



Past - Present - Future



INDUCULT2.0 FINAL CONFERENCE – DEBATE SESSIONS

Minutes

Version 1
04 2019



C.4.2



RP 6



August Horch Museum Zwickau



04.04.2019



Moderation by Danko Simic & Gina Zimmermann



PP1, District of Zwickau



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1. Title

Date: 04.04.2019

Time: 14.00 - 14.40 & 14.50 - 15.30

Location: August-Horch-Museum Zwickau

Moderator: Danko Simic (University of Graz), Gina Zimmermann (District of Zwickau)

Language: German & English

Scope of participants: project partners, regional stakeholders and national guests of the InduCult2.0 final conference

2. Agenda

During the final conference of InduCult2.0, the participants had the chance to attend two debating sessions in the afternoon. Moderated by Danko Simic (PP3) and Gina Zimmermann (PP1) the participants discussed topic related to industrial culture and its importance in tourism, regional identity and economic development. Objective was to connect participants and give them space to share experience and opinions to create a consensus or even divergencies on current issues of industrial culture and regional development in rural areas.

3. Course, results, decisions

1st Debate Session

In the beginning all participants had to first allocate themselves to one of the four groups: tourism, economy, culture or others, depending on their work field. Only four participants related themselves to economy, most participants work in the cultural branch.

Afterwards the participants were asked whether they agree with the following statements:

- Industrial culture only exists in museums.
- Industrial culture is hardly marketable.
- Industrial culture is part of regional identity.

The participants visualized their opinions in the conference hall by following moderator instructions (e.g. go to the left side of the room if you agree with the statement). All 39 participants of the first debate session disagreed with the first statement. Although some experts emphasized the importance of museums for story preservation it was clear that all participants agree that industrial culture is more than heritage preservation.

16 participants agreed that industrial culture is hardly marketable, whereas 13 people disagreed. Experts stated individually that industrial culture is on the one hand not a mainstream topic but on the other hand it could still be a unique selling point for some regions. Moreover, industrial culture could be seen as a portfolio that includes various aspects of a region that could be interesting for tourists. Some of the offers are hardly marketable, some of them very well. The suitability of offers for mainstream travel changes: It depends on other social development, too. In another way industrial culture is a topic you could fall in love with on 2nd sight. Other experts emphasized the importance of industrial culture for locals as some of them have strong personal connections with the topic.

And finally, all participants agreed again that industrial culture is part of regional identity. An industrial identity could reshape the future of the region. The moderator team now offered the audience to take seats again and opened the discussion to all participants. Based on the statements, Gina Zimmermann asked whether industrial culture could be both - a niche in tourism and also an anchor of regional identity. Ina Klemm (Tourism Association Zwickau e.V.) explained that industrial culture is part of regional identity and should not only be seen as a niche or hardly marketable topic in tourism because if industry is such a big part of regional history and presence it somehow defines the region and becomes the unique selling point whether or not it is a niche topic. Especially in the district of Zwickau, it is the topic that connects museums, companies, creatives and the whole civil society which underlines its importance.

Other experts as Marina Palm (Textile and Racing Museums Hohenstein-Ernstthal) emphasized that industrial culture can only be thought in past, presence and future if the stories of the past don't die out. Because of the older generation growing too old to share stories or knowledge it would be hard for museums and the region as a whole to preserve industrial heritage. Dr. Löffler (cultural office city of Zwickau) also underlined the serious situation that younger generations are not attached to the industrial past anymore.

In the end of the first debate session, the participants discussed the role of old-industrial buildings especially in rural areas. Danko Simic asked whether or not revitalization is important - when it comes to longstanding reviving of old-industrial areas it would need a long breath and a critical mass of active inhabitants because reviving old-industrial buildings does not only mean to redesign them but also create a place for social activities filled with people. Klaus Schotte (Dienstleistungskombinat MIR) emphasized the importance of preserving old-industrial buildings because regional identity consists of stories that are told. These stories need places where people come together and talk about industrial past, social challenges and regional issues. Old-industrial places could foster preservation of industrial past not only by keeping the buildings alive but also by the stories such buildings tell to the people.

2nd Debate Session

In the second debate session, the participants focused on the role of the present industry when it comes to a living industrial culture.

Gina Zimmermann asked why companies - which play a crucial role in this concept of a living industrial culture - are underrepresented in the panel and the whole conference. Furthermore several InduCult2.0 project partners struggled with measures that also included active engagement of industrial companies. Participants shared their experience. One expert stated that factory visits could not yet be seen as touristic offers because they do not open on a regular basis at all. Other experts emphasized the importance of industrial companies becoming aware of their role as cultural bodies. Inhabitants are interested in visiting production sites and learn how industrial production works. To create interesting offers that show innovative production but also focuses on the roots of this industrial progress it would need more cooperation between museums and industrial companies. It would also mean to invest money in existing projects of associations that already show past and present industry as a representative of the mining-technology-park Leipzig explained.

Moreover, all experts agreed that companies are not aware of the potential of an active corporate engagement in cultural activities. Instead of seeing visitors as a threat that costs time, money and staff industrial companies could focus on outcomes like customer loyalty, branding effects and securing of labor force.

Last but not least a living industrial culture highlights the regional potential of innovation that has a long history in old-industrial regions. Being aware of this potential would open companies towards new sectors and cooperation (e.g. with creatives) as a natural part of regional economic thinking and behavior. Companies should be motivated in joining regional work groups and intersectional

work groups like the regional focus group that was founded in InduCult2.0 for creating commitment and corporate responsibility.

Finally the moderators summed up that successful cooperation with companies already exists but more in a very local manner with individual, small projects.

Summary

Although the experts shared even more individual experience, the following issues dominated the discussion and showed challenges faced by regional stakeholders:

- Cooperation with industrial companies
- revitalization of old-industrial buildings as a task of society as a whole
- preservation of old-industrial knowledge and stories

4. Evaluation

The debate session was a good opportunity for experts to get directly involved in the discourse. It showed that most of the participants struggle with similar challenges. All topics that were discussed offered a lot more aspects to focus on.

The results of the debate sessions tie up with the results of the InduCult2.0 project.

As some experts have already more experience than others it is recommended to reconnect the experts in post-conference communication by using the method of a learning network. Further debate sessions during other events, expert groups or even an industrial culture blog and peering visits in other regions could be relevant follow-up steps to secure the sustainability of newly gained knowledge.