Burdens of Eternity?

Heritage, Identity, and the "Great Transition" in the Ruhr

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ABSTRACT: The industrial past has become an inescapable and fundamental component of the identity of the Ruhr region. Throughout the twentieth century the Ruhr acquired a diverse public self-perception—incorporating multiculturalism, football, nationalism, urbanity, and nature—that was strongly imbued by images of the industrial past. Over recent decades, representations of the Ruhr's industrial heritage have been driven by a desire to build the future of the region on a proud sense of its past. However, there have also been signs of an increasing touristification and commercialization of industrial heritage that is sometimes presented in a self-congratulatory way. Development of a critical "historical culture" involving the region's industrial past therefore remains a constant challenge.

KEY WORDS: industrial heritage, regional identity, deindustrialization, memory, Ruhr

Introduction

The Ruhr, Germany's former industrial heartland, is formed by a peculiar conglomerate of postindustrial settlements whose more than five million inhabitants have witnessed decades of structural transformation in the region. In the late nineteenth century, industrialization, followed by a rapid urbanization, formed the Ruhr as a geographic unit. The region was dominated by coal and steel for around 150 years, but in 2018 the last coal mine will close and its much-diminished steel industry is in deep crisis. The region's long history of heavy industry will soon exist in memory only, but the memorialization of that past has already become a major concern. Precisely because the region can fall back on little else than its industrial past to define itself, its industrial heritage has been increasingly magnified over the twentieth century. The industrial heritage of the region not only includes steel mills, ironworks, and coal mines, but also slagheaps, transport ways, working-class settlements, and a whole range of other material as well as immaterial forms of heritage associated with its heavy industry and the workers employed in it. This article explores how diverse actors have shaped this heritage over the last half

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century. It will analyze the historical mindscape of the Ruhr and its varied, but predominantly industrial, images.[1] And it will discuss what the region's heritage means for the memorialization of the past and the imagination of the future.

Regional identity is understood here from a constructivist point of view in terms of public representation rather than of personal identification, which would require surveys and interviews.[2] Like nations, regions are constructed through a range of cultural practices that individuals share reflexively and repetitively.[3] Regions, just as much as nations, have an existential need for their own historical culture to legitimate their existence as spatial and institutional entities.[4] The narrators of their "history" thus play a formative role in the making and maintenance of their territorial identities. The "invention of tradition" booms especially in times of transition.[5] In the Ruhr the transition from heavy industry to a more diversified economic structure has been an ongoing process for sixty years, that is, from the first coal crisis of 1958 to the present.[6] Although the region has slowly transformed into something new, it also continues to rely heavily on the memory of the industrial age.

The Politics of Heritage

You cannot walk five hundred meters anywhere in the Ruhr without stumbling across some remnants of the industrial past.[7] In comparison with other regions of

1 Dai Smith used the term mindscape to describe the proletarian identity of the South Welsh coal region. See Dai Smith, *Aneurin Bevan and the World of South Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), 92ff. For more on how this term has been used in relation to the construction of heritage in a deindustrializing region, see Stefan Berger, "Von 'Landschaften des Geistes' zu 'Geisterlandschaften': Identitätsbildungen und der Umgang mit dem industriellen Erbe im südwalisischen Kohlerevier," *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen* 39 (November 2008): 49–65.

2 See for example Aansi Paasi, "The Institutionalization of Regions: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Emergence of Regions and the Constitutions of Regional Identity," *Fennia* 164, no. 1 (January 1986): 105–16; Cf. Detlef Briesen, Rüdiger Gans, and Armin Flender, eds., *Regionalbewußtsein in Montanregionen im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert: Saarland–Siegerland–Ruhrgebiet* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N Brockmeyer, 1994).

3 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

4 Sven Tägil, *Regions in Central Europe: The Legacy of History* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1999).

5 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

6 Stefan Goch, "Betterment without Airs: Social, Cultural and Political Consequences of Deindustrialization in the Ruhr," in *De-industrialization: Social, Cultural and Political Consequences*, ed. Bert Altena and Marcel van der Linden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 87–111.

7 There is extensive literature on industrial heritage in the Ruhr. For overviews, see Stefan Berger, "Industriekultur und Strukturwandel in deutschen Bergbauregionen nach 1945," *Geschichte des deutschen Bergbaus*, vol. 4, *Rohstoffgewinnung im Strukturwandel: Der deutsche Bergbau im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Dieter Ziegler (Münster: Aschendorff, 2013), 571–601; Kerstin Barndt, "'Memory Traces of an Abandoned Set of Futures': Industrial Ruins in the Postindustrial Landscapes of Germany," in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 270–93; Andrea Höber and Karl Ganser, *IndustrieKultur: Mythos und Moderne im Ruhrgebiet* (Essen: Klartext, 1999).

heavy industry in Europe and globally, the proliferation of industrial heritage in the Ruhr is truly astonishing and leads to the questions of why initiatives for the preservation of industrial heritage were so successful and why industrial heritage today constitutes such a dominant image of the region.[8] The answer lies in the peculiar response to the coal and steel crises that took place in the Ruhr.

When the first coal crisis hit the Ruhr in the late 1950s, many employers, politicians, and unions thought it was a cyclical crisis that would come and go again. After all, the Ruhr had seen many such difficulties since the 1850s. It took a decade before the local politicians, industrialists, and unionists realized this was a different crisis—indeed a terminal one that would necessitate some creative thinking about how to guarantee the future of the largest urban conglomerate in Germany.[9]

The eventual answer was the founding of the Ruhrkohle AG in 1969—a central, state-subsidized company under whose umbrella all mine owners could crawl in order to ensure survival. It was an answer typical of the Rhenish capitalism that had emerged in West Germany after the end of the Second World War and that built on a long history of state responsibility for mining going back to early modern times. Rhenish capitalism as it developed after 1945 amounted to a strongly corporatist system in which employers, the unions, and the state worked together to ensure policies that would be economically and socially acceptable.[10] Over a period of fifty years the coal industry was phased out—with the last of hundreds of mines in the Ruhr closing in 2018.[11] Every year of those fifty, thousands of miners lost their jobs, but they were not simply sacked. Many were let go with attractive retirement packages; many more were retrained and found jobs elsewhere in companies that were attracted to the Ruhr to replace the ailing coal industry.[12] This social transformation was achieved at a price—taxpayers' money went into the financing of this structural transformation. But there was an overwhelming consensus among

8 For a global comparative perspective on industrial heritage see Christian Wicke, Stefan Berger, and Jana Golombek, eds., *Industrial Heritage and Regional Identities* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

9 On the structural transformation of the Ruhr and strategies employed in pursuit of structural transformation, see Stefan Goch, *Eine Region im Kampf mit dem Strukturwandel: Bewältigung von Strukturwandel und Strukturpolitik im Ruhrgebiet* (Essen: Klartext, 2002).

10 On Rhenish capitalism, see Werner Abelshauser, *The Dynamics of German Industry: Germany's Path toward the New Economy and the American Challenge* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Walther Müller-Jentsch, *Gewerkschaften und Soziale Marktwirtschaft seit 1945* (Stutgart: Reclam, 2011).

11 The German Mining Museum, Bochum, currently runs a project on the history of black coal mining in Germany since 1945. See the German Mining Museum, Bochum, website, "Vom Boom zur Krise: Der deutsche Steinkohlebergbau nach 1945," http://www.bergbaumuseum.de/index.php/de/forschung/projekte/sgm-boom-krise.

12 The Institute for Social Movements in collaboration with the German Mining Museum currently runs an oral history project producing digital sources on the history and individual experiences of coal mining in the Ruhr: "Digitaler Gedeächtnisspeicher: Menschen im Bergbau," http://isb.rub.de/sbr/drittmittelprojekte/gedaechtnisspeicher.html.de.

the employers, the union, and policy makers that this was a price worth paying for social peace and a livable future for the people of the Ruhr.

When the steel industry of the Ruhr faced a similarly terminal phase of decline from the 1970s onward, the answer to the crisis was on one level quite different: this time there was to be no centralized solution and no state subsidies.[13] Times had changed: the world was on the cusp of a neoliberal revolution, which advocated a restriction of state intervention.[14] However, on another level, the proposed solution for the steel crisis still looked quite Rhenish capitalist, particularly from outside of Germany. When major steel plants closed, generous social plans and retraining schemes were put in place and again employers, trade unions, and the state cooperated in order to smoothly engineer social change.[15] National politics also played a role: in the 1970s Germany's Social Democrat–led government prided itself on successfully riding the storm of a global economic recession. The national government under Helmut Schmidt also worked hand in hand with the Social Democrat–led government in the Ruhr's federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia to ensure a future for the Ruhr.[16]

Despite the large-scale social engineering, pockets of social deprivation developed, especially in parts of the northern Ruhr, with unemployment rates today almost twice the national average and a third of all children living on social benefits.[17] Despite this, it does not feel like a "region without a future," characterized by massive out-migration and a noticeable decline in the quality of life for its inhabitants, as seen in many other heavy-industry regions where strong neoliberal policies were enacted, such as the United States and Britain.[18] Some of these areas, including parts of the American Rust Belt or the northern English or Celtic heartlands of heavy industry in Britain, remain today sad reminders of the economic, social, and cultural devastation brought about by neoliberalism from the 1980s onward.[19] By comparison the Ruhr is a polycentric urban space that is attractive

13 Karl Lauschke, "Krisenstrategien in der Stahlindustrie des Ruhrgebiets," *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen* 30 (2004): 85–90.

14 On the rise of neoliberalism, see David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

15 The iconic struggle surrounding the steel plant of Rheinhausen is typical of a struggle that became a central memorial place of the Ruhr. Although a defeat for the workers, it is a proud memory of the way in which the people of the Ruhr used their resilience and values of solidarity to shape a future for the region. On Rheinhausen, see Stefan Berger, "Gewerkschaften und soziale Bewegungen," in *Aufruhrgebiet: Uproar Area*, ed. Michael Kerstgens, Theo Steegmann, and Christoph Fasel (Berlin: Peperoni, 2016), 6–11.

16 Bernd Faulenbach, *Das sozialdemokratische Jahrzehnt. Von der Reformeuphorie zur neuen Unübersichtlichkeit. Die SPD 1969–1982* (Bonn: Dietz, 2011).

17 Wolfram Goetz, "Ruhrgebiet. Arbeitslosigkeit, Armut und Tristesse," *Deutschlandfunk*, July 8, 2016, radio broadcast, http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/ruhrgebiet-arbeitslosigkeit-armut-und-tristesse.724.de.html? dram: article_id=362393.

18 See Stephen High, "'The Wounds of Class': A Historiographical Reflection on the Study of Deindustrialization, 1973–2013," *History Compass* 11, no. 11 (November 2013): 994–1007.

19 On a comparison of the Ruhr and South Wales, see Stefan Berger and Neil Evans, "Two Faces of King Coal: The Impact of Historiographical Traditions on Comparative History in the Ruhr and

to millions of inhabitants. It developed many green spaces that people can enjoy, including miles of walking and cycling paths, along with one of the largest and best cultural scenes in contemporary Germany.

The architect and city planner Christa Reicher defined a specific "Ruhrbanity," characterized by an impressive concern for industrial heritage, that has accompanied this structural transformation.[20] This support for maintaining the region's industrial heritage began in the 1960s and did not come from the central powerful players in the Ruhr, nor from the employers or the unions or from politics. Employers initially wanted to dispose of closed mines as quickly and cheaply as possible. The unions saw industrial heritage as a job killer, instead fighting tooth and nail to keep their members employed in active mines. And the political sphere was busy trying to solve the economic and social crisis. Thus it was left largely to initiatives from outside traditional power centers to fight the first iconic battles for industrial heritage. Beginning in the late 1960s, intellectuals, academics, and local people allied together to successfully preserve this heritage.

A microsociological analysis of the emerging industrial heritage movement during the deindustrialization of the Ruhr is overdue.[21] The first important example, which in many ways marks the beginning of this movement in Germany, was the fight to maintain the art deco machine hall of Zeche Zollern (designed by Bruno Möhring 1902–3) in Dortmund after its closure in 1966. A small circle of activists, including the photographers Hilla and Bernd Becher, had discovered the particular industrial aesthetics of the Ruhr and felt that this remarkable building especially had to be protected.[22] In 1969, following a successful petition to the minister president of North Rhine-Westphalia, the property came under heritage protection.[23] The second foundational moment was the establishment of so-called workers' initiatives (*Arbeiterinitiative*n) for the preservation of workers' settlements that had been built to supply coal mines and steel foundries with a workforce across the Ruhr. The first and most influential campaign was with the region's oldest workers' settlement, the Eisenheim Settlement of Oberhausen (partly dating back to 1848). A group of university students under the leadership of Roland Günter, a professor from Bielefeld, allied with the working-class inhabitants of the settlement and in

South Wales," in *Towards a Comparative History of Coalfield Societies*, ed. Stefan Berger, Andy Croll, and Norman LaPorte (Aldershot: Sage, 2005), 29–42. For an example from the Rust Belt, see Kaeleigh Herstad's contribution on Detroit in this special issue.

20 Christa Reicher et al., *Schichten einer Region: Kartenstücke zur räumlichen Struktur des Ruhrgebiets* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014).

21 For a unique example of an in-depth study of a single campaign in the 1970s for the preservation of a historic workers' settlement, see Thomas Rommelspacher, *Wenn wir richtig zusammenarbeiten, dann entsteht eine Macht: Zechenhausinitiativen im Ruhrgebiet 1974–1981: Struktur und Perspektiven in einem regionalen Mietkampf* (Bochum: Germinal, 1984).

22 Susanne Lange, *Was wir tun, ist letztlich Geschichten erzählen—Bernd und Hilla Becher. Einführung in Leben und Werk* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2005).

23 Thomas Parent, "Rettung vor Abbruch und frühe Umnutzung—Zur Geschichte der Maschinenhalle der Zeche Zollvern II/IV zwischen 1969 und 1979," in *Von der Schönheit der Eisenkonstruktion: Studien zur "Musterzeche" Zollern II/IV* (Essen: Klartext, 2013), 241–78.

1972 achieved heritage protection. The group in Eisenheim sought to establish a movement spanning across the region from Duisburg to Dortmund. In all initiatives working-class activists were in the majority. As they tried to protect their homes from demolition, they were assisted by movement elites who held motivations consistent with those typical of outsiders motivated by ideological and aesthetic considerations.[24] A third key episode in the "history from below" of the Ruhr's industrial heritage movement was the campaign for the preservation of the Zeche Carl mining complex in Essen (with parts constructed between 1885 and 1886). The head of this campaign was a progressive Protestant pastor, Willi Overbeck. Beginning in 1977, Overbeck engaged the working-class youth in the Altenessen neighborhood to establish a sociocultural center on the postindustrial site, which was part of an area subject to rezoning plans by the city council. Since 1985, this complex has also been listed as a heritage site. The combined efforts of the Ruhr's civil society during this period of transition should be further studied from an urban movement perspective.[25]

It was only after the powerful actors in the state administration adopted these initiatives (and co-opted some of their leaders), following initial soul-searching, hesitation, and even opposition, however, that industrial heritage expanded so remarkably. The Social Democratic Party came to see in industrial heritage an important anchor for the construction of a Social Democratic Ruhr, in which its key constituents, the workers and ordinary folk, took center stage. The long-term Social Democratic minister president, Johannes Rau, and the first-ever building minister in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Christoph Zöpel, were among the key representatives of a political class with a vision for industrial heritage as cultural anchor for a region undergoing an unparalleled transformation. In addition to the state administration and governing political parties, the Ruhrkohle AG itself was vitally important for the victory of industrial heritage in the Ruhr. It developed its own foundation for industrial heritage, the Stiftung Industriedenkmalpflege, and founded a daughter company, the Ruhrkohle Montan Immobilien, that regenerated closed mines with the stated aim of maintaining as much industrial heritage as possible. Even the unions eventually accepted industrial heritage as a proud reminder of the past achievements of their members.[26] The International Building Exhibition Emscher Park in the 1990s marked the breakthrough of industrial

24 Christian Wicke, "Urban Movement à la Ruhr? The Initiatives for the Preservation of Workers' Settlements in the 1970s," in *Contested Cities in an Era of Crisis: Italy and West Germany during the 1970s*, ed. Martin Baumeister, Dieter Schott, and Bruno Bonomo (Frankfurt: Campus, 2017), 347–71.

25 See Stefan Berger, Jana Golombek, and Christian Wicke, "Erinnerung. Bewegung. Identität: Industriekultur als Welterbe im 21. Jahrhundert," in *Forum Geschichtskultur Ruhr* 4, no. 2 (2015): 23–29.

26 Thus, for example, the trade union Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau, Chemie, Eniergie (IGBCE), which contains the former miners' union, celebrated 125 years of its existence with a large public party at the world heritage site Zeche Zollverein in 2015.

heritage on a massive scale.[27] More than one hundred individual projects aimed at setting standards for the economic, ecological, and social restructuring of the old industrial region. The celebrations for the cultural capital year 2010, and current attempts to extend the world heritage status of Zeche Zollverein to the whole industrial landscape of the Ruhr, confirm the central position that industrial heritage has to the self-understanding of the region.[28]

As we know from Hegel, the owl of Minerva only flies at dusk. No one paid much attention to coal and steel in the Ruhr when they were in full swing. They provided a decent—although often hard, brutal, and dangerous—living for millions of workers. Only with the industries' slow demise did industrial heritage become a way of constructing an identity for the region. Arguably it has become so powerful because it had no other basis on which to do so. Other regions of heavy industry, such as Asturias in Spain, have access to other pasts—royal, pre-Romanesque, rural—that compete with the memories of an industrial past, taking the focus away from industrial heritage.[29] There is no such difficulty in the Ruhr. Places exist in the Ruhr, such as the Hanse cities of Duisburg, Essen, Bochum, and Dortmund, which have a medieval and early modern past. This history gives those cities deeper layers of identity, but the Ruhr region itself is one entirely dependent on its industrial past. This identity took a long time to form as a recognizable unit; the name "Ruhr region" became firmly established only in the 1920s, replacing unwieldy terms such as the Rhenish-Westphalian Coal Region. But today, beyond a name, the Ruhr needs a memorial landscape to retain a historically connected identity as a region.[30] In creating a dense network of industrial heritage sites it has taken a first important step in that direction. The "mindscape" of the industrial Ruhr, as the next section will demonstrate, has allowed for the construction of a variety of "Ruhrs" in the twentieth century, but they have not been able to escape the industrial past.

27 On the IBA Emscher Park, see Karl Ganser, *Liebe auf den zweiten Blick. Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park* (Dortmund: Harenberg, 1999).

28 On the impact of the culture capital, see Jürgen Mittag, *Die Idee der Kulturhauptstadt Europas: Anfänge, Ausgestaltung und Auswirkungen europäischer Kulturpolitik* (Essen: Klartext, 2008). See Die Industriedenkmal Stiftung website, http://www.industriedenkmal-stiftung.de/docs/20061685906121 6_de.php, on attempts to extend world heritage status.

29 On industrial heritage in Asturias, see Rubén Vega García, "Looking Back: Representations of the Industrial Past in Asturias," in Berger, Golombek, and Wicke, *Industrial Heritage and Regional Identities.*

30 The project Zeit-Räume-Ruhr, undertaken by the Institute for Social Movements in conjunction with the Ruhr Museum in Essen and funded by the Regionalverband Ruhr and the Land NRW, is exploring the memory landscape of the Ruhr; see the Zeit Räume Ruhr website at http://www.zeit-raeume.ruhr/ and the Instituts für soziale Bewegungen (ISB) website at http://www.isb.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/forschung/drittmittel/zeitraeume.html.de. For a first effort to employ and critically review the "realms of memory approach," see Stefan Berger and Joanna Seiffert, eds., *Erinnerungsorte. Chancen, Grenzen und Perspektiven eines Erfolgskonzeptes in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Essen: Klartext, 2014).

The mining industry leaves behind both a radically transformed landscape with its "burdens of eternity" (*Ewigkeitslasten*) and also a powerful and irremovable industrial image of the Ruhr. The regional politics of memory, driven by actors from above and below, has successfully preserved the Ruhr's industrial past. These industrial images provide both the dominant feature and the durable cultural material for the endurance of its regional identity.

The Ruhr does not act as a political unit, and arguably it is this loose political structure that requires a relatively coherent historical culture to maintain the imagined community of the former coal and steel region. Initial efforts to develop some political unity in the Ruhr were largely due to infrastructural necessities to cope with the industrialization of the towns in the region-to-be. In particular the institutionalization of a common water system around 1900 that led to the foundation of the Emschergenossenschaft (public cooperation for water management) can be seen as foundational. The Regionalverband Ruhr (RVR)—founded in 1920 under the Prussian Government under the title Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk (SVR) to facilitate more organized city planning—has emerged as an important agency in the promotion of regional identity and industrial heritage.

The Ruhr cities are so close together that crossing their municipal borders usually goes unnoticed. Even today it is not fully clear what the Ruhr is: a region, a city, or something in-between? The Ruhr contains fifty-three communities, fifteen administrative districts, and is divided into six subregions.[31] But the non-Ruhr entities of Rhenish Düsseldorf, Westphalian Münster, and Arnsberg each govern one of three parts of the Ruhr. Reflecting their association with the historic regions of the Rhineland and Westphalia, the communities of the Ruhr in the west belong to the Landschaftsverband Rheinland (landscape association Rhineland) and in the east to the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe. Despite—or perhaps because of—its geopolitical muddle, the Ruhr has constructed a relatively coherent regional self-image based on its distinctive industrial heritage within Germany.

Strikingly, the diverse images of the Ruhr that often spring to our mind when we talk about the area—that is, the "multicultural Ruhr," the "football Ruhr," the "German Ruhr," the "urban Ruhr," and the "green Ruhr"—all are steeped in this dominant image of the "industrial Ruhr." This section analytically explores these impressionistic images in order to help explain the reliance on the industrial image of the Ruhr, which can be traced through the region's other spatial images.[32] It demonstrates that alternative images have not presented any serious challenge to

31 Stefan Goch, "Der Ruhrgebietler—Überlegungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung regionalen Bewußtseins im Ruhrgebiet," *Westfälische Forschungen* 47 (1997): 585–620.

32 Cf. Achim Prossek, *Bild-Raum Ruhrgebiet: Zur symbolischen Produktion der Region* (Detmold: Dorothea Rohn, 2009).

the Ruhr's predominant image as *the* region of industrial heritage during its industrial as well as postindustrial phase.[33]

Since the late nineteenth century the region has been associated with a distinctly industrial image. The term "Ruhrgebiet" appeared first in an article from 1867, in which Nicolaus Hocker wrote: "With the district of Duisburg we enter the Ruhrgebiet, which is so important for the modern industry due to its coal and ore deposits as well as its smelting works and other industrial establishments." The journalist paints a romantic image of the industrial landscape from Duisburg to Hamm with its captivating industrial architecture and sounds, heaping upon it great future expectations of inexhaustible expansion and endless resources, which could be exploited for centuries and overtake industrial England.[34]

In the German Empire (est. 1871) and the Weimar Republic, the Ruhr stood out from other regions where the middle and upper classes dominated the cultural life.[35] In 1925, Paul Schneider hoped his book, *Ruhrland*, would educate local teachers that the Ruhr's industrial heritage defined its regional character, serving as the basis of a new kind of Heimat.[36] The proletarian Ruhr was being subject to a civilizing mission. Some writers portrayed a strongly negative image of the "black Ruhr" as poor, dirty, and messy.[37] Others, such as the drama critic Herbert Ihering, saw a great opportunity in the transforming industrial region: "The Ruhrgebiet is beginning. Nothing has been set here. Nothing is complete."[38]

In the second half of the twentieth century, this ambivalence between the "dark" and the "bright" in the Ruhr's industrial image increasingly captured the imagination of artists. In 1958, Heinrich Böll and Chargesheimer published their well-known volume comprising raw photography and mythological descriptions of contemporary industrial heritage in the "exotic" Ruhr.[39] This coincided with the beginning of the all-encompassing processes of deindustrialization in the Ruhr. At

33 A student project at Dortmund University of Technology found that the inhabitants of the Ruhr do not associate their home region as much with the heritage of coal and steel production as outsiders may. The green Ruhr, leisure, and culture dominate the spatial image among the younger population. Find the report at http://www.selbsti.ruhr/.

34 From Nicolaus Hocker, *Die Großindustrie Rheinlands und Westfalens, ihre Geographie, Geschichte, Production und Statistik* (Leipzig: Quandt & Händel, 1867), 115–18, reprinted in Gunnar Gawehn and Marco Rudzinksi, "Industrielle Revolution und die Entstehung des Ruhrgebiets," in *Das Ruhrgebiet: Ein Historisches Lesebuch*, vol. 1, ed. Klaus Tenfelde and Thomas Urban (Essen: Klartext, 2010), 216–17.

35 Karl Rohe, "Die Kultur des Ruhrgebiets und die Zukunft der Region," in *Zukunft war Immer: Zur Geschichte der Metropole Ruhr*, ed. Ulrich Borsdorf et al. (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 182–87; Karin Schwarz, *Bürgerliche Selbstdarstellung im Ruhrgebiet zwischen 1871 und 1918: Die kommunalen Denkmäler einer Industrieregion* (PhD diss., University of Trier, 2004), http://ubt.opus.hbz-nrw.de/volltexte/2007/440/pdf/Dissertation_Schwarz_Text.pdf.

36 Paul Schneider, *Ruhrland: Ein Heimatbuch für das rheinisch-westfälische Industriegebiet* (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1925).

37 Heinrich Hauser, *Schwarzes Revier* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1930).

38 Cited in Matthias Uecker, *Zwischen Industrieprovinz und Großstadthoffnung: Kulturpolitik im Ruhrgebiet der zwanziger Jahre* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 1994).

39 Heinrich Böll and Chargesheimer, *Das Ruhrgebiet* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witch, 1958).

this point, the industrial image shifted from evoking feelings of progress to a sense of history.

As outlined in the first section, in the following decades an industrial heritage movement emerged. Artists and distinguished scholars, such as Lutz Niethammer, recognized that the people in the Ruhr had particular life experiences worth being told to future generations.[40] Numerous industrial museums were founded. One, the Ruhr Museum, a first-class regional museum, was redesigned from an older institution of the same name and opened its gates in 2010 at a new location, the world heritage site Zeche Zollverein.[41] Overall, the demand for studies of the Ruhr and its industrial history increased.[42] This fascination with the Ruhr by artists and intellectuals nevertheless did not automatically improve the region's image among the general German public. In response, the RVR (then *Kommunalverband Ruhr*) started image campaigns to counter the negative perception of the industrial past by integrating the industrial legacy into an image of the green and forward-thinking Ruhr.[43] Since the 1980s, the industrial-historical culture in the region has been strengthened by the association Forum Geschichtskultur an Ruhr und Emscher. In the same decade the International Building Exhibition Emscherpark (IBA, 1989–99) funded more than one hundred industrial heritage projects with an overall budget of five billion deutschmarks put up by the North Rhine-Westphalian state in conjunction with local communities in the Ruhr. It is widely regarded as the breakthrough of industrial heritage in the Ruhr. Academic research on industrial heritage and the recognition of industrial monuments in the region then became of key importance for urban planning the Ruhr.[44]

It would be too restrictive to reduce the industrial image of the Ruhr to active heritage conservation and scholarly engagement and thus ignore the "banal" symbolism of industrial heritage. The social psychologist Michael Billig suggested in his work on nationalism that national identity has been consumed reflexively and

40 In 1980, funded by the government of North Rhine-Westphalia, Niethammer launched the first large oral history project in Germany with 350 interviews on "life stories and social culture in the Ruhr 1930–1960" (*Lebensgeschichte und Sozialkultur im Ruhrgebiet 1930–1960,* abbreviated as LUSIR). See Lutz Niethammer, ed., *"Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll": Faschismuserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* (Bonn: Dietz, 1983); Lutz Niethammer, ed., *"Hinterher merkt man, daß es richtig war, daß es schiefgegangen ist": Nachkriegserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet* (Bonn: Dietz, 1983); Lutz Niethammer and Alexander von Plato, eds., *"Wir kriegen jetzt andere Zeiten": Auf der Suche nach der Erfahrung des Volkes in nachfaschistischen Ländern* (Bonn: Dietz, 1985); Alexander von Plato, ed., *"Der Verlierer geht nicht leer aus": Betriebsräte geben zu Protokoll* (Bonn: Dietz 1984).

41 See the Ruhr Museum website, https://www.ruhrmuseum.de/.

42 Stefan Goch, "Stadtgeschichtsforschung im Ruhrgebiet: Ein Forschungs- und Literaturbericht," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 34 (1994): 441–75.

43 Kommunalverband Ruhr, *Wechsel auf die Zukunft* (Essen: KVR, 1982).

44 Klaus Pirke, "Industriekultur und ihre Bedeutung für gesellschaftlich-planerische Prozesse am Beispiel der Erhebung von industriekulturellen Potenzialen: Plädoyer für eine Angewandte Industriekulturforsching in der Region," *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen* 44 (2010): 171–86.

permanently by the masses who were inescapably exposed to national symbols in the industrialized West. He saw the repetitive internalization of national symbols in everyday life, or banality, as an important mechanism to secure loyalty to the nation-state.[45] In this way, the Ruhr's "banal" identity has been charged with traditions deriving from the mining industry, including customs (the miners' uniform), folk songs ("Steigerlied"), and greetings (*Glück Auf!*)—arguably part of the Ruhr's intangible heritage. Similarly, regional food (*Currywurst*) and shopping culture (*Trinkhallen*) derive from a proletarian sphere that existed around the industrial sites. Such a distinct regional-identity repertoire has been projected into the wider, national public across Germany and thus cemented the identity of the Ruhr. A good example is the popular *Schimanski* TV series broadcast since the early 1980s. The protagonist of the series, Schimanski (Götz George), a rough but lovable police officer from Duisburg, became a national icon representing the "specific selectivity" of the Ruhr culture with its particular "proverbs, phrases and topoi" that are perceived as "natural" attributes of the local people and their way of thinking.[46] This everyday regionalism is strongly connected to the industrial image of the Ruhr.

Being the heartland of football is one dominant image that has played a strong role in the everyday life of many people in the Ruhr.[47] It did not come as a surprise that *The Miracle of Bern* (2003), about a German veteran taking his son to the 1954 World Cup, was filmed in the Ruhr city of Essen and that the German Football Museum recently opened in Dortmund (not Berlin!), four hundred meters from the Dortmund U-Tower.[48] The myth of football as a working-class game has been developed in Germany most strongly in the Ruhr. The mining heritage has become an integral part of the football club culture, with the stadium of FC Schalke 04 as the primary example. The miners' song "Steigerlied" is also Schalke's anthem, sung by thousands every second weekend, and since 2014 the players' tunnel from the dressing room to the pitch replicates a coal mine. Further, this image of the *football Ruhr* is strongly intertwined not only with the image of the industrial heritage of the region, but also with the image of the *multicultural Ruhr*, where children of working-class migrants such as Ernst Kuzorra and Mesut Özil had the opportunity to become football stars.[49]

45 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

46 Karl Rohe, "Regionalkultur, regionale Identität und Regionalismus im Ruhrgebiet," in *Industriegesellschaft und Regionalkultur*, ed. Wolfgang Lipp (Cologne: C. Heymanns, 1994).

47 Stefan Goch, "Zwischen Mythos und Selbstinszenierung: Fußball im Ruhrgebiet und das Image der Region," *Westfälische Forschungen* 63 (2013): 103–18; Stefan Goch and Ralf Piorr, eds., *Wo das Fußballherz schlägt: Fußball-Land Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Essen: Klartext, 2006).

48 The Dortmund U is a former brewery building and today one of most iconic industrial heritage sites in the Ruhr, comprising galleries, educational areas, and cultural centers.

49 See for example the exhibition *Von Kuzorra bis Özil: Die Geschichte von Fußball und Migration im Ruhrgebiet* at the Bochum industrial museum Zeche Hannover in 2015, http://www.dfb.de/news/detail/fussball-und-migration-im-ruhrgiet-ausstellung-von-kuzorra-bis-oezil-129165/.

Schalke Tunnel. (Photo used with permission of Schalke 04)

The idea of the Ruhr as a "melting pot" has always been associated with labor migration.[50] Even before the arrival of the first so-called "guest workers" in the 1950s, the Ruhr has been imagined as a place of ethnic diversity. During the interwar period, the journalist, ethnologist, and sociologist (and later Nazi) Wilhelm Brepohl collected data on what he called *Ruhrvolk*, an "industrial people" that was in the process of forming a regional ethnicity.[51] Brepohl sought to evoke a "Heimat feeling"[52] in the Ruhr to emancipate his rather new, urban, transforming, and industrial homeland from the more traditional, pristine, and rural homelands in Germany. The Ruhr was to him home of the "industrial human being."[53] Being proletarian to him reflected not class but an ethnic mix of "blood" and ideas from different groups, comprising the autochthonous people from Westphalia, the Rhineland, and the ethnic German migrants from the eastern territories.[54] The

50 Dietmar Petzina, "Die Erfahrung des Schmelztiegels—zur Sozialgeschichte des Ruhrgebiets," in *Erneuerung des Ruhrgebiets: Regionales Erbe und Gestaltung für die Zukunft*, ed. Heiner Dürr and Jürgen Gramke (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1993), 41–46.

51 Wilhelm Brepohl, *Vom Industrievolk an der Ruhr* (Essen: West-Verlag, 1957); Wilhelm Brepohl, "Das Volkstum im Ruhrgebiet," *Kölnische Zeitung*, October 7, 1934, and November 23, 1934.

52 Wilhelm Brepohl, "Heimatgefühl und Heimatkunde im Ruhrgebiet," in *Heimatblätter für das Ruhrgebiet* (Essen, 1919/20). For the concept of Heimat, see, for example, Celia Applegate, *Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

53 Jens Adamski, *Ärzte des sozialen Lebens: Die Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund 1946–1969* (Essen: Klartext, 2009), 75ff.

54 See Matthias Uecker, "Heimatbewußtsein im Ruhrgebiet? Das bürgerliche Heimat-Konzept im Ruhrgebiet der Weimarer Republik: Inhalte, Funktionen Probleme," *Westfälische Forschungen* 47

Ruhrvolk also comprised in his view the massive influx of Protestant Masurians and Catholic Polish workers, who he saw as less qualified for the "higher" occupations and more capable of performing heavy work.[55]

This peculiarly ethnic "multiculturalism" of the Ruhr as constructed by Brepohl is largely forgotten today, whereas the idea that the Ruhr has been shaped by labor migration from Poland still is very much alive. Since the 1950s historians have widely recognized that the local communities in the Ruhr since the turn of the last century have been fundamentally shaped by labor migration from Silesia, Posen, and West and East Prussia—the so-called *Ruhrpolen*—without sharing Brepohl's view of the *Ruhrvolk*.[56] The successful integration of the *Ruhrpolen* today is part of the regional mythology.[57] For example, the recent announcement of the restoration of the Dom Polski, a cultural center in a working-class district of Bochum once known as Little Warsaw, suggests the enduring importance of multicultural *lieux de memoire* in the mindscape of the Ruhr, harking back to the first decades of the industrial Ruhr.[58] The establishment of the documentation center for the culture and history of Poles in Germany, the Porta Polonica, not in Berlin, but in Bochum, is also a sign that the significance of Polish migration to the Ruhr is recognized not only in the region but also by national governments in Berlin and Warsaw.[59]

In the second half of the twentieth century, the Ruhr experienced another tremendous influx of labor migrants. In the 1950s the Ruhr played a key role in West Germany's economic miracle. Tens of thousands of guest workers from countries such as Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey came to work in the Ruhr industry, and cultural activities in recent decades have highlighted this multicultural heritage of labor. The Zeche Hannover industrial museum in Bochum, for example, has highlighted the history of migrants workers in a series of temporary exhibitions and events for the last fifteen years[60] and the Henrichshütte industrial museum in Hattingen, a former steel mill that had its production partly shifted to China, exhibits photos of the many guest workers arriving in the Ruhr.[61] Duisburg Marxloh, still shaped by the relics of the steel industry, markets its Weseler Strasse

(1997): 135–51, 146–47. We are grateful for the helpful advice from Jens Adamski. It is beyond dispute that Brepohl had strong anti-Polish sentiments.

55 Wilhelm Brepohl, *Der Aufbau des Ruhrvolkes im Zuge der Ost-West-Wanderung* (Recklinghausen: Bitter, 1948), 4.

56 See Stadt Recklinhausen, ed., *Hochmarklarer Lesebuch: Kohle war nicht alles. 100 Jahre Ruhrgebietsgeschichte* (Oberhausen: Asso, 1981), 21; Christoph Kleßmann, *Polnische Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet: 1870–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1978).

57 Horst Pöttger, "Zu Verdeutscht: Die Mär der integrierten Ruhrpolen," *Die Zeit*, February 26, 2015, http://www.zeit.de/2015/07/integration-migration-ruhr-polen.

58 "Ausbau des polnischen Hauses kann beginnen," *WAZ*, June 15, 2016, http://www.derwesten.de/staedte/bochum/ausbau-des-polnischen-hauses-kann-beginnen-id11920820.html.

59 See the Porta Polonica website, http://www.porta-polonica.de/.

60 See the Zeche Hannover industrial museum website, https://www.lwl.org/industriemuseum/standorte/zeche-hannover/english/discovering-history.

61 See the Henrichshütte industrial museum website, https://www.lwl.org/industriemuseum/standorte/henrichshuette-hattingen/english.

as the "most romantic street of Europe," where postmigrant families, often of Turkish descent, produce wedding dresses. And at the Bochum Westpark, the area of a former cast iron plant, citizens of the Ruhr recently celebrated a multicultural festival, Ruhr International, which represented various ethnic groups in the Ruhr.[62] This image of the multicultural Ruhr does not necessarily stand in opposition to the image of the *German Ruhr*, which currently searches for greater recognition; the regional cultural elite promote the image of the Ruhr as Germany's industrial heartland, thus making claims to a broader national identity.

The German Heimat movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century did not acknowledge anything German in the working-class quarters of the Ruhr cities and the transforming landscape, where nature had yielded to industry.[63] Nationalists presented the region's Social Democratic labor movement and any kind of left-wing radicalism as Heimat-less, unpatriotic, and un-German.[64] The Ruhr, however, gained national significance during its occupation by France and Belgium in 1923.[65] In the following years, nationalists such as Bernhard Schulte wrote about the Ruhr as "the much admired heart chamber of the German industry." The traveler, according to Schulte, would know that "this is the land of labor, where the loyal German hearts are beating."[66] In 1933, the year when the Nazis came to power, geographer Hans Spethmann saw in the Ruhr a new kind of Heimat for the German worker, something no left-wing ideology had been able to offer.[67] Under the new regime, the Ruhr was presented as the *Waffenschmiede des deutschen Reiches* (the armory of the German Empire).[68]

Germany's industrial heartland survived two world wars and the troubled interwar period, entering the second half of the twentieth century with the controversial image as the nation's center for the weapons production that had been essential to German warfare since 1914.[69] Subsequently, it was central to the reconstruction of the country and its emancipation within the West during the Cold War. The Schuman Plan of 1950 and the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community

62 Sven Westernströer, "Multikulti-Party im Bochumer Westpark wieder an Pfingsten," *WAZ*, March 22, 2016, http://www.derwesten.de/staedte/bochum/multikulti-party-im-westpark-wieder-an-pfingsten-id11672695.html.

63 Hans Heinrich Blotevogel, "Die Region Ruhrgebiet zwischen Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion," *Westfälische Forschungen* 52 (2002): 465; Uecker, "Heimatbewußtsein im Ruhrgebiet?," 137–38.

64 Goch, "Der Ruhrgebietler," 612–15; Uecker, "Heimatbewußtsein im Ruhrgebiet?," 141–44.

65 Gerd Krüger, "'Aktiver' und passiver Widerstand im Ruhrkampf 1923," in *Funktion und Gestalt militärischer Fremdherrschaft von der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Günther Kronenbitter, Markus Pöhlmann, and Dierk Walter Besatzung (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), 119–30.

66 Bernhard Schulte, *Westfalen, Land der Arbeit: Seine Wirtschaft und sein Gemeinschaftsleben*, vol. 1 (Dortmund: F. W. Ruhfus, 1931), 145, cited in Blotevogel, "Die Region Ruhrgebiet zwischen Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion," 474.

67 Hans Spethmann, *Das Ruhrgebiet*, 3 vols. (1933; repr., Essen: Klartext 1993).

68 Bruno Fischer, *Ruhrgebiet 1933–1945: Historischer Reiseführer* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2009), 32.

69 Falk Pingel, "Das Ruhrgebiet—Deutschlands Waffenschmiede oder Industriezentrum für den europäischen Wiederaufbau," *Westfälische Forschungen* 36 (1986): 120–32.

(which would later become the European Union) sought to prevent further struggles over the essential resources in Europe, especially with France. In this context, West Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) catapulted the Ruhr's industry quickly back to the forefront of national production, reaffirming its central status for the wealth of the young republic. This positive image of the Ruhr as being vital to the nation's economic power has been carefully maintained ever since.[70]

Since 1969, the mining museum in Bochum (est. 1930) has held the national archive for mining history, and in 1976, the museum was renamed the Deutsches Bergbau-Museum (the German Mining Museum) signaling national recognition of the Ruhr's mining heritage, followed by continuing federal support.[71] Since the 1980s, the region implemented an image campaign under the slogan "*Das Ruhrgebiet: Ein starkes Stück Deutschlands*" (The Ruhr: A Strong Piece of Germany). In the 1990s this was complemented by a campaign in English entitled "The Ruhr: The Driving Force of Germany."[72] While these campaigns sought to convey a forward-looking image of postindustrial normality, they were not able to move beyond the emphasis on the Ruhr's historical centrality to the nation in its role as the industrial powerhouse. The struggle of local politicians and the cultural elites for national recognition continues. The RVR's former representative, Dieter Nellen, for example, has called for a legitimate place for the Ruhr's industrial past in Prussian and ultimately Germany's national history.[73]

One reason for the decentralized character of the Ruhr region, its Ruhrbanity as mentioned above, is its political structure. Ever since the 1920s, administrative efforts to centralize the strange urbanity of the Ruhr in the form of one "normal" city, the Ruhrstadt, similar to the formation of Groß-Berlin (est. 1920), have been visible but never successful.[74] More fundamentally, however, the Ruhr as an urban space has not been able to overcome the simple fact that it has always followed the logic of industry. Urban planning always played second fiddle to the needs of industry. As the writer Heinrich Hauser wondered as early as 1930: "What is city here, what is country?"[75] The Ruhr has always been presented as distinct from

70 Hans Rudolf Uthoff, *Als der Pott wieder kochte: Wirtschaftswunder im Ruhrgebiet 1950–1969* (Essen: Klartext, 2015).

71 Rainer Slotta, ed., *75 Jahre Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum (1930 bis 2005): Vom Wachsen und Werden eines Museums*, 2 vols. (Bochum: Dt. Bergbau-Museum, 2005).

72 Roland Kirbach, "Kein starkes Stück Deutschlands," *Die Zeit,* April 23, 1993.

73 Susanne Abeck, "Industriekultur 2020. Positionen und Visionen für Nordrhein-Westfalen, 11/12 November 2011, Dortmund" (Conference report, Dortmund, October 9, 2012), http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-4408. See also Stefan Berger, Ulrich Borsdorf, and Dieter Nellen, "Eine nationale Aufgabe: Das industrielle Erbe an Rhein und Ruhr," *Politik und Kultur* 4, no. 15 (July/August 2015).

74 Stefan Goch, "Am (vorläufigen) Ende der Ruhrstadt-Debatten," in *Regionale Planung im Ruhrgebiet, Von Robert Schmidt lernen?*, ed. Renate Kastorff-Viehmann, Yasemin Utku, Regionalverband Ruhr (Essen: Klartext, 2014), 205–12; for an early critique of the chaotic urban structure of the Ruhr, see Erik Reger, "Ruhrprovinz," *Weltbühne* 24, no. 2 (July 1928): 51, 918–24; Erik Reger, "Kulturpolitik and der Ruhr," *Das Kunstblatt* 13, no. 11 (November 1929): 291–99.

75 Heinrich Hauser, *Schwarzes Revier* (Berlin: S. Fischer 1930), 26.

other, "normal" cities, that is, as a city of cities that themselves consist of "industrial villages,"[76] built close to the mining complexes and steel mills around which the workers' lifeworld was organized.

This ensemble of industrial villages and production sites has been connected by a spaghetti bowl of infrastructural networks crossing through the industrial landscape, a geographic pattern typical for the Ruhr.[77] The urban image of the Ruhr has thus not been able to escape the industrial. The discovery of the Ruhr's own industrial chic is an enduring trend among the new generation of cultural activists in the region. Recent creative efforts to revitalize urban spaces in the Ruhr, such as the regional network Urbane Künste Ruhr, Die Urbanisten in Dortmund, or the Zukunftsakademie NRW in Bochum, still focus on the industrial aesthetics of the region in their projects.[78] The representation of the Ruhr's urbanity thus remains dependent on its industrial image.

One important feature of the decentralized urbanity in the postindustrial Ruhr has been the growing emphasis on the green spaces in between and on top of the industrial remnants. Entering a symbiosis of nature, urbanity, and the industrial, *Industrienatur* ("industrial nature") attempts to reconcile elements usually thought of being in opposition.[79] Efforts at greening the Ruhr, as Hillary Angelo has clearly shown in her dissertation, have been apparent throughout the region's history in an attempt to "fix" and improve the urbanism of the industrial cities.[80] In recent years, however, the increasingly popular image of the *green Ruhr* has hardly competed with the industrial image of the Ruhr—rather it has been presented as an aesthetically fascinating and unique feature of Ruhrbanity.[81] The green and the industrial are presented as rather complementary, the natural beauty described as the fortunate outcome of industry.[82]

During the IBA Emscherpark in the 1990s the concept of *Industrienatur* became not only part of Ruhr's tourism marketing, but more profoundly one of the key concepts in the reconfiguration of the region.[83] Similar to nature parks, in designated *Industrienatur* areas, nature has been staged as an escape. At the same time the areas

76 Detlev Vonde, *Revier der großen Dörfer: Industrialisierung und Stadtentwicklung im Ruhrgebiet. Industrialisierung und Stadtentwicklung im Ruhrgebiet* (Essen: Klartext, 1989).

77 Wilhelm Dege, *Das Ruhrgebiet* (Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt, 1976).

78 See the Urbane Künste Ruhr website, http://www.urbanekuensteruhr.de/en; the Die Urbanisten website, https://dieurbanisten.de/; and the Zukunftsakademie NRW website, http://www.zaknrw.de/.

79 Sarah Hemmings and Martin Kagel, "Memory Gardens: Aesthetic Education and Political Emancipation in the 'Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord,'" *German Studies Review* 33, no. 2 (May 2010): 252.

80 Hillary Angelo, "How Green Became Good, Urban Greening as Social Improvement in Germany's Ruhr Valley" (PhD diss., New York University, 2014).

81 See Christine Vogt and Nina Dunkmann, eds., *Green City—Geformte Landschaft—Vernetzte Natur: Das Ruhrgebiet in der Kunst* (Berlin: Kerber, 2015).

82 Pia Eiringhaus, "Industrie wird Natur—postindustrielle Repräsentationen von Region und Umwelt im Ruhrgebiet" (MA thesis, Universität Bochum, 2017).

83 See Jörg Dettmar and Karl Ganser, eds., *IndustrieNatur—Ökologie und Gartenkunst im Emscher Park* (Stuttgart: Eugen Ulmer, 1999); Jörg Dettmar, "Wilderness or Park?," *Topos: European Landscape Magazine*, March 1999.

Duisburg, Landschaftspark, Duisburg-Nord, Hochofen, February 2016. (Photo by Dietmar Rabich, 2 — 2016 — 1115. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0)

can be seen as "a reminder of what nature would be like if it still existed" in the absence of industrialism.[84] Industrial heritage therefore became more approachable through spaces of "industrial nature" to the people from the Ruhr and visitors. The best example for such an area is perhaps the Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, the site of a former Thyssen steel plant that closed in 1985, which has attracted criticism for its de-historical presentation of the industrial past (further discussed in the following section). The industrial image of the Ruhr has remained historically dominant because of its symbiotic ability to cling to other images of the region.

De-historicizing Industrial Heritage

The debate over the Landschaftspark epitomizes the problems of memory in the Ruhr's representation of its industrial past. Wolfgang Ebert, involved in the preservation of the Duisburg steel plant, was concerned by nostalgic glorifications of the past and schmaltzy regionalism (*Heimattümelei*).[85] While those designing the park claimed that memory was central to the park's design, Sarah Hemmings and Martin Kagel argued that "while traces of ecological disturbance play an important

84 Dean MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers* (London: Routledge, 1992), 115.

85 Wolfgang Ebert, "Industriegeschichte im Revier—lebendige Vergangenheit oder Altlast?," in *Erneuerung des Ruhrgebiets*, ed. Heiner Dürr and Jürgen Gramke (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1993), 19–40.

role in explaining the industrial aspects of the landscape, the actual history of the site is removed to a distant elsewhere, a conceptual space outside of the actual grounds."[86] In the case of the Landschaftspark, a place of cultural reappropriation for aesthetic pleasure is "less of a bastion against forgetting than a contribution to obliterating the past."[87] The aesthetic appeal has been elevated over the sense of history and political space. The struggles of the workers in the steel industry have been disguised under the growing "industrial nature." As Anna Storm suggested, it represents a missed opportunity to construct a more critical memory site and engage the public with the history of labor in the steel industry and the destructive environmental history of this site.[88]

To what extent, one may ask, are the shortcomings in constructing a more critical historical culture for the Ruhr related to constant attempts to revalorize the deindustrializing region, including its industrial heritage? The region's industrial heritage often services the goal of structural transformation. As Jörn Rüsen has written, "the Ruhr region is a good example of the fact that structural change can be consciously designed and accomplished through the servicing of memory."[89] We agree with Rüsen's perception of a danger that the "historical conditions and the actual life-nexus of the people in the Ruhr vanish into the beautiful appearance of aesthetically constructed relics. . . . The shadow of the aesthetic splendor is a dehistoricized past."[90] The Ruhr's industrial past has been subject to growing touristification and therefore a tendency towards a stronger aestheticization, which has led to a dilution of a concept of critical industrial heritage.[91]

The concept of (industrial) heritage is continuously changing. It is defined and redefined by articulations and negotiations of values, and understanding the concept's meaning thus requires a careful look at the discourses and negotiations surrounding its construction.[92] Three different periods with distinct legitimizing narratives can be identified: first, the rescue of industrial buildings and their conversion; second, the consolidation of heritage marked by the IBA Emscherpark; and third, trends towards the increasing touristification and commercialization in the lead up to the cultural capital year 2010 and after. These three periods were mirrored by three major challenges: first, saving as much as possible; second, developing concepts for future utilization; and third, staying relevant for the future.

86 Hemmings and Kagel, "Memory Gardens," 252.

87 Ibid., 253.

88 Anna Storm, *Hope and Rust: Reinterpreting the Industrial Place in the Late 20th Century* (Stockholm: Division of History of Science and Technology, Royal Institute of Technology, KTH, 2008), 129.

89 Jörn Rüsen, "Industriedenkmale und Geschichtskultur im Ruhrgebiet," *Forum Industriedenkmalpflege und Geschichtskultur* no. 2 (1998): 4.

90 Ibid.

91 For the debates over the concept of *Industriekultur* (here translated as industrial heritage), see Uta Hassler and Alexander Kierdorf, eds., *Denkmale des Industriezeitalters: von der Geschichte des Umgangs mit Industriekultur* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 2000); Bettina Günter, ed., *Alte und neue Industriekultur im Ruhrgebiet* (Essen: Klartext, 2010), 31–40.

92 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006); Storm, *Hope and Rust*.

A closer look at the utilization and interpretation of industrial heritage, especially in the third phase, unveils the pitfalls of today's heritage industry in the Ruhr.

The first phase emphasized the saving of industrial buildings and defining why they were worth saving. In the 1960s a change in the perception and interpretation of industrialization, and its cultural and social impetus, laid the ground for preserving and researching technical monuments as material remains of this epoch.[93] Those remains formed only one part of the emerging interest in the history of industrial society as it was manifested in the then evolving term *Industriekultur*.[94] The term referred not only to industrial heritage but also to the interpretation of the history of the industrial age. Hermann Glaser, then head of cultural affairs of the city of Nuremberg, seminally defined this concept as "turning towards a world that constitutes the offspring of our society."[95] Glaser realized his ideas in the Centrum Industriekultur in Nuremberg (est. 1979).

Deindustrialization opened new opportunities for the Ruhr's historiography and encouraged further interest in its regional history.[96] The new social history and the "history from below" movement of the 1970s was critical of the status quo and supported the revitalizing and converting of industrial monuments into industrial museums. Using oral history methods, the new museums started telling the history of workers and their everyday culture, following the motto of "dig where you stand." The new social history and history of everyday life distinguished the industrial museum from the traditional technical museum as well as the *Heimatmuseum* (local museum).[97] In the context of the new social movement activism at that time, critical intellectuals pursued a more urban and sociohistorical approach to monument protection. They not only became key agents in the regional conservation movement but also supported workers initiatives at the grassroots level in their struggles against the Social Democratic government's urban renewal programs, which planned to demolish and privatize the historic miners' settlements.[98]

The passage from the first to the second period was characterized by an increasing confidence of the academics working on industrial heritage. Books such as *Der steinerne Prometheus* (Lithic prometheus), *Kathedralen der Arbeit* (Cathedrals of work), and *Mythos und Moderne* (Myth and modernity) heralded a phase of consolidation where the focus shifted from what could be saved to the question of

93 Alexander Kierdorf and Uta Hassler, *Denkmale des Industriezeitalters: Von der Geschichte des Umgangs mit Industriekultur* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 2000).

94 Indre Döpcke, "Neue Nutzung alter Lasten? Zum Begriff der 'Industriekultur' und seinem Gebrauch im Ruhrgebiet," *Forum Industriedenkmalpflege und Geschichtskultur* no. 1 (2005): 29.

95 Hermann Glaser, *Industriekultur und Alltagsleben: Vom Biedermeier zur Postmoderne* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), 8.

96 For an overview of historical research on the Ruhr area, see Bernd Faulenbach and Franz Jelich, *Literaturwegweiser zur Geschichte an Ruhr und Emscher* (Essen: Klartext, 1999).

97 Cf. John Hartmut and Ira Mazzoni, eds., *Industrie- und Technikmuseen im Wandel. Standortbestimmungen und Perspektiven* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2005).

98 Projektgruppe Eisenheim, *Rettet Eisenheim: Gegen die Zerstörung der ältesten Arbeitersiedlung des Ruhrgebietes* (Berlin: Verlag für das Studium der Arbeiterbewegung, 1975).

how industrial heritage could be exploited to construct a regional identity and help to facilitate structural change.[99] A broader acceptance of industrial heritage laid the ground for this development. The IBA Emscherpark, beginning in 1989, was an important step for the consolidating of industrial heritage as a tool in revitalizing the Ruhr region. Not only did this ten-year program provide a large-scale master plan for rebuilding the Ruhr and restoring the environment but it also laid the foundation for the commercialization of industrial heritage. The Ruhr's industrial heritage was supposed to make a difference in a global economy and contribute to the region's economic recovery.[100]

The construction of the Landschaftspark, as discussed above, and the development of the *Route Industriekultur* (industrial heritage trail), which we will discuss below, were two important steps towards such commercialization of regional heritage, heralding the emergence of a third period of interest in industrial heritage. The presentation of the Ruhr's industrial heritage during this phase followed a process of "eventization" perceivable more generally in Western culture: entertainment events were declared to be "culture."[101] As Tim Edensor has argued, such processes of commercialization carry the potential of externalizing social memory, erasing unwanted parts and recontextualizing them in order to foster specific political agendas.[102] Such discomfort with an alleged "Disneyfication" of heritage dates back to the 1980s when historian Robert Hewison criticized the "heritage industry" in those terms.[103] The degradation of heritage to a mere cultural resource has since been vividly discussed in the field.[104]

The Ruhr's industrial heritage trail was, according to Wolfgang Ebert, "probably the most ambitious project of industrial tourism."[105] It has played a decisive role in structuring touristic space in the Ruhr. Several private limited liability companies

99 Andreas Beaugrand et al., eds., *Der steinerne Prometheus. Industriebau und Stadtkultur: Plädoyer für eine neue Urbanität* (Berlin: FAB, 1989); Wolfgang Ebert, *Kathedralen der Arbeit: Historische Industriearchitektur in Deutschland* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1996); and Andrea Höber and Karl Ganser, *Industriekultur, Mythos und Moderne im Ruhrgebiet* (Essen: Klartext, 1999). See also Hans Blotevogel, "Vom Kohlenrevier zur Region? Anfänge regionaler Identitätsbildung im Ruhrgebiet," in *Erneuerung des Ruhrgebiets. Regionales Erbe und Gestaltung für die Zukunft*, ed. Heiner Dürr and Jürgen Gramke (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1993), 47–52; Ulrich Heinemann, "Industriekultur: Vom Nutzen und Nachteil für das Ruhrgebiet?," *Forum Industriedenkmalpflege und Geschichtskultur* no. 1 (2003): 56–58.

100 Gert-Jan Hospers, "Industrial Heritage Tourism and Regional Restructuring in the European Union," *European Planning Studies* 10, no. 3 (2002): 401.

101 See Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 253.

102 Tim Edensor, *Industrial Ruin: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (London: Bloombsbury, 2005), 126.

103 Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

104 See for example, David Brett, *The Construction of Heritage* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996); David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

105 Wolfgang Ebert, "Strategien und Konzepte für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung des Tourismus zu Zielen der Industriekultur," in *Tourismus und Industriekultur. Vermarktung von Technik und Arbeit*, ed. Jürgen Schwank (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2004), 25.

dealing with marketing the Ruhr's industrial heritage have been founded as a result of the creation of the trail—The Projekt Ruhr GmbH as successor of the IBA Emscherpark for executing a follow-up masterplan for selected tourist sites; the Kultur Ruhr GmbH for developing cultural offers relevant for the tourism industry, including the RuhrTriennale; and the Ruhrgebiet Tourismus GmbH as operational basis for the marketing of the region.[106] The culminating point of these efforts can be seen in the nomination of the region for the European cultural capital in 2010.

In the cultural capital year 2010 and using the motto "Change through culture—culture through change," the Ruhr's marketing campaign pointed to its economic ambition of turning the Ruhr "from myth into a brand."[107] Mythology and marketing, however, are not necessarily opposing categories. The establishment of the industrial heritage trail serviced many demands: it became "a regional image bearer, a symbol of identification [and] a tourist attraction."[108]

Claus Leggewie rightly criticized these marketing campaigns for turning the region's industrial heritage into a "culture industry" instead of continuing the necessary ecological transformation of the region.[109] Yet within that industry, making money often is less important than providing a new identity for the region. The cutting-edge Ruhrtriennale art festival, for example, legitimizes itself by claiming to represent the transition of the Ruhr from an industrial hub to a postindustrial center for the arts. Johan Simons, the current director, stated in 2015 that the Ruhr's "identity" was threatened by a "vacuum" that needed to be filled. The region's identity was based on industrial labor, which was now redundant. To Simons, performing arts spaces in industrial heritage buildings were the answer to the problem. The Dutch artist emphasized his own working-class background and therefore his deep understanding of the people and their culture in the Ruhr.

The Emscherkunst project, which has received much less attention than the Ruhrtriennale, is accompanying the transformation of Europe's largest sewer, the Emscher, back into a river, a space of human leisure and of biodiversity. The Emscher was used as an open waste-water canal from the late nineteenth century because coal mining had made it impossible to install an underground sewage system. Under the IBA Emscherpark scheme the construction of an underground pipe system got underway to renaturalize the "river." The art projects of the Emscherkunst, built along the "renaturalized" and old drain parts of the Emscher since 2010, engage with the region's industrial heritage in a critical and innovative way. For example, in 2016 Swiss artist Roman Singer's art installation *Analyse*, next to the historic electrical

106 Achim Prossek, "Zwischen Kitsch und Kathedralen: die Ruhrtriennale und das Ruhrgebiet," in *Themenorte*, ed. Michael Flitner and Julia Lossau (Münster: LIT, 2005); Ebert, "Strategien und Konzepte," 27–28.

107 Julia Frohne et al., *RUHR. Vom Mythos zur Marke: Marketing und PR für die Kulturhauptstadt Europas RUHR.2010* (Essen: Klartext, 2010).

108 Kai Boldt and Martina Gelhar, *Das Ruhrgebiet. Landschaft, Industrie, Kultur* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2008), 75.

109 Claus Leggewie, "Kulturhauptstadt wozu?," *Die Zeit*, October 7, 2010.

Superflex *Waste Water Fountain*. (Photo by Roman Mensing)

substation of Recklinghausen, analyzed the remaining poisonous ingredients of the Emscher River, while healing it with clean water.[110] A few meters further down the river, the Danish art group Superflex installed *Waste Water Fountain*. The group writes on its website:

> With Waste Water Fountain SUPERFLEX asks if there is not an important element being lost in the sanitisation of the industrial version of the Emscher River. It might just be that this smelly and potentially health hazardous river teachers [*sic*] us something about the fundamentals of human civilisation—an element that gets lots in the process of "re-naturalisation."[111]

Conclusion

The identity of the Ruhr rests on the powerful image of its inescapable industrial past. Whichever mindscape we turn to, the industrial past is always already there. The political culture of Rhenish capitalism has made it possible to establish an extensive ensemble of industrial heritage sites there unlike any other industrial

110 See the Emscherkunst 2016 website, http://www.emscherkunst.de/.

111 See Superflex website, "Waste Water Fountain at Emscher Kunst 2016," http://superflex.net/activities/2016/06/04/superflex_participates_at_emscher_kunst_2016.

region of the world. First of all, this form of corporatism managed the structural transformation of the Ruhr relatively successfully, especially when compared to other regions of heavy industry in Europe and North America, and subsequently this corporatist alliance was also responsible for turning a lot of the active industry and its associated culture into industrial heritage in order to leave behind a proud legacy to both the achievements of those industries and of the structural transformation from those industries to a new knowledge-based society in the Ruhr. However, it remains a vital challenge to develop further the critical historical culture of the industrial heritage movement in the Ruhr. Industrial heritage, reduced to an object of tourism and a commodity, runs the risk of sanitizing history. Instead heritage initiatives need to build on what has been achieved in the Ruhr to arrive at more self-reflective forms of heritage by asking who is currently defining this heritage to what end.[112] A critical industrial heritage has great potential to become part of a critical historical culture in the Ruhr, affording new reflections on the urbanism, labor conditions, and environmental changes of the industrial age without following simple self-congratulatory motifs.

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112 See Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.