Deliverable 6.3 : Academic dissemination plan

DUST : Work Package 6, Task 6.3

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Document information

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01-01-2024		Marcin Dabrowski, Verena Elisabeth Balz	Outline of the DUST publication strategy
17-10-2024		All partners	Inventory of publication ideas and discussion on the DUST publication strategy during the Consortium meeting (CM) in Katowice
31-12-2025	v.0.1	Verena Elisabeth Balz	Compilation of descriptions of past and upcoming publications and first draft of D6.3 Academic dissemination plan
12-01-2026	v.0.2	All partners	Review of first draft and incorporation of additional descriptions of future publications
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31-01-2026	v.1.0	Anna Gralka	Final review and submission

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Abbreviation list

Term	Description
CA	Consortium agreement
CM	Consortium meeting
D	Deliverable
EEAB	External Expert Advisory Board
GA	Grant agreement
KPI	Key project indicator
T	Task
TBA	To be added
TBC	To be confirmed
TBD	To be defined
WP	Work package

1. Introduction

This deliverable D6.3 Academic dissemination plan sets out a strategy for disseminating research results from the project Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST) among an academic audience and via scientific publications. In the DUST Grant Agreement (GA) key project indicators (KPIs) have been defined for observing this dissemination. These indicators include 16 open access research papers, of which at least ten are published in leading academic journals with an Altmetric score of at least 20 and >500 views one month after publication, and one open access edited book covering the project's scientific advances, with 1000 online reads within a year after publication.

Since the project started in February 2023 researchers at the DUST partner organisations have been working towards realizing these KPI's. This deliverable therefore firstly presents achievements in terms of scientific publications so far, including already published journal articles, submitted journal articles, conference papers and presentations, as well as publication ideas that were launched by groups of researchers during related DUST project meetings. Drawing on these ongoing publication work as well as an intended comprehensive coverage of results from the different research activities in work packages (WPs) and tasks (Ts), the deliverable secondly identifies upcoming work to be done. This is presented in the form of agreed-upon lists of future publications. In conjunction these lists form the core of this final version of the DUST Academic dissemination plan.

Lastly, the deliverable presents guidelines for publication activities to guarantee reliability, honesty, respect, accountability, and inclusivity in the making use of the empirical data and knowledge that has been gathered during the project. A credit taxonomy is introduced as a specific instrument for determining co-authorship. Open science and acknowledgement practices as well as steps in bringing academic writing to publication are outlined. The realization of KPIs for academic dissemination largely falls outside of the duration of the DUST project. The plan therefore also introduces agreements that govern this post-project process.

Figure 1 Researchers acting during the session 'The DUST publication strategy' at the 3rd DUST CM

2. Academic dissemination plan

Against the background of past and ongoing publication work by DUST researchers, and drawing on an inventory ideas about future publications, this chapter provides an overview over DUST upcoming publication activities, and in this way forms the core of the final version of the DUST Academic dissemination plan. It is hereby important to note that the enlisted future journal articles were collaboratively prioritized. Three key criteria were used for this purpose, notably (1) publications are intended to be submitted to academic journals before the end of 2026, (2) publications centrally draw on DUST data and research results, and (3) publications in conjunction cover results from the different DUST work packages (WPs) and in this way present a comprehensive scientific elaboration of the output of the project. Additionally, the DUST book proposal is adopted as a core element of the plan.

2.1. Journal articles – published and submitted

Table 1 Published and submitted journal articles in overview.

P = published, S = submitted

#	Title of publication	Authors	Involved DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts	Case-specific	Status*	Year
1	Regional design: a transformative approach to planning	Verena Elisabeth Balz	TUD	WP1, T1.1	No	P	2023
2	Unsettling youth participation in relational space and commons: case study Lusatia	Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de Leon, Silke Weidner, Dominik Ringler, Anna Grebe, Gerd Kaufmann	BTU, KiJuBB	WP3, T3.2	Yes	P	2025
3	The key dimensions of just transitions - from concept to policy practice	John R. Moodie	NR	WP1, WP4, 5	No	P	2025
4	Coal phase-out in the Silesian coal regions – building sustainable scenario on past experiences	Adam Drobniak, Jan Bonadruk, Miroslaw Skibski	UEK	WP3, T3.1	Yes	P	2025
5	Participation in just transition – gaps in applying deliberative governance in coal regions of Greater Poland, Lodzkie, Lower Silesia and Silesia	Adam Drobniak, Malgorzata Rogowska-Sawicz	UEK	WP3, T3.1	Yes	P	2025
6	Preferences for deliberative citizen forums: evidence from national and transition regions	Fernando Mendez, Uwe Serdült	UZH	WP2, T2.2	No	S	2024
7	When policy meets politics: unpacking procedural justice in the sustainability	Marine Benli-Trichet, Uwe Serdült, Adam Drobniak, Tihomir Viderman, Silke Weidner	UZH, UEK, BTU	WP2, T2.3	No	S	2025

#	Title of publication	Authors	Involved DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts	Case-specific	Status*	Year
	transitions of European coal regions						
8	Regional Futures Literacy Labs: a community-led approach to just green transition policymaking	John Moodie, Jonas Kackus Tybjerg, Leneisja Jungsberg, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving	NR	WP5	Yes	S	2025
9	From restructuring to transition. Window dressing in programming structural change in an old industrial region	Adam Drobniak, Florian Kuźnik	UEK	WP2-5	Yes	S	2025

2.1.   Journal articles – drafts

CP = conference paper / presentation, PI = Publication idea to be turned into a submission in 2026

Table 2 Ideas for journal articles in overview.

#	Title of publication	Authors	Involved DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts and key words	Case-specific	Status*	Submission
1	The different faces of the just transition in the Silesia region	Adam Drobniak	UEK	WP4, 5 just transition, industrial regions, Just Transition Fund, Silesia	Yes	PI	January 2026
2	Community vs. policy futures: Towards negotiated conceptions of development in place-based policymaking	Verena Elisabeth Balz, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Neli Georgieva, Cristina Cavaco	TUD, STRATH, EEAB	WP3, 4, 5 regional development, futuring, place-based policymaking, community involvement	No	CP / PI	February 2026
3	Citizen learning in sustainability transitions: evidence from participatory policy processes	Leneisja Jungsberg, John Moodie, Elin Cedergren, Lumi Tomren, Verena Balz, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving, Adam Drobniak, other case study partners	NR, TUD, UEK, others	WP 5, 4, 3 learning process, sustainability, policy, knowledge building	No	PI	February 2026
4	Multidimensional climate change attitudes, just transition regions, and fuzzy opinion types: evidence from a multi-country study	Fernando Mendez, Uwe Serdült	UZH	WP2, T2.2 climate change attitudes, fuzzy cluster analysis, just transition regions, public support for climate policy	No	PI	March 2026

#	Title of publication	Authors	Involved DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts and key words	Case-specific	Status*	Submission
5	Mapping narratives of just transition in the EU's largest coal region	TBA	UEK	WP4, 5 just transition, future narratives, transition policy, Silesia	Yes	PI	March 2026
6	Why does just transition policy fail to reach people? Lessons from intergenerational Future Literacy Labs in the EU's largest coal region	TBA	UEK	WP4, 5 coal-related generations, just transition, transition policy, Silesia	Yes	PI	March 2026
7	Mapping community perspectives for co-designing regional sustainability transitions	Anca Ioana Forgaci, Verena Elisabeth Balz	TUD	WP4 community perspectives, sustainability transitions, territorial capital, computer-aided qualitative analysis	No	CP / PI	June 2026
8	Grounding the future: transformative learning through place-based imaginaries in sustainable transitions	Neli Georgieva, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Verena Elisabeth Balz	STRATH, TUD	WP3, 4 transformative learning, futures, communities, territorial capital, imaginative place-based sensemaking	No	CP / PI	June 2026
9	Youth participation in Lusatia's lignite phase-out: roles and expectations	Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León, Silke Weidner	BTU	WP4, 5 participation, structural transition, youth, Lusatia	Yes	PI	June 2026
10	Hybrid analogue and digital participation: The role of the e-democracy tool Pol.is in community-led place-based policymaking	Alexander Wandl, Nohemi Ramirez Aranda, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Anca Ioana Forgaci	TUD	WP4, T4.5 hybrid participation, place-based policymaking, community-led agenda-setting, digital deliberation (Pol.is), Regional Futures Literacy Labs	No	PI	August 2026
11	Representing communities' hopes and dreams in sustainability transitions: From territorial mappings to affective regional designs	Verena Elisabeth Balz, Alexander Wandl, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Nohemi Ramirez Aranda, Samir Amin	TUD, iUE	WP4, 5 territorial capital, regional design, least engaged communities, place-based policies, affective communication	No	PI	October 2026
12	Factors that facilitate or impede community participation in sustainable transition policies – a framework for analysis	Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry	STRATH	WP1, 2, 3 community participation, sustainability transitions, place-based development, deliberative governance, analytical framework	No	PI	November 2026
13	Patterns of citizen participation in	Marcin Dąbrowski,	TUD, STRATH	WP2, 3	Yes	PI	December 2026

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#	Title of publication	Authors	Involved DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts and key words	Case-specific	Status*	Submission
	place-based sustainability transitions policies: Who takes part in the shaping of post-gas futures in the Province of Groningen?	Thomas Verbeek, Odilia van der Valk, Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry		sustainability transitions, Just Transition Fund, Cohesion Policy, European Union, Groningen, place-based policy, citizen participation			
14	The potential of place-based policies to promote inclusive deliberative governance in sustainable transitions: a comparative analysis of barriers and facilitators	Martin Ferry, Neli Georgieva, others	STRATH	WP Territorial Just Transition Plans, place-based principles, participatory governance	No	PI	December 2026
15	Success and failures of TJTPs as place-based instruments	Martin Ferry, Neli Georgieva, others	STRATH	WP2, 3	Yes / No	P / S / CP	December 2026
16	The role of willingness and ability in explaining citizen engagement in place-based sustainability transition policies	Thomas Verbeek, others	TUD	WP1, 2, 3, 4, 5 place-based policies, sustainability transitions, citizen participation, community engagement	No	PI	December 2026
17	(In)visibility in the city: towards a time- and space-sensitive intersectionality approach to inequality	Rebecca Baugh, Julia Korpacka, Matthijs Koch	TUD, iUE	WP1, 6	No	PI	December 2026

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2.2.   DUST Book chapters

Table 3 DUST Book chapters in overview.

#	Title of chapter	Authors	Leading DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts
Content and foreword				
	Foreword	TBD		
Introduction				
1	Introduction	Editors of the book	TUD, NR, CSD, BTU, UEK, UZH, STRATH. iUE	WP1-6
Civic participation in place-based approaches to just sustainability transitions: Scope and determining factors				
2	Deliberative citizen participation in sustainability transition policies: institutional arenas and dynamics (TBC)	TBD	TBD	WP2, 3
2	Deliberative citizen participation in the design of sustainable transition policies: enabling factors and institutional capacity to respond to them	Martin Ferry, Neli Georgieva, others	STRATH, UZH, CSD	WP2, 3
3	Enabling participation in place-based approaches to sustainability transitions: Best practices (TBC)	TBD	TBD	WP6, T6.4
The RFLLs from a comparative perspective				
5	Regional Futures Literacy Labs: empowering citizens in sustainability transition policymaking	John Moodie, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Leneisja Jungsberg, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving, Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry	TUD, NR, STRATH	WP4, 5
6	The RFLLs in a democratic perspective: from opinion formation to publicly rated policy statements	Verena Elisabeth Balz, Artur Ochojski, others	TUD, UEK	WP4, 5
7	The communicative dimension of the RFLLs: regional design and affective communication	Samir Amin, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Leneisja Jungsberg, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving	iUE, NR, TUD, others	WP4-6
The RFLLs from a case-specific perspective				
8	Sustainability transitions from an intergenerational perspective – The Silesian RFLL	TBD	UEK	WP4, 5
9	A multistakeholder approach to sustainability transition policymaking – E-democracy in Silesia	TBD	UEK	WP4, 5
10	Reimagining structural transition through youth participation: Case Study Lusatia	Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León, Silke Weidner	BTU	WP4, 5
11	Stara Zagora lessons taken: translating community futures into policy recommendations through an adapted RFLL process	Rumyana Grozeva, Tea Turlakova	SZREDA	WP4, 5
12	TBD	TBD	TBD	WP4, 5
Transition narratives				
13	Miners' real stories of life: long-term transition	TBD	KADRA, UEK	WP3, 4, 5
14	Lusatia: One day in the year 2040	Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León, Silke Weidner	BTU	WP5

#	Title of chapter	Authors	Leading DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts
14	Transition narratives in the media (TBC)	TBD	CSD	WP3, T3.3
Conclusions and policy recommendations				
1 Chapter, ca. 20 pages				
15	Conclusions	Editors of the book	TUD, NR, CSD, BTU, UEK, UZH, STRATH, iUE	

3. Journal articles

This chapter presents the past, ongoing, and upcoming work on journal articles building on DUST research. The first sub-chapter 3.1 lists articles that have been published during the three-year course of the project. The sub-chapter 3.2 lists articles that have been submitted for publication at journals and are under review in January 2026. DUST researchers have been actively attending academic conferences throughout the project duration and have presented a number of conference papers during these occasions (for DUST-inspired special conference sessions, see Annex B). Sub-chapter 3.3 compiles information on these presentations. The last sub-chapter 3.4 lists ideas on future journal articles. Ideas were first brought together during the DUST 3rd CM in Katowice in October 2024. Another inventory of ideas was accomplished during the 6th CM in the last month of the project. In conjunction with the listed conference papers, the publication ideas present a reservoir for academic dissemination after the conclusion of the project.

3.1. Published journal articles

This section lists journal articles that have been published. Entries are ordered alphabetically.

Regional design: a transformative approach to planning
- **Author:** Verena Elisabeth Balz
- **Publication:** Planning Practice & Research
- **Volume / Issue:** 39/1
- **Year:** Published online 2023
- **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2024.2292895
- **Views:** 2662 (January 2026)
- **Keywords:** regional design, spatial planning
- **Abstract:** Observations of contemporary soft, adaptive, and flexible modes of spatial planning indicate that they give an important role to spatial visioning and design. Foresight methodology, co-design approaches, the imagination of spatial metaphors, and the 'art' of making spatial representations have emerged as respected tools in capacity and consensus building in the deliberative, interactive multi-actor settings that these planning modes imply. The special issue 'Regional design: a transformative approach to planning' is dedicated to a deeper understanding of how 'regional design' practices impact planning decision-making. It's goal is to contribute to theory formation and the establishment of propositions that can guide more in-depth analyses. The editorial note elaborates and structures existing theoretical notions on regional design and is intended to support the positioning and understanding of the articles in the special issue as parts of this theory formation.

Participation in just transition – Gaps in applying deliberative governance in coal regions of Greater Poland, Lodzkie, Lower Silesia and Silesia
- **Author(s):** Adam Drobniak, Malgorzata Rogowska-Sawicz
- **Publication:** Rozwój Regionalny i Polityka Regionalna
- **Volume / Issue:** 77(2025)
- **Year:** 2025
- **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.14746/rrpr.2025.77.02
- **Views:** 37 (December 2025)

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- **Keywords:** coal regions, deliberative governance, proactive participation
- **Abstract:** The paper explores the use of proactive participation tools in strengthening a deliberative governance (DG) within transition planning for coal regions. The main research question is: *to what extent was the planning of the just transition in Polish Coal Regions (PCRs) based on the proactive participation postulated in the DG approach?* Proactive participation, as applied in the case of PCRs supported by the Just Transition Fund (JTF) – including Eastern Greater Poland, the Walbrzych Subregion, the Belchatów Area of Transition (BAT), and the Silesian coal regions – have encountered a number of barriers during the programming of the Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs). Therefore, the aim of the paper is to *indicate the gaps in participatory practices during the programming of TJTPs for PCR that limit the DG*. The study employs a focused comparison framework (FCF), combining a conceptual analysis of DG in context of detailed review of participatory instruments used in TJTPs across the PCRs. The methodology draws on the Horizon DUST project framework including in-depth interviews with policymakers and decision-makers in the four PCRs. The main findings highlight a detailed typology of gaps to proactive participation identified in the surveyed regions, including a limited range of participatory instruments, poor use of digital tools, lack of direct citizen involvement, insufficient consideration of local and sub-local levels, and the unsatisfactory commitment of public authorities.

Coal phase-out in the Silesian coal regions – Building sustainable scenario on past experiences
- **Abstract:** The dynamics of phasing out of hard coal mining are currently the subject of many debates and policies programming the energy transition. Diversity of opinions on the speed of the hard coal mining transition is evident. This discourse uses a number of technical, environmental, economic and social arguments that are not always supported by evidence-based analyses. As assumed in the European Green Deal, a responsible approach to decarbonisation requires just transition values. Thus, the negative effects of mining phasing out should be well recognized to enable their mitigation. This applies especially to the Silesian Voivodeship, where the concentration of so-called coal regions is the highest in the EU. The article formulates scenarios of changes in the labor market in the Silesian Voivodeship and its coal regions, showing the effects of various variants of hard coal mining phase-out up to 2049. The scenarios were constructed based on the "back-casting" methodology and then applied into the portfolio method. The conclusions create a knowledge base enabling a more rational approach to the discussion on the pace of coal mining phase out as key assumptions for strategic documents planning decarbonisation in its various dimensions.

The key dimensions of just transitions - From concept to policy practice
- **Authors:** John R. Moodie
- **Publication:** Journal of Sustainability

- **Abstract:** A gap exists between the rapid evolution of Just Transition (JT) policies and the slower development of conceptual JT frameworks in academic research. As there is no universally agreed-upon definition of JTs within policy and academic circles, the further conceptualisation of JTs would be useful to provide policymakers with a JT framework that can be adapted to suit different territorial contexts. This conceptual paper develops a JT conceptual framework based on a synthesis of key JT themes identified within both JT academic literature and policy documents. The article contributes to bridging the gap between research and policy in two ways: firstly, by highlighting and exploring ten key dimensions of JTs and their relationship with core themes of justice associated with JTs, and secondly, by providing practical recommendations for integrating these ten JT dimensions into JT policymaking processes across different governance levels. The recommendations are targeted at EU, national, regional, and local-level policymakers responsible for formulating and implementing JT policies. The JT conceptual framework is designed to support policymakers in the development and implementation of balanced and inclusive JT policies that address regional challenges and opportunities and meet the needs of citizens.

Unsettling youth participation in relational space and commons: case study Lusatia

- **Authors:** Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de Leon, Silke Weidner, Dominik Ringler, Anna Grebe, Gerd Kaufmann
- **Abstract:** This paper examines youth participation in structural transformation in Lusatia, a post-coal region in eastern Germany. It argues that institutional frameworks rely on territorial and linear logics of participation that do not resonate with those they are meant to engage. Drawing on spatial theory and the commons, a relational perspective is proposed to explain the disjunction between scripted participatory formats and the contingent, affective, and situated ways in which young people relate to space and the future. While institutions and research often emphasize access, representation, and impact, this paper foregrounds empirical insights that show how participation frequently fails to engage with the multiple and uneven rhythms of everyday life. Reframing participation in relational terms opens a contingent terrain for more situated engagement with futures as at once inherited, envisioned, forged, enacted, and contested.

3.2. Submitted journal articles

This section lists articles that have been submitted or are very close to submission at journals. Entries are ordered alphabetically.

When policy meets politics: unpacking procedural justice in the sustainability transitions of European coal regions
- **Authors:** Marine Benli-Trichet, Uwe Serdült, Adam Drobniak, Tihomir Viderman, Silke Weidner
- **Publication:** Local Environment
- **Date of submission:** December 2025
- **Keywords:** multi-level governance, multi-actor governance just transition, procedural justice, stakeholder participation, coal regions, European Union
- **Abstract:** Questions of decision-making and participation are central to the democratic legitimacy of sustainability transitions. While distributive justice has received considerable attention, the procedural dimensions of these processes remain comparatively underexplored. This paper examines the conditions under which transition strategies in coal regions foster pluralistic and territorially grounded stakeholder participation. It draws on a structured focused comparison of four EU coal regions: the Silesian and Łódź Voivodeships in Poland, and Lusatia and the Rhenish Lignite districts in Germany. The analysis focuses on two policy frameworks, the EU-mandated Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs) and Germany's nationally governed Structural Strengthening Act (StStG) and combines Actor–Process–Event Scheme (APES) network metrics with process tracing. The findings show that while institutional capacity and economic diversification create favorable conditions for participation, they are not sufficient. Inclusive participation depends on regional political commitment and civic agency. Procedural justice ultimately emerges through the local activation of formal governance frameworks by embedded political and civic actors.

From restructuring to transition. Window dressing in programming structural change in an old industrial region
- **Author(s):** Adam Drobniak, Florian Kuźnik
- **Intended publication:** Regional and Local Studies / Studia Regionalne i Lokalne
- **Date of submission:** Submission for second round of review in 2026
- **Keywords:** structural change, regional development concepts, transition, old industrial region, window dressing
- **Abstract:** This paper examines the challenges of implementing contemporary development concepts in old industrial regions (OIRs), focusing on the Silesia region in Poland. The central question is whether the structural transition declared in Silesian strategic documents represent genuine adaptation or merely symbolic compliance with policy paradigms, i.e., window dressing. The analysis highlights new factor of window dressing i.e. a pronounced temporal lag in adopting new development paradigms arising from legacy of the past compared to Western regions, contributing to heterogeneous structural change across the region. Finally, taking into account results from various projects (including Horizon DUST, works on National Just Transition Plan) the study formulates recommendations for regional policy programming to overcome window dressing and support more effective, context-sensitive policy.

Preferences for deliberative citizen forums: evidence from national and transition regions

- **Authors:** Fernando Mendez, Uwe Serdült
- **Publication:** European Political Science Review
- **Date of submission:** September 2025
- **Keywords:** deliberative citizen forums, mini-publics, conjoint experiment, democratic innovation
- **Abstract:** Deliberative citizen forums (DCFs) have proliferated across democracies, yet citizen preferences regarding their design remain under-explored. We investigate these preferences using conjoint experiments in four European countries (Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden), combining national representative samples with oversamples from economically vulnerable regions. Analysing eight design attributes, we find consistent preferences across contexts: citizens favour expert-led discussions, financial compensation, and referendum decision-making over direct binding decisions. Random selection through lottery elicits scepticism, with citizens preferring open participation formats. Subgroup analyses reveal that ideology and institutional trust moderate preferences, while regional background and familiarity show limited effects. Our findings suggest citizens view DCFs as complements to, rather than replacements for, representative institutions. Methodologically, we apply Intra-Respondent Reliability adjustments to improve parameter accuracy while replicating earlier studies (Goldberg and Bächtiger 2023, Goldberg, Lindell, and Bächtiger 2025) to validate multicountry reliability levels.

Regional Futures Literacy Labs: a community-led approach to just green transition policymaking

- **Authors:** John Moodie, Jonas Kackus Tybjerg, Leneisja Jungsberg, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving
- **Intended publication:** TBA
- **(Intended) date of submission:** 2026
- **Keywords:** citizen participation, sustainability transition, Regional Futures Literacy Labs, Norrbotten
- **Abstract:** This paper examines Regional Futures Literacy Labs (RFLLs) as an innovative community-led approach to just green transition policymaking. Just green transitions involve profound socio-economic transformations that present both challenges and opportunities for citizens across Europe. Regional place-based policymaking instruments are, therefore, required that proactively engage citizens and communities in just green transition policymaking processes. RFLLs have recently been implemented in the EU Just Transition Fund eligible Norrbotten Region in Sweden, involving citizens representing the rural community. RFLLs are designed to empower citizens to use their imagination, anticipation, and futures literacy to build their capacity to change and adapt in response to just green transitions. Implemented through interactive workshops and digital tools involving citizens at the local level, RFLLs allow participants to: (1) identify and imagine alternative futures for just green transitions, (2) reflect on the implications of these imaginations for policymaking at local levels, and (3) formulate strategic policy statements that inform green transition policy discussions. Using key findings based on participatory observations, participant questionnaires and interviews, the paper assesses the different ways in which RFLLs have engaged the rural community in green transition policymaking. The paper finds that RFLLs have promoted a community-led approach to transition policymaking, empowering citizens in the development of place-

based policies that address community concerns and needs. Furthermore, the labs have increased citizen awareness and learning on regional transition issues, thereby enhancing their capacity and resilience to adapt to transition changes. However, citizen engagement tools like RFLLs are time and resource heavy which reduces the long-term sustainability of community-led policymaking approaches.

3.3. Conference papers and presentations

This section lists conference papers and presentations that happened in the past or are planned for 2026. Entries are ordered per year and alphabetically.

3.3.1. Conference papers and presentations 2026

Community vs. policy futures: Towards negotiated conceptions of development in place-based policymaking
- **Authors:** Verena Elisabeth Balz, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Neli Georgieva, Cristina Cavaco
- **Conference:** World Planning Schools Congress 2026
- **Date:** 29 June - 3 July 2026
- **Location:** Helsinki – Espoo – Tampere, Finland
- **Keywords:** regional development, futuring, place-based policymaking, community involvement
- **Abstract:** The world is grappling with a range of interlinked challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation, and a resurgence of populism, nationalism, and authoritarianism. As a result, our era is marked by uncertainty, and anxiety—conditions that intensify tensions between competing visions of the future and contribute to polarization. At the same time, this context of polycrisis has prompted significant efforts to rethink the role of futures in regional development policy and spatial planning. This is evident in the growing prominence of mission-oriented transformative concepts such as the *Just sustainability transition* and the *Circular economy*. There is also a rising recognition that cultivating alternative local futures is essential to community-building and mobilization, and democratic representation and deliberation—particularly when these futures are grounded not in dominant expert, policy, or planning discourses, but in the lived experiences and social capital of the communities themselves. These developments are reflected in evolving strategic spatial planning and place-based development approaches. However, what constitutes an interface between these various futures—and their underlying conceptions of development—and how this interface can be effectively utilized in place-based policymaking remains underexplored.
- Against this background, this paper explores the different futures articulated during experiments conducted within the Horizon Europe project *Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST)*, as part of the 'Regional Futures Literacy Labs' (RFLLs) in sustainability transition regions of Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, and Sweden. We begin by distinguishing between three types of futures: (1) Futures that are expected or preferred by communities affected by transitions but often underrepresented in policymaking (based on focus group research and qualitative text analysis of conversations with community members), (2) futures that are used to motivate place-based policy initiatives (identified through policy document analysis), and (3) futures that are appreciated by the broader public (derived from a deliberative e-democracy tool). A subsequent systematic comparison of these envisioned futures enables us to, first, understand the values attached to different place-based development potentials within

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the regions, and second, to identify and explain the alignments and tensions between the various associated development imaginaries. The RFLLs aimed to strategically position community concerns within the multi-level deliberative governance of sustainability transitions. In the final part of the paper, we discuss the regional design approach employed for this purpose. In particular, we highlight the importance of fostering a discretionary interplay between local, community-led, and supra-local, policy-led conceptions of development for negotiated shared futures and just place-based sustainability transition policymaking.

(In)visibility in the city: towards a time- and space-sensitive intersectionality approach to inequality

- **Authors:** Rebecca Baugh, Julia Korpacka, Matthijs Koch
- **Conference:** Regional Studies Association (RSA) Annual Conference 2026
- **Date:** 15 June – 18 June 2026
- **Location:** Gothenburg, Sweden
- **Keywords:** Socio-spatial segregation, intersectional analysis, spatial planning, urban inequality, policy tools
- **Abstract:** Socio-spatial segregation and urban inequality are commonly analysed using datasets and categories that only partially capture the complexity and multi-layered nature of these phenomena. This researcher argues that applying an intersectional lens to urban analysis can reveal how different population groups become variably visible or invisible in the knowledge bases that inform spatial planning and policy decisions. Here, visibility refers to the extent to which social groups are recognised, measured, and addressed in analyses guiding the planning and design of physical space.

    While intersectionality has primarily been applied to social dimensions of inequality, this paper extends the concept by explicitly incorporating spatial and temporal dimensions. It argues that experiences of (in)visibility are neither generic nor static, but context-dependent and shaped by specific spatial domains. Building on this premise, a transferable intersectional analytical model, structured around three key urban domains: housing, workplaces, and public space. Each domain is associated with distinct, time-sensitive categories of social identity, which are assessed along a spectrum of (in)visibility.

    The model is designed as a practical analytical tool for researchers and policymakers to uncover hidden patterns of exclusion that are often overlooked in conventional urban analyses, thereby supporting more equitable planning and policy decisions. Its applicability is demonstrated through a case study of the Brussels municipalities of Anderlecht and Ixelles, illustrating how the model helps identify domain-specific and evolving forms of socio-spatial invisibility within and between urban regions.

3.3.2.   Conference papers and presentations 2025

Towards understanding of de- and restabilizing mechanisms in regional economies in transition - Applying the *pol.Is* toolkit as a prospective approach

- **Authors:** Artur Ochojski, Adam Drobniak, Marcin Baron, Adam Polko, Piotr Rykała, Adrian Widuch
- **Conference:** 41st International Scientific Conference Contemporary Determinants and Directions of Development of Industry and Services
- **Date:** 1 - 2 December 2025
- **Location:** Kraków, Poland

- **Keywords:** embeddedness, transition, futures
- **Abstract:** This study investigates the mechanisms of destabilization and restabilization within regional economies undergoing processes of transition, particularly those moving away from traditional industrial structures, as exemplified by a coal region in Poland. Increasing global pressures and challenges - such as climate change and the accompanying social and political agendas - exert a significant influence on local systems. The path dependence characterizing such regions, when confronted with the new visions and narratives introduced by the just transition agenda, gives rise to a "new normal," in which past industrial legacies and emerging sustainability paradigms coexist in tension. To conceptualize this complex dynamic, the study draws on the multidimensional notion of embeddedness developed by M. Hess (2024). Three interrelated dimensions are distinguished: territorial embeddedness, referring to the extent to which actors are anchored in territories or places - understood as regions where economic and social activities are clustered, societal embeddedness, denoting the influence of social and cultural backgrounds on actors' behavior and decision-making - representing their "genetic code" or collective culture, and network embeddedness, describing the involvement of actors in networks of relationships that transcend physical proximity and operate instead within a topological space defined by relational distance. Within this framework, embeddedness at local and regional levels functions as a mediating filter that mitigates the impact of global destabilizing forces, often reinforced through deliberate restabilization strategies. Empirically, the study employs the Pol.is real-time survey tool to capture and analyze dynamic patterns of opinion, interaction, and consensus formation among stakeholders in the Katowice Coal Region of Upper Silesia, Poland - an initiative referred to as 'Transformatorium'. The analysis of the Pol.is results reveals strong interconnections between the dimensions of embeddedness and the ongoing transition processes. Territorial embeddedness is reflected in widespread public support for engaging local communities in the revitalization of post-industrial areas, along with a prevailing sentiment favoring the preservation of the region's industrial heritage. In terms of societal embeddedness, concerns arise over the potential loss of local identity associated with the creation of a metropolitan structure or "megacity," alongside strong support for a long-term, balanced energy transition that prioritizes stability, continuity, and caution. Network embeddedness, by contrast, is manifested in high expectations of support from external institutions - cities, regional authorities, and the state - perceived as essential for successful community engagement. At the same time, these findings reveal a persistent lack of trust in existing decision-making networks and governance structures. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the geography of transition by demonstrating how local structures of embeddedness - territorial, societal, and network - operate as key restabilizing mechanisms. These mechanisms both buffer regions against external destabilizing pressures and shape the temporal and spatial trajectories of transformation, often slowing, modifying, or reinterpreting the direction of change imposed by global impulses. By integrating participatory data from Pol.is with the conceptual lens of embeddedness, the study offers new insights into how regions in transition negotiate stability and transformation, thereby enriching theoretical and empirical debates on regional resilience and post-industrial change.

Toward just futures: advancing deliberative democracy in coal-mining regional transitions
- **Authors:** Artur Ochojski, Adam Drobniak, Marcin Baron, Adam Polko, Piotr Rykała, Adrian Widuch

- **Conference:** 9th CERS - Central European Conference in Regional Science - "Sustainability-driven territorial development. Challenges for CEECs"
- **Date:** 27 - 29 November 2025
- **Location:** Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- **Keywords:** deliberative democracy, transition, futures
- **Abstract:** Amid the profound socio-economic shifts brought about by the transition to carbon neutrality, the Horizon Europe DUST project seeks to democratize territorial responses to sustainability transitions by strengthening citizen participation and rebuilding trust in democratic institutions. The project recognizes that effective policies must be accountable, transparent, and socially equitable - particularly for communities that are often the least engaged. To this end, DUST introduces Regional Future Literacy Labs (RFLLs), which integrate design-led territorial, digital, and participatory methods to foster direct citizen involvement in policymaking. These place-based deliberative platforms bring together citizens, experts, and policymakers in open dialogue, enabling joint reflection on regional challenges and the co-creation of fair and sustainable transition strategies. The RFLLs has been tested in four regions - Norrbotten (Sweden), Lusatia (Germany), Katowice (Poland), and Stara Zagora (Bulgaria) - with particular attention to groups often excluded from decision-making, including ethnic minorities, young people, women, and workers in vulnerable sectors. At the heart of the DUST approach lies futures literacy, grounded in the UNESCO Futures Literacy Lab methodology. By equipping citizens with the capacity to anticipate and imagine alternative futures, the RFLL model highlights the importance of spatial and territorial perspectives, treating place as a cultural lens through which policy decisions are shaped. Supported by digital deliberation tools such as Pol.is, this framework enables broad-based dialogue and strengthens proactive citizen engagement within multi-level governance. The project's outcomes have allowed to assess in practical terms whether, and to what extent, these innovative instruments empower citizens and communities to anticipate structural change, build consensus in inclusive decision-making settings, and contribute to policies for sustainability transitions that are just, inclusive, and responsive to local realities. With gatekeepers facilitating access to the least engaged communities and with efforts to build social capital, digital tools can play a vital role in generating insights for more just futures.

Prefiguring post-coal futures in Lusatia: containing dissensus, staging consensus
- **Authors:** Tihomir Viderman, Hendrik Weiner
- **Conference:** Symposium Prefiguring Hopeful Futures
- **Date:** 10 - 11 September 2025
- **Location:** Eindhoven, The Netherlands
- **Keywords:** participation, transition, futures, Lusatia
- **Abstract:** The structural transition in Lusatia, Germany, prompted by the national coal phase-out, is narrowly framed around regional economic stabilisation. Multilevel governance structures linking national, regional, and local levels of decision-making seek to stage an aesthetics of successful transition through flagship economic initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and extensive landscape restorations. These efforts rely on technocratic strategies built on consensus across major political parties, emphasising compromise and managerial coordination. Post-coal futures are thus framed as stabilising rather than unsettling existing structures, turning deeply political questions into administrative agendas. Decisions are presented as apolitical and inevitable even as headlines depict an unsettled population and urban environments

wary of difference. Dissensus is contained mainly through the shared rejection of radical-right perspectives. Although countering radical-right mobilisation is an ethical imperative, elevating it as the central challenge risks silencing other forms of critique or alternative imaginaries.

- Drawing on document analysis, expert interviews, focus groups, and participatory workshops with young people, this contribution shows how participation is promoted as a substitute for democratic values such as access and inclusion, yet in practice it often unfolds as a scripted engagement oriented towards measurable outputs including innovation, economic growth, and regional competitiveness. People and urban cultures are framed as territorial assets to be mobilised. Because participation has long been scripted, both institutional stakeholders and engaged publics have learned the script, knowing what to say and how to act to meet expectations. This dynamic leaves the intimate field of deeper exclusions untouched and turns participation into a legitimising tool rather than a transformative practice. This contribution discusses how governance strategies prefigure the future in technocratic terms, leaving little room for contested visions. It argues that participation cannot replace the normative ideals of democracy based on equal access and redistribution, and asks where and how hopeful futures can be prefigured.

Mapping community perspectives for co-designing regional sustainability transitions
- **Authors:** Anca Ioana Forgaci, Verena Elisabeth Balz
- **Conference:** AESOP Annual Congress 2025
- **Date:** 7 - 11 July 2025
- **Location:** Istanbul, Turkey
- **Keywords:** community perspectives, regional sustainability transitions, territorial capital, computer-aided qualitative analysis
- **Abstract:** For sustainability transition policies and plans to succeed, they must address territorial specificities and mobilize commitment from communities most vulnerable to transitional challenges. Otherwise, they risk being perceived as creating "winners" and "losers," eroding trust in governance, increasing resistance to change, and exacerbating polarization and social unrest. Active and direct involvement of communities is therefore an essential component of EU, national, regional, and local place-based policymaking for just sustainability transitions. However, involving communities in this policymaking is challenging because it is often a technocratic, top-down endeavor with little apparent relevance or meaning for communities.
- Against this background, this paper discusses an instrumental approach to revealing the dreams and expectations of the least-engaged communities (LECs) in place-based policymaking in four European regions transitioning from coal and iron mining. The analysis was carried out as part of experimentation with design-led territorial and digital tools in the Horizon Europe project Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST) in Norrbotten (SE), Stara Zagora (BG), Katowice (PL), and Lusatia (DE). Experiments titled Regional Futures Literacy Labs (RFLLs) engaged local communities in deliberations on transition policies during four co-design workshops. The concept of Territorial Capital (TC) provided a framework to trace deliberations, identify regional social-spatial dynamics, inform regional design explorations, and compare community and policy perspectives. The communities' dreams and expectations were captured through audio recordings, transcribed, and qualitatively analyzed using Atlas.ti software. AI tools were partially tested in the coding and analysis process. The coding system was developed using a combined deductive and inductive approach, starting with broad

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predefined TC categories and gaining depth with specific TC aspects identified inductively in the qualitative data collected from LECs.

- This paper presents key findings on the communities' dreams and expectations vis-à-vis sustainability transition policymaking and explores how these narratives can inform regional designs and community-policy comparisons. The preliminary conclusions of the paper are twofold. First, we draw on the empirical results to discuss how the transition narratives of LECs evolved over the course of the labs and under the influence of various factors. Second, we propose how methods can be refined to enhance community future literacy and support community reflection on regional sustainability transitions. Final conclusions will draw on how the proposed design-led methodology can facilitate policy and community alignment, indicating their potential to better represent LECs' voices in shaping policies across diverse regional contexts, fostering inclusive decision-making processes.

Youth participation in structural transition in Lusatia, Germany: race up together or race to the bottom alone?

- **Authors:** Tihomir Viderman, Silke Weidner, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León, Hendrik Weiner
- **Conference:** AESOP Annual Congress 2025
- **Date:** 7 - 11 July 2025
- **Location:** Istanbul, Turkey
- **Keywords:** youth, participation, transition, futures
- **Abstract:** The involvement of young people in urban development is mandated by the UN Convention and has become a normative goal in regional and urban planning. This goal resonates in particular with the debates on urban commons, which emphasize the importance of engaging young people in shaping shared urban spaces, extending the concept of commons beyond lived experiences to the domain of shared urban futures. The way futures are imagined, articulated, and enacted reflects governance structures, public spaces, and the lived realities of urban dwellers. Futures are bound to places and frame how humans collectively or individually settle their space. In regions undergoing structural transition, youth participation is recognized by stakeholders as vital for crafting regional futures because it is young people who will inherit the region that is designed today. Yet, in practice, youth participation often falls short of its promise due to systemic and cultural barriers.
- This paper examines youth participation in Lusatia, Germany, focusing on structural transition policies and their mechanisms on the side of institutional frameworks, as well as the perceptions, concerns, and aspirations of young people as they navigate the structural transition in their region. Drawing on qualitative data from regulatory frameworks, interviews, and focus groups, it situates youth participation at the intersection of urban realities and imaginaries, revealing a disconnect between policy frameworks and young people's lived experiences. Policies often emphasize abstract notions of economic and social restructuring, framed through quantitative metrics, while young people primarily engage with ramifications of structural transitions through direct interactions with their immediate environment. It is through everyday life experiences of the multiplicity of patterns and rhythms of urban space that they shape their understanding of structural transitions and their sense of agency within them.
- Key findings highlight that young people frequently identify the lack of cultural capital as an obstacle to meaningful participation. They lack the means to effectively translate their experiences into the structured discourses of participatory processes. Many struggle to

engage with institutionalized frameworks that focus on technical conceptualizations of urban space and temporality. Two concerning tendencies may be observed. First, a growing acceptance among youth that their voices will not be heard. Despite strong interest in participatory governance, young people express skepticism rooted in past experiences of limited follow-through and a perceived disregard for their input. This skepticism, coupled with a perceived disinterest in institutional participatory processes, perpetuates cycles of disengagement. Second, the opposition to welfare benefits, which many young people perceive as overly generous and discouraging hard work. Referring to their own economic conditions, which they perceive as precarious, they argue welfare benefits unfairly reward those who do not contribute. This criticism reflects growing resentment toward the welfare system and risks fueling a broader decline in social protections. Combined with falling trust in planning processes, these attitudes create fertile ground for radical-right mobilization, particularly in the context of rising extremism in the region.

- While positive regional changes, such as environmental improvements and economic diversification, are acknowledged, these are often overshadowed by uncertainties about individual prospects and future stability, which are frequently tied to inherited traditional views of employment and family life. The findings underscore the importance of meaningful participation in empowering youth to engage in structural change, ensuring that by playing an active role in shaping shared futures, they collectively redefine the commons as spaces of mutual interest rather than competing individual priorities.

Navigating Lusatia's structural transition between consensus and dissensus

- **Authors:** Tihomir Viderman, Silke Weidner, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León
- **Conference:** AESOP Annual Congress 2025
- **Date:** 7 - 11 July 2025
- **Location:** Istanbul, Turkey
- **Keywords:** transition, technocratic governance, depoliticization, polarisation, participation

Abstract: The structural transition in Lusatia, Germany, prompted by the national coal phase-out, exemplifies the complex interplay between technocratic governance and divergent public narratives. Despite sustained economic stability, bolstered by job creation and infrastructure improvements, public sentiment often remains tied to the decline of the region's energy-intensive industries. Stories that make headlines tend to depict an unsettled, dissatisfied population and an urban environment resistant to change and wary of difference.

- In view of the contingencies surrounding Lusatia's transition, the national Structural Strengthening Investment Program aims at establishing governance structures that bind various levels of decision making from national to local, which support projects aiming to stage a new aesthetics of transition through flagship structural projects and massive landscape restorations. This multilevel governance approach relies on consensus-driven, technocratic strategies that emphasize compromise and managerial coordination. Such depoliticization tends to be critiqued in social sciences for replacing adversarial politics and stifling radical new imaginaries. However, Lusatia's case reveals a different dynamic, in which dissent is driven by radical-right polarization, which capitalizes on narratives of exclusion, economic insecurity, and cultural fears, thus creating a complex ethical and political landscape that defies conventional categorizations of the post-political condition.

- Drawing on qualitative data from document analysis, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, this study identifies three pathways regional governance structures use to address the challenges of aligning structural policy with regional aspirations. First, counteracting radicalization through accessibility focuses on demystifying the complex lexicon of sustainability transitions and emphasizing equitable outcomes. While the stakeholders underscore the importance of transparent, relatable policies, the emphasis on consensus can paradoxically fuel polarization as the voices that feel left on the other side of environmental justice are picked up and mobilized by populist movements. Second, depoliticizing transition through evidence-based governance prioritizes common interest for a coal phase-out aligning particular interests of mainstream political parties with interests of consensus-driven governance structures, which seek to address dissent by presenting decisions as apolitical and inevitable. Third, public participation is recognized as a mitigative tool for marginalizing radical-right narratives. Stakeholders advocate for an inclusive framework that foster consensus and actively engage publics across plural differences, yet at the operational level they agree there is still much room for enhancing active and direct public involvement.
- This research reimagines technocratic governance as both a stabilizing force and a potential source of alienation, offering lessons for managing structural transitions in polarized contexts. By addressing the interplay between consensus-driven governance and dissensus rooted in radical-right polarization, this paper offers insights into balancing technocratic efficiency with inclusive participatory practices.

Grounding the future: transformative learning through place-based imaginaries in sustainable transitions

- **Authors:** Neli Georgieva
- **Conference:** Strengthening Democratic Citizenship: Educational, Political and Governance Innovations, Joint Sessions of Workshops, Charles University
- **Date:** 20 - 23 May 2025
- **Location:** Prague, Czech Republic
- **Keywords:** citizenship, democratisation, governance, political participation, qualitative comparative analysis, experimental design, energy, policy-making
- **Abstract**: This paper investigates how community discussions about expected and preferred regional futures reveal early manifestations of transformative learning in sustainability transitions. Drawing on a place-based understanding of futures imagination, it conceptualises place as a locus of meaning, memory, and social practice through which communities make sense of change. The analysis introduces imaginative place-based sensemaking as a process through which relevance is attributed to territorial assets in relation to both probable and desired futures. By qualitatively examining how different aspects of territorial capital are articulated and reimagined across communities and future frames, the study identifies varying depths of learning, ranging from recognition of change to emerging shifts in meaning and agency. The findings highlight how reinterpreting familiar places and assets can open space for regenerative imaginaries and early-stage transformative learning.

Challenges of just transition in Silesia

- **Authors:** Adam Drobniak, Marcin Baron, Radosław Cyran, Artur Ochojski, Adam Polko, Piotr Rykała, Adrian Widuch
- **Conference:** POLREG2025 – Polish Conference on Regional and Urban Studies
- **Date:** 19th-21st of October 2024

- **Location:** Warsaw, Poland
- **Keywords:** just transition, challenges of transition, Silesia
- **Abstract:** The presentation covers several strands of the transformation process, including: challenges of transforming traditional sectors, energy modernisation of residential buildings, bottom-up initiatives and transformation animators, as well as perceptions of the transformation among young people, miners, and seniors. On this basis, recommendations for transformation policies in the Silesian Voivodeship were formulated. The presentation draws on a range of studies conducted within the Horizon BOLSTER and DUST projects, projects implemented for the Silesian Voivodeship Transformation Fund, as well as research carried out for the Marshal's Office of the Silesian Voivodeship.

3.3.1.   Conference papers and presentations 2024

Beteiligung junger Menschen am Lausitzer Strukturwandel: Die Zukunft gestalten – mit denen, die sie betrifft [Involvement of young people in structural change in Lusatia: Shaping the future – with those who will be affected by it]
- **Authors:** Silke Weidner, Tihomir Viderman
- **Conference:** Strukturwandel in den Braunkohlerevieren - Transformationsregionen als Ressource [Structural change in lignite mining areas – transformation regions as a resource]
- **Date:** 27 - 28 November 2024
- **Location:** Mönchengladbach
- **Keywords:**   youth,   participation,   transition,   futures
  Abstract: In Lusatia, structural change has become an omnipresent concept—almost a trademark for the region and the defining framework for regional development. The Structural Strengthening Act, designed to compensate for losses in jobs and economic prosperity resulting from the decline of energy-intensive and lignite-dependent industries, has brought resources and catalysed a variety of projects in the region. However, a gap remains between the region's growing economic prosperity and young people's perceptions of the challenges they face. Addressing this gap, this paper presents initial findings from research on the extent to which the ambitious transition aligns with the interests and expectations of young people. Our findings are based on telephone surveys, analysis of policy documents, and interviews with decision-makers at various levels of government, as well as with representatives of organised civil society. These methods were implemented as part of an international research project funded by the EU's HORIZON program, in which a consortium of academic and civil society partners investigates the challenges and opportunities of involving different population groups in regions facing structural transitions (DUST Project).
- This paper highlights the potential emergence of democratic deficits in Lusatia's structural transition. Stakeholders interviewed for the study acknowledged that participation in decision-making processes was constrained by time and generally considered insufficient. Surveys and interviews further indicate a gap between the opportunities for participation offered by institutional actors and the perceived lack of meaningful involvement. Additionally, most broad participation formats focused primarily on the preparation of policy documents. In contrast, flagship projects—such as a railway workshop—target specific groups and largely take place outside the general population. These shortcomings and negative perceptions create space for the populist exploitation of structural change.

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- Finally, the paper outlines how efforts to address these gaps are increasingly being promoted. Initiatives that aim to involve the population more directly are leveraging Brandenburg's robust legal framework for participation and the interest of institutions and civil society in fostering youth engagement. These efforts extend beyond policy formulation, translating into concrete financial support for projects that appeal to young people, such as the development of the "Lusatian Cultural District" at Cottbus railway station.

Democratising just sustainibility transitions: creating space for citizen participation in Norrbotten, Sweden
- **Authors:** Myriam Chilvers, Elin Cedergren, John Moodie, Leneisja Jungsberg, Linnea Löfving
- **Conference:** 63rd ERSA Congress
- **Date:** 26 - 30 August 2024
- **Location:** Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal
- **Abstract:** Sweden has set the ambitious goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2045. This commitment to green growth is influencing Sweden's northern most regions and municipalities, which play a crucial role in providing the necessary land, resources, educational competence and services to implement these policies. Sweden's Norrbotten County is expected to receive large industrial investments to develop fossil free mining and steel production. A significant proportion of these investments, around 90 million euros, are channelled through The Just Transition Fund 2021- 2030. Recent evidence suggests that citizen participation in the design and execution of national, regional, and local green energy and climate policies—especially those with considerable territorial impact in Norrbotten—is limited. This lack of involvement is a cause for concern. Many Swedish northern regional, and local governments are currently weighing significant trade-offs between green growth opportunities, often linked to natural resource industries, and environmental protection. These decisions have far-reaching implications, potentially affecting local landscapes, culture, and social equality, and could escalate social conflict. Democratising these complex multilevel decision making processes through meaningful citizen participation is however not without practical challenges. To ensure their transformative nature, these processes must adhere to four key principles—accountability, transparency, participation, and inclusion. Moreover, they must be institutionalised at all levels of governance. Transformative participation implies that citizens have a clear impact on decisions and results in their empowerment, and well as collective learning. It should allow for a community to create collective representations of its geography, history, shared experiences and visons of the future, and allow space for a community to tell its own stories of their lives and landscapes. This study will focus on whether and to what extent the DUST Regional Future Literary Laboratories (RFLL) method can support governments at all levels in Sweden to create transformative participation spaces for their citizens and in turn allow for deep democratization of their local community's landscapes. The study will address the following research question: Given Sweden's expansive green transition, what are the opportunities and barriers for transformative citizen participation within multi-level decision making? How do decision makers problematised the issue of citizen participation in Norrbotten in relation to national green transition? Can RFLL create a multi-level participatory space for citizens? How do decision makers at different level envisage they could be successfully implemented? What barriers do they foresee?

How just is the sustainability transition in the Polish coal heartland? Exploring participation of the least engaged communities in Bełchatów and Katowicki Coal Regions

- **Authors:** Adam Drobniak, Artur Ochojski, Marcin Baron , Adam Polko, Piotr Rykała (University of Economics in Katowice) – Poland, Grzegorz Trefon
- **Conference:** Regional Studies Association (RSA) conference 2024
- **Date:** 11 - 14 June 2024
- **Location:** Florence, Italy
- **Keywords:** just transition, sustainability transition, participation, multilevel governance, leaving no one behind
- **Abstract:** The concept of territorial just transition plans is positioned as a response to the goal of achieving a zero-carbon emission industry while ensuring inclusivity in policy initiatives, guided by the principle of "leaving no one behind." The distinguishing feature of these instruments is their place-based approach, characterized by territorially biased and participatory policy development and implementation closely tied to local considerations. However, the soundness and effectiveness of these initiatives can be compromised when the voices of communities are excluded, and barriers to participation in decision-making on sustainable transition policies are not adequately addressed. While just transition instruments are recognized for their vital role in facilitating an inclusive response to the phasing out of coal industries and alleviating associated impacts, there is an ongoing lack of studies examining their effects on local and regional dynamics.
- This paper seeks to bridge this gap by identifying factors/narrations that influence citizen participation in decision-making processes related to multi-level, place-based policies promoting sustainability transitions. The focus is on deliberative approaches and multi-actor engagement in the context of the Polish coal heartland. To operationalize the conceptual framework, the paper draws on the activities of the Horizon Europe project DUST, conducted in five countries with eight case studies. These regions are eligible for funding under the EU's Just Transition Fund and other national policy measures due to significant structural changes. Our research delves into qualitative methods, including desk research, interviews and focus groups, to explore the design and performance of participatory mechanisms at various levels of government.

Participation of least-engaged communities in the deliberative governance of place-based approaches to just sustainability transitions: A bridge too far?

- **Authors:** Verena Elisabeth Balz
- **Conference:** Regional Studies Association conference 2024
- **Date:** 11 - 14 June 2024
- **Location:** Florence, Italy
- **Keywords:** citizen participation, least-engaged communities, deliberative governance, place-based policy, sustainability transitions
- **Abstract:** The Horizon Europe project Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST) develops andoperationalises novel participatory instruments for proactive and strategic citizen engagement in sustainability transitions. It combines design-led territorial tools with digital tools for citizen deliberation at scale. The project addresses a defining societal and democratic challenge for Europe, which is to hear the voices of least-engaged communities, especially in structurally weak regions dependent on energy-intensive industries, which will be most affected by transitions towards a more sustainable future. Building on the concept of

'active subsidiarity', the project employs an innovative mix of research methods, and experimental citizen participation, to understand the determinants of participation in decision-making on sustainability transitions at different levels of government, and to develop effective policy recommendations for inclusive engagement of civil society.

- In this paper we discuss the challenges and barriers that influence the participation of least-engaged communities in the deliberative governance of place-based policy approaches to just sustainability transitions. Drawing on a literature review, we systematically map these variables of participation. We structure the review along the analytical, evaluative, instrumental, and communicative dimensions, building on notions from the fields of public policies (in particular regional development policy), democracy studies (in particular deliberative democracy), and spatial planning and design (in particular strategic spatial planning and regional design). This allows for a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of participation in place-based policymaking and, consequently, for the conceptualisation of inclusive participatory approaches as the strategic bundling of multiple knowledge and various instruments for particular places and communities. The paper also critically assesses the current participatory approaches to just sustainability transitions and challenges the formulated ambitions for such approaches at the EU, national and regional levels.

The role of willingness and ability in explaining citizen engagement in place-based sustainability transition policies: findings from a European population survey

- **Authors:** Thomas Verbeek
- **Conference:** Regional Studies Association conference 2024
- **Date:** 11 - 14 June 2024
- **Location:** Florence, Italy
- **Keywords:** place-based policies, sustainability transitions, citizen participation, community engagement, population survey
- **Abstract:** In the formulation of place-based sustainability transition policies there is a growing emphasis on actively involving citizens. However, despite good intentions, these efforts often fall short of engaging all parts of the population, with some groups proving particularly difficult to reach - the so-called "least engaged communities" (LEC), including, for instance, youth, elderly, women, ethnic minorities, and blue-collar workers.
- The Horizon Europe project DUST (Democratizing Just Sustainability Transitions) focuses on these communities, recognizing their vulnerability to transitions and transition policies, but also the ethical and practical need for their participation. Ethically, we should aim for an equitable distribution of benefits and burdens across social groups and that requires their involvement in the policy process. Pragmatically, the support of these LECs is crucial for the socially acceptable implementation of place-based sustainability planning. This is increasingly challenging in a climate of growing disillusionment with democracy, especially amongst the LECs. To remove the barriers faced by these groups, understanding the factors contributing to their lack of engagement is imperative.
- Through a literature review on citizen participation, we identified a range of factors that can help explain (lack of) engagement, broadly categorized under willingness (e.g., discontent, disillusionment, perception of powerlessness, lack of trust, and dominant social-cultural norms and values) and ability (e.g., time constraints, language barriers,

geographical distance, and technological illiteracy). In a representative population survey across five countries, with oversampling in regions eligible for EU's Just Transition Fund, we explore how willingness and ability factors interact with each other and explain engagement. In a comparative analysis we consider regional differences and associations with socio-economic or demographic variables, aiming to identify the most problematic barriers and inform more participatory and inclusive place-based sustainability policies. This way, this study aims to contribute to the debates on the operationalisation of just sustainability transitions in European regions.

How just is the sustainability transition in the Dutch energy heartland? Exploring participation of the least engaged communities in post-gas Groningen

- **Authors:** Marcin Dąbrowski, Gisela Garrido Veron, Thomas Verbeek, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry
- **Conference:** Regional Studies Association conference 2024
- **Date:** 11 - 14 June 2024
- **Location:** Florence, Italy
- **Keywords:** sustainability transitions, Just Transition Fund, Cohesion Policy, European Union, Groningen, place-based policy, citizen participation
- **Abstract:** Regions reliant on fossil fuel extraction and energy intensive industries face major challenges in the face of sustainability transitions. These regions suffer not only from dependence on those declining Sustainability policies must prioritize these vulnerable areas and be inclusive, considering the voices of communities most affected or overlooked. Whether initiated by the European Union or local governments, these policies should leave no one behind to avoid backlash against crucial measures addressing climate change and its uneven impacts, which in turn requires engaging a diversity of stakeholders and social groups in the processes of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. The European Union has deployed the Just Transition Fund (JTF) as part of its Cohesion Policy, providing support for restructuring and cushioning of the negative impacts of sustainability transitions to the regions which are particularly dependent on extraction of fossil fuels and energy-intensive industries. However, the extent to which the EU-funded Territorial Just Transition Plans and the domestic policies addressing similar regional challenges actually respond to the needs of the communities within those regions remains an open question.
- This paper focuses on Groningen region in Northern Netherlands, one of the regions eligible for funding as part of the JTF and targeted by a range of national sustainability transition policies. Until 2023, Groningen has been the Netherland' country's natural gas extraction hub and has already been facing substantial challenges related to negative impacts of this industry (earthquakes), but also depopulation, peripherality and socio-economic hardship. Building on the Horizon Europe DUST project, the study uses diverse research methods, ranging from desk-based policy analysis, citizen survey, to expert interviews, and focus groups with the citizens representing the least engaged communities. It explores and contrasts the performance of participatory practices put in place as part of the Territorial Just Transition Plan for Northern Netherlands and the National Programme Groningen, seeking to reveal the factors that facilitate and hinder participation of citizens in the shaping and implementation of multi-level place-based policies to steer regions towards more sustainable futures. The findings allow for drawing lessons for making

such policies more just and participatory and adds to the debate on more active citizen engagement in multi-level policy settings.

Which factors impede or facilitate participation of less engaged communities in place-based measures for sustainable transition? Insights from comparative regional analysis

- **Authors**: Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry
  Conference: Regional Studies Association conference 2024
- **Date:** 11 - 14 June 2024
- **Location:** Florence, Italy
- **Keywords:** sustainability transitions, place-based policies, multi-level governance, participatory mechanisms, inclusive participation, least-engaged communities
- **Abstract**: Excluding the voices of communities facing systemic barriers to participation when making decisions on policies for sustainable transition poses a significant risk of undermining the overall impact of these initiatives. Such exclusion hinders the effectiveness of measures and contributes to the (re-)production of socio-economic and territorial inequities. In response to the need for more inclusive policy initiatives, place-based policies have gained prominence, forming a key component of the EU Cohesion policy and other EU, national, and local initiatives. The potential value of place-based policies lies in their ability to create new participatory spaces and anchor policy more closely to local and territorial considerations.
- Despite growing recognition of the potential of place-based policies for sustainable transition, there is a notable gap in research regarding the factors that enable the involvement of diverse groups in these approaches. While these policies can play a crucial role in fostering more inclusive and responsive policy-making processes, few studies have investigated the mix of factors that facilitate active engagement of certain demographics or communities that face systemic barriers to participation.
- To address this gap, the paper identifies factors affecting citizen participation in decision-making on multi-level place-based policies promoting sustainability transitions. A novel conceptual framework is developed, integrating key concepts related to political efficacy, deliberative spaces, active subsidiarity, digital divide, social capital, etc. Drawing on these, three main categories of factors affecting participation – contextual, community and policy based - are distinguished and seen as independent variables that enhance or hinder an inclusive deliberative governance of sustainability transitions.
- The conceptual framework is operationalised within the Horizon Europe project DUST in five countries and eight case studies – regions eligible for funding under the EU's Just Transition Fund and other domestic policy measures due to the substantial structural changes they undergo. Diverse qualitative research methods including interviews and focus groups are applied to examine the design and performances of digital and non-digital participatory mechanism at different levels of government as well as communities' sentiments towards participation in processes that inform policy measures.
- The comparative analysis will explore the extent to which citizen participation in decision-making is affected by a mix of factors and shed light on the variations among barriers and facilitators facing different social groups. The paper will develop practice, policy and conceptual contributions: identifying opportunities and incentives for participation of least engaged communities, recommendations for policies seeking to create new spaces for participation, and insights for conceptualisation and assessment of policy participation.

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Perceptions of the energy transition in mining families – the case of the Katowice coal region

- **Authors:** Adam Drobniak, Marcin Baron, Artur Ochojski, Adam Polko, Piotr Rykała
- **Conference:** POLREG2024 – Polish Conference on Regional and Urban Studies
- **Date:** 20th-22nd of October 2024
- **Location:** Poznan, Poland
- **Keywords:** just transition, energy transition, mining families
- **Abstract:** The issue of the presentation concerns the social dimension of the energy and just transition processes currently taking place in Polish coal regions as a consequence of the implementation of the European Green Deal. The research problem is formulated as follows: what is the level of knowledge, perception, and reception of processes related to the energy transition—entailing the decarbonisation of the economy and, consequently, the phase-out of hard coal mining and conventional power generation— within mining communities. The presentation is based on research conducted within the Horizon DUST and BOLSTER projects. Methodologically, the study employed structured interviews (n = 15) and focus groups (with young people from mining and energy-sector families, miners, and retirees from the mining and energy sectors). The research was carried out in the Katowice coal region.
- **Additional information:** within the conference Katowice's team run a session and a panel discussion titled: "Sustainable transition of regions – communities, economy, strategic challenges" which gathered 5 presentations from: Adam Mickiewicz University from Poznan, University of Lodz, and University of Economics in Katowice.

3.3.2.   Conference papers and presentations 2023

Investigating the potential of regional design as a catalyst of deliberative governance of just sustainability transitions

- **Authors:** Verena Elisabeth Balz, Marcin Dąbrowski
- **Conference:** AESOP Annual Congress 2023
- **Date:** 10 - 15 July 2023
- **Location:** Lodz, Poland
- **Keywords:** regional design, citizen participation, deliberative governance, sustainability transitions
- **Abstract:** The ongoing sustainability transitions bring a defining societal and democratic challenge for Europe, which is to hear the voices of least engaged communities, especially in structurally weak regions dependent on energy-intensive industries, which will be most affected by transitions towards a more sustainable future. The European Union, its member states and the regional authorities in these regions have been putting forward place-based policies to steer these transitions. The challenge, however, is to engage the communities in deliberation and decision-making on those policies and on the future transformation of the regions affected.
- Building on the concept of 'active subsidiarity', the Horizon Europe DUST project (Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions), starting in February 2023, employs an innovative mix of research methods, and experimental citizen participation, to understand the determinants of participation in decision-making on sustainability transitions at different levels of government, and to develop effective policy recommendations for inclusive engagement of civil society. DUST will develop and operationalise novel participatory instruments for proactive and strategic citizen

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engagement in sustainability transitions. It will combine design-led territorial tools - tested in Regional Futures Literacy Labs - with digital tools for citizen deliberation at scale.

- In this paper we outline a conceptual framework for exploring the socio-spatial implications of sustainability transitions in structurally weak regions heavily dependent on energy-intensive industries. Building on a cross-disciplinary review of scientific and policy literature on citizen participation, sustainability transitions, citizen participation in place-based approaches, we explore the potential of regional design as a vehicle to engage communities in deliberation in a multi-level policy context and anticipation of post-carbon regional futures.

Dilemmas of Just Transition of coal regions in Poland
- **Authors:** Adam Drobniak, Marcin Baron, Artur Ochojski
- **Conference:** Regional Studies Association Winter Conference
- **Date:** 9th-10th of November 2023
- **Location:** London, Great Britain
- **Keywords:** just transition, coal regions, Poland
- **Abstract:** The presentation seeks an answer the question of what will determine the success of the Just Transition (JT), pointing to the dilemmas faced by this process in Polish coal regions, i.e. regions that create the largest number of jobs in the mining in the scale of the European Union (EU), and facing the most drastic change in the context of the energy transition (ET). Due to the scale of the ET and the complexity of JT processes in Poland this kind of changes require bold vision, knowledge, leadership, multi-sector collaboration and a broad social contract. Unfortunately, in Poland, for various reasons, there is a visible defragmentation of JT process, i.e. the lack of a broad agreement between regional and central stakeholders, as well as the lack of a framework encouraging multi-stakeholder cooperation along the lines of: HEIs, R&D, enterprises, traditional sector, non-government organizations, trade unions, communities.

Democratising just and sustainable transitions – introduction to the Horizon DUST project
- **Authors:** Adam Drobniak, Marcin Baron, Artur Ochojski, Adam Polko, Piotr Rykała
- **Conference:** POLREG2023 – Polish Conference on Regional and Urban Studies
- **Date:** 22nd-24th of October 2023
- **Location:** Wroclaw, Poland
- **Keywords:** just transition, participation, deliberative governance
- **Abstract:** The transition of coal regions in Poland, supported by substantial resources from the Just Transition Fund (JTF), assumes broad stakeholder participation in programming this process in line with the "no one left behind" principle. In practice, however, consensus-building on transition policies and projects included in Territorial Just Transition Plans takes place under conditions of limited social participation, which hinders reaching the social groups and economic actors that bear or will bear the greatest costs of the energy transition. The presentation of experiences from the Horizon DUST project enables a better diagnosis of the level of social participation related to the JTF and helps identify effective solutions to enhance community involvement in a just transition.
- **Additional information:** within the conference Katowice's team run a session and a panel discussion titled: "Regions in Transition" which gathered 5 presentations from: Adam Mickiewicz University from Poznan, University of Lodz, University of Economics in Katowice, and Lower Silesia Marshal Office

3.4. Ideas for journal articles

This section lists concrete new publication ideas that make central use of DUST research results, that are not listed in other sections of the Chapter 3 (including Section 3.4 Conference papers and presentations), and that will be turned into submissions to journals or book editors before the end of 2026. Entries are ordered chronologically by month of intended submission and alphabetically.

The different faces of just transition in the Silesia region
- **Author(s):** Adam Drobniak
- **Intended publication:** EU Cohesion Policy and Sustainable Just Transitions (eds.) Eduardo Medeiros , Lefteris Topaloglou, Edward Elgar Publishing
- **(Intended) date of submission:** January 2026
- **Keywords:** just transition, industrial regions, Just Transition Fund, Silesia
- **Abstract:** This chapter examines the conditions of just transition (JT) in the Silesian Voivodeship (SV), the European Union's (EU) most coal-dependent region, where mining directly employs over 70,000 people and coal-related sectors add another 90,000. The SV faces challenges from the decarbonization-driven phase-out of both traditional industries such as coal, steel, conventional energy, and a new one such as automotive. Key issues include socio-economic diversity across seven coal subregions, management models of the Just Transition Fund (JTF), social expectations to redefine the SV's identity. The chapter also addresses policy coordination challenges, potential window-dressing, and superficial structural changes. Methodologically, it draws on findings from the Horizon DUST project, including future literacy labs with three generations of mining stakeholders, surveys via the Transformatorium platform (n=558), in-depth interviews with decision-makers and business leaders (n=77), and the author's direct involvement in the National Just Transition Plan (2021), and Territorial Just Transition Plan for SV (2021-2023).

Multidimensional climate change attitudes, just transition regions, and fuzzy opinion types: evidence from a multi-country study
- **Authors:** Fernando Mendez, Uwe Serdült
- **Intended publication:** Political Studies
- **(Intended) date of submission:** March 2026
- **Keywords:** climate change attitudes, fuzzy cluster analysis, just transition regions, public support for climate policy
- **Abstract:** Public attitudes towards climate change are multidimensional, combining beliefs, affective concern, policy preferences, and willingness to act. This article draws on data from a five-country survey to examine the latent structure of climate change attitudes in a multi-country context. Drawing on prior research, we distinguish four underlying dimensions: beliefs and perceived seriousness, willingness to accept economic burdens for climate policy, prioritisation of the environment over economic development, and willingness to modify personal lifestyles. We apply fuzzy cluster analysis to identify overlapping attitude profiles and recover five distinct respondent types, ranging from consistent scepticism to high concern combined with divergent cost and economic trade-off preferences. To explain variation in these profiles, we model fuzzy cluster membership scores using Dirichlet regression with country-level random effects. Particular attention is paid to whether residing in an EU Just Transition region— areas expected to face heightened socio-economic adjustment costs from climate

policy—shapes climate attitude types. The results highlight the role of ideological and political trust dimensions in shaping climate policy support and opposition.

Mapping narratives of just transition in the EU's largest coal region

- **Author(s):** TBA (UEK)
- **Intended publication:** Energy Research & Social Science, Regional Studies & Regional Sciences, Environment and Planning A, Geoforum, Technological Forecasting & Social Change
- **(Intended) date of submission:** March 2026
- **Keywords:** just transition, future narratives, transition policy, Silesia
- **Abstract:** Core idea and questions discussed concern which transition narratives coexist in the region, how they are socially and spatially embedded, and which of them are reinforced or marginalized by transformation policy. The paper discusses also how a just transition in coal regions is a process of negotiating future narratives rather than merely redistributing costs and benefits.

Why does just transition policy fail to reach people? Lessons from intergenerational Future Literacy Labs in the EU's largest coal region

- **Author(s):** TBA (UEK)
- **Intended publication:** Policy & Politics, Environmental Policy and Governance, Energy Policy
- **(Intended) date of submission:** March 2026
- **Keywords:** coal-related generations, just transition, transition policy, Silesia
- **Abstract:** Core ideas and questions discussed concern the gap between the language of transition policy and the language coal-related generation, how policy defines "just transition", how different social groups understand justice, and where the "policy misfit" emerges

Regional Futures Literacy Labs: empowering citizens in sustainability transition policymaking

- **Author(s):** Verena Elisabeth Balz, John Moodie, Leneisja Jungsberg, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving, Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry
- **Intended publication**: Book chapter (the article was earlier submitted to and accepted by Buildings & Cities. The publication process was stopped due to time constraints)
- **(Intended) date of submission**: May 2026
- **Keywords:** sustainability transition, citizen participation, Regional Futures Literacy Labs
- **Excerpts of the introduction:** In recent years, the concept of 'just sustainability transition' has gained serious momentum in policy circles and lays at the heart of the European Union's (EU) Green Deal and the United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals. The EU's Just Transition Mechanism, under the EU Green Deal, is committed to supporting European regions with the shift to a low carbon economy and society, focusing on regions that are highly dependent on fossil fuels and energy-intensive industries. The European Commission points out that the impacts of climate transformations will not be neutral from a territorial or societal perspective. (...)
- Within this context, the Regional Futures Literacy Lab (RFLL) model has emerged as a novel and innovative place-based approach for enhancing citizen engagement and empowerment in sustainability transition policymaking (Balz et al, 2023). Developed and implemented as part of the ongoing Horizon Europe Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST) project, RFLLs are designed to empower citizens to use their

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- imagination, anticipation, and futures literacy to build their capacity to change and adapt in response to climate transition challenges and opportunities. (...)
- This conceptual paper aims to introduce and critically assesses the RFLL model. The paper outlines the RFLL structures and methods, highlighting where the labs took place and the main participants in the process. This includes policymakers, experts, and citizens from least engaged communities in European regions most vulnerable to the impacts of sustainability transitions. (...)

Grounding the future: transformative learning through place-based imaginaries in sustainable transitions

- **Author(s):** Neli Georgieva, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Verena Elisabeth Balz
- **Intended publication:** TBD
- **(Intended) date of submission:** June 2026
- **Keywords:** transformative learning, futures, communities, territorial capital, imaginative place-based sensemaking
- **Abstract:** This paper investigates how community discussions about expected and preferred regional futures reveal early manifestations of transformative learning in sustainability transitions. Drawing on a place-based understanding of futures imagination, it conceptualises place as a locus of meaning, memory, and social practice through which communities make sense of change. The analysis introduces imaginative place-based sensemaking as a process through which relevance is attributed to territorial assets in relation to both probable and desired futures. By qualitatively examining how different aspects of territorial capital are articulated and reimagined across communities and future frames, the study identifies varying depths of learning, ranging from recognition of change to emerging shifts in meaning and agency. The findings highlight how reinterpreting familiar places and assets can open space for regenerative imaginaries and early-stage transformative learning.

Youth participation in Lusatia's lignite phase-out: roles and expectations

- **Author(s):** Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León, Silke Weidner
- **Intended publication:** TBD
- **(Intended) date of submission:** June 2026
- **Keywords:** participation, structural transition, youth, Lusatia
- **Abstract:** Participatory processes influence not only the opportunities for different sectors to engage in planning and the framing of issues to be discussed, but also the roles and behaviours of participants. This paper examines the roles that young people assume and project in relation to the policies and strategies guiding the structural transition toward the phase-out of lignite in Lusatia, Germany. The analysis draws on empirical data from a series of workshops, referred to as Regional Future Literacy Labs, which involved young people and political actors. These workshops were designed to empower young people to position themselves and their perspectives in the structural transition. The paper also analyses how policy documents frame participation, specifying both the roles envisaged for young people and the outcomes expected from their involvement. By examining both practical engagement in workshops and the formal policy framework, the paper identifies relationships between the roles adopted by participants and the expectations associated with their participation in Lusatia's structural transformation.

Hybrid analogue and digital participation: The role of the e-democracy tool Pol.is in community-led place-based policymaking

- **Author(s):** Alexander Wandl, Nohemi Ramirez Aranda, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Anca Ioana Forgaci
- **Intended publication:** Raumforschung und Raumordnung | Spatial Research and Planning
- **(Intended) date of submission:** August 2026
- **Keywords:** hybrid participation, place-based policymaking, community-led agenda-setting, digital deliberation (Pol.is), Regional Futures Literacy Labs
- **Abstract:** Hybrid participation is increasingly used to connect community-led place-based processes to multi-level policymaking, yet evidence on how digital deliberation reshapes locally produced agendas remains limited. This paper examines the role of the e-democracy tool Pol.is as a digital extension of Regional Futures Literacy Labs (RFLLs), focusing on how concerns articulated with different least engaged communities (LECs) change when opened to wider publics. Drawing on experiments conducted between January and May 2025 in Norrbotten, Katowice and Stara Zagora we analyse Pol.is engagement metrics and statement-level outcomes.

  We operationalise the contribution of Pol.is to place-based policymaking using three deliberative-democracy aspects, scale, transparency and equality and compare seed statements ("input") with researcher-qualified output statements. Statements are coded as policy-relevant (PR) and/or preferred-future (PF) and assessed for groundedness in LEC perspectives, alongside Pol.is indicators of high overall agreement, cross-group consensus and polarisation.

  Across cases, Pol.is broadened participation beyond workshop settings while maintaining multiple opinion groups. PR statements often achieved high overall agreement, but cross-group consensus was more selective, and a polarising minority often persisted, especially around transition trade-offs and "who pays/who benefits". PF statements were broadly accepted across cases, though their prominence and polarisation varied by region. The paper contributes a transferable assessment approach for hybrid participation that links community-led agenda-setting, large-scale deliberation, and policy-useful outputs in place-based transitions.

Representing communities' hopes and dreams in sustainability transitions: From territorial mappings to affective regional designs

- **Author(s):** Verena Elisabeth Balz, Alexander Wandl, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Nohemi Ramirez Aranda, Samir Amin, others
- **Intended publication:** Regional Studies or Cities
- **(Intended) date of submission:** October 2026
- **Keywords:** territorial capital, regional design, least engaged communities, place-based policies, affective communication
- **Abstract:** This paper presents the application of a method that combines the analysis of regional sustainable transition policies, mapping of territorial capitals, and the development of representations of preferred futures of least engaged communities (LECs). We examine the impact of community-led and government-led just sustainability transition policies through designs informed by input from Regional Futures Literacy Labs (RFLLs) and policy analyses in four case study regions: Norrbotten (SE), Stara Zagora (BG), Katowice (PL), and Lusatia (DE). The resulting design explorations visually

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represented the hopes and dreams of LECs, enabling comparison with policy-impact representations. The findings, illustrated in four triptychs, aim to inspire fresh perspectives on just sustainability transition policies while elevating the concerns of LECs within broader discussions. Additionally, we provide an assessment of the reception of these designs among members of the LECs and policymakers, supported by empirical data from interviews and storytelling videos. This work underscores the importance of integrating local voices into sustainability transitions to promote equitable affective regional designs.

Factors that facilitate or impede community participation in sustainable transition policies – a framework for analysis

- **Author(s):** Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry
- **Intended publication:** TBD
- **(Intended) date of submission:** November 2026
- **Keywords:** community participation, sustainability transitions, place-based development, deliberative governance, analytical framework
- **Abstract:** This article proposes a conceptual framework for analysing factors that facilitate or impede community participation in sustainable transition policies. Based on an extensive review of literature on place-based development, multi-level governance, sustainability transitions, and deliberative democracy, the framework integrates insights from these fields to identify key influences on participation. It distinguishes three interrelated sets of factors: contextual, community, and policy, which together support systematic analysis of how community participation is enabled or constrained across different transition contexts.

Patterns of citizen participation in place-based sustainability transitions policies: Who takes part in the shaping of post-gas futures in the Province of Groningen?

- **Authors:** Marcin Dąbrowski, Thomas Verbeek, Odilia van der Valk, Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry
- **Intended publication:** TBD
- **(Intended) date of submission:** December 2026
- **Keywords:** sustainability transitions, Just Transition Fund, Cohesion Policy, European Union, Groningen, place-based policy, citizen participation
- **Abstract:** Regions dependent on fossil fuel extraction and energy-intensive industries face acute socio-economic risks during sustainability transitions requiring engagement of the affected communities in territorial policies steering sustainability transitions. The extent to which effectively respond to local community needs remains under-examined. This paper sheds light on this topic by invesitgating the case of the Groningen region in the Northern Netherlands, a former natural gas hub grappling with industry-induced earthquakes, depopulation, and peripherality. Drawing on the Horizon Europe DUST project, the study employs a multi-method approach, including policy analysis, citizen surveys, expert interviews, and focus groups with underrepresented populations, to evaluate participatory practices. By contrasting two differentiated policies, the EU-funded Territorial Just Transition Plan for the Northern Netherlands with the National Programme Groningen, the study identifies factors that facilitate or hinder citizen engagement in multi-level, place-based policies to respond to the needs of the marginalised communities in Groningen region. The findings offer critical lessons for enhancing procedural justice and participation in place-based policies supporting

sustainability transitions, contributing to the broader debate on democratic engagement in the context of sustainability transitions.

The potential of place-based policies to promote inclusive deliberative governance in sustainable transitions: a comparative analysis of barriers and facilitators

- **Author(s):** Martin Ferry, Neli Georgieva, others
- **Intended publication:** TBD
- **(Intended) date of submission:** December 2026
- **Keywords:** inclusive deliberative governance, place-based policies, citizen participation, comparative case studies, participation barriers and facilitators
- **Abstract: Aspects of t**he DUST conceptual framework are operationalised using an appropriate selection of the DUST case studies. Selection of case studies can be made based on similarities and differences type of policy, type of community, context factors such as traditions in civic participation. Diverse qualitative research methods are applied in operationalising the framework, engaging actors from the policy domain and citizens who belong to vulnerable communities and face participatory barriers. Findings are based on comparative analysis of the empirical data collected by case studies. They show that citizen participation in decision-making is affected by a mix of factors across the three categories which interact, shape or amplify each other's effect.

Success and failures of TJTPs as place-based instruments

- **Author(s):** Martin Ferry, Neli Georgieva, others
- **Intended publication:** TBD
- **(Intended) date of submission:** December 2026
- **Keywords:** Territorial Just Transition Plans, place-based principles, participatory governance
- **Abstract:** This article examines how place-based principles are reflected in the strategic orientation and governance arrangements of Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs) across DUST case studies. It aims to discuss implications for strengthening the place-based and participatory dimensions of just transition planning under EU Cohesion Policy.

The role of willingness and ability in explaining citizen engagement in place-based sustainability transition policies

- **Author(s):** Thomas Verbeek, others
- **Intended publication:** TBD
- **(Intended) date of submission:** December 2026
- **Keywords:** community, willingness and ability framework, citizen participation, sustainability transition
- **Abstract:** This conceptual paper uses results from the DUST survey, focus groups, and the participatory encounters to discuss the theoretical distinction between willingness and ability to participate in sustainability transition policymaking.

4. Book proposal

Among the KPIs for academic dissemination of DUST research results is the publication of a DUST book. This chapter presents the book proposal that was developed to respond to this indicator. The proposal was collaboratively prepared by DUST partners and reflects the research results that were achieved across the WPs1-6, with a focus on results that concern the social governance of sustainability transitions and the institutional readiness of place-based policymaking to adopt this form of governing. To guarantee the realization of the book editorship is shared by all DUST academic partners. The editors will refine the proposal and submit it to a publisher in spring 2026.

4.1. Book outline

- **Title:** Citizen involvement in place-based approaches to sustainability transitions
- **Editors:** See Table 3
- **Book volume:** 160-200 standard text pages in total
- **Publisher:** Under consideration are publishing houses that provide the possibility of open access publication, the services and reputation that a book of high academic standards requires, and allow the incorporation of visual materials that form a core result of the DUST project. Publishers considered so far include TU Delft OPEN Publishing (in cooperation with NAi Publishers), Edward Elgar, Routledge, and Springer.

Table 4 List of editors of the DUST book

#	Name editor	Partner
1	Verena Elisabeth Balz	TUD
2	Silke Weidner	BTU
3	Adam Drobniak	UEK
4	Neli Georgieva	STRATH
5	TBD	NR
6	TBD	UZH
7	TBD	CSD
8	Samir Amin	iUE

4.1.1. Overview

Drawing on research in the Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST) project, funded by European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, this book offers a comprehensive exploration of how the principles of sustainability transition and place-based policymaking converge to guide equitable transformations in regional contexts. It emphasizes the integration of participatory frameworks and citizen involvement as catalysts for the social governance of transitions, demonstrating how these elements collectively shape forward-looking and legitimate regional planning and development practices.

4.1.2. Key theoretical themes

Place-based policymaking for just transitions
The book re-establishes the connection between just transition - ensuring equity in immediate and long-term socio-economic and environmental changes - and place-based policymaking, which provides structured institutional frameworks and governance processes for navigating the

dynamics between top-down and bottom-up forces in systemic transformations. It examines how embedding principles of place-based policymaking within transition frameworks and processes ensures that populations that are affected by transitions are empowered and that social, environmental and economic shifts are effective, inclusive, and fair.

Citizen involvement and institutional readiness
Citizen involvement is framed as a cornerstone of the social governance of transitions, highlighting the necessity for inclusive mechanisms that amplify diverse voices, especially of those affected by transitions but less engaged. The book identifies factors influencing this involvement and links these with institutional readiness, showcasing how effective and inclusive citizen engagement can be strengthened as part of place-based policymaking.

Participatory instruments and strategies for just sustainability transitions
The book identifies instruments for active citizen involvement in place-based approaches to sustainability transitions. It demonstrates how these instruments enable citizens to anticipate and envision regional structural change, build social capital, and voice their concerns in the deliberative governance of place-based sustainability transition policymaking. Specifically it highlights strategies that combine instruments to make transition policies more self-authored by people while addressing socio-economic disparities. Results from comparative and in-depth case studies illustrate how place-based policymaking can serve as a platform for coordinating and aligning policy priorities with local needs.

4.1.3.   Relevance

This book provides critical insights for navigating the intertwined challenges of equity, sustainability, and resilience in regional systems under pressure of transition due to the phasing out of coal / fossil fuel-based industries. It highlights the synergies between participatory approaches and institutional innovation, offering a roadmap for fostering just and effective transitions in an era of complex societal and environmental challenges.

4.1.4.   Intended Audience

Ideal for spatial planners, regional development policymakers, governance experts, and researchers in these fields and with an interest in sustainability and social equity, this book bridges theory and practice. It equips readers with the tools and insights needed to design and implement inclusive and adaptive transition strategies within urban and regional planning contexts.

4.2.   Book structure and chapters

Table 5 DUST book structure and chapters

#	Title of chapter	Authors	Leading DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts
Content and foreword				
Ca. 15 pages				
	List of contents List of tables List of figures List of boxes List of Acronyms and Abbreviations			
	The authors			

#	Title of chapter	Authors	Leading DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts
	Acknowledgements			
	Foreword	TBD		
Introduction				
1 Chapter, ca. 25 pages				
1	Introduction	Editors of the book	TUD, NR, CSD, BTU, UEK, UZH, STRATH. iUE	WP1-6
Civic participation in place-based approaches to just sustainability transitions: Scope and determining factors				
3 Chapters, ca. 70-80 pages				
These chapters establish the scope of citizen participation in place-based approaches to just sustainability transitions, and - in conjunction - identify the factors determining the integration of participatory frameworks and citizen involvement in these approaches. Each chapter also critically discusses the institutional readiness for incorporating factors as catalysts for the social governance of transition policymaking.				
2	Deliberative citizen participation in sustainability transition policies: institutional arenas and dynamics (TBC)	TBD	TBD	WP2, 3
2	Deliberative citizen participation in the design of sustainable transition policies: enabling factors and institutional capacity to respond to them	Martin Ferry, Neli Georgieva, others	STRATH, UZH, CSD	WP2, 3
3	Enabling participation in place-based approaches to sustainability transitions: Best practices (TBC)	TBD	TBD	WP6, T6.4
The RFLLs from a comparative perspective				
3 Chapters, ca. 70-80 pages				
These chapters draw on a comparative assessment of the DUST participatory experiments, titled Regional Futures Literacy Labs (RFLLs), and conducted in the four case-study regions of Norrbotten (Sweden), Katowice (Poland), Stara Zagora (Bulgaria), and Lusatia (Germany). These chapters conceptualize and explore participatory instruments for the positioning of citizens' concerns in the deliberative social governance of place-based sustainability transition policymaking. Specifically they highlight strategies that combine instruments to make transition policies more self-authored by people while addressing socio-economic disparities.				
5	Regional Futures Literacy Labs: empowering citizens in sustainability transition policymaking	John Moodie, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Leneisja Jungsberg, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving, Neli Georgieva, Martin Ferry	TUD, NR, STRATH	WP4, 5
6	The RFLLs in a democratic perspective: from opinion formation to publicly rated policy statements	Verena Elisabeth Balz, Artur Ochojski, others	TUD, UEK	WP4, 5
7	The communicative dimension of the RFLLs: regional design and affective communication	Samir Amin, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Leneisja Jungsberg, Anca Ioana Forgaci, Myriam Chilvers, Linnea Löfving	iUE, NR, TUD, others	WP4-6
The RFLLs from a case-specific perspective				
4 Chapters, ca. 70-80 pages				
These chapters draw on an in-depth assessment of the aforementioned RFLL experiments in individual case study regions. In conjunction they explore participatory instruments for the voicing of citizens' concerns in the deliberative social governance of place-based sustainability transition policymaking. Contributions respond to factors determining the integration of participatory frameworks and citizen involvement in these approaches and critically assess instruments on their contributions to institutional readiness and the mediating of top-down and bottom-up development forces.				
8	Sustainability transitions from an intergenerational perspective – The Silesian RFLL	TBD	UEK	WP4, 5

#	Title of chapter	Authors	Leading DUST partner(s)	Related DUST WPs / Ts
9	A multistakeholder approach to sustainability transition policymaking – E-democracy in Silesia	TBD	UEK	WP4, 5
10	Reimagining structural transition through youth participation: Case Study Lusatia	Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León, Silke Weidner	BTU	WP4, 5
11	Stara Zagora lessons taken: translating community futures into policy recommendations through an adapted RFLL process	Dr Rumyana Grozeva, Tea Turlakova	SZREDA	WP4, 5
12	TBD	TBD	TBD	WP4, 5
Transition narratives				
3-4 brief insertions, ca. 10-15 pages				
The DUST experiments involved young people, generations in mining families, rural communities, and women. These brief insertions draw on transition narratives told by members of these communities during the DUST experiments. In conjunction they bring to life how citizens understand, experience, and anticipate on the impact of transitions on their lives and place of living.				
13	Miners' real stories of life: long-term transition	TBD	KADRA, UEK	WP3, 4, 5
14	Lusatia: One day in the year 2040	Tihomir Viderman, Rafael Maximiliano Flores de León, Silke Weidner	BTU	WP5
14	Transition narratives in the media (TBC)	TBD	CSD	WP3, T3.3
Conclusions and policy recommendations				
1 Chapter, ca. 20 pages				
15	Conclusions	Editors of the book	TUD, NR, CSD, BTU, UEK, UZH, STRATH, iUE	

5. Publication strategy

The purpose of this chapter is to set out principles guiding the realization of the DUST Academic dissemination plan and to clarify the way in which publications building on DUST research results are conducted and attributed. It is important to note that notions add to the provisions concerning the use of results that are established in the DUST consortium agreement (CA).

5.1. Principles for integrity and inclusion

We agreed to follow the principles for integrity in academic publishing as defined by the League of European Research Universities. These include **reliability** (trustworthiness and consistent performance of contributors), **honesty** (refusing to lie, plagiarise, or deceive in any way), **respect** (being respectful concerning the feelings, rights and wishes of the researchers involved in the project), and **accountability** (responsibility for actions and possibility to raise concerns if there are concerns about the pursuit of the other principles).

To these four principles we add the principle of **inclusivity** towards the researchers involved. This entails encouraging and supporting **less experienced and early career researchers** in developing skills in academic writing and contributing to high-quality and high-impact academic publications based on the DUST research insights. The pursuit of inclusivity in our strategy also entails attention to (1) **time constraints** (caused, for instance, by minor emphasis on publishing at partner organizations and temporary overload of work), (2) differences in the **availability of other resources** at different partner organisations (for instance, writing and editing experience), (3) the **amount of earlier work on DUST deliverables** underlying publications (also acknowledging 'hidden' contributions), and (4) **gender equality.** These points were established as guidelines for specially determining co-authorship of academic publications. The taxonomy introduced in the next chapter is a practical instrument to implement these principles.

5.2. Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT)

For determining co-authorship of academic publications, we agreed to build on the taxonomy of contributor roles [CRediT](), which is used by academic institutions and journals to increase the transparency and fairness in recognizing the contributions to the research outputs. CRediT identifies a number roles that contributors to academic publications can play. The taxonomy can, thus, be used to define and acknowledge the roles typically played by the contributors. Individual contributors may play one or several roles and one role can be played by several contributors. The roles should be discussed with all contributors at an early stage of the work on the publication and can be reviewed at a later stage. It is also possible to determine the degree of a contribution in cases where multiple contributors share a role. For instance, in case of writing the original draft, one can distinguish between 'lead', 'equal' or 'supporting' roles, thus further improving transparency about the efforts put in the work on the publication.

Table 6 Contributor Roles Taxonomy CrediT.

CRediT roles	Definition
Conceptualisation	Ideas, formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.
Data curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later re-use.

Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyse or synthesize study data.
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication.
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection.
Methodology	Development or design of methodology, creation of models.
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.
Software	Programming, software development, designing computer programs, implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms, testing of existing code components.
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs.
Visualisation	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/data presentation.
Writing – original draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation).
Writing – review , editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stages.

Source: https://credit.niso.org/contributor-roles-defined/

5.3. Agreements on publication procedures

During the project it was agreed that DUST WP leaders coordinate the work on defining and delivering the academic publications stemming from tasks in WPs. It was decided that they are to contribute to the DUST academic dissemination through (1) gathering and circulating ideas about publications drawing on WP results in a timely manner, (2) discussing with and distributing authorships among all who have been involved in producing WP deliverables, and (3) watching out on inclusivity and fairness and being a 'first line' confidant in case of disagreement. According to the agreement TUD and iUE are to be informed about publication decisions. Agreed-upon steps towards publication are:

- **Ideas for publications are submitted** to WP and Task leaders (TUD and iUE in Cc).
- **Ideas are discussed** with WP and Task leaders and all of the researchers in a task. Together it is decided who is working on which publications and who are lead authors. The discussion may include 'external' researchers who are interested in preparing an article.
- Once everybody has agreed on publications and authorships, the lead author takes over. He/she applies the CRediT taxonomy to **identify roles in individual publications** while safeguarding principles for integrity and inclusion.
- Following the Consortium agreement (CA), all partners in tasks that have produced research output used in publications receive the draft version of the article 30 days before submission to a journal and are given an **opportunity to provide feedback and raise any objections.**

5.4. Additional agreements on post-project dissemination

During the final stage of the project a series of additional agreements were made to guarantee the realization of KPIs beyond the duration of the project. These are listed below.

- **Commitment to the Academic dissemination plan:** All partners are committed to realizing the future publications presented in Chapter 2 of this deliverable. They will prioritize the publications in their academic work and submit articles for peer review at selected journals and book editors before the end of 2026.
- **Monitoring of progress:** To continue the monitoring of progress all partners report on milestones in achieving publications, including (1) the selection of co-authors, journals, and timelines, (2) the submission of articles at journals, (3) the acceptance or rejections of articles for publication, and (4) the publication of papers. Progress is reported via an email to WP leaders, the DUST project lead TUD, and iUE.
- **Other uses of DUST data:** All DUST researchers also inform the relevant WP leads and the DUST lead partner TUD about other uses of the data that was gathered during the DUST project. The list of data is presented in Table 4.
- **Co-ownership of the DUST book:** To achieve the DUST book a group of researchers from different DUST partners volunteered to become editors of the book. DUST researchers have proposed book chapters. Editors are committed to submitting the DUST book proposal to a publisher in spring 2026. Authors are committed to submitting the book chapters for peer review before November 2026. Both editors and authors agreed to collaboratively develop the book and to participate in meetings for this purpose.

Table 7 DUST data sets from WPs.

DUST WP and WP lead	Data from tasks in WPs (bold letters highlight sensitive data)
WP2 UZH	Task 2.2 **Population survey** – IPSOS temporary, TU Delft Project Storage primary Task 2.3 APES mappings
WP3 STRATH	Task 3.2 Notes, **transcripts, and recordings** of the focus groups Task 3.2 Notes, **transcripts** of the interviews with policymakers Task 3.3 Data collected for media analysis
WP4 TUD	Task 4.2 GIS database, .shp layers (baseline for D4.1) and QGIS files — spatial analysis included in D4.1 Task 4.3 Regional design visualizations Task 4.4 Analysis files and regional designs derived from RFLL workshop data Task 4.5 Pol.is reports and Pol.is data Task 4.5 Pol.is information campaign material
WP5 NR Case study partners	RFLL workshops Task 5.3 **Audio recordings and transcripts** from RFLL WSs Task 5.3 Participant observation forms (PO) per RFLL workshops Task 5.3 Questionnaires per RFLL workshop Task 5.3 Workshop report per RFLL workshop Task 5.4 Interviews with LECs (**transcripts**) Task 5.4 Interviews with policymakers (**transcripts**)
WP6 iUE	Task 6.5 Storytelling videos (RFLL Workshop 3) Task 6.6 **Records of Community Champions**

5.5.   Open science

The DUST GA has set out a series of principles for open science practices in the DUST project. In summary, these principles imply that peer-reviewed publications will have open access to allow researchers and other individuals and organisations to benefit from and build upon this work. The GA also states that DUST will engage in open peer-review processes, in which results are assessed openly by relevant stakeholders within and outside academia. Early and open sharing of the first results of the research will be done via concise and accessible online communication means, preprints, preregistration thus allowing for peer-review and feedback of the study design and data collection.

As of the end of the project, it can be confirmed that these principles have been followed. All published journal articles were peer-reviewed and are published with open access. During conferences intermediate versions of publications were discussed among both academic and non-academic peers. DUST scientific project reports were regularly made publicly available on the DUST website. The DUST Data Management Plan (DMP) foresees open access to all non-sensitive data underlying project reports and other academic publications. All partners agree to continue to comply with the established open science principles.

5.6.   Acknowledgements

Any academic publication explicitly mentions the DUST project and the grant in the acknowledgement section. The phrase to be used is:

This work is supported by the Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST) project (www.dustproject.eu) funded by European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the grant agreement [101094869].

The acknowledgement section also lists all contributors to research tasks underlying publications who are not co-authors. Lists of authors of and contributors to relevant DUST deliverables provide guidance for identifying these publication contributors. The aforementioned publication principles must be consciously used when compiling lists. In case of doubt WP and project leaders are addressed.

Annexes

A: 3rd DUST CM Session 'The DUST publication strategy'

Aim of the session

During the third CM in Katowice in October 2024 a session titled 'The DUST publication strategy' was organized. The aim of the session was to create an overview over publication plans of the individual DUST partners as a base for decisions on further steps in the implementation of the DUST Task (T) 6.3: Scientific knowledge dissemination: publication and conference participation. T6.3 was intended to compile research results in an open access edited book and a minimum of 16 open access papers in leading journals specialising in the relevant disciplines. A specific aim of the session was to develop a distinction between contributions for the book and other publications.

Proceedings of the session

The session was prepared by Artur Ochojski (UEK) and Verena Elisabeth Balz (TUD) and chaired by Artur Ochojski. During the session these steps were taken

- Introduction to the session, Artur Ochojski (UEK)
- Presentation 'The DUST publication strategy in a nutshell', by Verena Elisabeth Balz (TUD)
- Workshop
  - Round 1: researchers note down their publication plans on post-its and stick these to the wall. While doing so they group publication plans by key words
  - Round 2: researchers assign their names to publications in which they are interested
- Brief conclusions, by Artur Ochojski (UEK)

Results of the session are listed in Table x.

Table 8 List of publications proposed during the 3rd DUST CM.

Title / key words	Lead partner(s)	Lead researcher(s)	Additional description on the wall	Scope	Related DUST WP / tasks	Interested partners / researchers
Innovative conceptual framework assessing participatory democracy	STRATH		Drawing on case studies	Concept / theory formation	WP3, WP1	
How to assess participation both quantitatively and qualitatively	UEK	Adam Polko		Methods and methodology		IUE
Determinants of participatory attitudes	UZH	Fernando Mendez	Survey paper	Comparative	WP2 / Task 2.2	TUD
Determinants of climate attitudes	UZH	Fernando Mendez	Survey paper	Comparative	WP2 / Task 2.2	UEK / Adam Polko
Testing the willingness / ability framework using T2.2 survey results	TUD	Thomas Verbeek		Concept / theory formation	WP1, WP2 / Task 2.2	UZH?

Paths of communities attitudes towards transitions	UEK	Adam Drobniak		Case specific		
A labour perspective of the just transition	UEK, KADRA	Adam Drobniak, Grzegorz Trefon		Case specific		
The role of community in (social multi-level) deliberative governance	TUD	Verena Elisabeth Balz		Concept / theory formation	WP1, WP3, WP4, WP5 (synthesis)	UEK / Adam Polko
The impact of Europeanisation on policy networks: A comparative analysis	UZH	Marine Benli-Trichet	APES-related paper	Comparati ve => theory formation	WP2 / Task 2.3	
The role of leaders in processes of community participation	UEK, KADRA	Adam Drobniak, Grzegorz Trefon		Case specific	WP	
Education for participation in just transitions	UEK	Adam Drobniak			WP6 / Task 6.4	
Lessons from opportunities and barriers for participation	STRATH, CSD, Others			Comparati ve	WP3	
Emotional coping mechanisms (of communities) in transitional change	STRATH			Comparati ve	WP3	SZ REDA
E-democracy in the context of just sustainability transitions, pol.is	TUD	Mimi Ramirez Aranda	RFLL case studies, pol.is	Comparati ve	WP4 / Task 4.5	
Decision makers in deliberative participation	UEK	Adam Drobniak		Case specific		
Stakeholder participation tools and methods	CSD, TUD, IUE		STEP	Methods and methodol ogy		
Design of deliberative forums	UZH	Fernando Mendez	Survey paper 2	Comparati ve		
Territorial capital in deliberation: Comparing policy, community & media perspectives	TUD	Anca Ioana Forgaci, Verena Elisabeth Balz, others		Comparati ve		
Potential future and present territorial capital in case study regions	TUD	Mimi Ramirez Aranda, Alex Wandl		Comparati ve	WP4	
Potential future and present territorial capital	RFLL case study partners			Case specific	WP4	
Theoretical paper on territorial capital + just sustainability transition + case studies + themes level	TUD	Mimi Ramirez Aranda, Alex Wandl		Concept / theory formation		
The use of the territorial capital concept to support place-based policy approaches	TUD			Concept / theory formation		Cristina Cavaco

Topic	Partner	Authors		Type	WP	Input
Multi-level governance and sustainability transitions	CSD					
Policy options, recommendations for the new EC, the future implementation of the JTF	CSD, IUE			Policy paper		
Applying place-based principles to transition policies (cohesion policy)				Comparative		
Integrating community and policy perspectives, input: from futures to statements	TUD	Anca Ioana Forgaci		Comparative	WP4, 5	NR
Regional design, community, comparison	TUD	Verena Elisabeth Balz		Comparative	WP4, 5	
Main findings from RFLL implementation – cross-case analysis	NR	John Moodie, Myriam Chilvers, Leneisja Jungsberg		Comparative	WP4, 5	TUD
Creating space for citizen participation in (5) Norrbotten municipalities (in sustainability transitions)	NR, HSSL BD				WP5	
Regional design, comparing the community and policy perspective	TUD	Anca Ioana Forgaci, Verena Elisabeth Balz		Comparative	WP4	
Regional design and the role of digital tools	TUD	Anca Ioana Forgaci		Methods and methodology	WP4	
Conceptual paper on democratic participation in green transitions	NR	John Moodie, Leneisja Jungsberg		Concept / theory formation		
Effectiveness of participatory instruments				Methods and methodology		
Affective communication in localising international research projects / policy agendas	IUE					
Specificity of just transitions in case study regions	UEK	Adam Drobniak (which one)		Case specific		
Stara Zagora Lessons taken	SZ REDA			Case specific		IUE
One or two miner's real stories of life	KADRA			Case specific		IUE
Democratic organisation, participation mechanisms, in green transitions in Gotland	NR	Elin Cedergren, Leneisja Jungsberg		Case specific		
Transition narratives, narratives of change (based on case-studies)	IUE, TUD	Anca Ioana Forgaci		Case specific		

B: DUST-inspired special conference sessions

WPSC 2026

World Planning Schools Congress 2026, 29 June – 3 July 2026, Helsinki – Espoo – Tampere, Finland

Table 9 Special session at GEPEAN 2026.

Title	**Designing regional futures: futuring, visioning, and imagination in times of policrisis**
Short description	This Special Session explores practices of futuring, visioning, and imagination in shaping the development of cities and regions in the context of today's polycrisis, highlighting a need for fresh conceptions and models of development and planning in sustainability transitions. We welcome discussions on • The roles and impacts of visioning, imagination, and futuring in times of crises, where robust yet flexible guidance is a necessity for meeting complex transformation and governance challenges. Current discourses on the development of cities and regions are often dominated by corporate technocratic agendas that privilege infrastructure and economic development over development emphasizing social life and lived experiences. We specifically invite contributions critically discussing these discourses by embracing inclusion and equity. • Collaboration in visioning, imagination, and futuring, integrating environmental, social, and economic perspectives and various time horizons (past, short and long term). We specifically invite contributions critically discussing co-creation and community participation in shaping regional futures, including anticipation and imagination methods and formats (e.g. workshops, mapping, voting, games) and communicative approaches (e.g. maps, imagery, narratives). • The contributions of universities to visioning, imagination, and futuring practices via their educational programs and societal missions, serving as laboratories for eliciting futures and civic platforms for deliberating these.
Keywords	Regional design, imagination, futuring, regional governance, co-creation, sustainability transitions
Organizers	
Organizer 1	First name: VERENA Last Name: BALZ Affiliation: Delft University of Technology Email address: V.E.Balz@tudelft.nl Country: The Netherlands
Organizer 2	First name: CRISTINA Last Name: CAVACO Affiliation: University of Lisbon, Faculty of Architecture, CIUAD Email address: ccavaco@fa.ulisboa.pt Country: Portugal
Organizer 3	First name: VALERIA Last Name: LINGUA Affiliation: University of Florence, Department of Architecture Email address: valeria.lingua@unifi.it Country: Italy

AESOP Annual Congress 2025

Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) Annual Congress 2025, 7 - 11 July 2025, Istanbul, Turkey

Table 10 Special session at AESOP Annual Congress 2025.

Title	Shaping regional futures toward sustainable transitions: community involvement in visioning and implementation
Short description	In an era of accelerating global change, cities and regions face interconnected challenges, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable energy transitions, the shift toward a post-carbon circular economy, all while addressing persistent socioeconomic disparities and spatial vulnerabilities. These challenges demand approaches that balance long-term strategic visions with the immediate demands of place-based community development and daily wellbeing. This special session aims to explore how strategic territorial and spatial planning can respond to these demands. By focusing on methods such as regional design, visioning, foresight, and other participatory practices of spatial imagination, the session emphasizes transformative actions for fostering resilient, equitable, and sustainable futures. Contributions will examine strategic and territorial practices in European and non-European cities and regions, addressing at least two of the following themes: • Futures in sustainable transition planning: Visioning and design practices provide fertile ground for new transition narratives and spatial imaginaries, enabling stakeholders to articulate how metropolitan areas and other regions might evolve. Rethinking spatial futures allows policymaking to adapt to the emerging needs of urban and rural societies undergoing rapid structural change: Which future is envisioned for the region? For whom is the transition relevant? What is its true focus beyond abstract ambitions such as greening, justice, and energy transition? Contributions should elaborate on how transition narratives are constructed and applied in sustainability transition planning and policymaking. • Communities in sustainable transition planning: For sustainability transition policies and plans to succeed, they must address territorial specificities and mobilise commitment from communities most vulnerable to transitional challenges. Multi-level governance, including active and direct social involvement of citizens and communities, is an essential component of EU, national, regional, and local place-based policymaking for just sustainability transitions. Participation fosters trust in government and reduces the risk of social unrest, which could otherwise slow or halt progress towards sustainability. Contributions should elaborate on how visioning and design practices facilitate community participation and bridge top-down and bottom-up dynamics in spatial planning and place-based policymaking. • Operational regional design approaches: Driving sustainability transitions requires bridging the gap between visioning and implementation by identifying pilot actions, pivotal game changers, and execution mechanisms that foster innovation and resilience in metropolitan and other regions. These approaches include embracing digital technologies, advancing ecological solutions, and promoting socioeconomic equity within regional planning and design: How do strategic plans and policies address these changes? Which role have the Cohesion and Next Generation EU policies played in enabling and providing resources and strategic directions to support transformative efforts? Contributions should elaborate on how regional design approaches are implemented, highlighting their potential to translate visions into actionable endeavours for just sustainability transition.
Keywords	Regional design, visioning, sustainability transition, transition narratives, citizen / community participation, policy implementation
Organizers	
Organizer 1	First name: VERENA
	Last Name: BALZ
	Affiliation: Delft University of Technology
	Email address: V.E.Balz@tudelft.nl
	Country: The Netherlands

Organizer 2	First name: CRISTINA
	Last Name: CAVACO
	Affiliation: University of Lisbon, Faculty of Architecture, CIUAD
	Email address: ccavaco@fa.ulisboa.pt
	Country: Portugal
Organizer 3	First name: VALERIA
	Last Name: LINGUA
	Affiliation: University of Florence, Department of Architecture
	Email address: valeria.lingua@unifi.it
	Country: Italy
Add more if needed	
Presenters	
Presenter 1	First name: Anca Ioana
	Last Name: Forgaci
	Affiliation: Delft University of Technology
	Presentation title: MAPPING COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES FOR CO-DESIGNING REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS
	Authors: Anca Ioana Forgaci, Verena Elisabeth Balz, Delft University of Technology Keywords: Community perspectives, regional sustainability transitions, territorial capital, computer-aided qualitative analysis
Presenter 2	First name: Anke
	Last Name: Hagemann
	Affiliation: Technische Universität Berlin
	Presentation title: CO-VISIONING URBAN-RURAL FUTURES: TESTING A PARTICIPATIVE AND INTEGRATED REGIONAL PLANNING APPROACH IN GERMANY AND CHINA
	Authors: Anke Hagemann, Technische Universität Berlin, Lukas Pappert, Technische Universität Berlin, Sigrun Langner and Maria Frölich-Kulik, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
Presenter 3	First name: Tihomir
	Last Name: Viderman
	Affiliation: BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg
	Presentation title: NAVIGATING LUSATIA'S STRUCTURAL TRANSITION BETWEEN CONSENSUS AND DISSENSUS
	Authors: Tihomir Viderman, Silke Weidner, Maximiliano Flores De Leon, BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg
Presenter 4	First name: Fabio
	Last name: Bayro Kaiser
	Affiliation: RWTH Aachen University (Germany)
	Presentation title: ASSETS FOR CIRCULAR FUTURES: BOOSTING THE TRANSITION TO CIRCULAR CONSTRUCTION IN THE EURODELTA
	Authors: Fabio Bayro Kaiser (RWTH), Christa Reicher (RWTH), Alexander Wandl (TU Delft), Dagmar Keim (City of Amsterdam) Keywords: Circular built environment, Eurodelta, bottom-up innovation, top-down coordination, sustainable urban futures
Presenter 5	First name: Giuseppe
	Last Name: De Luca
	Affiliation: University of Florence, Department of Architecture (UNIFI-DIDA)
	Presentation title: GIVING OPERATIONALITY TO STRATEGIC PLANNING: FROM THE VISION 2030 TO THE TERRITORIAL PLAN OF THE METROPOLITAN CITY OF FLORENCE
	Authors: Giuseppe De Luca, Carlo Pisano, Valeria Lingua, University of Florence, Department of Architecture (UNIFI-DIDA)
Presenter 6	First name: Cristina
	Last Name: Cavaco
	Affiliation: University of Lisbon, Faculty of Architecture, CIUAD
	Presentation title: NAVIGATING REGIONAL CHALLENGES: FOOD SYSTEMS AS A CATALYST FOR SPATIAL PLANNING INNOVATION - THE FOOD TRANSITION STRATEGY AND FOODLINK NETWORK IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF LISBON
	Authors: Cristina Cavaco[,] CIAUD, Research Centre for Architecture, Urbanism and Design, Lisbon School of Architecture, Universidade de Lisboa (ccavaco@fa.ulisboa.pt) and Rosário Oliveira[2] Institute of Social Sciences, Universidade de Lisboa (rosario.oliveira@ics.ulisboa.pt)

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	Keywords: Food system planning, food transition, soft planning, regional planning, Lisbon metropolitan area
Presenter 7	First name: Müge
	Last Name: Yorgancı Ozar
	Affiliation: Istanbul Planning Agency
	Presentation title: Enacting Istanbul Vision 2050: Addressing Key Urban Challenges Through Participatory and Multi-Scale Planning
	Authors:
Presenter 8	First name: Chiara
	Last Name: Fratini
	Affiliation: Technical University of Denmark, Department of Environmental and Resource Engineering (DTU Sustain)
	Presentation title: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF WATER DATA SPACE IMAGINARIES IN ACCELERATING TWIN (GREEN AND DIGITAL) TRANSITION PATHWAYS FOR THE WATER MULTIVERSE
	Authors: Chiara Farné Fratini, Peter Steen Mikkelsen, DTU Sustain

RSA Conference 2024

Regional Studies Association (RSA) Conference 2024, 11 - 14 June 2024, Florence, Italy

During the RSA conference 2024 the DUST team co-organized a series of special sessions on citizen participation in place-based policymaking. The conference offered DUST a platform to collaborate with other Horizon Europe projects such as PHOENIX, UP2030, and BOLSTER.

Table 11 Special sessions at RSA Conference 2024.

Session Title	Chair	Papers' Title	Speaker Full Name
SS45 I - Exploring the Patterns of Participation in Place-based Sustainability Transition Policies	Artur Ochojski	Participation of Least-engaged Communities in the Deliberative Governance of Place-based Approaches to Just Sustainability Transitions: A Bridge too Far?	Verena Elisabeth Balz, Delft University of Technology
		Which Factors Impede or Facilitate Participation of Less Engaged Communities in Place-based Measures for Sustainable Transition? Insights from Comparative Regional Analysis	Neli Georgieva, European Policies Research Centre
		The role of willingness and ability in explaining citizen engagement in place-based sustainability transition policies: findings from a European population survey	Thomas Verbeek, Assistant Professor, Delft University of Technology
		How Inter-Territorial Cooperation Contributes to Systemic and Transformative Innovation Policies for Long-Term Societal Wellbeing: Insights from Partnerships for Regional Innovation and Regional Innovation Valleys Initiatives	Solange Mifsud, European Commission
		Where Just Transition and Transition Management meet. Insights into the Governance Models of the Four European Regions	Marcin Baron, Assistant Professor, University of Economics in Katowice
Session Title	Chair	Papers' Title	Speaker Full Name

Session Title	Chair	Papers' Title	Speaker Full Name
SS45 II - Place-based Just Sustainability Transition in Action: Instruments, Policy Measures, Approaches	Verena Elisabeth Balz	Patterns of Citizen Participation in Place-based Just Sustainability Transition Policies: Who takes part in the Shaping of Post-gas Futures in the Province of Groningen?	Marcin Dabrowski, Assistant Professor, Delft University of Technology
		How Just is the Sustainability Transition in the Polish Coal Heartland? Exploring Participation of the Least Engaged Communities in Bełchatów and Katowicki Coal Regions	Artur Ochojski, University of Economics in Katowice
		Planning Sustainable Urban Futures: Participative Design-oriented Activities for Sustainability in Florence	Valeria Lingua, Assistant professor on Urban and Regional Planning, University of Florence
		Green Transition Pathways and their Context-dependency: A Regional Comparison between Emilia-Romagna (Italy) and Transdanubia Central (Hungary)	Andrea Testi, Postdoc researcher, University of Florence
		Exploring Regional Future Literacy Labs: Innovative citizen participatory mechanisms for sustainable green transitions in Europe	John Moodie, Nordregio
Session Title	Chair	Papers' Title	Speaker Full Name
SS45 III - Spatial Justice and Place-based Approaches in Sustainability Policies	Marcin Dąbrowski	Spatial Justice Analysis of Urban Sustainability Transition Plans: A Critical Examination of Ten European Cities	Hugo Lopez, Researcher, Delft University of Technology
		Mitigation Policies and the Material Dimension of Economic Development in European Countries	Gabriel Renault, PhD candidate, Université Grenoble Alpes
		Just Transition and the Need for Levelling up	Claudia Vecciolini, King's College London
		Agency and Local Narratives in the Romanian Just Transition Process. The Voice of the Unheard	Ana-Maria Elian
		Participatory Planning in the Context of the Just Transition. Perceptions, Impacts and those Left Behind. Empirical Evidence from Seven Regions in Europe	Michiel Stapper, Tilburg University

Figure 2 Special sessions at RSA Conference 2024.

AESOP Annual Congress 2023

Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) Annual Congress 2025, 10 - 15 July 2023, Lodz, Poland

Table 12 Special session at AESOP Annual Congress 2023.

Title	INVOLVING THE CIVIL SOCIETY INTO INTEGRATED PLANNING AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: A REGIONAL DESIGN PERSPECTIVE
Short description (min. 200 words)	This Special Session is intended to discuss the role of regional planning and design in promoting sustainability, socio-spatial justice, health and well-being of individuals, organizations, and communities. It poses that these practices can provide actors with transformative power for the common good in collective contexts. Post-pandemic dynamics and climate change are triggering profoundly new social dynamics, and are calling for innovative forms of planning and development. They necessitate the participation of civil society at all levels: from collaborative regional planning and design to urban co-design in complex neighbourhoods. In this direction, regional planning and design are called to promote participation even at a larger-than-local scale and to enhance future literacy among citizens and stakeholder for the future of their territories. Stakeholder and citizens involvement is intended to enhance the development of territorial systems (in urban, rural and inland areas), to connect technological and social innovation and direct them towards the strengthening of social cohesion, health

	and well-being in families, in the workplace, in urban and residential structures, in a true perspective of sustainable human development. Moreover, the University can play a "civic" role within these processes by proposing learning and research approaches and a methodologies for the whole community, targeted to promote future literacy and to enhance the construction and diffusion of spatial visions, imaginaries and design studios concerning the present and future of our cities and territories.
Keywords	
Organizers	
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Presenters	
Presenter 1	First & last name: Verena Elisabeth BALZ
	Affiliation: TUDelft
	Presentation title: *The Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions (DUST) project: Investigating the role of regional design in democracy at scale*
Presenter 2	First & last name: Elisa CARUSO
	Affiliation: University of Florence, Department of Architecture
	Presentation title: *The role of the Civic university for the co-design of the healthy city*
Presenter 3	First & last name: Agnes FORSTER
	Affiliation: RWTH Aachen University
	Presentation title: *Citizen participation through a regional platform approach*.
Presenter 4	First & last name: Laura SAJIA
	Affiliation: University of Catania, Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture
	Presentation title: *A critical view of the public-civic nexus in Italian regional planning strategies*
Presenter 5	First & last name: Cristina CAVACO
	Affiliation: University of Lisbon, Faculty of Architecture
	Presentation *title: Spatial planning and Governance in Timor Est*
Add more if needed	