

**Conclusions:** We have shown that old and new inhabitants of suburban zones highly evaluate pro-environmental technologies. Anyhow, their attitudes mainly depend on time they have already stayed in the suburbs, their age and education. What is more, innovative solutions developed in suburban communes are strongly affected by the model of governance. The more traditional model of governance the less innovative commune. It can be quite problematic. According to the inhabitants' expectations, pro-environmental solutions should be available everywhere as they determine the image, long-term development, and quality of life in suburban communes.

Fernando Ruiz Peyré, Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences (Austria)  
*Social movements against lithium mining in Northern Portugal,*

Lithium is a mineral related with a “green discourse” and has been included in the list of critical minerals of the European Union. The urgently needed energy transition, as well as the electrification of mobility, depends on the availability of the “white gold”. The main producing countries are Australia and the so-called Lithium triangle, in South America. In order to reduce dependence on international supply and volatilities in the global market, the European Union is pushing for local lithium exploration and exploitation, which is increasing the pressure under peripheral rural areas, such as northern Portugal. While mining transnational companies benefit from the extraction of raw materials the local population must bear the social and environmental costs.

In this paper I will present the results of a fieldwork in November 2022 in the lithium mining area, in Serra da Estrela, Barroso and Montalegre, where I've conducted interviews with experts and involved stakeholders. Following the political ecology approach, I will present a multiscale perspective as well as the institutional settings and actor constellation of the conflict.

I will conclude discussing how European geopolitics as well as the national policies, in coalition with transnational corporation promote the hegemonic and “green” development discourse along the lithium mining. On the same time, I will present the local resistance against lithium mining and exploitation of nature, which shows the inequality within the system in a kind of “David versus Goliath” confrontation.

## Session 2: Rural local communities towards the challenges of the „green deal” (Part 1)

Chairs: Holly Barcus, Serge Schmitz

Maria Helena Pina, Diogo Miguel Pinto, Andre Samora-Arvela,  
University of Porto, Centre of Studies in Geography and Spatial Planning (Portugal)  
*The olive tree in the Douro region: a secondary crop, but strategic for regional development*

A privileged area located in NE Portugal, the Douro Demarcated Region (DDR), declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001, boasts a unique heritage. However, there are still obstacles to its development. Efforts have been made to mitigate these problems from a multifunctional perspective, combining wine production with tourism and increasingly with other secondary crops, such as olive groves. Nevertheless, farms suffer significant levels of abandonment, especially in less favoured areas.

When we go beyond the boundaries of the DDR, this scenario becomes even worse, despite the proliferation of olive groves. Although the olive tree is indelibly present in the DDR's westernmost sub-region, it has remained a secondary crop. In contrast, in the easternmost sub-region, olive trees rival with almond trees and vines, whereas in the plateau areas, olive groves dominate the landscape.

Several projects have focused on renovating olive groves, subsidised or not by the EU, which provide for extensive mechanisation and high productivity. There are innovations among private companies or cooperatives (for example, the Murça Olive Growers Agricultural Cooperative), as well as other associations that invest not only in innovation and quality, but also in environmental conservation, recycling, and waste profitability. Hence, projects associated to the reuse of by-products such as olive stones and other solid waste are emerging, producing bioenergy and “briquettes” of high calorific value, among others. Slowly, a new future is being prepared for the DDR, where innovation is the foundation of a multifunctional, sustainable, and ecological framework.

In this paper, we analyse the evolution of the Douro olive grove and its surrounding areas, based on extensive documental research and fieldwork, including semi-structured interviews with local development agents, associations, and olive growers. We also focus on the existing asymmetries, having identified the challenges and strategic opportunities that the olive tree brings to the Douro region.