

Call for papers for the international conference

**Deindustrialization and Reindustrialization Re-Connected.
Comparing Developments in the Global South and the Global North
from the 1970s to the Present Day**

Vienna, May 31-June 3, 2023

Organizers:

Stefan Berger, Institute for Social Movements, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Ulf Brunnbauer, Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg

Philipp Ther, Research Centre for the History of Transformations and East Central Europe,
Universität Wien

Place: University of Vienna

Time: 31 May 2023 – 3 June 2023

Studies of deindustrialization in different parts of the world have pointed out that deindustrialization was often connected in intricate ways with forms of reindustrialization. Most obviously and commonly, deindustrialization at one particular place implicated industrialization somewhere else, often far removed from the place that industry had been located before deindustrialization hit. Sometimes, however, industries did not move all that far. And sometimes, the transformations associated with deindustrialization did not lead to complete devastation of the industrial cores and the abandonment of urban environments – a process most often associated with the rust belt of the United States and centers of heavy industry in formerly socialist countries. Even there one can argue that deindustrialization went hand in hand with economic transformations that led, in certain parts, to examples of reindustrialization. At the same time, optimistic predictions about a surge in manufacturing in the Global South because of the relocation of capital from the North thanks to an abundant supply of cheap labor and natural resources, and thanks to trade liberalization failed to materialize. The (South) East Asian ‘tiger’ model appears to be not so easily replicable.

Overall then, the organizers of this international conference contend that it is time to reinvestigate the relationship between deindustrialization and reindustrialization, between industrial decline and resilience, and non-industrialization. We want to do this in globally comparative as well as transnational perspectives, bringing together research on the global north and the global south, and West and East, including China and East Asia. For this exploratory conference we want to focus on heavy industries which are often seen as emblematic both for early industrialization and deindustrialization, and which were said to be particularly prone to relocation away from traditional industrial heartlands.

The conference will therefore focus on coal and other extractive industries, iron and steel, as well as shipbuilding as paradigmatic examples of de- and re-industrialization and of relocation across different spaces. These industries also allow the discussion of the role of their gendered nature for decisions on closure or relocation. By and large, predominantly “male” industries had often

enjoyed an elevated political status relative to industries with a higher share of female labour – this could result in more or less protection, depending on the power of labour. However, even within the Global South and East Asia, industries have moved from one place to the other, as capital has been looking for ever cheaper ways of production in our age of an increasingly disembedded capitalism. There, where they are socially and politically well embedded, some of these industries proved resilient and managed to adapt. Hence, structure and practice are our guiding principles. We want, thus, to find out:

- a) What are the structural and long-term preconditions of the mentioned phenomena are?
- b) How do different groups of actors perceive, enact, or oppose them.

The conference also seeks to explore the political economy of de- and reindustrialization, and its intersection with crucial dimensions of social inequality such as gender, race, and education. How do the spheres of production and reproduction change as a consequence of deindustrialization? What happens to those people who are left behind when industrial capital moves? How do they resist processes of deindustrialization? Through which forms of collective action, such as trade unions, social movements, and political parties, did they achieve a higher degree of resilience? Tracing reactions from the shopfloor and within the communities affected by deindustrialization is one aspect of our agenda. Another one is the reaction from economic and political elites. How do business leaders and managers react if industries move from one place to another? Do they simply abandon communities, or do they employ conscious strategies to help communities transition from one economic and social regime to another? Do political elites engage in forms of economic steering and if so, why and how? To what extent is political macro-economic management capable of countering the effects of deindustrialization and to re-embed capitalism? What is the impact of different patterns of political representation on the outcomes of industrial restructuring? Why do policy makers intervene at some places more than at others, and what is the impact of industrial gender cleavages? Under which conditions do governments provide support for the mitigation of the social costs of deindustrialization, and which policies appear successful and which not?

We are interested in papers dealing with economic processes and social practices but also with questions of cultural representation and the symbolic dimension of the economy. Which cultural reservoirs and memoryscapes are used by actors resisting, or advocating the end of industry (or on the opposite, its creation) to create legitimacy for their claims? What is the symbolic place of the mentioned industries in the social imagination, how and why does it change? How do these relate to gender?

Both the memoryscapes of deindustrialization and the sites of social struggle over the fate of industry are often connected to fundamental conflicts about the nature of global capitalism and its always locally specific manifestations. Hence, we are interested in attempts to either dis-embed or re-embed capitalism following economic crisis and we want to explore how this takes place in different but possibly interconnected parts of the world. Deindustrialization studies have to date focused largely on industrial regions of the global north. Even here local case studies have dominated the field, with little comparison or transregional contextualization. There are of course exceptions, such as the works by Steven High, Alice Mah, Lutz Raphael, and James Rhodes, among others. We want to build on this body of literature also by referring to (still very rare) transregional studies seeking to explore the interconnections between forms of de- and reindustrialization in different places such as Jeff Cowie's *Capital Moves* (1999). Our vision of global comparisons, therefore, aims to highlight interlinkages and differences around the globe but also the importance of place: to what degree, for example, do the legacies of state-socialism or colonial penetration shape later processes of de- and reindustrialization?

The conference organizers invite, above all, abstracts from scholars who are seeking to develop such transregional and comparative perspectives on the history of deindustrialization, of reindustrialization and industrial resilience. In particular, we invite proposals seeking to relate the experiences in the Global South with those in the Global North, and vice versa. We invite both senior and early career researchers, and the research presented can be in its initial stage or well advanced. Due to the gendered nature of heavy industry (and the preponderance of men at economic history conferences), we are especially encouraging abstract submissions by female colleagues. At the same time, we invite transregional and comparative studies within the Global South, as we are still lacking a comprehensive understanding of how processes of de- and reindustrialization are interconnected there. Last but not least, we encourage contributions that seek comparative or transnational perspectives on key countries of the Global North, for example by comparing different industrial regions or contrasting the capitalist with the (state)socialist experience. Studies interconnecting north and south perspectives are particularly welcome.

For the sake of comparability, we intend to focus on three industries, which often served as the economic but also symbolic and social core of industrial regions and face deindustrialization pressures: (1) coal and other extractive industries, (2) iron and steel, (3) shipbuilding. Yet, contributions comparing their fate with other industries are welcome as well. We invite not only social and economic historians, but also scholars from cognate fields dealing with those issues, such as social anthropology, sociology, political science, and political economy. The dimension of change over time, though, must be crucial in each paper. We envision four thematic clusters:

- 1) Relocation: How was deindustrialization in the global north connected to (re)industrialization in the global south, including East Asia?
- 2) Governance: How far were governments involved and able to steer processes of de- and reindustrialization?
- 3) Collective action: What was the impact of protest and mobilization by civil society actors and social movements?
- 4) Representation: What cultural reservoirs were available and exploited in (post)industrial transitions?

Keynote speakers:

Doris Fischer, University of Würzburg, Chair of China Business and Economics, Germany

Lachlan MacKinnon, Canada Research Chair in Post-Industrial Communities, Cape Breton University, Canada

Joanna Wawrzyniak, Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw, Poland

Please send a title and brief abstract (300 words) plus a one-page CV in one PDF file to Mrs. Anita Biricz, email: anita.biricz@univie.ac.at

Deadline: September 15, 2022

Depending on successful fundraising, the organizers plan to cover accommodation costs and to support travel costs.