



International Conference of Labour and Social History

Internationale Tagung der HistorikerInnen der Arbeiter- und anderer sozialer Bewegungen  
Conférence internationale d'histoire ouvrière et sociale

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## PROGRAMME (Version: 01.07.2023)

# 'Deindustrialization, Reindustrialization and Economic Transitions – Transnational Perspectives from Labour History'

7-9 September, 2023

AK-Bildungshaus Jägermayrhof, Römerstraße 98, A-4020 Linz, Austria

*Conference Languages: English – German*

58th ITH Conference, organized by the International Conference of Labour and Social History (ITH), kindly supported by the Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria, the Chamber of Labour of Vienna, the Austrian Society for Political Education, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, and the City of Linz.

The 58th ITH Conference takes place on-site in Linz/Austria. We offer the possibility to join the conference online for participants who cannot travel to Linz for specific reasons.

### Preparatory Group

**Ravi Ahuja** (Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen), **Eszter Bartha** (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary), **Stefan Berger** (Ruhr University, Bochum), **Laurin Blecha** (ITH, Vienna), **David Mayer** (ITH, Vienna), **Therese Garstenauer** (ITH, Vienna), **Paulo Fontes** (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro)

### Objectives

Industrialization and deindustrialization have been global and combined phenomena ever since the Industrial Revolution. The wave of industrialization associated with England in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries formed but one element of a dramatic global restructuring of production which came with the loss and transformation of livelihoods in other parts of the world. India is emblematic for that, as the surge in machine-driven industrialization in England went hand in hand with the decline if not dismantling of the more craft-based textile industries in India. Since then, we have witnessed many waves of deindustrialization, reindustrialization and economic transition around the world. These interconnected processes have been accompanied by often dramatic changes in employment opportunities and the world of work more generally.

This conference seeks to explore processes that are often described as 'deindustrialization' from a global and historical perspective. It starts from the assumption that the term itself is problematic, as the economic processes leading to deindustrialization at the same time might include processes of reindustrialization. The term itself is also not used widely in different languages: in German 'Strukturwandel' is preferred, in Italian there 'ristrutturazione' and in French we often hear about 'modernization'. The ambivalence of terminology points at the diversity of processes of industrial restructuring: they may be due to shifts of profit expectations between industrial sectors, changing modalities of international capital movements or to the transformation of labour processes and management strategies within a specific industrial sector. Each of these interconnected processes of crisis resolution can result in various forms of spatial relocation, and re-composition of the labour force.

Hence, we are asking how best to understand the processes of economic and spatial transition, their social and cultural consequences as well as their political fall-outs. We are interested in resistance to economic transitioning processes where industrial capital is leaving one place and moving to another. We would like to receive paper proposals that seek to recuperate the voices of those most affected by economic transitions, including workers and their communities, adjacent social strata directly affected by industrial restructuring, labour movements and urban as well as rural social movements. Furthermore, we are keen to learn about how these transitions might have changed traditional gender orders and how they might have opened up new ethnic divisions. Finally, we wish to pay special attention to how the memory of an industrial past and of specific trajectories of deindustrialization have influenced the postindustrial orders that have been emerging in many of the formerly industrial regions. Memory has been a powerful political resource and the construction of industrial heritage has not just been the nostalgic backdrop to a vibrant tourist industry but also the backbone of resistance towards an undermining of ways of life and of solidaristic collective cultures that characterized industrial societies. Memory has also traveled between old and new sites of de/industrialization, and can function as a resource informing endeavors to build new solidarities and community-building.

Processes of deindustrialization and reindustrialization need to be embedded in wider problems of capitalist development and the tensions between global markets and local conditions. If 'capital moves' (Jefferson Cowie), it might fix problems for capitalist development but it also causes problems for those attached to specific localities. Furthermore, processes of industrialization have often caused massive environmental problems, which are left to postindustrial futures once the industries have gone. Papers dealing with questions of political ecology and energy transition will therefore also be welcome.

The conference will attempt to shed light on processes of deindustrialization in a global framework paying attention to dramatic forms of deindustrialization and industrial restructuring in the global South as well as the global North including Eastern Europe. The history of developmentalist politics and their failure raises questions about the interrelatedness of developments in the global North and the global South. Focusing on localities and regions where industrial capital has left and/or has relocated to, the conference wishes to explore the spatial re-organization of capitalism and its conferences in regions and countries around the world. Transregional and comparative studies will be especially welcome.

Undoubtedly, so far, studies of deindustrialization have tended to focus on the global North. The conference wishes to develop a de-centered global perspective by bringing in the global South and the interrelatedness of both spatial spheres. It also seeks to draw attention to less well-studied regions/sites affected by deindustrialization around the world. Finally, being aware that deindustrialization processes arguably go back a long way, this conference will be open to papers on the early modern period as well.

Deindustrialization studies has been strongly transdisciplinary and the conference would invite contributions not just from historians but from a range of different disciplines, including the social sciences, geography, anthropology, memory studies, social movement studies and others who have engaged with the types of economic transitions discussed above.

## Thursday, 7 September 2023

### Registration of participants at the venue

12.00 - 14.00	Meeting of the ITH Board and International Scientific Committee
14.00 - 14.30	Break
14.30 - 16.30	General Assembly of the ITH

- 17.00 - 17.30 **Conference Opening**  
**Therese Garstener**, University of Vienna, ITH President  
**Representative** of the Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria  
**Representative** of the City of Linz
- 17.30 - 19.00 **Keynote lecture**  
Alina-Sandra Cucu (Institut für Cultural Inquiry Berlin): *The double crisis of 'nonwork' in the aftermath of state socialism*
- 19.00 - 21.00 **Welcome Reception by the Major of Linz**

## Friday, 8 September 2023

- 09.00 - 11.00 **Panel I: The long arch – early experiences and future pasts**  
Chair and comment: Ravi Ahuja
- Lawrence McDonnell (Iowa State University): *After Appomattox: The Civil War and America's First Crisis of Deindustrialization*
  - Kaveh Yazdani (University of Bielefeld): *India's 19th Century 'Deindustrialization' through the Lens of Early Colonial Gujarat and Mysore – Revisiting a Contentious Debate*
  - Luis Paulo Bresciani (Fundação Getulio Vargas, São Paulo): *Revival or irrelevance? the challenge for Brazilian industry in the new age*
  - Juan Grigera (King's College London): *The myth of deindustrialization in Argentina: and the secret of deindustrialization in the Global South*
- 11.00 - 11.15 Coffee Break
- 11.15 - 13.15 **Panel II: Chained – relocation, restructuring and supply chain embeddedness**  
Chair and comment: David Mayer
- Bridget Kenny (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg): *The infrastructural labour of logistics: Reorganizing warehouse workers and reconfiguring landscapes in South Africa*
  - Lokesh (Centre for Education and Communication, Delhi) & Mayur Chetia (Max Weber Foundation, Delhi): *Industrialization and the Emergent Labour Question in Delhi-NCR in the Post-Liberalization Period*
  - Tanja Kotik (University of Graz): *Early German-Chinese Automotive Joint Ventures and their effects on local industry, work, and education*
  - Will Kendall (London School of Economics): *Labour and logistics in agricultural supply chains in the East of England*
- 13.15 - 14.30 Lunch
- 14.30 - 16.30 **Panel III – Part 1: Deindustrialization, Communities, local and regional impacts**  
Chair and comment: Paulo Fontes
- Péter Alabán (Ózdi SZC Gábor Áron College): *The impact of deindustrialization on the hinterland: Hungarian villages in the magnet of a socialist factory town in Hungary*
  - Sven Brajer (TU Dresden): *Wholesome Structural Change or 'Neoliberal Shock Therapy'? The Liquidation of the East German Textile Industry and the Downsizing of the Former GDR's 'Coal and Energy District' in the Two Lusatian*

- *Regions from 1990 to the Present Day*
  - Alicia Gorny (Ruhr-University Bochum): *Unorganized, unseen, irrelevant – Female Workforce in the Ruhr Area (1945-1998)*
  - Ángela Vergara (California State University): *Don't Come Back: De-Industrialization, Unemployment, and Authoritarianism in Chile (1973-1990)*
- 16.30 - 16.45 Coffee Break
- 16.45 - 18.45 **Panel III – Part 2: Deindustrialization, Communities, local and regional impacts**  
Chair and comment: Stefan Berger
- Andreas Fasel (Independent historian) & Leo Grob (University of Bern): *Deindustrialization, migration and trade unions: A case study of the aluminum industry on the outskirts of Switzerland*
  - Anđela Pepić (University of Banja Luka): *Deindustrialization via privatization: workers' struggles and pacification of the working class in Bosnia and Herzegovina*
  - Tibor Valuch (University of Debrecen) *From deindustrialization to re-industrialization - the social impact of industrial transformation in Hungary in Central-European comparison between 1990 and 2020*
  - István Horváth (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca,): *Employment paths in times of economic restructuring. A generational case study in a small Romanian city*
- 18.45 - 19.30 Dinner
- 19.30 - 20.30 **Public evening event (in German)**  
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Moderation: Laurin Blecha

## Saturday, 9 September 2023

- 9.30 - 11.30 **Panel IV: Unions, State and deindustrialization**  
Chair and comment: Therese Garstenauer
- Thomas J. Adams (University of South Alabama): *'A Parade of Ghost Towns': The Politics of Labor and the Rhetoric of Deindustrialization in the Southern Piedmont*
  - Sumeet Mhaskar (O. P. Jindal Global University): *Political Mobilization of Retrenched Urban Workers in the Indian Rural Landscapes*
  - Aynur Özugurlu (Arctic University of Norway): *Deindustrialization as a new dispossession process, and the specter of the industrial past: The privatization case of Alpagut-Dodurga Lignite Mines in Turkey*
  - Sorin Gog (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca): *De-industrialization and the formation of precarious populations: how did ghettos become an important resource for capitalist re-industrialization?*
- 11.30 - 11.45 Coffee Break
- 11.45 - 13.45 **Panel V: Memories, heritage & workers' experiences**  
Chair and comment: Eszter Bartha
- Stefan Backius & Åsa Melin (both Karlstad University): *De-industrialization Before Re-industrialization? Legacies, hopes and memories in Swedish*

*working-class communities*

- Christoffer Holm & Matias Kaihovirta (both Åbo Akademi University): *Lived de-industrialization in the 'Finnish Ruhr area'. Local nostalgia, regional hope and global continuance, 1980's to 2020's*
- Sahar Ghasemshahi (Université de Québec à Montréal): *Abadan; Dreaming of the future in the memory of industrial past*
- Lucky Igohosa Ugbudian (Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Nigeria): *Deindustrialization, reindustrialization and memory of industrialization in Nigeria*

13.45 - 15.00 Lunch

15.00 - 16.00 **Concluding Debate**  
Chair: tba