European Peripheries between stagnation and awakening

“Why do some regions succeed and others don’t?

Examples of two peripheral regions in Portugal”

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Portugal itself is considered as on the periphery of Europe but some regions in the country are more dynamic than others. The examples that will be presented are both located in the province of Beira, along the border with Spain. Whilst Castelo Branco, in South Beira, ranks as the second area in Portugal with the best quality of life and shows some interesting dynamics, Almeida, in North Beira, seems to stagnate.

What are the factors that promote the apparent success of the first? What is undermining the development of the latter? Both receive support from the EU! This paper will tackle the reasons for this absurdity based on a recent study by OECD and personal interactions with the local authorities and selected institutions.

Moreover, examples of “smart” projects developed in both areas will depict scenarios for the future that may bring hope for a smiling future.

Finally it will be argued that much can be achieved based on the local initiative and entrepreneurial capacity, establishing active national and international networks and launching creative investment, namely crowdfunding.

The commitment of the younger generation in this effort of innovation and building up of conditions that may allow them to settle down is essential for the safeguard of their own expectancies, as some well proven examples will illustrate.