



Bridging Organizations and
marginalized communities for Local
Sustainability Transitions in EuRope

Leaving No One Behind in Transformative Innovation Policy: Directing instruments across multiple levels to reach marginalized communities

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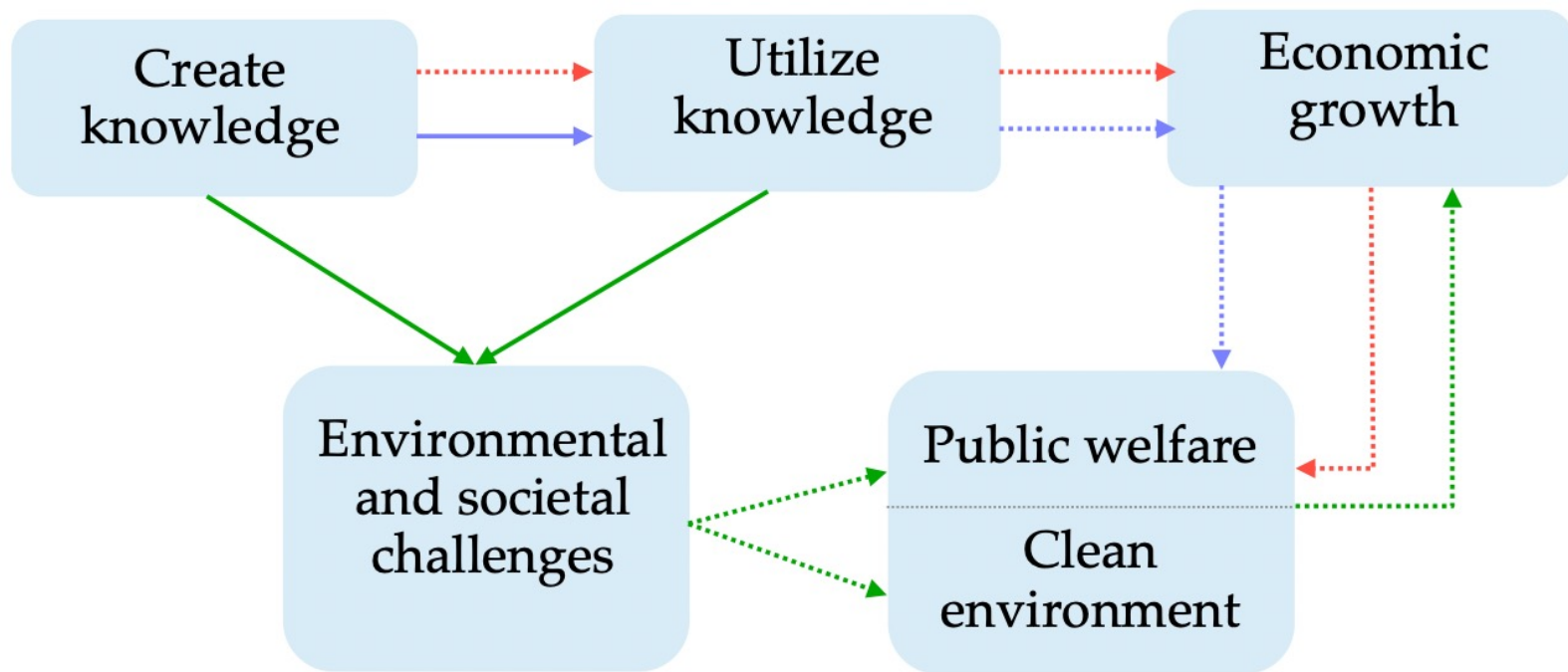


Introduction

- Governments adopt **transformative innovation policies (TIPs)** to solve **grand challenges like climate change**
- TIPs:
 - next generation innovation policies that **focus first on environmental and social challenges**, which then indirectly support economic growth
 - **'directed'** to give innovation processes a societally desirable strategic orientation
 - recognize negative secondary effects of innovation policy on inclusivity in society & pay attention to **marginalized communities**

Introduction

Figure: Three frames of Innovation Policy (taken from Chataway et al. 2017)



Introduction

- TIPs being created at supra-national level and then transferred down to local levels
(**multi-level governance context with vertical and horizontal dimensions**)
- Supra-national levels use different **instruments** to do this, but little research has been found about how this happens...

Introduction

Goals of paper:

1. Understand how – after an instrument is designed and put into action at a supra-national stage – the transfer and translation of it occurs at various levels;
2. and understand how TIP instruments implicate and/or affect marginalized communities in society, namely at the local level

Context

- The TIP we study is the European Green Deal (Bergek et al., 2023)
- The instrument we study is the **Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)** & associated Just Transition Fund (JTF)
- Selected territories in Europe are eligible to receive money from the JTF
- Necessary to create a Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP)
- Primary aim: **Leave no one behind in the transition to carbon neutrality by 2050**

Context

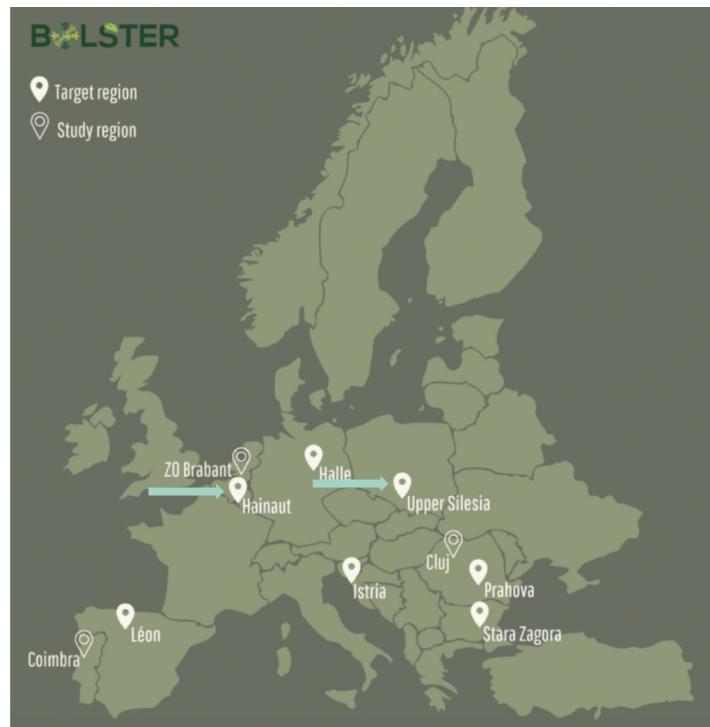
- 2 cases

1. Hainaut (Wallonia, Belgium)

Industrial transition (heavy industry like cement production)

2. Upper Silesia (Poland)

Transition away from coal production; decarbonisation of the economy



Methods

- Semi-structured interviews with actors involved in just transition & TJTP:
 - Policymakers (national, regional)
 - Local governments
 - Civil society organizations (including unions)
 - Businesses
 - Research & university
 - Territorial development agencies
- Inductive method (Gioia, 2012) to, starting from interview data, build up to conceptual dimensions

20 interviews for Hainaut
21 interviews for Upper Silesia

Initial results: Belgium

Research goal 1:

Understand how – after an instrument is designed and put into action at a supra-national stage
– the transfer and translation of it occurs at various levels:

Initial results: Belgium

Vertical transfer – how the instrument is transferred & translated:

- European Commission (EC) creates the policy and transfers it down to member state and its regions
- Wallonia manages the JTM and **defines what the just transition is for the territory**
- Inter-municipality organizations play an important intermediary role, but:
 - They were unable to directly consult with EC (important since local issues far from concern of EC)
 - There was confusion about EC decisions for what territories are eligible for JTM
- Regional actors did not contact several relevant stakeholders in process (namely civil society)
– in Wallonia there was no public participation

Initial results: Belgium

Horizontal transfer – how the instrument is transferred & translated:

- Wallonia decided to align JTM with ERDF to not multiply EC funding instruments (efficient, but reducing the purpose of the TIP instrument?)
- TJTP is for three districts, so the inter-municipalities worked together
- Independent of the JTM, there exist horizontal level collaborations and partnerships (but not fully leveraged due to vertical governance challenges)
- General lack of collaboration & coordination has led to serious concerns about alignment between education and jobs of the future

Initial results: Belgium

Research goal 2:

Understand how TIP instruments implicate and/or affect marginalized communities in society, namely at the local level:

Initial results: Belgium

Marginalized in society is systemic:

- **Economic marginalization** – Hainaut is evolving proportionally faster than other regions, but is still last. There are important housing and mobility crises.
- **Political marginalization** – public policies are made for the middle or the average, and then help for the marginalized comes in piece-meal initiatives that are often conditioned. Transition policies tend to benefit those who are already in an advantageous position in society.
- **Social marginalization** – certain communities are more affected by marginalization (women, youth, immigrants), which has led to lack of confidence and motivation. There is apathy for these groups in society.

Initial results: Belgium

- Due to systemic marginalization and the limits to vertical and horizontal governance mechanisms, the JTM does not seem to reach marginalized communities
- Interviewees stressed the need for a **bottom-up approach** to address this...
 - Citizen participation is needed: transition processes should be coupled with social dialogue and policy actions should bring the climate transition as close as possible to the citizen
 - But citizens also have a certain responsibility: they need to appropriate the transition and face behavioural shifts

Initial results: Belgium

- We identify that policymakers can foster a bottom-up system that is conducive for citizen engagement and also find the right tools to bring people into these spaces

Reflections from Polish case study

Initial results: Slaskie

Vertical transfer – how the instrument is transferred & translated:

- Regional self-government manages the JTM and defines within the EC regulations what the just transition is for the territory
- Initially the national government was involved but stepped out at some point of time
- High level of consultations with a wide range of expectations and efforts
- Wide representation of actors in the region – the regional self-government is (supposed to be) a liaison between various stakeholders and the EC

Initial results: Slaskie

Consequences of vertical governance challenges identified by interviews:

- With time, there is a growing understanding of the just transition concept across territorial actors but still not sufficient (NB. the process lasted 3 years in the region but it has a long-term historical roots dating back to 1990s)
- The proposals for transition money are collected to inform regional self-government on the needs; rather poor quality of inputs
- Strong role of the regional self-government and some additional agreements with the EC made

Initial results: Slaskie

Horizontal transfer – how the instrument is transferred & translated:

- TJTP is for 7 NUTS3 regions where there is already a well structured institutional framework – it is; usual suspects play their roles,
- The role of research centres & professional research is appreciated but not fully used (not sufficient time)
- Collaboration & coordination has been done at various levels but it is the usual suspects that collaborate like key players in the subregions

Initial results: Slaskie

Marginalized or not:

- No specific discussion on leaving no-one behind (nothing in the TJTP)
- Some smaller towns could be seen as marginalised (various reasons)
- Professionals directing the education could be seen as marginalised
- There is a certain level of knowledge gaps - horizontal and vertical transfer of knowledge in the region is not covering everyone; further research needed to learn why
- Competence gaps or engagement conditions (to act, to prepare for action, to understand) could also be the reason that some communities are marginalised

Conclusion

How to support a bottom-up approach?

- (Better) Clarify purpose of the JTM/F and the concept itself! What is a just transition? Who is it for?

Wallonia & Slaskie did not consider marginalized communities to be in JTM scope

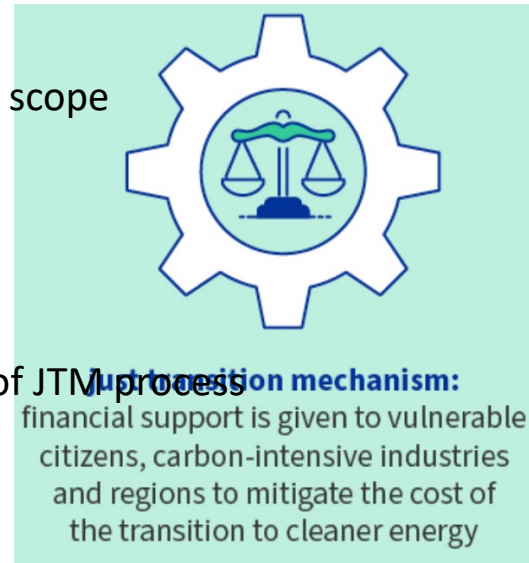
But, Europe says it should support a variety of stakeholders...

- Improve design of JTM components, like the monitoring committees

Wallonia - Monitoring committees were poorly informed at the beginning of JTM process

Or only included 'the usual suspects' – Slaskie and Wallonia

Recommend to include representatives of marginalized communities



Conclusion

How to support a bottom-up approach?

- EC currently offers member states ability to receive “technical support instruments” which are extra financing to support the writing of the TJTP

Normally goes to consultants... Why not give it to civil society organizations working with marginalized communities instead?

It will change power dynamics by offering resources to those at the local level

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Thank you!

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Extra slides

Literature

Multi-Level Governance & Transformative Innovation Policies

- MLG framework as an analytical approach to understand two perspectives:
 - **Vertical:** government interactions across scales (supra-national, national, regional, local);
 - **Horizontal:** between actors (government, business, civil society, citizens) at a single level (e.g., Bache & Flinders, 2004)
- Literature begins to discuss TIP policy in a MLG context at one level, but less about how it moves across levels

Marginalized Communities & Transformative Innovation Policies

- Innovation policies in the past have had unintended consequences, so TIPs focus on inclusivity (Haddad et al., 2022) and how to better include marginalized communities in a bottom-up manner (Calderini et al., 2023)



Therefore, the European Green Deal is on the one hand about cutting emissions, but on the other hand it is about creating jobs and boosting innovation.

I am convinced that the old growth-model that is based on fossil-fuels and pollution is out of date, and it is out of touch with our planet. The European Green Deal is our new growth strategy – it is a strategy for growth that gives more back than it takes away.

And we want to really make things different. We want to be the frontrunners in climate friendly industries, in clean technologies, in green financing.

But we also have to be sure that no one is left behind.

In other words: This transition will either be working for all and be just, or it will not work at all. And therefore, a crucial part in the European Green Deal is the Just Transition Mechanism. We have the ambition to mobilise EUR 100 billion precisely targeted to the most vulnerable regions and sectors.

Context

Press release in 2019:
President von der Leyen