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In *Working Class Experiences of Social Inequalities in (Post-) Industrial Landscapes*, Lars Meier sets out to show how class identity and a sense of class affiliation have multiple dimensions, which are created not just by access to economic capital, and the relationship to work, but also by shared emotional responses to collective experiences and social changes. The book focuses on skilled manual workers in South Nuremberg, Germany. Many of Meier's research participants were retired or nearing retirement at the time when he interviewed them. In *Working Class Experiences of Social Inequalities*, Meier discusses the ways of coping of the workers and how they adapted to social transformations that resulted from de-industrialisation and the shift to a service based economy, with focus on adapting to and coping with changes in one's social status resulting from the devaluation of manual work. Many of the interviewees experienced job changes and closures of the factories where they worked. Years later, these events were still significant in the life narratives and memories that they described to Meier. He notes that some workers even occasionally visited their former places of work as an opportunity to reminisce on their lives and on the changes in the urban landscape of the city. Changes in the social position of the workers has an emotional effect, which is experienced not only on an individual level, but as part of a collective emotional landscape.

The book is divided into three parts, each of which is thematically focused. In the first part, Meier describes the structural, social and economic changes that occurred in recent decades, and this sets the context for the experiences outlined in the narratives of his research participants in later parts and chapters of the book. Nuremberg has a long history as an important industrial city and has had a large working class population. This industrial history has left a lasting impact on the city, as Meier describes in the book. Nuremberg's industry has always been involved in weapons manufacture and after WWII many Nuremberg companies were involved in metalworking and engineering. Because of high demand for labour starting in the 1960s there was a steady flow of migrants to Nuremberg, which led to the city becoming increasingly ethnically diverse, thus creating changes in the social landscape of the city.

Like other Western European countries, Germany experienced a shift from industry to service economy in recent decades. This was accompanied by increased privatisation, including the

privatisation of the regional railway company, of formerly state- or collectively owned housing, as well as the privatisation of formerly state-owned enterprises and subsequent restructuring or closure of manufacturing plants, leading to a decrease in a sense of social security. Social inequality has increased in recent decades, and Nuremberg has a higher than average rate of relative poverty.

The shift to service economy became visible in the urban space, which is the focus of the second part of the book. Far from being empty urban structures, cities are produced by ongoing practices and as such they are constantly changing and undergoing transformation. Meier describes how this transformation is reflected both in the way the urban space is designed, structured, used and experienced, and in the social structures it generates together with what is seen as acceptable behaviour in the public space and who has access to it. Meier notes that manual labour has also been devalued through practices of memorialisation and official representations. Many of the workers formed a strong attachment to their workplace and some described their work being like a 'second family' and not 'just a number'. In their narratives, they talk about work as an important part of their lives, not just as a source of stable income, but also as an opportunity for creating and accessing social networks. With the closure of plants and the official representations of Nuremberg as the 'city of academics' (p.74), it became clear that their sentiments of work being like a 'second family' were not shared by the management who did not involve the workers in their decisions and in fact treated the workers like 'just a number'.

The closed and disused, demolished or transformed factories where people used to work act as reminders of the former working lives and of the devaluation of the workers' skills and manual labour. Meier talks about them as ghosts of the past, as reminders of the 'good old days'. For the workers, encounters with these 'ghosts of the past' were a source of nostalgia. However, the nostalgia and the narratives of the past were not looking at a time of prosperity, in contrast with a present hardship. In fact, in real terms the workers experienced an improvement in their living standards and in spending power throughout their lives. What they experienced, and what their nostalgic narratives focus on, is the loss of status and the de-centring of the working class from the way labour and production are organised, a change in their social position.

In the third part of the book, Meier focuses on three individual life narratives of former manual workers. The first two are German born workers, 'a former established', who expressed a nostalgic view of the harmonious past and a sense of loss of agency and of social networks, and dissatisfaction with their present situation. The second life history is that of a Spanish born worker, 'a former outside', who migrated to Germany for work, spent most of his working life

there and now, in retirement, lives a more mobile and transnational life with no strong sentimental attachment to a particular place. In this, Meier shows that a sense of belonging and agency can be created through other connections and through a personal ability to adapt to external transformations. The 'former established' experienced a loss of symbolic power, whereas the 'former outsider' experienced upward social mobility. Meier concludes that the nostalgic narratives of the 'former established' are 'not only expressions of passive desperation or of negative responses to transformations but they are also currently active cultural practices' which are used to contribute to a common class identity of the 'former established'. The nostalgic views were sometimes accompanied by negative perception of others. However, the 'former outsider' did not express a nostalgic view of the past, even though he also experienced transformations of work organisations and of urban space. When studying nostalgia, collective sentiments, and negative perceptions of others, it is therefore important, as Meier argues, to have an intersectional approach and to include the stories of others (p.138). This book is an invaluable theoretical and methodological contribution to studies of class and the effects of urban transformations on a sense of collective identity.