

**(Re)Framing adaptation research and practice in Portugal:
the case of ClimAdaPT.Local**

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Back in **2015**...

Paris Climate Change Conference (**COP21**) of the parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

New **Sustainable Development** Agenda, a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, structured around 17 **Sustainable Development** Goals (**SDGs**) and 169 integrated and indivisible targets

ClimAdaPT.Local - a jointly EEA Grants and Portuguese Government funded research project with the scope of providing Portuguese municipalities with Climate Change adaptation strategies at the local level

Context

Deepening **confluence of crises** (Steffen *et al.*, 2007; Steffen *et al.*, 2015; Bordo *et al.*, 2001)

Inaptitude of contemporary political arenas, institutions, development models and policy instruments **to effectively address the causes** underlying these crises (Bina, 2013; Ferrão, 2016a; Kolb, 2010: xx; Castles, 2004; Smith and Wiest, 2012) **and mitigate its negative impacts** (Akyüz, 2014)

Rising **call for structural change** that catalyses societal transformations towards **sustainability** has appeared concurrently with - or seemingly as a result of - the predominant neo-liberal capitalist, productivity- and growth-led hegemonic worldview (Haque, 1999; McMichael, 2010; Lorek and Spangenberg, 2014).

But...

what do we want to change into (i.e. ends - development)?

what do we need in order to secure such change (i.e. means - adaptation)?

Sustainable development (vs.) sustainability:

business as usual, ***reformist***, and ***paradigm shift*** (Dryzek, 2009; Bina, 2013).

CC adaptation research and practice:

resilience, ***transition*** or ***transformation*** (Pelling, 2011).

Adaptation research **today**...

- fragmented landscape: **no consensus** about its scope;
- mainly **focused** on **proximate causes and solutions**; technical, non-political, response-driven;
- Increasing interest in **governance**, decision-making, stakeholder and **politics** of adaptation;
- but...fails to exploit potential of adaptation as **testing ground for transformative**, paradigm shifting, alternative policy practices...

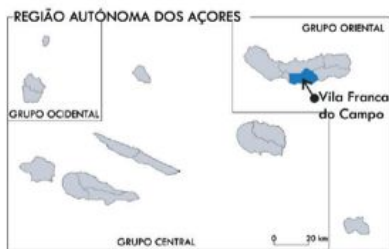
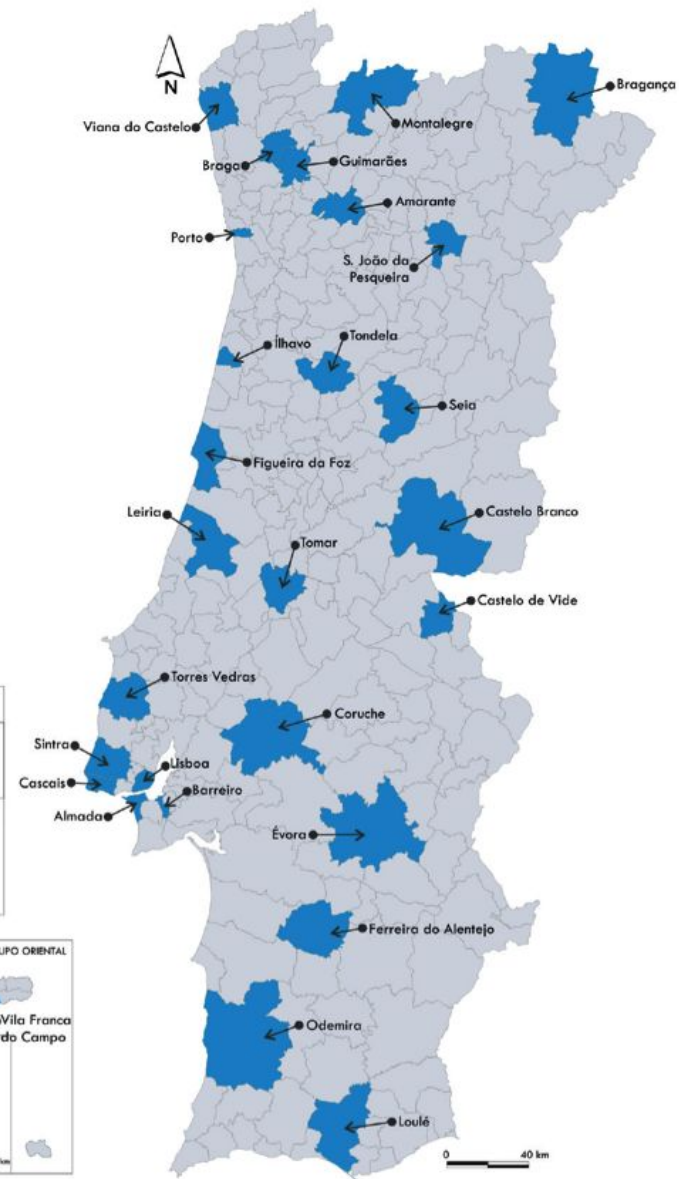
So....hope for **transformative adaptation**?

O'Brien (2012): do we actually have the possibility to **induce change** instead of only **adapting**?



ClimAdaPT.Local

Estratégias Municipais de Adaptação às Alterações Climáticas



Critical self-assessment

- ground-breaking!
- reinforced local **participatory culture**;
- enhanced **communication** capacity amidst stakeholders;
- **strengthened** administrative and institutional **capacity**;
- raised **local awareness** of current socio ecological challenges
- brought a much more **in-depth** debate about **sustainable development** to **local policy agendas**.

Critical self-assessment

but...

participatory dimension of the project hinted at inclusiveness, yet the **“what has to be discussed”** dimension not addressed...

nor the underlying causes that underpin the **urgency to adapt and change**, and how these issues could be **tackled locally**.

however,...

post-project flourishing National network for local adaptation!

Possible **facilitator** for broader **transformative action**? Next **ICS project**!