

Transforming territorial governance to make it transformative: reflections from and for action research for territorial development

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Abstract: The challenge of the climate emergency has highlighted the relevance of local transformative action for the development of new paths to sustainability, but also the relevance of the connection between the local and the global so that these paths have a real impact. Delving into this local-global connection is key for action research, and specifically, for Action research for territorial development (ARTD) and the Pedagogical approach (PA), two action research approaches that work from and for the territories, and which are the subject of analysis in this special issue. With the aim of contributing to deepening of this relationship, this article adapts the concept of *transformative governance* proposed by IPBES to build an actionable framework for reflection on the contribution of territorial development policies and research to transformative governance. It then analyses the IADT and the EP with this framework and suggests strengthening the critical dimension of facilitation so that these approaches are better adapted to the challenge of climate change.

Key words: action research, transformative change, governance, multilevel, sustainability, facilitation

Transformando la gobernanza territorial para hacerla transformadora: reflexiones desde y para la investigación acción para el desarrollo territorial

Resumen: El reto de la emergencia climática ha puesto de relevancia la acción local transformadora para el desarrollo de nuevos caminos a la sostenibilidad, pero también la relevancia de la conexión de lo local con lo global para que esos caminos tengan un impacto real. Profundizar en esa conexión es clave para la investigación acción, y en concreto, para las aproximaciones de la investigación acción para el desarrollo territorial (IADT) y el enfoque pedagógico (EP), enfoques de investigación acción que trabaja desde y para los territorios, y que son objeto de análisis en esta edición especial. Con el objetivo de contribuir a la profundización en esa relación, este artículo adapta el concepto de *gobernanza transformadora* propuesto por el IPBES para construir un marco accionable de reflexión sobre la contribución desde las políticas y la investigación del desarrollo territorial a la gobernanza transformadora. Analiza después la IADT y el EP con ese marco y sugiere fortalecer la dimensión crítica de la facilitación para que estos enfoques se adapten mejor al reto del cambio climático.

Palabras clave: investigación acción, cambio transformador, gobernanza, multinivel, sostenibilidad

1. Introduction

The climate emergency calls for the urgent development of new paths towards sustainability, which, in turn, requires profound changes in all spheres of society. Both the policy frameworks that guide global action in this area, like the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the academic communities that have worked on sustainable transitions, recognise the importance of local-level action in addressing this challenge. It is at the local level where, among other aspects, experimentation and social innovation can generate innovative and appropriate responses to local needs, where social, economic, and green agendas can be interweaved in collaborative processes, and where the foundations can be laid for a global change. It is also at the local level that the transformative power of action research can be deployed as a mechanism that facilitates creating and articulating collective responses and change strategies, as proposed by two action research approaches that have been developed in parallel but interconnected ways and which are focused on territory and territorial development: the pedagogical approach (PA) and action research for territorial development (ARTD).

Developed in Latin America, PA is a methodological framework aimed at establishing learning processes and capacity building in the territory. In ARTD, an approach to AR developed mainly in the Basque Country, research is viewed as a strategy for change that focuses on creating dialogue spaces between researchers and public policy actors to transform how the policies are drawn up. While these two frameworks were built based on and responding to the characteristics of the contexts in which they were developed, they have generated collaboration mechanisms that allow their interconnected development to respond to common challenges that underlie and transcend local specificities. One of these challenges is the need to adapt the frameworks, along with the processes and governance they promote, to respond to the challenge of the climate crisis.

PA and ARTD consider that territorial development, with its spaces for creating collective and shared strategies, can act as a counterpoint to the global dynamics underlying and perpetuating a system that must be changed to address the climate challenge (Larrea and Costamagna, 2023). However, they also consider that strengthening territorial capacities and positioning the territorial perspective in global agendas and debates requires more explicitly examining the relationship between the local and global levels and exploring the multilevel dimension of these frameworks (Larrea and Costamagna, 2023).

This text proposes an exercise in that direction. Drawing on the definition and proposal of *transformative governance* made by several authors within the framework of the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services published by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), I add a multilevel perspective and propose a simple framework to help us reflect on how territorial processes (research and/or policy processes) contribute to transformative governance. I then briefly reflect on how this framework questions PA and ARTD. Thus, my aim is to contribute to delving deeper into the multilevel dimension by conceptually connecting both scales (and different disciplines) so that it can benefit *us* and *them*.

I consider it relevant to clarify that I am a researcher who belongs to the ARTD community and who works in processes undertaken mainly with local and regional governments, accompanying the actors, i.e., policy actors. While these actors have little influence and decision-making capacity at the global level, they do have considerable influence and deci-

sion-making capacity in the territory. It is also possible to find this duality of margin-centre in ourselves as researchers in that although our capacity for global action is limited, and we even place ourselves on the margins of academic spaces, we may be influential actors in the territory. It is from this standpoint that I observe and experience the phenomenon of governance, reflecting on what we can do from this perspective and thus making proposals in this article.

2. Transformative governance for transformative change

The IPBES Report argues that the climate emergency requires transformative change, ‘*a fundamental, system-wide reorganisation across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values*’ (IPBES, 2019, p. 889). A transformation of such magnitude also demands the articulation of governance that orchestrates the change, *formal and informal (public and private) rules, rulemaking systems and actor networks at all levels of human society that enable transformative change, in our case towards sustainability* (Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2021, p.21); in other words, *transformative governance*.

The group of authors that have developed the concept, first in the report (IPBES, 2019) and later in an article (Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2021), propose that transformative governance (1) must be oriented to address the indirect drivers of environmental problems, i.e., elements that underlie the leading causes that produce change in the global ecosystem (change in the use of land and sea, direct exploitation of organisms, pollution, and climate change). These include demographic (population dynamics), sociocultural (such as consumption patterns), economic (such as trade), and technological, institutional and governance aspects, which are underpinned by social values and behaviours. (2) For the above, governance must manifest the incorporation of four principles: that is, governance must be integrative, pluralistic, adaptive, and inclusive.

Integrative governance refers to the need to govern different governance instruments and systems interdependently, taking into account that change must occur in multiple places, areas, and scales. To achieve this, it is essential to combine different instruments that address the multiple dimensions of any problem, coordinate so that there is coherence between sectors, levels, and places, and integrate the sustainable dimension into different policy areas and sectors. In short, it means tackling the problem in a comprehensive manner. The authors mentioned above underline the idea that many approaches tend to underestimate the political dimension of governance and assume that win-win situations can always occur. As they point out, and as ARTD and PA also assume (Larrea and Costamagna, 2023), this is not true, especially if we focus on the short term: agents with unsustainable practices will have to lose power. Therefore, it is particularly important that integrative governance is also inclusive.

Inclusive governance is based on encouraging the participation of “a wide range of rights holders, knowledge holders, and stakeholders” (Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2021, p.22) so that processes, policies, and actions can incorporate different values, contribute to increasing social capacity, and promote responsibility, legitimacy, and fairer results. Certain groups, interests, and values—such as marginalised communities and nature—tend to be under-represented. Therefore, it is essential to develop practices that include them, especially given

the potential pressure from actors with strong interests who may resist due to their possible loss of power. Promoting coalitions of underrepresented actors is one strategy the authors, as mentioned earlier, suggest to counteract the weight of powerful agents and interests. Through deliberative approaches and instruments for dialogue and collaboration, such as citizen assemblies, action research, and consensus conferences, visions and conflicts can be brought to the surface and built upon.

The conflicts, uncertainty, and complexity inherent to change justify the need for *adaptive governance*, that is, governance built on processes that foster resilience and continuous learning and enable adaptation. Such processes are fostered by incorporating feedback cycles, promoting networks of actors, and institutional and actor diversity. For example, articulating processes where diverse actors share information and spaces for dialogue and learning around a specific challenge they want to tackle (e.g., energy) could foster an adaptive system that adjusts to uncertainty and conflicts.

Pluralism is the fourth key principle for transformative governance. It implies “recognizing the multiple legitimate ways of knowing, defining, valuing, and representing biodiversity” (p.23) and also includes those that reflect non-Western visions of understanding nature and the environment. A crucial component of this is collective knowledge construction processes, such as spaces for dialogue and open debate between local actors, researchers and scientists about a specific local environmental challenge (e.g., energy infrastructure). However, as the authors point out, these types of processes are often problematic due to the potential incompatibility between the definitions, concepts, and practices of the knowledge systems used by politicians, scientists, professionals, and local communities. Additionally, there is a reluctance to accept visions coming from alternative knowledge that challenges the domain of science. Explicitly recognising differences is, therefore, essential for uniting these systems.

In short, a governance that aspires to be transformative must articulate a government system of interdependent actions, include the participation of the broadest spectrum of rights, knowledge, and stakeholders, foster a system that has the capacity to adapt based on learning, and be built on plural and diverse visions.

3. A multilevel view: from the global to the local, from the local to the global

From the territorial development perspective, we tend to look at governance from a multilevel lens, and we must continue to do so, especially when it comes to transformative governance. Since we conduct our research in specific spaces and processes that typically involve both research and policymaking, these processes directly affect territorial governance and, very indirectly, global governance. Furthermore, our work can also directly target the transformation of the institutions (norms and organisations) that are part of and sustain territorial or global governance. Thus, our activity (research and territorial development policies) is situated and developed at different scales, which in turn are affected by dynamics that occur at different levels. All of these can be the object of transformative action.

Let us focus, for example, on pluralism, which centrally challenges the knowledge co-generation processes that are the basis of ARTD and – in theory – of many territorial development processes. In an interesting multilevel heuristic framework on the relationship between science and policy, Hoppe, Wesselink, and Cairns (2013) note the importance of the political-cultural sphere for understanding how different types of knowledge interact and are integrated into public decisions. The cultural-political sphere “describes a specific governance space that coordinates the production, dissemination, and acceptability of knowledge for public decisions” (p.287). Implicitly or explicitly, this manifests a public epistemology, i.e., a vision of the legitimacy and validity of the knowledge of different agents (citizens, professionals, bureaucrats, and experts). There is a dominant macro epistemology, which prioritises certain types of knowledge over others, alongside an epistemology of specific spheres that shape how these different types of knowledge – and the people who embody them – interact in specific spaces, processes, and projects. For instance, a global culture that prioritises expert knowledge is also replicated in certain territorial contexts, while in others, citizens’ voices are given greater weight for public decisions. Hoppe and colleagues (2013) argue that, in the context of global climate policies, it is essential to understand the relationship between global cultures and local epistemologies to see how knowledge generated in one is interpreted in another.

For us, at the local level, it may be equally important to become aware of these epistemologies since they affect which people – who represent different types of knowledge – are integrated into the knowledge cogeneration processes that we articulate or where we participate; they also influence how the dialogue is developed – or not – between those types of knowledge. The former is more obvious and easier to see and solve, whereas the latter is much more subtle but equally important. In this sense, as Miranda Fricker’s (2007) work on epistemic injustice points out, people’s capacity to contribute to collective knowledge can be reduced through different means, like through testimonial injustice – a mechanism by which a person’s contributions are not taken into account because they have a lack of legitimacy in the ears of who is listening. Indeed, I have participated in processes where epistemologies that prioritised theoretical expertise over other types of knowledge have influenced how one interacts with the other in policy cogeneration processes. This can lead to situations where not only those who hold theoretical knowledge subtly delegitimise other types of knowledge, hindering their use in collective processes, but also where other types of knowledge do not even emerge, possibly because their holders do not value them; eventually, in a kind of aspirational exercise, they all end up dialoguing with the language and norms of the expert knowledge system. And in the end – using the words of a colleague – “everybody is a philosopher”. In this way, I have witnessed cogeneration processes where, although hierarchical power officially lost its relevance, this power took the form of knowledge, generating new – or rather, renewed – hierarchies. It is, therefore, crucial to detect, understand, and address these dynamics to transform processes and governance. The recent work by Larrea (2024) offers an enormous and valuable contribution to counteracting these dynamics since it sheds light on and systematises visions that generate practices that affect pluralism, and which are usually very difficult to detect and, consequently, to address due to their subtlety.

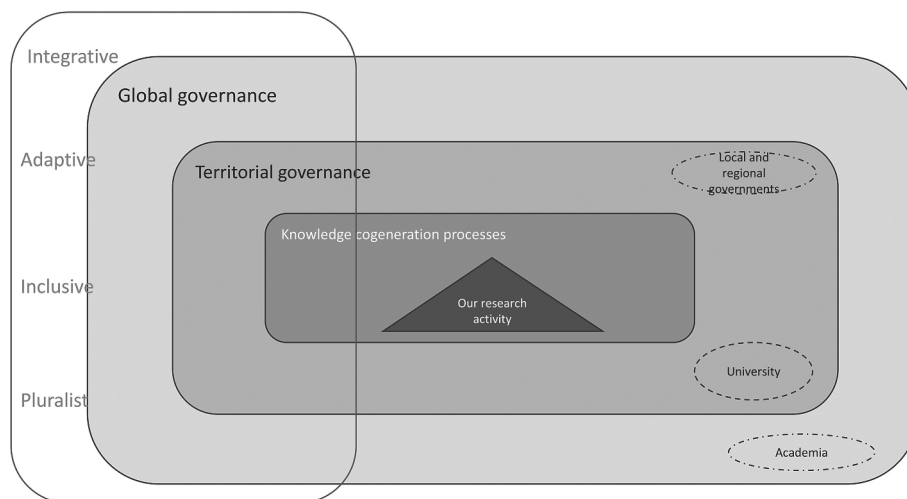
Placing ourselves on the territorial scale, we must consider that the university is not only another institution of territorial governance but also one that generates, perpetuates, or transforms knowledge systems and contributes to building political-cultural spheres. Currently, “hermeneutical and structural injustice” operates at universities (Boni and Velasco,

2020, p. 23), with disciplinary and codified knowledge taking precedence and tacit knowledge losing value. In my own experience, I have participated in spaces where research approaches that move away from positivist knowledge paradigms are delegitimised under premises that rigidly define what counts as valid knowledge and what does not. Through such practices, the university also strengthens belief systems that later influence public space. In this regard, transforming the university towards greater methodological pluralism and openness to different types of knowledge can, in turn, be an action towards transformative governance.

Placing ourselves on a global scale, our actions towards transformation can be articulated through our participation in international and interlocal academic networks and communities of practice. As researchers, we take part in academic networks and policy organisations that have their own rules and beliefs about how knowledge is constructed; we organise conferences that generate thinking and exchanges between certain people and not others; we read and build on academic works and are involved in deciding which ideas have the greatest resonance, for example, due to an issue of language (see Brixner, Romano and Zabala-Iturriagoitia 2021); and we occupy spaces that others do not. By exercising this participation in global networks more consciously, we can contribute to building more pluralistic governance.

Taking all the above into account, we can establish a framework that helps us generate reflexivity about our contribution to transformative governance by applying a multi-level perspective (Illustration 1) so as to consider how we are contributing to transforming governance in our processes, the contexts and organisations in which these are developed, and also from a macro-level perspective.

Illustration 1. Different levels of transformative action from research in territorial development



Source: author's own elaboration

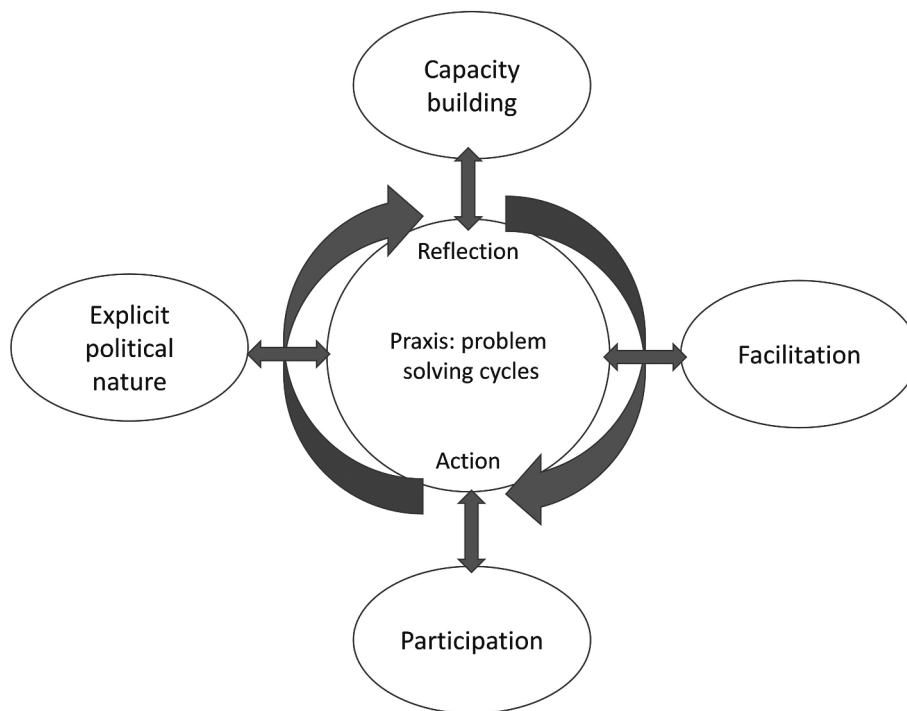
4. Towards a more critical and transformative facilitation in ARTD and PA

The previous framework is intended to be an instrument for reflecting on our personal and collective practice in research and territorial development. With that aim, and as someone who belongs to the ARTD community, I do a brief exercise in this section on how the framework aligns with ARTD and PA and how it challenges them.

In their principles and intervention approaches, both ARTD and PA contribute to promoting transformative governance (see summary in Table 1). This alignment becomes visible when considering the elements that Larrea and Costamagna (2023) identify as the main contributions of ARTD and PA for addressing the climate challenge: i) new modes of participation. ii) praxis. iii) capacity development, iv) facilitation, and v) making explicit conflict and politics (Illustration 2).

Promoting participatory processes constitutes a central axis of territorial development in ARTD and PA. For Larrea and Costamagna (2023), *participation* can also be the means to strengthen democracy, build knowledge more fairly, generate awareness of change, and seek agreements for action in the context of the climate emergency. Thus, from the new lens that I explore in this text, we can consider that territorial development spaces can be the spaces in which to develop more integrative, inclusive, adaptive, and pluralistic governance.

2. Illustration. Elements of PA and ARTD that can help generate processes against the climate emergency



Source: Larrea and Costamagna (2023, p.18)

Praxis not only serves as a means to break away from the traditional division between theory and practice and between different knowledge systems but also as the axis on which the continuous cycles of reflection and action are supported. According to Larrea and Costamagna (2023), praxis can help better understand sustainability challenges and generate actionable knowledge. Undoubtedly, praxis embodies pluralism as a principle of knowledge construction (pluralism) and can also allow a more holistic approach to challenges using interdependent measures (integration). Furthermore, continuous processes of reflection and action build collective knowledge in action (Karlsen and Larrea, 2015), or in other words, resilient collective capacity to respond to emerging challenges (adaptation).

Both of these approaches also recognise that behind all territorial development issues lie different visions of society and that *making explicit the politics* of territorial development is crucial. Larrea and Costamagna (2023) consider that this is key in the context of the climate crisis in order to raise questions about different societal models underlying the various responses to the climate emergency. Doing so is also a way to delve into the inclusive and pluralistic dimension of governance (inclusion and pluralism) since acknowledging the political dimension of problems and the people who participate in their definition and solutions should lead to the consequent search for spaces where different visions are represented.

The focus on the *construction of territorial, individual, and collective capacities* is also a fundamental contribution of ARTD and PA in the framework of the climate emergency in Larrea and Costamagna's (2023) proposal. The authors especially point to the need to establish learning spaces between knowledge generation centres and political decision-makers, in addition to addressing the integration of citizens and social movements. This also aligns with the transformative governance framework in that generating capacities for transformation is essential within the context of transformative governance (pluralism).

1. Table. Axes of transformative governance and contributions of ARTD and PA

Axes and operationalisation		Contributions from ARTD and PA
Governance axis/approach	Forms of operationalisation in transformative governance	
INTEGRATIVE Interdependently governs diverse governance instruments and systems	Includes diverse strategies focused on indirect drivers Requires coordination, integration, and combination strategies	Participatory processes as a means of coordination Praxis to understand and address challenges more holistically
INCLUSIVE Participation of "a wide range of rights holders, knowledge holders, and stakeholders" so that diverse values are incorporated, capacity is increased, and accountability, legitimacy, and fair outcomes are promoted.	Face power asymmetries Empowers holders of underrepresented rights, knowledge, and interests Recognises new rights of innovators Emancipates those who represent values of transformation	Participatory processes to integrate differences Makes explicit the politics of the challenge and its solutions
ADAPTIVE Fosters resilience, seeking opportunities for continuous learning so that governance can adapt to uncertainty, conflict, and the inherent complexity of change	Stimulates dialogue, learning, and reflection Reflects the complexity of change	Participatory processes as spaces for learning and collective action Makes explicit the politics of territorial development and managing conflict Praxis for promoting cycles of reflection and action and for constructing a collective capacity for action
PLURALISTIC Builds on the recognition of the multiple ways of knowing, defining, valuing, and representing biodiversity	Reflects the diversity of values, perspectives, and knowledge systems	Participatory processes that serve as a space for articulating different people who represent different types of knowledge

Axes and operationalisation		Contributions from ARTD and PA
Governance axis/approach	Forms of operationalisation in transformative governance	
	Adopts collaborative knowledge production systems Builds capacities for transformative governance	Cogeneration and reflection and action Focuses on building individual and collective capabilities

Source: author’s own elaboration based on Visseren-Hamakers et al., (2021) and Larrea and Costamagna (2023)

Facilitation is the gear that makes the other elements work. In other words, it is what creates participation spaces, makes explicit different positions, and articulates capacity-building processes and cycles of reflection and action. The facilitative person (or people) assumes the role of “generating conditions so that the actors of territorial development can reflect, decide, and take action” (Larrea and Costamagna, 2023, p.19), and this figure is key in the transitions. It is in this dimension – and through it in all the others- that it is worthwhile asking: Does the transformative character of the governance required by the climate emergency challenge facilitation?

Fostering participatory governance has been central in ARTD and PA as they envision territorial development itself as a mobilisation of actors. Moreover, the processes of collective construction are nuclear in action research. Thus, it is not surprising that the transformative governance proposal aligns with the ARTD and PA approaches. However, the transformation capacity needed to transition from participatory and collaborative forms of governance to transformative governance may rest on the extent and depth to which some characteristics of transformation are integrated into ARTD and PA. More concretely, the transformative governance proposal suggests that what is needed is a type of facilitation that not only creates participatory and collective learning spaces for decision-making and action but that especially plays a critical role in ensuring the integration of diverse systems of knowledge and interests, and facilitating appropriate dialogue between them. Moreover, this facilitation must confront power asymmetries and promote holistic visions that lead to integrative measures. In sum, a facilitator figure with a critical and reflective vision of how the territorial processes are contributing to transformative governance and responding to the climate emergency.

Therefore, paving the way towards more transformative governance modes in our territories could rest on focusing specifically on the elements that provide the (collaborative) governance of our territorial processes with a transformative character, and on broadening our vision and thinking about the consequences of our actions both on a territorial level and on a larger scale. Along this path, there are many questions that a facilitator can raise and that we can ask ourselves. Table 2 includes some questions that can help us begin to generate greater reflexivity in our practices in response to the climate emergency.

2. Table. Some questions for facilitating towards transformative governance

Governance axes	Some questions to consider for critical and reflective facilitation and action regarding the climate emergency	
	Our territorial research and development processes and territorial governance	Global Governance
INTEGRATIVE Interdependently govern diverse governance instruments and systems	To what extent is the sustainability dimension introduced into the spaces of territorial development? To what extent are the underlying causes of the climate emergency analysed, discussed, and addressed, and how are these translated into actions by territorial development actors in these spaces?	How are we contributing to inclusion, adaptation, integration, and pluralism in global governance? What does it mean for our practice? Which ideas do we echo in our work, and which do we not? Who participates in the academic and/or professional networks in which we participate, and what systems do they promote? Etc. (...)
INCLUSIVE Participation of “a broad spectrum of rights, knowledge, and interest holders” so that diverse values are captured, capacity is increased, and accountability, legitimacy, and fair outcomes are promoted.”	Who participates in defining the problems and solutions, therefore putting their vision on the table to build the answers in our processes? Whose rights, knowledge, and interests do they represent? Who is missing? I.e., what vision, what themes, and what people? To what extent are the different underlying models being discussed in the processes? Are there power asymmetries in our processes? How are we addressing them? How are we helping to ensure that those who promote transformation have a place in it? How are we helping to ensure that the university spaces we participate in are inclusive? How are we, as researchers, using the power derived from the legitimacy of our role?	
ADAPTIVE Governance that fosters resilience, seeking opportunities for continuous learning so that it can adapt to un-	What type of dialogue is stimulated in the processes? How are we stimulating reflection in the institutions in which we participate?	

Governance axes	Some questions to consider for critical and reflective facilitation and action regarding the climate emergency	
	Our territorial research and development processes and territorial governance	Global Governance
certainty, conflict, and the inherent complexity of change		
PLURALISTIC A governance that is built on the recognition of the multiple ways of knowing, defining, valuing, and representing biodiversity“	Do our processes reflect diverse values, perspectives, and knowledge systems? How are these types of knowledge being discussed? Are there power asymmetries in these dialogues? Are different types of knowledge being recognised and integrated? If this is not the case, how can this be improved? How are we working on capacity building? Who needs it and what for? How are we contributing to pluralism at the university? As researchers, how do we understand – and exercise or have exercised – our role and that of others?	

Source: author’s own elaboration

5. Final considerations: from *us, here and now* to *others, there and then*

Larrea and Costamagna (2023) propose exploring the multilevel dimension of governance more deeply so that ARTD and PA can contribute to addressing the climate emergency challenge. The question of how the different governance spaces, spheres, and scales of intervention should be articulated and what their role should be in tackling the climate challenge is a topic that is currently at the centre of academic debates on transitions and is a very complex and difficult one to resolve. The invitation of Larrea and Costamagna (2023) to delve deeper into this dimension in the field of territorial development is equally complex, and its response must be under continuous construction.

This text represents a small contribution from the perspective of an ARTD community member who works from and with institutions of institutionalised governance for territorial

and regional development and looks at this particular challenge from that place. From that standpoint, and with an action orientation, I have proposed to start looking at the relationship between the global and the local levels.

On the one hand, my proposal is to use the concept of transformative governance (developed in the context of a global organisation) as a framework to review our contribution and to guide action (from global to local). This invites us to consider the extent to which the territorial governances we foster are integrative, inclusive, adaptive, and plural. On the other hand, I suggest including a more explicit multilevel lens in the framework to make the different scales visible. By doing so, I aim to provide a broader reflexivity framework for our practice, as well as contributing from our local praxis to global thinking and actions. This approach offers an actionable and multilevel character to a global framework (from the local to the global).

Much of the actions required to tackle the climate emergency will and must occur outside our intervention areas (research and territorial development policies). Nevertheless, the spaces where we participate and that we promote (from research, from policies) can also incorporate and contribute to transformative governance. As described in the article, PA and ARDT are built on axes that provide an approach for articulating and facilitating processes that can lead towards it. However, the type of transformation the climate challenge demands would suggest the need for a facilitation approach where the critical dimension ¹acquires greater weight. This is necessary in order to pay attention to the sometimes subtle issues that can differentiate collaborative governance from transformative governance, which places a greater focus on a paradigm shift.

A paradigm shift necessarily requires building awareness of the effects of our current practices and actions. Awareness about interdependence is central to that. There is a strong tendency in our territorial development, regional development, and innovation spaces to fail to see beyond ourselves, that is, to not consider the implications of our actions and policies on other people in other places and on other generations. Perhaps the key for the future lies in starting to look at others instead of only looking at ourselves. In ARTD and PA, the recognition of the other is the essence of their praxis, but it is usually a close other, a territorial *other*. In light of the climate emergency, I wonder if this recognition should not be extended to those who are more distant; that is, making visible those who are more distant and invisible so we consider how our actions, *here and now* are influencing others, *there and now*, and *here and later*. This could be part of the *pedagogy of the privileged* that we proposed in our work in the field of territorial development and policies (Arrona, 2020), which sought to raise awareness among ourselves, “the privileged”, about the implications of our frameworks, actions, and policies. The multilevel framework proposed is also an attempt to contribute towards that aim.

The *pedagogy of the privileged* challenges us all. When writing this text, I was continuously haunted by an idea: perhaps looking at others should also make us consider and discern when our actions contribute, when we should stop occupying spaces so that others can occupy them, and when to be silent so that others can speak.

1 At ARTD we have conceptualised the researcher’s role as *soft resistance*, a balance between the relational and critical dimensions (see Arrona and Larrea, 2019). This is extendable to any facilitator who promotes processes.

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