

# Abstracts

## ■ Klaus Tenfelde

### *Raumbildung als ökonomischer, sozialer und mentaler Prozess*

This article shortly describes recent approaches to a renewed analysis of space (“spatial turn”) in German historiography and historical geography. It is shown that a new perception of historical space already accompanied the revival of the history of industrial regions since the 1960s (*Regionalgeschichte* instead of *Landesgeschichte*). Following Simmel, a perception of historical space as condensation of communications would make it possible to distinguish different capacities to communicate within different classes of a given society. Thus, migrant societies such as the ones that evolved from economic growth in heavy industrial regions everywhere in Europe would display a rather low capacity to construct mind space and regional identity on their own, whereas in the same regions, the middle classes developed rather poorly, so that mind space construction rested on weak shoulders. It is therefore that regional identity construction within formerly heavy industrial regions sprang off from structural change and educational reform mostly in the 1960s.

## ■ Stefan Goch

### *Die Selbstwahrnehmung des Ruhrgebiets in der Nachkriegszeit*

The article centres on the question, which forces contribute to the development that the Ruhr area in Germany is considered by its citizens and by outsiders as an identifiable region at the end of the industrial age. Due to the structural change of the post-war period the “old Ruhr area” with its heavy industrial coinage has been transformed into a “new Ruhr area” with a differentiated structure and a specific image of the region. In particular, the “new middle classes” have created new images of a “Ruhr city” with a special urbanity – differing from other conurbations.

## ■ Stefan Berger

### *Von „Landschaften des Geistes“ zu „Geisterlandschaften“: Identitätsbildungen und der Umgang mit dem industriekulturellen Erbe im südwalisischen Kohlerevier*

Stefan Berger investigates the proletarian narrative on the South Wales coalfield drawn by historians and “people’s remembrances” which dominates the spatial identity concepts since the interwar period. The Historian Dai Smith used the term “mindscape” to describe the homogeneous identity incorporating the notions of “class” and “community” the predominantly proletarian inhabitants of South Wales developed. Smith attributed a central role to the trade unions that were anchored very widely in the social structure and every day life. After the decline of the coal industry the mindscape of South Wales underwent substantial changes. Most of the historical iron and steel sites were deprived of their specific character due to a feeling of awkwardness that came along with structural change. Since the 1980s

endeavours were made to recover the industrial heritage in order to attract tourists and to push the economic regeneration. At the same time the industrial heritage should serve as a means of public remembrance. But reality did not live up to expectations: Mindscapes became ghostly landscapes (Geisterlandschaften). The proletarian narrative to a certain extent still prevails today – too often as a hindrance that prevents the region from further advancement.

■ *Jean-François Eck*

*Die Entwicklung der Mentalitäten im nordfranzösischen Montanrevier während des 20. Jahrhunderts*

Jean-François Eck analyses the development of regional consciousness in the French coal-field Nord-Pas-de-Calais during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though extraction of coal began relatively early with the first coal mine that has been sunk in 1716 a regional consciousness was formed not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Having remained steady up to the 1950s regional consciousness was seriously disturbed by the closure of collieries and underwent substantial changes thereafter. From 1955 to 1990 collective identity perished until a new mentality was shaped on the basis of a reevaluation of the industrial heritage which reveals both chances and potentials of the structural change.

■ *Holm-Detlev Köhler*

*Industriekultur und Raumbewusstsein in Asturien/ Spanien*

The article deals with the development of a spatial consciousness in the old heavy industrial region Asturias in Northern Spain. On the basis of social and cultural historical studies, qualitative research, literary sources and media representations/interpretations Holm-Detlev Köhler traces mental processes of change from industrialisation to the present structural change. Economic, political and administrative, socio-cultural and topographical conditions are confronted with concepts of self-perception and external apperceptions of the region.

■ *René Leboutte*

*Space Construction as a Mental Process: Heavy Industrial Regions in Comparative Perspective*

Choosing a more general approach to heavy industrial regions the article analyses how different perceptions of heavy industrial regions emerge. The author presents a wide range of reconstructions of past and present and thereby analyses different patterns of how history has been interpreted and communicated. Leboutte concludes that identity construction of coalfields reacts to internal as well as external challenges. Therefore historians are facing tensions, debates, and conflicts between the past and its representation, between reconstructed pasts and projects for the future, between mind space produced by people living in the coalfields, and perception of the coalfields from outside.