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**The Path from Passivity towards Entrepreneurship:  
Public Sector Actors in Brownfield Regeneration Processes  
in Central and Eastern Europe**

**Abstract**

Europeanization research dealing with the environmental transition in Eastern Europe has focused on the roles of state actors in adopting European regulations. Less well understood are the framings and roles of public administration actors when EU regulations do not prescribe specific institutional changes. This paper offers a micro perspective on the framings and roles of such actors in several cases of brownfield regeneration. Actors can play a proactive role, thereby fostering change, or they can play a moderately active or a passive role. We identify three moments – defining brownfield problems, mobilizing networks and leading by example – which together define an entrepreneurial path. Along this path, actors can evolve from passivity towards entrepreneurship, but stasis and regression are also possible. Using qualitative data from the project TIMBRE (Tailored Improvement of Brownfield Regeneration in Europe), we illustrate different moments along this path for public sector actors in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania.

## Introduction

The institutional setting of societies – that is the framework of formal rules of laws or property rights and the informal restraints of habits or traditions – has been increasingly understood as influencing how decision making and policy formulation and implementation are taking place (e.g. North, 1990). Students of public sector organizations have long focused on the central role played by institutions in ensuring the continuity and stability in organizational processes (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007). With the Eastern enlargements of the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2007, however, attention has shifted towards the institutional changes that a variety of young EU member states have undergone as part of the integration process over the last two decades. These changes have come to be known under the collective label of Europeanization.

The environmental transition of Eastern European societies – which followed the dramatic economic changes of the 1990s – has been analyzed in the Europeanization literature as processes of institutional transformation at the macro level. Attention has been devoted, for example, to the role of state and non-state actors in shaping public policies (Börzel & Buzogány, 2010). While the agency of domestic actors has been recognized in this body of research, as will be discussed below, a focus on the distinctive characteristics of actors in influencing processes of institutional transformation is largely absent in this literature. The basic assumption of this article is that, both within and outside their formally defined roles, representatives of public institutions (in central institutions or self-governing local institutions) have certain understandings or play specific roles by either fostering or delaying institutional changes. The roles played in each specific instance depend on cultural, political or organizational factors. The net effect of these actions can vary significantly: at times, it can amount to an emerging pressure for change from within the state institutions themselves and at other times to inertia and opposition to change.

The present paper explores the micro-level agency of public administration actors in one area of environmental policy making, namely brownfield regeneration. Our concern with the active role of public sector actors in institutional change, which can occur at various levels, leads us to consider brownfield regeneration as a very useful case study. Unlike the environmental *acquis* of the European Community, whose adoption involves a transfer of bounded sets of policy prescriptions and frameworks from the EU to the national level<sup>i</sup>, brownfield regeneration is not associated with a unitary set of regulations. In this way, changes in this area are bound to be shaped by the understandings and actions of domestic actors, who can manifest considerable discretion in promoting or retarding change. How and why this is the case will be the focus of the analysis to follow.

Based on qualitative data gathered between 2011 and 2013, we provide an empirically grounded analysis of the understandings and actions of individual public administration actors<sup>ii</sup> in five applied settings of brownfield revitalization in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. More exactly, we ask: What are the understandings and the roles of public sector actors in encouraging or delaying change in specific cases of brownfield regeneration in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania?

In this way, our research addresses current needs in understanding specific forms of interplay between organizations and the environment, focusing on how actors in different public sector contexts shape certain forms of environmental transition. There is, first of all,

our focus on Central and Eastern Europe, that is, on a world region outside the traditional Western research foci (Aragon-Correa, 2013). Second, by taking the case of brownfield regeneration, we address a truly site-specific topic, recalling the recent emphasis of Shrivastava and Kennelly (2013) for a more place-based understanding of organizations. At the same time, this is a particularly multi-dimensional topic (cf. Aragon-Correa, 2013) where organizations need to address a sustainable revitalization task under uncertainty of environmental contamination and resultant legal, economic, technological and local planning challenges (e.g. Bartke, 2011; Schädler et al., 2012) – leaving us the crucial question of how this complexity is dealt with by the local actors. Third, with our analysis of actors at the micro-level, we add to the recent literature on organizational learning (e.g. Benn, Edwards & Angus-Leppan, 2013) by shifting from group and organizational levels to individuals in organizations.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: In the next section, we broadly locate our proposed focus within the Europeanization literature. By drawing upon the institutional literature dealing with entrepreneurship in the public sphere, we propose a dynamic framework – conceptualized as a pathway – for the analysis of the role of public sector actors in changes related to brownfield regeneration. In the third section, we describe the situation of brownfield regeneration in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania. The fourth section describes the data collection and analysis, while the fifth is devoted to the analysis of the understandings and roles of public sector actors in five specific settings in the three countries. For each case, we explore the three moments of the entrepreneurial path (defining brownfield problems, mobilizing networks and leading by example). The concluding section summarizes the findings and points to some theoretical distinctions that can help us better understand how entrepreneurship can drive change in CEE.

### **Theoretical Framework: Entrepreneurs in Institutional Change**

The concept of Europeanization describes a set of processes and phenomena that are part of the more encompassing notion of transition in Central and Eastern Europe. Andersen already remarked that “Europeanization is increasingly used [...] to denote the process of European integration and its progressive effects on national and subnational actors, legal arrangements, and policy-making processes” (Andersen, 2002, p. 1396). The Europeanization literature identifies specific mechanisms through which domestic policy areas are modified in accordance with EU rules. Carmin and Vandeveer (2005) distinguish three mechanisms of Europeanization, namely the hierarchical institutional model, the altering domestic opportunity structures and the model of actors’ changing preferences, beliefs and expectations.

In the hierarchical institutional model, it is assumed that the domestic institutions of nation states are created and configured in accordance with EU rules and requirements. This sees EU actors prescribing legal changes for domestic actors, which the latter – given their subordinate position – need to implement in their legislation. The scope of independent action for public administration agents is severely limited in this case. The second mechanism focuses on altering domestic opportunity structures by looking at the distribution of incentives for various actors in national politics and the transformation of incentives as a result of international processes, such as EU policy making. Changing incentives for actors

may be the result of market incentives within the common market. On the other hand, domestic environmental policy officials can “leverage EU environmental policy debates or requirements into greater domestic political influence” (Carmin & Vandever, 2005, p. 14). This second model points to a greater ability of domestic actors to fashion local environmental policies than under the hierarchical institutional model.

The third model takes our understanding of the agency of domestic actors one step further. In moving beyond actors’ instrumental strategies and interests, this approach focuses on the changed preferences, beliefs and expectations of actors (Carmin & Vandever, 2005). These changes are the result of policies, which aim to “influence values and participation patterns at the domestic level in a direction compatible with specific projects or ideas at the European level” (Knill & Lehmkuhl, 1999, p. 12). When considered from the point of view of domestic actors, the influence of EU policies will “motivate [them] by internalized identities, values, and norms” (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005, p. 9) that resonate with the broader European values and norms in which policies are defined.

This article is set within the body of Europeanization literature that stresses the active role of domestic actors in fashioning (or, on the contrary, limiting) institutional transformations in their policy fields and jurisdictions. Following the third model of Europeanization, we show how the actions of domestic actors do matter where the legal provisions do not impose any specific courses of action. Some have recognized that in the Central and Eastern European context, “domestic actors’ preferences and interests matter more than formal institutions” (Parau, 2009, p. 120).

A variety of concepts have been employed in the literature on institutional and policy change to make sense of the role of entrepreneurial actors in this process. Cohen (2011) reviews some of the terms used to describe this category of actors, such as “political entrepreneur, institutional entrepreneur, public entrepreneur, policy entrepreneur, evolutionary policy maker and executive entrepreneur” (Cohen 2011, p. 2). Without delving into these fine-grained distinctions, for the purposes of this paper we rely on a more general definition of the entrepreneur, such as the one by Maguire, Hardy and Lawrence (2004). For them, institutional entrepreneurs are “actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (2004, p. 657). What does this interest in particular arrangements say about the relationships between entrepreneurs, the status quo and the alleged necessity of change?

Garud and Karnøe (2000) provide a useful clue in this sense: “Entrepreneurs are knowledgeable agents with a capacity to reflect and act in ways other than those prescribed by existing social rules and taken-for-granted technological artifacts” (2000 p. 2). In other words, entrepreneurs deviate in some way from the status quo, a process that Garud and Karnøe qualify as mindful, because it requires reflection and “an appreciation of what to deviate from and the value of pursuing such a strategy” as well as an evaluation of “how much they can deviate from existing relevance structures” (Garud & Karnøe, 2000, p. 9).

The literature on institutional entrepreneurship focuses on several key characteristics of entrepreneurs, which will also help articulate the conceptual framework for this analysis. These features are: (1) the definition or reframing of new problems and/or solutions, (2) mobilizing networks for fostering change and (3) leading by example while assuming an entrepreneurial role. Our assumption is that these three ways of deviating from the status quo

are not simply distinct characteristics of entrepreneurs but that they rather constitute moments of what may be called an *entrepreneurial path*. This path can be defined as the self-conscious progression from redefining the status quo as undesirable, mobilizing others to change the current situation and creating a workable model of change that can hold for actors in similar conditions.

While the three moments overlap to some extent, we assume that the path begins when actors define new problems or define problems in a new way. Two decades ago, Roberts and King (1991) summarized the areas of agreement in the literature on entrepreneurship at that time by pointing out, among others, that entrepreneurs are engaged in defining and reframing problems. More precisely, Polsby saw public entrepreneurs as individuals "who specialize in identifying problems and finding solutions" (1984, p. 171). The problems are most likely to be found in the current institutional and policy setting, whereby entrepreneurs seek to highlight inefficiencies, failures or even crises of the status quo (Mintrom & Norman, 2009). As solutions to the perceived predicament, they are likely to frame new stories about what is to be done. These stories are often about meaning and membership, two key concepts in the literature on organizations, which go back to Goffman (1974) and are still relevant for the new theories of institutional and social change (e.g. Fligstein and McAdam, 2012).

With the question of membership, we arrive at the second moment of the entrepreneurial path, that is the mobilization of networks. Garud and Karnøe (2000) suggest that redefining an existing arrangement is not sufficient for entrepreneurship. What is required is "the ability to mobilize a collective despite resistance and inertia" (Garud & Karnøe, 2000, p. 2). In other words, entrepreneurs need to mobilize other, perhaps less active, actors in order to further their initiatives (Garud & Karnøe, 2000). Roberts and King (1991) claim that public entrepreneurs need to enlist the support of influential allies, and especially of politicians, with whom they form a "symbiotic relationship" (1991, p. 148). This may represent what in a different context has been called "networks of commonality", namely intense, long-lasting and generally thick ties, in which the personal dimension plays a crucial role (Grabher, 2004, p. 115). In some contexts, one important category of such networks is that of political membership. On the other hand, entrepreneurs are also likely to be motivated to engage in what might be called expert networks, in order to secure knowledge and relevant skills (Mintrom & Norman, 2009, p. 653) for their entrepreneurial initiatives. These are the so-called networks of sociality, which are superficial, serendipitous and based on expertise and exchange of knowledge (Grabher, 2004, p. 115).

The third moment of the entrepreneurial path is the so-called leadership by example: "When they lead by example—taking an idea and turning it into action themselves—agents of change signal their genuine commitment to improved social outcomes" (Mintrom & Norman, 2009, p. 653). Public entrepreneurs are, therefore, actors who wish to "reorganize and improve governmental services" and even invent new forms of government (Cohen, 2011, p. 7), which they can more easily achieve by showing workable models of change. Leading by example is often the indicator that an effective network has been mobilized and the new definition of the status quo has come to fruition. Leadership by example on the part of public administrators is particularly noteworthy, given that their main concerns are equity, accountability and diligent management of public money and, therefore, "any bold, innovative risk-taking behavior seems suspect" (Bernier & Hafsi, 2007, p. 488). Being able to

show that one's proposed innovations or changes in the public sector can bring improvements in existing institutional or policy arrangements can both help redefine what is possible and convince others to join the institutional change bandwagon. Finally, when it has run its full course, the entrepreneurial path could be further developed as an entrepreneurial cycle. This possibility will be addressed in the conclusion.

Garud et al., have used the concept of institutional entrepreneurship to “[reintroduce] agency, interests and power into institutional analyses of organizations” (2007, p. 957). Perkins (2012) has employed the concept of pathway to focus more precisely on the factors that shape individuals' entry into social movement activism. The entrepreneurial path suggested here combines two underlying ideas of these perspectives, by asking: how does the agency of public sector actors evolve over distinct stages and what factors shape them at each stage? First, pathways allow for a unitary understanding of different degrees of entrepreneurship (or activism) and, second, the movement along a path is possible in both directions. The path concept thus allows us to follow actors as they advance towards entrepreneurship but also when they stagnate or reverse towards conservatism.

From another angle, this paper fills the gap between two strands of Europeanization research, the approach from which this analysis started out. On the one hand is the assumption that CEE actors learn about novel ways of dealing with environmental conditions by recognizing the appropriateness of approaches and practices employed in the old EU member states (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005). Along these lines, we assume that public sector actors' knowledge of European experiences in brownfield regeneration will motivate them to attempt small or large changes of the status quo. This occurs through lesson-drawing or social learning (Andonova, 2005, p. 135), both of which can set actors on the entrepreneurial path by signaling inadequacies in the status quo.

On the other hand, Börzel and Buzogany (2010, p. 716) emphasize the weak capacities of state actors, which result from “the lack of a coherent policy and clear institutional structure”, for biodiversity conservation. This observation – as also found in the case of water resource management (Leidel, Niemann & Hagemann, 2012) – alerts us to the limits facing emerging entrepreneurs in CEE countries also for brownfield regeneration.

Based on these, we postulate that while a given appetite and movement from passivity towards entrepreneurship is to be expected in CEE brownfield contexts, there is no inevitable progress towards full-fledged entrepreneurship. Actors are dependent on existing organizational or political networks (channeling resources and legitimacy), on ongoing production practices or on the absence of legal frameworks, among others. We illustrate these arguments in different applied contexts of CEE countries.

### **The Context of Brownfield Regeneration in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania**

By focusing on this area of policy making, we depart from the more technical understanding of Europeanization as the transfer of a bounded set of policy prescriptions from the EU to the national level. While Europeanization research in the environmental field has dealt mostly with the implementation of the directives from the environmental *acquis* at the national level (e.g. Börzel & Buzogany, 2009), our research deals with a policy area that is much less clearly circumscribed at the European level. First, there is no agreed unitary definition of brownfields among EU member states (Oliver et al., 2005). The member states failed to agree



on a common Framework Directive for Soil Protection as first introduced in 2006 (European Commission [EC], 2006). EC (2012) provides a definition of such sites at the EU level as land that was previously developed, but which is not in current active use or is available for re-development. As a result of the need to protect soils (EC, 2011, 2012), on the one hand, and the missing coherent approach, on the other, brownfield regeneration is regulated by no less than 16 European directives (Darmendrail, 2013). As there are no clear specific prescriptions to be adopted from the EU to the national level with regard to brownfield regeneration, public administration actors appear to have considerable latitude in tackling this complex problem. Their perceptions and actions thus appear to be very important for understanding the potential for change in the institutional context of brownfield regeneration.

Research on the main actors involved in regeneration in CEE countries has only recently started to garner attention in the countries analyzed here (cf. for the Czech Republic Klusáček et al., 2011; Klusáček et al., 2013; Vojvodíková, Potužník & Bürgermeisterová, 2011). In addition, two studies carried out by the German Fraunhofer institute focus on brownfield regeneration in Poland and Romania (2010a and 2010b). However, none of these studies deals with institutional entrepreneurs, and they also largely limit themselves to the formal competences of different actors in the national brownfield markets. On the other hand, our research deals explicitly with the understandings and roles of concrete actors in applied settings.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The data for this article were collected as part of the EU-funded TIMBRE project (Tailored Improvement of Brownfield Regeneration in Europe). A total of 22 individual and small group interviews and 3 focus group discussions were organized with stakeholders located at different levels (local, regional and national) in different locations of the three case study countries (in Ostrava, Hunedoara, Bucharest, Szprotawa and Zielona Gora). The aim of the data collection was to identify the key actors and decision-making structures for the three TIMBRE test sites (Ostrava<sup>iii</sup>, Szprotawa<sup>iv</sup> and Hunedoara<sup>v</sup>). The questions asked were thus attuned to the goals of the TIMBRE project – learning about decision-making and the stakeholders involved – and did not inquire about entrepreneurship as such. During the preliminary analysis of the material, however, it became apparent that public sector actors at different administrative levels often referred to institutional or policy changes that they wanted to see implemented. This prompted us to inquire more carefully into these entrepreneurial framings and assumed roles because they seemed to offer insight into how institutional or policy changes are fostered or resisted by those who have decision-making power in the regeneration of brownfields<sup>vi</sup>. However, in pursuing what had emerged as a promising research venue, we had to tackle two practical problems. The first was the selection of respondents and the second the selection of relevant information from the interviews.

The selection of respondents for the purposes of the TIMBRE project was inclusive and comprised all relevant actors, whether local, regional or national, involved in decision-making for the three study sites. These stakeholders were identified by the TIMBRE partners in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania, based on their roles in decision-making for the three brownfield sites. For this reason, the sample did not include equal proportions of local,



national and regional respondents. In addition to being issue-specific, this selection did not include only public sector actors, but also representatives of non-public organizations (such as NGOs or private companies) involved in brownfield regeneration. By retaining only the former in the analysis, the total number of respondents, including the participants in focus groups discussions, totaled 30 public sector actors (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Public sector actors participating in the interviews and focus group discussions of the TIMBRE project*

<b>Level</b>	Local	Regional	National	Total
<b>Country</b>				
Poland	9	3	0	12
Czech Republic	1	4	1	6
Romania	7	1	4	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30</b>

The sample thus reflects the applied nature of the TIMBRE research. This can be seen as advantageous given that it allows a contextualized understanding of entrepreneurship. At the same time, the results should be interpreted with caution, as they were elicited in specific contexts from the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania. Nevertheless, the theory-based interpretation of the data allows us to derive more general pathways of entrepreneurship of public administration actors in brownfield regeneration in CEE.

All interviews and focus group (FG) discussions have been carried out by trained staff in Romanian, Czech and Polish, and a few of them in English and German. The interviews were semi-structured and included questions on the visions, strategies and decision-making of actors as well as on their relationships with other key actors directly or indirectly involved in regeneration. The modal length of the interviews was about one hour and that of the FG discussions two hours. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated into English, predominantly by native speakers from the three countries. In addition, we used the speech of a Polish regional actor at one of the TIMBRE workshops as a useful data source and the statements of a representative of a Romanian ministry representative made during another project workshop<sup>vii</sup>. We also relied on one unstructured observation done by one of the Timbre researchers in the case of the Hunedoara site (2013). The interview transcripts were transferred into a software package for qualitative data analysis (Maxqda).

The selection and analysis of the data<sup>viii</sup> has been carried out in two steps. First, based on the literature reviewed, we established the three broad conceptual categories: defining or redefining the status quo, mobilizing networks for bringing about changes in the status quo and leading by example (showing how changes in the status quo would work). As a second step, we re-read the interview material to search for the ways in which public sector actors do (or do not) refer to each of these three broad topics. We derived from the data a set of codes and sub-codes – empirically grounded categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) – that abstract and systematize the information provided in the interviews for each of the three concepts. The level of abstraction was, however, very low, as the categories were relatively close to the empirical formulations provided by the interviewees. We identified 19 codes for the

defining/redefining moment, 3 for mobilizing networks and 9 for leading by example. In addition, we used separate codes to identify the status quo and what deviation from the status quo means in a given context. This identification was also based on secondary sources and on the literature on brownfield regeneration in CEE countries.

Figure 1 shows a selection of the most relevant codes, that is, of those codes that had at least two coded segments<sup>ix</sup> or were considered illustrative to be used in the actual analysis. The green curve is used to suggest the entrepreneurial path, while the rectangular boxes contain the codes derived from the interviews. The names given to the codes have been chosen by the researchers with the double purpose of capturing the specificity of what was said and of finding a way to include the information provided under a more general category, subsumable under the three moments of the path. The codes depicted in Figure 1 are illustrative and are meant to indicate that the analysis is based on a reasonable number of “data points”. The numbers in brackets correspond to the number of coded segments from the interviews. However, they should be taken as a relative measure of importance, since not only the number of statements is important, but also the context in which they occur, as will be apparent from the discussion.

The green boxes located above the entrepreneurial path include the codes that suggest the different ways in which actors redefine the status quo (identified as SQ in Figure 1), their experiences in mobilizing networks and their narratives with regard to leadership by example. The red boxes below the entrepreneurial path capture the points of view and experiences that suggest limitations in redefining the status quo, obstacles in mobilizing networks or barriers affecting leadership by example. Finally, the arrows suggest actual experiences of advancing along the entrepreneurial path (with solid green color) or reversals in this process (the dashed arrows).

This detailed analysis of the empirical information enables the interpretation of actors’ movements along the entrepreneurial path. Based on the categories derived from the data, we do not aim for an overarching characterization of entrepreneurship across settings (Szprotawa, Ostrava or Hunedoara) or across levels (local, regional or national). Instead, the discussion to follow will place each path in its specific context and will highlight the factors that shape entrepreneurship in each case. As the situation in some of these contexts is relatively fluid, it is important to bear in mind that the interpretations are based on data and observations collected between 2011 and 2013.

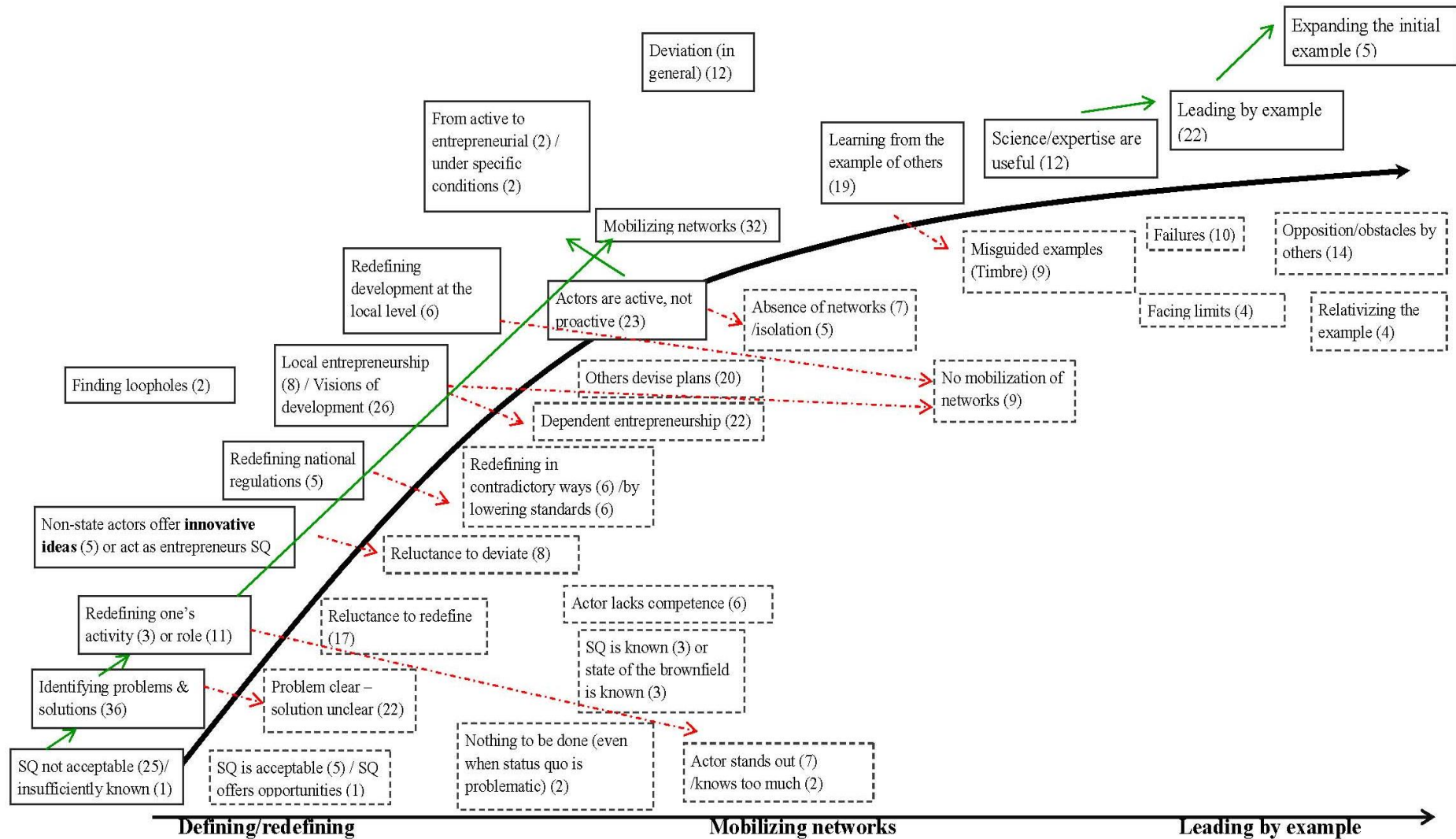


Figure 1

## Results and Interpretation

Public sector actors involved in brownfield regeneration are far from being a homogenous group with an interest in preserving the status quo. Our empirical research reveals substantial variation in the attitudes and practices of public sector actors between and within the three CEE countries, as well as depending on their location at different scales (national, regional or local).

This section presents some of the positions that public sector actors occupy along the entrepreneurial path. Given that our research was carried out from a synchronic perspective, we can only present snapshots of the postulated entrepreneurial path. We show that different actors are more or less advanced in a process that leads from passivity towards entrepreneurship and thus provide support for the hypothesis of an entrepreneurial path. As will be seen, the concept of a path is well-chosen because our evidence indicates that actors can either advance towards entrepreneurship or, if the required conditions are not in place or unexpected barriers emerge, they may fail to progress or revert to conservatism. We provide a picture of entrepreneurship as a process, pointing out different stages reached by actors but also pitfalls that can affect their evolution.

It is important to acknowledge that the three test sites and the countries in which they are located, had to deal with a complicated process of transition after their (re)turn to the market economy in 1990s. The very idea of brownfield regeneration is less than two decades old even in Central Europe. It is a new awareness that the abandoned places of the post-socialist transition might still hold value for future development (Garb & Jackson, 2010).

First, we discuss the case of Hunedoara, Romania, which is arguably at the earliest stage of brownfield regeneration and where entrepreneurship is largely definitional due to (post)industrial path dependency and dependency on the central political power, which prevent the mobilization of networks. Second, we discuss the case of Szprotawa, Poland, where would-be entrepreneurs have developed more coherent and realistic definitions of the desired changes than in Hunedoara, but still have to contend with the fragmentation of their networks. The third case is that of the Ostrava oil lagoons in the Czech Republic, where the brownfield problem was recognized and a remediation process brought underway, yet stasis emerged following some unexpected challenges of decontamination. Forth, we address the case that provides strong evidence for the existence of the entrepreneurial path, as we show how the representative of the environmental department of the Silesian Voivodeship in Poland, covers all the three moments of the pathway. We conclude this section with some national-level public sector actors in Romania. While moving up compared to the regional setting discussed for Silesia, with this case we actually move down on the entrepreneurial path to discover contrasting definitions, incoherent institutional networks and unsuccessful attempts to lead by example. All these cases provide valuable insights for identifying the conditions for failed and effective entrepreneurship. The selection of these stories is based on the availability of rich interview and focus group data, and not on the assumption that one or the other of the levels (local, regional or national) is more important in one country than in another.

*Entrepreneurship in Hunedoara: Between path dependency and unsupportive networks.*

Of the three case study sites, the one in Hunedoara has undergone the most dramatic transformation during the post-socialist transition. Beginning in 1999, the main activities of the large *Siderurgica* steel plant, employing as many as 20,000 workers at the height of its production, were discontinued (Alexandrescu et al., 2012). Only one relatively small part of the former plant was privatized and is currently operated by the global steel manufacturer ArcelorMittal. The rest of the site became a 138 ha large brownfield that is managed by Ecosid Ltd., a company owned 99% by the Hunedoara local council<sup>x</sup>. The regeneration of this site has commenced in 2004 but is still at an early stage. Ecosid has managed to partly capitalize on the resources of the former steel plant, especially through the demolition of buildings and the recovery of scrap metal. As these resources have been gradually exhausted, Ecosid and the local council have started looking for new opportunities. At the time that the interviews and FGs (in Bucharest and Hunedoara, 2012) were carried out, local actors were busy creating a variety of scenarios for the regeneration of the site. All these scenarios implied significant redefinitions of the status quo, aiming to develop the large brownfield site. Due to its location in the immediate vicinity of the center of Hunedoara, the Ecosid site appeared to have redevelopment potential, according to a representative of the Romanian Environmental Protection Agency (George, Bucharest, 2011<sup>xi</sup>).

Local actors themselves described a variety of redevelopment venues. The proliferation of these definitions was, indeed, striking. A representative of Ecosid described the “three big steps” of their regeneration activities: 1) the demolition of 365 buildings, which was largely completed in 2011; 2) the “regeneration of the affected soil which is more or less polluted”; and 3) “after the [ecological] clean-up, we will try to give it back to the Hunedoara community as a lawn-quality area.” (John, Bucharest FG, 2012). Peter, the chairperson of Ecosid, offered further optimistic visions of development: “In my opinion, we can clean up through our own resources, a large part of the site.” He departed from the current image of the rubble-littered site and offered radically new definitions: “green grass! We are really preoccupied now to do something in the area.” He also explained how their entrepreneurial initiatives would be supported: “We have the necessary money, we can begin the development, to buy some machines...” (Hunedoara FG, 2012). Peter went further and offered a development scenario: “We are talking with [a company] that wants to install photovoltaic cells, on 10 – 15 ha [of our site]”. He is aware that installing photovoltaic cells has “caught on very well at the European level” (Peter, Hunedoara FG, 2012). One year and a half later, none of these hopeful redefinitions had materialized and were nowhere near realization. What had happened?

The entrepreneurship of the leaders of Ecosid has mostly been of a path dependent kind. In other words, they could support their redefinitions of the status quo as long as they could capitalize on the resources of the former steel plant. In 2012, they could still boast about their successful initiative: “What we managed to do, as a first case in Romania, was to demolish the buildings, the remnants, what was left over, and get some money” (Peter, Hunedoara, 2012). The stream of income offered by this short-lived entrepreneurial act was, however, inevitably limited. In trying to escape from their dependency on local resources, they turned to the central government in Bucharest. The high hopes placed on this actor are clearly conveyed by a FG participant who said that “it is there [in Bucharest] that the sun

risers and sets.” (Novak, Hunedoara, 2012). It soon became apparent, however, that the central authorities were not favorably disposed towards local actors:

Our bad luck was that the [political] color<sup>xii</sup> that was in power in Hunedoara was different from the ruling color in Bucharest. Some projects were almost finalized but due to various reasons, not one 1 leu, euro or dollar reached Hunedoara. (John, Bucharest, 2012)

Left without local resources, but also without powerful political allies (Roberts & King, 1991), the worst fears of Peter and John seemed to have materialized: Hunedoara was left as a “terminal stop, not taken into account by any government” (Peter, Hunedoara, 2012). This pessimistic assessment was confirmed by the representative of the regional environmental protection agency in Deva<sup>xiii</sup>: “several election cycles have passed and nothing has happened from the point of view of attracting money for rehabilitation” (Leila, Deva, 2012). The final blow to these emerging entrepreneurs came in the next elections (June 2012) when they had to leave their office “for political reasons” (Peter, Hunedoara, 2012). The activities of Ecosid since then bear no resemblance to the plans so enthusiastically put forward by its previous leadership (personal observation, 2013).

This story points out the severe limits faced by well-meaning entrepreneurs who find themselves in situations of extreme resource dependency. The explanation for this has to do with the almost unmitigated restructuring of the industrial sector under the so-called shock therapy, which left local actors with no development alternatives. On the other hand, the reason for the political dependence is given by the highly centralized structure of the Romanian political system (Fraunhofer MOEZ, 2010a), wherein mobilizing networks would require the alignment of local political power with that at the national level. Furthermore, as Timbre researchers learned in Hunedoara, the networks of knowledge exchange and expertise played a minor role in the absence of a political commitment to regenerate the site of the former industrial behemoth. Advancing along the entrepreneurial path is thus likely to fail when new definitions, such as the hopeful redevelopment scenarios of the Ecosid leadership in 2011 and 2012, meet unsupportive networks of communality. The effect of this was to blunt local initiatives by cutting them off from the vital resources of the central administration.

*The challenges of integrated development at the Szprotawa site: Coherent definitions vs. fragmented of networks.*

The status quo in the case of Szprotawa is very different from the one in Hunedoara. Being a former Soviet military base, the brownfield had not belonged to the local community for a long time until 1992, when it was retroceded. In contrast to Hunedoara, Szprotawa incurred no loss through the closure of a plant, but instead gained an area of 300 ha that it could develop. The community was eager to capitalize on the resources of the site and “from that time [1992] a policy of selling or leasing the property” has been pursued (Julia, Szprotawa, 2012). This policy has been continued, so that several businesses operate on the site at present, thus providing the needed financial resources for new initiatives. A representative of the mayor’s office explained in an interview that “this is my duty, to do everything to prepare reliable answers for potential investors and attract them” (Jonathan, Szprotawa, 2012). The

conversion of the brownfield into an investment area has been accelerated by the inclusion of 2.5 ha of the site into a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Some local actors regard investors and SEZ as “the most important” actors (Timothy, Szprotawa, 2012). Yet, despite this overwhelming focus on economic development, some local public sector actors have advanced a broader definition of the desirable future of the site.

While rejecting economic development at all costs, these latter actors hope “that this area will be developed through settling of the investors who will, in order to get the tax relief, employ many people” and maintain environmental quality, because “we had enough of contamination and noise” (Julie, Szprotawa, 2012). Another town hall representative, Petra, claims that she wants the site investigated for contamination for the sake of the families and children living on part of the site (Szprotawa, 2012). The town hall supports alternative uses of the site, for example by leasing part of the former airfield for small airplanes and by accepting an informal nature protection area managed by a local NGO. Although the emphasis has always been on attracting investors, these actors are unwilling to limit, in the words of Julia (2012), “our possibilities”. Keeping open options for change is a characteristic of mindful deviation (Garud & Karnøe, 2000).

These concerns for an integrated form of development of Szprotawa (focusing in economic but also on environmental and social criteria) are considered entrepreneurial because most of the Polish SEZs are geared towards the reconstruction of heavy industry (Stenning, 2000). The history of the Szprotawa site has also been one of capitalizing on the resources of the site. A second reason is that the definitions of public sector actors in Szprotawa are broadly similar with those of two local NGOs. In his view, establishing “harmony between nature and commerce (with active tourist activities)” is possible (Matthew, 2012, Szprotawa).

This relatively broad consensus over the desirability of balanced and integrated development in Szprotawa would lead one to expect that local actors are likely to support each other and form a network, which would capitalize on and streamline all the local initiatives towards a common regeneration plan. However, local actors have failed so far to coalesce around a unitary effort to promote change at the Szprotawa site, for two reasons. On the one hand, the pursuit of development at the former airbase has followed two unequal scenarios: the dominant economic development scenario and the subordinate nature protection scenario. With regard to the former, an alderman explains that “[the mayor] is very active and he has got a clear strategy to develop this area and attract new investors” (Timothy, Szprotawa, 2012). The representatives of the NGOs that promote non-industrial uses of the site regard themselves as largely isolated from the decisions of the municipality: “There is no cooperation with other [local] institutions. I mentioned our own initiatives.” (Matthew, Szprotawa, 2012). In other words, the promoters of the economic scenario have pursued their goals through the SEZ and other economic actors and thus largely aloof from those advocating the nature protection scenario.

The second reason is the inactivity of some relevant local actors. Some of the local agents – e.g. the forest department in Szprotawa – have been left isolated and passive. They have not heard of the initiatives of the local NGOs and view their role in an exceedingly narrow way: “Here is forest ... What we could do in the forest? [...] only forest treatment ... We are not thinking in the category of management” (David, Szprotawa, 2012).



The Szprotawa case suggests that, even when actors reach a definitional consensus on the desired direction of change, they face difficulties in pooling their resources together. However, in contrast to Hunedoara, local actors are not so dependent on unsupportive national-level networks. By strengthening their local and regional networks, as a recent Timbre stakeholder workshop has shown (Alexandrescu, 2013), they seem to be capable of building the prerequisites for the integrated development of the Szprotawa site.

*Struggling for inclusiveness in decision-making at the Ostrava oil lagoons.*

The case of the Ostrava oil lagoons shows that even if change is taking place and the regeneration of brownfields is underway, public sector actors can misinterpret claims for change and oppose further changes, even when the new status quo is very undesirable. In this case, unexpected barriers called for new definitions for dealing with the undesirable consequences of the decontamination process. The remediation began in the mid-2000s and the status quo is defined by certain decontamination practices – especially the conversion of the extracted oil lagoons material into fuel – which have proved controversial among NGOs and the local public due to air pollution. We use this case to illustrate definitional stasis that prevents actors from embarking on an entrepreneurial path even when other actors advocate for change. The discussion focuses on the positions and arguments of public sector actors formulated in response to suggestions made by civil society actors on the opportunity of public participation in decision-making.

The regeneration of the Ostrava oil lagoons has aimed to provide a tangible public benefit: improving the quality of life of the site neighbors by replacing the toxic lagoons with a forest park (Alexandrescu et al., 2013). The unfolding of clean-up activities has nevertheless generated heightened levels of public dissatisfaction. The questions are: How did some of the public sector actors respond to this situation? Did their reactions suggest proactive or conservative framings? The FG discussion suggests that the latter is the case, but it is important to explain why.

In the opening parts of the debate, two actors stated their favorable position with regard to public participation in decision-making. Jane from the Technical University in Ostrava was much in favor of public involvement: “local people [...] simply have to be taken into account while planning the future” (Ostrava FG, 2012). This is so despite the fact that these are “socially weak people, in their majority belonging to the Roma population” (Thomas, Ostrava FG, 2012). Katherine from an environmental NGO that is actively contesting the decontamination practices employed in the Ostrava lagoons also thinks that “people have to be taken into account” and that the public “should have the feeling that they are able to decide what is going on around them”. These ideas are considered innovative because they correspond to recent proposals of broadening decision-making on brownfield regeneration to include stakeholders more fully into decision-making (Aguilar, 2009).

In response to these points of view, the representative of the state-owner of the lagoons acknowledges that “we underrated communication” (Joseph, Ostrava FG, 2012). However, this acknowledgement does not lead him to seek to redefine his position and bring change to the undesirable status quo. Instead, he reverts to a defensive stance: “we are just a mediator between [a] consortium of private companies and [the] state” (Joseph, Ostrava FG, 2012). Similarly, the representative of the environmental department of the city of Ostrava

thinks that the “opinion of local population is an important factor to be taken into account.” At the same time, he is reluctant to give them a role in decision-making: “people simply don’t have information and they decide according to their emotions” (Alfred, Ostrava FG, 2012).

The moderator of the focus group discussion restated the issue in more specific terms by asking who should be involved in the choice of technologies and in what way. Jane from the university said that only experts should be involved and Joseph supported her position. Katherine insisted by asking whether they “really don’t think that [the] local population should have a voice in cleaning that heavily influences their quality of life?” The public sector actors remained silent on this question. The reluctance to redefine a clearly undesirable status quo had yet to reach its climax in the FG discussion. Jane expressed a technocentric view: “I don’t know if it is good idea to mix the cleaning of soil with happiness of people” (Ostrava FG, 2012). This encouraged Joseph to push his conservative stance furthest: “I really do not like the idea of people involved in decision about technologies. It scares me too” (Ostrava FG, 2012).

These actors deal with the obvious problems of lack of public acceptability by emphasizing the exclusive role of experts in decision-making. This suggests a backsliding on the entrepreneurial path: after the initiative of improving the local quality of life was taken, public sectors actors (owners of the lagoons) clouded the transparency of the change process. The explanation for this can be that, in effect, the decision to clean-up the lagoons area has lacked a clear definition of the (local) public good. First, the decision was taken by the central authorities, with little input from the city of Ostrava (Alfred, Ostrava, 2012). Second, one of the outcomes of the decontamination process has been the production of fuel which may suggest that, beyond the generous definition of the public good – a clean environment - lie “ingrained commitments to productivist practices” (Pavlinek & Pickles, 2004, p. 260). This case alerts us to how a “reversed” entrepreneurial prevents rather than fosters change. Narrow definitions of decontamination, in which only experts are allowed a voice, fail to mobilize networks of concerned stakeholders. Lacking this input, alternative solutions are not pursued, so that the undesirable status quo is allowed to continue despite mounting public discontent. Given that a regeneration process such as that in Ostrava is hardly reversible, the prolongation of the status quo will make the change process unnecessarily costly and contestable (Alexandrescu et al., 2013).

*The full entrepreneurial path illustrated: The case of the brownfield database of the Silesian Voivodeship.*

Based on the instances reviewed so far, one would have little empirical basis to speak of an entrepreneurial path. Until now, we have illustrated attempts by various actors to redefine the status quo (or resist new definitions) and have pointed out the – mostly missed – opportunities to capitalize on networks (either local or national-level). The case to be discussed now, that of the environmental department of the Silesian Voivodeship in Poland, illustrates the full unfolding of the entrepreneurial path. The inspiration for this story is Theodor, the head of the environmental department in Silesia, who exemplifies the designer of a new product, the successful networker and the actor who provides exemplary leadership in the Polish brownfield regeneration context.

Very much in line with the current thinking within European networks in the area of brownfield regeneration, Theodor defines sustainability in the brownfield context as the “economical management of space” (Katowice, 2012). He is dissatisfied with the status quo: “In Poland the state is not interested in solving the problem”. He also shows that he is able to draw lessons from other, mostly Western European, contexts to infer that the status quo is not acceptable “In other countries, the role of state, region and local municipality are clear[er]” than in Poland. Next, Theodor offers an overview of the barriers confronting brownfield regeneration actors in Poland:

In the first place I put the legal barriers [...]. Then there are ownership barriers – diffusiveness of ownership of those properties is one of the major barriers. Informational barriers – I will talk about that later, as we are trying to fight this barrier at the Voivodeship level. And finally financial barriers (Theodor, Zielona Gora, 2012).

In outlining this diagnosis of the status quo, Theodor shows his awareness of the interconnections of current problems, and also identifies the level at which he can act: the availability of information on brownfields within Silesia, addressed to potential investors. The task he sets himself is, thus, unambiguous: making “information [...] reliable, full and complete”.

Having defined his mission, Theodor mobilized his office to turn these ideas into a product, namely a database of brownfields for the Silesian Voivodeship. The successful accomplishment of the process suggests that expert networks and personal motivation were usefully combined. The main difficulty was that no funds from the Voivodeship could be spent for this database. In response to this situation, Theodor took the role of an institutional bricoleur (Garud & Karnøe, 2000) by combining voluntary work with existing resources:

The information tool was created within a scientific study (financed by State Committee for Scientific Research). The other part of the work was financed by European funds (EU project). We didn’t spend any money. We only had to fit/adjust the topic of the work [...]. This was our method for overcoming this barrier. (Theodor, Katowice, 2012)

By assembling these resources and actors, Theodor showed that he was able to deviate from the status quo, but also know how much to deviate (Garud & Karnøe, 2000). Theodor was also aware of the exemplary value of his entrepreneurship, by suggesting that “other regions can utilize our experience in some ways” (Theodor, Katowice, 2012).

In addition to creating this information tool, the Silesian representative also tried to build the organizational prerequisites for fostering the activities of investors. There were some plans to establish a special department to help investors search for brownfields, but this idea failed. Despite this drawback, the entrepreneurial path of Theodor can be followed still further: “at this moment a new [data] base is under development”. In other words, he and his team work on expanding the initial example.

This case shows the successful progression from redefining the status quo, finding solutions to current problems, delivering those solutions and continuing the work on improving the state of the art. All moments seem to fit smoothly into this path. The explanation for this success lies, beyond the personal skills of Theodor, in the generally

supportive investment climate in Poland and in the availability of European expertise on regeneration.

Before assuming the inevitability of the entrepreneurial path, the last case to be discussed will show just how easy the path can lead astray. This can occur in the absence of clear regulations and due to overlapping jurisdictions even when actors are willing to redefine the status quo.

*Promoting brownfield regeneration in Romania: Heroic but misguided entrepreneurship within dysfunctional inter-ministerial relationships.*

Based on the distinction drawn by Bernier and Hafsi (2007) between heroic and systemic entrepreneurship, all instances discussed in this paper belong to the first category. The individual public sector actors discussed so far were concerned to build something new (or defend something old) – brownfield regeneration strategies – in a generally unfriendly institutional environment. The last case to be discussed sheds light on a particularly idiosyncratic case of entrepreneurship in brownfield regeneration. We will discuss the case of four national-level public sector actors from Romania: George from the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Dennise and Jeannette from the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism and Taylor from the Ministry of the Environment and Forests.

The definitions which these actors use to deal with the brownfield problem could hardly be more different. On the one hand, George is an example of social learning (Andonova, 2005). He adopts the “Western European philosophy” (George, Bucharest, 2011) with regard to investigating and dealing with the contamination of brownfields. In contrast to the status quo, he places emphasis on risks assessments, which he considers in terms of “human health, water, and ecosystems” (George, Bucharest FG, 2012). He appears thus motivated by internalized European values and norms (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005).

On the other hand, Taylor defines the brownfield problem by lowering the requirements for regeneration to the sole criterion of human health. This leads him to ask: “Is there an impact on the health of the population? This is at stake, first of all, not the habitat in itself. The bug can survive under more difficult conditions or move elsewhere” (Taylor, Bucharest, 2011). Taylor also disagrees with the European views of brownfield regeneration, by claiming that decision-makers in Western Europe “were pressed by the environmentalist trend.” Thus, he offers a much more conservative assessment of the need for change. These contrasting definitions would probably have had few practical implications, if they were not placed in the context of dysfunctional inter-ministerial relationships. These implications are reflected in the work of Dennise and Jeannette.

Working in a ministry with no connection to environmental issues, the two actors explained how they struggled with the problem of defining brownfields for the purposes of one of the European programs offering funding for regeneration: the regional operational program (POR). They requested a list of potentially contaminated sites from the Ministry of the Environment and the ministry, in turn, requested it from the institution that was in charge of this list, NEPA. However, as a NEPA employee, George refused to make the list available, although it was a formal requirement from the ministry. He explained that “we do not have contaminated sites in Romania” (Bucharest, 2011), because the list had not been

formally accepted as “official” by the Ministry of the Environment. This left George almost discretionary power over the list of potentially contaminated sites in Romania. His actions were animated, however, by an explicit concern for the public good:

[When] you talk about contaminated sites, you have to think about the psycho-social and economic implications [...] You create a mass psychosis, [...] inflated by the mass media. [...] big problems will emerge. People will sue the state. (George, Bucharest, 2011)

As a result of George’s decision, Dennise and Jeannette had to work with an improvised list of 600 sites – about one-third of George’s actual list. In the interview, these actors underscored their special efforts to aid the regeneration of brownfield sites. Their attempt to make informed decisions on the appropriateness of regenerating brownfield sites under the POR met dysfunctional relationships between environmental authorities. This case shows that redefinitions of the status quo – even when made possible through funding sources such as the POR – are hampered by organizational relationships characterized by policy vacuum (no official recognition of brownfield sites) and arbitrary decision-making by individual actors.

## **Conclusion**

This article has started out by discussing processes of change under the broad concept of Europeanization. In contrast to the policy areas strictly regulated by environmental regulations, those that are subject to softer forms of Europeanization through social learning and lesson drawing are shaped to a greater extent by the agency of domestic actors. Throughout this paper, we have interpreted the agency of actors in terms of deviating from the status quo, by taking successive steps along what we have called the entrepreneurial path.

The pathway concept has been useful in that it has enabled an understanding of the factors that shape how actors initiate changes in their organizational or policy contexts, in a way that resonates with Perkins’ (2012) analysis of women’s entry into activism. In order to understand more long-term changes in CEE, however, the concept of path does not seem to be sufficient. All five cases analyzed here suggest that redefining the status quo and mobilizing networks are consequential for initiating processes of change. But policy change does not occur until the path has reached its climax, that is, actors are able to lead by example and expand on the initial example, as we have shown for the Silesian case.

To advance theoretically on this issue, we need to ask if the entrepreneurial path is likely to assume a repetitive form, thus suggesting a possible cycle of entrepreneurship, or whether after a promising start it turns out to be a short-lived deviation from the status quo. In analogy, individuals’ entry into activism does not guarantee by itself policy changes, but repeated engagement in action is likely to increase the efficacy of activism. To better understand entrepreneur-driven changes in CEE, we distinguish between paths and cycles of entrepreneurship in regeneration. Our case studies enable us to flesh out this distinction only in a preliminary way, but there is theoretical promise in this.

A cycle suggests that, after advancing along the entrepreneurial path and leading by example, actors are able to follow the example themselves and tread the path anew. The process is similar to the organizational evolution of enterprises analyzed by Zollo, Cennamo

and Neumann (2013). We use the concept of cycle, however, because we draw on the literature on urban regeneration that underscores the “unique nexus of social and economic relations” (Henneberry & Parris, 2013, p. 237) specific to each regeneration project.

In contrast to pathway, the cycle of entrepreneurship indicates that the agency of actors yields policy or institutional results. To paraphrase Grabher (2004, p. 107), repeated cycles of entrepreneurship “within the organization and between the organization and the environment form a central base” for entrepreneur-driven change in CEE. With the notion of cycle, deviations from the status-quo are not only subject to trial and error (e.g. more or less successful attempts to redefine the status quo), but become established. We thus reserve the term cycle for those instances of entrepreneurship that complete the path and build on it through successive iterations. We speak of paths instead to draw attention to the initial steps towards entrepreneurship, which may or may not lead to changes in the status quo. The cases discussed here illustrate both concepts and suggest the relative rarity of entrepreneurial cycles in comparison to paths.

The case of the Silesian brownfield database reveals the dynamic of a cycle. After redefining the problem and mobilizing a network, Theodor created a successful example of change. Importantly, this involved recognizing the most appropriate level at which one can act, which shows that the organizational context in which the leading example is advanced does matter. Once the initial database was developed, actors could build on the existing pool of knowledge (redefinitions) and networks to improve the workable model of change, thus engaging in a new iteration.

On the other hand, treading the entrepreneurial path only part of the way leaves few traces and resources for future entrepreneurial efforts. In Hunedoara, even when local actors are eager to redefine the status quo by articulating various initiatives, some of which are in line with European trends (e.g. using brownfields for energy generation), all are bound to fail if networks – of a political kind in this case - are not mobilized. As a result, actors succeed each other, each with its own redefinition of the status quo, but these potential entrepreneurs do not manage to drive change. Similarly, even when a broader coalition of actors is able to reach kindred redefinitions of the status quo, failing to mobilize a network is a stumbling block on the entrepreneurial path. This is what has happened in Szprotawa so far, but the mobilization of a network there seems to be closer in sight than in Hunedoara, due to a better networking potential among local (and regional) actors.

The case of Ostrava shows that even after regeneration has begun, actors can respond to an undesirable status quo by clinging to narrow definitions that exclude the inputs of other stakeholders. Change does occur in this case, but it is out of sync with European and national trends that emphasize more inclusive approaches to brownfield management. After the initiative of regeneration was taken, public sector actors in this case refused to become proactive and reverted to a defense of the status quo.

Finally, entrepreneurship at the national level, where policies, funds and consequential decisions are bound to meet, requires inter-organizational coherence in the first place. At this level, the lack of legal definitions and the absence of clear responsibilities invites arbitrary – even if well-meaning - redefinitions of the status quo and can block the initiatives of other public sector actors.

Future research on the Europeanization of brownfield regeneration in CEE would require renewed attention not just to the issue of whether and why European norms and practices are adopted by domestic actors. From our point of view, one needs to understand how actors act as entrepreneurs and especially what makes the difference between simply treading an entrepreneurial path, on the one hand and engaging in repeated cycles of entrepreneurship, on the other. Furthermore, the Europeanization approach could be employed in a way that does justice to the agency of entrepreneurs by asking how actors employ European values, norms and practices in redefining, networking and especially leading by example in regeneration.

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<sup>i</sup> Not all EU directives involve strict regulations that countries have to adhere to. For example, the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) directive is based on negotiations between the regulators and those regulated (Börzel & Buzogany, 2009). However, the terms and conditions of environmental regulations are explicitly spelled out.

<sup>ii</sup> Since our data comes from individuals, we limit our claims to individual actors. Our claims should not be generalized without qualification to entire organizations.

<sup>iii</sup> This is the site of a former refinery and oil storage area, known as one of the oldest and largest ecological hazards in the Czech Republic (for details see: <http://www.timbre-project.eu/ostrava.html>)

<sup>iv</sup> The site of a former Soviet airbase, this brownfield exhibits pollution related to its previous uses, especially with fuel-related compounds (for details see: <http://www.timbre-project.eu/szprotawa.html>)

<sup>v</sup> Hunedoara was one of the main steel production facilities in Romania during the socialist period. Following its downsizing, all facilities were closed down between 1999 and 2004 (for details see: <http://www.timbre-project.eu/hunedoara.html>)

<sup>vi</sup> In this article, we refer to public sector actors as those who have decision-making power in brownfield regeneration. In this sense, representatives of public universities or non-executive actors are not included.

<sup>vii</sup> Both actors were subsequently interviewed by the Timbre researchers.

<sup>viii</sup> The validity of the data is ensured based on the fact that the interviews were carried out with decision-makers, that is, with those actors who have actually acted (or consider acting) in an area, that is brownfield regeneration, where few regulations are in place. Given that no question dealt with entrepreneurship as such – thus avoiding the socially desirability biases of being seen as an entrepreneur – tends to also increase the validity of the data. The reliability of the data was ensured by the context of the Timbre project in which the interviews were carried out. More exactly, most of the statements made by the respondents – for example those concerning the status quo in the three research settings – could be verified.

<sup>ix</sup> Some of the codes have been reformulated to make them intelligible to readers.

<sup>x</sup> The decision making body of the city, elected every four years by the residents of Hunedoara city.

<sup>xi</sup> The information from the interviews will be identified by the pseudonym of the respondent, the location of the interview or focus group (in which case the specification FG will be added) and the year.

<sup>xii</sup> “Political color” refers to party politics/political allegiance in the Romanian context.

<sup>xiii</sup> This is the capital of Hunedoara county, where the city of Hunedoara is also located.