittag and Kathrin Oerters, "Kreativwirtschaft und Kulturhauptstadt: Katalysatoren urbaner Entwicklung in altindustriellen Ballungsregionen," in *Entwicklungsfaktor Kultur: Studien zum kulturellen und ökonomischen Potential der europäischen Stadt*, ed. Gudrun Quenzel (Bielefeld, Ger.: Transcript, 2009): 61–94.

²⁴ On the Ruhr, see Stefan Berger, "Industriekultur und Strukturwandel in den deutschen Bergbauregionen nach 1945," in *Geschichte des deutschen Bergbaus*, vol. 4, *Rohstoffgewinnung im Strukturwandel: der deutsche Bergbau im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Dieter Ziegler (Münster: Aschendorff, 2013), 571–601. On Asturias, see Ruben Véga, "Looking Back: Representations of the Industrial Past in Asturias," in *Industrial Heritage and Regional Identity*, ed. Christian Wicke, Stefan Berger, and Jana Golombek (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

²⁵ Gerd-Rainer Horn, "1968: A Social Movement Sui Generis," in *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective: A Survey*, ed. Stefan Berger and Holger Nehring (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 515–42.

The deindustrialization of regions of heavy industry in the West also meant that those regions had to reinvent themselves economically. The extent to which those wielding political and economic power in and over those regions valued the past as an important resource for the future varied considerably.²⁶ Industrialists invariably thought of keeping the costs of deindustrialization to a minimum for themselves while politicians were often keen to look to the future and new horizons for economic regeneration, often simply reducing the past to a burden to be shed as much as possible. Where both of these strategies came together and were dominant, such as in many parts of the United States, the outcome depended on economics. Where restructuring was successful, the region reinvented itself with its industrial past becoming, at best, a romantic side story, neither very present in public history nor in the architecture of the region. Where the economics failed, such strategies left urban wastelands that developed their own cultural scenarios, described with terms such as “ruin porn” and “ruin chic.”²⁷

The subtle changes in the conception of culture(s) in regions of heavy industry undergoing deindustrialization processes point to the importance of the regional politics of industrial heritage. Various actors have been engaged in such politics. It is clear that heritage activists emerged in bottom-up processes of deindustrialization, sometimes forming social movements fighting for the preservation of industrial heritage sites, be it working-class housing, places of work, or parts of the infrastructure sustaining a now increasingly defunct industry.²⁸ Workers who once made their living in the now idle factories have been prominent among heritage activists, particularly skilled workers and trade unionists; the former because they took a certain pride in their now useless skills, and the latter because they came from a tradition of collectively representing workers and seeking to protect their interests. Workplaces always have been places of united communities of various sorts and work provided a social space valued by many workers. Yet for every worker who became a heritage activist, there was at least another worker who was glad to see the industry go because of unpleasant memories associated with his or her place of labor.²⁹ Hence, although working-class heritage activists have been an

26 For a comparison of strategies of structural economic change in the regions of the north of France and the Ruhr, see Peter Friedemann and Karl Lauschke, eds., *Strukturwandel in altindustriellen Regionen: Nord/Pas-de-Calais und das Ruhrgebiet im Vergleich* (Liège, Belg.: Revue du Nord, 2006).

27 On the reinvention of local and regional economies in the United States, see Gerald L. Gordon, *Reinventing Local and Regional Economies* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2009). It is intriguing that heritage is not discussed in this book at all.

28 Looking at heritage movements through the lens of social movements is an intriguing new perspective that has the potential to shed new light on the politics of heritage. See, for example, Christian Wicke, “Urban Movement à la Ruhr? The Initiatives for the Preservation of Workers’ Settlements and the Global 1970s in West Germany,” in *Cities Contested—Urban Politics, Heritage and Social Movements in Italian and West German Cities of the 1970s*, ed. Martin Baumeister, Dieter Schott, and Bruno Bonomo (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2017), 347–70.

29 Oral history projects of workers in heavy industry point to this basic ambiguity in the positioning of workers towards their previous place of work. See the ongoing work referred to in footnote 11 above.

important part of community heritage initiatives, there have also been many other prominent actors in the politics of industrial heritage.

A leading group also often associated with the beginnings of industrial heritage movements in regions of heavy industry was made up of intellectuals, artists, and academics who became activists and/or through their work managed to make an important contribution to the “heritagization” of regional identities. Photographers recording industrial remains and lives of the workers; historians writing about the industrial past and the communities that that past had, for better or worse, sustained; sociologists, city planners, and geographers thinking about how urban and regional space had to be reassigned amid processes of deindustrialization; artists, producing art about communities undergoing deindustrialization—all can be found prominently in the politics of industrial heritage.³⁰ If industrial heritage movements in many cases started as an (often highly problematic and uneasy) alliance between workers and intellectuals, their success depended to a large extent on how other actors reacted to their initiatives. Employers, who, after all, owned the companies and the land on which those companies stood, needed to position themselves vis-à-vis the politics of industrial heritage. And the politically powerful in local, regional, and national governments also had to take a stance and align or distance regional politics with or from the politics of industrial heritage. Heritage activists from below often made use of political opportunity structures provided by the political and economic frameworks. They could use or squander them depending on the specific historical circumstances.³¹ The forms of activism, the range of movements, the variants of responses all differed enormously across diverse regions of heavy industry, but one can also observe a range of commonalities. Thus for example, in regions of heavy industry where the politics of industrial heritage could take root, we always find strategies to market heritage and to promote tourism with industrial heritage initiatives.³²

While industrial heritage’s potential for valorization has been recognized in some deindustrializing cities and regions, from a more global perspective its legitimacy still seems to rest on shaky grounds. Some cities and regions, such as the German Ruhr, have appropriated their industrial heritage as the fundamental feature of their identity, whereas others have worked hard to erase their industrial

30 On the role of intellectuals in social movements see, for example, M. N. Zald and J. D. McCarthy, “Organizational Intellectuals and the Criticism of Society,” in *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays*, ed. Zald and McCarthy (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1987), 97–120.

31 The concept of “political opportunity structures” that comes from social movement studies might be usefully employed also in heritage studies. See Karl Dieter Opp, *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multi-Disciplinary Introduction, Critique and Synthesis* (London: Routledge, 2009), 161–203.

32 See, for example, the Routledge Cultural Heritage and Tourism series: <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Cultural-Heritage-and-Tourism-Series/book-series/RCHT>.

past.³³ How can industrial identities be preserved under conditions of deindustrialization? What are the local conditions for industrial heritage to be constructed? What are the impediments for public industrial histories? This special issue of *The Public Historian* comprises five articles on places with very different kinds of deindustrialization processes and public memories of the past: the industrial cities of Dortmund and Glasgow in comparison, Detroit as globally perhaps the most prominent example of a postindustrial landscape, three industrial regions in Australia, the polycentric Ruhr as Europe's former industrial heartland, and finally the Jiu Valley of post-socialist Romania.

The articles in this issue are primarily concerned with the relationship between historical culture, in particular industrial heritage, and representations of place identity. They are interested in the agents constructing industrial heritage—comprising private, civil-society, and public institutions. They also ask about the uses of industrial heritage for identity constructions of regions and cities under conditions of deindustrialization since the 1960s. The various authors suggest that such institutional perspective does not work without also taking a history-of-emotions perspective, which is important when analyzing the reasons for industrial heritage movements, their institutionalization, and the way heritage is perceived and represented. This becomes especially clear in Kaeleigh Herstad's work on Detroit as well as in the article on the Jiu Valley, which is written by memory activists in Romania.

The industrial past might be “stigmatized,” as Ralph Richter shows in his work on Dortmund and Glasgow, and perceived as a burden rather than something worth being preserved and represented as formative to the hometown or region. Both Dortmund, with its vast coal mining and steel industry, and Glasgow, with its shipping and textile industries as well as nearby coalfields, have been significant places of industrial culture and experienced large-scale deindustrialization processes in the twentieth century. Their industrial legacies, however, play very different roles in each case. Richter found that Dortmund officially represents its industrial past in a positive light and preserves its built heritage, whereas Glasgow conceals it for a different kind of city branding that has little respect for the industrialism that has shaped its built environment. He argues that the different public approaches to the industrial past correlate with the local citizens' attitudes, which have not simply been dominated from above by marketing strategies and political elites. While Glaswegians perceive industrial history as a “social stigma,” Richter believes that Dortmunders' appreciation for industrial heritage is “authentic,” as it reflects the collective identity of people in this city.

Herstad's research encourages us to employ a differentiated view of social groups within a single deindustrializing city. In Detroit, the center of the American car industry, some groups have been affected much more severely by

³³ For a global comparison of industrial heritage in coal- and steel-producing regions, see Wicke, Berger, and Golombek, *Industrial Heritage and Regional Identity*.

deindustrialization than others. Deindustrialization, she shows, may stimulate “urban renewal” and open new spaces for creative middle classes while at the same time lead to racial discrimination and displacement. In recent years, media representations of Detroit have hovered between polarized images of “death” and “rebirth.” The city’s urban renewal has been staged as a model for deindustrialized cities, while the tremendous population decline has left vast areas of the city in decay. The city’s identity thus remains highly ambivalent. It is witnessing both the large-scale destruction of urban spaces through blight removal strategies as well as spatial appreciation in the form of intangible “heritagization” and reclamation. Importantly, drawing on interviews from citizens, Herstad sheds light on the disproportionate suffering of Detroit’s African American majority under these transformative developments and thus suggests that we need to pay greater attention to the racial dimensions of deindustrialization.

Erik Eklund’s comparison focuses on three regions in Australia that have been shaped by coal mining and accompanying heavy industry: Newcastle, Wollongong, and the Latrobe Valley. These regions, Eklund shows, have industrialized, deindustrialized, and sometimes reindustrialized in very different ways and at different times. In the official heritage discourse of the three places, however, industrial heritage has never enjoyed high status. Although industrial heritage activism does exist across the country, it remains rather exceptional in many parts of Australia. Against the continuing industrial present and visions of a postindustrial future, Eklund argues, “the industrial past is a largely untapped cultural resource.” Very recent campaigns for “heritagization” of currently closing power stations in the brown coal region of Latrobe might be able to manipulate successfully Australia’s historical culture.

Unlike Australia, Germany has developed a strong tradition in industrial heritage conservation. Stefan Berger, Christian Wicke, and Jana Golombek show that the industrial past has become an inescapable and fundamental component of the identity of the Ruhr region, with its numerous museums and heritage sites. Virtually all public images of the Ruhr incorporate associations with the industrial past. The problem in this region, thus, is not the absence of care for its heritage but rather its touristification and commercialization, which has impeded the development of a critical historical culture. Starting in the late 1960s as an impulse from a few people concerned about the region’s industrial aesthetics, the institutionalization of the Ruhr’s industrial heritage movement over the last decades became driven by the ideal of constructing a positive regional identity based on a sanitized industrial past. Narratives on the exploitation of labor and nature remain largely absent in the local historical culture.

This, again, stands in sharp contrast to the situation in post-socialist countries, where the industrial past is often neglected. Dragoş Dascălu, Ilinca Păun Constanţinescu, and Cristina Sucală offer an activist’s perspective on the Romanian Jiu Valley, which had been heavily industrialized by coal mining until the collapse of the Communist regime and rapidly deindustrialized towards the end of the

twentieth century. Their focus is on the Petriila Coal Mine, which only closed in 2015. Local artists and architects, including the authors, developed plans to prevent its demolition and to place buildings on the site under heritage protection. The authors illuminate the complex process in the construction of industrial heritage, the underlying “identity conflicts” among the former workers, the alienation of the local administration from the local population, and their own activities in the region.

The editors of this special issue all have scholarly roots in the Ruhr region of Germany. Stefan Berger moved to a chair in social history and the directorship of the Institute for Social Movements at the Ruhr University Bochum from the University of Manchester in 2011. While working at Cardiff University and the University of South Wales he had already developed an interest in the comparative history of regions of heavy industry. After 2011 he was successful in attracting a string of grants to investigate the memory politics of regions of heavy industry undergoing deindustrialization in global comparative perspective. One of these projects, funded by the Regionalverband Ruhr and the federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia, also included Christian Wicke as a postdoctoral fellow and Jana Golombek as a doctoral student. Together they organized several conferences and workshops on the themes of structural change, industrial heritage, historical memory, and regions of heavy industry—always in comparative and transnational perspective. These activities resulted in the formation of a thriving global network of researchers in the industrial heritage of regions of heavy industry that has been exploring diverse aspects of the relationship between regional and class identities and between structural economic change and memories of an industrial past. This special issue is one of the results of this network’s ongoing cooperation.