

Submitted Abstract

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>> SYNTHESIZE MOUNTAINS OF KNOWLEDGE <<

Abstract

Recently recognized by the United Nations and supported by scientific data, indigenous peoples have proven to be original Earth Guardians (FAO report Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples, 2021). Although representing 5% of humanity, traditional societies are managing 11% of worldwide forests, their ancestral territories hosting 80% of the planet's biodiversity. Millenarian knowledge and consciousness of complex natural mechanisms has led to harmonious, sustainable and regenerative land management until the industrial era. Now facing climate imbalance and biodiversity collapse, western science is opening to new perspectives from the dialogue with indigenous knowledge keepers, to start a new relationship with the commons at a global level.

In 2018, French geographer Eric Julien organized an experimental "territorial health study" called Cross Diagnosis, designed as a transdisciplinary scientific dialogue between two ontologies. 3 medicine men and women of the Kogi indigenous culture (Sierra Nevada, Colombia) shared perspectives with 25 western scientists of complementary expertises to analyze the health of our european commons in the Vercors region (Haut-Diois). Ran during 5 days in the mountain areas, the experimentation led to sensitive map sketching, according to the Kogi perceptions of subtle living interactions, offering an unseen perspective of the landscape's natural mechanisms, intertwined with human and other species' activities.

Based on this first experiment, my paper aims to give a specific and original overview of the Kogi people's subtle geographical perceptions and explain the potentials of imagining a "third ontology", where the Kogi knowledge meets the western land management, addressing inspiring strategies to relieve the complex socio-ecosystem mechanisms of Alpine areas.

To achieve that goal, I will showcase visuals of the Kogi's "territorial body" perspective of landscapes in Vercors, drawing the invisible interconnections between living entities (mountains, rivers, trees...) at a landscape scale and a planetary scale. Indeed, the Kogi believe there is a relationship between all mountains of the world, logically putting the Mont-Blanc and the Alpine Bow in direct connection with their own mountain region, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. Through another experimental workshop led in Chamonix area (France) in June 2021, I will then give a special focus on the adaptation and possible integration of the Kogi's subtle knowledge in concrete local strategies, as a proposal to improve our relationship with the natural world, our "local and global commons", and start integrating forgotten ancestral knowledge in our transition processes.