



Industrial legacy, contemporary views: narratives on industrial heritage and its development in Czechia

Vladan Hruška, Cristina Merciu, Pavel Raška, Jan Píša, Zdeňka Smutná, Tomáš Sýkora, Michaela Štěbetáková, Petr Hlaváček, Silvie Rita Kučerová & Eva Nedorostová

To cite this article: Vladan Hruška, Cristina Merciu, Pavel Raška, Jan Píša, Zdeňka Smutná, Tomáš Sýkora, Michaela Štěbetáková, Petr Hlaváček, Silvie Rita Kučerová & Eva Nedorostová (13 Nov 2025): Industrial legacy, contemporary views: narratives on industrial heritage and its development in Czechia, *European Planning Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/09654313.2025.2585058](https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2025.2585058)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2025.2585058>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 13 Nov 2025.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)











[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

Industrial legacy, contemporary views: narratives on industrial heritage and its development in Czechia

Vladan Hruška ^a, Cristina Merciu ^b, Pavel Raška ^a, Jan Píša ^a, Zdeňka Smutná ^a, Tomáš Sýkora ^c, Michaela Štěbetáková ^a, Petr Hlaváček ^c, Silvie Rita Kučerová ^a and Eva Nedorostová ^a

^aDepartment of Geography, Faculty of Science, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Ústí nad Labem, Czechia; ^bFaculty of Geography, Interdisciplinary Center of Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania; ^cFaculty of Social and Economic Studies, Department of Regional Development and Public Administration, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Ústí nad Labem, Czechia

ABSTRACT

Industrial heritage is often highlighted in development strategies as an asset that can be valorized and thus contribute to the redevelopment of old industrial regions. However, the inclusion of industrial heritage in development efforts is based on a specific constellation of perceptions and expectations of local or regional stakeholders, which ultimately transform these efforts into newly revitalized places. Based on semi-structured interviews with representatives of local and regional authorities, traditional industrial companies, NGOs and cultural institutions in an old industrial region in Czechia, we identified three different narratives relevant to industrial heritage: the pragmatic, the problematizing, and the revitalization narrative. Our findings highlight the different perceptions and expectations of the development potential of industrial heritage that need to be taken into account when incentivizing transformative efforts in old industrial regions. While this plurality can generate new insights and ideas, the lack of alignment prevents the emergence of a system-level agency at the regional level that could reshape industrial culture and integrate industrial heritage into a coherent development strategy.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 4 November 2024
Revised 30 October 2025
Accepted 31 October 2025

KEYWORDS

Industrial heritage; old industrial region; narrative; path-development

1. Introduction

In recent decades, many regions that played an essential role in European industrial growth have experienced decline, resulting in social, economic and environmental challenges. These challenges particularly manifest in old industrial regions (OIRs), which are characterized by oversized and obsolete infrastructure, urbanism and landscapes that have been heavily influenced by industrial activities. On the other hand, industrial

CONTACT Vladan Hruška  vladan.hruska@ujep.cz  Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Ústí nad Labem, Pasteurova 15, 40096, Czechia

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

sites and artefacts are important sources of regional identity, place attachment and ‘industrial culture’ of local society (Collazo 2022; Ilovan and Mutică 2023; Harfst, Sandriester, and Fischer 2021). Previously undervalued and neglected buildings and artefacts are gradually being recognized as industrial heritage, which is ‘considered worthy of cultural preservation and to be passed on to future generations’ (Konsa 2013, 124).

Therefore, current development efforts in OIRs assume that reconfiguration of the industrial culture by integrating the adaptive reuse of former industrial sites and mobilizing industrial heritage can contribute to a complex transition and a new development path (Květoň and Blažek 2018). The key question for urban and regional planners is thus how to initiate processes that transform industrial (brownfield) sites and heritage into areas of interest for new residents, visitors and tourists (Harfst, Sandriester, and Fischer 2021; Peira, Bonadonna, and Beltramo 2023). This process is usually accompanied by conflicts due to competing interests regarding how the site should be used (Rofe 2004). Consequently, the transformation of industrial heritage requires a deep understanding of a set of cultural values (Merciu et al. 2022; Wu et al. 2022), expectations and heritage discourses (Birkeland 2017; Bockelmann 2023). It also requires consideration of the quality of institutions involved in the revitalization of old industrial sites (Tideman 2021).

These elements are shaped by, and shape, a specific local or regional industrial culture (Harfst, Wust, and Nadler 2018), and vary across territorial contexts (Xie 2015; Merciu et al. 2022) and institutional domains. For this reason, exploring and analysing perceptions of industrial heritage is essential in order to understand the diverse and often contrasting narratives. However, there is a continuing lack of contextually sensitive studies providing information on the perceptions and expectations of local stakeholders regarding the future of OIRs. Against this background, we present key findings from a survey of perceptions of industrial heritage in one of Europe’s most prominent OIRs – the Ústí nad Labem Region in Czechia. The regional setting of our research is motivated by the current Just Transition goals in the European Union, in which the Ústí nad Labem Region is one of the worst performers in terms of social and economic variables (ESPON 2020).

The survey is aimed specifically at representatives of local and regional authorities, as well as managers of regional industrial companies, NGOs and cultural institutions. Through semi-structured interviews, we explore the perception of industrial heritage in this region and examine the attitudes of those who could potentially help to create a new development path. The research questions are: *How is the concept of industrial heritage perceived? What role does industrial heritage play in redevelopment efforts from the perspective of different actors?* Following on from this question, *what opportunities exist for the better integration of industrial heritage in regional development policies?*

2. Industrial culture, heritage, and re-development of old industrial regions

Industrial culture is a complex concept that plays an important role in building the image and identity of OIRs and towns (Bosák, Nováček, and Slach 2018; Glorius and Manz 2018; Bole 2021). More broadly, it refers to the extent to which a community identifies with industrial elements, such as informal institutions, material heritage, working-class

values, tacit knowledge, and shared experiences or stories (Bole 2021). In public discourse, however, the term ‘industrial culture’ most often refers to aspects of industrial heritage, such as the preservation and reuse of old industrial sites, landscapes and industry traditions (Görmar et al. 2019).

Unlike industrial culture, industrial heritage was initially defined with reference to its tangible aspects, such as buildings, infrastructure, landscapes and their preservation and reuse (Bosák, Nováček, and Slach 2018; Bole 2021; Harfst, Wust, and Nadler 2018; Glorius and Manz 2018; Görmar and Harfst 2019). This approach was also reflected in older definitions of industrial heritage, as evidenced by the Charter for Industrial Heritage (TICCIH 2003). Later, it was redefined to encompass the intangible aspects related to the components of daily life and living conditions created by industrialization, including attitudes, values, traditions, ways of thinking, solidarity and social practices (Harfst, Wust, and Nadler 2018; Bole 2021; Bosák, Nováček, and Slach 2018; Görmar and Harfst 2019; Görmar 2024; Kozina, Bole, and Tiran 2021). Official definitions of industrial heritage also highlight its intangible nature. Examples include the newer definition by TICCIH and ICOMOS (The Dublin Principles, ICOMOS 2011) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO General Conference (Lu, Liu, and Wang 2020). This paradigmatic shift reflects the fact that, in practice, it is impossible to completely separate the tangible and intangible aspects of a heritage; it is primarily the intangible aspects that give the tangible heritage its significance (Ilovan and Mutică 2023).

However, despite the apparent overlap in the definitions of industrial culture and heritage, the two concepts differ significantly. Industrial culture is a broader term that encompasses heritage, as it forms the general cultural milieu of industrial cities and regions (Görmar et al. 2019). It comprises memories, traditions, cultures, and forms of local knowledge that constitute heritage values. It generates the social and cultural processes and practices involved in heritage use (Oevermann and Mieg 2015). Xie (2015) goes further, suggesting that heritage is the result of the patrimonialization (or heritagization – e.g. Bessière 2013) of culture, including industrial culture. In this process, the value of a given industrial element is recognized, protected, and passed on to future generations collectively (Marcondes 2024).

Bole (2021) distinguishes four theoretical perspectives on industrial culture: sociological, anthropological, institutional and evolutionary. Given the focus of our paper, however, we will concentrate on the latter two. From an institutional perspective, culture encompasses social norms, traditions and conventions, as well as beliefs, values, and rules established by various institutions at the collective level. These can have both enabling and constraining effects (Mathias et al. 2015), thereby shaping the social actions and practices (including those with economic aspects) of individuals. The concentration of certain (industrial) economic activities shapes socio-cultural dependencies, meaning industry influences the cultural codes and identities of workers and communities (Bole, Goluža, and Kozina 2024).

Influenced by evolutionary approaches in regional development studies, the focus has expanded from institutions to the actors that shape them. Scholars have therefore focused on human agency, i.e. the ability of individuals or collectives to change local/regional development trajectories (Grillitsch, Rekers, and Sotarauta 2019; Bole, Goluža, and Kozina 2024), commonly referred to as change agency. However, human agency can also reproduce and maintain existing structures that prevent change (Píša and Hruška

2024a; Görmar 2024). From this perspective, industrial culture could generate new development paths or hinder their emergence due to cognitive lock-ins that are typical of OIRs (Hassink 2010; Bole 2021).

An OIR is defined as an area whose former economic potential and prosperity associated with economic specialization in old industries has been exhausted (Hassink and Shin 2005). This has led to the degradation of the environment and public spaces (the emergence of brownfield sites), economic decline resulting in labour market distortions and community disintegration (Szczepański and Ślęzak-Tazbir 2007), and further political and discursive peripheralization and stigmatization (Copus 2001). These problems and the question of how to redevelop OIRs have often been addressed by national regulations, including industrial diversification strategies or social welfare policies, but these have usually proved ineffective (Danson 2005; Helms and Cumbers 2006).

Thus, planning approaches and research have refocused on local and regional assets that can be utilized to promote the development of OIRs and mitigate the growing economic and social polarization between regions (Lang 2015). In this way, regional industrial culture, which has endured long after the industrial activities ceased (Bole, Goluža, and Kozina 2024), could be mobilized. On a day-to-day basis, it adds value to local (post-)industrial assets by invoking the memory of local communities through the physical presence of these assets in the landscape. Reusing these sites can remind people of their own lives, while younger generations and visitors can discover their industrial history. Negatively perceived brownfields can be transformed into industrial heritage, which can contribute significantly to individual and community identity (Birkeland 2017; Harfst, Sandriester, and Fischer 2021). Furthermore, their valorization can contribute to job creation, improve the quality of public spaces, and facilitate the reimagining of negatively perceived OIRs (Oevermann and Mieg 2015).

Conversely, utilizing industrial heritage for the development of OIR is by no means guaranteed. The key question is how to transform individual agency – individual recognition of the value of a particular industrial artefact – into collective agency translating care for industrial heritage into broader development strategies and new development paths. In the context of industrial heritage, Nettleingham (2018) highlights that decisions about what to preserve depend on the local context, in which different meanings and interpretations may arise. Simply considering heritage as ‘anything that people want to protect’ (Howard 2003, 1) means that it will always depend on who, where, how, for whom and why its historical and cultural value should be preserved and developed. Xie (2015) argues that developing industrial heritage sites requires first securing the cultural recognition or valorization of brownfield sites as heritage sites in order to create and legitimize a new set of cultural meanings. Local residents in particular need to recognize that old industries represent a set of values to be shared, preserved and protected (Xie, Lee, and Wong 2019). However, this crucial task is under-researched (Xie, Lee, and Wong 2019), and little is known about the specific circumstances that lead to industrial sites being recognized as valuable rather than as a burden (Mérai and Kulikov 2021) or as a resource rather than as trash (Cossons 2012).

There are some general factors that influence the capacity of a community, place or region for cultural valorization. With increasing decentralization, regions gain more influence over how they address their development challenges, reflecting their unique cultural and historical context (Nettleingham 2018). Recognition of industrial heritage

usually involves a variety of stakeholders and interests (He et al. 2019; Peira, Bonadonna, and Beltramo 2023). Howard and Pinder (2003) suggest that the heritage process involves owners, visitors, governments, and research institutions with competing ideas about the place in question (see also Nettleingham 2018). Consequently, the incorporation of industrial heritage into development initiatives is underpinned by power dynamics that permeate various social, cultural, and economic relationships (Dicks 2000; cited in Nettleingham 2018).

From this point of view and in the context of the evolutionary approach to industrial culture, OIRs need collective agencies that recognize the potential of industrial heritage and incorporate it into new development paths. The capacities of relevant actors to act or change are based on their personal characteristics, values, motivations, economic resources, knowledge and social capital (Grillitsch and Sotarauta 2020; Píša and Hruška 2024a). These capacities must then be aligned with the those of other stakeholders. For any local development strategy to succeed, common goals and visions must be established among national, regional, and local actors (Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, and Tomaney 2007). This collective action can take place at different levels, particularly the system (agencies of various actors aimed at improving the local or regional milieu) and organizational level (agencies aimed at improving the functioning of an organization, such as company, local, and regional authority) (Blažek, Kadlec, and Květoň 2024).

3. Study area

The Ústí nad Labem Region in north-western Czechia is a case study for understanding the perception of industrial heritage (see Figure 1). This region was one of the centres of industrialization in Czechia. Significant economic growth began here in the mid-nineteenth century, thanks to cheap energy sources and good transport links. Apart from lignite mining, the region's key industries became textiles, steel, chemicals, glass and

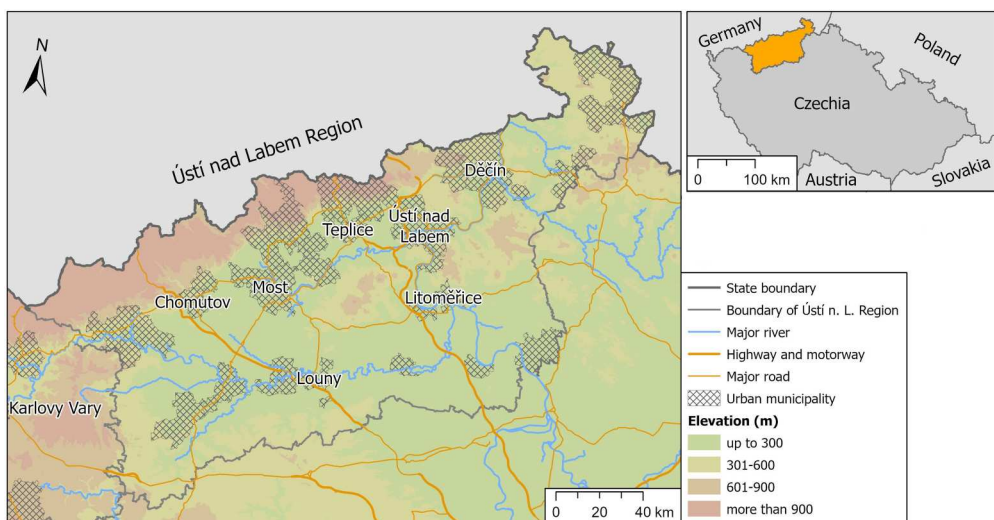


Figure 1. Location of the Ústí nad Labem Region. Source: own elaboration, ARC ČR 500–3.3 version.

porcelain, making it the most industrialized part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Koutský 2011).

Although the twentieth century brought many changes, the industrial character of the region was preserved. The expulsion of Czech Germans after the World War II led to an ethnic, social, and class re-composition, which had a severe impact on the regional economy. Private entrepreneurial activity was then definitively stopped by the total socialization and nationalization of economic activities within the centrally planned economy. The ruling socialist regime strongly supported lignite mining and energy-intensive industries, such as metallurgical, chemical, and power industries. This significantly impacted the region's landscape and settlements.

The collapse of socialism in 1989 marked the beginning of a period of post-socialist economic restructuring. It was difficult to find a new economic orientation based on market principles due to the existence of large, inflexible enterprises and a strong dependence on old industries. Consequently, the region experienced serious social and economic issues, such as high unemployment, the social exclusion of the Roma population and brain drain. However, the unemployment rate decreased to the current value of 6.5% (May 2025 – MPSV 2025) due to the partial re-industrialization of the regional economy based on foreign direct investment (Koutský, Slach, and Boruta 2011). Nevertheless, the problems of social exclusion and brain drain still persist.

These challenges are reflected in the poor state of public spaces and the large number of derelict sites. For their revitalization or transformation into industrial heritage, a combination of different regional, national, and EU funds can be used; however, none of these funds are specifically designed for the revitalization of industrial heritage. Furthermore, new investors have so far preferred greenfield sites, and therefore local, regional, and state institutions often have to intervene in the preparation of brownfield sites in order to reduce their revitalization costs (Klusáček, Dvořák, and Trojan 2023). Even so, economic, technical, geographical, legislative, ownership or logistical conditions pose significant complications (Hruška et al. 2022).

The low number of sensibly revitalized buildings in the region could be explained not only by the lack of financial resources, but also by low level of institutional support from local or regional administrative bodies. Blažek, Kadlec, and Květoň (2024) argue that the quality of system-level agencies at the local (town) level varies considerably in the Ústí nad Labem Region. At the regional level, however, this type of agency is rather weak, also due to the lower average level of education, the lack of a common regional identity and the weak cooperation between regional actors (Píša 2023). The public authorities that drive these agencies rarely work with or promote the rich industrial heritage, so all successful revitalizations in the region are rather the result of private initiatives (Hruška et al. 2022).

4. Material and methods

Our overall research design can be described as a qualitative, interpretive case study utilizing semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis (Stake 1995). We conducted qualitative research focused on interpreting phenomena in the specific territorial context of OIR. The main methods of data collection were semi-structured exploratory interviews and the applied analytical technique was thematic coding, which clustered respondents' perspectives into different narratives.

In order to investigate the perceptions of industrial heritage, we chose to survey key stakeholders who have a close relationship with industrial heritage or the development of ‘their’ old industrial towns. The list of potential stakeholders builds upon the previous steps of our research activities. Firstly, the individuals and organizations that use or own industrial sites were selected as interview partners (IPs). Then the main public administration organizations, development agencies, and NGOs operating in the region were included. In order to delve deeply into the industrial heritage, we rejected from the list the development actors from rural areas, and we focused on IPs whose activities are concentrated in the most industrialized areas of the region. In particular, we selected the main users of traditional and larger industrial sites in a variant selection to cover different areas of economic activities located in these sites.

Between November 2019 and February 2020, 29 semi-structured exploratory interviews were conducted. The final group of IPs included (see [Table 1](#)):

- 10 representatives of traditional industrial companies or their successors who used the traditional industrial sites or developed a traditional industrial product or trademark;
- 8 representatives of local and regional public administration (small and medium-sized towns, Ústí nad Labem Regional Authority) – mostly local and regional officials responsible for local or regional development;

Table 1. Overview of interview partners.

ID	Data source	Organization	Gender
1	notes	traditional company, food and chemical industry	F
2	notes	traditional company, glass industry	M
3	notes	retail company in a revitalized brownfield	F
4	notes	inbound travel agency	M
5	audio	local authority	M
6	audio	chamber of commerce	M
7	notes	local authority	M
8	audio	local authority	F, M
9	audio	state agency for economic development	F
10	audio	NGO	M
11	audio	local authority	M
12	audio	traditional company, machinery	F, M
13	audio	local museum	M
14	audio	traditional company, chinaware production	M
15	audio	local library	M
16	audio	regional authority	M, M
17	audio	traditional company, beverage industry	M
18	audio	NGO	F
19	audio	local museum	M
20	audio	traditional company, production of fabricated metal products	M
21	audio	local authority	M
22	audio	local authority	F
23	audio	state agency for economic development	F
24	audio	regional agency for economic development	M
25	audio	traditional company, machinery	M
26	audio	local authority	M
27	audio	state owned enterprise for land reclamation, local branch	M
28	audio	state owned enterprise for land reclamation, local branch	M
29	audio	traditional company, food industry	M

Source: authors.

- 6 representatives of regional and state development agencies and companies (their regional offices) with focus on economic development and post-mining land reclamation;
- 5 representatives of regional NGOs and cultural institutions (e.g. museums, libraries) dealing with industrial heritage or local history in different ways.

The interviews lasted between 20 and 70 min. Most of the IPs agreed to be recorded, only in five cases written notes were taken during the interviews. The trained interviewers (members of our research team) followed the interview guideline based on the following topics: perception of industrial heritage, evaluation of the role of old industrial buildings and areas in the current urban fabric of the respective cities and opinions on how to approach them in the future from the perspective of local development. In this respect, we sought the IPs' opinion on the importance of industrial heritage for the development of a given place or region. Although the IPs could build on their pre-defined definition (which could also be based on intangible artefacts – see below), very often the attention was focused on the old industrial buildings in a given place or region. We followed the analytical technique of thematic coding (see, e.g. Flick 2006), which makes it possible to capture the distribution of different perspectives on the phenomenon under study. The codes of the IPs' statements were then analysed and clustered into narratives, which are presented in the following section.

5. Results

5.1. Perception of industrial heritage

Many IPs emphasized the intangible dimension of industrial heritage, most frequently mentioning a specific product brand, company, or the name of the company founder. In the latter case, however, they mostly referred to the pre-socialist period, a time when private entrepreneurship was still possible and was defined in the region mainly by the German business elite. IPs also tended to refer to the specific industrial know-how of the people, the industrial tradition. These perceptions were related to the production process, e.g. in the case of traditional porcelain production:

In the case of industry, I also see those patents and industrial processes that were actually invented here in our country, or that were invented by people in our factories. I would say that certain know-how is a very important part of industrial heritage. (IP14)

Similarly, the skills of local employees who have extensive experience of working in the industry were identified as industrial heritage: 'From my point of view, it's the people who have been associated with the industry, as there's a certain mentality that has been historically prominent in this region. I would dare to protect that as well' (IP19). Such an aspect of industrial heritage then appears as something that is still alive, that can clearly be exploited by local businesses: '... there is an industrial tradition of the region, so in my opinion the employers have something to build on, and there are people who understand it' (IP21).

However, the intangible industrial heritage has not always been perceived positively. In the context of the economic restructuring of the Ústí nad Labem Region, which is still

fresh in the minds of the region's inhabitants and which has resulted in the region lagging behind other Czech regions, a reference was made to the current problematic social and economic structures. These are seen as a legacy of the socialist mode of regulation that prioritized heavy and energy-intensive industries. 'I think also the social composition, the people and the mentality and the mood that is here – I'd also call that an industrial heritage' (IP27). Such an attitude then influences the everyday construction of public spaces as IP26 argues:

... that social structure. Low education in general – these people got, like, elementary education, so I think their interests in the area are completely different to those of university graduates. So, I think that's one reason for the low interest in public affairs or what's happening in the public spaces.

With regard to the material aspects of industrial heritage, the IPs mainly highlighted famous regional products such as soap, glass, porcelain, as well as primary resources, such as mineral water and lignite.

For example, the production of flat glass in Teplice: although it doesn't have a long tradition, it was actually the first factory in the Eastern Bloc that was able to produce flat glass to a high standard and this production has been maintained and will continue to develop. (IP14)

The IPs also mentioned industrial buildings and areas, as well as the former residences of factory owners and managers. 'I think that a number of extremely interesting buildings – old factories that are now empty and in poor condition – can be described as industrial heritage. If you drive through the Děčín region, there are many dilapidated but beautiful factory buildings' (IP23).

The entire physical infrastructure that shaped the layout and urban design of the cities was also considered to be industrial heritage. 'I think that thanks to the industry, we have very good transport links and rail connections. The Elbe River isn't used that much anymore, but it certainly has potential' (IP26). In the extreme case of the town of Most, the entire town was defined as an industrial heritage site, as the entire historic town was demolished and rebuilt to make way for open-cast mining. 'What did it bring? A new town, but a bad one. That's the legacy on which the old Most fell' (IP28).

The infrastructure associated with industrial production also causes some problems. The IPs' statements reveal an ambivalent perception of industrial structures, viewing them as valuable historical assets in need of significant investment for restoration or revitalization.

We have amazing industrial buildings and neighbourhoods, but we also have many brown-field sites, contamination and transport structures and corridors that make it impossible for us to access the rivers' (IP18). Similarly, 'The Setuza chemical factory is built in the centre of the city, so it's kind of like weird. When people come here, they say, 'Jesus, where are we?' But again, it's a legacy of the industry. (IP24)

On the other hand, lakes created after the closure of open-pit mines are a specific and positively perceived type of industrial heritage. There are quite a few of these lakes in the Ústí nad Labem region, and more are being created.

The land reclamation process and man's ability to change the landscape on such a large scale fascinate me. I know it's a necessary evil, but I'm just amazed by the results. If you compare pictures of the landscape before and after the mining and land reclamation, it's amazing. (IP23)

IP9 continues: ‘For example, I really like Lake Milada, which would not have been created without mining’.

5.2. Narratives of industrial heritage and local development

Just as there are different perceptions and approaches to defining industrial heritage, so too are there different narratives associated with its future and its contribution to local development. In this respect, we sought IPs’ views on the importance of industrial heritage for the development of a particular place or region.

5.2.1. Pragmatic narrative

The pragmatic narrative is most prevalent among IPs who represent traditional regional businesses and regional development agencies. Here, industrial heritage is seen as a driver of economic prosperity. The contribution of industry is emphasized in terms of job creation, generation of gross domestic product generation, production expertise, skills, and experience.

I have to say that for me, everything I’m building in the company now is industrial heritage. This includes the goodwill for our company, sustainability for the future, and the fact that we employ local people. After all, Děčín has 50,000 inhabitants and our company employs 600 people, so we are a significant employer. (IP20)

Similarly, IP12 also recognizes the economic importance of the industrial sites near the town of Kadaň: ‘Well, in Kadaň we have, we had, four power plants: Tušimice I, Tušimice II, Pruněřov I and Pruněřov II. So, a lot of people are employed in these power plants. The same goes for the lignite mines’. From this perspective, then, developing industrial heritage means maintaining the company’s relevance, which in turn supports the prosperity of the places, as IP26 suggests:

I recall the two strongest brands, Spolchemie and Unipetrol, which confirms to me, in my opinion, that the chemical industry has a future. At the same time, it’s possible to have such a chemical industry here in our region or, at least, companies of national or at least of supra-regional importance. It can be crucial for the region in terms of employment and infrastructure.

On the other hand, even here, the IPs were aware that the prosperity of the companies in question could not be taken for granted. They recognized the risks associated with intensifying competition in the global market, especially in the production of porcelain products, and the need of transition to cleaner production with a higher added value.

Our industrial heritage is a bit like a Danaë gift that we must deal with. At the same time, we must motivate them and suggest the direction they should take. The aim is for them to bring these trends to the region, and even the chemical factory should find a production process that benefits society without harming nature. (IP24)

5.2.2. Problematizing narrative

In contrast to the previous one, the problematizing narrative dominates among development agencies and local and regional authorities. It is mainly directed at the industrial

infrastructure, which is now perceived as a local development issue and as a key element shaping social structures and place attachment. In the case of Most, the town discussed above, its new urban landscape is seen as one of the causes for the current social issues.

The industrial heritage has probably caused Most to suffer more than other Czech towns. It led to the destruction of the town and the construction of a new town with a modern urban design for the time, featuring plenty of green spaces but with flats in unpopular prefabricated houses. Mining also led to the destruction of many surrounding villages and the resettlement of their inhabitants into the urban areas. Before 1989, some compensation was offered in the form of better-paid jobs. Today, however, this is no longer the case, and all that remains are the well-known and widely discussed social problems. (IP7)

The industrial infrastructure is oversized yet underutilized. It is seen not only as a source of a negative image of places (IP16), but also as a barrier to mobility for local people: 'We have inherited some restrictions on mobility in the urban landscape. We've inherited the fact that many of the industrial sites are overdeveloped' (IP18).

In this narrative, the terms 'industrial heritage' and 'brownfield sites' are closely linked, and public administration representatives in the region pay relatively close attention to them. From this point of view, a fairly common development measure proposed by this group of IPs was the demolition of brownfield sites, including historically valuable industrial buildings. Numerous subsidy programmes have supported this, as IP6 points out.

5.2.3. *Revitalization narrative*

The proponents of the revitalization narrative are primarily representatives of the third sector, such as regional museums and non-profit organizations, as well as producers of consumer goods (porcelain, mineral water) and a few development agencies and local authorities. This narrative tends to promote an agency that would encourage the revitalization of the region's industrial heritage.

One of the IPs suggests that there are many undervalued industrial artefacts in the region that would be worthy of revitalization:

We have hundreds of these old, beautiful factories in the district. ... I think this is one of the few areas where we need to work harder to revitalise these old factories and put them to new uses. That's what's happening all over the world, with them being turned into housing and schools. (IP13)

Some IPs also point out that the basis for successful work with industrial heritage requires raising awareness and educating of local people about the regional industrial history. This requires fundamental changes, which can be achieved through a formal teaching process. IP17 suggests that: 'We should simply create a special programme for our regional education schemes, where the topic 'The industrial heritage of the region and its values' would be added to the curriculum'. This could be complemented by the cooperation with local companies and media coverage of their products. 'Perhaps it would be worthwhile to inform local people about what the factories are doing and how their products contribute to society, in order to promote these companies more effectively and demonstrate their value to the community' (IP10).

Together with initiatives of other regional development stakeholders, these steps could contribute to the necessary change in the region's external image, which is currently

rather negative. The aim is not to create a completely new identity, but rather to build on the region's existing industrial image. 'I'm not saying that we should be proud of the chemical factory or Setuza ... but I am saying: let's not deny our history, let's build on it and let's develop it, but in the way, we want' (IP24).

From this point of view, the region could benefit from the successful projects that have been carried out so far. Reclamation projects following opencast lignite mining are often mentioned by IPs. 'I have a vision of an attractive tourist landscape that has undergone industrial devastation and subsequent land reclamation' (IP7). However, successful revitalizations of industrial buildings are sporadic in the region. One IP pointed to an example of this:

In Děčín, for instance, they converted a brewery into a shopping centre, preserving some of the original features. When you walk through the centre it's not just a new building made of glass and concrete; it's full of history, and it looks better from the outside. It's not just a flat box. (IP9)

5.3. Challenges in linking industrial heritage and regional development

Despite some distinct differences, all the narratives expressed a certain degree of scepticism regarding the extent to which industrial heritage can or will be utilized for regional development. These sceptical attitudes are based not only on problematic ownership arrangements and increased reconstruction costs, particularly for listed industrial buildings, as in the case of the historic brewery in the town of Bílina (IP8), but also on other factors. Representatives of traditional industries, such as ceramics, are concerned about the decline of traditional expertise due to increased competition resulting from the global integration of the regional economy and the emergence of new industries in the region associated with the expansion of multinational companies, particularly in the automotive industry.

Basically, the companies in the industrial zones have taken over the engineers from the ZKL company. We also have an industrial zone here, which is dominated by the automotive industry. These companies have sucked the people out of this traditional sector. (IP11)

In the context of takeovers by multinationals and owners from other regions of Czechia, as well as the downward shift in global production networks, the IPs highlight another issue: the lack of motivation among companies to engage with the region.

I think these companies could take a bit more responsibility for the region. I understand that everyone wants to make a profit. That's the purpose of business. But on the other hand, at least in times when they are doing well, I think they could be more involved in the region that they are exploiting. (IP21).

Similarly, IP4 said

Local companies don't make much effort to present themselves or help the region. They have greater capacity. What they are doing now is more of a PR joke – it's a shame. ... The owners are not from the region; they have no connection to it. What is important to them is money, not the region itself. Besides, the people here are less educated and oriented, they accept the situation as it is - there is no pressure from the community.

The last argument also highlights the need for local communities and authorities to play a greater role in the revitalization of industrial heritage. For example, they could promote

industrial heritage more effectively. One notable case is the relocation of the Gothic church in Most [it was transported on rails some 800 metres away due to the expansion of open-cast mining – authors’ note]:

I have always regretted that we do not promote the relocation of the church. Not the church itself - that’s a monument in itself - but the fact of the move. That’s really unique, and we sell it very little. (IP23)

Secondly, the public administration fails to act as a mediator between the interests of businesses and citizens. ‘There is no mediator here to bring these things together. I think the local government, the region and the city should be doing more. I definitely don’t think they are doing enough’ (IP27). The link between local government and business is weak, and cities are poorly informed about the local business environment.

The city has the tools [to activate businesses for participation on the revitalisation of public spaces and industrial buildings – authors’ note]. The fact that they are not used is another matter. I think there’s a great deal of alibis, apathy and disinterest. ... I’ve done some research and they [city officials - authors’ note] don’t even know who owns the industrial buildings. They’re not in contact with those people, and that seems to me to be a huge deficiency. (IP18)

6. Discussion

Despite the fact that the population of the Ústí nad Labem Region exhibits a relatively strong industrial culture (at least in terms of the intense perception of its industrial past; cf. Hruška et al. 2022), heritagization agency in the region is weak. This may be because, unlike the existing literature (e.g. Bosák, Nováček, and Slach 2018; Harfst, Wust, and Nadler 2018), the narratives of regional stakeholders in the Ústí nad Labem region emphasize negative aspects. In some cases, the public discourse surrounding the term ‘heritage’ (in Czech ‘dědictví’) takes on negative connotations, such as being obsolete and unsuccessful and being strictly connected to old industrial sites (brownfields). This contradicts other definitions which state that heritage is something that acquires collective recognition (e.g. Howard 2003; Xie 2015). This negative connotation stems from the region’s specific industrial culture, which was strongly shaped by elements of socialist industrialization and, to a certain extent, the subsequent economic transformation. This had a significant impact on urban planning, the environment, and the social structure of the population. Consequently, there is a lack of input into the individual/collective agency attributing positive value to a given industrial artefact. This input can be defined as an emotional capital. Current research on change agency and regional development (Píša and Hruška 2024b; Hannemann, Henn, and Schäfer 2024) has shown that emotions or emotional capital embedded in people’s motivations was a key resource for implementing change. In other words, while actors may possess cultural, social, and economic capital, it is emotional capital that is necessary to trigger change in a given place (Píša and Hruška 2024b).

Furthermore, the narratives of industrial heritage held by regional actors were highly diverse. This can be attributed to the ongoing lack of discussion surrounding tangible and intangible industrial heritage at both the national and regional levels. As Nettleingham (2018) argues, the definition of industrial heritage can be extremely subjective, depending

on who defines it and for what purposes. Based on these definitions and perceptions of its potential contribution to regional development, we identified three distinct industrial heritage narratives (Table 2).

Corporate stakeholders largely adopted a pragmatic approach to industrial heritage. They perceived it as a regionally specific opportunity space (Grillitsch and Sotarauta 2020) – as the know-how of the local workforce, production facilities and a source of jobs. This idea was also identified by stakeholders in other countries (He et al. 2019; Peira, Bonadonna, and Beltramo 2023). From their perspective, developing industrial heritage meant improving their employees' skills and increasing economic performance, thus advocating a more growth-oriented approach. They did not see their production facilities as industrial heritage in the first place. Second, the problematizing narrative often emerged among representatives of local authorities who were dealing with issues related to the appearance of public spaces and brownfield revitalization (cf. Bosák, Nováček, and Slach 2018). In this narrative, adapting old buildings for new and non-industrial uses was a little considered option. Proponents of this narrative preferred the demolition of the buildings and/or their use for industrial or storage purposes. Finally, the revitalization narrative emphasized the cultural-historical values of industrial sites and artefacts. Representatives of non-profit organizations and educational institutions often emphasized the revitalization of industrial buildings, their historical value and contribution to the regional identity.

These narratives reflect different attitudes towards the potential for industrial heritage to become an integral part of the new development path. The lack of integration and complementarity of the three narratives indicates that the regional level has so far failed to establish a system level agency (Blažek, Kadlec, and Květoň 2024). Such an agency would be based on an industrial culture or vision that would integrate, or at least bring together, the different perspectives on industrial heritage and its management. From this perspective, greater involvement from the public sector is necessary to preserve and properly valorize industrial heritage (He et al. 2019; Peira, Bonadonna, and Beltramo 2023).

Due to this dysfunction, the current agency of change (including the heritagization agency) is limited to the activities of individuals or collectives (for example, in city museums) who use the revitalization narrative. Their efforts are scattered and isolated, and the necessary capacities and assets for system-level change are lacking (Blažek, Kadlec, and Květoň 2024; Grillitsch and Sotarauta 2020). Consequently, they are unable to dominate the power games with other development actors (Dicks 2000; cited in Nettleingham 2018). As a result, their ideas will hardly penetrate regional development approaches and concepts (Collazo 2022; Bockelmann 2023). From our research

Table 2. Three narratives of industrial heritage and their attributes.

Narrative	Main representatives of the narrative	Prevailing meanings of industrial heritage	Strategic goals for tackling the industrial heritage
Pragmatic	corporate stakeholders	industrial skills of workforce	increasing economic performance
Problematizing	local administrations	brownfield sites and dilapidated buildings	improving the visual appearance of sites at available costs
Revitalization	NGOs and cultural institutions	culturally valuable sites, buildings and knowledge	mobilizing the cultural values to steer societal development

perspective, there is a need to better integrate and empower this relatively dissident stakeholder group. This could facilitate the growth and spread of the necessary industrial culture across the region (He et al. 2019).

7. Conclusions

This study explored how industrial heritage is perceived and utilized in the Ústí nad Labem Region, a prominent old industrial region in Czechia. Through analysing semi-structured interviews with a wide range of regional stakeholders, we revealed that the term ‘industrial heritage’ often has negative connotations. This is interpreted as a consequence of the region’s socialist industrialization. We also identified three narratives – pragmatic, problematizing, and revitalization – that reflect contrasting expectations and attitudes towards industrial heritage. These narratives underline the heterogeneity and ambivalence of meanings attached to industrial artefacts, ranging from sources of economic prosperity to burdensome brownfield sites or underutilized cultural assets.

The contribution of this paper lies in linking the concepts of industrial culture and heritage with the agency of regional development actors. The findings suggest that industrial heritage is unlikely to become a consolidated driver of regional development without greater institutional support. Corporate stakeholders prioritize economic functions, local authorities emphasize cost-effective brownfield management, and NGOs and cultural institutions advocate cultural valorization. While this plurality can be fruitful for discussions and emerging ideas, the lack of alignment prevents the emergence of a system-level agency that could reshape industrial culture and integrate industrial heritage into a coherent development strategy. Therefore, there is the need for stronger involvement of public authorities in mediating between business and society.

Finally, this paper opens up further research questions – industrial culture and heritage are multifaceted concepts that can lead to regions becoming trapped in inherited mindsets but can also promote the creative re-use of the industrial past. The example of the Ústí nad Labem Region has shown that although its industrial culture is still strong, the remnants of its industrial past are not perceived very positively. For this reason, it is important to explore this reciprocal relationship and to identify the constellations of actors, their capacities, and industrial artefacts which then act as triggers or tipping points for the transformation towards a form of industrial culture that can sensitively mobilize industrial heritage for regional development.

Acknowledgements

Early drafts of this research were presented at IGU Heritage Geographies: Politics, Uses and Governance of the Past (Lecce, Italy) in May 2021 and EUGEO 2021 Conference in Prague. The authors are thankful to the discussants of the corresponding sessions. This work was supported by the European Union, European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic under Grant Project Smart City – Smart Region – Smart Community – CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/17_048/0007435.











Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by European Union, European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic: [Grant Number CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/17_048/0007435]; European Union, European Social Fund, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic: [Grant Number CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/17_048/0007435].

ORCID

Vladan Hruška  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3839-7376>
 Cristina Merciu  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2993-5136>
 Pavel Raška  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4206-8962>
 Jan Piša  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4666-7858>
 Zdeňka Smutná  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7581-4696>
 Tomáš Sýkora  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7189-2515>
 Michaela Štěbetáková  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9260-3559>
 Petr Hlaváček  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3922-5739>
 Silvie Rita Kučerová  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3210-6240>
 Eva Nedorostová  <http://orcid.org/0009-0003-8340-0666>

References

- Bessière, J. 2013. “‘Heritagisation’, A Challenge for Tourism Promotion and Regional Development: An Example of Food Heritage.” *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 8 (4): 275–291. doi:10.1080/1743873X.2013.770861
- Birkeland, I. 2017. “Making Sense of the Future: Valuing Industrial Heritage in the Anthropocene.” *Future Anterior* 14 (2): 61–70.
- Blažek, J., V. Kadlec, and V. Květoň. 2024. “The Role of Assets and Variegated Constellations of Organizational-and System-Level Agency in Regional Transformation.” *European Planning Studies* 32 (11): 2381–2402. doi:10.1080/09654313.2022.2163155
- Bockelmann, L. 2023. “Impacts of Change: Analysing the Perception of Industrial Heritage in the Vogtland Region.” *Urban Planning* 8 (1): 30–38. doi:10.17645/up.v8i1.6025
- Bole, D. 2021. “‘What is Industrial Culture Anyway?’ Theoretical Framing of the Concept in Economic Geography.” *Geography Compass* 15: e12595. doi:10.1111/gec3.12595
- Bole, D., M. Goluža, and J. Kozina. 2024. “Linking Industrial Culture and Human Agency in Three (Post) Industrial Towns: Collective and Individual Agency Shaping Development Paths.” *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences* 150: 103993. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2024.103993
- Bosák, V., A. Nováček, and O. Slach. 2018. “Industrial Culture as an Asset, Barrier and Creative Challenge for Restructuring of old Industrial Cities: Case Study of Ostrava (Czechia).” *GeoScape* 12: 52–64. doi:10.2478/geosc-2018-0006
- Collazo, A. 2022. “Urban Morphology and Industrial Heritage Persistence.” *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment* 260: 427–436. doi:10.2495/SC220351
- Copus, A. 2001. “From Core-Periphery to Polycentric Development: Concepts of Spatial and Aspatial Peripherality.” *European Planning Studies* 9 (4): 539–552. doi:10.1080/09654310120049899
- Cossons. 2012. “Industrial Heritage: Treasure or Trash?” In *TICCIH Congress 2012, Series 2, Selected. Papers of the XVth International Congress of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage*, 11–22.
- Danson, M. 2005. “Old Industrial Regions and Employability.” *Urban Studies* 42 (2): 285–300. doi:10.1080/0042098042000316155

- ESPON. 2020. "Structural Change in Coal Phase-Out Regions." Policy Brief. <https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/Policy%20Brief%20structural%20change%20in%20coal%20phase-out%20regions.pdf>.
- Flick, U. 2006. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Glorius, B., and K. Manz. 2018. "Beyond the City of Modernism: A Counter-Narrative of Industrial Culture." *GeoScape* 12 (1): 26–38. doi:10.2478/geosc-2018-0004
- Görmär, F. 2024. "Weaving a Foundational Narrative – Place-Making and Change in an old-Industrial Town in East Germany." *European Planning Studies* 32 (11): 1–22.
- Görmär, F., and J. Harfst. 2019. "Path Renewal or Path Dependence? The Role of Industrial Culture in Regional Restructuring." *Urban Science* 3 (4): 106. doi:10.3390/urbansci3040106
- Görmär, F., J. Harfst, D. Simić, and A. Wust. 2019. "The Transformative Power of Industrial Culture-from Concepts to Actions." *Grazer Schriften der Geographie und Raumforschung* 49: 1–53.
- Grillitsch, M., J. Rekers, and M. Sotarauta. 2019. *Trinity of Change Agency: Connecting Agency and Structure in Studies of Regional Development*. Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE). Lund.
- Grillitsch, M., and M. Sotarauta. 2020. "Trinity of Change Agency, Regional Development Paths and Opportunity Spaces." *Progress in Human Geography* 44 (4): 704–723. doi:10.1177/0309132519853870
- Hannemann, M., S. Henn, and S. Schäfer. 2024. "Regions, Emotions and Left-Behindness: A Phase Model for Understanding the Emergence of Regional Embitterment." *Regional Studies* 58 (6): 1207–1218. doi:10.1080/00343404.2023.2218886
- Harfst, J., J. Sandriester, and W. Fischer. 2021. "Industrial Heritage Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development? A Case Study of Steirische Eisenstrasse (Austria)." *Sustainability* 13 (7): 3857. doi:10.3390/su13073857
- Harfst, J., A. Wust, and R. Nadler. 2018. "Conceptualizing Industrial Culture." *GeoScape* 12 (1): 1–9. doi:10.2478/geosc-2018-0001
- Hassink, R. 2010. "Locked in Decline? On the Role of Regional Lock-ins in old Industrial Areas." In *The Handbook of Evolutionary Economic Geography*, edited by R. Boschma and R. Martin, 450–470. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Hassink, R., and D. Shin. 2005. "South Korea's Shipbuilding Industry: From a Couple of Cathedrals in the Desert to an Innovative Cluster." *Asian Journal of Technology Innovation* 13 (2): 133–155. doi:10.1080/19761597.2005.9668611
- He, F., W. Wu, T. Zhuang, and Y. Yi. 2019. "Exploring the Diverse Expectations of Stakeholders in Industrial Land Redevelopment Projects in China: The Case of Shanghai." *Sustainability* 11 (17): 4744. doi:10.3390/su11174744
- Helms, G., and A. Cumbers. 2006. "Regulating the new Urban Poor: Local Labour Market Control in an old Industrial City." *Space & Polity* 10 (1): 67–86. doi:10.1080/13562570600796804
- Howard, P. 2003. *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity*. London: A&C Black.
- Howard, P., and D. Pinder. 2003. "Cultural Heritage and Sustainability in the Coastal Zone: Experiences in South West England." *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 4 (1): 57–68. doi:10.1016/S1296-2074(03)00008-6
- Hruška, V., P. Raška, M. Balej, J. Bláha, P. Hlaváček, J. Konupka, Z. Kučera, et al. 2022. *Průmyslová Minulost, Kreativní Budoucnost? Perspektivy Průmyslového Dědictví Podkrušnohoří*. Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem.
- ICOMOS. 2011. "Joint ICOMOS – TICCIH Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes (The Dublin Principles)." https://ticcih.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GA2011_ICOMOS_TICCIH_joint_principles_EN_FR_final_20120110.pdf.
- Ilovan, O., and P. Mutică. 2023. "Advocacy for Territorial and People-Centered Approaches to Development in Romania: Place Attachment Based on Industrial Heritage." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 27 (5): 876–894.
- Klusáček, P., P. Dvořák, and J. Trojan. 2023. "Revitalising Rural Spaces: Lessons Learnt from Brownfield Regeneration in a Shrinking Region." *Land* 13 (1): 7. doi:10.3390/land13010007

- Konsa, K. 2013. "Heritage as a Socio-Cultural Construct: Problems of Definition." *Baltic Journal of Art History* 6: 125–151. doi:10.12697/BJAH.2013.6.05
- Koutský, J. 2011. *Staré Průmyslové Regiony, Vývojové Tendence – Možnosti Rozvoje*. Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem.
- Koutský, J., O. Slach, and T. Boruta. 2011. "Restructuring Economies of Old Industrial Regions – Local Tradition, Global Trends." In *Scale of Globalization: Think Globally, Act Locally, Change Individually in the 21st Century*, edited by T. Drobík, 166–173. Ostrava: University of Ostrava.
- Kozina, J., D. Bole, and J. Tiran. 2021. "Forgotten Values of Industrial City Still Alive: What Can the Creative City Learn from its Industrial Counterpart?" *City, Culture and Society* 25: 100395. doi:10.1016/j.ccs.2021.100395
- Květoň, V., and J. Blažek. 2018. "Path-development Trajectories and Barriers Perceived by Stakeholders in two Central European Less Developed Regions: Narrow or Broad Choice?" *European Planning Studies* 26 (10): 2058–2077. doi:10.1080/09654313.2018.1509061
- Lang, T. 2015. "Socio-economic and Political Responses to Regional Polarisation and Socio-Spatial Peripheralisation in Central and Eastern Europe: A Research Agenda." *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 64 (3): 171–185. doi:10.15201/hungeobull.64.3.2
- Lu, N., M. Liu, and R. Wang. 2020. "Reproducing the Discourse on Industrial Heritage in China: Reflections on the Evolution of Values, Policies and Practices." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26 (5): 498–518. doi:10.1080/13527258.2019.1666293
- Marcondes, C. 2024. "Cultural Heritage Objects: A Model of the Patrimonialization Process." In *Proceedings of the 17th Seminar on Ontology Research in Brazil (ONTOBRAS 2024)*. <https://ceur-ws.org/Vol-3905/paper5.pdf>.
- Mathias, B., S. Lux, T. Russell Crook, C. Autry, and R. Zaretski. 2015. "Competing Against the Unknown: The Impact of Enabling and Constraining Institutions on the Informal Economy." *Journal of Business Ethics* 127: 251–264. doi:10.1007/s10551-013-2030-6
- Merciu, C., C. Pănescu, M. Dorobanțu, and L. Merciu. 2022. "Assessing the Value of Railway Heritage for Sustainable Development: The Case Study of the Oravița-Anina Railway, Romania." *Sustainability* 14 (20): 13262. doi:10.3390/su142013262
- Mérai, D., and V. Kulikov. 2021. "From Burden to Resource: Uses of Industrial Heritage in East-Central Europe." In *Introduction from Burden to Resource: Uses of Industrial Heritage in East-Central Europe*, edited by D. Mérai, Z. Sidó, H. Szemző and V. Kulikov, 5–12. Budapest: Archaeolingua.
- MPSV. 2025. "Měsíční nezaměstnanost – vývoj na trhu práce pro vybrané kraje a ČR." <https://data.mpsv.cz/web/data/vizualizace15?mesic=5&rok=2025>.
- Nettleingham, D. 2018. "Heritage Work: The Preservations and Performances of Thames Sailing Barges." *Cultural Sociology* 12 (3): 384–399. doi:10.1177/1749975518783380
- Oevermann, H., and H. Mieg. 2015. "Zollverein and Sulzer: The Tangible and Intangible Dimensions of Industrial Heritage Sites." In *Regions, Industries, and Heritage: Perspectives on Economy, Society, and Culture in Modern Western Europe*, edited by J. Czierpka, K. Oerters, and N. Thorade, 262–281. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Peira, G., A. Bonadonna, and R. Beltramo. 2023. "Improving the Local Development: The Stakeholders' Point of View on Italian Railway Tourism." *Leisure Studies* 43 (2): 327–341. doi:10.1080/02614367.2023.2230535
- Pike, A., A. Rodríguez-Pose, and J. Tomaney. 2007. "What Kind of Local and Regional Development and for Whom?" *Regional Studies* 41 (9): 1253–1269. doi:10.1080/00343400701543355
- Piša, J. 2023. "How Individuals Become Agents of Change in old Industrial Regions." *Regional Studies, Regional Science* 10 (1): 592–602. doi:10.1080/21681376.2023.2219723
- Piša, J., and V. Hruška. 2024a. "Disentangling the 'Capacity to Act': Variegated Resources of Individuals Exerting Change Agency." *European Planning Studies* 32: 1–19.
- Piša, J., and V. Hruška. 2024b. "It was my Duty to Change This Place': Motivations of Agents of Change in Czech old Industrial Towns." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 106 (2): 235–251. doi:10.1080/04353684.2023.2208580

- Rofe, M. 2004. "From 'Problem City' to 'Promise City': Gentrification and the Revitalisation of Newcastle." *Australian Geographical Studies* 42 (2): 193–206. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8470.2004.00259.x
- Stake, R. 1995. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Szczepański, M., and W. Ślęzak-Tazbir. 2007. "Between Fear and Admiration. Social and Spatial Ghettos in an old Industrial Region." *Polish Sociological Review* 159 (3): 299–320.
- TICCIH. 2003. "The Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage." *TICCIH XII International Congress*. <https://ticcih.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/NTagilCharter.pdf>.
- Tideman, S. 2021. "Hull's Maritime Industrial Heritage: Sites of Debated Value and Conflicting 21st-Century Port-City Mindsets. Case Analysis and Suggested Learnings." *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes* 4 (1): 154–182.
- Wu, X., L. Yu, H. Fanf, and J. Wu. 2022. "Research on the Perception and Reuse of Industrial Heritage from the Perspective of Public Participation-a Case Study of Northern Mining Area of Pingdinghan, People's Republic of China." *Land* 11 (1): 11–16.
- Xie, P. F. 2015. *Industrial Heritage Tourism*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Xie, P., M. Lee, and J. Wong. 2019. "Assessing Community Attitudes Toward Industrial Heritage Tourism Development." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 18 (3): 237–251.