Policy Entrepreneurship and Regional Development

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Abstract

The scholarly regional governance debate usually divides actors into two categories:
state actors, representing the public domain and politics, and non-state actors, repre-
senting the economy and civil society. However, these categories are based on the
functional context and not on the actual behaviour patterns of the actors. Also, this
dichotomy fails to explain why actors contribute differently to regional develop-
ment processes. In analysing the design and implementation phases of regional de-
velopment strategies, we observe that some of the involved actors show entrepre-
neurial behaviour. We understand these actors as governance entrepreneurs. Based
on their behaviour, we differentiate between two new categories: realising and ena-
bling governance entrepreneurs. Realising governance entrepreneurs contribute to
regional development processes through creativity and innovation, alertness to op-
portunities and a willingness to invest personal resources and take risks. Enabling
governance entrepreneurs contribute through a large network, persistence in negoti-
ation and the capacity to operate across various government levels and economic
sectors. The findings are based on 33 in-depth expert interviews across six rural and
peripheral regions in Switzerland where two National Development Policies are
applied to strengthen regional development processes.

1. Introduction

Understanding regional governance dynamics has become a major goal on the regional studies research agenda (Ayres & Stafford 2014; Foster & Barnes 2012; Woods & Goodwin 2003; Goodwin 1998; Jordan 2008; Pütz et al. 2017). Although regional governance is understood and applied in varying ways across disciplines, it generally involves the joint coordination of regional development processes that are shaped by state and non-state actors, framed by weakly institutionalised structures and taking place within a functional, regional space (Fürst 2010; Benz & Fürst 2002; Bevir 2011; Bulkeley 2012; Jessop 1997; Willi et al. 2018).

However, knowledge about what state and non-state actors actually do to influence and shape the processes of regional development remains superficial (Ayres & Stafford 2014; Sotarauta 2010; Marra 2014). The commonly used dichotomy between 'state' and 'non-state actors' remains static and does not say anything about the actual activities and practices of actors engaged in regional development processes. In order to overcome this shortcoming, researchers are more commonly referring to a third, intermediary actor type: the regional manager. This actor is located somewhere between the state and non-state realms and is seen by many as key actor in coordinating, managing, steering and influencing regional development processes (Sotarauta 2010; Sotarauta 2009; Pearce & Ayres 2009; Marra 2014; Sætren 2016). However, highlighting the roles of regional managers may result in overlooking the roles of additional actors, who are also strongly influencing regional development processes, such as politicians, business people or actors from outside the region. This leads us to two fundamental questions: What are the roles of state and non-state actors in jointly coordinating the design and implementation phases of regional development strategies? How can governance actors be categorised beyond the dichotomy of state and non-state actors? Accordingly, in this paper, we analyse how various actors shape regional development by specifically considering the design and implementation phases of regional development strategies. This leads us to the development of a typology of governance actors. We place this analysis in the policy entrepreneurship literature because we believe that this concept will enable us to understand the various coordination patterns adopted by state actors, non-state actors and regional managers during regional development processes. By developing a typology of governance entrepreneurs, we account for the element of agency and how it is exercised by actors engaged in regional development processes across various governmental levels, economic sectors and societal realms. By doing so, we hope to provide insights into how the behaviour of policy entrepreneurs is linked to the evolution of various regional governance forms.

This paper contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, we take the concept of regional governance as a starting point in analysing how regional development processes are coordinated by various actors. Second, we adopt a policy entrepreneurship perspective to analyse the specific roles of these actors. The concept of policy entrepreneurship is useful in understanding how and why actors behave innovatively and are willing to discover new paths toward regional development opportunities. With this paper, we hope to advance the understanding of the various roles of actors, their interplay, and how this affects regional development processes. The combination of the two popular concepts, regional governance and policy entrepreneurship, both heavily used in various disciplines, such as political science, economic geography and planning and development studies, allows us to analyse regional development processes in an interdisciplinary fashion. Third, we expand knowledge on the design and implementation phases of regional development strategies and thus contribute to the under-standing of policy processes (Winter 2012; Kern & Rogge 2017). Furthermore, this paper advances our understanding of the roles of policy entrepreneurs within rural areas and thus counterbalances studies on the subject conducted in urban areas (Catney & Henneberry 2016). Finally, we focus on actors located on the regional, i.e., the subnational, level and thus complement existing studies focus-ing on the national or subnational level (Palmer 2015; Petridou & Olausson 2017; Sætren 2016).

In recent years, the importance of strategies for the targeted development of regions has been recog-nised by both researchers (Sotarauta 2009; Getzner et al. 2014; Inderbitzin & Hauser 2016) and public organisations alike (OECD 2012; OECD 2006; United Nations 2011; Cultural Capital Counts 2014). Strategies are seen as 'powerful tools in direction-setting' (p. 396, Sotarauta 2010) because they merge varying expectations, ideas and goals regarding regional development into a common vision and thus join regional forces. Given that strategies may be able to set the direction of a region's developmental path, actors must be entrepreneurial through, for example, recognising opportunities to focus on re-gional strengths, taking risks by choosing specific directions and, of course, investing their own re-sources, such as time and insights about regional development. However, those who are involved in these strategic processes may take on various roles. Thus, by analysing the many roles played by vari-ous actors during the design and implementation phases, we hope to better understand regional gov-ernance actors and agency.

This paper addresses its two research questions through a comparative case study of six regions across Switzerland. Due to its federal and decentralised organisational structure, Switzerland is most suited to the study of regional development processes in a highly fragmented, multilevel and multidimensional setting. In each region, we analysed how actors shape the coordination of regional development.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In the subsequent section, we review the concepts of regional governance and policy entrepreneurship and highlight the characteristics of policy entrepreneurs. In the fourth section, we describe our comparative case study design and provide an overview of the se-lected case study regions. In the fifth section, we describe the roles of various actors during the design

and implementation phases of regional development strategies and introduce the typology of governance actors. We close the paper with concluding notes in the sixth section.

2. Theoretical background

The concept of regional governance

In recent years, regional studies scholars have addressed various aspects of regional governance, particularly to understand the ways in which state and non-state actors coordinate processes of regional development across governmental entities, economic sectors and social realms (Bevir 2011; Fürst 2014; Pomeranz & Decker 2017; Zäch & Pütz 2014; Wilkes-Allemann et al. 2015; Pütz et al. 2017). In this paper, we understand *regional governance* as the coordination of regional development processes by a range of state and non-state actors representing various political levels, jurisdictional entities, economic sectors and societal realms (Fürst 2010; Benz & Fürst 2002; Bevir 2011; Bulkeley 2012; Jessop 1997; Willi et al. 2018). Regional governance is a helpful research perspective to use in analysing similarities and differences in the coordination of regional development processes because it focuses on actors, institutions and their interplay. These three factors shape the form and course of regional development processes, and analysing them helps explain why regional development processes differ. The concept of regional governance is popular within an array of academic disciplines, such as regional and political studies, urban and rural planning, as well as environmental studies. However, despite the widespread use of the concept of regional governance, there remains a superficial understanding of actors' roles in coordinating regional development processes. Specifically, a further refinement of the crude dichotomy between state and non-state actors is needed.

The roles of actors in developing regions

In recent years, democratic governments have supported the increased engagement of non-state actors such as locals, business people and representatives of non-governmental organisations in regional development processes in order to foster transparency, acceptance and efficiency in these processes (Agger 2012; Shortall 2008; Wellbrock et al. 2013). Depending on the roles assigned to non-state actors, they can shape public decision-making processes in their own ways and affect the outcomes of these processes. Commonly, four degrees of involvement can be described: information, consultation, co-production and co-decision (Edelenbos 2005; Verweij et al. 2013; Arnstein 1969; Wilkes-Allemann et al. 2015). First, the lowest degree of involvement occurs if non-state actors are only *informed* about ongoing public decision-making processes, without having the opportunity to directly contribute to them. Second, non-state actors are a bit more involved in solution-finding processes if they are *consulted*, e.g., if they expressed their ideas and opinions during participative workshops or other forms of organised meetings. Third, non-state actors co-produce solutions if they are allowed to actively contribute to the development of solutions, though without or with only reduced co-decision capabilities. Fourth, the strongest degree of involvement occurs if non-state actors have the opportunity to *co-*

decide with their state counterparts. Agencies for regional development differ in their degrees of involvement. In some countries, the involvement of non-state actors is a mandatory criterion to apply for national funding (Hanssen et al. 2011). The inclusion of non-state actors is a subject of controversy among scholars because it may, on the one hand, provide transparent and acceptable solutions, but on the other hand, it may harm democratic principles (Aarts & Leeuwis 2010; Larsson 2017; Birnbaum 2016; Klijn & Skelcher 2007; Durose et al. 2015).

While the importance of actors in fostering regional development processes has been identified in many academic works, we still do not know enough about the roles played by various actors, particularly with regard to their entrepreneurial behaviour. Thus far, attention has been given to regional managers and their motivation, manipulation strategies, and success in coordinating regional development processes (Sotarauta 2009; Sotarauta 2010; Sætren 2016; Pearce & Ayres 2009). Although these contributions represent a step in the right direction, they clearly overlook the roles of state and non-state actors, who are also contributing to regional development processes. This reinforces the need to study the entrepreneurial roles of actors and their interplay within regional development processes.

Policy entrepreneurship

In order to examine the entrepreneurial behaviour of governance actors, we must extend our theoretical basis into the realm of policy entrepreneurship. The concept of policy entrepreneurship is used in political and public management studies and is applied to a wide range of issues, such as 'municipal decision making' (Arnold et al. 2017), 'institutional' or 'policy change' (Bakir & Jarvis 2017; Palmer 2015) and the 'public policy process' (Brasil & Niedhardt Capella 2017). In the recent past, the concept has increasingly been applied to governance-related issues because it helps us understand how different actors behave within highly dynamic multilevel and multidimensional settings (Petridou & Olausson 2017; Arnold et al. 2017). For example, Catney and Henneberry (2015) analyse 'local public entrepreneurship in a system of multilevel governance' (p.1324) and show that 'entrepreneurial activities, such as lobbying, framing and institutional development' (p.1325) are highly relevant to initiating institutional and policy change within multilevel governance regimes. Similarly, Saetren (2016) scrutinised the roles of policy entrepreneurs who had, by seizing an opportunity, successfully applied a set of manipulation strategies to realise a controversial change in a policy program. The characteristics, motivations and activities of policy entrepreneurs are crucial in realising policy change (Mintrom & Norman 2009; Bakir & Jarvis 2017). Again, Catney and Henneberry (2015) state that 'successful entrepreneurship […] depends on how well actors operate within and across governmental levels and the ways in which particular policy ideas are perceived at particular junctures across these levels' (p. 1325). Both Lucas (2017) and Klein et al. (2010) emphasise that policy entrepreneurship is a collective phenomenon, in which diverse actors collaborate and collectively make decisions within and across political, economic and societal realms. In general, policy entrepreneurs are understood to propel policy change by skilfully advocating and framing political issues until an open policy window

emerges regarding that issue (Mintrom & Norman 2009; Kingdon 2011a; Sætren 2016). Policy entrepreneurs are persistent during negotiations (Kingdon 2011a), highly networked (Mintrom & Norman 2009) and alert to opportunities (Kirzner 1973; Kirzner 1997). Also, policy entrepreneurs are willing to invest large shares of their own resources, such as skills, knowledge, reputation, energy and, occasionally, money (Kingdon 2011a; Bakir & Jarvis 2017). Similar to the concept of economic entrepreneurship, the Schumpeterian (Fritsch 2017) conception of innovation is often attributed to public entrepreneurship because it helps to explain how public entrepreneurs bring about change in policies. However, the concept of innovation falls short in terms of acknowledging cases in which policy entrepreneurs deliberately prevent policy change 'to preserve the status quo' (Lucas 2017, p. 5) and thus cannot serve as a sole concept in understanding the actions of public entrepreneurs. The literature on policy entrepreneurship, however, has not been applied to the varying roles adopted by state and non-state actors and regional managers during regional development processes and falls short of producing a typology of governance actors to help explain how different actors contribute to such processes in different ways.

3. Research design

We examine the various roles of governance entrepreneurs in the regional development context of Switzerland. We chose Switzerland as the background of our comparative case study because the country's federal and decentralised organisational structure makes it suitable for studying regional development processes in a highly fragmented and multidimensional setting. There are more than 2,200 municipalities that are highly independent from superordinate levels, possess far-reaching competences and are responsible for providing communal services. These municipalities include contributing to the development of the wider region, in which municipalities work together with other municipalities and, in many cases, establish agencies for regional development that cross municipal borders and include a variety of actor from various horizontal and vertical levels. This means that state actors from the municipal level are highly present and involved in regional development processes in various ways.

Furthermore, Switzerland has a long-standing tradition of regional development policies (Rudaz & Debarbieux 2014). For this paper, we chose two national regional development policies that were introduced late in 2007 to strengthen the sustainable development of regions: The 'New Regional Policy (NRP)'(SECO 2013) and the 'Ordinance on Parks of National Importance', or the 'Park Ordinance (PO)' for short (FOEN 2014). Neither policy is ultimately implemented by political entities, such as the cantons or municipalities, but by regional development agencies, which are responsible for the coordination of actors, project ideas and development processes at the regional level.

The data for this study were collected through 31 semi-structured interviews with regional managers, municipal councillors and local businesspeople within six agencies for regional development across

Switzerland. Additionally, we conducted two meta-interviews with consultants who had, at various times, advised one or several of the six selected regional development agencies and thus had profound knowledge of these regional development processes. All interviews were conducted at the interviewees' workplaces or homes and lasted between 50 minutes and three hours. The standard language was Swiss German, but five interviews were conducted in French with the assistance of an interpreter. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed for content using MaxQDA 12. In the following, we will explain the choice of regions and interview partners.

In 2017, we counted 79 Swiss agencies for regional development that were legally organised as associations and were either recipients of the 'New Regional Policy' (n= 82) or established as Regional Nature Park within the 'Park Ordinance' Funding Program (n=14). Only 29 of these 79 associations made a regional development strategy available on their homepages and were thus included in our population. The observed lack of regional development strategies aligns with the work of Inderbitzin et al. (2016, p. 921, own translation), who find that '[i]n fact, only a few regions [in Switzerland] have an explicitly formulated idea of future development and positioning.' From the determined population, we chose a total of six case studies based on the degree of involvement of non-state actors, the location (e.g., different cantons, urban rural areas) and the language area (e.g., French and Swiss German areas). In order to determine the degree of involvement of non-state actors, we applied two criteria: a) the membership terms of the association (i.e. membership for state actors only vs. membership for state and non-state actors) and b) the share of non-state actors within the executive board (i.e., a low, medium or high share). According to these criteria, we chose the following six case studies, with the last showing the highest degree of involvement among non-state actors (Table 1): 1) Regio Frauenfeld, 2) Region Thal/Naturpark Thal, 3) LuzernPlus, 4) Region Oberaargau, 5) Développement du Nord Vaudois (ADNV), and 6) Parc Ela. Parc Ela and Region Thal/Naturpark Thal are recipients of the Park Ordinance Policy, whereas the other are mainly funded by the New Regional Policy.

Table 1: Selected case studies and the degree of involvement on the part of non-state actors (own compilation, status: 19.10.2017)

Criteria for case study selection		Case studies	
Members	Share of non-state actors on executive board	Regional development agencies	Degree of involvement on the part of non-state actors
State actors	Low	Regio Frauenfeld	lowest
	Medium	Region Thal/ Naturpark Thal	lower
	High	LuzernPlus	low
State and non-state actors	Low	Region Oberaargau	high
	Medium	ADNV	higher
	High	Parc Ela	highest

Within each case study, we interviewed at least five actors who held one or several key positions at one of three different levels of the regional development agency: the management level, the strategic level (i.e., the executive board and advisory board) and the operational level (i.e., commissions and

project promoters). First, we conducted a profound entry conversation with the managing director or an equal knowledgeable representative of the regional development agency. Second, by building on the network created during the first interview, we selected additional interviewees. In total, we interviewed eight regional managers, nine state actors (e.g., municipal councillors) and 14 non-state actors (e.g., businesspeople). The selected nine state actors were all politicians and showed a high degree of political legitimacy as they were all members of municipal councils (executive). Six of them were presidents. Regarding their position within the regional development agency, five state actors were involved strategically, as members of the executive boards, and four held different positions on the operational level, mainly in commissions. The 14 selected non-state actors all had an economic background and were either directors of local businesses (n=10) or self-employed (n=4). In addition, eight of them represented various regional economic organisations, such as chambers of industry and commerce, trade associations and tourism associations. By choosing these highly networked and well-known non-state actors, we ensured a highly representative sample of non-state actors. Half of them were involved strategically, either as members of the executive board or in advisory groups. The other half was involved operationally, either as members of commissions or as project promoters.

4. Results

Before we delve into the results regarding the roles of various actors in designing and implementing regional development strategies, we must highlight the variation in actor representation in the six regions. The six selected agencies for regional development vary in terms of size, density and type of municipality (e.g., rural, peri-urban, or urban) and also regarding the number and composition of the delegates and of the executive board (Table 2). First, in agencies where membership is limited to state actors (e.g., Regio Frauenfeld, Region Thal/Naturpark Thal, LuzernPlus), the delegates are all also state actors. However, despite the exclusion of non-state actors from membership, Region Thal/Naturpark Thal and LuzernPlus both appoint non-state actors to their executive boards. In the case of LuzernPlus, two representatives of the regional economy are appointed, who are encouraged to advocate for the needs and interests of local businesses. In the Region Thal/Naturpark Thal, four employees of the management office, who preside over four working groups, are part of the executive board. Second, in agencies where membership is open to both state and non-state actors (e.g., Region Oberaargau, ADNV, Parc Ela), the composition of delegates is mixed as well. Here, membership is open to private individuals, private companies and interest groups or associations. Although non-state actors can be elected members of the executive board, the share of non-state actors does not reflect their share among the group of delegates. Instead, state actors hold most positions within the executive boards of Region Oberaargau and ADNV. Only in the Parc Ela do non-state actors account for most of the executive board.

Table 2 Characteristics of selected case studies (own compilation)

Regional development agencies	Perimeter (km^2)	Inhabitants per km^2	Number of municipalities	Municipal structure (%)*			Members	Number of delegates		Composition of executive board	
				Rural	Peri-urban	Urban		State actors	Non-state actors	State actors	Non-state actors
Regio Frauenfeld	197	253	15	20	73	7	State actors	22	-	5	-
Region Thal/Naturpark Thal	134	107	9	100	0	0		19	-	10	4
LuzernPlus	336	716	25	4	54	42		25	-	5	2
Region Oberaargau	348	234	49	96	0	6	State and non-state actors	49	>20	11	2
ADNV	537	153	72	32	63	6		72	>300	5	2
Parc Ela	548	30	7	86	0	14		7	>500	2	5

*(Federal Statistical Office 2012)

4.1. Actors' roles in designing and implementing regional development strategies

In all of the analysed agencies for regional development, regional development strategies are designed on the strategic level through collaboration between the executive board, the management office and the delegate assembly, which approves the strategy. Once approved, regional development strategies are implemented on the operative level through project promoters, working groups or the management office itself.

During the design and implementation phases, different actors are assigned different roles and opportunities to become involved. The core tasks of regional managers include the organisation of the different actors and members of the various bodies of the association, the generation of additional input from actors outside these bodies and the fulfilment of the various requirements of various political levels, all if which are restricted by limited resources (Sotarauta 2010; Ayres & Stafford 2014; Pearce & Ayres 2009; Inderbitzin & Hauser 2016). State actors – here members of the municipal councils – influence the design of regional development strategies through their strategic positions within the executive boards, where they are at the core of the decision-making process. However, despite their apparent influence within these agencies, state actors may face tremendous challenges in 'selling' the strategy – which has been developed with the regional perimeter in mind – to their respective municipal councils. Often, state actors find themselves in a dilemma in that they are caught between serving their municipality and serving the goals of the region. Furthermore, because state actors hold their offices part-time and on a voluntary basis, they face time constraints and are not always able to fully complete all of their assigned tasks. Non-state actors can hold a variety of positions during the design phase of regional development strategies, some of which are more influential than others. Interestingly, in agencies for regional development with a low degree of involvement on the part of non-state actors, the design phase is not necessarily limited to state actors. Instead, non-state actors are extensively consulted through selected expert interviews (e.g., Regio Frauenfeld), participate in open workshops to define a broad regional vision that serves as one of the key documents of today's regional development strategy (e.g., Region Thal/Naturpark Thal) or have been invited to attend workshops and thus generate input for the current regional development strategy (e.g., LuzernPlus). In agencies for regional development with higher degrees of involvement on the part of non-state actors, a greater emphasis is also placed on collecting input from non-state actors through elaborate procedures. Through various channels (e.g., municipal newspapers and newsletters), non-state actors are invited to join open workshops, after-work get-togethers and networking events (e.g., Region Oberaargau, Parc Ela). However, although non-state actors are directly encouraged to participate, the response rate is often rather low (Shortall 2008).

4.2. Typology of governance entrepreneurs

Based on our analysis of the various actors involved in coordinating regional development processes, we developed a typology of governance entrepreneurs, which contains two types: the realising and the enabling governance entrepreneur. Using common attributes from the academic literature on policy entrepreneurs, we identify the realising governance entrepreneurs as highly innovative, alert to windows of opportunity and willing to invest their own resources. In contrast, we define enabling governance entrepreneurs as highly networked, persistent in negotiations and able to operate across governmental levels and economic sectors. These two types, described below, are mutually exclusive and independent of actors' functions within the regional development agency. In other words, the two types can be found among both state and non-state actors.

Realising governance entrepreneur

First and foremost, realising governance entrepreneurs are characterised by their innovative potential, which typically manifests as long and diverse list of regional development projects that they have already realised or plan to implement in the near future. These actors are eager to directly contribute to the development of a region through generating novel ideas and projects. Thus, they can bring new momentum to a region. Furthermore, they are characterised by an optimistic can-do attitude, entrepreneurial risk-taking and a willingness to invest their own resources, especially their time, skills and knowledge. Observed cases involve non-state actors who are experimenting with re-introducing old and formerly native fruit varieties to mountain areas for juice production (e.g., Parc Ela), the planned conversion of a rail line into a non-motorised traffic axis (e.g., Region Oberaargau) and the installation of an artistic theme trail dedicated to raising awareness for the thriving wood industry of a region (e.g., Region Thal/Naturpark Thal). These actors were all owners of small- to medium-sized businesses, primarily businesses based on the local market. As business owners, they appreciate the sustainable development of the region: "*For me, the sustainable development of the region is important. [...] I am afraid that sacrifices will be made at the expense of the environment and nature that we have here*" (economic actor, Parc Ela). Typically, these actors were only marginally involved in the design phase of regional development strategies, and this became even more true during the implementation phase. Often, their main concern was to ensure that the designed strategy would support their project ideas: "*[my concern was about] what has to be written into the program to avoid the later rejection of a project just because it does not fit the program*" (economic actor, Region Oberaargau). Realising governance entrepreneurs are not limited to non-state actors. They can also be found among state actors. Examples include municipal presidents, who are key drivers in promoting the strengths of a region in exceptional ways, such as the development of a theme park about the mammoths that were once native to that region (e.g., Region Oberaargau) or the maintenance of a network of museums to preserve the cultural and industrial heritage of an area (e.g., ADNV). This situation implies that these municipal presidents are not only acting on the operational level – as project promoters – but also on the strategic

level – as members of the executive board. These two types of actors assess the mixing of the strategic and operational levels differently. Whereas the former emphasises the importance of differentiating between the operational and the strategic level, the latter argues that *"[this way], the exchange of information is thus simplified"* (municipal president, ADNV). As long as everyone involved is aware of the inherent circular reasoning, the mixing of the operational and strategic levels can indeed contribute to the exchange of information; however, there is also the potential for conflict (Inderbitzin & Hauser 2016). Finally, regional managers can also act as realising governance entrepreneurs, as shown by the following two examples. In Regio Frauenfeld, the aging population became a popular issue at various levels among politicians and the public administration. The regional manager seized the opportunity to promote a regional project and successfully raised funds from a national foundation. Another example of an innovative realising governance entrepreneur is the regional manager of Parc Ela, who attempted to advocate for the launch of a new type of local bread with the help of local bakers. Although large amounts of effort, time and resources were put into the project, the results were rather moderate. These examples confirm the findings of other scholars, who identify policy entrepreneurs as highly innovative (Petridou & Olausson 2017), willing to invest their own resources at great risk (Kingdon 2011a; Bakir & Jarvis 2017) and alert to windows of opportunity (Kingdon 2011a; Mintrom & Norman 2009). However, our examples also show that the application of strategic mechanisms to influence policy networks (Sotarauta 2010) is not limited to regional managers but also encompasses many different actors who directly or indirectly cooperate on regional development issues (Lucas 2017; Klein et al. 2010). In fact, a range of actors from both the state and non-state realms are actively engaging in and contributing to regional development and are thus responsible for realising concrete development projects. Their ability to secure support from actors who have the power, resources and capacity to enable the successful implementation of these often ambitious and risky projects in practice is crucial (Bakir & Jarvis 2017; Mintrom et al. 2014).

Enabling governance entrepreneur

The second type of governance entrepreneur we identify is the enabling governance entrepreneur. Enabling governance entrepreneurs are characterised by their large networks and reputations within the region, which they make available to support the aims of the region. They could, for example, be business owners who own or lead a large globally oriented company that is one of the most important employers in the region. Commonly, these actors are interested in regional development because of its potential to improve regional soft factors, such as improving the living conditions and leisure opportunities for its employees. However, they are not interested in implementing concrete regional development projects on their own. Rather, they see their contribution as opening the doors to their networks, outlining the needs of local businesses and providing ideas for future projects. Furthermore, their engagement within the regional development agency is rooted in their belief that only a regional platform can unite different interests and guide them towards a common regional development vision.

Such a platform also strengthens the visibility of a region: "*It [the regional development agency] is the only platform through which we can sell ourselves and make ourselves known to the world. And also, for the inner cohesion of the region, there is no comparable platform that could equally unite the different municipalities and dissolve the isolated thinking of these municipalities. We realised early on that this is an opportunity for our region, which we must support proactively*" (economic actor, Region Thal/Naturpark Thal). Also, because these actors often represent several regional economic associations, such as the chamber of commerce, chamber of trade or tourism association, their input into the designing of regional development strategies is highly valued and sought-after. Due to their positions within various organisation, these actors are equipped with the heterogeneous knowledge and insider information needed to bring innovation to regional development processes (Lucas 2017; Sætren 2016). State actors can act as enabling governance entrepreneurs as well. For example, these state actors could be members of municipal councils, which are also members of the cantonal parliament. This provides them with the leverage to advocate for regional needs at various governmental levels. Also, the academic literature suggests that actors who are part of multiple networks and thus well-connected with a range of actors are more successful in promoting policy change (Mintrom & Norman 2009; Mintrom & Vergari 1996; Rabe 2004). Furthermore, municipal politicians who are members of the executive boards of regional development agencies must be persistent in negotiations with their respective municipalities because issues that have been discussed on the regional level require the approval of municipalities. If municipalities are skeptical about the regional development strategies and projects planned on the regional level, representatives of regional development agencies must find good arguments to convince their fellow members of municipal councils: "*But especially in budget debates, you have to defend every franc. The cooperation with other communities, the mutual exchange of ideas, the joint forces when it comes to implementing projects, that is all very difficult to quantify in monetary terms. [...] If the municipality needs to save, it is much harder to convince them [the other members of the municipal council] than if the budget is good*" (member of municipal council and member of the executive board, LuzernPlus). Finally, regional managers who manage to create favourable conditions and thus encourage regional development projects can also be considered enabling governance entrepreneurs. They are well-recognised in the region, possess high levels of credibility and good reputation and show persistence in negotiating solutions that respect the region's needs. Their network encompasses actors from various economic sectors and across various governmental levels.

5. Conclusion

Policy entrepreneurship is a useful concept with which to analyse the various behaviours of actors involved in the governance of regional development processes. Adopting a policy entrepreneurship perspective allows to assess the various behaviours and activities of actors during the design and implementation phases of regional development strategies. It thus offers insights into the practice and functionality of various regional governance forms. Using this concept, we are able to identify two types of governance entrepreneurs: realising and enabling governance entrepreneurs. Other authors have stated that coordinating regional development processes is a collective phenomenon (Kingdon 2011b). In this paper, we assess the various actors who are part of this phenomenon and thus apply a more comprehensive perspective on governance actors, going beyond contributions focusing on regional managers only (Sotarauta 2010; Sotarauta 2009). Our typology of governance actors of regional development advances existing actor typologies, such as the dichotomous typology of state and non-state actors or the concept of stakeholders. Our typology offers a dynamic understanding of governance actors by differentiating the fundamentally different phases of designing and implementing regional development strategies.

In order to better shape regional governance processes, it is important to understand the different roles played by actors during the design and implementation phases of regional development strategies. The findings show that positions within regional development agencies must be filled with persons with the capacity to both realise and enable governance entrepreneurs. Regional development, including too many realising governance actors, may lead to an unguided and unstructured trial-and-error phase for project implementation, whereas a surplus of enabling governance actors may result in measures formulated entirely on the strategic level that do not stand any chance of actual implementation.

Furthermore, realising and enabling governance entrepreneurs do not encompass all the actors involved in regional development processes. Some actors belong to neither group. Instead, these actors may have rather restraining effects on regional development processes because of their sceptical attitudes. These could include actors who fill positions within regional development agencies *ex officio* because they are presidents of municipalities or regional associations and thus obliged to be part of the agencies. Their scepticisms may have different roots: a general reluctance to cooperate across municipal borders, concerns about the competition faced by the regional development agency or doubts about its efficiency in bringing a region forward.

This paper has several implications for future research. Generally, we assume that actors can play different roles in regional development processes and are able to act both as realising and enabling governance entrepreneurs. However, further research is needed to assess the circumstances under which an actor either does or does not become a realising or enabling governance entrepreneur. In particular, we require more comparative research to compare the various phases of regional development pro-

cesses. In our study, we managed to compare the design and implementation of regional development strategies. It would be interesting to investigate how the various phases of the policy cycle (e.g., agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation) or various governance functions (e.g., information, consultation, decision-making and funding) are characterised by governance entrepreneurs. We also require more comparative research to highlight the heterogeneity of the activities of governance entrepreneurs in various regions, assuming that European or national regional policies are implemented differently in regions and are following place-specific rationales.

Another strand of future research concerns actor typologies. Our research started from the observation that common actor typologies (state vs. non-state actors and stakeholder typologies) are too simplistic to account for the dynamics of actor constellations in regional governance processes. Accordingly, we used a policy entrepreneurship perspective to identify realising and enabling governance entrepreneurs. It is obvious that our proposition to introduce governance entrepreneurs requires further empirical support. In addition, to develop more specific policy recommendations, we must move beyond statements that it is important to identify key actors. Future research should analyse how realising and enabling governance entrepreneurs can be identified within regions and how they can be motivated to become involved in regional development processes.

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