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**Industrial heritage without history:  
diverse conceptualizations of industrial heritage in the  
Ústí nad Labem Region (Czechia)**

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Industrial heritage is frequently accentuated in development strategies of old industrial regions as an asset that may be subject to commodification and thus helping to support employment, improve the quality of public spaces and more generally to facilitate re-imaging of rather negatively perceived old industrial regions (Jonsen-Verbeke 1999, Blotvogel 2001, Barski and Zathay 2018, Berger et al. 2018). However, incorporation of industrial heritage into the development endeavour of local or regional actors is conditioned by its specific conceptualizations related to a particular set of cultural values, expectations, heritage discourses as well as quality of institutions relating to its potential for bringing a city/region on new development paths. Such preconditions as well as territorial contexts and public awareness of industrial heritage (Feifan Xie 2015) vary across both the institutional domains and space and, as a result, industrial heritage may help to (re-

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)construct the image of some localities, while posing a barrier for development in others (Bosák et al. 2018).

To illustrate the different conceptualizations, values and expectations associated with industrial heritage, we will present and discuss in this paper our findings from the survey of perception of industrial heritage in the Ústí nad Labem Region (in Czechia) by representatives of local and regional authorities, managers of regional industrial companies and various NGOs and cultural organizations. Ústí nad Labem Region was one of the cores of the industrial revolution in Czechia (Hruška et al. 2017); its considerable economic growth started in the mid-19th Century. However, today, mainly due to the fundamental social transformation resulting from expulsion of former German population after the World War II, later transition to centrally planned economy, and finally a problematic post-socialist economic restructuring since the 1990s, the region struggles with serious social and economic problems (Koutský 2011).

Based on thirty the semi-structured interviews we found out that despite a relatively high level of 'industrial' path dependence in the thinking of regional political and economic elites, intangible artefacts (such as original brands of products, company names, know-how) are considered as industrial heritage more frequently than existing industrial architecture. Moreover, very often negative aspects of industrial heritage are stressed out (brownfields, disturbed landscape, unfavourable social structure). There was a difference among narratives of individual groups of interview partners – whereas existing traditional companies emphasize their contribution to the local image, economic performance and job creation, representatives of public administration focus on the problems caused by the industrial restructuring during the post-socialist development in 1990s (brownfields revitalization, inherited social structures and urban design). Members of NGOs acknowledge a possible positive role of industrial heritage in the regional development

(re-imagining, tourism, creative industries) but from their point of view, it is necessary to mobilize regional industrial companies to become more active in the public life of the Ústí nad Labem Region.

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