

The use of weather types to study changes in present and future circulation over Northwest Iberian Peninsula

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Circulation types are associated with surface climatic variables, like precipitation or temperature. Consequently, circulation types can also be a useful tool not only to validate the control simulations of the coupled general circulation models (CGCM) but also to analyse changes in the circulation patterns under future climate change scenarios. In this study, the circulation type used was an automated version of the Lamb weather types adopted with success for the NW Iberian Peninsula in 2008 by Lorenzo et al.

Mean seasonal circulation type frequencies for the period 1948-2008 were computed. Linear trends were analysed taking into account not only all period of analysis but also for two sub-periods (1948-1975 and 1976-2008); these two sub-periods are coincident with a general change in circulation in the Northern Hemisphere (Trenberth, 1990; Ramos et al, 2009).

We have also studied changes in WT frequency in future climate change scenarios based on the output runs of several GCMs used for the IPCC 4AR. The chosen models were the IPSL-CM4; the ECHAM5/MPI-OM and the CCSM3 motivated by the availability of the daily data. To do so, we have used Sea Level Pressure (SLP) data from different forcing simulations corresponding to three emission scenarios representing low (B1), medium (A1B) and high (A2) concentration of CO₂ and from a 20th century control simulation.

The difference between the seasonal mean SLP fields of three models and the reanalysis are computed in order to evaluate the ability of the models to reproduce the present climate. After assessing the behaviour of the three models in the 20th century, we examine changes in the frequency of the circulation types for the three scenarios A1B, B1 and A2. The differences between the respective control run (1961-1999) and the 3 models are accessed and discussed for two future periods of analysis: 2046-2065 and 2081-2099 (Lorenzo et al, 2011).

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