

# ACCORD - Aligning risks and coping appraisals to kick off local climate action

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Involvement of stakeholders

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Why are some communities active in climate change adaptation and others not?

## Introduction

ACCORD explores differences in risk appraisal of climate-induced change among local actors in climate-active and inactive communities to improve the effectiveness of climate policy by promoting a common understanding. It integrates Protection Motivation Theory with climate governance to address research gaps and enhance policy efficacy.

### Research Questions:

- How do local actors in climate active and inactive municipalities differ with regard to their risk and coping appraisal?
- How can a shared understanding of climate risk and coping potential increase the uptake and effectiveness of climate policy instruments and local climate action?

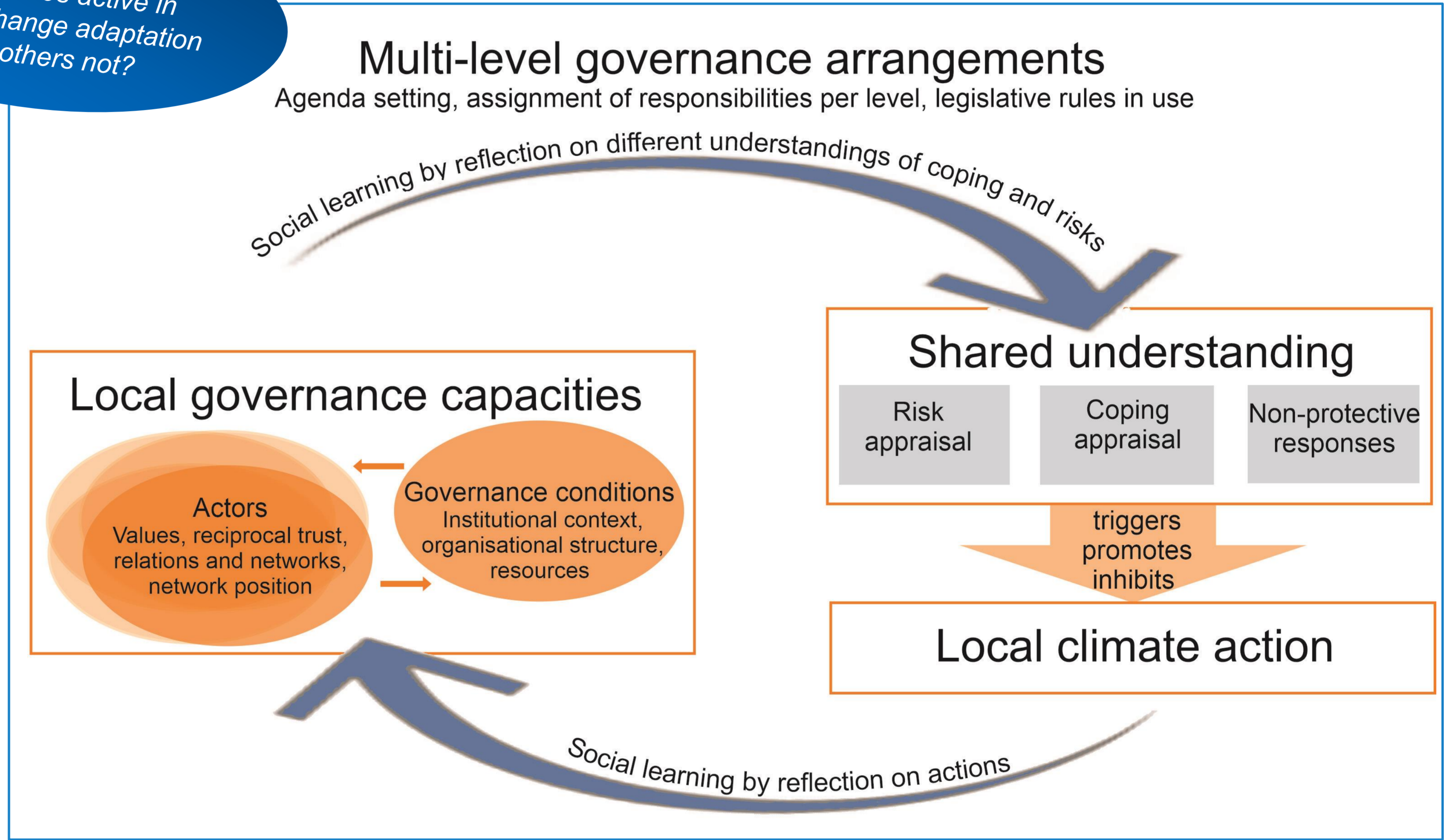


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework (own processing)

## Research Design

ACCORD focuses on the natural hazards **heat and drought** and investigates 6 municipalities (1.500 - 4.000 inh.) in two most-similar case study regions:

- Region Römerland Carnuntum
- Region Weinviertel (both Lower Austria)

Selected municipalities differ in terms of climate related activities:

- **two frontrunners** and
- **four potential municipalities** – two as a control group and two municipalities with experimental participatory intervention.

## Climate action for adaptation

	Frontrunner municipalities	Potential municipalities
<b>Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Precautionary check</b> for natural hazards</li> <li>– <b>Historical analysis</b> of municipal council minutes and local newspapers</li> <li>– 24 stakeholder <b>interviews</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Precautionary check</b> for natural hazards</li> <li>– <b>Historical analysis</b> of municipal council minutes and newspaper</li> <li>– 12+9 stakeholder <b>interviews</b></li> <li>– 2 co-creation <b>workshops</b> per municipality as experimental interventions to foster shared understanding and map actions</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b>	<p><b>Shared understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Climate change <b>perceptions</b> mainly based on <b>personal observations</b></li> <li>– Awareness of <b>heat and drought increase</b></li> <li>– Local policymakers take <b>responsibility</b> for CCA and CCM measures in their local sphere of influence</li> <li>– Decisionmakers undertook numerous CCA and CCM activities in the last ten years</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance capacities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Municipal self-image drives climate action</li> <li>– Decisionmakers are informed with clear priorities in addressing natural hazards</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shared understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Personal awareness of heat and drought, but <b>not</b> perceived as <b>problematic</b></li> <li>– Climate change perception mainly relies on <b>personal observation</b></li> <li>– <b>Contradictory</b> picture regarding adequate measures related to CCA</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance capacities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Weak social cohesion and networks as barrier to forming actor coalitions</li> <li>– Low importance of climate active self-image</li> <li>– Despite environmental convictions, feelings of powerlessness and resignation prevail</li> </ul>

## Overarching findings

- Heat and drought are gradual processes and are therefore not yet recognized as a problem
- Shared risk appraisal is a necessary but not sufficient component of shared understanding
- Mayors have a central role as coordinator, linking different actor groups (--> social capital)
- Trust and social networks within the community are critical for municipal governance capacities
- eNu (Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria) links the local with the federal governance level and turned out to be an important source of information as well as network builder for municipalities
- In particular during the transdisciplinary discourse on coping opportunities, the depth of information provided has to be consciously aligned to the pre-knowledge and level of activity of the local actors