

Who own the Mining Brownfields?

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Brownfields in postindustrial and mining areas have received increasing interest from both scientific and practical perspectives. Typologies (e.g. Butzin and Noll, 2005) distinguish the brownfields that require little or no intervention by public authorities due to their economic value, from those which require public action because of being less sought after lands or requiring expensive remediation works. Literature points out possible pathways to address brownfield sites (e.g. Janin and Andres, 2008), including reflections on sustainable development. Meanwhile, little attention is paid to the issue of ownership (in a wide sense). Who are the stakeholders? What are their positions and their engagements regarding these lands (Moore, 2012)?

The paper focuses on mining brownfields situated in rural areas, where land pressure is lower than in urban areas. Through the study of six municipalities of Bucovina (Romania) and Wallonia (including fieldwork, documentation reviews, interviews and oral surveys) (Chiriță and Schmitz, 2017), the authors show that, beyond differences due to political and historical context (which shaped the mining history and the issue of reconversion), general lessons learnt can be identified:

- Brownfield reconversion is a long-term process;
- The perspectives strongly depend on the levels of assessment and intervention and these differences should be taken into account;
- Mining brownfields are appropriated by several groups;
- Mining brownfields provide several services to the local rural systems;
- Mining brownfields face uncertainties from juridical, environmental and technological points of view.

References

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