



Past - Present - Future



“HISTORY OF THE FUTURE”: A CONCEPTUAL PROPOSAL FOR RE-BOOSTING INNOVATION AND PIONEER CULTURE IN THE INDUSTRIAL REGION OF SOUTHERN SAXONY- ANHALT

**Regional Thematic
Summary**

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PP 1, District of Zwickau in cooperation with economic development agency Anhalt-Bitterfeld | Dessau | Wittenberg (ABDW)



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Abstract

The history of the region in Southern Saxony-Anhalt (ABDW region) is also the history of genius thinkers, inventors and founders, who, based in Central Germany, often tread non-conformist paths. Their pioneering achievements and innovations have influenced our ways of thinking and still influence our modern technologies today.

On the one hand, this study highlights the pioneering achievements of the Central German region, which led to the region's emergence as a world-class industrial region. For that purpose, relevant places, events and biographies that influenced the pioneering history were analyzed. On the other hand, this study points out through which measures the pioneering spirit of the ABDW region could be revived. It proposes establishment/promotion of existing/new creative places. This includes a. o. the foundation of a new type of University 2.0 taking up similar institutional innovations of earlier centuries.

1. Project Context

Since June 2016, the district of Zwickau has been leading the EU project InduCult2.0: "Industrial heritage, cultural resources of the industry and creative pioneers - living industrial culture outside the metropolises in Central Europe".

While the term "industrial culture" has predominantly been used for the preservation of monuments and buildings in recent decades, nowadays there are innovative approaches that include contemporary cultural and creative resources. In this new understanding, industrial culture is a dynamic concept that changes with the transformation of the industrial economy and society.

This culture approach is particularly suitable for regions that are still heavily focused on industrial production today. InduCult2.0 brings together such regions from Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Italy. The InduCult2.0 partners use the qualities of their industrial past, present and future to position their regions in competition as attractive places to work, live and rest.

Specifically the partnership intends:

- to promote and establish the concept of a "living industrial culture" in Central Europe
- to strengthen the specific culture in industrial regions and to use it as a location factor
- to revive the pioneering spirit in industrial regions

The business development agency Anhalt-Bitterfeld | Dessau | Wittenberg mbH (ABDW) is a cooperation partner of the district of Zwickau.

The concept developed belongs to the work package T4 with the topic "Fostering creativity and innovation in the environment of industry and its remains". In our action "History of the future" T4.5.1 concepts for capitalisation of innovation and pioneer culture of industrial regions shall be provided. This concept is supposed to provide proposals how the pioneer spirit of the ABDW region can be revived. The project partners

from Italy (CCIAA Padua) and Slovenia (BSC Kranj) are also developing on concepts for action T4.5.1.

2. Regional Context

Just like other old industrial rural regions, the ABDW region struggles with a bad image: It is often considered dusty and old-fashioned. Creating a new regional identity can help transform and re-design such an image.

In context of “History of the future - Innovation and pioneer culture”, industrial culture and industrial tourism give the ABDW region the opportunity to build on its historical heritage and harness the potential of regional industrial culture to promote tourism and regional identity.

For example, the route of Industrial Culture “Coal, Steam, Light” connects regional industrial past and present through cooperation with industrial museums and factories. Within the festival of the “Regional days of industrial culture”, factories and industrial museums open their doors to the public and organize special events.

3. Objective

ABDW, in cooperation with the district of Zwickau, sought to examine the historical peculiarities of the cultural environments in which unique pioneering achievements could be made in Southern Saxony-Anhalt. The key question considered is how one can learn from historical pioneering phases in order to revitalize pioneering culture in the region today.

In addition, the establishment of a regional network of committed actors from relevant areas should be promoted.

4. Applied Approach

For working up the study, a contract was issued to an external expert. As a starting point for their work, the economic development agency ABDW had set up three theses which served as an orientation for the “narrative” to be developed.

- Thesis 1: In its role as an energy carrier, the brown coal of our region was the major force of the industrial development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.
- Thesis 2: The lack of resources and the need for their substitution were the major forces in the twentieth century.
- Thesis 3: Ecological and social aspects are the major forces of the innovative development in the early twenty-first century.

To verify the theses, the contractor analyzed the history of the development of the chemical industry in the ABDW region, taking into account various location development theories, like agglomeration theory, development path theory, spillover-effect, etc.

Additionally, a quantitative event-action-analysis was carried out. It covered innovations and pioneering achievements made in the ABDW region over the time span of 500 years.

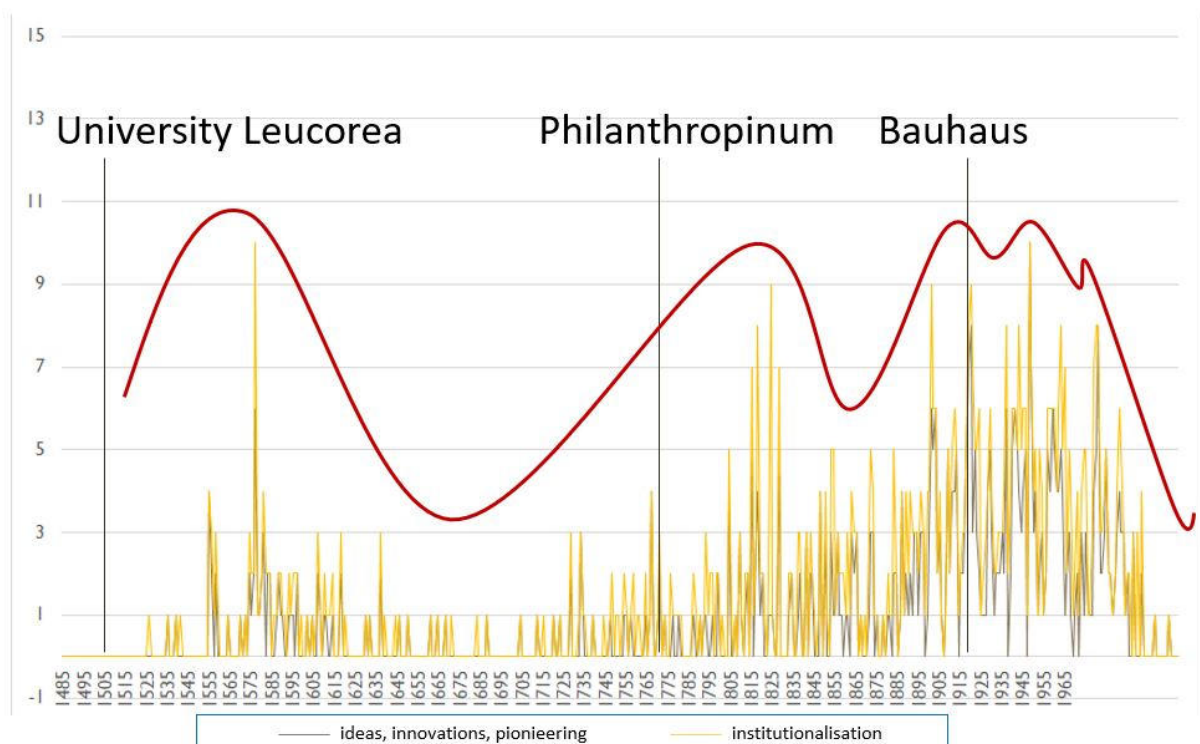
In order to be able to measure the significance of pioneering achievements, an assessment and estimation of the influence on future developments and changes took place.

Methodologically, the event-action-analysis focused on time horizons on identifiable effective patterns of action and constellations that could advance pioneering achievements and innovative developments. Access to data as well as biographies of the pioneers in Central Germany were used. All data was arranged chronologically and spatially. Subsequently, the search was for interpretable indicators to explain the accumulation of historical pioneering achievements.

The method of quantitative data collection was supplemented by qualitative expert surveys. At the end, the interim results were presented to regional actors, discussing opportunities and possibilities of innovation and pioneer culture for the region.

5. Results

This chart highlights the pioneering achievements of the Central German region, which led to the region's emergence as a world-class industrial region. For the purpose of the chart, relevant places, events and biographies that influenced the pioneering history were analyzed and pictured in form of ideas, innovations and institutionalisation. The span goes back to the time of Reformation 500 years ago. Before, the region was a terra incognita - a land without properties.



With the founding of the University of Leucorea a first point was set for a renewal movement and creative people started to settle in the region. In later decades, the Philanthropinum and the Bauhaus in Dessau in particular generated similar direct or indirect impulses.

The chart shows waves of innovations and institutionalisation (red line). There is a clear connection between the rise of innovations and educational institutions. Today, the region is facing another Zero Point concerning innovation culture. The answer to the key questions (see Objective) is that higher education institutions were the “pioneers” to benefit innovations. Universities have always been key institutions for post-crisis innovation and for the onset of advancement.

Policy-wise, this means it is necessary to develop a motivating narrative on the innovation character of the region in order to work out the peculiarities of the historically verifiable, unique pioneering character and to revive it in the form of a University 2.0.

One result for a new innovation culture for the ABDW region is the foundation of a University 2.0 named “Walther Rathenau University”. It is intended to be a specific university for social innovation and transformation in economics, politics, culture and spatial planning. The university shall have specific educational tasks and comprehensive study programs. In order to pursue the concept of a University 2.0, its importance and necessity has to be presented continually to regional political circles.

A University 2.0 needs to be embedded in a spatial, inspiring environment. In order to create innovative milieus, places have to be created in which the pioneering and researcher spirit can be felt and experienced and where creative minds are brought together across institutions, generations and interests. First conceivable places could be the historical “employment office” in Dessau, the “Leucorea” in Wittenberg and the “041” in Bitterfeld-Wolfen (currently the town hall on the site of the former film factory).

Other possible steps or approaches could be:

Landscape and village formation design

- The ABDW region could break new ground through exceptional landscaping and become a talking point through innovative and unusual land use and design ideas.
- Through the targeted use of land art and art installations, an unforgettable positive impression and a positive expectation can be induced at the first contact in the Bauhaus anniversary year.

Discover stories of the home region

- It is important to involve the people of the region, to listen to their stories and to connect them in different places and lifeworlds of the past and the present.
- A path of the Central German pioneers, called “Pioneers of future”, should be developed, connecting the artifacts of the World Heritage region with the Central German metropolitan area.

Interactive map of the pioneering achievements

- In cooperation with regional museums and home associations, the pioneering achievements shall be recorded. An interactive map is intended to give an overall

presentation on the innovations and to illustrate the industrial culture's potential for the region.

Multimedia presentation of regional innovation history

- In a "House of Pioneers" the visitor will experience interactively what innovative industry means in the ABDW and in Central Germany with its long history and tradition.

"Pioneers of Future"

- Under the title "Pioneers of Future", programs and projects are being developed. They are intended to convey the pioneering achievements of industrial culture and inputs of industrial work to students and young people in order to encourage their career choices in the ABDW industry.
- In addition, the ABDW focuses on the cultural aspects of industrialized regions. With the installation "Pioneers of Modernity", ABDW will present the historical innovation potential in collaboration with the tourism agencies in regional companies and historical factories to present their historical roots.

6. Transnational Added Value

The concept can be transferred to other European partner regions. It is important, however, that the concept needs to be adapted to local conditions. In order to revive the pioneering culture in the region, the following aspects should be considered.

- A pioneer region needs inspiring projects that value what the region has and produces and brings it into a regional cycle. Therefore, creative design spaces are needed.
- It is essential to establish committed regional stakeholders to stimulate pioneering culture and to set common strategic goals.
- Creative hubs should be generated in an old industrial environment.
- It is always important to increase political attention to the region.
- The region's population can be involved in the topic of industrial culture with the help of events, festivals, educational offers, guided tours and educational institutions.
- The application of social media and modern technology is compulsory in the age of digitalization.
- Use the opportunities of your region to create your own pioneers of the future.

Finally, each region striving for a similar goal can make use of such a study in order to define its own unique characteristics and revive its pioneer culture.

7. Outlook and Sustainability

The ABDW region can only become an innovative milieu again in the medium and long term.

A requirement for this is to continue to present the idea of a new University 2.0 in regional political circles and to convince politicians of its importance and necessity. An important

step can be taken in 2019, when the 100 year anniversary of the founding of Bauhaus will be celebrated. At the Regional Forum of Dessau-Anhalt-Bitterfeld-Wittenberg, we will be presenting and discussing our results of the study to gain more supporters. If the project University 2.0 is accepted positively in the Regional Forum, it will be pursued progressively.