

Article

Place-Based Policy in the “Just Transition” Process: The Case of Polish Coal Regions

Aleksandra Nowakowska ¹, Agnieszka Rzeńca ¹ and Agnieszka Sobol ^{2,*} 

- ¹ Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Lodz, 90-136 Lodz, Poland; aleksandra.nowakowska@uni.lodz.pl (A.N.); agnieszka.rzenca@uni.lodz.pl (A.R.)
² Institute of Urban and Regional Development, 30-015 Krakow, Poland
* Correspondence: agnieszka.sobol14@gmail.com

Abstract: One of the pillars of the European Union’s Green Deal is the “Just Transition Mechanism”, which is interpreted here as providing fair access to diverse resources; above all, as a far-reaching reorientation of the approach to regional development and policy-making processes. Rooted in a normative approach to the development of just and fair place-based policy towards promoting growth in Poland, this paper aims to highlight the challenges posed by the Just Transition Mechanism in two selected Polish transition territories (Upper Silesia and Bełchatów Basin). The research methodology employs literary critical analysis along with an examination of pertinent documents, strategic plans and programs created at national and regional EU member levels. Additionally, interviews were conducted with key actors across the spectrum of the process. The authors argue that place-based policy, viewed as a new model of shaping regional policy, seeks to meet the expectations of the Just Transition Mechanism and can successfully face the challenges it encounters. The research reveals a significant gap between the analyzed transition territories in terms of knowledge and substantive preparation towards enacting the process. Visible deficits were noted in both regions concerning approaches to programming, particularly with reference to information policy and networking with partners.

Keywords: just transition; place-based policy; regional development; integrated planning; governance; Polish coal transition territories



Citation: Nowakowska, A.; Rzeńca, A.; Sobol, A. Place-Based Policy in the “Just Transition” Process: The Case of Polish Coal Regions. *Land* **2021**, *10*, 1072. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10101072>

Academic Editor: Krystian Heffner

Received: 25 August 2021
Accepted: 4 October 2021
Published: 11 October 2021

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

1.1. Context and Objective of Study

In December 2019, the European Council endorsed the objective of achieving a climate-neutral Union by 2050. Known as “The Green Deal”, the new vision of development of the European Union (EU) has the Just Transition Mechanism (JT) as one of its pillars.

Embedded in it, there is fair access to diverse resources which integrate social, economic and environmental change. Consequently, European regions have embarked on a large-scale energy restructuring process that affects coal regions in particular. At the same time, it should be stressed that JT does not merely rest on the restructuring of traditional industry, but more holistically on a comprehensive package of transformations. It covers the economic structure, labor market and social policy mechanisms. Moreover, the course of action is set by green innovations in all socio-economic processes [1–4].

Concurrently with the processes shaping development policy, there has been a far-reaching reorientation of the factors and mechanisms comprising regional development, as well as the objectives and tools of its shaping. There is a call for a greater adaptation of policies to the specific needs and conditions of development characterized by high spatial disparity. An endogenous approach to development is stressed, with a strong focus on harnessing the creativity and innovation of local actors. This approach to development policy making, called place-based policy (PBP), promotes participation and partnership as the primary mechanism for stimulating positive change. It points to the need to move

away from sectoral thinking about development towards a holistic view, which should be accompanied by the integration of institutional actors [5,6].

Place-based policy is seen as an adequate approach to solving unique problems in the context of shaping sustainable development [5,7–9]. Thus, this approach meets the problems and goals of the Just Transition Mechanism. While the idea of place-based policy resonates with the essence of JT, on the other hand, it provides a perspective on restructuring processes, pointing to new mechanisms to encourage transformation.

This article discusses the crux of place-based policy and of JT within the framework of analyzing the theoretical foundation of the process in two Polish coal regions—Upper Silesia and the Belchatów Basin. The main objective of the study is to identify and assess the processes governing JT that are being implemented in Polish coal regions in the context of place-based policy postulates. The paper poses a research question: how and to what extent is PBP used in the process of planning and implementing the Just Transition Mechanism in Polish regions? The article points out the key conditions from the perspective of PBP theory and is an attempt to search for the optimal Just Transition Mechanism planning path, taking into account the territorial dimension of the processes of change.

The article touches upon very topical issues both in scientific and application dimensions, given that the JT process in Polish regions has entered an accelerated stage since 2020. In this manner, the article serves to fill an analytical gap and provides a new perspective to view the processes of the Just Transition Mechanism.

1.2. Place-Based Policy—Theoretical Framework

The idea of place-based policy grew out of a critique of the ways in which regional development policy was conducted [10–12]. This criticism concerned above all, the standardization of regional policy that does not take into account the specificity of a place, and the lack of coordination and integration of activities undertaken by different public entities. It negates space-neutral policy [13], or as Healey writes, “spatially blind” policy [14]. At the same time, in the debate on the future of European policy, the problem of territorial cohesion was emphasized. Apart from the social and economic cohesion, it has become an independent and strategic goal of building the European community [15–17]. Thus, territorial cohesion has become the primary dimension of cohesion policy integrating spatial, economic, social and environmental aspects in stimulating development processes. In response to these challenges, an attempt was made to reform the methods and tools of stimulating regional and local development, embodied in the paradigm of a place-based policy.

The main pillars of PBP focus on three areas (Figure 1) [18–21]. In the first place, it is a policy oriented towards strengthening endogenous mechanisms of development and the use of territorial capitals in the dynamization of development processes [22–24]. Consequently, the necessity of the re-evaluation of development factors and a stronger use of “soft” development capitals, such as social, human, relational and institutional capital, culture and identity of the place, is emphasized.

Secondly, the territorial approach to development policy advocates the mobilization and involvement of local actors in territorial development activities. It points to the need to strengthen the environmental debate and involve a wide range of stakeholders in the process of programming and creating development. It is a policy oriented towards the local community and the use of its resources of knowledge and skills, network relations, creativity or culture and identity. The territorial approach exposes the importance of cooperation, dialogue and partnership not only as a mechanism for building territories, but also as a source of knowledge about the preferences of local actors [25].

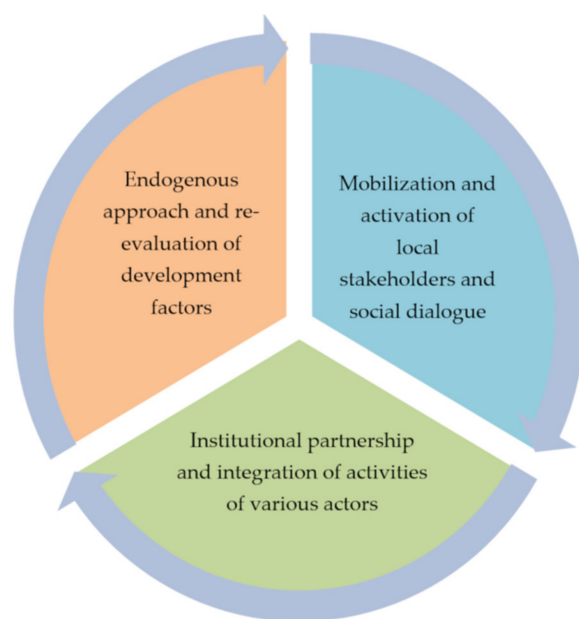


Figure 1. Components of place-based policy approach in the Just Transition process. Source: own study.

Thirdly, another one of the pillars of PBP is building institutional partnerships and integrating the impact of different public actors. This approach points to the need for strong coordination mechanisms between sectoral and horizontal policies and between the different levels of governance (multi-level governance). As a consequence, there is the proposal to move away from individual and dispersed interventions towards the implementation of common development objectives and building comprehensive and integrated projects addressed to the specific development conditions of a particular territory. The complementarity and coordination of activities undertaken at different levels of management (national, regional, local) are exposed. Similarly exposed is the importance of cross-scalar governance, which altogether builds territorial cohesion, activates multiplier mechanisms and strengthens the effects of synergy [26–30].

PBA is recommended in “The Green Deal” policy as a foundation for individually built local and regional resilience. Resilience refers to a complex set of infrastructural, economic, social and institutional traits that characterize the ability of regions to respond to a shock and maintain system stability and durability, as well as to mitigate and adapt to structural changes and move to new development pathways [31].

To summarize, place-based policy is a kind of antidote to the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the methods and tools used so far to shape regional development. In practice, the territorialization of public policies comes about at the local level through the diversification of institutional and organizational policy instruments to provide solutions and pro-development measures and projects that have been adapted to the specific needs of particular areas (Figure 2). The focus is on local actors, their power to create development processes and their needs for, and objectives of action. The idea is that there is no “one-size-fits-all” model for Just Transition planning.

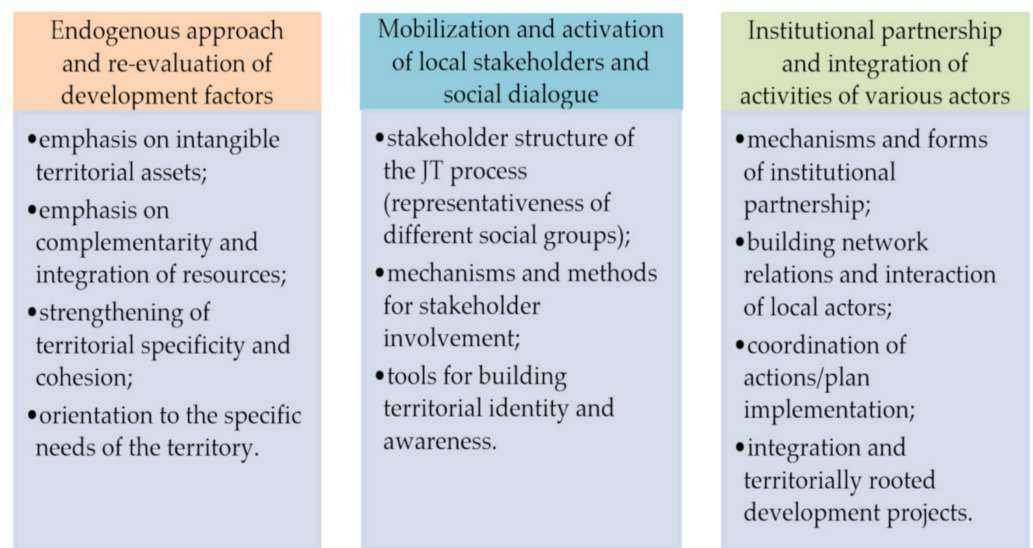


Figure 2. Areas of place-based policy analysis in the creation of a Territorial Just Transition Plan. Source: own study.

1.3. The EU Just Transition Mechanism Framework

The Just Transition Mechanism is part of the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan for the period from 2021 to 2027 [4]. “Just Transition” is interpreted, above all, as a far-reaching reorientation of the approach to regional development and policy-making processes. Embedded in it is fair access to diverse resources that integrate social, economic and environmental change.

Mining transformation municipalities include territorial units that have one of the following prerequisites:

- Coal mining activities are being carried out;
- There is a significant number of people working in the mining sector and a significant share of those working in mining in total employment;
- There are significant environmental problems, in particular post-mining land transformation and air pollution [32].

In economic and technological terms, the Just Transition Mechanism is accompanied by a reorientation towards the so-called green economy focused on the relationship between the economic system and the condition of the natural environment [3]. The implementation of a technological change involves novelty in a given social, economic, territorial and institutional context [33].

One of the pillars of the Just Transition Mechanism is the Just Transition Fund (JTF) which is implemented under cohesion policy. The aims of the JTF are to mitigate the adverse effects of the climate transition by supporting the most affected territories and workers concerned, and to promote a balanced socio-economic transition. In line with the JTF’s single specific objective, actions supported by the JTF should directly contribute to alleviating the impact of the transition by mitigating the negative repercussions on employment, and by financing the diversification and modernization of the local economy. All supported activities should be pursued with full respect to the climate, environmental and social commitments and priorities of the Union. The list of investments should include those that support local economies through stimulating their endogenous growth potential in accordance with the respective smart specialization strategies. To protect the citizens who are the most vulnerable to the climate transition, the JTF should also cover upskilling and reskilling, including training the affected workers, irrespective of whether they are still employed or have lost their jobs due to the transition. Due regard should be paid to citizens at risk of energy poverty, in particular when implementing energy efficiency measures for improved social housing conditions [34].

According to the EU regulation on JTF, the member states shall prepare, together with the relevant local and regional authorities of the territories concerned, Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTTPs). Those territories shall be those most negatively affected, based on the economic and social impacts resulting from the transition; in particular, with regard to the expected adaptation of workers or job losses in fossil fuel production, and also to the utility and the transformation needs of the production processes of industrial facilities with the highest greenhouse gas intensity [34].

The purpose of these plans will be to provide an outline of the transition process until 2030, consistent with the National Energy and Climate Plans. On the other hand, one of the principles of the process is a place-based approach. It therefore requires an individualized and partnership-based approach towards individual coal regions and a bottom-up development of the direction of its programming process. These regions, due to their specificity and different scale of problems, must be treated in a different way by defining their proper directions, objectives, instruments and projects [35,36].

The EU's Cohesion Policy and its articulated objectives provide a framework for the Just Transition Mechanism and guide actions that require a tailored approach which should respond to regional and local conditions and needs. Predetermined paths that do not take into account local specifics will be subject to error and will not bring about the intended results. Field- and sector-specific transition must not overlook the territorial perspective. An in-depth diagnosis of local and regional specificities in three dimensions: endogenous development mechanisms and available territorial capitals (1), social capital potential, its involvement and driving force (2) and institutional partnership (3) allow for increasing the effectiveness of the JT process. An individualized approach, derived from an objective diagnosis of the state of affairs, should be the starting point for planning public interventions in coal areas both at the national level and in transition territories (TT). On the one hand, due to the endogenous and highly diversified nature of transformation problems, and on the other, the emphasis on the role of local institutions and partnership mechanisms in it, the PBP approach seems to be the most appropriate perspective for implementing Just Transition in Central European countries. The Just Transition process is a multifaceted social-ecological challenge, strongly marked by the history of the place and the cultural and social conditions that permeate with economic and environmental problems [37]. The territorial focus of the TJTTPs is in keeping with the Commission's recent emphasis on territorial governance and place-based policymaking, such as the development of regional smart specialization strategies, in addition to applying the concept of "active subsidiarity" which advocates a central role of regions and cities in EU policy formulation and implementation [23,38].

The current draft of the Partnership Agreement envisages that EUR 4.4 billion will go to six Polish mining-related provinces as part of the JTF. The beneficiaries are to be the designated territories in the following provinces: Śląskie (Upper Silesia), Łódzkie (the Bełchatów Basin), Małopolskie, Lubelskie, Dolnośląskie and Wielkopolskie (Figure 3).

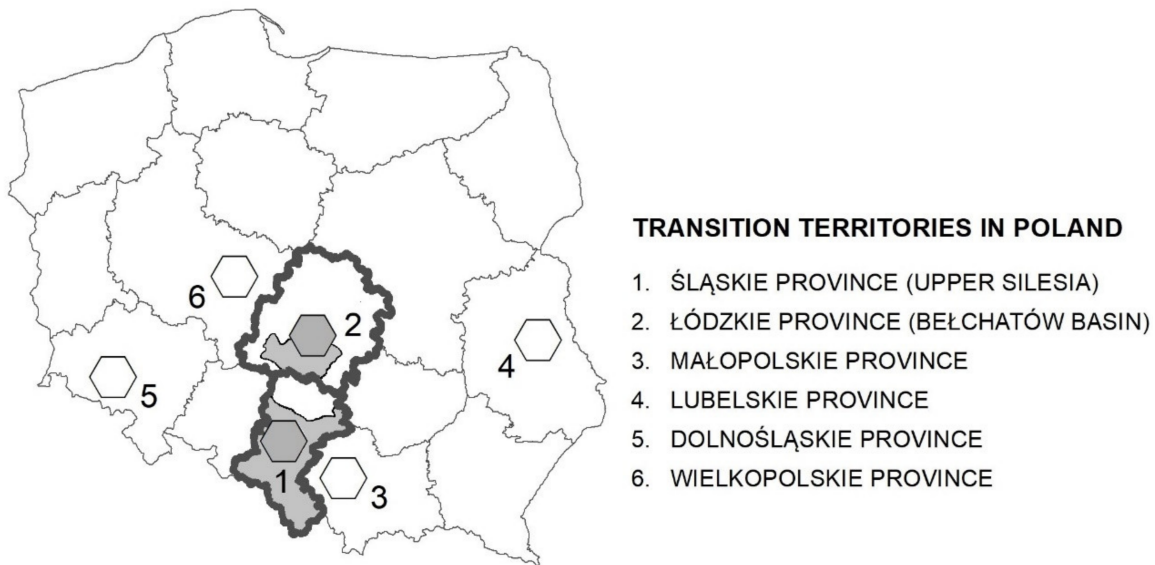


Figure 3. Map of Poland with transition territories indicated. Source: own study.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Method and Sources of Information

In search of an answer to the research question, two case studies were analyzed. These are the coal regions in Poland identified in the Just Transition process—Upper Silesia and Bełchatów Basin. The Just Transition process does not only apply to the coal regions. Nevertheless, these are the places that focus on the problems addressed in JT.

The study employed a triangulation of research methods (Figure 4). Two complementary methods were used, i.e., critical analysis of legacy materials and individual semi-structured interviews. These methods were complemented by research of the literature, expert studies and thematic internet sources.

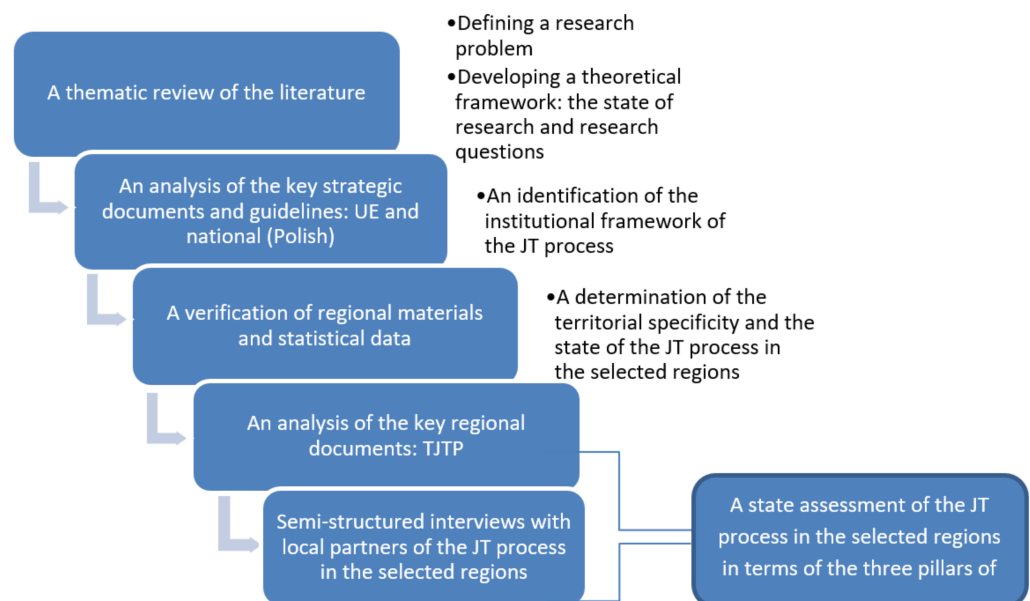


Figure 4. Stages of research. Source: own study.

Critical analysis of the legacy materials included detailed evaluation of the Territorial Just Transition Plans of the two regions, in accordance with the defined territories and analysis criteria (Appendix A). Additionally, the case study was supplemented with the analysis of supplementary documents such as: the National Just Transition Plan (NJTP),

development strategies of the examined provinces and expert opinions and strategic plans prepared by local authorities.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with national, regional and local policymakers, public officials, and key sectoral and academic actors. The empirical results presented in Sections 3 and 4 are based on these analyses. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents, subordinated to three criteria:

- Direct involvement in the planning of the JT process—respondents are persons who have a significant influence on the definition of the objectives, scope of activities and implementation mechanisms of the TJTP;
- Diversity of stakeholders in the JT process—representatives of different social groups, i.e., local and regional authorities, NGOs, workers' unions and scientific and research institutions participated in the study;
- Different perspectives of the JT process in the regions—semi-structured interviews were conducted with both the entities located in the studied regions (the so-called internal respondents) and the entities seeing the transformation process from a wider, national and European perspective (the so-called external respondents).

A total of 17 semi-structured interviews were conducted in the study. A detailed classification and institutional affiliation of the respondents is presented in Appendix B. The scope of analysis (research dispositions) was subordinated to the goal and correlated with the three areas identified as pillars of the place-based policy (Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews were conducted during the months of April and May 2021.

2.2. Criteria for Transition Territories' Selection and Case Study Description

The selection of case-study regions for the analysis took into account, on the one hand, similarities in development problems and conditions, and on the other hand, key differences which could show various paths for building Just Transition processes. The shared similarities and links between these two regions are that they are economies subordinated to the extraction of energy resources and dominated by related industries.

The differentiating features are the type of raw material obtained and the technology of its extraction (Upper Silesia—hard coal; Bełchatów basin—lignite), as well as the related specificity of environmental problems and the scale of ecological threats. Moreover, in the case of the Bełchatów basin, we are dealing with a relatively “young” basin and an explosion of economic and social changes in the 1980s and 1990s. The decision to start the construction of the Bełchatów fuel and energy basin was taken in 1973 and it became a trigger for radical social and economic changes and a dynamic reorganization of the space. The dynamics of economic changes in a short period resulted in strong migration movements to the city of the central basin (Bełchatów) and a departure from the traditional agricultural activity for this area.

In contrast, Upper Silesia boasts a centuries-old tradition of mining, which has led to the specificity of its territory, not only in economic terms, but also in terms of social structures, culture, tradition and identity. Additionally, the analyzed regions are characterized by a different settlement structure. Upper Silesia is a group of several dozen cities strongly interconnected with each other, forming the Upper Silesian conurbation characterized by a high level of investment. In the case of the Bełchatów basin, there is no dominant and strong urban center and the spatial structure is dominated by agricultural areas. The main difference between the two case studies is in the scope (area) of the Just Transition process. In the case of the Bełchatów basin, it is the southern part of the Łódź Province, which consists mainly of many small rural municipalities. In the case of Upper Silesia, we are dealing with the area of almost the entire province (Silesian conurbation).

Moreover, the process of restructuring the mining industry has been occurring in Upper Silesia since the 1990s with varying intensity, and the transformation processes taking place are in line with the direction of the Just Transition Mechanism. By contrast, the Bełchatów region, on the eve of these changes, still supplies 20% of the electricity within the National Grid System, and the transformation process here is in the planning phase.

2.2.1. Upper Silesia

The Silesian Province is the largest mining region in the European Union. It has been undergoing transformation processes for almost 30 years and is one of the economically and demographically strongest regions in Poland, with 12.4% of GDP and almost 4.6 million people, respectively. It is the largest urbanized area in Central and Eastern Europe, with the highest national average population density and urban population ratio—over 77%.

Due to its specific character, i.e., the highest industrialization, high population density and urbanization, the Silesian Province belongs to the regions with the highest anthropopression. The specificity of the region is also associated with the presence of mineral resources (mainly hard coal), which for several centuries drove the development of industry. The negative effect of this development is significant environmental degradation and adverse landscape transformation. The intensity of industrialization affects the largest number of brownfield sites, which have been degraded because of various utility functions.

The restructuring processes in the region, which have been proceeding since the beginning of the 1990s, have been accompanied by a change in the structure of employment, reflected in a decreasing number of people employed in construction, mining and metal production, with a simultaneous increase in the service sector. Currently, direct employment in mining stands at approximately 74,000 jobs. Moreover, employment in the mining services industry is estimated at around 100 thousand to even 400 thousand [39].

The territory defined in the Territorial Just Transition Plan of the Silesian Province (TJTP, SP) includes 7 out of 8 sub-regions (NUTS 3 type territories, 75% of the province's area), inhabited by 2.72 million people (88% of the province's total population) [39].

The implemented measures include the gradual closure and restructuring of mines and the decommissioning of power units. By 2030, two power plants located in the transformation area—Łaziska Power Plant and Rybnik Power Plant—are to be decommissioned.

According to forecasts within the framework of the Energy Policy of Poland up till 2040 (EPP 2040), hard coal mining (without coking coal) will gradually decline from 59.6 million tonnes in 2015 to 41.6 million tonnes in 2030 [40]. In connection with the fact that about 80% of hard coal extraction in Poland takes place in the Silesian Province, it may be assumed that the indicated decrease in the extraction of this raw material by 30.2% will predominantly concern mining municipalities located in this region. The reduction in production of this raw material is linked to a fall in demand for it in all sectors of the economy.

2.2.2. Bełchatów Basin

The core of the Bełchatów Basin is the Bełchatów lignite mine (KWB Bełchatów) and a power plant owned by PGE Górnictwo i Energetyka Konwencjonalna S.A (PGE GiEK). This is the biggest employer in the region, directly employing over 8000 people, including 4700 at the mine and 3000 at the power plant (data from 30 June 2020). Additional employment of 5.5 thousand people is guaranteed by related and subsidiary companies of PGE. Companies located in the Bełchatów Basin as well as outside its borders also support the Mining and Power Facility. In 2020, in terms of supplies and services, the power plant and the mine partnered with more than 800 companies. It is estimated that over 20 thousand people may derive their employment directly and indirectly from the Bełchatów Mining and Power Facility and related sectors [35]. In addition to being the largest employer in the Bełchatów area, PGE GiEK directly and indirectly contributes significant financial resources to the local government units and the State Treasury in the form of local taxes and fees.

At the end of 2019, the output of coal from the Bełchatów deposit (Szczerców and Kleszczów fields) totaled almost 41 million tonnes, i.e., 77.2% of the domestic annual output of this raw material. It is home to Poland's largest system power plant, with a capacity of 5 GW, responsible for generating approximately 20% of the electricity produced in the National Power System. Bełchatów Power Plant is also among the largest CO₂ emitters in

the European Union. In 2019, the annual CO₂ emissions were 32.7191 million Mt (metric tonnes) [41].

The Bełchatów region is distinguished for being the largest transformation of the lithosphere in Poland and one of the largest in Europe that resulted from opencast lignite mining. Significant transformations of the landscape are connected with the creation of excavations and external dumps, deforestation, exclusion of large areas from agricultural use and interference in the hydrographic system, i.e., shifting of two river beds. The open pit is 18.0 km long and 250–280 m deep, with the external spoil pile reaching up to 180 m in height. In 2019, the excavation area of the Kleszczów Field was approximately 1300 ha, while that of the Szczerców Field was 1600 ha. The cone of depression in both open pits covers 482 sq. km, which poses a major threat to the groundwater table.

Currently, the mine operates in two fields: “Kleszczów” (license expires in 2026) and “Szczerców” (license expires in 2038). The depletion of the lignite deposits exploited so far and the dates of the licenses coincide with the decline in the coal power industry in the European Union.

The territory specified in the Territorial Just Transition Plan for Łódzkie Province (TJTP ŁP) covers an area of 3667 km² (20.1% of the total area of Łódzkie Province) inhabited by 416.6 thousand people (17.0% of the total population of the province). The area of transformation of Bełchatów basin includes 8 NUTS 4 type units: bełchatowski, piotrkowski, radomszczański and Piotrków Trybunalski city (from the piotrkowski subregion- NUTS 3) and also pajęczański, łaski, sieradzki i wieluński (from podsieradzki subregion—NUTS 3), including 35 municipalities altogether [42].

3. Results

3.1. Just Transition Process in Upper Silesia

Within the area of Upper Silesia under mining transformation, there are areas where the process of mine closures started in the 1990s, as well as areas where the process of mine closures will take place within the timespan of 2030–2049.

The formal process of “Just Transition” is based on a developed TJTP SP. It delineates the territories that most need the transformation. Transitional territories in the Silesian Province includes seven sub-regions (NUTS 3 type territories): Katowice, Sosnowiec, Tychy, Bytom, Gliwice, Rybnik and Bielsko-Biała. The municipalities under mining transformation included 64 units, located mainly in the central and western parts of the province [39].

The Territorial Just Transition Plan of the Silesian Province 2030 is to be a particularization of the Development Strategy of the Silesian Province “Silesia 2030”—Green Silesia in terms of socio-economic transformation [39,43]. Thus, it refers directly to the diagnosis of regional potentials and identified development challenges. They concern, in particular, seven separate mining sub-regions of the Silesian Province [44]. Moreover, the Regional Innovation Strategy is to be a complementary document [45]. Strategic findings within the TJTP SP are presented in the following sequence: challenge—operational goal—results in the areas of economy—society—environment.

3.1.1. Endogenous Approach and Re-Evaluation of Development Factors

From the point of view of the territorialization of the transformation process in the Silesian region, of key importance are the functional areas in the mining transition—the territories that have experienced and will experience the negative effects of the abolishment of the mining sector. Secondly, these are areas losing their socio-economic functions—growth centers and areas with environmental problems, in particular as regards air quality. In the case of functional mining areas, the emphasis of the transformation is placed on the creation of new jobs based on existing resources, which will make it possible to mitigate the effects of mine closures and limitations on the activity of companies from the mining services industry and to maintain, above all, the creation of new economic potential in the region. Another type of support targets units with the greatest air quality problems as areas with poor quality of life due to environmental factors. Subsequently, support is dedicated

to units that are “locomotives of development”, or growth centers, as those areas that have the highest potential for the development of new economic functions, enabling the creation and implementation of innovation and the development of entrepreneurship [43].

Taking into account the scale of employment in the mining industry and bearing in mind that the Silesian Province is the largest consumer of hard coal in the country (in 2019, 16,460 thousand tonnes, i.e., 24.1% of consumption at the national level), the activities in TJTP SP are aimed at supporting entrepreneurs and individuals. To strengthen their level of innovation and generate new engines of growth to replace traditional industries, it is important to expand and further develop the research and development (R&D) ecosystem oriented towards sectors around which new, rebuilt value chains will be concentrated. Support requires targeted investments in the field of, among other things, development of R&D infrastructure, development of industrial–scientific consortia and conducting research work with implementation, in particular in the field of climate-neutral technologies [39]. The region has rich scientific and research facilities and innovative potential developed in business entities. This intellectual potential rooted in the region can be used in the JT process. It is endogenous capital that provides the capacity for innovative solutions.

The long-term transformation process will require a transition to a new economic model based on the development of green economy. The deployment of the indicated solutions will contribute to the implementation of the climate objective related to the 7% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the sectors not covered by the ETS (as compared to the level in 2005), from the 2030 perspective. Transformation measures will focus on mitigating the negative social and economic effects of the process of hard coal mine closures. To support the transition of local enterprises to the circular economy model, actions will be taken to implement resource, energy and material-efficient production and logistics processes, as well as to reduce the amount of waste generated and modify the way in which it is managed [39].

The creation of new jobs will be based on the endogenous economic and scientific-research potential in the technological areas identified in the Technology Development Program of the Silesian Province for 2019–2030 [46]. The Just Transition process in Upper Silesia has taken into consideration the need to develop educational opportunities and competences adequate to the contemporary labor market. This highlights the need to strengthen human capital as a key component of the Just Transition Mechanism. Fast-growing industries that have the potential to absorb workers leaving the mining industry are companies in sectors such as transport, logistics and construction, among other sectors. TJTP SP indicates that the potential of creating new jobs from the 2030 perspective in these sectors will be between 21 and 37 thousand jobs [39].

The transformation is also aimed at improving the quality of the environment, developing public services, improving investment attractiveness and improving the quality of urban spaces. Especially in terms of poor air quality, it requires investments in the elimination of low emission sources, the development of a public transport network and cycling mobility. There is also a need for support of those at risk of energy poverty, and likewise in the area of health care.

The indicated directions were included in the TJTP SP for the region as the foundation of changes based on endogenous social and economic potentials.

3.1.2. Mobilization and Activation of Local Stakeholders and Social Dialogue

The process of socializing the Just Transition Mechanism in Upper Silesia began in 2019. It should be noted that all stages of activities undertaken were in accordance with the principles of participatory management, whereby various meetings and consultations on the JT process in Upper Silesia were properly documented. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the selection of entities that could be party to the consultations is not entirely transparent and understandable. Who was considered to have: “the potential, competence and need to engage in this difficult and multi-faceted process”?

The Regional Team for the initiative of mining regions in Silesia, established by the Board of the Silesian Province in March 2019, was to be the entity involved in the consultation process directly and on an ongoing basis. The team has an advisory and consultative character and cooperates with regional authorities in planning activities as part of the Just Transition process. The Team consists of 55 members representing the government, regional and local self-government, business, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and institutions of science and culture. The Team's priority is to work towards the inclusion of new projects, including grassroots initiatives, in the transformation agenda, and the strengthening of inter-regional cooperation within the platform, including at the international level, as well as lobbying for adequate funds for the transition of mining regions within the framework of the JTF created.

Subsequently, in 2020, a plan was developed to involve the widest possible range of local partners in the process of preparing the TJTP SP. Implementation of the plan began in September 2020 with a series of expert workshops attended by local leaders, including members of the Team, a wide range of industry professionals and representatives of the government and the European Commission. Further into 2020, a seminar was conducted in each of the sub-regions to identify geographical transition issues and challenges. At the beginning of 2021, six consultation meetings were held with representatives of various social groups (entrepreneurs and business environment institutions, mining sector, social movements, scientists, media and students). These consultations allowed the Just Transition process to be viewed through the lens of the needs of each community.

The following independent platform was set up and dedicated to information and consultation policy: <https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/> accessed on 15 September 2021. Moreover, the JT Śląskie newsletter is published periodically. Local media broadcasts are also produced to provide updates on JT work and to explain expert and industry knowledge to the public.

The draft TJTP SP was made public in June 2021, marking the beginning of the open consultation process. The eventual analysis of the comments produced during this phase will translate into the preparation of the third draft of the TJTP SP and initiation of the negotiation process with the European Commission.

As it was shown, the scale of initiatives undertaken within the process of socialization of the JT process in the Silesian Province is rich, diverse and dedicated to many groups of recipients. At the same time, the respondents of the research pointed out that while the number and multiplicity of activities protects against the voices concerned with the lack of transparency, the approach, on the other hand, does not guarantee the quality of the process. There were objections addressed at the limitations of directly including various key stakeholders.

Apart from the participants invited by the Marshal's Office, approximately 300 people representing various circles attempted to become involved in the process of socialization of the Silesian JT. The research identified insufficient participation, especially of representatives of municipalities, future employers, trade unions, employment services, regional civic organizations and economic self-government. What was surprising was the lack of activity, particularly on the part of the miners' trade unions, which joined the talks at a later date. What was apparent in this regard was the insufficient integration of the talks around the JT and the government's social contract with the miners [47]. Respondents also pointed to the insignificant contribution of the scientific community of Upper Silesia. Academics have rather been on the side-lines of JT regional programming activities to date. At the same time, their substantive input could have enhanced the quality of the process. During the research it was noted that: "the stakeholders are there to guide the policy, not to forget anything important" (SSI).

On the other hand, large players from the energy and automotive sectors joined the process. However, in the JT process in Upper Silesia, there is more emphasis on the need to cooperate with the SME sector, recognizing that talks with "big players" should be conducted by the government. Much attention was paid to the mining services industry,

which is not covered by the support system of the government's social contract with miners. At the same time, it is an industry that is directly threatened and of great importance to local labor markets.

The rationale for including the voice of different communities is clear and ensures that the perspectives of multiple stakeholders are seen. However, common sense must be exercised and the risks of projects from the "wishful thinking" catalogue eliminated. The research also revealed allegations against the established JT Target Team, some of whose members showed limited commitment, and the Team had more of an informative role than a creative one. As it was indicated: "important actors are missing in the Team" (SSI). The arbitrariness of the selection of the Team members was criticized, as well as the excessive composition and lack of representation of key circles.

3.1.3. Institutional Partnership and Integration of Local Actors

The Board of the Silesian Province in cooperation with the JTF Program Managing Authority are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the TJTP. It should be noted, however, that the organizational structure of the JT process implementation in Upper Silesia is not detailed. Moreover, there is no long-term governance mechanism with a clearly defined role for each institutional partner.

The declaration of the Silesian TJTP reads: "The theme of our work on the document—at every stage—was dialogue, participation and cooperation with all local and regional environments that have the potential, competence and need to join this difficult and multi-faceted process" [39] (p. 2). The document also stipulates that relevant partners, including social and economic partners and bodies representing civil society, will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. The understanding of the "suitability" of partners is questionable. It is advisable that, in order to preserve the concept of partnership, all relevant circles and actors should be represented. In the process of the Just Transition in the Silesian Province, the role of the different actors involved was also unknown.

Critical voices of the respondents were also aimed at the organization of the JT process in the region. They were concerned with the signs of a chaotic process and a kind of improvisation, especially in the initial phase. The guidelines for implementing the processes of the various stages, including the criteria for the projects to be submitted, were unclear. Respondents were unanimous in their assessment of the atmosphere of misinformation surrounding the identification of key projects. The research indicated the preparation of suitable diagnostic material, which was the result of numerous meetings and consultations. At the same time, it was noted that this diagnosis was not sufficiently translated into the development of optimal directions and recommendations for the JT process in the region.

Mining municipalities and mining communities were identified as the main beneficiaries of the JT process. However, the negative assessment referred to the lack of comprehensive thinking about the needs of the region and integration of different communities to develop a common vision. The research revealed a discrepancy between the assessment of the Marshal's Office of the Silesian Province—the key institutional actor in the JT process—and the other respondents. According to the position of the Marshal's Office, from the beginning of the process the perspective of generating large projects of regional importance was adopted. Integrated projects included economic hubs, industry observatories, and even a transition observatory. According to other stakeholders, the process was essentially focused on gathering the opinions of particular communities. This approach proved insufficient to integrate different actors at such a crucial moment in the development of the region. There was a lack of mechanisms and tools for deliberation and building partnerships aimed at creating multi-sectoral projects. Respondents explicitly raised concerns about the lack of a "communal table". As a rule, without an actors' network platform, many projects do not create synergies and sufficient added value. The authority of the public sector has failed in this case, in the sense of uniting diverse communities and coordinating beyond vested interest. Institutional integration of the public sector has

been lacking. It is important in building a consistent message of JT benefits and mitigating public anxiety around the process.

3.2. *Just Transition Process in the Bełchatów Basin*

The Bełchatów mining and power generation complex constitutes the south-western part of the Łódzkie Province. This industrial monoculture was established on a lignite deposit. In a relatively short period, it was the driving force behind the “civilization leap” of the territory—the development of technical infrastructure, diversification of the labor market, development of social services, change in the income structure of municipalities and others. At the same time, dynamic processes led to internal differentiation and the polarization of economic and social processes. At present, a new chapter of changes towards climate neutrality is opening up in the Bełchatów basin.

In the Development Strategy of the Łódzkie Province 2030 (May 2021), the Bełchatów basin territory was defined as a specific problem area and one of the greatest development challenges in terms of the territorial cohesion of the Łódzkie Province. Nearly 17% of the Łódzkie Province is a transition area, requiring a specialist approach and planning multi-faceted actions to limit the negative effects of necessary economic transformations [41].

It should be emphasized that the process of JT and development of the Territorial Just Transition Plan of the Łódzkie Province (TJTP ŁP) is considerably delayed as compared to other regions in Poland, which resulted from the decision-making processes at the national level, i.e., planning to launch the new lignite open cast Złoczew mine.

3.2.1. Endogenous Approach and Re-Evaluation of Development Factors

The research conducted clearly indicates that the designated TT were treated as a homogeneous whole without taking into account the deep individual characteristics and conditions of development. The concentration of economic activity of the complex mainly covers the Bełchatów district; however, the scope of connections and networks of economic and social dependencies concerns a much larger area, determined mainly by commuting and a negative environmental impact. However, the intensity and strength of the links vary widely. The designated transition area consists of three medium-sized cities (up to 100 thousand inhabitants), urban–rural municipalities and rural municipalities. It is economically and socially heterogeneous and does not form an internally coherent functional territory [42]. On the one hand, the TJTP ŁP did not highlight the characteristic features (resources) and, on the other hand, problems which differ across the area. One example is the issue of agriculture and its development under adverse environmental conditions (steppe formation, drought, water scarcity) and alternative development paths. It should be emphasized that the TT in question is characterized by a low urbanization index, and its structure is dominated by typically rural areas that are agricultural in nature—factors which were completely neglected in the TJTP ŁP.

TJTP ŁP treats the transition area as a homogenous structure, while a strong diversity of economic, social and environmental conditions has been identified. This is confirmed, among other things, by significant differences in the investment expenditure of municipal budgets per capita in 2010 and 2019. A constant high level of expenditures in the analyzed timeframes was found to be characteristic for municipalities located in the direct range of the impact of mines and power plants. The interviews conducted for this research paper verified that the problems of deep and lasting disproportions in development have not been noted and clearly highlighted.

Insufficient attention has been paid to demographic problems, which are crucial for this area. They concern both cities and rural areas (e.g., the city of Radomsko is one of the fastest depopulating cities in the Łódzkie Province). There is no sufficient recognition of demographic trends and forecasts, as well as stimulating changes towards the silver economy, and at the same time building an offer of economic and social activities for young people (counteracting migration).

Due to the broad approach taken to define the boundaries of the JT territory in the Bełchatów region, the identified key problems have been accurately presented; yet, they do not take into account the intensity and scale of the negative phenomena. Complementary resources of the TT and conditions for their integration were also not identified. Among other things, the importance of post-mining areas as potential “piloting grounds” for testing and implementing innovative forms of recultivation and management were completely ignored. The low quality of the natural environment, in terms of air pollution, water deficit and low forest cover, is not treated as an impulse to launch green economy sectors. Innovative economic activities of SME can be focused around these challenges and “green” jobs can be created in the area of environmental protection in a broad sense of the word.

It is worth mentioning that within the TT, there are deposits of lignite in Złoczew that are considered in PEP 2040 (Polish Energy Policy until 2040) as a prospective resource due to its strategic character [40]. It is envisaged that extraction will be secured and dependent on the decisions of investors, with key factors being the price of CO₂ emission allowances, environmental conditions and the development of new technologies. According to the Ministry of State Assets, in today’s economic conditions and with available technologies, exploitation would be permanently unprofitable, therefore PGE GiEK is not planning to extract lignite from the Złoczew deposit. At the same time, there is a lack of proposals for the use of this area in terms of opportunities for its development.

To a limited extent, intangible territorial capitals were addressed in TJTP ŁP. Only the potential of experienced personnel in the energy and power systems sectors was noted and highlighted. The use of high workforce competencies in the implementation of low and zero-carbon investments in the transformation area was indicated [42]. On the other hand, the issues of deficits in entrepreneurial attitudes and economic activity were completely ignored. Meanwhile, the TT are characterized by a show of average entrepreneurship among residents [48]. Research has shown a lack of orientation to the specific needs of the territory as a whole. As part of the work to be developed in TJTP ŁP, the tasks and projects submitted by stakeholders (project fiches) concerned mainly hard infrastructure investments which cater to the individual, current needs of the municipalities. There was no broader view of the process of building the socio-economic potential of the transformation area.

It should be clearly emphasized that the TT are also characterized by low levels of trust and deficits in social ties, relational capital and sense of identity. An unsatisfactory level of social capital is observed, including low attachment to the region, resulting from the fact that a significant share of the population are immigrants [41].

The strategic and operational objectives indicated in the TJTP ŁP, as well as the types of foreseen operations under the JTF, are universal (standard) and do not take into account the specific conditions, problems and potentials of the Bełchatów region, which prevent the “leverage effects” of the Just Transition Mechanism from being activated. The identified social and economic costs of the process of decarbonization of the economy refer to standard (typical) thematic areas, omitting the issues of the accumulation of negative effects and deferred consequences in time. There is no in-depth and comprehensive diagnosis or outlined development scenarios (e.g., through foresight, good practices). Moreover, several factors resulted in a significant narrowing of the subject areas of planned activities; among them were the lack of exchange of experiences between the stakeholders of the JT process from other regions, no study visits to regions that implement transformation activities and limited substantive knowledge about the specificity of the process.

A coherent vision and comprehensive transformation plan has not been developed for the local environment. This translates into weaknesses and fragmentation of proposed investment ideas and activities. Emerging proposals for key projects/undertakings are in the idea phase, still lacking in-depth analyses, feasibility studies or public consultations.

3.2.2. Mobilization and Activation of Local Stakeholders and Social Dialogue

Having only existed for a period of mere months, the process of planning the Just Transition Mechanism and preparing the TJTP LP for the Bełchatów region is well behind other areas in Poland. A deficit of information has been identified in local governments, ranging from the essence and purpose of JT, to its conditions and the substantive scope and possibilities of financial support. The lack of a widespread information campaign addressed to the local community and the lack of a professional website dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge on JT, its stages in the Łódź region and possible opportunities (solutions) has limited the scope for real impact on the process of transition planning. Moreover, no channels and mechanisms of communication between the stakeholders, for building attitudes of cooperation and reaching consensus on the current challenges and possible directions for further development of the Bełchatów region, have been developed.

Local government officials and residents alike seem largely unaware of the impending end of the conventional energy industry. There is a strong fear and resistance to implementing changes in the local community directly connected to the mine and power plant. The lack of reliable information on both the inevitability and need for transformation, the scale and timing of planned changes and the consequences and effects of their omission all combine to reinforce public fear and anxiety about this process. Moreover, the local community was taken by surprise by this process, and the spontaneous actions and lack of real support from public authorities is a significant barrier to the participatory process.

Locally, there is a high level of passivity and indifference to the transition processes, resulting largely from the lack of knowledge and awareness of the inevitability of this process. It has only been in the last few months that the discussion about the future of the mining and energy basin has accelerated in the regional environment due to the need to prepare a territorial and national Just Transition plan.

The JT process lacks a broad social dialogue. The initiatives undertaken (Bełchatów 2050) are incidental and do not provide sufficient impulse to launch comprehensive public debate. In addition, the territory is characterized by a lack of leaders in the area of energy transition with public recognition, experience and authority. The lack of strong leaders with a realistic and comprehensive view of the problems of the Bełchatów region, around whom the knowledge would be focused and the discussion about the transformation would be integrated, is one of the greatest threats to this process. There is a lack of grassroots impulses and activities mobilizing locals: "In the local community, at the level of municipalities, no information meeting was held, introducing the topic of JT"; "... residents, including municipal councilors, do not have knowledge about the essence of the process, development opportunities and the boundary conditions of this process" (SSI).

As a result, the planning of the transition process is dominated by the regional authorities, despite the fact that representatives of local authorities, NGOs and business-related institutions are part of the regionally established committees. This process has the character of a formal (administrative) procedure, which is directed and organized by the authorities at a regional level and has been limited to the standard administrative forms of participation, i.e., submission of applications and comments.

A particularly negative characteristic of the Bełchatów region, significantly weakening the JT process, is the lack of strong local identity, common traditions, history and attachment to the region. On the other hand, social and cultural life is strongly concentrated around PGE, which plays not only the role of an economic leader, but also of an organizer and sponsor of many local events and attractions. This dynamic strengthens the role of PGE as an "integrator of life" in the social and economic life of the Bełchatów region, but on the other hand it leads to "learned helplessness" and passivity of social attitudes in the local community.

As the research indicates, in the Bełchatów community there is low environmental awareness and poor knowledge and perception of environmental costs. Local governments and residents recognize, first and foremost, the threat of drought and air pollution resulting from the activities of the conventional energy industry. It is surprising that young people

from the Bełchatów region are characterized by lower ecological awareness compared to the youth from the Łódź region. It is also alarming that the youth in Bełchatów are convinced that the national government along with international organizations have a greater role to play in the transformation process than regional and local authorities [49,50].

Within the JT process, the importance of human capital, which is a weak point of the Bełchatów basin, was poorly highlighted. The educational offer of higher education institutions in the region is oriented towards social sciences and humanities, as well as the development of “soft” skills and competences. At the level of higher education, the Bełchatów region offers no technical profile directly connected with the economic profile of the region. Moreover, there is a lack of institutional infrastructure that could develop and strengthen this resource and serve as an impulse for civic mobilization processes. There is also no branch/off-site center of any of the large public universities located in Łódź, i.e., the University of Łódź and Technical University of Łódź. New alternative areas of educational activity have not been launched. As a result, today “we observe shortcomings in the market of educational services in specialist education, the general education profile dominates. The exception is the High School of Modern Technologies” (SSI).

The authorities of the region have identified gaps in the human and social capital, therefore the TJTP ŁP indicates the necessity of its development. Increasing acceptance of transformation processes is to be carried out with the participation of NGOs and local transformation leaders from among the residents of the TT. It seems that this postulate is unrealistic, especially when there is no such organization in the Bełchatów region. Needs to develop the competencies of transition management officials have also been identified [35]. This is the right thing to do, but it lags far behind the need for coordination of plans. The gap in the development of new professional activities and competences is to be filled by the Center for Competence and Qualification Development established in the JT process. Its aim is to help PGE employees and the inhabitants of the Bełchatów region to acquire new professional competences. It is a joint initiative of the Marshal’s Office of the Łódzkie Province and the PGE Corporate Group. The partners are: PGE Foundation, PGE Górnictwo i Energetyka Konwencjonalna, Marshal’s Office of the Łódzkie Province, Education Superintendent’s Office in Łódź and Bełchatów City Hall. Formally, the Center has been established; however, there is as yet a complete lack of information about its structure and the scope of its activities [41].

3.2.3. Institutional Partnership and Integration of Local Actors

The short period of preparation of the TJTP ŁP has revealed gaps and weaknesses in the Bełchatów region in network relations and the poor organization of local self-governments, and likewise in business entities. The quality of the institutional environment and the strength of its impact varies strongly in the Bełchatów region. For the most part, the mining and energy basin lacks institutional support for energy and economic transition. Moreover, the existing institutions supporting entrepreneurship and innovations in the economy are not significant enough to become an important development factor and play an important role in the transition process of the Bełchatów basin.

The Bełchatów mining and power industry region is characterized by the lack of strong business environment institutions oriented at creating innovative solutions and technology transfer, which translates into the lack of partnership in creating innovative investments. In addition, the lack of support from specialist scientific and research units, combined with the lack of an attractive offer of higher education, is a significant barrier to change. On the one hand, the vast majority of innovation and entrepreneurship centers have been operating for many years and are well recognized in the local environment. On the other hand, these institutions have a limited scope of influence and do not create a significant development impulse for the entire mining and energy basin.

The weakness of partnership and lack of integration of local actors was revealed by the call for project proposals under the JT. The submitted projects were characterized by a narrow and particularistic approach. Only a few had an integrated and cross-sectoral

character. This demonstrates both a lack of substantive preparation of local stakeholders in designing the Just Transition process, and a dearth of knowledge about its mechanisms and principles. Moreover, partnership and economic cooperation relations, and business representative organizations, are poorly developed, which is confirmed by the almost total absence of cluster initiatives (only one cluster operates in the area).

The Bełchatowsko-Kleszczowski Park Przemysłowo-Technologiczny (Industrial and Technological Park) operates in the Bełchatów functional area and covers mainly the Bełchatów district. Two other districts, Radomsko and Piotrków, do not have an active background neither in supporting nor in undertaking JT activities. A new initiative that may play a key role in the process in the Bełchatów region is the agreement concluded in October 2020 with Bełchatowsko-Kleszczowski Park Przemysłowo-Technologiczny Sp. z o.o. (BKPPT), the Foundation for Kleszczów Municipality Development, the Regional Chamber of Commerce in Bełchatów and the Regional Development Agency ARREKS S.A. Its objective is to cooperate with and actively engage in the JT process by: conducting social and economic consultations, developing a joint concept of the process promotion and so on. The BKPPT is the leader and coordinator of the initiative. The result of the cooperation has been the preparation of a coherent list of proposals for a Just Transition plan at the national and regional level.

In the course of implementing JT at the regional level, two teams were established administratively:

- A team for the transformation of mining areas in the Łódzkie Province, comprising nearly 40 people (representatives of mainly local governments and one NGO);
- The Just Transition Team operating within the Provincial Social Dialogue Council (dominated by trade union representatives, as well as representatives of the Province's Marshal and the Province's Governor).

The role of the said Teams was limited to providing opinions and consultations on the draft Territorial Just Transition Plan for the Łódzkie Province. These teams did not reach out to the local community. They are not active in the field of initiating and organizing debates, or meetings in the region.

The preparation of the TJTP ŁP followed two paths. The lack of substantive preparation and extensive introduction to the subject of the JT process limited the possibility of active and effective participation (SSI). As a result, the stakeholder's participation in the proposed TJTP ŁP preparation scheme was significantly limited. Firstly, the regional authorities launched the submission of project/activity/task proposals by the stakeholders. In response, 185 applications were submitted. Nearly half of the projects are individual undertakings of municipalities, and only 18 projects are of a supra-municipality character. Against this background, the integrated projects submitted by PGE GiEK S.A. (9 projects) and BKPPT (21 projects) stand out. Too short a period of time for submitting proposals did not allow for the development of joint, self-governmental, supra-local projects. The second pathway involved the development of the TJTP ŁP by an external company and Spatial Planning Office WŁ. Organized team meetings were not open. There was no broad debate, and no workshops to develop a common position reflecting the problems and needs of the area. The document prepared was made public and subject only to consultation. As part of the public consultation, four online meetings were organized and a procedure for commenting was launched. A total of 163 comments from applicants were submitted by the deadline. Representatives of local government units were the most numerous group among those submitting comments. Moreover, comments were also submitted by representatives of associations and foundations (nationwide, not local), representatives of the economic and social environment and private actors. However, this consultation was narrow in nature.

A significant constraint to the dynamization of the JT process and to overcoming emerging limitations is the lack of cooperation among public institutions. The passive attitude of local governments that is focused on waiting was evident. The lack of knowledge

and substantive support and the short period of time did not serve active involvement and true bottom-up initiatives uniting local governments [48].

The problem of transformation of the Bełchatów region is poorly highlighted in the strategic development plans for the Łódź region. In the new Development Strategy for the Łódzkie Province adopted in April 2021, the only area of strategic intervention indicated is the “ASI Mining and power transformation area”, which covers territorial units economically dependent on the Bełchatów mining and power complex. At the same time, very general directions of the transformation were indicated, i.e., “... measures related to, among other things, the development of entrepreneurship and diversification of the economy, implementation of the concept of a low-carbon circular economy, retraining of personnel, creation of alternative jobs, prevention of social inequalities and exclusion, measures aimed at regeneration and re-naturalization of post-mining areas, increasing the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency” [41]. However, there is no outline of the development vision for the Bełchatów region, and no indication of specific actions and “ideas” pertaining to the Just Transition Mechanism.

4. Discussion

The Just Transition process is intended to counteract the transfer of the costs of the restructuring processes of coal regions to local communities, so that they are not “victims of the decarbonization process” [51]. It also provides opportunities for community and partnership design for a “new reality” in coal regions. EU funds dedicated to the transition processes should go to citizens and local governments, local (regional) communities and entities directly involved in the processes of this change. The JT process is not about transition per se, but about limiting the negative effects of the transformations taking place.

The emphasis of the analyzed Territorial Just Transition Plans was placed on the most important and pressing transformation challenges in the perspective of the ensuing 10 years. Local communities should be active and local authorities should be involved to a significant extent in processes of change at the supra-local level. “To avoid the shock of too abrupt a change, the transition should be planned for at least ten years. It takes time to build economic alternatives, retrain workers, and make an orderly, gradual transition to a new model of regional development. These plans should be developed as early as possible, as the economic basis for coal mining and coal-fired power generation is weakening by the year” [52].

The diagnosis of the condition of mining sub-regions in Poland and the forecast of the effects of decarbonization in the JT process is presented in a rather pessimistic, negative tone that focuses on highlighting the difficult socio-economic situation. At the same time, there is little emphasis on the benefits of transition and its positive consequences, i.e., the disadvantages of remaining on the current development path. The perspective of the consequences of maintaining the status quo would reveal the need for change more clearly. The conclusion which can be drawn here is that within the promotion of the process, there needs to be a narrative focusing on the “success story”. There is also a definite need for a public debate about transition, and for it to be oriented towards identifying new endogenous values and strengthening the “language of benefits”. A territorial approach increases the chances of an effective “tailor-made” transition, responding to existing conditions and needs. It should be noted that in terms of organization, preparation for the JT process was hampered by the pandemic, which has certainly affected delays and created a lack of sufficient information policy and promotion of the process.

The analysis showed that within the JT process, regions are not sufficiently using the moment of transition to create a sustainable foundation for community building in the regions studied. The Territorial Just Transition Plans that were analyzed lack due reference to the importance of social capital. Networking is deficient throughout the process. There is a lack of thinking on how to build partnership and integrate the local community—business, local leaders, social organizations and the scientific community—around important issues

for municipalities and regions. An important argument for adopting such optics is to retain young people and build their bonds and sense of identity with the region [53,54].

Technological change, which is an intrinsic component of the Just Transition process, takes place under conditions of specific institutional capacities that may facilitate or impede these processes in regions and economic sectors. In the dimension of institutional capacity to stimulate change, the importance of its presence in a given territory is emphasized as: a “mix” of organizational forms (public–public, public–social, public–private, cooperation networks, associations and alliances, formal and informal partnerships), and a “mix” of goals in an array of organizational forms (public, business, social and environmental goals) [55]. The lack of integration of local and regional environments has consequences in the limited scale of large, multi-sectoral projects. In addition, the lack of deliberation and coalition building around the regions’ transformation goals does not take sufficient advantage of the opportunity presented by this important moment of change and the dedicated resources accompanying it. Up to the present stage, the potential of municipal unions and investments implemented in the form of public–private partnerships has been underestimated.

As indicated by the conducted research, building a competitive advantage, seen in both regions from the perspective of “green” transformation and the associated technological leap, has not been supported by an in-depth diagnosis of the state and the opportunities associated with it. A confrontation of the records of the TJTP may eventually be brutally juxtaposed with reality. On the one hand, the plan for a “green” technological leap is rather an aftermath of the growing importance of related topics in the public debate. In principle, the shift towards “green” should apply to all areas of the economy and society. It does not necessarily have to concern environmental protection and related industries. On the other hand, there is insufficient outreach being carried out for innovative opportunities in the regions that go beyond the original and coherent norms of the needs of the residents, and that correspond with regional human capital as regards skills and competences. The JT process places too little emphasis on the creation of new local and regional brands. It is essential to ensure that climate transition within JT is performed *in situ*.

The effects of the negative environmental impact of the excavation of energy resources are felt on a local and sub-regional scale. Although environmental problems are identified in both regions, there is a lack of awareness of the scale of environmental transformations and the profound consequences in terms of climate change and reduced ecosystem services. The issue of investing in nature-based solutions, innovative processes for reclamation and remediation of degraded areas is neglected. This issue has been marginalized, whereas, the essence of the transition of post-coal regions is the improvement in the quality of the natural environment and nature restoration [32]. The lack of a broad view on restoring the economic value of brownfields and degraded areas and the lack of a spatial policy for these areas limits the opportunity for effective place-specific solutions.

It seems that in both regions, the discussion around support for mining communities is not focused sufficiently on building future capacity in the labor market, a potential that would constitute solid human and social capital. Support is mainly geared towards social assistance and not enough in the sense of creating a development springboard for those leaving the mining industry. This approach stands in contrast to the general guidelines of the JT in the EU Green Deal, which promotes active social policies (e.g., training and re-skilling) in favor of the traditional social protection policies (e.g., unemployment redundancy payment, welfare payments and minimum income benefits) [56]. Moreover, in the JT process, too little emphasis is placed on the development of the small and medium enterprises (SME) sector versus large economic actors, especially when large companies are in possession of assets accumulated over several years, which allows them to better weather the period of change.

Throughout the JT process in the regions, the lack of national-level guidance has been frustrating. The research pointed to the low transparency of the whole process and insufficient synergy of government documents related to it. The lack of clarity in the

process has been heated by the atmosphere of discussions with the mining sector and the government's breakneck declarations bowing to the pressure of coal union demands. The lack of a National Just Transition Plan, overarching the Territorial Just Transition Plan, resulted in organizational difficulties in the regions and unclear criteria for the various regional partners involved. In principle, it has also affected process delays in the regions. The NJTP should provide "steerage" to the whole process. The research also revealed a relatively better assessment of the organizational and conceptual work of the JT process carried out by regional governments, comparable to the work carried out at the governmental level.

The JT process is integrally related to the state's energy policy. At the same time, it too often succumbs to the forces of the coal and energy lobby, and takes too little account of the territorial dimension and the needs of the regions. According to Johnstone and Newell, this is a significant barrier to the transition to a more just and sustainable society [57]. The effect of this process could be observed in the Bełchatów region, where until recently, lobbying for the opening of a new lignite opencast "Złoczew" mine was carried out and actions were taken towards this end (license application). The consequences of this situation are far reaching, as they have translated into poor regional preparation for JT planning. It is worth emphasizing here that the state elites are cautious about changes in the energy regime [58], which is an important constraint in the designing of the JT process. In the context of the above, the strength of a transition territory lies in the reliable diagnosis of the state of affairs and the identification of an alternative selection of cost and scenario analyses.

Achieving the effectiveness and efficiency of JT requires that PBP ideas and principles are taken into account throughout the programming process. In order to achieve a change in the current socio-economic functions, it is necessary to identify the specificity of the regions, to capitalize on endogenous potentials and consequently to mobilize resources towards their development. There is a need for a stronger reorientation of the policy, from a "top-down" approach and expectation for external assistance (especially in the Bełchatów basin), to a bottom-up approach and orientation of activities towards activating endogenous developmental forces and synergy mechanisms in the JT process. It requires a mental change, especially on the part of JT leaders and actors responsible for the Territorial Just Transition Plan.

The success of Just Transition requires the involvement of institutions from all levels of development management, i.e., European, national, regional and local. Above all, however, it requires an open and partnership-based dialogue with the social partners and a wide range of representatives from business, NGOs, the scientific sector, education and the labor market. JT processes in both analyzed regions indicate deficits in the above-mentioned areas. Nevertheless, in Upper Silesia we can observe an increased focus on the importance of partnership, taking into account the voices of various stakeholders. In the case of the Bełchatów region, disintegration of the environment, domination of passive attitudes and the lack of knowledge and ideas have not been conducive to the creation of JT. In addition, the hurried pace of the TJTP procedure, without real substantive and organizational support, definitely weakened the possibility to involve stakeholders in the change process.

The regions studied lack multi-stakeholder integration and mechanisms to enable "bundling" and integration of smaller projects. Strengthening the integration and networking of local partners would certainly serve to develop locally and regionally relevant investments. A greater openness to dialogue would certainly improve the process of JT building in the researched regions. The research revealed the concerns of different communities regarding their agency in the JT process. The need to reconcile different interests is a significant challenge of the implemented activities. Cross-scalar governance should be an important part of the PBP. Nevertheless, in both case studies there was much room for improvement.

The research further revealed that the process was largely driven by technical considerations. Both the action plan and the general organization of the work were set out

without in-depth reflection on the purposefulness of individual parts and the quality of the results achieved. As a counterpoint, we put forward these cogent recommendations covered by JT in Sweden: “This indicates that a more open and inclusive place-based territorial approach to transition policy formulation and implementation is required. A balance between the technical, social, and spatial elements of a just transition is needed if policies are going to meet the requirements of local and regional citizens and provide sustainable socio-economic growth and environmental protection, without risks of delocalizing energy-intensive processes to other regions” [59]. Finally, it is important to deliver high-impact funding for local and regional projects. It should be noted, however, that the bar for governance in public policy in Sweden is set higher than in Poland. The correct path will be reached if the transition is seen from the perspective of the subject, not the object, and of the community, not particular interests.

5. Conclusions

The research revealed a significant gap between the analyzed regions in terms of knowledge and substantive preparation for the JT process. Since December 2017, the Silesian region has been a member of the European Commission initiative called the “Coal Regions in Transition” Platform. It supports the transition of coal regions in their efforts to diversify their economic structures and the technological shift to greater use of clean energy sources. Cooperation among a wide group of coal regions allows for the exchange of experience and the acquisition of competences in the JT process. For the Bełchatów region, JT is a “novelty”, both in terms of knowledge and implementation possibilities.

The selection of two extremely different examples of coal regions allowed for the identification of JT mechanisms and the conditions for its implementation. Mining specialization, which in the case of Bełchatów basin has a short history (one generation), and the existence of an industrial monoculture bringing prosperity to the inhabitants and communes in a short period of time, made it possible to make a civilization “leap” for this agricultural area. The new challenge related to the Just Transition was, in a way, a surprise for the local community and, as a consequence, the lack of preparation for this process was revealed. The Upper Silesia, which is “in the process” of a real transformation, with experience in this field, is characterized by a higher level of work advancement.

Moreover, in the Bełchatów basin, the main player is PGE GiEK, which has so far organized and directed development paths, and JT will somehow force their verification and search for alternative directions by a wider group of participants in the ST process. In the Silesia region, we can see a much greater diversity of entities (stakeholders) participating in the process. At the same time, in both case studies, we have found that regions do not sufficiently use the moment of transformation to create a solid foundation for building real communities in the regions. There is a lack of thinking about how to build and develop social capital (partnership and integration of the local community). Due to the historical and social conditions and the strength of the entrenched mining industry, the trajectory of the JT process is different. Nevertheless, it should be clearly emphasized that in the case of both case studies, especially in the Bełchatów basin, it is initiated an “inwards” look at socio-economic processes. This approach is particularly desirable in the context of building resilience and stimulating the processes of adaptation to social, economic and environmental changes.

We conclude that governance structures are based on rather poor links between the national government, national agencies, regional and local public authorities, and key stakeholders including industries, SMEs, academia, labor unions and civil society organizations. Multi-sectoral collaboration, better coordination and deliberation is required to overcome governance challenges. A comprehensive assessment of JT will be possible in retrospect. Some of the circles involved in the process draw a positive scenario and speak of an important turning point. There are also skeptical voices, pointing more to the mitigation of problems, rather than to the JT as the driving force behind development. The

process is a pioneering one and requires the remodeling of all areas of local and regional development. The PBP approach creates the foundation for building resilience.

Place-based policy can certainly play an important role in taking advantage of this important moment in the history of Polish mining regions. The emphasis should therefore be on creating synergies among networking partners, and on integrating projects based on local needs and local potential. It is crucial to focus the discussion on the genuine needs of the regions and not on the particular interests and projects of individual stakeholders.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.N., A.R. and A.S.; Data curation, A.N.; Formal analysis, A.N., A.R. and A.S.; Investigation, A.N., A.R. and A.S.; Methodology, A.N., A.R. and A.S.; Validation, A.N., A.R. and A.S.; Writing—original draft, A.N., A.R. and A.S.; Writing—review & editing, A.N., A.R. and A.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: Publication financed by the Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Lodz.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The research for the Lodz region (A.N., A.R.) was partially carried out under the project “Program framework for integrated Just Transition planning at the national and regional level”, the research project “Society on the road to climate neutrality” financed by the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, carried out by the University of Economics in Katowice. English Language editing services by Carolyn Trotman-Grabek.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Areas of Analysis

Areas of TJTP Analysis/Dispositions for Semi-Structured Interviews	Research Method TJTP—Territorial Just Transition Plan SSI—Semi-Structured Interview
I. Endogenous approach to development and re-evaluation of factors and determinants of development	
1. Factors and determinants of development exposed in the Just Transition process	TJTP
2. Territorial specificity and its constituent elements	TJTP
3. Features defining the internal cohesion of the functional territory (the so-called territorial cohesion of the transition area)	TJTP/SSI
II. Mobilization and activation of local actors and social dialogue	
4. Actors involved in the TJTP formation process	TJTP/SSI
5. Real involvement of local actors and their real impact on the TJTP process	SSI
6. Principles for creating a vision for the JT process (e.g., bottom-up approach, consensus principle)	SSI
7. Methods and tools for consultation and public participation	TJTP/SSI
8. Methods and tools for communication and promotion of the JT process in the local environment	TJTP/SSI
III. Institutional partnerships and integration of activities of various actors	
9. Actors, mechanisms and organizational coordination structures (e.g., steering committees, monitoring bodies)	TJTP/SSI
10. Governance mechanisms for the TJTP, with particular reference to the partnership principle	TJTP/SSI
11. Scope and nature of integrated and multi-stakeholder projects	TJTP/SSI
12. Complementarity of projects to create territorial cohesion and synergy effects	TJTP/SSI

Appendix B. Structure and Characteristics of Respondents

Institution/Region	Respondent's Characteristics
Marshal's Office of the Silesian Province (two respondents)	A representative of regional self-government administration; a person supervising and responsible for the JT process in the Silesian Province
Jastrzębie Zdrój City Hall Bytom City Hall	Representatives of local authorities; persons directly involved in the JT process in the Silesian Province
Social Economy Foundation	A representative of a social organization; a person directly involved in the JT process in the Silesian Province
Science and Technology Park	A representative of the business sector involved in the JT process in the Silesian Province
Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province (two respondents)	A representative of regional self-government administration; a person supervising and responsible for the JT process in the Łódzkie Province
Bełchatów District Office	A representative of district authorities; a person directly involved in the JT process in the Łódzkie Province
Bełchatów City Hall Kamieński City Hall and Municipality Office Kleszczów Municipality Office	Representatives of local authorities; persons directly involved in the JT process in the Łódzkie Province
Center for Ecological Activities "Źródła"	A representative of a social organization; a person directly involved in the JT process in the Łódzkie Province
Industrial and Technological Park Business Center Club (BCC)	Representatives of the business sector involved in the JT process in the Łódzkie Province
Institute for Ecology of Industrial Areas University of Silesia	Scientific representatives directly involved in the JT process in the Silesian and Łódzkie Provinces

References

- Alves Dias, P.; Kanellopoulos, K.; Medarac, H.; Kapetaki, Z.; Miranda Barbosa, E.; Shortall, R.; Czako, V.; Telsnig, T.; Vazquez Hernandez, C.; Lacal Arantegui, R.; et al. *EU Coal Regions: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead*; JRC Science for Policy Report; European Commission: Luxembourg, 2018.
- Kapetaki, Z.; Ruiz Castello, P.; Armani, R.; Bodis, K.; Fahl, F.; Gonzalez Aparicio, I.; Jaeger-Waldau, A.; Lebedeva, N.; Pinedo Pascua, I.; Scarlat, N.; et al. *Clean Energy Technologies Coal Regions in: Opportunities for Jobs and Growth*; JRC Science for Policy Report; European Commission: Luxembourg, 2020.
- Milani, B. *Designing the Green Economy*. In *The Postindustrial Alternative Corporate Globalization*; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.: Lanham, MA, USA, 2000.
- The European Commission. *The European Green Deal*; COM/2019/640 Final. The European Commission: Brussels, Belgium, 2019. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640&from=EN> (accessed on 12 June 2021).
- Rainnie, A.; Beer, A.; Rafferty, M. *Effectiveness of Place Based Packages*; Regional Australia Institute: Canberra, Australia, 2019.
- Tomaney, J. *Place-Based Approaches to Regional Development: Global Trends and Australian Implications*; Australian Business Foundation: Sydney, Australia, 2010.
- da Silva, R.F.B.; Rodrigues, M.D.A.; Vieira, S.A.; Batistella, M.; Farinaci, J. Perspectives for environmental conservation and ecosystem services on coupled rural-urban systems. *Perspect. Ecol. Conserv.* **2017**, *15*, 74–81. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Thissen, M.; van Oort, F. European place-based development policy and sustainable economic agglomeration. *Tijdschr. Econ. Soc. Geogr.* **2010**, *101*, 473–480. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Lantz, T.L.; Ioppolo, G.; Yigitcanlar, T.; Arbolino, R. Understanding the correlation between energy transition and urbanization. *Environ. Innov. Soc. Transit.* **2021**, *40*, 73–86. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Barca, F. *An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy. A Place-Based Approach to Meeting European Union Challenges and Expectations*; Independent Report prepared at the request of Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy. European Commission: Brussels, Belgium, 2009. Available online: www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/.../barca_report_en.pdf (accessed on 12 June 2021).
- OECD. *How Regions Grow. Trend and Analysis*; OECD: Paris, France, 2009.
- OECD. *Regions Matter. Economic Recovery, Innovation and Sustainable Growth*; OECD: Paris, France, 2009.

13. Barca, F.; McCann, P.; Rodríguez-Pose, A. The case for regional development intervention: Place-based versus place-neutral approaches. *J. Reg. Sci.* **2012**, *52*, 134–152. [CrossRef]
14. Healey, P. Institutional analysis, communicative planning and shaping places. *J. Plan. Educ. Res.* **1999**, *19*, 111–121. [CrossRef]
15. Davoudi, S. Understanding territorial cohesion. *Plan. Pract. Res.* **2005**, *20*, 433–441. [CrossRef]
16. Faludi, A. Territorial Cohesion Under the Looking Glass: Synthesis Paper about the History of the Concept and Policy Background to Territorial Cohesion. 2009. Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andreas-Faludi/publication/27353983_Territorial_cohesion_under_the_looking_glass_synthesis_paper_about_the_history_of_the_concept_and_policy_background_to_territorial_cohesion/links/5a9294d20f7e9ba4296e48af/Territorial-cohesion-under-the-looking-glass-synthesis-paper-about-the-history-of-the-concept-and-policy-background-to-territorial-cohesion.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2021).
17. Nosek, S. Territorial cohesion storylines in 2014–2020 cohesion policy. *Eur. Plan. Stud.* **2017**, *25*, 2157–2174. [CrossRef]
18. Beer, A.; McKenzie, F.; Blažek, J.; Sotarauta, M.; Ayres, S. *Every Place Matters. Towards Effective Place-Based*; Routledge: London, UK, 2020.
19. Ministry of Regional Development Warsaw. *Territorial Dimension of EU Policy. Strategic Programming, Coordination and Institutions Territorially-Sensitive for an Efficient Delivery of the New Growth Agenda*; Ministry of Regional Development: Warsaw, Poland, 2011.
20. Nowakowska, A. Terytorializacja rozwoju i polityki regionalnej. In *Terytorialny Wymiar Polityki Regionalnej. Polskie Doświadczenia*; Nowakowska, A., Szlachta, J., Eds.; Biuletyn KPZK: Warsaw, Poland, 2017; pp. 26–38.
21. Ministry of Regional Development. *Place-Based Territorially Sensitive and Integrated Approach*; Ministry of Regional Development: Warsaw, Poland, 2013.
22. Camagni, R. Territorial capital and regional development. In *Handbook of Regional Growth and Development Theories*; Capello, R., Nijkamp, P., Eds.; Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham, UK, 2009; pp. 118–132.
23. Garcilazo, J.E.; Martins, J.O.; Tompson, W. Why Policies May Need to Be Place-Based in Order to Be People-Centred. *VOX EU*. 20 November 2010. Available online: <https://voxeu.org/article/why-policies-may-need-be-place-based-order-be-people-centred> (accessed on 15 September 2021).
24. Moodie, J.R.; Meijer, M.W.; Salenius, V.; Kull, M. Territorial governance and Smart Specialisation: Empowering the sub-national level in EU regional policy. *Territ. Politi. Gov.* **2021**, 1–21. [CrossRef]
25. Bentley, G.; Pugalis, L. Shifting paradigms: People-centred models, active regional development, space-blind policies and place-based approaches. *Local Econ.* **2014**, *29*, 283–294. [CrossRef]
26. Szlachta, J.; Zaucha, J. Wzmacnianie terytorialnego wymiaru polityki spójności w polsce w latach 2014–2020. In *Miasta—Metropolie—Regiony: Nowe Orientacje Rozwojowe*; Klasik, A., Kuźnik, F., Eds.; Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Katowicach: Katowice, Poland, 2014.
27. Churski, P. Podejście zorientowane terytorialnie (place-based policy)—Teoria i praktyka polityki regionalnej. *Rozw. Reg. Polityka Reg.* **2018**, *41*, 31–50.
28. Zaucha, J.; Brodzicki, T.; Ciołek, D.; Komornicki, T.; Mogiła, Z.; Szlachta, J.; Zaleski, J. *Terytorialny Wymiar Wzrostu i Rozwoju*; Dyfin: Warsaw, Poland, 2015.
29. Nowakowska, A. (Ed.) Zintegrowane plany rozwoju—W stronę terytorialno-funkcjonalnego podejścia do rozwoju jednostki terytorialnej. In *Nowoczesne Metody i Narzędzia Zarządzania Rozwojem Lokalnym i Regionalnym*; Uniwersytet Łódzki: Łódź, Poland, 2015.
30. Anczewska, M.; de Grandpré, J.; Mantzaris, N.; Stefanov, G.; Treadwell, K. *Just Transition to Climate Neutrality. Doing Right by the Regions*; WWF: Berlin, Germany, 2020. Available online: https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_just_transition_to_climate_neutrality_1.pdf (accessed on 6 June 2021).
31. Carodi, P. Recessions, recoveries and regional resilience: Evidence on Italy. *Camb. J. Reg. Econ. Soc.* **2014**, *8*, 273–291. [CrossRef]
32. Mustata, A. *Eight Steps for a Just Transition*; CEE Bankwatch: Bucharest, Romania, 2017. Available online: <https://bankwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/eight-steps-just-transition.pdf> (accessed on 10 August 2021).
33. Boschma, R.A.; Martin, R. Editorial: Constructing an evolutionary economic geography. *J. Econ. Geogr.* **2007**, *7*, 537–548. [CrossRef]
34. European Parliament; European Union. Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 Establishing the Just Transition Fund. 2021. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1056&from=EN> (accessed on 6 June 2021).
35. European Commission. The Just Transition Mechanism: Making Sure No One Is Left Behind. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/just-transition-mechanism_en (accessed on 7 June 2021).
36. Bankwatch Network. *Territorial Just Transition Plan Checklist, How to Make TJTPs Climate and People Driven*; Bankwatch Network: Prague, Czech Republic, 2020. Available online: <https://bankwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TJTP-checklist-1.pdf> (accessed on 8 June 2021).
37. Duckett, D.; Feliciano, D.; Martin-Ortega, J.; Munoz-Rojas, J. Tackling wicked environmental problems: The discourse and its influence on praxis in Scotland. *Landsc. Urban Plan.* **2016**, *154*, 44–56. [CrossRef]

38. European Commission. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European Code of Conduct on Partnership in the Framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds. 2014. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0240&from=EN> (accessed on 8 June 2021).
39. Śląskiego. Terytorialny Plan Sprawiedliwej Transformacji. *Województwo Śląskie, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Śląskiego*. 2021. Available online: <https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/content/terytorialny-plan-sprawiedliwej-transformacji1> (accessed on 5 July 2021).
40. Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska. *Polityka Energetyczna Polski do 2040 r*; Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska: Warsaw, Poland, 2021. Available online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/klimat/polityka-energetyczna-polski> (accessed on 8 June 2021).
41. Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Łódzkiego 2030. 2021. Available online: http://strategia.lodzkie.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SRWL-2030_6.05.2021_uchwalona.pdf (accessed on 12 July 2021).
42. Terytorialny Plan Sprawiedliwej Transformacji Województwa Łódzkiego (Projekt). 2021. Available online: http://strategia.lodzkie.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/projekt-Terytorialnego-Planu-Sprawiedliwej-Transformacji-WL_2021.06.29.pdf (accessed on 5 July 2021).
43. Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Śląskiego “Śląskie 2030”, Zielone Śląskie, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Śląskiego, Katowice. 2020. Available online: <https://www.slaskie.pl/content/strategia-rozwoju-wojewodztwa-slaskiego-slaskie-2030> (accessed on 5 July 2021).
44. Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Śląskiego. *Potencjały i Wyzwania Rozwojowe Województwa Śląskiego w Kontekście Sprawiedliwej Transformacji, Załącznik Diagnostyczny do TPST*; Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Śląskiego: Katowice, Poland, 2021.
45. Innobator Silesia. Regionalna Strategia Innowacji Województwa Śląskiego 2030 (PROJEKT). 2021. Available online: https://ris.slaskie.pl/czytaj/konsultacje_spoleczne_projektu_regionalnej_strategii_innowacji_wojewodztwa_slaskiego_2030 (accessed on 5 July 2021).
46. Innobator Silesia. Program Rozwoju Technologii Województwa Śląskiego na Lata 2019–2030, Katowice. 2019. Available online: <https://ris.slaskie.pl/dokument/program-rozwoju-technologie-wojewodztwa-slaskiego-na-lata-2019-2030> (accessed on 18 August 2021).
47. Umowa Społeczna Dotycząca Transformacji Sektora Górnictwa Węgla Kamiennego Oraz Wybranych Procesów Transformacji Województwa Śląskiego. 2021. Available online: <https://solidarnoskatowice.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Umowa-Spoleczna.pdf> (accessed on 10 August 2021).
48. Burchard-Dziubińska, M.; Kassenberg, A.; Kozakiewicz, M.; Pacura, J.; Rzeńca, A.; Sobol, A.; Szablewski, A. *Zielona Transformacja Albo Zapaść. Zagłębie Belchatowskie w Przededniu Zmian*; Źródła: Łódź, Poland, 2021. Available online: <https://api.ngo.pl/media/get/158170> (accessed on 15 September 2021).
49. Belchatow. Ośrodek Działań Ekologicznych “Źródła”. 2020. Available online: <https://belchatow2050.pl/> (accessed on 20 June 2021).
50. Dańkowska, A.; Sadura, P. *Przespana Rewolucja*; Krytyka Polityczna: Warsaw, Poland, 2021. Available online: <https://wydawnictwo.krytykapolityczna.pl/przespana-rewolucja-934> (accessed on 15 June 2021).
51. Harrahill, K.; Douglas, O. Framework development for ‘just transition’ in coal producing jurisdictions. *Energy Policy* **2019**, *134*, 110990. Available online: https://www.academia.edu/41622949/Framework_development_for_just_transition_in_coal_producing_jurisdictions (accessed on 20 June 2021). [CrossRef]
52. Bartecka, M. *Platforma Węglowa Jako Mechanizm Wspierania Sprawiedliwej Transformacji. Podstawowe Informacje*; Związek Stowarzyszeń Polska Zielona Sieć: Warsaw, Poland, 2019. Available online: <http://zielonasiec.pl/wp-content/uploads/Platforma-w%C4%99glowa.pdf> (accessed on 10 August 2021).
53. Kiewra, D.; Szpor, A.; Witajewski-Baltvilks, J. *Sprawiedliwa Transformacja Węglowa w Regionie Śląskim Implikacje dla Rynku Pracy*; Instytut Badań Strukturalnych: Warsaw, Poland, 2019. Available online: <https://ibs.org.pl/publications/sprawiedliwa-transformacja-weglowa-w-regionie-slaskim-implikacje-dla-ryнку-pracy/> (accessed on 25 June 2021).
54. Frankowski, J.; Mazurkiewicz, J. *Województwo Śląskie w Punkcie Zwrotnym Transformacji*; Instytut Badań Strukturalnych: Warsaw, Poland, 2020. Available online: <https://ibs.org.pl/publications/wojewodztwo-slaskie-w-punkcie-zwrotnym-transformacji/> (accessed on 25 June 2021).
55. Johanson, J.E.; Vakkuri, J. *Governing Hybrid Organisations. Exploring Diversity of Institutional Life*; Routledge: London, UK, 2017.
56. Sabato, S.; Fronteddu, B. *A Socially Just Transition through the European Green Deal*; ETUI Research Paper, Working Paper; The European Trade Union Institute: Brussels, Belgium, 2020.
57. Johnstone, P.; Newell, P. Sustainability transitions and the state. *Environ. Innov. Soc. Transit.* **2018**, in press. Available online: https://www.cssn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Johnstone_Newell_2017_sustainabilitytransitionsandthestate_EIST.pdf (accessed on 18 August 2021). [CrossRef]
58. Lockwood, M. Fossil fuel subsidy reform, rent management and political fragmentation in developing countries. *New Political Econ.* **2015**, *20*, 475–494. [CrossRef]
59. Moodie, J.; Tapia, C.; Löfving, L.; Gassen, N.; Cedergren, E. Towards a territorially just climate transition—Assessing the Swedish EU territorial just transition plan development process. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 7505. [CrossRef]