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Beyond the "Decarbonization Consensus": The Ethics and Practices of Sympoiesis



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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Alejandro Mora Motta
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Cátia Cardoso
Christiane Woopen
Christopher McCarty
Corinna Burkhart
Claudia Palechort
Dányi Tibor
Dennis Avilés Irahola
Diego Hernando Florez-Ayala
Ekatherina Zhukova
Emilia Fernengel
Ela Callorda Fossati
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Jonas Egmose *paper1* & *paper2*
Joana Canelas
Joana Roque Pinho
John Clammer
Joseph Tzanopoulos
Juliana Melo
Lasse Kos *paper1* & *paper2*
Linus Eckert
Luis F. Sarango Macas
Luís Filipe Olival
Marc Jaquinet
Marcelo Garglia
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Mariana Riquito *panel* & *paper*
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Rebeca Roysen
Richard ole Supeet
Robert Fish
Rogério Duarte
Rogério Amaro *paper* & *paper2*
Roman Hausmann
Ruth Sander
Sara Sacur
Shobana Sharma
Sigrid Stalg
Sílvia Barbosa *panel* & *indiv.*
Stanley ole Neboo
Sunna Kovanen
Troy Sternberg
Yilson Beltrán-Barrera
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ABSTRACTS

The Sympoiesis of "Created" Ecosystem Services in Cities: Rethinking the Role of Urban Commons

Alexandre Guttmann [1]

1 Associate Professor, ICD Business School, Paris, France

Traditional ecosystem services are typically autopoietic inasmuch as they are self-produced and self-regulating. While environmentalists have long recognized the importance of ecosystem services to our societal well-being by providing the biosphere sustaining life, they are also aware of the risk of commodifying nature when subjecting ecosystem services to market valuation (e.g. ecotourism, bioprospecting).

As we face climate change and the ecological transition, the need arises for an additional category of sympoietic ecosystem services. These come about especially from community-led decarbonization initiatives spawning urban commons as spaces for such "created" ecosystem services as, for example, urban resiliency farms establishing local food distribution networks in food desert areas or urban greening initiatives to counter the acceleration of urban warming.

This paper argues that decarbonization solutions in densely populated urban settings will necessarily involve a variety of "created" ecosystem services reconnecting highly urbanized societies with nature. Their creation is best assured by urban commons driving their sympoiesis as collective-governance resource creation and sustenance systems. Our discussion is supported by case studies of urban commons that successfully address carbon-related issues through the creation of ecosystem services.

Keywords: *Decarbonization, Urban commons, Ecosystem Services, Sympoiesis*

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Post-patriarchal futures: Articulation of gender relations in protests around copper mining in Latin America

Alina Meike Heuser [1]

1 Prae-Doc University Assistant, University of Vienna, Austria

Departing from decolonial and feminist approaches within Political Ecology, a deepening of social and intersectional intertwined inequalities in extractive contexts are observed due to land dispossession and unequal environmental and social benefits and structural vulnerabilities linked to gender and ethnicity. As a consequence of mining activity, indigenous and peasant women experience multiple forms of violence against their bodies and territories. At the same time, they play a key role in collective processes of defending commons and livelihoods and link territorial demands with demands for more just gender relations based on Andean cosmovision. This proposal seeks to analyse the articulation of gender relations in protest movements against mining extractivism in Latin America through an ethnographic case study in the Southern mining corridor of Peru. Which forms of stigmatization and gender-based violence, changing care responsibilities but also ways to overcome patriarchal structures, do environmental defender experience within and without their communities? Which post-human and post-patriarchal and decolonial alternatives are provided in the defence of body-territories? The proposal is based on nine months of ethnographic research (qualitative interviews, participant observation, collaborative

workshops) following a participatory and decolonial approach to knowledge production and aims to foster practices of defending commons, territories and bodies in contexts of extractivism.

Keywords: *gender, extractivism, protest, post-patriarchal futures, decoloniality.*

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Co-creating livable worlds: weaving together community art practices and ecological regeneration

Panel Session Earth

Álvaro Fonseca [1] André Fausto [2] Graça Corrêa [3] Sílvia Barbosa [4]

1 Independent researcher; member of the Portuguese Degrowth Network
2 Actor and community artist; co-coordinator at Casa-Árvore: Laboratório de Arte Comunitária e Ecologia/Home-Tree: Community Art and Ecology Lab
3 Researcher affiliated with CFCUL-FCUL and CET-FLUL
4 Permaculture designer and educator - Aldeia do Vale projeto agroecológico

CASA-ÁRVORE / HOME-TREE is an action research project that explores relevant elements for cooperation between artists, ecologists, social agents, local communities and researchers aiming at local ecological intervention. It is focused on communication and on how art in connection to our own body and Nature may promote collective learning and an empowerment space.

The evolution of Home-Tree, as developed in a pilot-project in Sintra, Cascais and Lisbon - https://casa-arvore.weebly.com/ - starts from the Root (Laboratory Theatre), proceeds to Leaf (education in Permaculture), then Fruit (Community Theater), and rounds off in Seed (multidisciplinary research). This mainframe provided the tools for community intervention in public spaces through the planting of trees and artistic practices.

The participants in this panel are all team members of the Home-Tree project and will provide an alternating discursive or performative overview of the project's core values, goals and practices with local communities and public institutions. The diverse areas of expertise and practice that were interwoven during the different project's research, educational or performative events will hopefully become apparent in the presentations as poetic, visual, natural and reflective materials rise in interaction with the audience.

Donna Haraway's concept of sympoiesis seems particularly useful in conveying the approach undertaken by the Home-tree project, as well as in providing a framework for collaborative practices involving different areas of knowledge, such as this one. We have also invoked Natasha Myers's manifesto "How to grow livable worlds" to emphasize the project's close affinity with the author's call to conjure other worlds within this world and to learn other ways to see, feel and know, through art, experiment and radical disruption, and specifically by promoting plant/people conspiracies. This seems to open possibilities for the needed local and global eco-social transformation as we learn together - through creative, inclusive and practical education - ecocentric regeneration.

Keywords: *performative arts, ecological ethics, regenerative agriculture, ecocentric aesthetics, community-based local action*

Nurturing an ecological ethics and aesthetics

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Earth

Álvaro Fonseca [1]

1 Independent researcher; member of the Portuguese Degrowth Network, Portugal

Our view of the world, which informs the way we act on it, is culturally constructed, that is, it is conditioned by ideas and rationalizations that do not necessarily represent what the world is in reality. The dominant worldview was fostered by the European Enlightenment and colonial expansion, and later by the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent rise and spread of Capitalism. It was built on the misguided views of human exceptionalism and mechanistic reductionism. The dire consequences of such a path are now blatantly apparent in the so-called global environmental and social crises. But the deep causes of this predicament are rooted in our disconnection from the more-than-human world. However, the possibility of a healing reentanglement was always in plain view and has been nurtured by the cosmologies and practices of various indigenous cultures, as well as by more interconnected and sensitive ways of being in the world.

The dispelling of the ecocidal worldview, often expressed through the concept of the Anthropocene (but also Capitalocene or Plantationocene), requires not only going beyond the fragmented rationalizations that we have constructed through our specialized epistemologies (biology, anthropology, sociology, etc.), but also fostering a deeper sensitivity to the more-than-human world.

I intend to briefly summon some of the ideas put forward by systemic thinkers such as Gregory Bateson, David Abram, Sacha Kagan, Natasha Myers or Donna Haraway, as a means to decolonize our anthropocentric imaginaries and build an ecological ethics and aesthetics, which, in turn, may help to foster ecosystems of practices and/or micropolitical actions aimed at growing livable worlds. Haraway's concept of sympoiesis seems particularly useful in providing a framework for collaborative practices involving different areas of knowledge, such as the one undertaken by the Casa-Árvore/Home-Tree project.

Song of a Tree

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Earth

André Fausto [1]

1 Actor and community artist; co-coordinator at Casa-Árvore: Laboratório de Arte Comunitária e Ecologia/Home-Tree: Community Art and Ecology Lab, Portugal

Research on Community Artistic Practices and their impacts on society has seen a growing increase in recent decades, as a field of learning both at its intersection with other artistic

areas and with other fields of knowledge. The possibility of improving communities through collective action, empowerment and inclusive and creative participation animates this discussion that crosses the areas of Education, Social Action, Activism and Personal/Collective Development [Jan Cohen-Cruz, François Matarasso, Augusto Boal]. Matarasso directly associates community arts with community development. At a national level there is a noticeable gap in both the practice and knowledge production.

This is also the case of Laboratory Theater and Theatrical Anthropology, which centers their theory and practice on the body and action of the performer [Jerzy Grotowsky, Eugenio Barba]. The relationship between Laboratory Theater and Community Theater and, mainly, its focus on eliminating psychophysical blocks to expression provides elements for a creative process with a participatory and ecocentric matrix. This presentation spawns from these two main elements in articulation with needed ecological action [Ailton Krenak, Félix Guattari, Bill Mollison].

Recent ecodramaturgy and ecocriticism have argued and discovered the need for the Arts to establish a relationship with Ecology. The current situation of eco-social crisis requires that the Arts and Theater, in particular, assume their role in reinventing the world. From the point of view of the creative process, it is not about creating ecological discourses, but rather about exploring dialogical practices through which humans and non-humans can create heterogeneous community learning spaces [Natasha Myer, Jonas Egmose, Donna Haraway].

What happens when artistic and ecological practices come together? This is one of the core questions of the ongoing action research HOME-TREE / CASA-ÁRVORE. As we weave art and ecology we are trying to cocreate more solidary and abundant inner and outer worlds. This is a very fragile and complex border that encompasses many difficulties regarding specialization, legal and institutional frameworks, social interactions and body/mental mechanization and uniformization.

In this presentation, the focus is on both Laboratory Theatre and Community-based Theatre as forms of engaging collectives and individual development. The aim is to bring a discussion on the importance of body consciousness in the process while sharing body and sound echoes from our collective journey.

Practices

Body demechanization, individual expression and collective interaction through physical and vocal actions exploration.

Eco-Empathy, or towards a co-creative sympoietic embodied relation with more-than-human environments

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Earth

Graça P. Corrêa [1]

1 Researcher affiliated with CFCUL-FCUL and CET-FLUL, Portugal

When we talk about empathy, we usually refer to a "transposing" emotional process towards other human beings (often less fortunate, more fragile or co-dependent beings), sometimes towards animals (mostly mammals), occasionally towards works of art (where the concept originated), but very seldom towards soil, rocks, seas, clouds, mineral, vegetal and nonvisible features of our environed Earth. My proposed reflection on eco-empathy focuses on our co-creative sympoietic embodied relation with more-than-human environments, or what we commonly term natural landscapes.

Philosopher Bruno Latour recently observed how "economy, the science of managing limited resources, has become an argument for forgetting all limits" (2020), decrying how in the name of globalization we have finally succeeded in universalizing the same economizing and calculating humanoid over the whole surface of the Earth. In effect, so-called globalization has accelerated a process of territorial imperialism whereby wildlife sanctuaries, vast expanses of forests, agricultural lands, and even urban parks are being destroyed, to the point of extinguishing many animal and plant species, causing environmental degradation, and turning humans into "development refugees".

However, geopower refers not only to the ways that power is exerted over and through the Earth (as drawn from Michel Foucault's notion of biopower), but also to the more-than-human forces of the Earth that so often disrupt humanly regulated environments, and whose material manifestations are both aesthetic by themselves and also reimagined in artistic form (Val Plumwood; Elizabeth Grosz). Drawing on questions pertaining to the aesthetics of the Earth's geopower, this communication explores the aesthetic embodied experience of more-than-human natural scapes and spaces, ranging from the intimate playful observation of the poetics of seeds (Gaston Bachelard), to the sublime and terrifying beholding of the vastest unattainable mountains (Caspar David Friedrich, Sebastião Salgado, Godfrey Reggio). By dialogically connecting our affective intensities with these scapes and spaces – as in the Home-Tree action research project – we may learn to experience our belonging to the world, and be able to "detach the figure of the Earth from that of the Globe", i.e., from an image that "gave shape to the imperial idea of a universal power grab" and control (Latour).

Harmonizing Human-Nature Interactions: A Holistic Approach to Regenerative Community Development

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Earth

Silvia Barbosa [1]

1 Permaculture designer and educator - Aldeia do Vale projeto agroecológico, Portugal

Exploring the philosophical frameworks that challenge reductionist approaches to human-nature interactions.

This includes revisiting cosmologies, epistemologies, and spiritual traditions that offer post-human, post-patriarchal, post-developmentalist, and decolonial perspectives. By acknowledging the intrinsic value of non-human beings and the interconnectedness of all life forms, we redefine our relationship with nature, fostering symbiotic coexistence and reciprocity.

Examining innovative methodologies and participatory approaches that empower communities to reclaim agency over their local environments.

Of particular interest are agroecological principles and agroforestry practices, which mimic natural patterns to enhance biodiversity, soil fertility, and ecosystem resilience. By integrating these principles into community development initiatives, we foster self-sufficiency, food sovereignty, and socio-ecological resilience.

It's imperative to recognize that nature operates on the principle of reciprocity.

There are no free meals in the natural world. To thrive, we must integrate ourselves within nature's intricate web, nurturing rather than exploiting its resources. By aligning our actions with the frequency of abundance inherent in the planet's ecosystems, we unlock the potential for sustainable development, regenerative humane scapes and collective well-being.

Practices

Demonstrations of practical applications that embody the principles of agroecology and regenerative community development. Consider showcasing a multi-layered planting system in a single pot, incorporating plants from various vegetal strata to mimic natural ecosystems.

Interactive experience by providing different-sized sieves and baskets filled with seeds, illustrating the diversity of seeds and the importance of seed-saving practices. Through hands-on engagement, participants can deepen their understanding of agroecological concepts and explore ways to implement them in their own communities.

Practices of sympoiesis versus the seducing allure of contemporary perplexities

Panel Session Water

Ângela Lacerda-Nobre [1] Agapi Karamanli [2] Nikolett Puskás [3]

1 ESCE-IPS, Escola Superior de Ciências Sociais, Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal, Campus do IPS, Setúbal, Portugal; PRAXIS - Centro de Filosofia, Política e Cultura, UBI, UE
2 Researcher on participative and transformative economy, macroeconomist, Thessaly, Greece
3 Postdoctoral researcher at Utrecht University, Netherlands

There is the need to promote debate and confrontation of ideas that help to grasp the tensions and polarizations around alienation and self-referential modes of justification versus constructive realism and the collective intelligence of sympoiesis. Only a truly authentic and genuine experience of social learning spaces may counterbalance the seducing allure of entrenched social structures that are closed onto their privileges and blind to the extractive, toxic and destructive mechanisms of mainstream activity - across academia and beyond. Indeed, human thought and action cannot lose its creativity and spontaneous regenerative power. Civilizations that deny human capacity to reinvent itself and create new possible futures, are a menace to life itself, beyond human dimensions. Ethical and governance concerns, the strengthening and deepening of democratic calls for action, and the urgency of open and free spaces of intersubjectivity, are work-in-progress that avant-garde academia already voices and embodies. To overcome outdated and shallow institutionalised myopias, it is crucial to perform creative art-making instances of resignification of previous taken-for-granted approaches. Beyond extractivism, it is possible to regenerate and offer pre-figuring exercises that may help to shape change, transformation and renewal of human thought and action towards a desired present and future reality, that includes non-human and more-than-human as its modus operandi.

Practices

We would like to propose a 60-90 minute session where we will present and discuss our respective proposals (below) and take questions from the audience. We will offer an open space for collective reflection and sharing practices. Together with the audience, we will explore the insights that emerge from the cross-pollination between the different presentations.

Keywords: *transformative economies; sympoiesis; existential phenomenology; disruptive imagination; creative thinking; pluriverse.*

The anthropocene era and the sustainable economy, the exit from our dystopic evolution

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Water

Agapi Karamanli [1]

1 Researcher on participative and transformative economy, macroeconomist, Thessaly, Greece

The natural cycles of the Earth are explained and the respect that human activity owes to the natural cycles of the Earth as a condition for economic and ecological sustainability is affirmed. We decode the phenomenon of entropy in nature and the way it has to reproduce matter. We explain and recognize in the cycles of sustainability (ecological, social, economic) the prerequisite for the safe, stable well-being of life and human society. We describe their disequilibrium regime in the Anthropocene.

Monotheistic religions with non-gender inclusion, wars of plunder and colonialism form the bases of the development model of the human societies that prevailed and dominated. The exclusion of entire social groups, the non-inclusion of knowledge and practices of indigenous populations, the model of economic development based on perpetual and mindless economic growth, the intensive exploitation and destruction of the natural environment, fencing and the reduction of free space formed the contexts of economic enrichment and productive profligacy. They have been the model and methodology for the Western economic development model that has dominated and entrenched our world for over 15 centuries.

The linear economic model of a finite capitalist world and the exit from the model that exhibits the "extraction - supply, production, consumption and disposal" characteristics of the dominant linear capitalist economy. This economic productive model dominated and was imposed on the Earth, bringing human lives and life on the planet to an existential impasse.

The proposal of the circular economy and transformatives economies for a new economic production model and the democratic rights of nature and natural resources as factors of production. It is an essential part of efforts to modernize and transform the global economy, with the aim of turning it in a more sustainable direction. The circular economy is a set of economic activities that focuses on the long-term reduction of the waste of resources used in the production process, emphasizing the use of renewable resources, the production of energy from the production process itself, maintaining a product in good working order for a long time period of time, the economic exploitation of products to provide services to multiple users (sharing economy), and, finally, the use of the service offered by a product and not the possession of this product itself. We are approaching the

elimination of the ecological debt created by the human activity of the capitalist linear economy and respecting the Earth's limit, that is, its ability to produce what we want and assimilate our waste.

Keywords: *cycles of sustainability, disequilibrium regime in the Anthropocene, capitalist linear economy, ecological debt, circular economy, transformatives economies*

Logical positivism, performativity of images and the neo-baroque – revisiting the myth of totalitarianism

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Water

Ângela Lacerda-Nobre [1] Rogério Duarte [2] Marc Jacquinet [3] Miguel Cunha Lima [4]
Marcelo Graglia [5]

1 ESCE-IPS, Escola Superior de Ciências Sociais, Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal, Campus do IPS, Estefanilha, 2914-503, Setúbal, Portugal; PRAXIS - Centro de Filosofia, Política e Cultura, UBI, UÉ.
2 MARE—Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre, Escola Superior de Tecnologia, Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal, Campus do IPS, Estefanilha, 2910-761 Setúbal, Portugal.
3 Universidade Aberta, Lisboa, Portugal.
4 Universidade Aberta, Lisboa, Portugal.
5 PUC-SP, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brasil.

Logical positivism, in epistemic terms, is structural to knowledge production and use, yet, in existential terms, it is a prison and a form of totalitarianism, which, once dismounted, may serve the purpose of creating safe spaces and opening the floor for dialogue, debate and creativity, in a spontaneous and organic manner, individually and collectively, in the inner and outer conversations that are continuously going on in vigil and less vigil states.

Totalitarianism, in economic policy and in political economy, as referring to the extreme concentration of power, resources and decision-making capacity, is commonly understood as a regime that is structurally abusive, leading to suicidal and self-destructive modes of operation on a collective scale. Both Donna Haraway's concept of sympoiesis (2019; 2016) and Hannah Arendt's idea of pluralism (1961), coincide in arguing that human's self-organisation capacity already encompasses larger than life and beyond human open processes of interaction. As Bonnie Mann (2013) states, aspiration to judgement, in the Arendtian sense, is both unsettling to the discipline of philosophy and important for its future, precisely because of the unravelling and disentanglement process that occurs when alterity and otherness are confronted, tested and stretched to its limits.

The ownness and the otherness, within individual or collective experiences, in latent or explicit manifestations is, unavoidably, present in every instance of signification, sense-making, theory building or the creation of new narratives. The structure of a myth, its

capacity to condensate powerful human experiences and to serve as a vehicle for further searching, helps to grasp the prefiguring conditions that enable the evolution and development of totalitarianism, and which use the performativity of images and the neo-baroque as a mechanism for saturation emotions and overloading absorption channels.
To capture creative thinking, to unleash collective memories and empower disruptive imagination, that is, to enable the possibility of alternative perspectives, livelihoods and experiences, it is mandatory to breakthrough exhaustion and saturation. This occurs merely because the conditions of possibility of totalitarianisms hold together until they cannot hold anymore the winds of change and the possibility of newness. It is commonly assumed that strangeness and fear, discomfort and unsettledness, disquietness and incertitude, are to be avoided, when offered a chance, a condition shared by humans and beyond, yet, culture is precisely the vehicle that painstakingly and silently opens up new windows of opportunity and let's go of past certitudes enabling novelty to emerge. That is, the fearless attitude occurs when fear is re-signified. The Ah!Ah! and Eureka visionary and prophetic experiences are part of a pattern that unequivocally dismounts the vicious circle of stating that it is always "too early until it is too late".

Conversations, open conversations, are unique and paradigmatic examples of the unfolding of reality that is manifested through language, in all its forms, in humans and in non-humans alike. The broadening of horizons and expansion of the depth and breadth of the choreography between manifestation and participation, the snapshot of whatever is emerging, is a process that different theories, schools of thought and non-formal knowledge production have successfully captured.

In other words, in rich and poor regions and territories of contemporary societies, the profusion of Cosmogonies, world visions, narratives and experiences that is being offered, intentionally or otherwise, is overwhelming. Religion, laic spirituality, arts, sports and policy-making, the embedded and embodied nature of socio-technical systems and of techno-science paraphernalia, in large language models and in the open spontaneous conversations that occur, for instance, between strangers when waiting for public transport, reveal astonishing degrees of inter-permeability, showing influences and cross-influences in an ongoing dynamism. Turbulence, acceleration, movement and change, the ontic and existential phenomenology of how life is experienced in its immediateness and inter-penetrability, between the individual and the collective, the interior and the exterior, the public and the private, that which may be called our own and that which is felt as alien and foreign, even when part of selfhood, the familiar strangeness, is an open journey, a roadmap that is recognised across history.

The core message is that the creation of safe spaces, of colloquial and cordial environments, inclusive and plural, is, primordially, an existential experience. That is, it occurs, it is present and acknowledged as such, individually and collectively, as a feeling of the absolute, of the here and now presence of plenitude, intense, dense and authentic, of feeling good to be alive and of the universal wealth and abundance that may be within reach

and shared with no limits. This experience, in turn, may be understood as the tip of the iceberg of immemorial processes that may take the name of freedom, of universal peace, of democracy, or climate justice. Whatever the naming, it is an ongoing process that each life cycle, each generation, each culture and each civilisation produce, consume, share, create and recreate, and, when necessary, new age eras have to be named.

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Yet we have two hands. – Caring as a Community of Practice in academia

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Water

Nikolett Puskás [1]

1 Utrecht University, Netherlands

The special interest group JUPITA launched towards the end of 2023, with the aim to create a community of practice, across Utrecht University's Copernicus Institute for Sustainable Development, extending across the University and beyond – via the member's personal existing social networks (academic and non-academic) and connecting with 'the real world' – based on our geographical context. We are hosting weekly lunch sessions, with different themes, guests and "open share-ins" where any member can throw up an inspiration, difficulty, a question they are concerned with, a story to share – or, to simply share a meal, in community.

Thus far, feedback and conversations indicate that it is successful in holding space, for honest, radical, raw, human conversations, reflections, emotions, hope, fear, and recurring theme of exploring how we can, together as well as individually, navigate these times of uncertainties. I would like to share moments, thoughts, vignettes from our co-woven stories and journeys, as I strongly believe it is of value, in our shared exploration of solidarity, commoning and community – notions we, as academics, do not only theorise on, but act upon.

We struggle with questions such as:

"Why do I care, and for whom? Do my daily actions reflect or contradict my caring?"
“Should we be responsible? Are we responsible?”

One of our members from Brazil shared with us the beautiful poem of Carlos Drummond de Andrade, titled “Hand in hand” – in which we find solace, hope and inspiration to, what we call pre-figure our desired futures, making them happen already in the NOW.

We find strength in this community, that inspires us to keep on working towards transforming the outdated, entrenched and not-working institutional frameworks, mainstream practices and culture, and shift towards a more just, equitable way of doing and being in our respective practices, to lead by example, to embody our values and ethics, with an openness and humbleness, knowing that we can all, always learn from each other, and with a pluriversal approach.

We are also co-creating a dynamic learning agenda, which embarks with a set of co-created questions that we intend to “live with” and not rush to have an answer to.

Keywords: *(in)justices, power, transformative action, people-nature enmeshments, pluriverse*

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Towards reciprocal human-nature relations in nature-based solutions?

Anya Umantseva [1] Jonas Egmose[2]

1 Postdoctoral researcher, Institute of People and Technology: Roskilde University, Denmark
2 Associate professor; Institute of People and Technology: Roskilde University, Denmark

In the wake of climate and biodiversity crisis, there is an increasing attention to go beyond reductionist measures that reinforce human-nature relations in modern societies based on utilitarian values and mastery. There is a need for exploring the re-emergence of reciprocity between humans and nature as a basis for environmental and social regeneration (Egmose et al. 2021).

Nature-based Solutions (NBS) are attracting much interest due to the aims of mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity while providing socio-economic co-benefits (UNEP 2020). At the same time, NBS has been criticized because it can reproduce human-nature relations from an instrumental and extractivist lens (Welden et al. 2021). A growing strand of NBS literature calls for NBS researchers and practitioners to place the objective of collectively developing new ways of relating to nature at the centre of the NBS framework (Mercado et al. 2023).

The conceptual framework of the TRANS-Lighthouses project (More than Green: Transformative nature-based solutions for inclusive communities) places renewal of human-nature relations at the core of NBS. This work is reflected in analysing ambitions, dilemmas and challenges of transformations in human-nature relations in 8 pilot cases of NBS across several European countries in diverse contexts (urban, rural, forestry, coastal).

1. Building on marginalized knowledges and practices.

A point of departure is recognising and learning from marginalised knowledge(s) and practices within communities which represent human-nature relations of care and reciprocity. This approach is inspired by sociology of absences and emergences as an epistemological procedure to recognise marginalised knowledge(s), constituted by unequal political and economic relations (de Sousa Santos 2014). This requires anchoring democratic ownership with the communities working with NBS practices; and working with participatory methodologies to learn and unlearn from local knowledge and experience.

2. Social, economy and governance dimensions

Following the conceptual framework of the TRANS-lighthouses project, for transitioning towards practices of reciprocity and care, human-nature relations should be approached as interrelated with the economic, the social and the participatory governance dimensions.
Firstly, working with participatory methods at concrete community levels, as well as integrating participatory approaches in multi-level institutional governance. Secondly, working with marginalised knowledge(s), addressing who and what is not present and might re-emerge in NBS. Finally, working with plural notions of economy and how they can be integrated into NBS working with inclusive communities.

The presentation is based on the work with "Conceptual Framework: NBS Lighthouses for inclusive communities".

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Informal Economies as a Reservoir for Post-Patriarchal and Post-Developmentalist Alternatives to Modernity

Panel Session Air

Miria Gambardella [1] Marta Massera [2] Aulia Rahman[3] Benjamin Cisagara [4] Brenda Andrias [5]

1 PhD Fellow, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
2 PhD Fellow, International Joint Research Unit Source, Doctoral School Law, Economics and Management, Université Paris-Saclay & Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France
3 PhD Fellow, Faculty of Business and Administration, University of Bucharest, Romania
4 PhD Fellow, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Latvia, Latvia
5 PhD Fellow, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Recent debates within informality studies aim to move past dualistic conceptualizations opposing state to non-state actors to delineate the limits of what can be considered acceptable (Polese 2023). Nonetheless, policy-oriented perspectives still view informal economic practices as a gray area needing to be eliminated, controlled, or channeled into compatible and foreseeable rules and policies. Such perspectives perceive informal economies as subordinate to formal institutions and advocate for a new type of modernization corresponding to formalization. The precarity in which non-state actors find themselves is seen as hailing directly from the exclusion from the global capitalist system rather than its integration. Policy specialists and intergovernmental organizations see processes referred to as transition to formality as valuable contributions to government strategies and sustainable innovations. Informal economies can avoid official rejection when compatible with rulers' interests and power dynamics and when capable of providing

politically correct business opportunities: its existence is allowed as long as it is possible to subsume it within neoliberal logic.

Beyond theorizations that conceptualize informality as a purely economic phenomenon, the interdisciplinary contributions gathered in this panel look at the social and cultural embeddedness of informal economic practices as a potential reservoir for post-patriarchal and post-developmental alternatives to modernity. Without idealizing groups and practices, the aim is to bring attention to the cultures, the production, exchange, and financing practices, and the modes of production that are articulated but distinct from the dominant economic model. This means looking at how informal practices have gradually morphed over time with cultural and traditional norms that normalize and exacerbate their existence and relationship to the formal economy. The panel will specifically focus on social exchanges and relating to nature by analyzing informal economic practices within their social-ecological systems, deepening the understanding of major transformations affecting such practices.

Keywords: *Informality, Transition, Socio-ecological Systems, Modernity, Alternatives*

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Informal Economies as Practices of Resistance: Economic Solidarity with Zapatista Communities

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Air

Miria Gambardella [1]

1 PhD Fellow, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Theories on informal economies are based on studies conducted within post-Soviet states and territories recently categorized as the *Global South*, compared with supposedly “developed” regions that historically dominated the world. State and policy-oriented perspectives are constructed on an idealization of Western ideals such as (neoliberal) democracy, (individual) freedom, and progress. Anthropology broadly discussed the evolutionary inheritance of these notions, radically rethinking the way we conceptualize modernity and otherness.

New challenges within informality studies are researching the contributions that informal economies could bring to Western countries, representing informality as a

non-modern phenomenon. In the attempt to recognize and channel its positive sides, informal economies can be seen as more humane, fostering social and solidarity economies, and civic involvement. This understanding of civic engagement is reduced to liberal-democratic notions of individual participation and empowerment, disentangled from underlying hegemonic dynamics. Denying structural responsibility to society and the economy, inequality is attributed to personal moral conduct instead of being recognized as the historical product of power relations.

Informal practices are conceived as experiences of resistance to state mechanisms when they represent a reaction to institutional ineffectiveness or a result of individual morality or societal norms (Polese 2023). Scott's (1985) notion of *infrapolitics* is applied to describe the impact of uncoordinated behaviors when repeated numerous times by many people. Applied to informality, *resistance studies* aim to overcome the dichotomy between *overt/public* and *hidden/everyday* forms of resistance (Murru and Polese 2020). To transcend dual rationalizations between silent and loud resistance, I suggest that *everyday* practices must be articulated simultaneously with attempts to build alternatives and organize collectively, studying their constant re-articulations, "dialectical combination" and "entanglements" (Smith 2024).

Looking at informality through the eyes of anti-systemic movements broadens our understanding beyond standardized conceptualizations reducing informal economic practices to self-serving actions of avoiding paying taxes and bureaucracy or the impossibility of accessing formal trade networks. It helps reconceptualize informal economies as forms of resistance to encompass initiatives that collectively and openly challenge the state order. In this context, informality is not just a synonym for civic (individual) engagement; it's a tool to analyze organized efforts to reappropriate the commons and build alternatives to market-driven societies. The study draws on multi-site fieldworks between Europe and Mexico and focuses on economic solidarity with Zapatista communities, articulating Marxist anthropology with decolonial thought. Analyzing the mobile limits between formalization and informalization processes of economic practices as forms of resistance to the market, the state, and state-centered political approaches, it investigates how the boundaries between being inside, beyond, or against the neoliberal system are relationally conceived and performed.

Keywords: *Resistance, Informality, Economic Solidarity, EZLN, Political Anthropology*

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Informality in Food Practices and Shifting Gender Dynamics in Rufisque, Senegal

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Air

Marta Massera [1]

1 PhD Fellow, International Joint Research Unit Source, Doctoral School Law, Economics Management at the Université Paris-Saclay

Disruptions from COVID-19 have shed light on the fragility of the globalized industrial food system, once deemed the most efficient and rational, and simultaneously led to vast economic impacts on informal workers (IPES Food and ETC Group 2021). The pandemic also brought forth a resurgence of challenges related to informality and food, particularly regarding food aid, social protections, and labor rights. Meanwhile, policies implemented to reduce the potential disease transmission, such as the shutting down of informal markets, disproportionately impacted informal workers and reflected the historical bias against informality in food policy (Battersby 2020).

However, informal workers have played – and continue to play – a critical role in ensuring employment and food security through alternative and decentralized food networks (Kushitor et al. 2022). Within these networks, women are predominant actors: they often make up the majority of most workers in informal food processing, trading, and sales.

The historical bias against informality, along with an oversimplified conceptual dichotomy between the formal and informal economy, has long hampered a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play within hybrid food systems. These are food systems that include local and global resources and combining conventional food system infrastructure with the alternative and informal modes and sources of food processing and consumption. Research gaps persist concerning context-specific and temporally-situated empirical shreds of evidence on informal economic practices being adopted in hybrid food systems that question instrumental approaches to social interactions.

Building on a theoretical framework constructed around alternative paradigms to modernization and economic growth inspired by the literature on Popular Economy, this ongoing research in socio-economics aims to evaluate the intricate functioning and the potential contribution of women's informal practices as a source of livelihood in Senegal. By

embracing a value chain perspective, the research transcends the formal-informal binary. It delves deeper into understanding how informal food access and distribution practices, specifically in urban and semi-urban areas, intersect with the dominant economy and are influenced by it. A feminist approach will further enable us to deconstruct the concept of work – particularly women's work – to overcome the dichotomy between production and reproduction, and between private and public (Marega and Vega 2023).

The proposed communication showcases a literature review and preliminary findings from ongoing research with fieldwork in Senegal and specifically investigates women's economic informal practices in urban and peri-urban areas within the Rufisque department. Dominated by a vital agriculture and artisanal processing tradition but also undergoing rapid urbanization, the department of Rufisque is at the heart of the Senegalese government's objective to "modernize" the country. The analysis focuses on selected food products that are particularly relevant for the range of human and non-human agents inhabiting the area. Starting from the technical-economic transformations affecting the distribution of such products, the research aims to understand the changing division of labor resulting from modernization and the alternative practices in labor participation and social interactions that women's networks embrace to ensure access to food.

Keywords: *Food Value Chains, Modernity, Women's Collectives, Senegal, Socio-Economics*

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Exploring the Role of the Social and Solidarity Economy Organization in Indonesia's Just Transition to a Circular Economy: Case Study of Waste Bank Model

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Air

Aulia Rahman [1] Fikri Aswan [2]

1 PhD Fellow, Faculty of Business and Administration, University of Bucharest, Romania
2 M.Economic Student, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia

The need for an inclusive transition considering multiple dimensions of environmental sustainability, social inclusion, decent work, and inequality reduction has been largely demanded and triggered the mechanism of 'just transition' (Schröder, 2020), including in the circular economy objectives. Despite being unacknowledged by the state, informal actors in the recycling sector have contributed greatly to waste collection in Indonesia for years (WEF, 2020). This study explores the role of the emerging waste banks model in supporting a just circularity transition for the informal waste recycling sector in Indonesia, highlighting essential elements in their models to facilitate the integration between formal and informal actors in the current waste systems. Using just transition in the circular economy framework, this study not only evaluates their business models and challenges in juggling between social and business aspects, but also investigates the social and cultural embeddedness in their activities, such as bridging social dialogues, acting as intermediaries between different stakeholders (Avelino & Wittmayer, 2019), and strengthening social capital.

Given the majority of the literature has been studying informal recycling actors predominantly through an economic development lens, this study will expand the discussion beyond the economic phenomenon, to explore the bonding mechanisms (Nesheim et al., 2024) and social innovation that occurred within the informal recycling network in Indonesia, especially in the post-pandemic period. This study uses qualitative methods including semi-structured interviews with waste bank representatives, informal chats and interpretative case studies. Some challenges of financial sustainability and managing duality tensions between commercial and social aspects are discussed, including their business models' feasibility, desirability, and viability. Given their unique characteristics, this study highlights the potential of community-driven waste banks and the solidarity financing approach in addressing the contemporary ecological challenges of neo-liberal market economies.

Keywords: *Informal Recycling Sector, Just Transition, Waste Banks, Social and Solidarity Economy, Circular Economy*

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Digital Transformation in the Informal Sector: Exploring the Impact of Digital Financial Technologies on Informal Businesses

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Air

Benjamin Cisagara [1]

1 PhD Fellow, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Latvia, Latvia

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of our lives, including how informal businesses operate. This work delves into the intricate relationship between digital transformation and informal economic activities, shedding light on the profound implications and emerging trends in this dynamic landscape. With the proliferation of mobile devices and internet connectivity, digital platforms have become pivotal in facilitating economic transactions (Gupa, et al., 2022). From street vendors using mobile payment apps to informal lenders leveraging peer-to-peer lending platforms, digitalization has revolutionized the way informal businesses operate and interact with their customers (Schilling & Seuring, 2023).

However, the digitalization of informal economies is not without its challenges and complexities. While technology has enabled greater access to financial services and market opportunities for informal actors, it has also raised concerns about the digital divide, data privacy, security and digital trust, and regulatory compliance. For instance, marginalized communities often face barriers such as digital literacy and infrastructure limitations, exacerbating existing inequalities in accessing digital tools and resources (Warschauer, 2003; Bon, et al., 2024). This work analyzes the multifaceted impacts of digital transformation on informal businesses. It examines how digital financial tools have facilitated financial inclusion, empowered marginalized communities, and fostered entrepreneurial innovation in informal sectors.

Furthermore, this study evaluates how these digital tools influenced trust and social cohesion among participants, and investigates the regulatory frameworks and policy interventions necessary to harness the benefits of digitalization while mitigating its risks and challenges. By examining the interplay between technology, informality, and socio-economic development, this article aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges posed by digital disruption in informal economies and help understand the

socio-economic implications of digitalization in informal finance. Ultimately, it advocates for inclusive and equitable approaches to digital transformation that prioritize the needs and aspirations of informal actors, ensuring that technology catalyzes sustainable development and social empowerment.

Keywords: *Informal Businesses, Mobile Finance, Digital Divide, Digital Humanism, Financial Inclusion.*

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Transitioning Traditional Economies into the Cash Economy: Exploring the Symbiotic Co-Existence of the Formal and Informal Economies in Papua New Guinea

Presentation integrated in Panel Session Air

Brenda Andrias [1]

1 PhD Fellow, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Western capitalism attempted to deconstruct and mould traditional economies, that existed for millennias, into recognisable frameworks that could be managed and controlled. Papua New Guinea (PNG), a former British colony in the Pacific, offers an example of how such an agenda did not work. PNG is one of the worlds linguistically diverse countries with over 1000 tribal groups, each with very distinct cultural and traditional practices (Conroy, 2013). Exchange activities are performed within an elaborate set of unwritten rules and through intricate webs of social networks and trade relations (Hukula, 2017). The economy is all encompassing, not a distant unknown 'market' that somehow controls how people exchange goods and services.

In PNG, the formal and informal economies have had to co-exist. The former to enable the integration into the global system and the latter as it works in harmony with

pre-existing exchange systems. The institutions of the government control the rules of the game in the formal and the informal is left to the people, the traditional knowledge holders, the gatekeepers of 'informal wisdom' (May, 2022). As Rooney (2019) alludes, the informal and informal must co-exists and is a delicate balance of economic, social and moral values.

Using and ethnographic reapproach, the research seeks to uncover these nuances and investigate how the 'modern' and 'traditional' economies co-exist. Additionally, it seeks to understand the challenges that informal economy participants face and the formal and informal mechanism in which they have had to develop to traverse these challenges. Moreover, the study focuses on women entrepreneurs due to the intersecting issues they face related to gender inequality in PNG (Hukula, 2019).

The research employs qualitative methods including interviews, field observation and informal conversations with 20 migrant women entrepreneurs the city of Port Moresby and 20 indigenous women in the peri urban town of Goroka. It will be conducted over a 4-month period and will showcase the complexities in the lives of these women entrepreneurs and the strategies they have developed to navigate the 'modern' economy.

Keywords: *Traditional Economies, Informal Economy, Women Entrepreneurs, Papua New Guinea.*

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Making with the community - the case of the community forum of Canelas and Espiunca, in the rural interior of Portugal

Cátia Cardoso [1] Sara Sacur [2] Rogério Amaro [3]

1 PhD candidate in Sociology at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra, Portugal, with Research Project 2023.01942.BD funded by the FCT, and with the Centre for Social Studies as host institution; Member of the secretariat of the Canelas and Espiunca Community Forum, Portugal
2 MAsc Clinical Nutrition from Faculty of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Porto; Member of the secretariat of the Canelas and Espiunca Community Forum, Portugal
3 Retired Associate Professor in the Department of Political Economy at ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, a researcher at CEI - Centro de Estudos Internacionais, ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Portugal, and co-founder of CommunityPluriversity;Member of the secretariat of the Canelas and Espiunca Community Forum, Portugal

Inspired by the experience of the Lisbon Community Groups (Ferreira & Amaro, 2021 and Amaro & Ferreira, 2024), the Community Forum of the Parish of Canelas and Espiunca, in the municipality of Arouca (Portugal), was created on 16 September 2022. It is an informal platform or group, open to the participation of anyone from the local community, which meets once a month, also inviting public institutions and services involved in the area to jointly present and discuss local problems and needs (Participatory Diagnosis - Marchioni, 1999; Ander-Egg, 2005; Ferreira & Amaro, 2021; and Amaro & Ferreira, 2024) and to demand, build and/or organise community responses and solutions.

Although the municipality of Arouca is part of the Aveiro district and the Oporto Metropolitan Area, Canelas and Espiunca is near the Viseu district and is a rural mountain area that suffers from the usual problems of these areas, such as demographic devitalisation, double ageing, senior isolation, loss of economic activity, lack of public transport and geographical marginalisation. These challenges contribute to the reproduction of the social inequalities of the people who live there (Bourdieu, 2010), which reinforces the relevance of the existence of participatory spaces, such as the Community Forum, which contribute to a fairer redistribution of more or less symbolic powers (of capital, status and/or influence (Bourdieu, 2021).

This communication thus aims to present this Community Forum as an open space for Participatory and Deliberative Democracy, which has introduced an innovative dynamic of Shared and Participatory Local Governance (Fung & Wright, 2003, Fung, 2006, Ferreira & Amaro, 2021 and Amaro & Ferreira, 2024). To this end, the aim is to showcase initiatives that have already been developed, including support for young people and teenagers, intergenerational dialogue and interaction, support for isolated elderly people, support and encouragement for the informal local economy by holding two street markets to promote and sell local products, and the creation of a Community Solidarity Shop to exchange and sell second-hand clothes and other objects.

In the future, the Forum will tend to encompass other areas of Community Welfare, such as Social Support, Culture, Education, Employment, Health and Mental Health, as a result of its greater involvement, together with the other living beings and abiotic elements of the territory, in the co-construction ("Sympoiesis" - Haraway, 2016) of Life in Common, while also reinforcing its role in fertilising the formal processes of Representative Democracy and maintaining respect for the plurality of actors involved (Lahire, 2002).

Keywords: *Community Groups, Community Forum, Participatory Diagnosis, Participatory Democracy and Shared and Participatory Local Governance.*

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Macaronesia's solidarity economy, an ecocentric concept - on the road to the Ecocene (Oikoscene) or the Chthulucene?

Rogério Amaro [1] Bárbara Ferreira [2]

1 Retired Associate Professor in the Department of Political Economy at ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon, a researcher at CEI - Centre for International Studies at ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal, and co-founder of Community Pluriversity.

2 PhD student in Economic Sociology at ISEG - University of Lisbon and a guest lecturer at ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon, Guest Assistant Professor at IPPS - Institute of Public and Social Policies, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal, and co-founder of Community Pluriversity.

When, at the end of the 1980s in the Autonomous Region of the Azores (Portugal), the process began that led, later, in the mid-1990s, to the emergence of the concept of the Macaronesian Solidarity Economy (involving, in a European INTERREG Project, also the Republic of Cape Verde and the Autonomous Regions of the Canary Islands - Spain and Madeira - Portugal), it was decisive to observe the activities and initiatives that were taking place, and to dialogue and learn from the authors of these activities. From this authentic "Ecology of Knowledge" (Santos, 2007), it became clear that the new type of economy being practised had a multidimensional and substantive dynamic (Polanyi, 2021 and Laville, 2018), involving eight projects or dimensions: These were the economic, social, environmental, cultural, territorial, cognitive, managerial and political dimensions (Amaro and Madelino, 2004, Amaro, 2009, Amaro, 2011 and Amaro, 2016), later added to by a ninth project or dimension, the ethical one (Amaro, Correia & Ferreira, 2022).

But the fundamental "discovery", probably facilitated by the island and archipelagic nature of the four territories and the intense and telluric relationship established between human beings and nature, including other living beings and, perhaps more importantly, abiotic elements (such as geological ones, so present in the volcanic phenomena so frequent there), was the ecocentric and not merely anthropocentric perspective of Solidarity present in these economic activities.

This ecocentric view of Solidarity and, consequently, of the Economy and, even more so, of Life and the Universe, contrasts with the predominant anthropocentric view of Life, Nature and the Universe in the last 200 years, after the Industrial Revolution, which in turn followed predominantly theocentric views.

From the ontological point of view of History as read by human beings, we can then speak of three great periods: the Theocene, the Anthropocene and the Ecocene or Oikoscene, which is now beginning... if we have the creativity and courage to do so and if the Anthropocene doesn't stop it and destroy Life, all types of Life.

The aim of this communication is to show how an Ecocentric Solidarity Economy can make a decisive contribution to a new historical period centred on Our Common Home, or Oikos, i.e. the Ecocene, articulating and combining all its elements, living or not, in a logic of Sympoietic Cooperation (Haraway, 2016), and also in what ways this scenario combines with the concept of the Chthulucene, a neologism proposed by Donna Haraway (Haraway, 2016), or with the "pachamamist" perspectives of Buen Viver (Giraldo, 2014 and Lalander, 2015) or even recovers some of Aldo Leopold's proposals (Leopold, 1968 and Knight & Riedel, 2002).

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Care for community and infrastructure - open workshops as places of self-organizing in the neoliberal Nordic welfare state

Corinna Burkhart [1]

1 PhD candidate, Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden

In this paper I discuss open workshops in Sweden as places that enable experiences of self-organisation and care. The self-organised care for community and infrastructure that is practiced in open workshops is framed as experience-based social learning. Self-organized

communities or grassroots groups are unusual in Sweden. Sweden's non-profit and volunteering sector is said to be strong and thriving. On closer scrutiny, however, it is apparent that much volunteering is done in predefined and streamlined formats. Grassroots or uncivil actors are very rare, and bottom-up organisation therefore something special. In this context, open workshops are relevant not just as they enable creative making, but also as they provide a setting where bottom-up organisation can be experienced. The empirical grounding for this paper comes from interview and observation materials from open workshops in Sweden, collected between 2019 and 2022. With the empirical material I show how members of the workshop care together for an association and their space. This care and sharing is motivated through the desire to use workshop infrastructure. The material also shows how associations struggle to maintain both the community and the shared infrastructure. Caring and organising together is done by trial and error. Scrutinizing these struggles helps to understand how associations form, while navigating administrative structures as well as dominant ideas and habits surrounding volunteer organizations. The paper advances two conclusions. One is that in the Swedish context self-organised open workshops become prefigurative through their bottom-up organisation. It is the organisational from that is prefigured. Second the paper shows that strategies for social ecological transformation need to be contextual, as the usual focus on bottom-up change presupposes a strong culture of bottom-up organising. A context where such a strong culture is missing might call for other strategies.

Keywords: *Open Workshops, Nordic welfare state, care, experience based social learning, strategy for social ecological transformation.*

Towards a Decolonial Degrowth Feminism in Feminist Foreign Policies

Ekatherina Zhukova[1]

1 Associate Professor, Department of Language, Literature and Intercultural Studies, Karlstad University, Sweden

This paper responds to the call made by Sarah Cook and Naila Kabeer who state that "[f]eminist foreign policy makers around the world have a critical role to play in shaping and sharing ideas, discourses and debates that question growth and provide alternatives" (2023: 8). Drawing on scholarship in decolonial feminism (Espinosa-Miñoso et al. 2022; Tamale 2020; Vergès 2021) and feminist degrowth (Abazeri 2022; Dengler and Seebacher 2019; Pérez Orozco and Mason-Deese 2022), the paper develops a decolonial degrowth feminist

approach to existing Feminist Foreign Policies (FFPs). Combining perspectives from interviews with 26 representatives from 19 countries in the Global South (9 in Latin America, 6 in Africa, 3 in Europe/Eurasia, 3 in the Middle East, and 5 in Asia) and theoretical perspectives from life philosophies of the Global South such as *ubuntu, buen vivir, swaraj*, and GNP, the paper proposes decolonial degrowth feminism as a critical response to neoliberal feminism in FFPs. It offers a conceptualisation of decolonial degrowth feminism from four angles: (i) interrelational; (ii) intercultural; (iii) glocal; (iv) planetary. It shows that the interrelational and intercultural feminisms correspond to the decolonisation of the mind, body, soul, and spirit of the individual and communities (Tamale 2020) and address the indigenous quest for recognition (Fraser 2012); the glocal and planery feminisms, on the other hand, respond to the call to decolonise existing political and economic structures at the level of the state and international system (Tamale 2020) and the need for global redistributive justice (Fraser 2012). The paper thus argues that if FFP states want to be transformative, they need to embrace decolonial degrowth feminism instead of holding to neoliberal feminism limited to an understanding of gender equality through economic growth. The paper further contends that for FFP actors to adopt a decolonial degrowth feminist approach to their policies, they should start (i) practicing cooperative (rather than competitive) relations with the Global South, (ii) treating nature as a source of human life (rather than as a commodity), (iii) finding balance between the role of culture and respect of human rights when defining humanity, and (iv) addressing global inequalities within the North and South (rather than only between the North and South).

Keywords: *decolonial feminism, feminist degrowth, global political economy, feminist political economy, philosophies of the Global South*.

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Rethinking NBS with marginalised economic knowledge: towards a transformative diversity

Ela Callorda Fossati [1] Andreia Lemaître [2] Maria José Ruiz Rivera[3] Anya Umsteva[4] Jonas Egmose[5] Beatriz Caitana [6] José Luis Fernandez-Pacheco [7]

1 Postdoctoral researcher, IACCHOS, Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain), Belgium
2 Professor, IACCHOS, Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain), Belgium
3 Postdoctoral researcher, IACCHOS, Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain), Belgium
4 Postdoctoral researcher, Center for Social Sustainability, Roskilde University (RUC), Denmark
5 Associate Professor, Center for Social Sustainability, Roskilde University (RUC), Denmark
6 Researcher, Centre for Social Studies (CES), Universidade de Coimbra (UC), Portugal
7 Assistant professor, Departamento Dirección de Empresas y Sociología, Universidad de Extremadura (UEX), Spain

Nature-based solutions (NBS) are "actions inspired by, supported by or copied from nature […] aiming to help societies address a variety of environmental, social and economic challenges in sustainable ways." (European Commission, 2015: 5 & 24). This widespread definition should not obscure the contested character of the concept. A clear manifestation of contestation lies in the call "No to Nature-Based Dispossessions!" (2021). Contestation is also reflected in recent critical reviews (e.g., Anguelovski and Corbera, 2023; Remme and Haarstad, 2022; Kiss et al., 2022) pointing to the need to pay greater attention to justice concerns and deeper forms of participation. Moreover, early EU-funded research on NBS has overlooked the sociopolitics of NBS (Harriet Bulkeley, 2020).

Against this background, TRANS-lighthouses (More than green - Lighthouses of transformative nature-based solutions for inclusive communities) is an EU-funded research project rethinking the sociopolitics of NBS across different landscapes (urban, rural, forestry, and coastal) while experimenting with a set of NBS initiatives in Europe. The project aims to deepen transdisciplinarity by establishing a wide community of practice (including universities, municipalities, civil society, and Southern associated partners from different continents) on critical and pragmatic approaches to NBS.

This contribution presents the conceptual framework (CF) of TRANS-Lighthouses from a socioeconomic angle. The CF builds on the sociology of absences and of emergences, a methodological tool and epistemological operation to recognize marginalised knowledge (Santos, 2014). It focuses on identifying invisible actors and conditions that make counter-hegemonic social experiences absent and close the horizon of possible alternative futures (Santos, 2014). The angle taken addresses absences and emergences over what can be understood as "the economy". We explore absences in mainstream NBS discourses and introduce what we call "Five building blocks of transformative economies beyond

extractivism": Non-extractivist economies, Substantive-transformative economies, Solidarity economies, Caring economies and Indigenous economies. All address system changes in human-nature relations and socio-ecological justice concerns. After explaining such heuristic choices and presenting each building block and their implications for NBS, we discuss the challenges they pose together, in combination, as an attempt to provide another (counter-hegemonic) imaginary and to open up new avenues of research in this field.

The communication is based on project results of the TRANS-lighthouses international research project (Horizon Europe)

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Expressions of democracy in pluriversal spaces of India: what can we learn from Southern worldviews?

Emilia Teresa Lewartowska [1]

1 PhD student, Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University

This article explores the concept and practice of *sangha*, a community development model in India, which seeks to empower every person to be part of the decision-making processes, while fostering social change on multiple levels. Based on unique empirical data from long-term ethnographic fieldwork at two alternative Indian communities working with marginalized smallholder farmers, the paper introduces two different ways in which sangha is conceptualized and practiced, therefore leading to distinct outcomes of social transformation. I identify key differences, commonalities, and linkages between various spheres of transformation that sangha governance model fosters in the cases under study. While in one community sangha appears to be more holistic in nature, necessity-driven, and political, in the other case it is thematically focused, with pragmatic operational boundaries, and intentionally a-political. Moreover, I discuss how the question of autonomy is conceptualized and practiced through the distinct modes of operating through the sangha model.

Studies of grassroot alternatives to the compounded crises of our world represent possible openings for a just and ecological transition, transcending the mere critique of the unsustainability of the current model of capitalistic development. Most importantly, practices and political ontologies of the subaltern groups flowing from the Global South are of crucial importance in countering the homogenizing and universalizing effects of green growth narratives on how we imagine and formulate transitions, while embodying concrete manifestations of the pluriversal. The open-ended plurality of possible worlds includes various approaches to democratic organization, with alternative political imaginaries and forms of governance rooted in practices of place-based movements on the exteriority of modernity. Guided primarily by empirical findings, the paper contributes to the much-needed discussions around participatory modes of socio-economic and political organizing informed by non-Western paradigms and indigenous ways of being, answering the following research question: How do, if at all, decentralized and participatory modes of political organizing influence ways in which alternative communities may spur social change?

Keywords: *grassroot democracy, social change, autonomy, alternatives, post-development*

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Demystifying radical research methods: in dialogue with grounded experiences

Emilia Teresa Lewartowska [1]

1 PhD student, Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University

In this paper I center my personal trajectory as a PhD student engaging with the scholarship on alternative research methods which increasingly challenge the rigidity as well as extractive and colonial nature of classical qualitative research methods. Such body of literature includes participatory, decolonial, anti-hierarchical, anti-capitalist and feminist research methodologies and methods which offer a much-needed critique to the hegemonic ways of doing science and point towards a radical change.

While such examination is essential, this article questions the way in which these approaches sometimes present themselves in the literature, which may appear intimidating due to the strive for perfectionism along the spectrum of radical-ness. This results in many scholars, especially early-career researchers, giving up on the employment of such methods all together, due to the fear of not living up to the theoretically outlined expectations. What I argue, instead, is that an open-ended and exploratory engagement with such methods would be more constructive towards a collective transformation of the current problematic status of science-making and knowledge production. Instead of ruling out the “less radical” practices, critical scholarship should engage in an open dialogue with grounded experiences of those who tentatively approach what is being taught at the theoretical level. Based on the empirical evidence from fieldwork in India where such radical methods were attempted to a very limited extent, the article offers reflections on the major challenges, opportunities, and lessons emerging from such endeavor. I discuss how radical and alternative methods, even though not fully employed, can serve as a great tool for deepening qualitative analysis while joining the collective call for emancipatory methodologies. Far from cherry picking or pragmatism, the paper concludes with the need to demystify radical research methods in

allowing for trial and error, instead of striving for perfection which can be counterproductive and off-putting. While following the rightfully pointed direction that radical scholarship offers, it is part of our intellectual and epistemological honesty to open up a dialogue on our insecurities, uncomfortable feelings, and contradictory logics that emerge in the pursuit of decolonial, emancipatory, feminist, anti-capitalist, and anti-hierarchical social power in the research practice.

Keywords: *participatory research, power inequality, feminist approach, decoloniality, anti-capitalism*

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Experiencing Cartographies of Body-Territory-Earth: a methodology to think through the connection between peoples and places affected by the decarbonization plan

Panel Session Ether

Flora Pereira da Silva [1] Gustavo Garcia-Lopez [2] Mariana Riquito [3]

1 ECOSOC-CES, Portugal and Pulitzer Center
2 COSOC-CES, Portugal and Post-Extractive Futures
3 ECOSOC-CES, Portugal and University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

Going beyond the mainstream technocratic solutions and narratives to the climate crisis (i.e., decarbonization consensus and carbon reductionism) — which reproduce ecosocial unsustainability and injustice — requires new conceptual and methodological tools that support and potentiate socioecological struggles. This panel proposes to bring decolonial methodologies of counter-mapping that instigate thinking-feeling and actions geared towards eco-social justice and transformations beyond the decarbonization discourse.

Counter-mapping as a method seeks to undo the coloniality of traditional mapping by centering embodied knowledges/practices/visions of exploited and silenced peoples/territories. In this workshop, we will present the "body-territory cartography", a collaborative method developed by Latin American communitarian and indigenous feminists alongside insurgent territories, which aims to document and integrate the material and affective perspectives that link territories with people's bodies. This methodology invites participants to draw a body and, through this exercise, it asks: what pains and joys, what fears and strengths do our territories have, and where do they manifest on our body(bodies)?

In this exercise, we will frame these questions within two cases of territories confronting the contradictions of decarbonization plans: one involving the grassroots resistance to the proposed lithium mining project in Covas de Barroso, located in northern Portugal; and another involving the Coalition of Women Leaders for the Environment and Sustainable Development, CFLEDD, a network who fights for women's rights in the governance of tropical forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). As scholars-activists, we will draw on our own embodied experience of these conflicts, while also building on the embodied experiences of the workshop's participants in other decarbonization and extractivist conflicts. By critically examining the complexities of these conflicts—thus going beyond the decarbonization consensus—and by embracing alternative methodologies rooted in eco-social justice and solidarity, we aim to challenge the hegemonic understanding of the so-called 'energy transition', cultivating knowledges/practices/visions that disrupt mainstream climate and environmental politics.

Keywords: *decolonial feminism; embodiment; body-territory cartography; eco-social justice; decarbonization consensus*

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Residualisation or Transformation? Exploring the role of Renewable Energy Communities in eco-social transitions and policies

Georgios Anagnostopoulos [1]

1 MA in Social Policy candidate, Department of Social Policy, Panteion University, Greece

The transformative potential of social and solidarity economy projects within the context of shifting welfare regimes and citizenship paradigms has been widely debated. Employing a comparative qualitative methodology, this study aims to discern the differences between top-down and bottom-up citizen initiatives. By comparing and contrasting state-initiated social economy projects in the context of the “just” energy transition with non-state initiated formal and informal citizen initiatives in energy production and assistance, it is shown that the initiator of an SSE project is highly determinant on its transformative potential. In particular, the study examines municipal energy cooperative projects with citizen involvement, grassroots-initiated energy cooperatives, and informal solidarity networks of young people in poverty located in Greece. The latter focuses specifically on one understudied practice of horizontal solidarity employed by young people in Greece: the organization of unauthorized, DIY, mutual-aid concerts to cover various pressing social needs of humans such as housing precarity, energy poverty, medical operations, gender transition surgery, abortion, or trial expenses and of more than human lives. It is argued that while top-down projects engage in a form of "co-production" of social policy (Soares Da Silva, 2018), rooted in the “responsible citizen” conceptualization of citizenship (Lister, 2011, Kourachanis, 2020) in the context of the state's retreat from the provision of social welfare, grassroots initiatives constitute a form of "counter-production" of social protection promoting an eco-social citizenship (Dwyer, 2010) rooted in solidarity, emancipation, and universality.

The study aims to provide insights into the diverse approaches to solidarity economy and their implications for socio-economic transformation and eco-social solidarity. It also hopes to stir the interest for further research into understudied forms of highly informal but yet, as it is argued, highly transformative, networks and spaces of alternative economies in Greece. By centering scholarship on the direct experiences of the oppressed it is underscored how their lived practices of solidarity take an emancipatory direction that goes beyond "filling in the gaps" of the retreating neoliberal welfare state to directly challenging its hyper-individualistic, consumerist, and anthropocentric conceptualizations of citizenship. This process is described as "counter-production" of social protection, in that it does not simply go beyond the state but against it, constructing conceptualizations of citizenship rooted in solidarity through the prefiguration of wellbeing redistribution underpinned by universalist and eco-social principles. Ultimately, the study reveals that more than being socially "excluded" or "vulnerable" groups that need to be "mobilized" or "empowered" by external actors, oppressed groups can and do create their own alternative spaces of solidarity economies that can challenge the foundational rationale of the neoliberal regime.

Keywords: *Solidarity Economy, Citizenship, Welfare Regimes, Co-production, Counter-production*

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Entropic Grastronational Neoruralism vs. Syntropic Autonomous Agroecology. A view from an inner area of southern Italy

Gerardo Costabile Nicoletta [1]

1 Research Fellow, Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Calabria, Italy

This paper proposes an empirically grounded discussion of conflicting discursive-material practices on decarbonization and ecological transition in southern rural Europe. The recent protests of the farmers signaled growing conflicts in using land and energy to face climate

changes and enhance democratic decarbonization, highlighting the ambiguous relationship between petroculture and conventional agriculture that relies on chemicals and fossil fuels to 'feed the nation.' Concurrently, new experiences of communal agroforestry have started to inhabit the peninsula. Applying a new permaculture design founded on a more ecocentric relationship with the non-human, such experiences show an alternative conception of socio-ecological management and the use of organic and inorganic energy. They not only attempt to practice a socio-metabolism based on regeneration and human-nature sympoietic cohabitation but also challenge the imperative of energy production and consumption. Drawing on decolonial scholarship on permaculture and energy justice as well as on recent deliberations on sustainable materialism, the paper narrates the first provisional results of ongoing research on discursive and material conflicts on decarbonization in the rural areas of the inner rural peripheries of Italy. The research methods combine discourse analysis of communicative practices of farmers' associations, and ethnographic research, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation with a community-led agroforestry and peasant market in a small rural village in southern Italy. More specifically, the paper will inquiry, on the one hand, the discursive-material practices of the youth organization of the Coldiretti, the National Association of Farmers, promotes energy-intensive agricultural production for markets and retail chains based on a modernist and productivist understanding of energy as well as an anthropocentric-instrumentalist agrarian regenerative practice; on the other hand, the paper use field diary of an ongoing participant observation of a communitarian, self-organized collective experience of syntropic agroecology attempting to construct radical democratic agora and alternative energy use. The discussion of these provisional research results is meant to reflect on self-management autonomous practices of regenerative decarbonisation based on an alternative conception of energy production and consumption can enhance a post-capitalist production system based on low-fi technology, energetic frugality, and more-than-human commoning practices.

Keywords: *neorurality; syntropic agroforestry; gastronationalism; petroculture; prefigurative politics.*

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Pluriversal Dialogues on Environmental Ethics: Decolonising Scientific Practice to Build Futures Beyond 'Development'

Jan Linhart[1], Alejandro Mora Motta[2], Emilia Fernengel[3], Dennis Avilés Irahola[4], Eva Youkhana[5], Antje Gunsenheimer[6, 7], Luis Fernando Sarango Macas[8], Abelardo Ramos[9], Marcia Mandepora Chundary[10], Gabriel Llanquinao[11], José Quidel[12], Claudia Palechor[13], Pablo de la Cruz[14], Yilson Beltrán-Barrera[15], Guillermo Pacheco Habert[16], Francisca Elias Canás[17], Ruth Sander[18], Nikolaus von Stillfried[19], Fritz Letsch[20], Paul Basu[21], Christiane Woopen[22]

[1] Center for Life Ethics, University of Bonn (UB), Germany
[2] Global Heritage Lab, UB
[3] Center for Development Research, UB
[4] Institute for Archeology and Cultural Anthropology, UB
[5] Interdisciplinary Latin American Center, UB
[6] Pluriversity Amawtay Wasi (rector), Ecuador
[7] Universidad Autónoma Intercultural Indígena (UAIIN), Colombia
[8] Foundation for Education in Contexts of Multilingualism and Pluriculturalism (FUNPROEIB Andes – former executive director); UniBOL Guarani (former rector), Bolivia
[9] Universidad Catolica de Temuco, Chile
[10j] Fundación Gaia, Amazonas, Colombia
[11] National University of Colombia
[12] Universidad Austral de Chile; Universidad de Osorno, Chile
[13] ENBI NIM NA'OJ, San Martín Jilotepeque, Guatemala
[14] Politik im Raum, Germany
[15] Paradox Science Institute, Brazil
[16] Netzwerk Gemeinsinn, Germany
[17] School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography, Oxford University

Our paper will offer a brief account of the first pluriversal dialogues [1-5] that will be held at the University of Bonn in May 2024. The event is being co-organized by a collective of indigenous and non-indigenous researchers from Latin America and Germany. This joint project is part of a long-term strategy for decolonising and opening Science towards a pluriverse of perspectives on global challenges.

Modernist models of "progress" and "development" have not only shown inappropriate for tackling our self-made global eco-social crisis; they are increasingly being recognised as part of the problem. Particularly, voices from the global South have been criticizing "developmentalism" for universalizing "Western" worldviews and future visions, thereby dominating and exploiting both nature and a major part of humanity [6-22]. Scientific universalism [5] sustains the colonial geopolitics of knowledge [16] that systematically excludes subaltern (non-hetero-male, indigenous, Southern) perspectives

from the official discourses about desirable futures and possible solutions to the multi-crisis scenario of the so-called “Anthropocene” [23-25]. However, our capacity to find sustainable and just solutions to existential global threats critically depends on negotiating diverging worlding-practices and ethical notions of 'human', 'non-human', 'nature' or 'environment' into our projections of desirable futures. This demands recognising the possibility and the legitimacy of other worlds.

Against this background, our initiative aims to open spaces for pluriversal dialogues within academia where subalternised ethics and practices can meet on equal footing with the established sciences, thus mobilizing different perspectives for envisioning futures beyond development. The event is a result of a confluence of various previous collaborations of the involved participants, including a one-week minga at the Autonomous Intercultural Indigenous University (UAIIN) in Colombia (February 2024), international summer schools at the University of Bonn on decolonial futures (July 2023, in collaboration with the University of Ghana) and on Latin American perspectives on sustainability (2022), an international conference on Visions of the Future in the Americas (2019), and a long-standing commitment to community-led research on developmentalism, environment, gender inequalities and (indigenous) education all over Latin America. All those engagements have been based on decolonial approaches, and have sought to open up transdisciplinary dialogues.

For the event, 30 researchers from Latin America and Germany will meet at the Center for Life Ethics at the University Bonn for one week. Participants will engage in pluriversal dialogues, exchanging experiences and views on environmental ethics and education for futures beyond "development". A series of workshops will provide space for experimenting with different co-creative, dialogical and performative practices from intercultural and environmental research and education. These practical experiences will provide important insights concerning the challenge of establishing pluriversal dialogues as a decolonizing practice – not only in Bonn, but in Academia at large - for mobilizing diverging perspectives and practices for co-creating social and ecologically just (not only sustainable) solutions both for human and non-human “Terrans” [26].

Keywords: *Pluriversal dialogues, environmental ethics, alternative futures, decolonising practices*

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Forest Mothers: Pluriversal Multispecies Ontologies in Storied Landscapes

Panel Session Fire

Joana Canelas[1] Robert Fish [2] Joseph Tzanopoulos[3]

1 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Specialist, at Food4Sustainability CoLab, Portugal; Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, UK
2 Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, UK
3 Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, UK

This session proposes an immersive experience of pluriversal, multispecies and relational ontologies, exploring the entanglements of human and beyond-human entities in the co-production of Amazonian landscapes.

A journey to the Peruvian Amazon, wayfaring through forests and along river-paths, where stories of dreams and realities are intertwined. The air permeated with colors, sounds and scents make our senses aware of an 'ecology of selves', where beyond-human entities co-produce the landscape and share a common sociability. All are aware of our presence, responsive to our actions, on the brink of becoming prey or predator, they becoming you or you becoming them. Here, being human is becoming with the beyond-human; eating is an act of becoming other; crossing the forest is entering the beyond-human; hunting may be stealing or receiving a gift. Then, how are the relations with the beyond-human negotiated and managed? How is the knowledge that differentiate between life and death reproduced? What is the role of plant teachers, tricksters and forest mothers?

Based on fieldwork in the Peruvian Amazon, this session explores the oral narratives of local and indigenous communities about the rivers and the forest. Stories portray beyond-human entities as persons and places in the landscape, who speak to us through dreams and visions. Here, the concept of 'forest mothers' represent beyond-human entities who metamorphose into human, who protect the forest from greed and overexploitation, who may both heal and make ill. Some tree species (e.g. Lupuna, Ceiba pentandra) are considered powerful forest mothers, although oral narratives portray these in all plants, animals, mountains and rivers. The session closes with an invitation to think with pluriversal and multispecies ontologies: How can these inform modern discourses and practices? How are these threatened by the Anthropocene?

Keywords: *Storied Landscapes, Pluriversal Politics, Multispecies Ontologies, Relational Epistemologies, Anthropocene*

We All Need a Home

Activist Experience Report

Panel Session Fire

Tibor Zoltán Dányi [1]

1 Assistant professor, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, University of Pécs, Hungary



This design-build project learns from cross-disciplinary architecture and social psychology research insights. Ultimately a team of researchers, students, citizen allies and unhoused residents created a durable, protected living space that minimizes the ecological footprint while addressing more equitable social possibilities.

The Research Group for Solidarity in Architecture at the University of Pécs has been organizing student workshops (We All Need a Home) since 2016. These interventions address homelessness with small-scale sustainable design actions that invite participation through solidarity. This experience report documents our intervention in a socialist-era municipal garden, where unhoused people have constructed a community.

The research phase employed qualitative methods to document survival strategies and creative means by which this community finds shelter despite a forbidding housing policy context.

The findings illustrate how participants creatively used local materials and simple techniques to realize functional homes with minimal ecological impact compared to more advanced housing technologies. Adaptive insights from these individuals in marginalized communities evidence resistance to systemic obstacles within the homeless care system, allowing otherwise unhoused people to keep relationships intact in “homes”. These combined ecological and social findings informed the student-led collaborative design (through materials, means of construction and definition of the housing program).

The implemented temporary shelter realized a circular economy from design through construction with donated, upcycled materials, including timber from demolished houses, leftover thermal insulation, festival tent membranes, and door panels. One family

participated across the entirety of these processes and informed a social program which included:

- living space for two permanent residents and frequent visits from up to two temporary family members
- ensuring hygiene and comfort in a garden context lacking piped drinking water, piped natural gas, or grid-based electricity
- enables creative adaptation of the home (furnishing, ornament, mementoes etc).

Local housing policy created the challenge this study responds to: local homeless organizations do not provide long-term housing for married couples, partners, and families, therefore many do not appear in the homeless statistics, because they avoid homeless care services, instead managing their housing independently in places like these gardens.

The project proves that environmental sustainability goals might also serve economic and ultimately social sustainability outcomes: minimizing waste produced in the consumer society model can contribute to the alleviation of social inequalities through the framework of solidarity.

Value for design and social science pedagogy includes an expanded sense of the possibilities of co-creation to engage with solidarity and in an equitable way with the experiences and insights of lived expertise in unhoused communities to address serious social problems.

Keywords: circular economy, ecology, solidarity, participation

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Dányi, Müller, Bigazzi: *Lessons of Architecture Without Architects in Pécs*

Larae Malooly, Tian Daphne: *R-Strategies for a Circular Economy*

Pastoralism and Pentecostalism: Revealing the religious dimension of changing land tenure/use dynamics in southern Kenya

Joana Roque de Pinho[1] Stanley ole Neboo[2] Richard ole Supeet[3] Angela Kronenburg Garcia[4]

1 Researcher, Centro de Estudos Internacionais (CEI), Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa
2 alek River Water Conservation Association (Talek WRUA), Talek, Narok County, Kenya
3 Imbirikani, Loitokitok, Kajiado County, Kenya
4 Earth and Life Institute, Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium

Bialecki et al. (2008) once questioned anthropologists' reluctant engagement with Christianity. Recently, Wilkins (2021) pondered the absence of religious actors in political ecological inquiry. We address these concerns by tackling another omission, i.e., how scholarship on livelihoods and environmental change among Kenyan (agro) pastoralists overlooks their recent, rapid conversion to Pentecostalism. Despite other disciplines' acknowledgement of spiritual dimensions in human-environmental relationships, and accounts of early Maasai encounters with mainline Protestant and Catholic missionaries (Hodgson, 2005; Rigby, 1981), contemporary analyses of Maasai livelihoods and environments sidestep Pentecostalism as a variable in changing livelihoods/land uses, responses to climatic instability, conservation outcomes and relationships to the land (e.g., Homewood et al., 2009; but see Roque de Pinho et al.; 2014, Baird, 2015) – even when confronted with conspicuous faith-related manifestations, such as proliferating Kenyan and transnational churches and lively public religious performances.

We analyze long-term ethnographic data (2002-23) from two southern Kenyan conservation landscapes and examine entanglements of Pentecostalism with land use/tenure changes and climate change in former commons. We find that Christian beliefs, church leaders' discourses and behaviors, and Bible-inspired household dynamics re-shape how (agro-) pastoralists relate to the land, conceptually and materially. Around Amboseli National Park, churches' promotion of farming interacts with conservation discourse to redefine the very meaning of "land". Around Maasai Mara National Reserve, land demarcation and privatization has facilitated the penetration of churches through land purchases and donations. With declining reciprocity ascribed to land privatization and fencing, urbanization and education, churches are credited with re-creating "unity" and "respect" among community members. Meanwhile, pastors preach against land sales, arbitrate land conflicts, promote wildlife conservation and tree planting, and lead climate change mitigation efforts. Away from clear directions of causality, this study exposes the complexity of religious-environmental entanglements in Kenya Maasailand and suggests avenues for increased engagement between conservation studies, environmental conservation, and religion. We argue that both Pentecostal studies and scholarship on

Maasai pastoralism would benefit from paying attention to changing religious dynamics in Kenyan pastoral areas.

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The influence of projectification on the diffusion capacities of grassroots innovation initiatives and networks: the case of European Ecovillage Movement

Lasse Kos [1] André Girardi [2]

1 PhD Candidate in Sociology, Department of Social Sciences, University of Basel, Switzerland
2 PhD Candidate & Integrated Researcher (CEI) ISCTE - University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal.

This study investigates the influence of projectification processes on the diffusion capacities of grassroots innovations within transnational networks, focusing on the European ecovillage movement. Drawing on theories of projectification, professionalisation, and diffusion, our research combines insights from two distinct academic projects on ecovillages: Ecovillages as Incubators for Sustainability Transitions (EVIST) and EuroREGEN.

Projectification, defined as a trend where organisations increasingly orient their operations towards projects and project management structures, has gained prominence in EU-funded organizations (Jalocha, 2019). The EU's substantial project-based funding has spurred projectification, leading to both positive and negative effects. While projects enhance organizational flexibility, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities, they can also simplify agendas and alter organizational operations and priorities (Schoper et al., 2018).

This paper investigates how projectification influences the role of grassroots innovations (GIs) in sustainability transitions. GIs are crucial for fostering sustainability transitions by diffusing innovations across societies (Kohler, 2019; Seyfang and Smith, 2007). Despite its contemporary importance, the literature has overlooked the impact of projectification on GI networks and individual initatives.

Methodologically, we conducted a survey involving 41 European ecovillages to understand their diffusion activities. Additionally, field visits and interviews were conducted at individual ecovillages, along with interviews with key stakeholders involved in the ecovillage network.

Our analysis reveals that projectification incorporates elements of diffusion, with a notable prioritization of network projects over local diffusion activities, particularly among ecovillages deeply engaged in the network. This phenomenon suggests a shift in focus towards transnational endeavors at the expense of local initiatives.

In conclusion, our findings underscore the significance of grassroots innovations for sustainability transitions, particularly through their diffusion activities targeting mainstream actors. However, the ongoing dynamics of projectification and professionalization within the ecovillage network significantly impact the diffusion capacities of individual ecovillages, as well as the nature of support provided by the network.

These insights hold implications for policymakers, EU grant providers, and activist grassroots innovation networks. Understanding the multifaceted impacts of projectification and professionalization on diffusion capacities is crucial for effectively supporting and scaling grassroots innovations in the context of sustainability transitions.

Keywords: *Projectification, ecovillages, transnational networks, grassroots innovations, diffusion*

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Cooperative Financial Instruments in Portugal: a farfetched utopia or a feasible project for our times?

Luis Filipe Olival [1] Catarina Mateus [2]

1 Phd student, Anthropology, University of Coimbra, Portugal
2 Phd student, Urban Studies, ISCTE-IUL, Portugal

The economy is as much about satisfying collective needs and desires in the present as projecting enhanced living conditions into the future. In that sense, the prospect of saving and keeping a common financial safeguard, but also the possibility of accessing funds for developing collective projects, is a fundamental part of any economic system. The Great Recession of 2008 increased the general sense of distrust in private and profit-based financial institutions, whose bailouts were made possible at the cost of raising taxes, reducing the welfare state, and, as a result, worsening the lower classes' life conditions. As an answer to this institutional abandonment, several social and solidarity economy (SSE) initiatives have been deploying alternative saving and credit systems. In Portugal, however, SSE organizations suffer from the absence of ethical banks and credit cooperatives to fund socially and environmentally engaged projects. Based on ethnographic research among the Portuguese Network of Integral Cooperatives and an Ecuadorian saving and credit family cooperative, we seek to understand the extent to which the lack of cooperative financial instruments has been limiting the development of internal projects and the integral cooperative movement as a whole, while exploring the features of a successful case observed in Ecuador.

While looking at the relationship between cooperative enterprises, public institutions, and financial capital, our presentation will stem from analyzing the difficulties experienced within the integral cooperative movement to create non-profit financial instruments that would facilitate the development of projects that demand higher initial investments, such as housing complexes or storage hubs. Then, we will examine the national legal and institutional framework in order to identify the reasons for the absence of such financial instruments. Stemming on long-term fieldwork among the savings and credit cooperative Portada Bethania, we will explore the financial strategies adopted to guarantee both a common financial safeguard and the possibility of accessing funds for developing collective projects in a context that suffers from deficient governmental support. Finally,

while approaching a few attempts to develop alternative financial instruments in Portugal, we open the discussion to collectively think about prospects for enabling these alternatives to grow and multiply. With this discussion we aim to nurture a broader reflection on the role of trust and distrust in both public and private institutions, and on how cooperative financial instruments can foster autonomy and self-determination at a community level in the context of neoliberal capitalism and the reduction of welfare state.

Challenging the Decarbonization Consensus from Below: Contestations and Perspectives from Barroso

Mariana Riquito[1]

1 AISSR, University of Amsterdam; CES, University of Coimbra

This paper examines how local actors in Barroso are challenging and contesting the "decarbonization consensus" (Bringel and Svampa, 2023). The paper demonstrates that some actors are criticizing the dominant meta-narrative which focuses solely on carbon emissions, often called "carbon reductionism" (Eisenstein, 2022; Gelderloos, 2022). The hegemonic narrative is not only legitimizing socioecological destruction, such as the proposed lithium mining project in Covas do Barroso, but also overshadows ecological complexities, facilitating the conversion of nature into quantifiable and commodifiable units, which do not consider the interconnectedness of all ecological processes. Some locals are contesting the unfairness of having to bear the cost of the green transition, resisting being relegated to a “green sacrifice zone” and emphasizing that carbon is not the only element that matters. This paper stems from long-term collaborative fieldwork, conducted between May 2023 to April 2024, and from my engagement with Barroso since 2021. Specifically, this paper presents two ethnographic vignettes, in which local actors invite other elements and beings, namely water and the forest, respectively, to contradict – through their local knowledge – the "omissions" (Bonelli, 2023) generated by the dominant decarbonization narrative. Adopting a theoretical framework situated at the interface between political ecology and political ontology, through these ethnographic vignettes, the paper reveals how local knowledge contests and complicates the reductive focus on carbon. In both episodes, I reveal how locals articulate a vision of “climate change” that transcends simple carbon metrics, advocating for a more holistic approach that respects, integrates, and understands how “in the biosphere everything is connected”. The paper thus argues that the decarbonization agenda must be reimagined, shifting away from the narrow-technical-metrics of carbon calculations.

Keywords: *Decarbonization consensus; Energy transition; Carbon reductionism; Climate change; Local knowledges*

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Analysis and representation of the overall performance of organizations of the social and solidarity economy: Cooperative Women's Case Province of Guelmim

Maryem Rachid [1] El Bachir Asaaire [2]

1 University of Abdelmalek Essaadi, Tetouan Morocco
2 University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah Sais Fes Morocco

The concept of social economy emerged as an alternative economy to the market economy or the capitalist economy, based on the principles of social justice. Its priorities include creating opportunities for cooperation, solidarity and mutual assistance, achieving a balance between economic prosperity and social justice and achieving equitable democratic development to combat social exclusion of the most vulnerable groups. such as the poor, women and people in difficult situations, with the aim of remedying the imbalances resulting from public policies, social inequalities between men and women, and geography between regions. Moroccan women, particularly in province of Guelmim has found in the

cooperative sector a real dynamic and a tool for its self-integration allowing it to improve its living conditions.

This article deals, in the first part, with the different stages of evolution of women's cooperatives in Morocco, particularly in the field of local products, as well as State interventions for the promotion of these cooperatives. Our article presents the portrait of women's cooperatives, cooperatives created exclusively between women, their constraints as well as certain actors supporting their creations and their developments.

A second part was then devoted to the study of the situation of a sample of women involved in cooperatives in the province of Guelmim, and to the impact of this cooperative work on improving the condition of women. based on the results of the field study, we concluded that the importance of these cooperatives in the economic and social empowerment of women, and that despite the efforts made by the State to improve the cooperative sector, which results in the development of the number of cooperatives and a certain number of institutions which provide assistance to these women's cooperatives, they are still insufficient, which is reflected in the difficulties encountered by these organizations.

Keywords: *social and solidarity economy, female cooperatism, the impact of cooperative work, actors supporting creation and development, local development.*

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Economies of Scale-Linking: Re-thinking value co-creation and exchange

Mário Yanez [1] Gil Penha-Lopes [2]

1 PhD Candidate, ISCTE- IUL Complexity Studies and FCUL, Lisbon, Portugal
2 Auxiliary Professor, FCUL, Lisbon, Portugal

Theoretical approach

This paper will borrow its rationale for the proposed regenerative economic framework from Edgar Morin's work on complex organization in Method and Carol Sanford's work on developmental paradigms sourced from the Fourth Way school. In order to develop a complex organization of the various nested economic scales, we will utilize John G. Bennett's formal systematics (categories of existence) for all branches of natural philosophy sourced from The Dramatic Universe, Volume 1: The foundations of natural philosophy. So that we may generate an understanding of the various scales can naturally interact without losing their identity/integrity, we will refer to Bennett's hierarchy of worlds framework from The Dramatic Universe, Volume 2: The foundations of moral philosophy. And finally, to operationalize economies of scale-linking, we will introduce this author's Regenerative Development Aims, a Life-affirming practice-based framework that comprehensively reimagines the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Methodological approach

Via the integration of the above frameworks, this paper will propose a regenerative approach for developing multi-scalar living-economies, where entities co-create and exchange value in ways that preserve the identity of each scale and regenerate the integrity of living systems. It will do so by constructing a dynamic network graph 'open-model' to simulate how value is generated and can move between scales in sympoietic ways that continually regenerate the aliveness (vitality, viability and evolution) of the nested living wholes across scales.

Main argument

We will utilize the open-model to explore pathways that take us well beyond the extract value paradigm organized around ongoing resource depletion, and move human societies into, a regenerative Life paradigm, which holds the potential of local living economies purposely organized around RE-sourcing, enhancing the capability of living systems to produce greater degree of aliveness.

The extract value paradigm at the heart of the anthropocentric economy operates entropically. As its name implies, it functions by extracting what has been ironically known as a resource, while diminishing the health of the source and its ability to replenish itself. The thinking that constitutes this paradigm, systematically treats living systems, not as interrelated wholes, but as a collection of disconnected fragments, objectifying them and rendering them entropic—unable to participate further in value-adding processes as living systems.

Extract value paradigm produces a transaction-oriented economy that focuses on self-interest as driver of extractive activity. It collapses the notion of wealth to accumulation of material objects (things) and symbolic assets (money). Its degenerative nature threatens biospheric, and therefore societal, collapse via the depleting of non-renewable sources of energy, the unraveling of the living web of relations, and the altering of its generative, Life-giving cycles. This paradigm and its way of conveniently obscuring the true workings of living systems and how value is created, where it is located and how it is exchanged. The premise adopted here, is that economies that operate from this paradigm tend to overrun various scales of existence, because they ignoring the unique nature of value-adding processes at work different scales can offer without diminishing their capacity to continue producing that value indefinitely.

The regenerative Life paradigm strives to understand and integrate the workings of living systems and their value-adding processes. Living systems—from cell to biosphere—form complex organizations of interrelated wholes, found at various nested scales of existence. Life is negentropic: Wholes at one scale of existence, provide the conditions—wholeness—for their constituent parts-in-relation (themselves wholes at the next scale down), whom by their collective participation (togetherness) in in the exchange of nutrients and information, create value—aliveness—that serves to continually regenerate the greater whole. These greater wholes are themselves parts-in-relation of some large wholes they are in service to. As above, so below!

Indeed, we live in a Universe-of-Complexity, a unified yet discontinuous field of existence, where complex organization is continually at work producing an extraordinary diversity of modes of existence at a given scale. Although the pattern repeats at every scale, every step up is marked by the emergence of new qualities of wholeness and, therefore, new capabilities for aliveness. In this way, various scales are nested within each other and linked.

Brief summary of conclusions/Implications for research

It will be demonstrated here how we might approach the societal transformation with economies of scale-linking that embody a regenerative Life paradigm. That is, that value created at one scale of existence—for example an ecosystem—passes seamlessly to the next scale—a community—without being forcibly extracted in damaging ways, hence preserving the unique essence of both scales, that is, their distinctive modes of creating value. Scale-linking allows us to conceive regenerative economies, whose aims shift the focus beyond the value itself and rather cares for the process of (re)generation of genuine wealth—the capability of any system to continually produce value in a manner that brings it, as well as, the scales above and below it a greater degree of aliveness.

Activism/policymaking:

The scale-linking approach is intended to both present a theoretical framing so that communities might begin to think differently about how to structure their economies in Life-enhancing ways, and offer a practical approaches on how to get there. For this, we will introduce the Regenerative Development Aims (RDAs) as instruments that can guide communities in developing their own pathways towards economies of scale-linking.

Keywords: *regenerative development; local living economies; scale-linking; genuine wealth; degree of aliveness*

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Consumer-Driven Economic Democracy: A Conceptual Note on the Role of Consumers in the Process of Democratizing the Economy

Nicholas Pohl [1] Philip Balsiger [2] Victoria Becerril Nito [3] Fabian Petutschnig [4]

1 Postdoctoral researcher, Institute of Sociology, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland
2 Professor of economic sociology, Institute of Sociology, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland
3 PhD candidate, Institute of Sociology, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland
4 Postdoctoral researcher, Institute of Sociology, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland

Economic democratization results from political intervention or workers taking control of production—this, at least, is the common understanding of how economic democracy may come about. Consumers are seen to influence economic processes rather indirectly: either by creating incentives for producers through aggregate consumer choices or by mounting pressure through the formation of interest groups and social movements. However, consumers can—and often do—actively participate in democratizing the economy: They join forces and form consumer-owned organizations (COOs) in order to democratically organize their provisioning with goods and services. This conceptual paper introduces the notion of "consumer-driven economic democracy" to understand how consumers' collective self-organization may democratize market relations. Combining economic sociology and organization studies, it draws on the literature of moral markets and prefigurative organizing. The paper suggests a twofold process. First, COOs democratize the economy through the implementation of democratic organizing practices within their organizations. Second, these democratic practices help transform practices beyond the respective organizations, through the scaling out of consumer-driven economic democracy on supply-chain actors and the alternative economy. The paper renews academic discussions on economic democracy by bringing consumers to the fore. Its insights also have societal relevance by empirically nourishing current socio-political debates around "needs-oriented economies" and food democracy as responses to the environmental and social challenges of our times.

Keywords: *Economic democracy, Consumer-owned organizations, Alternative organizing, Economic sociology, Organization studies*

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Energy (in)justices in the Capitalocene: unpacking the controversy of a large solar power plant in Alentejo (Southern Portugal)

Oriana Rainho Brás[1] , António Carvalho[2], Vera Ferreira[3]

1 Researcher, SOCIUS/CSG, ISEG Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal.
2 Researcher, CES Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal; Assistant Professor, FEUC Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal.
3 PhD candidate, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

In this paper we explore the public controversy around a large solar power plant planned for the village of Cercal, southern Portugal, through the lens of the energy justice framework, namely its three tenets: distributional, procedural and recognition justice. Drawing on qualitative data from interviews, fieldwork and document analysis, we examine the contradictions and injustices (re)produced by hegemonic energy transitions in a local context. Our empirical findings reveal the local protest movement and environmental associations' concerns that the region may become a "green sacrifice zone", disrespecting local livelihoods and endangering biodiversity. They also point at serious procedural injustices: the public consultation process – in itself a limited form of participation – failed to involve the local community, indicating that the State and corporate actors do not recognize residents as legitimate stakeholders, disregarding protest and active discord as legitimate forms of political participation. This case-study illustrates how hegemonic imaginaries and practices of the energy transition – top-down, centralized and corporate – are major drivers of energy injustices, enforcing green grabbing and the enactment of green sacrifice zones. This scenario emphasizes the limitations of simplistic responses to the climate and environmental crises – often coined as "carbon reductionism" –, requiring alternative socioeconomic, political and ontological models to address the deep-rooted causes of the Capitalocene.

Keywords: *Energy justice; solar energy; green sacrifice zones; carbon reductionism; public participation*

Solidarity Practices to Face Catastrophes: The Torrential Rains in Southern Brazil.

Patrícia Tometich[1] Juliana Melo[2] Patrícia Dias[3]

1 Universidade Estadual do Paraná, Brazil
2 Federal University of Bahia, Brazil
3 Saint Mary's University, NS, Canada

In May 2024, The New York Times reported a devastating humanitarian crisis caused by torrential rains in Southern Brazil. The floods ravaged the Rio Grande do Sul State, affecting 473 affected cities. The Civil Defense announced a catastrophe impact, 45,126 sheltered population, 581,638 displaced population, and 2,347,664 people affected. The disaster resulted in 806 injuries, 44 missing persons, and 169 confirmed deaths. The State and Municipalities saved 77,729 people and 12,527 animals with 28.153 state staff (DEFESA CIVIL, 2024). Social media played a pivotal role, showcasing the devastation and the numerous official and community rescues and acts of Solidarity. Doctors, nurses, athletes, and individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds across Brazil have travelled to the southern cities to volunteer their assistance. The solidarity practices mobilized in the Rio Grande do Sul State encourage more discussions on disaster management. Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery programs underscore the importance of government and civil collaboration to strengthen community resilience. The severe climate events have already underscored the impacts of planetary crisis, inequality, conflict, and rising food and energy prices (UNEP, 2022). França Filho and Eynaud (2023, p. 225) argue that "solidarity offers an opportunity to raise political questions such as democracy, inequalities, and environmental issues within organizational studies, paving the way for radical change in management science." This phenomenon of solidarity raises several questions: Is it more than voluntary or rescue work? How can untrained individuals effectively contribute to disaster management? Can the Solidarity Network inform new strategies for addressing catastrophes? This research examines the unique relationships, resilience aspects, and solidarity networks formed during the Rio Grande do Sul floods. To explore these phenomena, we adopted a digital media observation methodology described by Hine (2015), incorporating the Internet into an ethnographic study. Based on reports from those affected and volunteers, we intend to reflect on priorities and potential paths for addressing extreme weather events, reinforcing the debate on the inadequacies of Neoliberal policies in mitigating the climate crisis.

Keywords: *Solidarity Economy, Climate Emergency, Ethnography for the Internet*

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Impact of changes in priorities of local communities and contemporary village institutions on ecology and livelihood in alpine pastures in eastern Himalaya region of India

Pijush Kumar Dutta [1]

1 Associate Professor, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, India

Local communities of Himalaya have been sustainably utilizing diverse natural resources with the help of traditional knowledge and management systems since time immemorial. Traditional village institutions have played very critical role to distribute production risk by supporting adoption of multiple subsistence techniques and pastoralism is one among all such options (Farroquee et al, 2004). Monpa communities of India, residing in western part of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh have been traditionally rearing Yak, an integral part of their culture and tradition, and managing summer and winter pasture lands for grazing. However, at present traditional Yak based livelihood of the community is facing serious internal challenges due to change in the effectiveness and priority of most of the traditional village institutions who have been responsible for grazing management. In this study it has been found that, the introduction of Panchayati Raj institutions in villages for decentralisation and democratisation of local governance system (Mibang and Modi, 2019), the influence and effectiveness of traditional institutions have got diluted. Also, with changed priority to be part of mainstream development processes, there has been lack in focus of these contemporary institutions in ensuring sustainable management of grazing area. Besides, though the local communities and some of the traditional village institutions with their limited capacity are still following traditional management systems, as most of the

rules and regulations have not evolved with time in accordance with the changing threats and challenges, there has been increase in threats on alpine pastures due to commercial hunting of wildlife and extraction of NTFPs which are being driven by external drivers. The owners of summer grazing sites are still following the traditional taxation systems, objective of which in past was to avoid overgrazing by herders coming from other villages to ensure availability of healthy grazing sites for their own Yak. However, at present owners of the grazing area have stopped raring Yak and so now, though they are following same traditional taxation system, the objective has changed to mainly ascertaining their ownership over the grazing areas which in turn has weakened the monitoring to avoid over grazing. In the present site, it has been found that the traditional management system of the alpine pastures is very much in accordance with Ostrom's 8 Design Principles (Ostrom, 1990). However, lack of convergence in functioning of traditional and contemporary village institutions is leading to unsustainable resource use in recent time. Reinforcement of age-old community stewardship through convergence of functioning various institutions is of urgent need to ensure socioeconomic and ecological security of communities highly dependent on these fragile natural resources.

Keywords: *Pastoralism, alpine pasture, Yak grazing, traditional management system, Village Panchayat*

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Ecovillages as a solution for displaced people in Colombia? Examining the replication dynamics of the ecovillage model for marginalized groups

Rebeca Roysen [1] Diego Ayala [2] Mónica Ramos-Mejía [3] Nadine Bruehwiler [4] Lasse Kos [5] Jens Koehrsen [6]

1 Researcher, Centre for Religion, Economy and Politics, Universität Basel, Switzerland
2 Strategic Planning Coordinator, Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, Brazil
3 Assistant Professor, Management School, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia
4 PhD candidate, Centre for Religion, Economy and Politics
Universität Basel, Switzerland
5 PhD candidate, Centre for Religion, Economy and Politics, Universität Basel, Switzerland
6 Lecturer, Centre for Religion, Economy and Politics, Universität Basel, Switzerland

Colombia has one of the largest internally displaced populations (IDP) in the world. According to the UN Refugee Agency, at the end of 2022, it amounted to 6.8 million people (UNHCR, 2024). Around 89% of IDP in Colombia are displaced from rural areas and settle in slums on the outskirts of cities (IDMC, n.d.). Although there are State mechanisms to compensate IDP for their losses, in 2014 they were still 3.5 times more likely to be below the extreme poverty line than the average population of Colombia (Ibáñez et al., 2022).

While migration is usually associated with a disruption of social networks (Ibáñez et al., 2022), there are many examples of community efforts led by IDP to rebuild their lives and identities - what Lemaitre (2016) has called “grassroots reconstruction”. This paper addresses one specific form of reconstruction: the adaptation of the ecovillage model to the situated needs of IDP groups in Colombia. Ecovillages are commons-oriented (Esteves, 2017), community-led initiatives (Schwab and Roysen, 2022) with a focus on social, cultural, economic and environmental regeneration.

This paper answers the following question: What are the potentials and the challenges of adapting the ecovillage model as a solution for displaced people in Colombia? In order to answer this, we draw on the literature related to the replication of grassroots innovations (Roysen et al., 2024; Seyfang and Longhurst, 2016).

We then analyse the case-study of Nashira ecovillage in Colombia. Nashira is an ecovillage born from a women’s association, many of them IDP and/or victims of domestic violence. Data collection consists of a fieldwork in Nashira, including observations and interviews with its members, as well as with representatives of two other organisations that are trying to replicate their ecovillage model. One is a group of displaced people, and the other is a group of reincorporados (former guerilla members).

While replication is considered an important pathway for the diffusion of grassroots innovations, there is a lack of studies that focus specifically on replication processes. This paper thus makes an important contribution to this field. Additionally, this paper has practical implications regarding the use of commons-oriented solutions to IDP in Colombia.

Keywords: *grassroots innovations; diffusion of innovations; internally displaced populations; internal migration; peace and conflict.*

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Grassroots Narratives of State-led Provisioning for Decent Living within Planetary Boundaries

Roman Hausmann[1] Linus Eckert [2] Sigrid Stagl [3]

1 Roman Hausmann, MSc, Vienna University of Economics and Business
2 Linus Eckert, MSc, Vienna University of Economics and BusinessCommunity Pluriversity, ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal
3 Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sigrid Stagl, Vienna University of Economics and Business

Proponents of the Foundational Economy (FE) (Arcidiacono et al. 2018) argue that state-led provisioning should take a stronger role in providing the basic goods and services needed to ensure a decent living within planetary boundaries for all citizens (DLPB). FE advocats see democratic and participatory processes as essential for defining what a DLPB entails and how it can be facilitated. However, we argue that those approaches often use an

underdeveloped and passive understanding of citizen participation, essentially seeing participation as the process of policy makers asking citizens about their preferences for policies towards a DLPB. Instead, this paper highlights the huge variety of narratives and practices through which citizens express their understanding of a DLPB in a more active role (Wittmayer et al. 2019). In particular, grassroots initiatives challenge dominant consumerist conceptualisations of a DLPB and develop alternative imaginaries rooted in solidarity, frugality, and social relationships (Seyfang and Haxeltine 2012; Smith et al. 2016).

This paper addresses the following research question: How can grassroots' narratives and practices inform policy makers in designing state-led provisioning for facilitating a decent living within planetary boundaries? We follow Miraftab's (Miraftab 2004)argument that 'invited spaces' of participation provided by policy makers are insufficient; instead, 'invented spaces' of participation that are proactively claimed by civil society actors – such as grassroots initiatives – have the potential to challenge state-led provisioning for DLPB more fundamentally, both in terms of content and processes.

The paper provides a mapping of grassroots' imaginaries of how a DLPB can be defined and ensured by state-led provisioning. Those insights can offer a more democratic approach for designing citizen-informed policies. The data is collected through a qualitative multiple-case study and fieldwork in various grassroots initiatives across Europe. Thereby, this paper addresses the limited understanding of citizen participation and contributes a more proactive and citizen-led approach.

Keywords: *Grassroots initiatives; foundational economy; decent living within planetary boundaries; citizen participation; narratives*

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Breaking the marginalization of informal practices of care for post-fossil transitions in rural regions.

Sunna Konaven [1]

1 Brandenburg Technical University BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany

The presentation reports about power relations and unintended, negative consequences in fostering degrowth-transition through eco-social entrepreneurship in rural areas. It is based on a PhD-research at the University of Leipzig, Germany, which was conducted via qualitative Interviews and ethnography during 2018 and 2019. Based on the results, the presentation suggests a co-creative methodology of dialogue with rural civic initiatives and policy makers as a means to prepare for and minimize negative lock-ins and experiences of injustice in efforts of regional transitions for post-fossil futures.

At times of multidimensional systemic crises, diverse economies -theory (Gibson-Graham 2008) suggests to acknowledge and strengthen more-than-capitalist means of ensuring livelihoods and care amidst capitalist economies. The examples discussed here include eco-social enterprises (ESEs) as independent organisations that prioritize ethical goals over private profit generation, and informal, mundane practices of food self-provisioning such as foraging, fishing and allotment gardening (Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017). The PhD-work has studied rural eco-social enterprises in Alentejo, Portugal and Brandenburg, Germany. Firstly, the empiric work identified a repeating conflict that divided generations, classes and spatial biographies across different ESEs. Conflicts emerged, when participants ESEs were not reflective of their respective privileges and they did not share a joint working practice, enabling empathic attentiveness towards other participants, human and non-human. Secondly, the results identified unintended negative consequences of a public support programme for a new, sustainable value chain in the field of herbal farming in Portugal. The public support programme locked the supported farms into a problematic technology, preventing slow, situated and hands-on learning about other, diverse and more suitable farming techniques.

Both examples highlight the importance of situated and embodied practices of livelihood provisioning for cultivating an “ethics of care” between human and more-than-human participants (Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017; Staffa et al., 2022) in transitions to a fossil-free economy. This situated knowledge is not acknowledged and valorised in current regional development strategies based on green modernization. ESEs

themselves and activists with an urban background may also themselves discredit already-existing practices of food self-provisioning of the elderly and low-educated population in rural areas, disclosing them from degrowth-transition and enhancing support for right-wing reactionist politics. To enhance dialogue and valorise already-existing, mundane practices of nature stewardship and care, the presentation discusses planned co-creative methodologies to be implemented within an ongoing knowledge transfer initiative "Alterperimentale" in Eastern Germany (Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research).

Keywords: *Degrowth, eco-social entrepreneurship, food self-provisioning, Ethics of care, co-creation*

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Mongolian mining: licensed tenure or commons grabbing

Troy Sternberg [1] Christopher McCarthy [2] Erdenebuyan Enkhjargal [3]

1 CEI-ISCTE, Lisbon, Portugal
2 Johns Hopkins University, Maryland, USA
3 Independent Scholar

The remote steppe of Mongolia offers a unique vantage point to investigate how use of the commons and resource extraction interact. Remarkably, the country's pasture land is communal and so enshrined in the constitution. Mongolia is an exemplary pastoral nation as herders continue seasonal movement according to environmental conditions, pasture quality and water availability. Migration is the key coping strategy to mitigate natural hazards like drought and extreme cold. Yet simultaneously the government holds the right to identify extractive sites of national strategic importance and exclude herders' access from designated areas. This enables de facto private land possession for spatially-significant mining operations. The two process – mobility and mining - are often framed by development discourse and claims of adhering to global standards such as the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs), the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles (Sternberg and Ahearn 2023). The inherent contradiction and challenge is how to reconcile a mine's exclusionary license area (to 80 km^2) with open pasture access essential to pastoral livelihoods.

Literature shows that the commons debate has come to Mongolia. The country is a promising case study as not only is use of the commons practiced in daily life, it is enshrined in the democratic constitution. A major challenge to open pasture is the advent of mega-mining, both in its impact on access to rangeland and how investment has shaped policy and practice. Several government, NGO and academic papers have been written about the impacts of mining on communities and the environment (Jackson 2015: Sternberg et al. 2022). Consideration has evaluated and theorised how resource extraction clashes with pastoralism. Here we expand research to document how mining takes pasture out of herders' use, effectively removing the biomass resources behind fences, in open pits, under asphalt and tarmac and related degraded areas where grasses no longer grow. Using satellite imagery we identify land cover changes in three traditional herding areas - Oyu Tolgoi, Tavan Tolgoi and Gurvantes. Taking openly available data from MODIS that has previously been employed in the Gobi, we investigated sites in the country's most significant mining province – Omnogov. We then measure the land removed from the pastoral commons between 2003 and 2022 at the mega-mines.

Findings document the massive expansion of mine license areas and measured the loss of km^2 of pastoral commons. For herders, the reality is that without significant adjustments in policy implementation accessible communal land will be reduced. Future strategies can recognise the de facto natural commons, prioritize sustainability and follow the constitutional intent. This would encourage herding practices and integrate pastoralists into national and local planning and development processes to ensure that no one is left behind.

Keywords: *Pastoralists, commons, mining, Mongolia, mobility*

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THEMATIC FIELDS SSE' 2024

The shortcomings of mainstream environmental politics are contributing to a growing interest in the relational ethics and practices underlying the sympoietic processes (Haraway, 2016) by which humans and non-humans collectively produce autopoietic social-ecological systems. This includes the performance, by community-led initiatives (CLIs), as well as the translocal/transnational networks they create, of the role of "social learning spaces" where new and old modes of thought and tangible practices beyond extractivism and mastery of nature are experimented with, enacted, and coordinated (Egmose, Hauggaard-Nielsen and Jacobsen 2022).

Such interest is driven by the goal of shifting the metabolic profiles of societies towards regenerative and democracy-enhancing goals. This implies going beyond the "decarbonization consensus" (Bringel and Svampa 2023) by conceiving post-carbon transitions as social-ecological processes in which modes of thought, political ecologies, institutional processes, and experience-based social learning play equally relevant and interconnected parts.

We invite researchers, activists, community organisers, project managers, and policy administrators to submit proposals for contributions to this conference. We aim to promote interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives at theoretical, conceptual, and methodological levels. Submissions might be based on formal research or on concrete activist, economic or public policy initiatives.

The conference is structured around two interconnected topics:

1. **Ethics:** The role of modes of thought that question instrumental approaches to social exchanges and relating to nature. This includes cosmologies, epistemologies, spiritualities/wisdom traditions, and cultural positions providing post-human, post-patriarchal, post-developmentalist and decolonial counterpoints to modernity, by re-signifying relationships with the non-rational dimensions of human existence, as well as the other-than-human dimensions of nature.
2. **Practices:** The contribution of non-mainstream pedagogies, action research methodologies, and other engaged and participatory approaches to knowledge production and diffusion to democratic deepening by promoting, among social movements, policymakers and community-led initiatives, the enactment of emancipatory, participatory, and commoning-oriented practices in everyday life.

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Book Editors/Contributors:

Amandine Gameiro

SSE Organizing Committee
2024 #SSE&Commons
CEI-ISCTE University of Lisbon.
Av. das Forças Armadas
Campo Grande Lisboa 1649-026 Portugal
Contact:
ssecommons.cei@iscte-iul.pt

