Beyond the City of Modernism: a counter-narrative of industrial culture

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Abstract

This paper unfolds around an empirical experiment, which aimed to reveal the meaning of industrial culture and place attachment of local inhabitants of Chemnitz. The central argument of the article is that industrial culture is usually understood in a historicizing and aestheticizing way, fuelled by the possibilities to valorise the legacies of the age of industrialization and its persistent artefacts and structures for marketing or musealization purposes. This frequently observable urban strategy neglects the memories, experiences and emotions of local inhabitants, and thus fails to support positive identification processes with connection to the industrial past of a specific place. This paper elaborates a conceptual definition of industrial culture as a complex approach with tangible and intangible dimensions, various temporal layers and multiple, sometimes controversial narratives. It discusses the role of industrial culture for regional and local image building and place related identity formation and demonstrates – reporting from an empirical experiment–, how individual counter-narratives can be detected, visualized and transferred and thus can increase reflexivity of society and support regional identity processes.

Highlights for public administration, management and planning:

- Urban rebranding processes frequently create a gap between external and internal image of a city. This hampers collective identification processes which are crucial for the activation of endogenous potentials.

- In a social constructivist perspective, human geography deals with industrial culture and industrial heritage with a strong focus on concrete places of production and their embeddedness in societal and social developments.

- Participatory approaches towards urban cultural reproduction can support the development of local resilience, which is important in order to actively face transformation processes.

1 Introduction

The industrial revolution has led to the development of urban hot spots of industrialization, like Chemnitz in Germany, which played a crucial role in the development of textile industry and thus was branded as 'Manchester of Saxony' in the late 19th century (Richter 1995:8). Since those times, Chemnitz severely changed its face, starting with physical destruction during the Second World War, urban reconstruction as 'socialist city', the collectivization of industry, and the economic depression and transformation in the years after 1989. All those stages can be found not only in the physical structures of Chemnitz, but also in the subjective perceptions, practices and identity processes of its inhabitants. Taking off from a conceptual definition of industrial culture as a complex approach with tangible and intangible dimensions, various temporal layers and multiple, sometimes controversial narratives, we discuss the role of industrial culture for regional and local image building and formation of place-related individual identity. Especially, we focus on the role of individual, subjective perspectives of industrial culture, which – derived from personal experiences, memories and emotions attached to specific places and artefacts – may not comply with the official version of industrial culture presented by marketing professionals.

While the latter may be crucial for the branding process to the exterior, the former is of utmost importance for the attachment of locals to their living environment. For those often neglected perspectives we apply the term 'counter-narrative' which, following Minow (1987:10), *"articulate[s] social reality not seen by those who live at ease in a world of privilege"* and thus arrive to express their identity (Somers 1994).

This paper presents empirical evidence from a participant research project on the industrial culture of Chemnitz, aiming to discover the local industrial culture through the eyes of Chemnitz' inhabitants and thereby to reveal those often neglected linkages between local identity processes, urban development and different periods of industrial production. By arranging those individual perceptions into an interactive application, we aim to integrate individual and collective knowledge, memories, emotions and reflections of the city's inhabitants and thus develop counter-narratives to the official memory of early industrialization, which is stressed in the city's image campaigns. We will start with an historical overview on the development of Chemnitz (section 2), followed by a discussion of our research terminology with a focus on our understanding of industrial culture and its effects on the production of regional or local identities (section 3). Then we will give insight into the practical process of data collection, analysis and processing in the context of a collective teaching project (section 4). Finally, we summarize the results from our case study (section 5) and discuss the opportunities of our approach for the strengthening of local identities and regional resilience (section 6).

2 From early developments to the City of Modernism

2.1 Urban and Economic Development of Chemnitz

The city of Chemnitz was first mentioned in 1143 and developed as an early industrial centre of textile production (Münch 1998:7). At the end of the 19th century, local businesses turned to the production of machines such as weaving machines, and Chemnitz gradually developed to a vivid industrial city with supraregional outreach (Viertel & Weingart 2002). The population quickly increased from 10 000 around year 1800 to 360 000 in 1930, accompanied by settlement expansions, which were typical for the late 19th and early 20th century. It was in those late expansion periods of the city when the notion of 'modernism' evolved, addressing a specific then-innovative style in architecture, painting and fine arts (Hierholzer 2003; Kassner 2000). During World War II, the city centre of Chemnitz suffered devastating destructions. The reconstruction process after World War II was oriented at socialist principles of urban planning; it comprised the erection of representative buildings for state and political institutions and the reshaping of the historical street grid with a focus on large street axes and public spaces used for state demonstrations (Barth 2001; Lindner 2011:11f). Another important focus was the fight against housing shortages by erecting new neighbourhoods with prefabric buildings; contrary to the 19th century buildings which were perceived as bourgeois, those new and uniform housing units underlined the egalitarian character of the new socialist society (Rietdorf 1976). On the other hand, the remaining buildings from the late 19th century – among them a considerable portion of Art Nouveau buildings – were neglected and entered a process of decay, sometimes leading to complete decline of those neighbourhoods (Viertel & Weingart 2002). The economic strategy of the centralist GDR regime re-assigned Chemnitz the role of an industrial core with a focus on textile industry and machine construction (Aufbaugesetz 1950, §2). During those times (1953), Chemnitz was renamed 'Karl-Marx-Stadt', in order to honour the productive spirit of its inhabitants (Lindner 2011:74f; Viertel & Weingart 2002).

After the political changes of 1989/90 and the related restructuring of the economic system, Chemnitz faced a strong downturn and deindustrialisation, followed by population decline due to birth decline, migration and suburbanization processes (Großmann 2007:100ff). The transformation processes were clearly visible in the urban landscape, with abandoned inner-city neighbourhoods and large zones of blight in downtown Chemnitz, which partly still represented the losses of World War II and the neglect of historical central functions as commercial centre during GDR times (Lindner 2011:159f). Towards the end of the 1990s, industrial production gradually started to recover, larger restoration projects were introduced, and a planning process for the revitalization of inner-city brownfields commenced (Großmann 2007). Since 1990 the city regained its original name 'Chemnitz', as a consequence of public vote (Stadt Chemnitz 2015). However, the external perception of Chemnitz keeps being connected to the socialist label 'Karl-Marx-Stadt'; thus, the image of Chemnitz was still linked to the productive yet somehow 'grumpy' image of a working men's city.

2.2   Rebranding the city

Since 2007, Chemnitz has been assigned the label 'Stadt der Moderne'/ 'City of Modernism' by a local marketing agency[1]. It was mentioned for the first time in 2004 in the context of the new cultural development plan of the city, which focused on flagship development such as the large cultural institutions of the city (Stadt Chemnitz 2004:27f). The interpretation of the local marketing department stresses the epoch of industrial modernism and matches those cultural and architectural developments to a general dynamism and innovative spirit of the city's economic and academic stakeholders (CMT 2008). In 2009, the key concept 'City of Modernism' was refined and added to the integrated city development concept. There, the term 'City of Modernism' is interpreted as diversity in art, culture and architecture. Among more general aspects such as sustainable development, revitalization of the city centre etc., the significance of the city as a location for innovative technologies and successful industrial production was emphasized. The slogan aimed to rebrand the image of Chemnitz not only within the region, but also with reference to the national and supra-national level (Stadt Chemnitz 2009:14).

A large image campaign was invented, aiming to spread the new image to the outside world and at the same time implant it in the collective memory of its inhabitants. Among others, a poster-series was developed, showing renowned citizens of Chemnitz and pointing out their merits in the economic development and technical innovations of Chemnitz. At the same time, existing problems were neglected, such as the effects of youth emigration and demographic change, the urban decay and the impression of a hesitant city administration lacking innovative and somehow experimentalist ideas. Thus, some activists developed another poster campaign aiming to unmask the main biases and contradictions of the urban campaign in a humourist manner. This action stands as a symbol for the gap between local image as either external attribution or external representation, and local identity, as result of individual and collective identification processes.

Regional marketing institutions since long have understood the significance of regional images and have invented campaigns to actively re-brand regions that had undergone a transformation process. In most cases, interventions in the economic and physical structure of a region and their active reinterpretation go hand in hand with public marketing measures. This is the case in the city of Manchester (Chemnitz' partner town), known as the 'cradle of industrialization', which experienced severe structural changes as a result of deindustrialization processes in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by a process of restructuring and re-branding (Ortiz-Moya 2015). Among others, strong externalizing marketing strategies in the context of two applications for the Olympic Games have helped to spread the new image. However, those re-branding processes are frequently invented and managed by professional developers, neglecting the multiple linkages of local populations who perceive their lived surroundings and the local history they witnessed as integral part of their identity. Thus, purely economically oriented projects can have a strong exclusionary effect on (parts) of local populations, as their memories and experiences are ignored (Kühne 2011).

In our research project and teaching experiment, we implemented a participatory approach to landscape preservation and industrial culture. Taking on a social constructivist perspective on space and place and on the notion of industrial culture, we empowered locals to actively create counter-narrations of specific places on the basis of narrations, experiences, meaning and emotions and thus reinforce their place attachment.

3   Industrial Culture, Industrial Heritage and Place Identity: Meanings and Discourses

The terms industrial culture and industrial heritage contain several aspects and definitions and are embedded in conceptualizations of space and place which may vary, depending on academic discipline and purpose. Thus, we will first clarify our understanding of industrial culture and our understanding of space and place, which form the basis for elaboration of counter-narratives of industrial culture as aspects of local identity formation.par

3.1   Genealogy, meanings and use of the terms 'industrial culture' and 'industrial heritage'

Industrial culture is a complex and contested notion, which is used in several disciplines, yet with somewhat different meaning. In historical science, industrial culture/heritage is understood in the context of industrial archaeology and its material artefacts, such as industrial architecture or technical artefacts (Föhl 200:36; Borsdorf 2000:16f; both refer to Pirke 2010). In an extended historical perspective, industrial culture not only regards ma-

terial artefacts, but also components of daily life and living conditions in the context of industrialization. The preservation and musealization of those artefacts and narrations are understood as industrial heritage and thus as cultural heritage of a specific region. Pirke (2010:177) defines industrial culture as *"the comprehensive history of the industrial age with its typical life and society forms and the associated values. It is the history and present form of the industrial cultural landscape. Industrial culture is also an industrial monument, which conservatively treats its industrial-historical objects without aestheticizing them."* (translated from German by the authors). Thus, while the historical perspective integrates oral history and memories of ordinary persons, the focus lies on preservation of artefacts or material structures; industrial culture in this terminology is often paralleled by the term 'industrial heritage'.

In geographical research, industrial culture is mainly analysed from a regionalized perspective. Research from the German Ruhr region (see Blotevogel 2001; Wehling 1998; 2002 in Pirke 2010) stresses the spatial components of industrial culture. Contrary to historical research, which is focusing on concrete industrial artefacts and thus specific places of industrial culture, geographical research considers networks of industrial locations and their embeddedness into landscapes of industrialization. Also, geographical research not only regards the history and meaning of specific places and artefacts, but also their potential for regional identification and image building processes (Pirke 2010:177). However, also this strand of research falls short to connect historical reflections on spaces and places to current meanings and lived and experienced social realities.

Both research perspectives on industrial culture focus on the age of industrialization and thus consider industrial culture as historically completed, not providing links to the present and future of industrial life. As our approach is based on a social constructivist understanding of 'industrial culture' as a concept that includes tangible (buildings, structures, artefacts etc.) and intangible (emotions, practices, ideas etc.) aspects, we will now turn to an elaboration of those meanings of space and place and explore their linkages to identity building processes. This approach is embedded in a broader perception of 'heritage', which cannot solely be understood as a collection of sites and artefacts, but rather as "a way of knowing and seeing" (Smith 2006:54).

3.2 Place, Space and Identity

In humanistic geography, the distinction of space and place is established since the 1970s in which space is being a more abstract geometric object that is measurable and thus rational, while place means a more holistic, phenomenological understanding of particular locations, integrating their material dimensions, the meanings and the symbolic values the location might have, both of which are subjective dimensions and may vary on an individual level (Tuan 1977:4−6). Also, there is a variation over time, be it because of the individual biography and the connections that are drawn to places in different points of life-time, be it because of changing materialities of places through time, and different functions assigned to buildings, streets, parks and so forth. In addition, the meaning of a place arises through concrete practices of people; finally, the meaning of a place is constructed via feelings or emotions, which again are individual, subjective and contingent. Thus, place meaning and place identity are produced and reproduced on an individual but also collective basis, and thus are not static but reflect changing materialities, contexts and practices (Harvey 1993; Cresswell 1996).

Also the notion of space can include manifold meanings – from the absolute, geometrical space towards relational and cognitive spaces. While in human geography, there are differing perspectives of how to define space, there is consensus that a sense of place derives of assigning meaning to space, which is not only attached to materialities, but also to experiences, practices, feelings and narratives (Buttimer & Seamon 1980; Entrikin 1991). Furthermore, also normative concepts play a role in terms of politics of space and place which might determine who may enter a specific location, when, and for what purposes. Both space and place thus appear as socially constructed. Given the subjectivity of place assignments on the one hand and the temporal perspective on the other, documentation of and communication about spaces, places and meaning seem crucial for the transmission of meaning and the development of place attachment (Casey 2001).

Finally, we need to consider the relation of place and identity formation, which was intensely discussed within cultural geography over the last two decades. Generally speaking, regional or local identity can be understood as part of the personal identity that results from the subjective self-location in a spatial context as a sense of belonging (Weichhart 1990:23). Thus, the development of local or regional identity is part of the human socializa-

tion process, which can be understood as process of personality development in reciprocal connectivity to the socially mediated social and material environment, steered by social resources and mechanisms of social appreciation (Geulen & Hurrelmann 1980; Hall 1980). Identity is seen as a social process that may change and depends on the context, but in addition can be understood as a kind of (ideological) discourse that exists as part of the rhetoric of elites and also as part of popular discourses. Especially in the works of Paasi (2001, 2003) the dialectic between spatial structures, social relations and meanings is analysed and he points out that *"a challenge for spatial research is to reflect how 'regions' and 'places' come together and what kind of spatial imaginaries, ideologies and institutions are involved in the process of making and understanding them as bounded units at diverging scales"* (2001:25). He refers to Massey (1995) and who conceptualize place as *"a cumulative archive of personal spatial experience, which is not bound up with some specific location as is suggested by the long tradition and even more recent, progressive ideas of place"*. Regional or local identity can develop on an individual basis, but also as collective understanding of representation, which displays a high degree of persistence; therefore, in the course of time and economic or social transformation, physical and subjective aspects of local identity can decouple from tangible structures and artefacts. Those developments can cause a sense of insecurity and resistance among locals. Also, as Kühne (2011:298) points out, the active reinterpretation of landscapes by external actors, based on economic strategies and stereotypical understandings of 'industrial culture', can provoke highly exclusionary mechanisms if those reinterpretations are accomplished by individuals or institutions with high amounts of symbolic capital and with the aim of distinction. Thus, the question of power relations is crucial in the analysis of regional identity and image building processes.

3.3 Subjective perspectives and immaterial artefacts

The previous paragraphs have demonstrated that there is a close connection between the concept of industrial culture and concepts of preservation in a historicizing manner, and a disconnection between industrial culture as part of regional development concepts and individual subjectivities and place identities. In order to overcome the static and conserving view on industrial culture, it is worth considering research that combines regional perceptions with aspects of industrial infrastruc-

tures and thus offers a broader concept of industrial culture. Fortin & Gagnon (2006) for example analyse the regional perception of specific industrial landscapes and construction of meanings attributed to the industrial landscape through the eyes of local residents, focusing on the social interpretation of landscape. To do this, they have analysed residents' discourses concerning landscapes associated with primary aluminium production complexes in Dunkirk (France) and Alma (Canada). The term 'landscape' is defined as *"the experiential, reflexive and symbolic relationship maintained by social actors with regard to a given environment. This relationship is founded not only on the concrete, physical aspects of the environment, but also on daily life experiences and shared cultural representations which are embedded in a given set of social relationships"* (Fortin & Gagnon 2006:728−730). Their research thus follows a social-constructivist perspective, taking into account the manifold meanings that a specific place can bear for the individual. Their results reveal three sets of explanatory factors for varying perceptions and interpretations of industrial landscapes: (i) the dynamics of regional development and the historical place of industry in the community, (ii) the relationship between residents and the industry and local governance capacities, and (iii) the social impacts experienced. Thus, contrary to the conserving perspectives presented above, Fortin & Gagnon (2006) reveal linkages between past and present by focusing on subjective interpretations of and discourses on specific regional structures and infrastructures. They criticize the absence of subjective perspectives on landscapes in general, which is in their eyes due to the normative and positivist orientation at 'objective' aesthetical criteria for the interpretation and valuation of landscapes. Even though their research is not directly connected to questions of industrial culture, their findings and critique touch focal points of our research on the industrial culture of Chemnitz[2].

Moving further towards the question of evaluation of specific physical structures and artefacts and the (economic) consequences of those evaluations, the term 'informal heritage' can be fruitful. Following Barrère (2015:87) 'informal heritage' is defined as specific setting of institutional and personal structures, which relate to each other and have the potential of cross-fertilization, yet which are frequently ignored, as they don't fit into classical frameworks of economic evaluation. In his research, Barrère (2015) deals with regional knowledge networks, which developed into 'brands', such as the 'Maisons de Haute Couture' or the 'Maisons de Champagne'. These local exam-

ples and their structuration are close to evolutionary approaches of economic geography on industrial districts and networks of innovation. Based on his research, Barrère (2015) stresses the embeddedness of the individual into society, which is the basis for the diffusion of informal heritage, such as language or cultural practices. Informal cultural heritage only persists through transfer between individuals in the socialization process and thus produces individual and societal added value: *"People benefit from this social and cultural heritage and, in return, they participate in its preservation, evolution and enlargement"* (Barrère 2015:92).

Other works on cultural heritage combine this notion with reflections on regional resilience, which again is connected to evolutionary approaches of economic geography (Cohen & Levinthal 1990; Lazzeretti 2012). More recently, new contributions using ecological approaches have emerged due to the surge of environmental concerns and the impacts of the current financial and economic crisis at a global level. The concept of resilience is increasingly applied to socioeconomic systems, investigating the capacity of urban and regional areas to cope with external threats and sudden changes – of differing natures – which often require profound adaptation (Cooke et al. 2012). Those approaches are pointing towards a new connection between economics, culture and society and argue that especially in the context of economic crises the societal value of cultural heritage – apart from its economic value – is identified and appreciated (Lazzeretti 2012:230).

Summarizing those considerations, we argue that the mainstream works on industrial culture still focus on industrial architecture as well as on concrete industrial artefacts, even though subjective perspectives like oral history have found their way into the historical exploration of industrial culture. The application of those traditional approaches often lead to musealization, placing references to the past in the foreground, or focusing on the economical exploitability of industrial culture for tourist purposes. Studies on regional identity from social geography as well as on resilience from evolutionary economic geography look at places and spaces as well as industrial-cultural relics from a social-constructivist perspective and recognize the importance of identification for the development of local identity and resilience. Research on informal cultural heritage points to the significance of non-formal connections from which a common idea can emerge. The return to the informal cultural heritage of a region is the basis for further innovative developments, through which a region can reinvent itself or show resilience. Concern-

ing the mediation aspect, it must be emphasized that a pure inventarization of cultural heritage will solely lead to musealization, without establishing linkages between past, present and future. Therefore, approaches must be found to promote an active debate on industrial culture, as this seems the only way how the potential of a specific local arrangement can be adequately appreciated, reflected and integrated in future developments of a place (Pirke 2010:172).

Moreover, in order to develop a local identity, it is also necessary to include intangible aspects that are based on emotions and experiences of local narratives and that can be revealed by documenting these individual views on industrial culture.

4   Discovering the Industrial Culture of Chemnitz

In our project 'Industriegeschichte Erleben'/ 'Discovering the Industrial Culture of Chemnitz' we aim to investigate the complexity of space and place, including material structures, varying meanings, feelings and emotions, changing practices and also reveal the ways people identify (with) those places, how they are influenced by discourses about places and integrate those meanings and connotations into their personal self-concept. Furthermore, by collecting and rearranging those materialities, meanings and discourses, we intend to disentangle the taken-for-granted-ness of specific places, spaces and artefacts and reveal the richness of meaning that develop when individuals relate to the world and communicate about it.

As we briefly described above, societal and structural changes had a strong impact on the urban development of Chemnitz and also on the identity building processes of its citizens. The changes of economic activity and its ideological framing are part of the individual memories of Chemnitz' inhabitants and – regarding changes over time and the experiences of different generations – produced varying and sometimes controversial identity allocations. Especially young inhabitants of Chemnitz are said to have difficulties developing a regional identity, as they cannot find linkages between their lived reality, the physical structures of the city and the strong focus on early industrialization which is present in the official image of the city.

Tackling those issues, we carried out a collaborative project[3] that aimed to reveal all layers of industrial culture in the city of Chemnitz and the connection to the urban development processes, and to especially address the younger generation. In collab-

oration with two local schools, we instructed high school students aged 14−18 years to carry out research on industrial culture concerning different periods of time and to examine the effects on identity building processes.

As already elaborated above, our conceptualisation of industrial culture is based on a broader understanding that not only focuses on material and historical aspects of built structures, but which also includes narratives and images about these places. Also, we not solely focus on those physical structures built in the late 19th and early 20th century, which are usually highly valued today for their aesthetical architecture, but also consider the transformation into a socialist industrial city and the de-industrialization after 1989, including all kinds of narratives following the knowledge, memories, emotions and reflections of the city's inhabitants, especially the younger among them.

4.1   Conceptual approach and research objectives

We refer to a relational concept that conceives space as contingent and active, being actively produced or constructed by social relations and practices, but also by (media) discourses (Merrifield 2000). This understanding as a relation of certain interpretations and imaginations builds the frame to grasp individual meanings and to explore connections of different places. The allocations are structured by socio-cultural knowledge and time related biographies that produce various memories and narratives. In addition, the symbolic or imagined facets of (urban) space, constituted through language, have an ordering effect on society or – on a smaller scale – on the individuals themselves. Considering the complexity of spatial production processes, it seems adequate to apply a mixed-method approach in order to tackle those multiple meanings and bring together different scientific perspectives. Thus, the high school students were introduced to a variety of methods – from classical to experimental techniques – to analyse and reflect their own perspective and their encounters with the environment. They interpreted (historical) traces by mapping past and current structures and also explored opinions and perspectives of varying actors to understand different and sometimes divergent patterns of interpretation and their impact on societal processes. Our research was arranged in four thematic - though interrelated – clusters: Material aspects, socio-economic and demographic aspects, narrative aspects and visual and textual aspects. For the practical implementation, those aspects were arranged in four methodical modules,

focusing on 1) historical traces, 2) structural analyses, 3) urban explorations and 4) image and identity production processes (see Fig. 1).

4.1.1   The historical perspective – material aspects: searching and reading historical traces

Research within the historical perspective focused on the tangible or material points of view, which represent the layer of industrial heritage and places of working class life. Our research in this module focused on spatial orientations and the interpretation of historical urban structures. The high school students carried out research in historical archives where they were analysing historical texts and sources as well as images from different periods of time. Building a bridge between the early and the today's perception of surroundings, we mirrored historical photos by taking photos from identical places and perspectives. In comparing the historical with the current picture, changes in the built environment could be reconstructed. In addition, the historical sources were analysed and replenished through conversations with historians and archivist. In this way places and social aspects of working class life were identified.

4.1.2   The structural view – analysis of socio-economic and demographic aspects

Our second module worked with data research and cartographic methods in order to analyse socio-economic and demographic changes of the city. The high school students analysed population statistics and other data sources in order to reveal economic and demographic structural changes, and visualized the results. In addition, they mapped today's patterns of usage and compared them to historical urban structures and patterns. For a deeper understanding, interviews with today's inhabitants and 'users' of historical structures were carried out, i.e. with shop owners in a former working class neighbourhood. The main questions were: How and why did structures of usage change? What effects do scale and administrative categorizations have on the perception of spatial differences? What kind of connection can be made between individual statements and structural data?

4.1.3   The subjective perspective – individual narratives and meanings of places

The perception of places is represented through emotions, sensations and individual practices. Through walking interviews several inhabitants
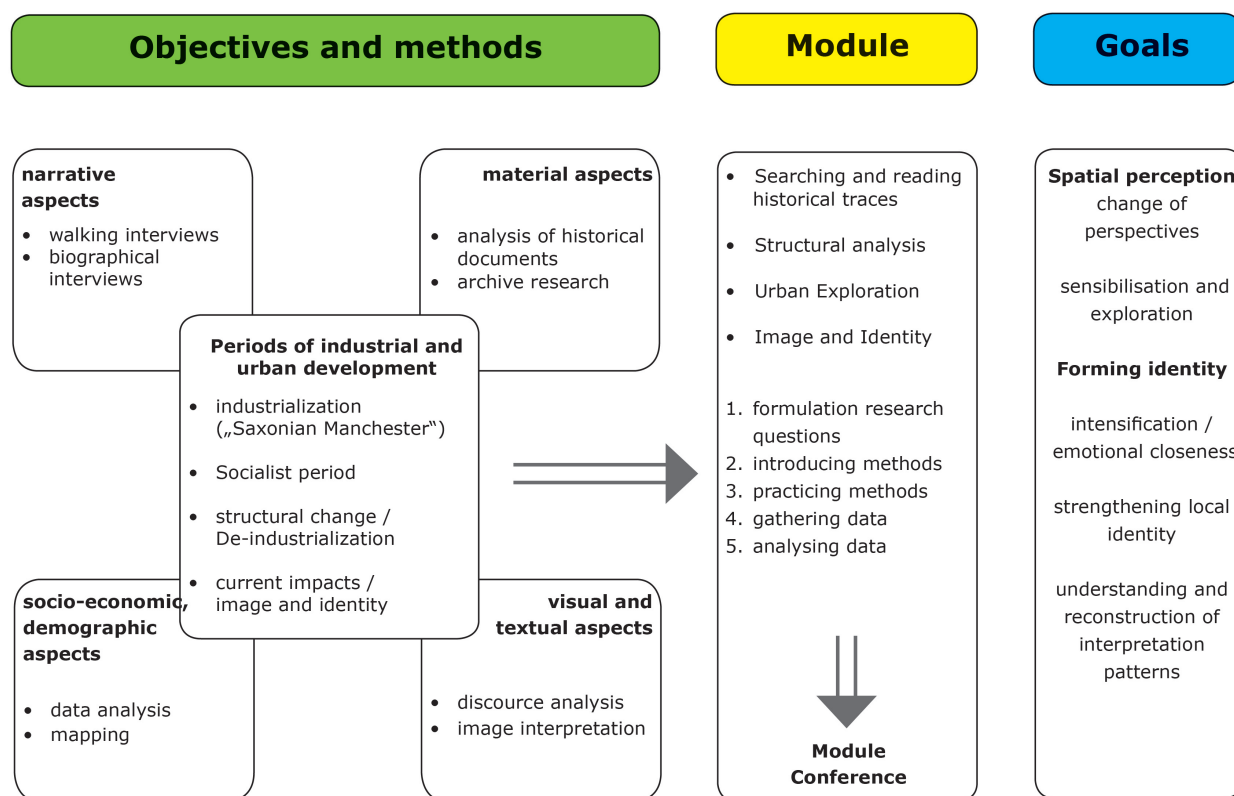
Objectives and methods

Module

Goals

narrative aspects
- walking interviews
- biographical interviews

material aspects
- analysis of historical documents
- archive research

Periods of industrial and urban development
- industrialization ("Saxonian Manchester")
- Socialist period
- structural change / De-industrialization
- current impacts / image and identity

socio-economic, demographic aspects
- data analysis
- mapping

visual and textual aspects
- discource analysis
- image interpretation

- Searching and reading historical traces
- Structural analysis
- Urban Exploration
- Image and Identity

1. formulation research questions
2. introducing methods
3. practicing methods
4. gathering data
5. analysing data

Module Conference

Spatial perception
change of perspectives

sensibilisation and exploration

Forming identity

intensification / emotional closeness

strengthening local identity

understanding and reconstruction of interpretation patterns

Fig. 1 Schematical overview of the project conceptualization (draft: K. Manz 2014)

and the high school students themselves were asked to show us those places, which are important to them. This method is based on the ethnographical method of go-alongs, as we wanted to capture the individual environments that are important to the inhabitants and are connected with feelings. The go-along is a hybrid of walking interview and participatory observation, which can capture the sometimes hidden or un-noticed habitual relations with place and the environment, as it highlights environmental perception, spatial practices, biographies, social architecture and social realms (Kusenbach 2003:456).

One of the central ideas is that the interviewees determine the route, showing the places that are important to them. Their impressions were documented with an audio recorder and a clip-on microphone, and the route was documented with a GPS tracker. Moreover, they were motivated to take photos of specific features of points of interest, which have a certain meaning for them. The integration of photographic tools is inspired by the method of reflexive photography. This method, originating

from visual sociology, allows investigating the interviewee's perspective and thus marks a shift of the respondent's role, from passive to active (Dirksmeier 2013). This way of investigation corresponds to the overall participatory approach of our research.

In the further process of interpretation, the audios and photos gathered during the walking interviews were re-arranged in video clips, only using the material gathered on the walk, in order to reveal the different layers and diverse perspectives of our interviewees in a comprehensive manner. Moreover, major statements of the interviews were transcribed and integrated in the video clip as textual phrases[4].

4.1.4 The discursive perspective – image versus identity

Media and official discourses influence patterns of interpretation and have a structuring effect on societal processes. The aim was to identify different perspectives and to detect the variety of identity constructions that can be found in the official

narratives but also in the opinions of the inhabitants. The high school students analysed the ongoing discussions about urban development topics in the local media and revealed diverse and sometimes contradictory storylines. They also integrated national media in their research in order to analyse and recognize the exterior view. In addition, they collected different opinions on urban development discourses by interviewing people on the streets, and later compared those statements with the 'official' image of the city.

The guiding questions were: What kind of images and perceptions do exist about the city of Chemnitz? What are the differences between the interior and the exterior view?

One of the outputs from this research step was the production of an audio-visual radio play, in which the high school students performed those discursive roles that were revealed by research. The topic of the radio play was the artistic repainting of a chimney in Chemnitz and the public discourses that developed during this process. The results from media analysis were reflected and organized into different public perspectives. Those were arranged in several scenes, rewritten as a radio play and performed by the high school students. In this process, the students not only identified and analysed various discursive features and strategies, but – by re-arranging those discourses in a radio play – actively and creatively reflected on local image building processes and the variations of local identities.

Finally, and again turning to a creative, reflective process, selected material that was collected during the research process was re-arranged in eight thematic walks and programmed as an interactive application that combines different perspectives on industrial culture and thus makes it lively, comprehensible and transparent. Users of the app can re-enter into the individual discovery of Chemnitz by approaching certain locations and listening to, observing, reading and reflecting on the various pieces of information that are displayed. In order to bring the user into direct contact with different places of industrial culture, the information is GPS referenced and can only be received in direct vicinity to the GPS signature. Thus, the places of industrial culture, scripted by the city's inhabitants and their biographies, memories and meanings, are the connecting elements of the walking tours. They can be rediscovered by the users and mirrored with own reflections. The app includes audio sequences, historical and current pictures, videos, tasks and citations as well as background information about the sites. In the following section, we will use the location 'Conti-Hole' to illustrate the dimensions of the methodological approach and its practical implementation via the re-arranged go-alongs.

4.2 "The most famous excavation of Chemnitz": Places and their attributions

The so-called 'Conti-Hole' was an inner-city fallow land with wild plants growing inside and various planning processes carried out by different developers, which however never were put into practice (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 The 'Conti-Hole' in 2012 (photograph: K. Manz 2012)

Walking around this site, using the app, introduces different layers of time and different meanings and attributions of this place: The historical built structures cannot be seen anymore, but they are visualized through historical pictures which give an impression of how the place looked like in former times. The buildings were created in the period of promoterism and damaged during the Second World War, and solely a few survived the socialist restructuring process. A historian criticizes the reluctance to preserve historical structures in the city and rather turn to modern features: *"Could have been the starting point for reconstruction, but people rather demolish than preserve, that is what is been done until today"*. In the socialist period, the area was renewed with buildings made from prefabricated slabs, which was a technology of industrialized construction that accelerated the construction work and helped to provide dwellings, which were urgently needed. One interviewee talks quite positive about these innovative construction methods: *"How fast that has grown, how fast they have built this up! As a child I knew the brick construction, then I saw the slab construction with the square plates, then the large plates - so that was*

already ... And then they have put in complete bathrooms, which were completely installed, there was already tub and everything in it. You only had to connect it. That was really impressive!"* (Fig. 3)

Fig. 3 Installation of ceiling tiles in the Yorkstraße neighbourhood, Chemnitz (photograph: W. Thieme 1972; Source: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-L1130-0016 / CC-BY-SA 3.0)

During the 1980s, a new production place of 'Textima Electronics', a collectivized industrial plant specialised in textile machinery construction, was created and a new building was constructed at the site. However, just before moving the company into the new building, the political changes of 1989 occurred, followed by serious and rapid economic transformations, which led to the privatization, division and finally liquidation of the company. The brand-new building was demolished in 1994 and left a derelict place for years to come. This was contested by many citizens, as the following quote from an interview exemplifies: *"There was a completely erected building, everything was already installed, also heating and elevator, this was all for 'Textima'. I was annoyed by the fact that the house was demolished – a building that has cost millions. But the argument was, we don't need it anymore, we will create something new instead. And then nothing has happened. But it had to disappear, as it was a 'GDR ruin' "*. In his voice you can hear the emotional connections with the industrial past and the meanings this period has for his local identity. In 1994, there were plans to build a new shopping centre, called 'Conti-Gallery' that have never been realised. Since these times the site – which from then on was called 'Conti-Hole' – has been derelict land, although there were manifold ideas on its further development. Recently, after 25 years of standstill, the decision was made to use the terrain for the new technical town hall of the city of Chemnitz; the construction process started 2015 and was finalized in 2017 (see Fig. 4).

During the construction process, the high school students carried out street interviews in order to capture the reflections of the citizens on those recent changes (Textbox 1). It becomes clear that for many interviewees the 'Conti-Hole' is connected to the GDR times, and that the restructuring processes that take place here are reflected against the background of the transformation period. The 'Conti-Hole' is perceived as part of the city's collective memory and its special past. The location 'Conti Hole' is an example for our data processing, where we aimed to capture the varying memories and individual perceptions of Chemnitz' inhabitants on the history and future of the 'Conti-Hole' as a specific and contested place of inner city development and part of the industrial culture of Chemnitz.

Fig. 4 The new technical town hall of Chemnitz at the place of the former 'Conti-Hole' (photograph: K. Manz 2018)

In the app, those varying meanings and imaginations appear as a pastiche of pictures, audios, quotations and video sequences that can be anticipated while walking around the place, thus adding one's individual perception to the collection of opinions and memories.

Textbox 1: Comments about the 'Conti-Hole' from street interviews, 2016

> *"Oh God, that's been forever; what was there? I should actually know, because I am a born Chemnitzer ... No. I cannot remember, it's been too long."*
>
> *"During GDR-times, something was built there. That was torn down due to the political change, because I think, the company which took over and was about to finish, went bankrupt."*
>
> *"That's already a Conti-Hole for such long, I don't know what was there before, I only know it as Conti-Hole."*
>
> *"It was supposed to be a shopping mall, and that should be called the Conti Gallery. And that's where the name 'Conti-Loch' came from. If I am properly informed."*
>
> *"That was so neglected and so lifeless and everything. It's nice that something happens again."*
>
> *"But you must not forget this, you must not just wipe away this past, you have to bring it into consciousness again and again."*

Source: Own compilation, based on fully anonymized street interviews

5   Discussion

In this paper, we presented an empirical experiment that aimed to reveal industrial culture from the subjective perspective of Chemnitz' inhabitants, using multiple methods of documentation and visualisation. Our main research question focused on the role of industrial culture for regional and local image building and place-related identity formation.

Regarding main disciplines that deal with industrial culture and industrial heritage, we found both terms frequently implemented in terms of musealization, combined with an aestheticizing and backward perspective on production processes and its material artefacts. We found that those 'official' notions of industrial culture and industrial heritage, which are frequently valorised in terms of marketing or tourism activities, tend to leave out the less aesthetical and contradictory representations of the past. Thus, expressions like 'City of Modernism' don't match with the memories and emotions of the citizens and cannot support the development of place attachment and regional identity.

This argumentation brought us to geographical approaches to space and place and the formation of local identity. In a social constructivist perspective, human geography deals with industrial culture and industrial heritage with a strong focus to concrete places of production and their embeddedness in societal and social developments. Critical approaches in this research strand highlight the question of identification and evaluation of industrial culture, which is embedded in local discourses and power relations. Especially the differentiation between formal and informal cultural heritage () highlighted the significance of integrating various perspectives of place and space in order to appropriately depict regional identities.

We introduced the city of Chemnitz as a place which is heavily influenced by industrialization. Industrial production and a pragmatic and innovative spirit thus are integral parts of the informal heritage of the city. In the context of city marketing processes, specific epochs of industrialization and its material artefacts are highlighted, while others are neglected as they seem to be less presentable, especially considering economical or tourist valorisation. This is particularly obvious in the case of collectivized production processes and its material artefacts from GDR times, such as industrialized housing, which is neglected in today's official discourse, or even physically eliminated, as the example of the 'Textima' buildings showed.

The experimental form of visualization in terms of the app 'Discovering industrial culture' offers the opportunity to actively approach the diversity of industrial culture and to oppose its official readings. The exploration of counter-narratives via collecting individual experiences, memories and emotions of locals, reveals the richness of culture and history, notably the complexity of industrial culture. Bringing different perspectives together opens the opportunity to compare subjective views with the produced image and to retrace the situations that caused irritations in identity building processes.

6   Conclusions and Outlook

The main hypothesis of the presented research was that there may occur strong contradictions between the official image of a city as a result of marketing oriented branding processes, and the individual and subjective memories, experiences and emotions of its inhabitants, which are crucial for their sense of place and of local identity. Especially economic and political transformations created heterogeneous biographies and local identities which strongly reflect the ruptures in space and time from a subjective point of view. In order to build and support place attachment, it is necessary to reflect and represent the contradictions of urban development, historical contingencies and ruptures in the built fabric and in the narrations of a city. However, as we argued, those representations frequently fail to connect with the official narrative focusing on a temporally fixed period and specific features which are found to be worth preserving, based on a musealizing view on important epochs.

Taking the results from research on place identity and its nexus to endogenous development seriously, it might be worth integrating local identities and the internal image of a city into urban and regional development concepts. The Interreg initiative Inducult 2.0 for example aims to reinvent cultural traditions based on periods of industrialisation. This is not only meant to strengthen the local identity, but to take it as a basis for new economic developments in the tradition of industrial districts or innovative clusters[5]. Also the recent developments of the "European Capital of Culture" application procedure prefers applications which don't exclusively merchandise existing culture but rather use the title "European Capital of Culture" in order to prompt new cultural developments and – by means of culture – find solutions to societal problems on European level. This is exactly what we aimed to demonstrate with our participatory approach that takes the contradictions of a place and its history seriously. These kinds of approaches can support the development of local resilience, which is important in order to actively face transformation processes. Thus, our counter narrative of industrial culture not only constitutes a window into the past, but also a door to the future.

Footnotes

[1] CMT = City-Management und Tourismus Chemnitz GmbH (city management and tourism Chemnitz GmbH), today: CWE = Chemnitzer Wirtschaftsförderungs- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft (Chemnitz economic development agengy)
[2] Also collaborative mapping projects such as the Appalachian Coal Camp Documentary Project are aiming to empower local actors to re-define a region's history on the basis of their own experiences (https://appalachianprojects.as.uky.edu/coal-camps, accessed: 5th March 2018).
[3] The project 'Industriegeschichte Erleben'/ 'Discovering the Industrial Culture of Chemnitz' was funded by the Robert-Bosch–Foundation and carried out in a collaboration of the chairs of human geography and economic and social history at Chemnitz University of Technology and the Industrial Museum of Chemnitz. For further Information see: www.industriegeschichte-erleben.de
[4] As the interviews were taken as part of our participatory approach, additional sociodemographic data wer not documented. Therefore, the quotations from the interviews appear without reference to gender, age or occupation of the interviewees.
[5] See information on the homepage of the project at https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/InduCult2.0.html

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