

## Transcript of the Video

### Pablo Dominguez

Hello, my name is Pablo Dominguez, anthropologist of the French National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS). And today, 18th of November 2020, I'm going to give a talk about pastoral community conserved areas in the mountains of the Mediterranean and the case of Sinjaevina. Mediterranean mountain pastoral commons at the same time a natural and cultural subject, their ever-evolving pasturelands conserved by local populations through dynamic adaptive community governance systems. Mountain populations governing the commons have generally a strong bond with tradition, which is most usually linked to the conservation of the ecosystems and natural resources, as their survival most often directly depends upon them and which they are deeply culturally connected with. In strict economic terms, these commons generally involve assemblies of pastoralists that impose the limitation of access to pastoral space during spring to allow the vegetation to rest at a particularly sensitive period when exponential plant growth, flowering and green production are happening and ensuring so the pastures recycling and sustained use year after year at the same time as maximizing their production while minimizing social conflicts between users due to the high participation of right holders in the management of these ecosystems.

Commons are spread practically in all the mountains of the Mediterranean, and we can assume that there are hundreds of thousands of commons in this region and that they could cover more than half a million square kilometers, giving them therefore a huge spatial weight concerning the management of key and very sensitive mountain landscapes that are mostly ignored partially by science and especially by decision makers. Ecologically speaking, community based management results most often in maintaining a denser and better preserve plant cover and free open access lands, biodiversity is often also more important in this commons or has a particularly one authored a small scale and an epic scale of commons. At the same time, they also favor pools for seed conservation diffusion so unrepentant against that ocean availability of water, carbon sinks against climate change, and a great diversity of landscapes, among others.

As a result, even though they are still poorly integrated in international policies and state legal systems, the concept of the Commons is now included in the political decisions and initiatives of some of the most important organizations at the global scale, such as the Convention for Biological Diversity, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the United Nations Development Program and the United Nations Environmental Program. But it is impossible to know the exact special range of these systems as much as their precise environmental, social, cultural and economic impact, unless a major comparative research on this system is launched at a Mediterranean scale. A large funding is needed for a comparative study of mountain pastoral commons across the Mediterranean, determine exactly their value in terms of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, fighting global warming, sustainable development and so forth, with the aim of establishing an audit plan for the support at the regional scale of the whole basin.

At the same time when there is data on social ecological interests, the rural commons in the Mediterranean, actions must be urgently launched in their favor because these systems are eroding very quickly while they will be practically unrecoverable if we do not get to them on time and thus losing forever a living heritage several times millenary that once touched upon practically all Mediterranean landscapes. They are part of our history, our identity, our biodiversity, our past and present ecosystems that we cannot allow ourselves

to lose. In fact, these interesting systems, socially and ecologically speaking, are practically all threatened. This is the case since the dawn of time. We're all Moroccan, Spanish, Italian, Montenegrin common studied by myself and colleagues. Moreover, the enclosure of the commons in the Mediterranean mountains seems systematic and not only a question of the past, but very actual.

Let's take the concrete example of Sinjajevina, a cluster of pastoral commons in Montenegro that we have also started to study in depth. The biggest mountain pass through the Balkans, the second in Europe, and a vital ecosystem against climate change that particularly favors biodiversity conservation. In 2019 last year, the government of Montenegro, supported by NATO, decided to inaugurate the military training ground in Sinjajevina within the Tara River Basin Biosphere Reserve next to two UNESCO World Heritage sites, a protected Natura 2000 area where the protection of birds habitats and a regional park for the protection of nature and culture that was supposed to be inaugurated in 2020 - but we're still waiting - unconcerned about the damage this would represent to its people, their traditional uses, and to these social, ecological invaluable systems built by humans and nature through millennia. It is especially astonishing when taking into account the artillery testing ground has been inaugurated without any publicly available environmental impact assessment, health evaluation, economic impact study nor any substantial negotiation with the affected pastoral communities on Montenegro is in accession talks of the EU, where things are usually done all the other way around. The inauguration of this military ground stands as an example of the types of threats many commons in the Mediterranean basin are facing still today in a generalized context where these systems and their customary laws are not acknowledged by the states, which most often consider the lands and resources within this commons as public property and not the local communities' who are there using them and that have generally enjoyed them for centuries, since the widespread degradation of rural commons in other Mediterranean countries. At the same time, their importance for global and regional ecological sustainability. It is obvious, urgent to address them and to work to protect them and promote them, meaning that Sinjajevina case is important for itself, but also much more as an indicator of a greater degradation phenomenon and lack of recognition to these systems at the Mediterranean and in fact, also at a global scale. Thank you very much for any questions, any reactions. You may just feel free to contact me on the email address you see in the first slide of the of the of the show. Thank you very much.