

ISCTE-IUL
International Conference

Social Solidarity Economy & the Commons



Decolonizing the Solidarity Economy and Commons: Enacting the Pluriverse

8 - 10
NOVEMBER '23
Lisboa, Portugal

ssecommons.cei.iscte-iul.pt/



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

iscte INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA

cei_iscte
Centro de Estudos
Internacionais

fct Fundação
para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia

ces
Centro de Estudos Sociais
Universidade de Coimbra

ECOLISE
EUROPEAN NETWORK
FOR COMMUNITY-LED
INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE
CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY



WU INSTITUTE FOR
ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

Est.
1841
**YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY**



Economic Context in Italy. *PARTECIPAZIONE E CONFLITTO*, 8(2), Article 2.
<https://doi.org/10.1285/i20356609v8i2p367>

della Porta, D. (2018). Protests as critical junctures: Some reflections towards a momentous approach to social movements.

Social Movement Studies. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1555458>

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention*. Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, C. (1978). *From mobilization to revolution* (pp. 1–192). Random House.

Tilly, C. (2006). *Regimes and repertoires*. The University of Chicago Press.

The Communal Lands and Their Communities in the Northwest of the Iberian Peninsula: strengths and threats

Pedro Hespanha¹, Paz Moreno Feliu², Eber Hernandez³

¹ Senior Researcher, Sociologist at Centro de Estudos Sociais of the University of Coimbra, Portugal

² Professor, Anthropology, UNED *Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia de Madrid*, Spain

³ Researcher, Sociologist at ECOSOL, Centro de Estudos Sociais of the University of Coimbra, Portugal

The traditional forms of communal land use have persevered until today, adapting to changing economic and political realities. This resilience can be observed in Galicia and the north of Portugal, where these ancient practices are being recognized and valued once again. They play a crucial role in revitalizing rural and peri-urban territories.

In recent decades, various transformations of rural areas have occurred worldwide. These include the widespread adoption of wage labor, the commercialization of consumption, and the influence of public policies in areas such as regional planning, tourism promotion, and environmental preservation. These changes have significantly impacted the way of life for land communities, gradually eroding the foundations of their self-sufficiency. The process of transforming territories and local communities has been slow, marked by both progress and setbacks, and characterized by considerable unpredictability.

To truly comprehend the lifestyle and culture of these regions, it is essential to uncover the numerous invisible institutions that have safeguarded the autonomy of communities. These institutions encompass a wide range of norms, symbolic values, and power structures that

have ensured social cohesion, preserved local identity, and fostered a balanced relationship between communities and nature.

This communication provides a summary of a recent study conducted by the authors, focusing on various communities of *veciñais en man común* and *baldios* in two Iberian regions. The study aimed to analyze the current uses of communal lands within a context of profound commodification of economic and social life. Additionally, it sought to examine the extent to which these communal lands have contributed to the well-being of communities and are recognized as valuable resources to be preserved.

The study primarily addressed two key issues. Firstly, it explored how the increasing dependence on powerful market agents, some of which operate on a global scale, impacts the fundamental principles of a system deeply rooted in community mutual aid. Secondly, it investigated the consequences of reduced reliance on communal lands for community subsistence on neighbors' engagement in the regular management of these lands and their ability to protect community interests from powerful economic forces.

These two core questions led to the exploration of several related inquiries. The study sought to understand the influence of phenomena such as rural exodus and emigration in the 1960s, diffuse industrialization in the 1970s, rurbanization in the 1980s, and economic globalization at the turn of the century on the functioning of these communities. It also examined how distinctions like insiders/outside, integration/exclusion, and patronage/democracy contribute to identifying the process of social heterogenization experienced by these communities. Furthermore, the study investigated the impact of neighbors' diverse occupations, reduced dependence on communal land resources, and the younger generation's lack of awareness about these resources, which may contribute to social gaps and a narrow rentier perspective on their utilization.

The study employed a combination of conventional ethnographic approaches and sociological methodologies for studying processes of change. These methodologies included non-directive interviews, direct observation, document analysis, and more. Particular attention was given to the production of knowledge and the lack thereof, which pose challenges when cultural and social distances exist between the subjects and the researchers' worlds.

Very briefly, the recent transformations in the communal land systems that were analyzed reveal the existence of a severely shaken community economy. This is characterized by a reduction in productive uses of common lands and an expansion of rent-seeking utilization. There is also an increasing internal differentiation among the communities of shareholders, revealing distinct groups with varied interests and power dynamics.

Threatened by resource-intensive and financially demanding productivity-oriented strategies, as well as the negative impact on community cohesion that a rent-seeking approach can bring, the studied cases demonstrate that the current management objectives consist of a

combination of reinvesting the obtained rents into local improvements that address pressing needs of neighbors, developing activities that create jobs in the village and provide professional development opportunities for the younger generation, utilizing national or European public policies aimed at enhancing the productive utilization of the lands, and collaborating with other similar organizations for larger-scale investments."

Keywords: NA

Thematic Field: (3) Ongoing tensions between transformation and cooptation in solidarity economy and commons-based initiatives and movements

References

Brouwer, Roland (1999). "Changing Name-tags. A Legal Anthropological Approach to Communal Lands in Portugal". In *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, nr. 43: 1-30

Feliu, Paz Moreno (1996) "Las dos caras de la Comunidad". In José Fernández de Rota y Monter (ed..) *Las Diferentes Caras de Espana*. A Coruña, Universidad.

Hespanha, Pedro (2022), "El desafío de los nuevos usos de las tierras comunales en Portugal", in Ana Urtasun, Rafael Castell-Cogollos e Ramón Llopis-Goig (eds.), *La sociedad colaborativa. Los impactos de la acción colectiva en la sociedad contemporánea*. Madrid: CIS, 189-210

Lopes, A. Ribeiro (2007). *Espacios Rurales Inquietos. Una contribución para el conocimiento de los terrenos comunitarios del noroeste de la Península Ibérica*, Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de SC

Serra, Rita; Allegretti, Giovanni (2020), "Democracies in common places: stories from baldios and 'fire-tales' in Portugal", *Scienze del Territorio*, 8:91-109

Romanian Commons Governing Institutions as Entrepreneurial Community Organisations (ECOs) - A Borderline Social Enterprise Model

Opincaru Irina Sinziana¹

¹ PhD student, Doctoral School of Sociology, University of Bucharest, Romania

The paper examines the institutions that govern Romanian land commons (*obști* and *composesorate*) within the wider organisational environment and shows that these traditional but recently reconstituted community-based institutions can be understood as social enterprises. The paper is to be presented in the framework of the track "Indigenous epistemologies and popular knowledges (epistemologies of traditional peoples and communities)".