

COMMONS?!?

TINE DE MOOR



COMMONS?

All the
resources we
own
collectively?

Common
Pool
Resources?

Peer-to-
peer-
economy?

All that we
share?

Citizens'
initiatives?

Sharing
economy?

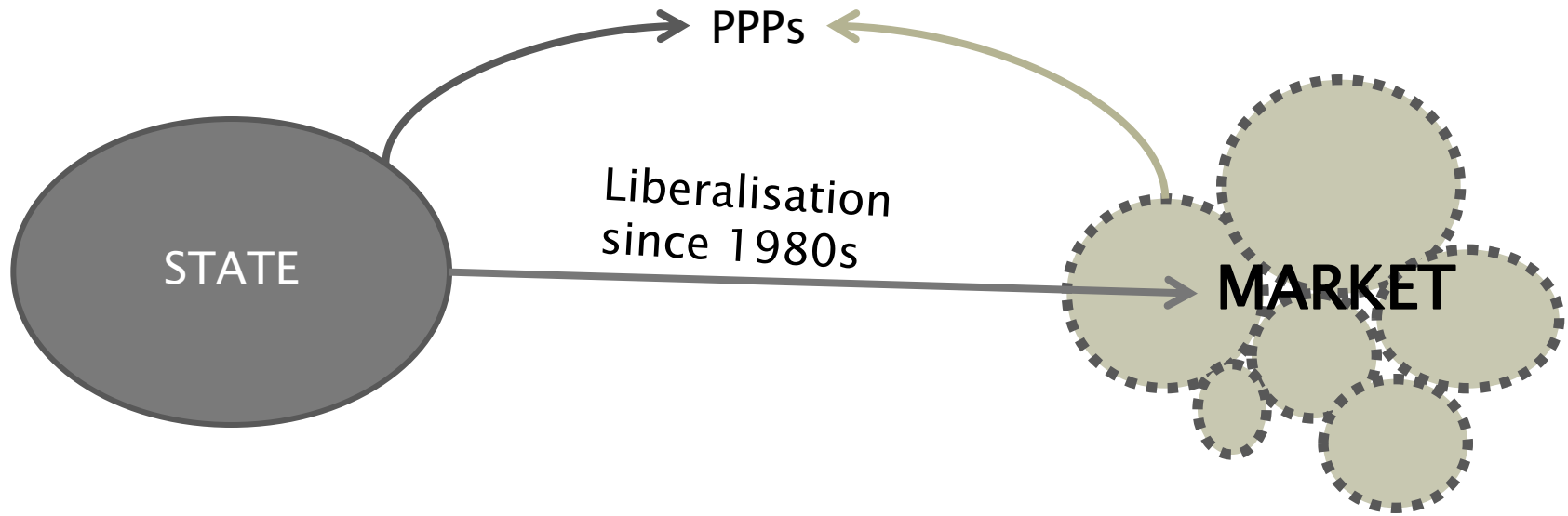
Common
Pool
Institutions?

Collaborative
consumption
and production?

Common
Property
Regimes?



PARALLEL TO RENEWED ATTENTION FOR COMMONS:
MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE APPROX. 2005



COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

State
governed

Peer-to-
Peer

Citizens'
COLLECTIVITY



COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

COLLECTIVITY BENADERT marketPARTNER

SAMEN OP WEG NAAR **GOEDKOPERE GROENE ENERGIE**



Besparen op je energiefactuur?

Een samenaankoop energie verzamelt zo veel mogelijk burgers die samen de markt op gaan om stroom en gas aan te kopen aan voordelige tarieven. Bedoeling is om over te schakelen op groene stroom en gas en om te besparen op je energiefactuur. Momenteel zijn er in de provincies Antwerpen, Oost-Vlaanderen en West-Vlaanderen samenaankopen gepland. Klik op het logo van je provincie voor meer informatie.

Samenaankoop
provincie Antwerpen

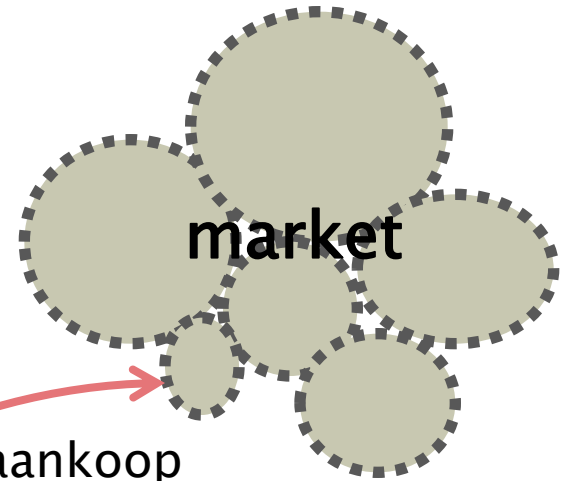


Samenaankoop
provincie Oost-Vlaanderen



Samenaankoop
provincie West-Vlaanderen



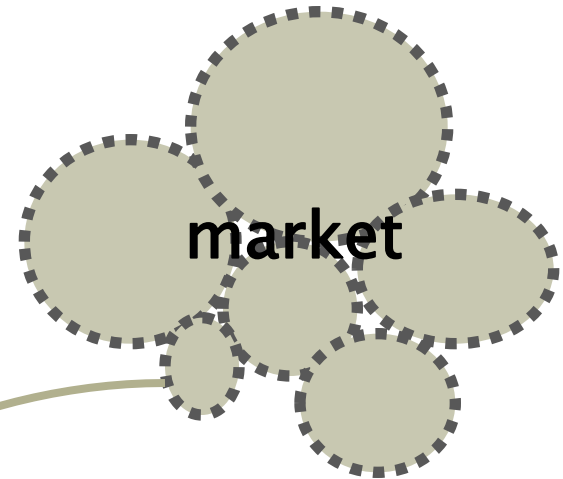


Samenaankoop
-initiatieven

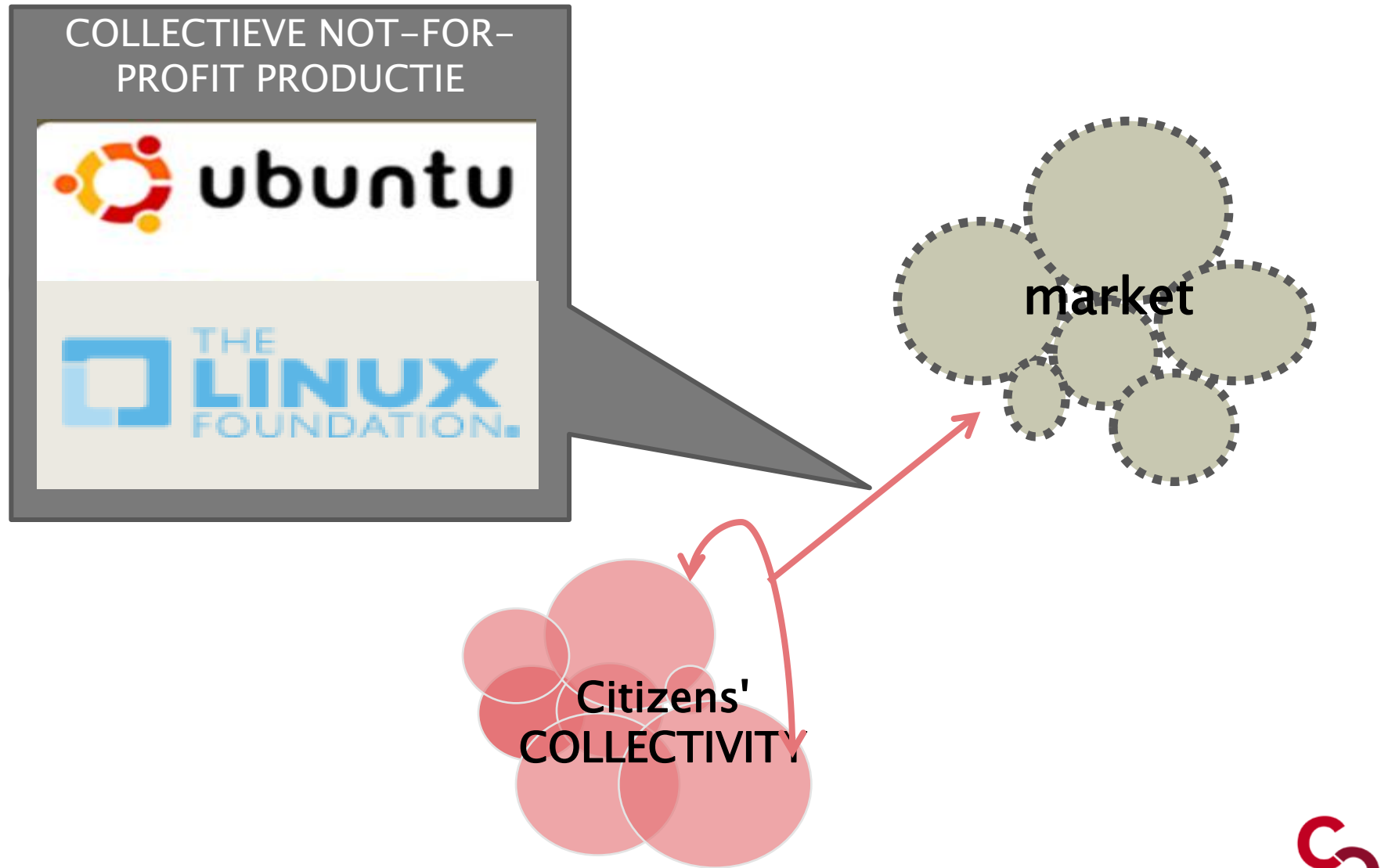


COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

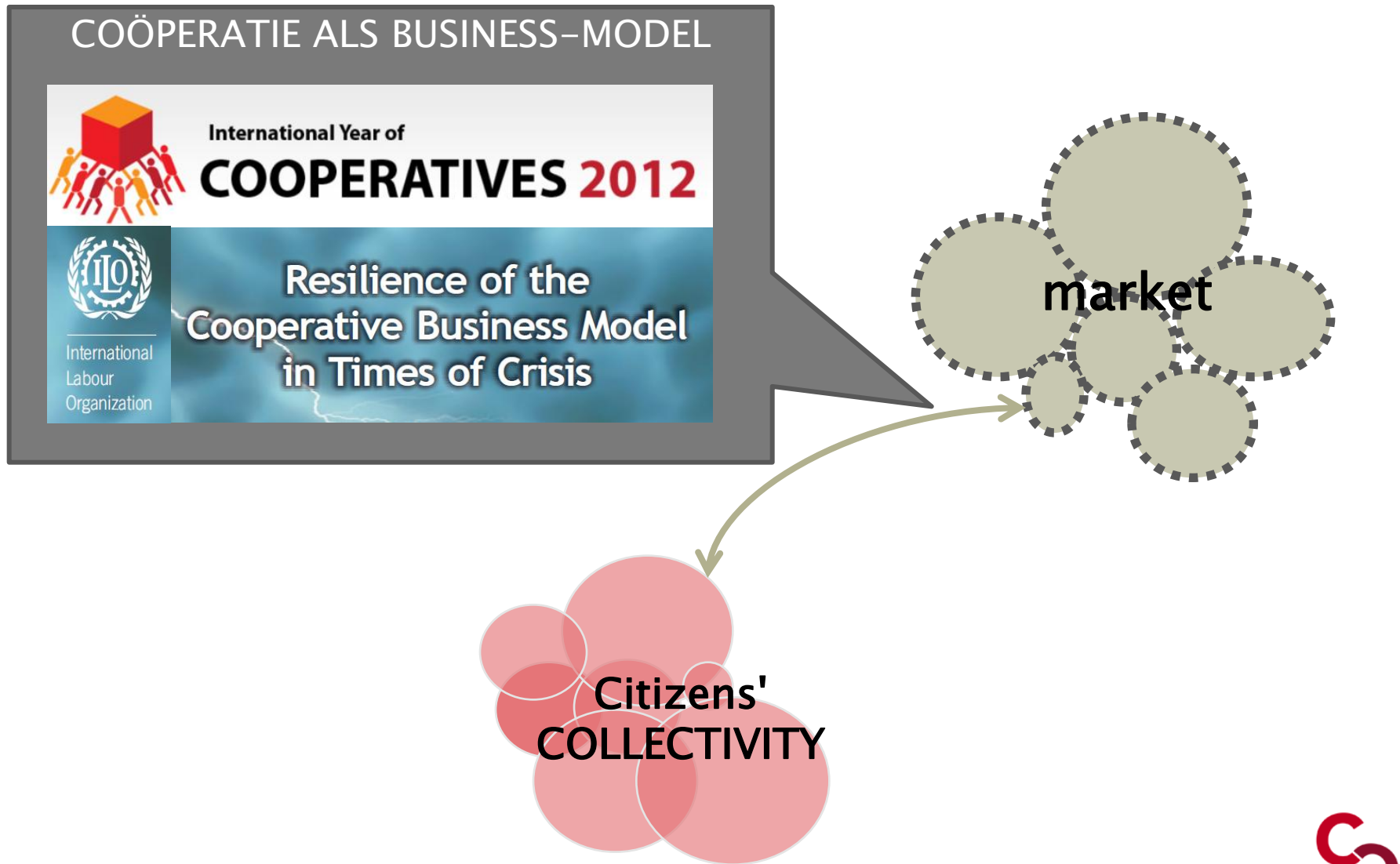
B2C: market benut potentieel van
COLLECTIVITY



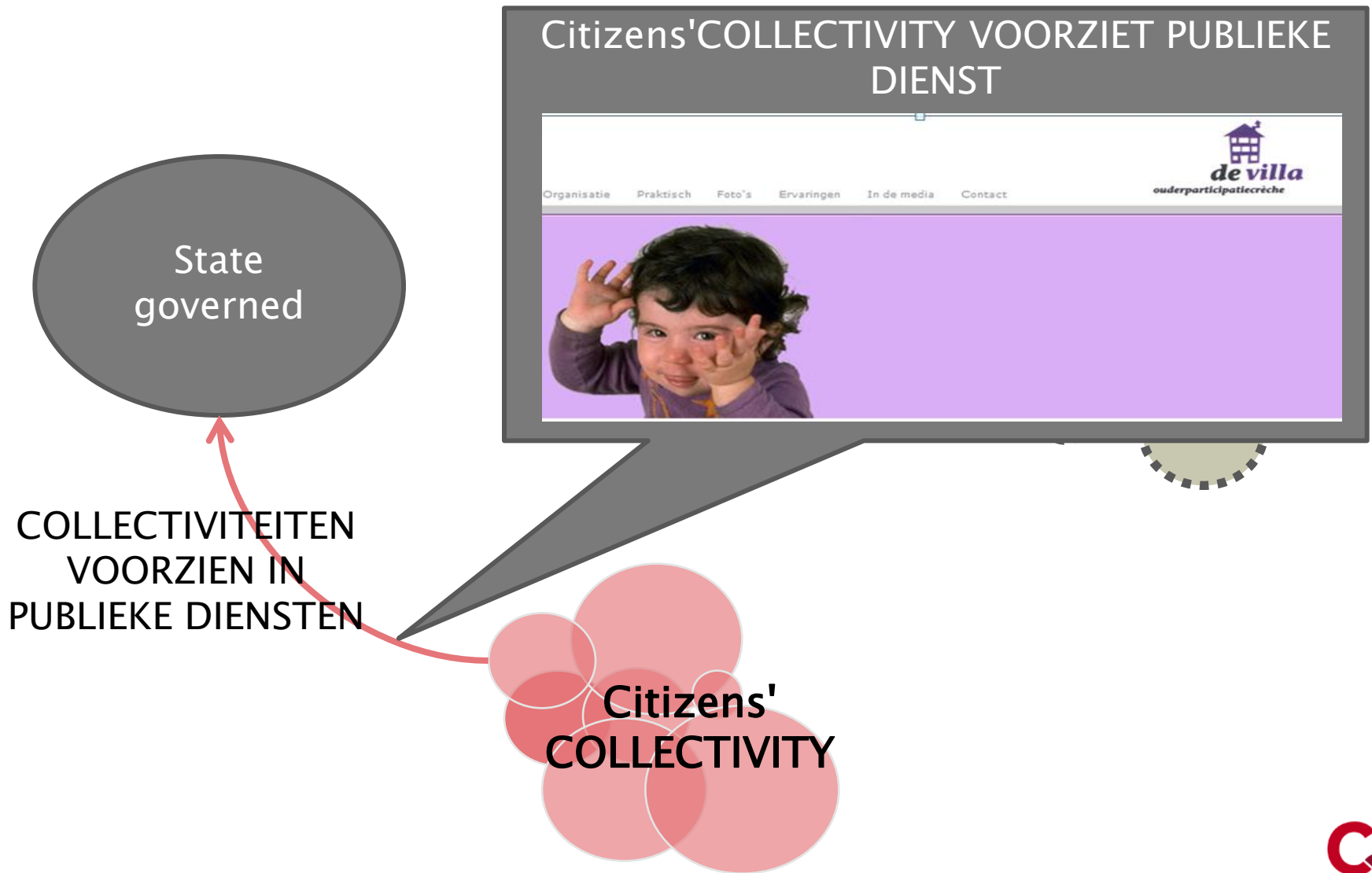
COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION



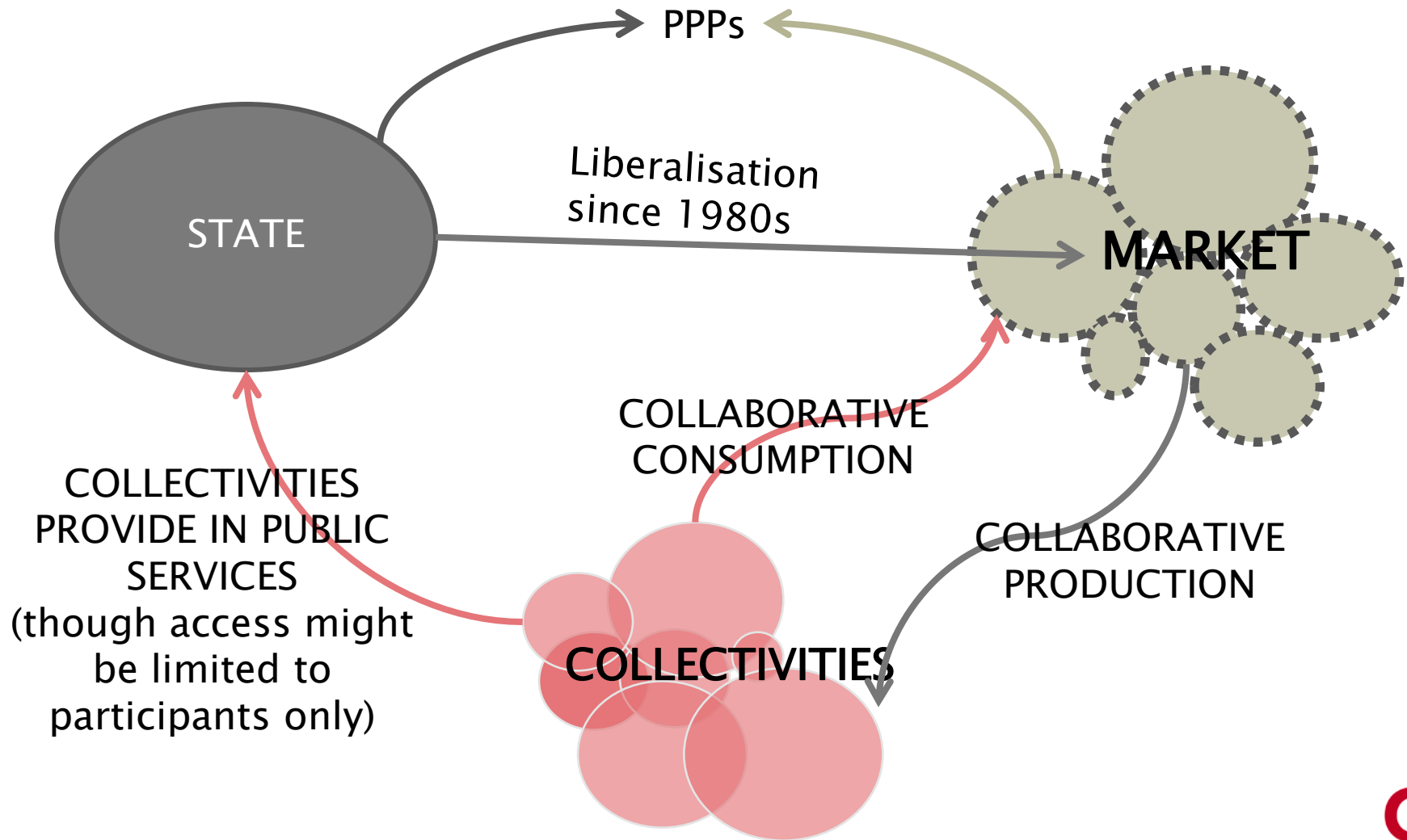
COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION



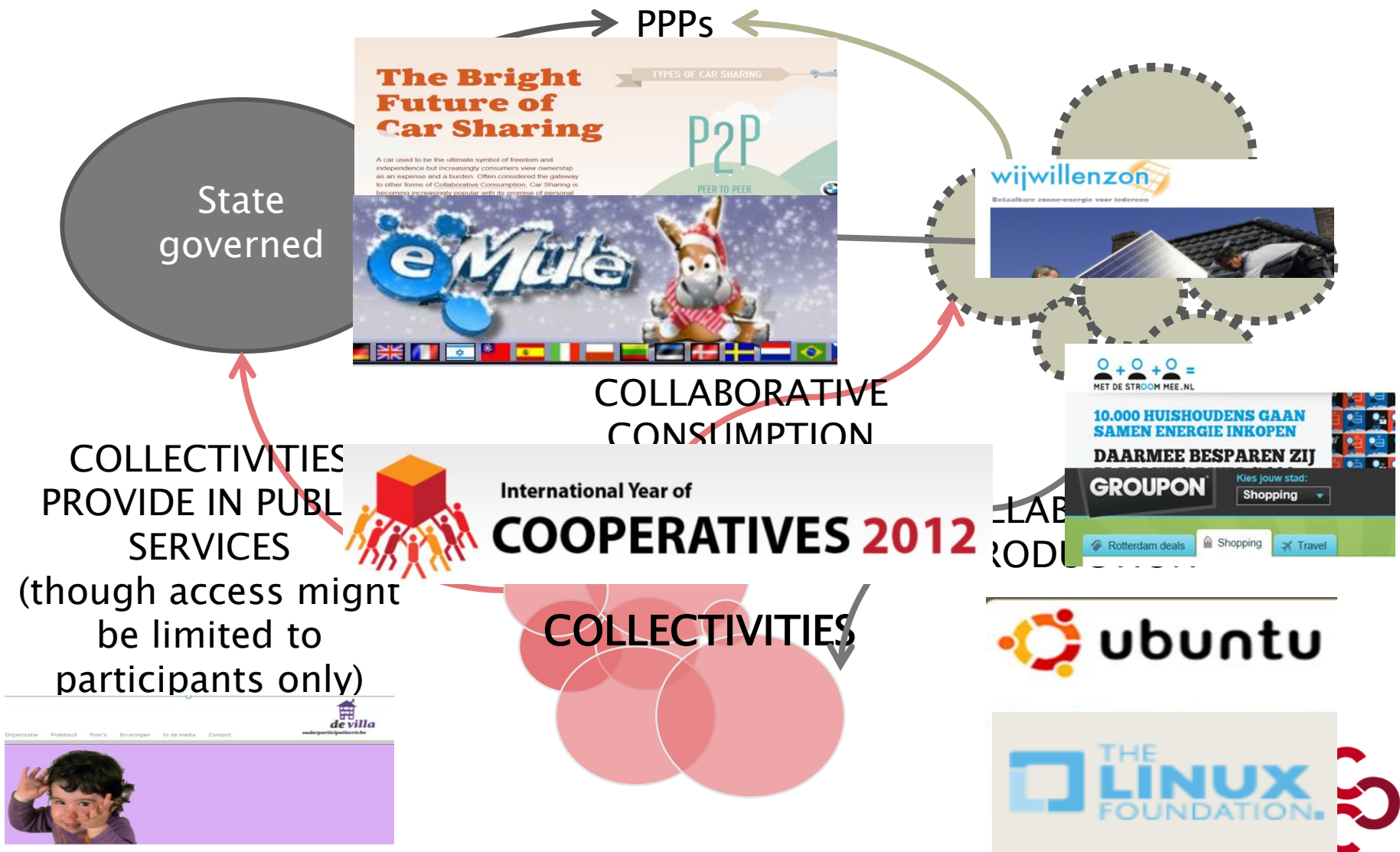
COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION



PARALLEL TO RENEWED ATTENTION FOR COMMONS: MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE APPROX. 2005



PARALLEL TO RENEWED ATTENTION FOR COMMONS: MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE APPROX. 2005



Products/services are offered by

Products/services are offered to/can be used by

To members of the collective

To others for free

To the market (sale)

by the collective



LINUX FOUNDATION



By the state (cond. Of citizenship)

Public collective partnership



Pure public goods



Public private partnership



by the market (sale)



airbnb



Market produce sold on the market



Products /services are offered by

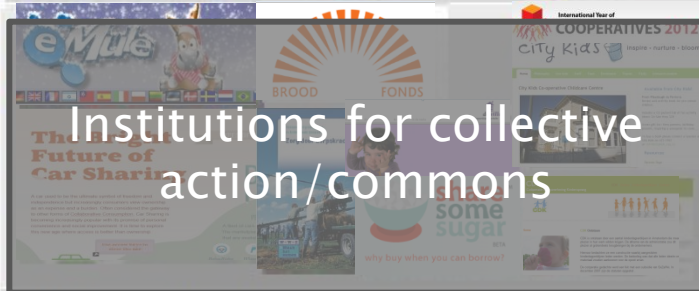
Products /services are offered to/can be used by

To members of the collective

To others for free

To the market (sale)

by the collective



Institutions for collective action/commons

By the state (cond. Of citizenship)

Public collective partnership



Pure public goods

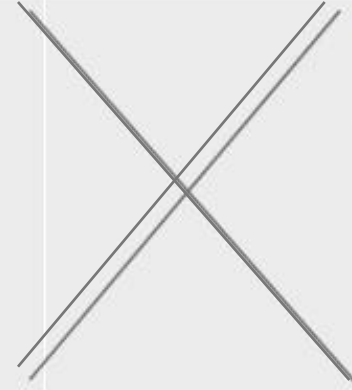


Public private partnership



Public goods (NOT = Commons!)

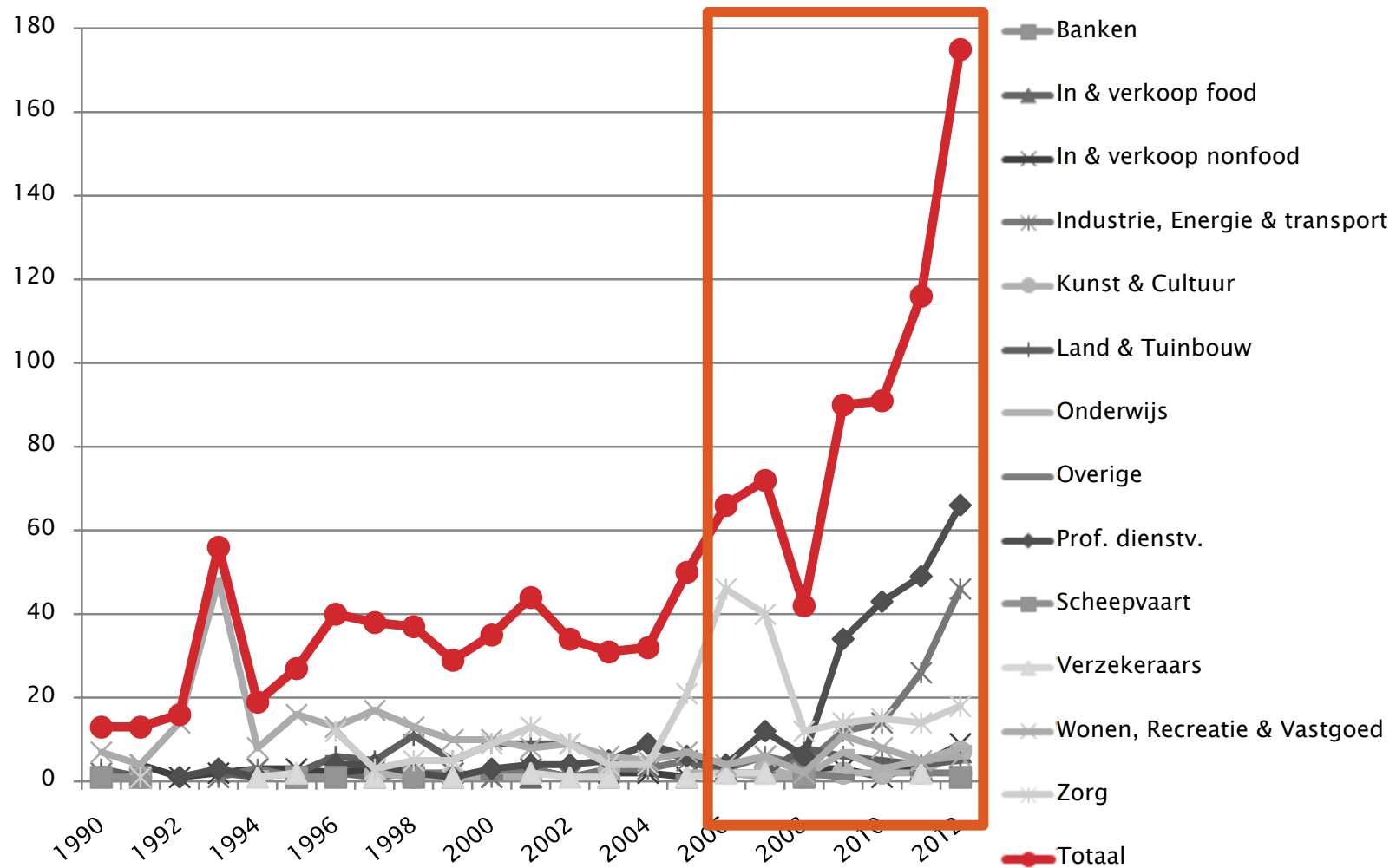
by the market (sale)



Market produce sold on the market



EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF NEW COOPERATIVES PER SECTOR 1990–2012 (NETHERLANDS)



“SHARING” ECONOMY EXPLAINED WITH CARS

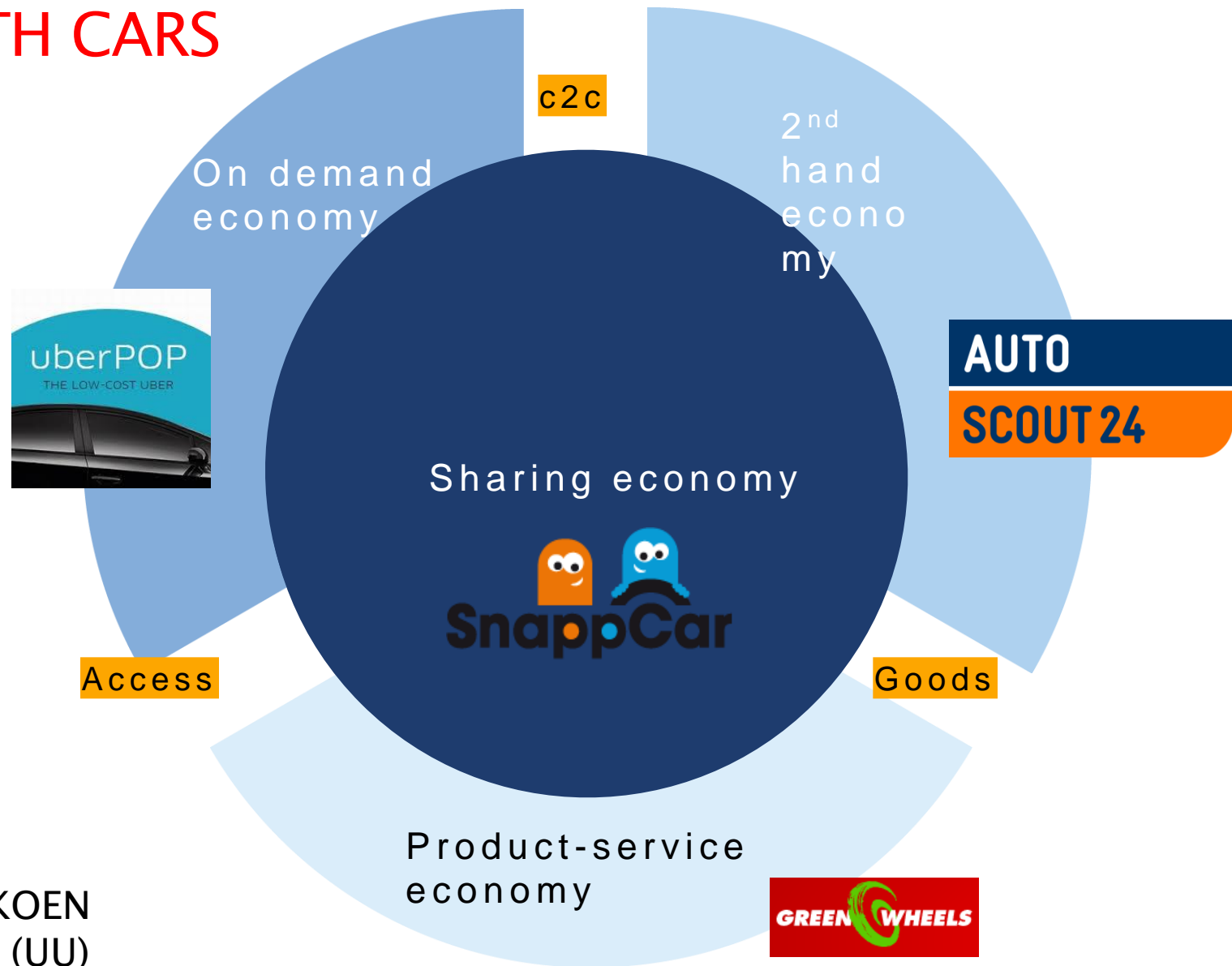




FIGURE: KOEN
FRENKEN (UU)

DIFFERENCES WITH SHARING ECONOMY

	UBERPOP 	SNAPCAR 
Decision making process	Fast but top-down	Slow but constructive and bottom-up
Importance of reciprocity	Nihil	Large
Importance of mutual (social) control	Nihil	Large
Equality providers and consumers	Nihil	Principle part of decision making process
Responsibility	Each participant separately	Group as collective and individual user
Profits go to	Uber as private business	Group and individual users
Freeriding	Fat chance	Limited
Commitment in service	Nihil	Important
Future perspective	Fast up, fast down	Slow growth,



TECHNOLOGY + ECONOMY \neq GOVERNANCE REGIME

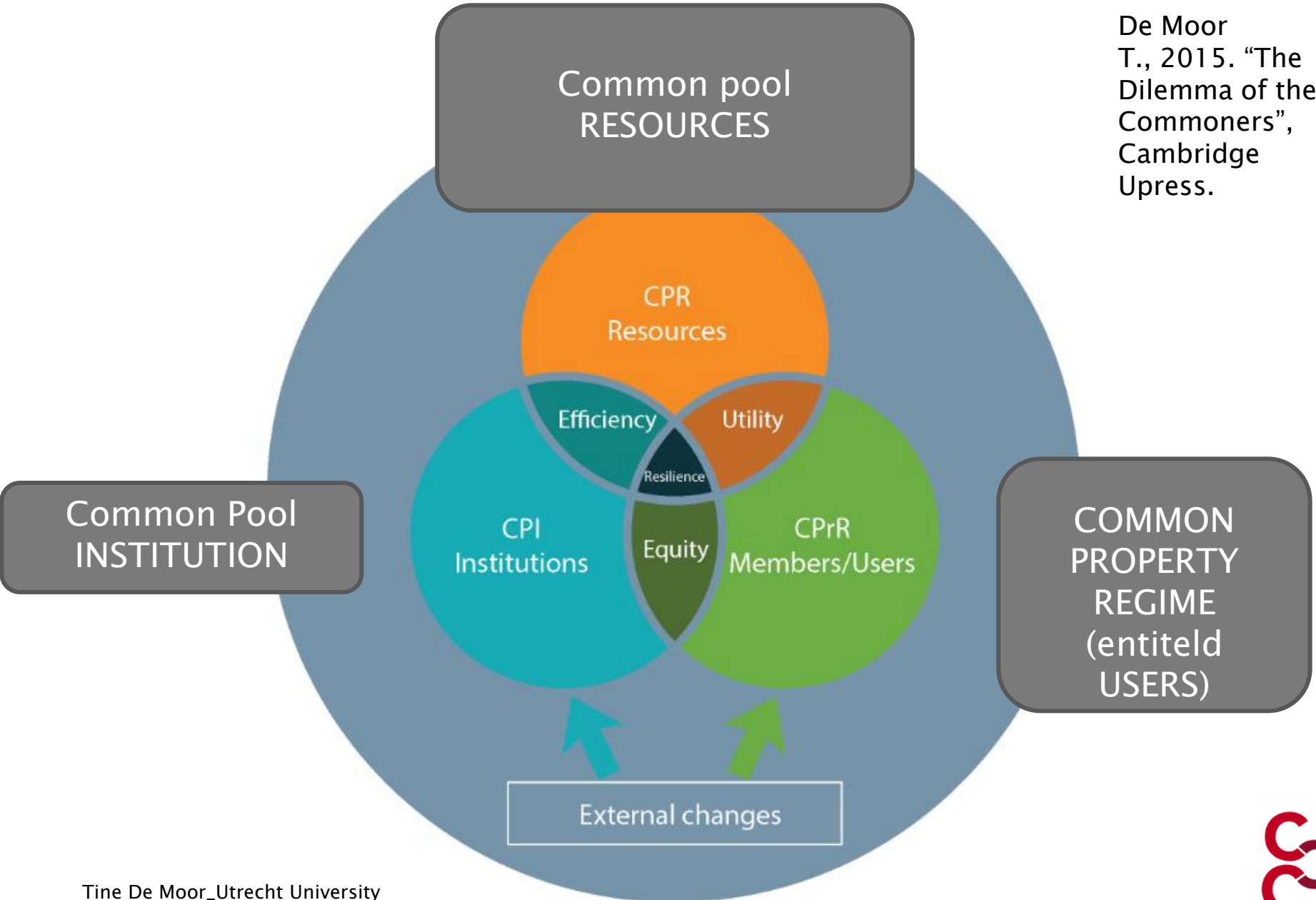
Online app + group of individual users \neq a common

- > technology not necessarily beneficial to cooperation
- > technology cannot replace institutions
- > the frequency and intensity of the actual talking is more important than the means to communicate

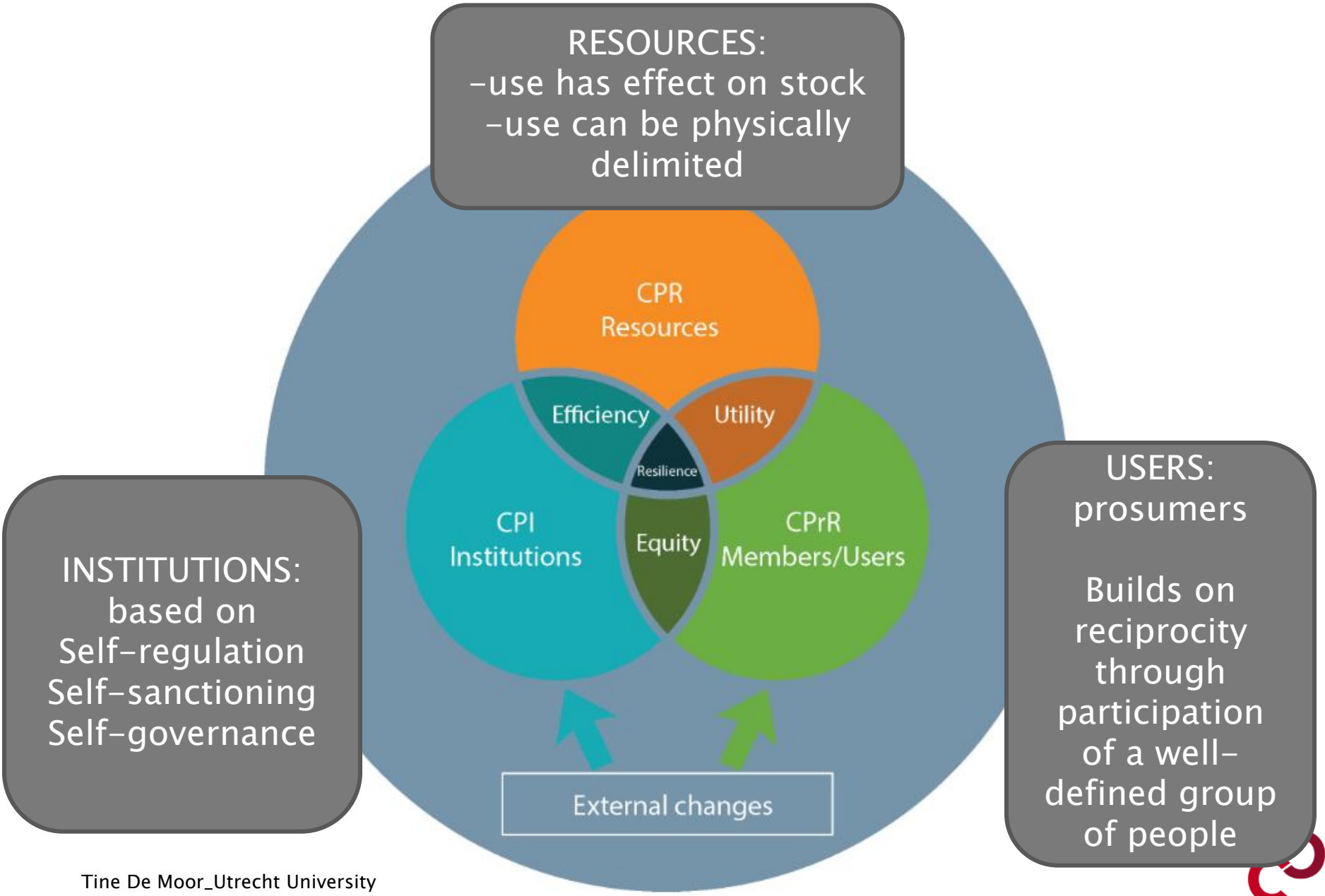


A THREE-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO COMMONS

De Moor
T., 2015. "The
Dilemma of the
Commoners",
Cambridge
Upress.



A THREE-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO COMMONS



IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL: COMMONS ARE

- Governance regimes, not simply resources, or a group of people, or a type of legal format (e.g. Cooperative)
- Set-up for enduring activity, not just a one-off action
- Variable in institutional design, due to their local embeddedness, no one-size-fits-all
- Delimited group size, do not comprise the whole society, but a specific group of entitled users



WHY SUCH A DIFFICULT CONCEPT?

- Very long-term use → long history of potential “misuse”
- **Hardin:** application of concept of commons on global resources with different features than
 - Conceptual “overstretch” of term commons: features of open access resources without controls imposed on access and use
 - Local example for problems on global scale
 - Linkage of wrong features (e.g. lack of communication means)
 - In an era of emerging awareness about environmental problems
 - Negative connotation to collective use not new but can now be contrasted to “consolidated” private and state solutions
- **Ostrom:** Return to original features of concept but broadening to other types of resources (a.o. Irrigation commons)
- **Today:** applied to many different resources and services AND types of collectivities



WHY DOES THE CURRENT “PARADIGM SHIFT” SEEM REVOLUTIONARY?

- **We have forgotten about the collectivity as a ‘valid’ organisational unit**

18th century:

- The “individual” becomes the central unit in society (Enlightenment)
- rationalisation of agriculture through Physiocratie

19th century: Nation State:

- introduction of code civil as legal basis for individual rights
- organisation of society becomes centralised, including legal and economic basis

–> 1750s–1850s: implementation of regional and national legislations across Europe to abolish/split up/sell the commons

e.g. Belgium, 1847: “Loi sur le défrichement” = in fact a privatisation law

–> by middle 19th century: centralised dissolution of common land all over Western Europe

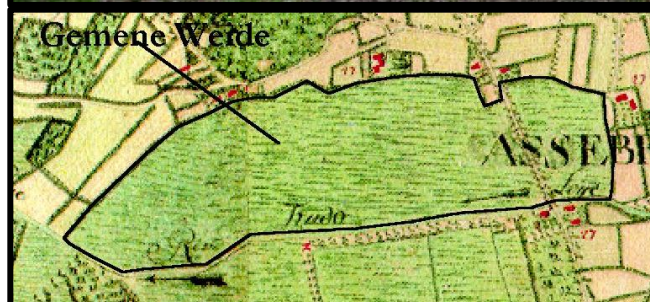
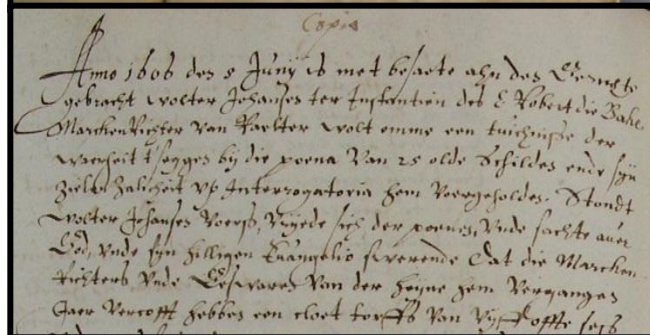
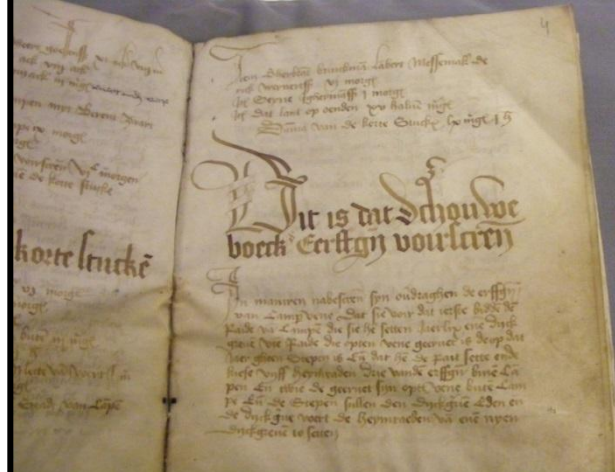
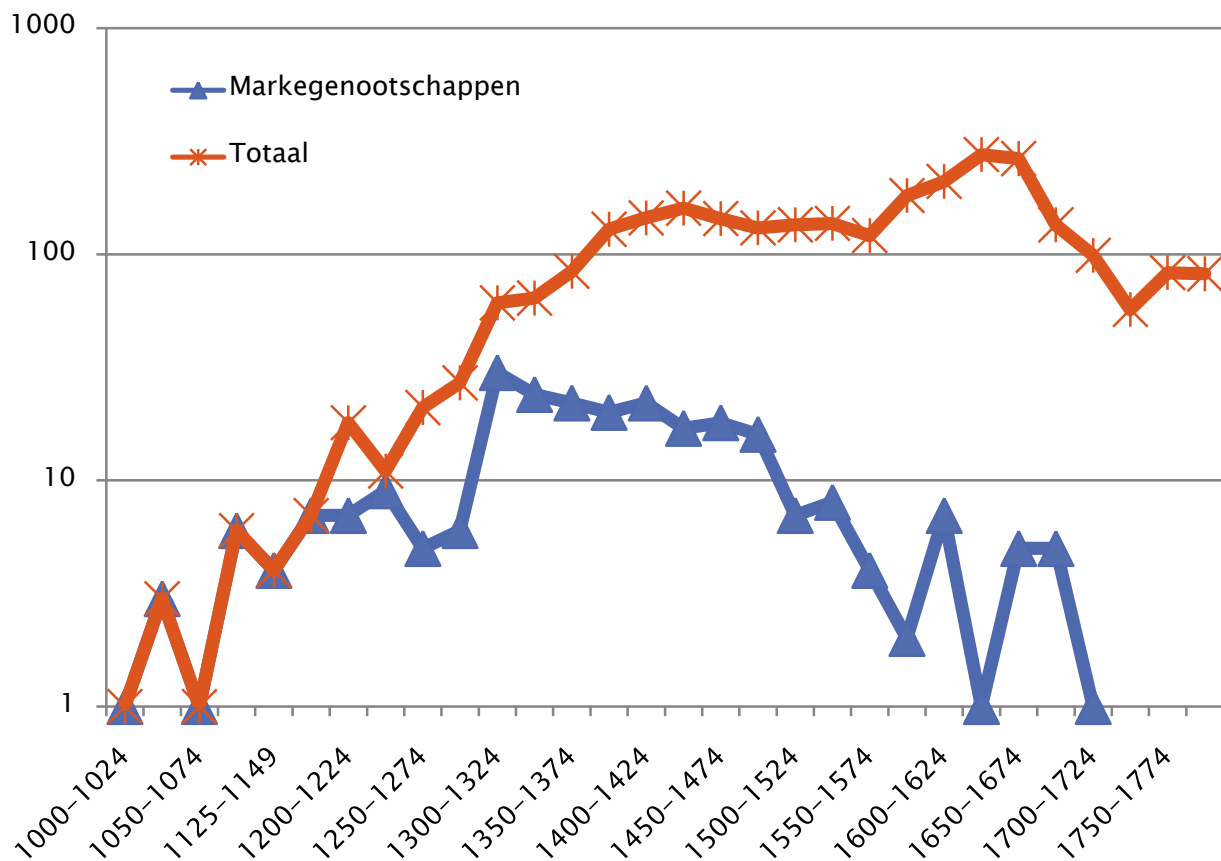


ONCE UPON A TIME IN EUROPE...

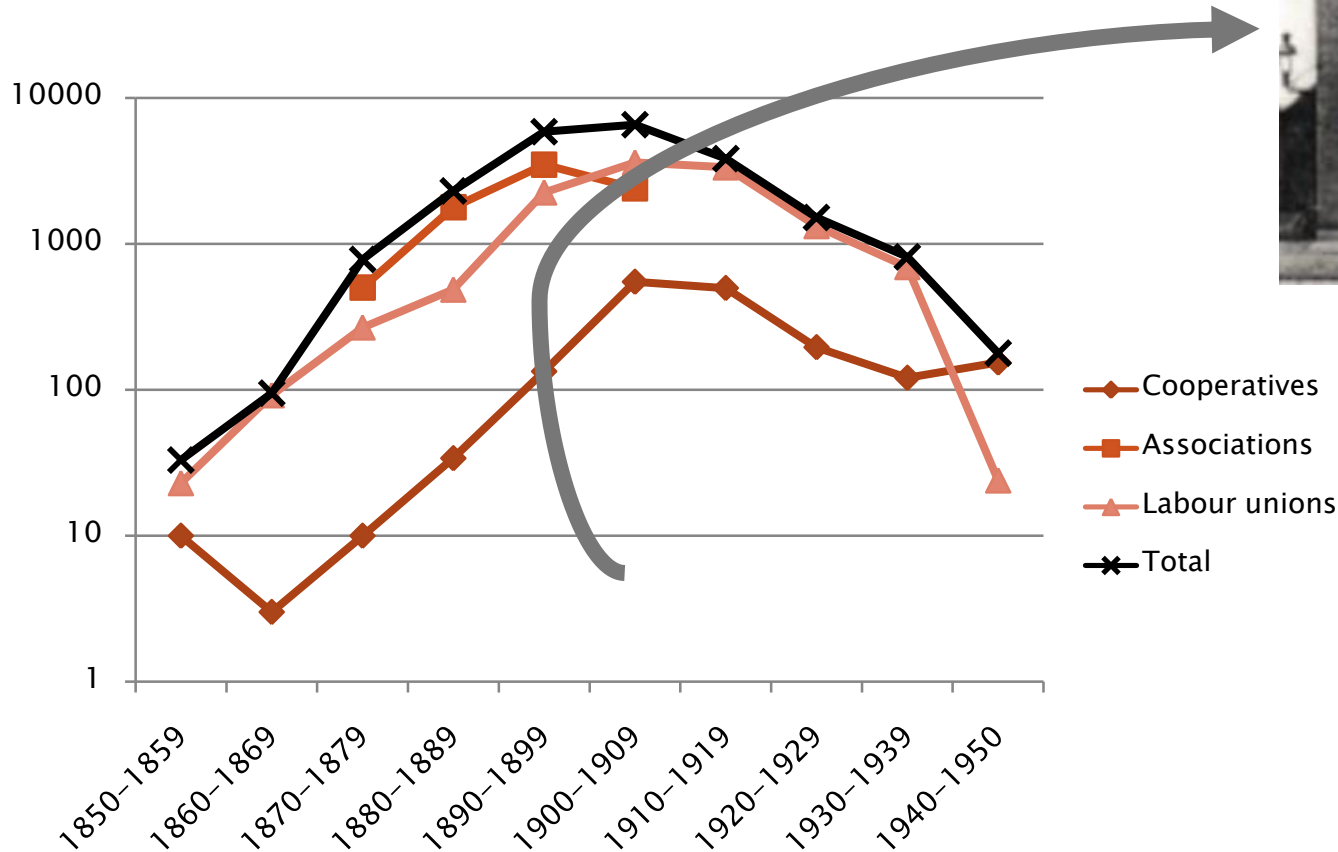
- « Land that is managed and used in common »
- Different terms:
 - Dutch: gemene grond, heirnis, meent, markegenootschap...
 - German: Markgenossenschaften, Allemende,...
- **In Europe: originated mainly in 12th–13th century, during/after Great Reclamations (10–12th century)**
 - Mixed agricultural system demanded balance between arable and pasture land
 - In reaction to pressure on mixed–agricultural system as reaction to demographic pressure
 - Main aim of institutionalisation: achieving balance in exploitation level
- **Often as land conflict settlements between lords and villagers**
 - Divided rights on same piece of land
- **Beforehand: common use of land within family–clan–tribe**



COMMONS



SECOND WAVE: COOPERATIVES, ASSOCIATIONS, L ABOUR UNIONS, 1880-1920



Rabobank
RURAL!!



COMMONS AND GUILDS HAVE SOME CLEAR SIMILARITIES WITH WORKERS COOPS TODAY

Definition: A *Cooperative* is a business owned and controlled by the people that it services

- 3 IMPORTANT FEATURES:
 - member-owned (economic participation)
 - member-controlled (democratic decision making)
 - aimed at a delivery of “member benefits”

Co-op principles	Guilds	Commons
Voluntary and open membership	Yes/No	Yes
Democratic member control	Yes	Yes
Member economic participation	Yes	Yes
Autonomy and independence	Yes	Yes
Education and training	Yes	No
Co-operation among co-operatives	Sometimes	No
Concern for community	Yes	Yes



TOOLS USED TO FACILITATE THE HISTORICAL COMMONS

- Right to vote in meetings (linked to household)
- Obligation to attend meetings
- Election of representatives
- Rotation of responsibilities (incl. the annoying ones)
- Intensive social control and sanctions for malefactors
- Liability of those who shirk responsibility



WHICH MOTIVATIONS DID AND DO COMMONERS HAVE IN COMMON?

- Economies of scale
- Collective bargaining position towards authorities
- Sharing risks and resources
- Lower search and information costs
 - internal agreement on the price of the goods
 - collective meetings with compulsory attendance
- Reduced transaction costs due to group-based access regulation
- Keeping close to local economies, shorten the chain

BUT WHY ?

Reaction to periods of increased commercialisation, privatisation and subsequent market failure



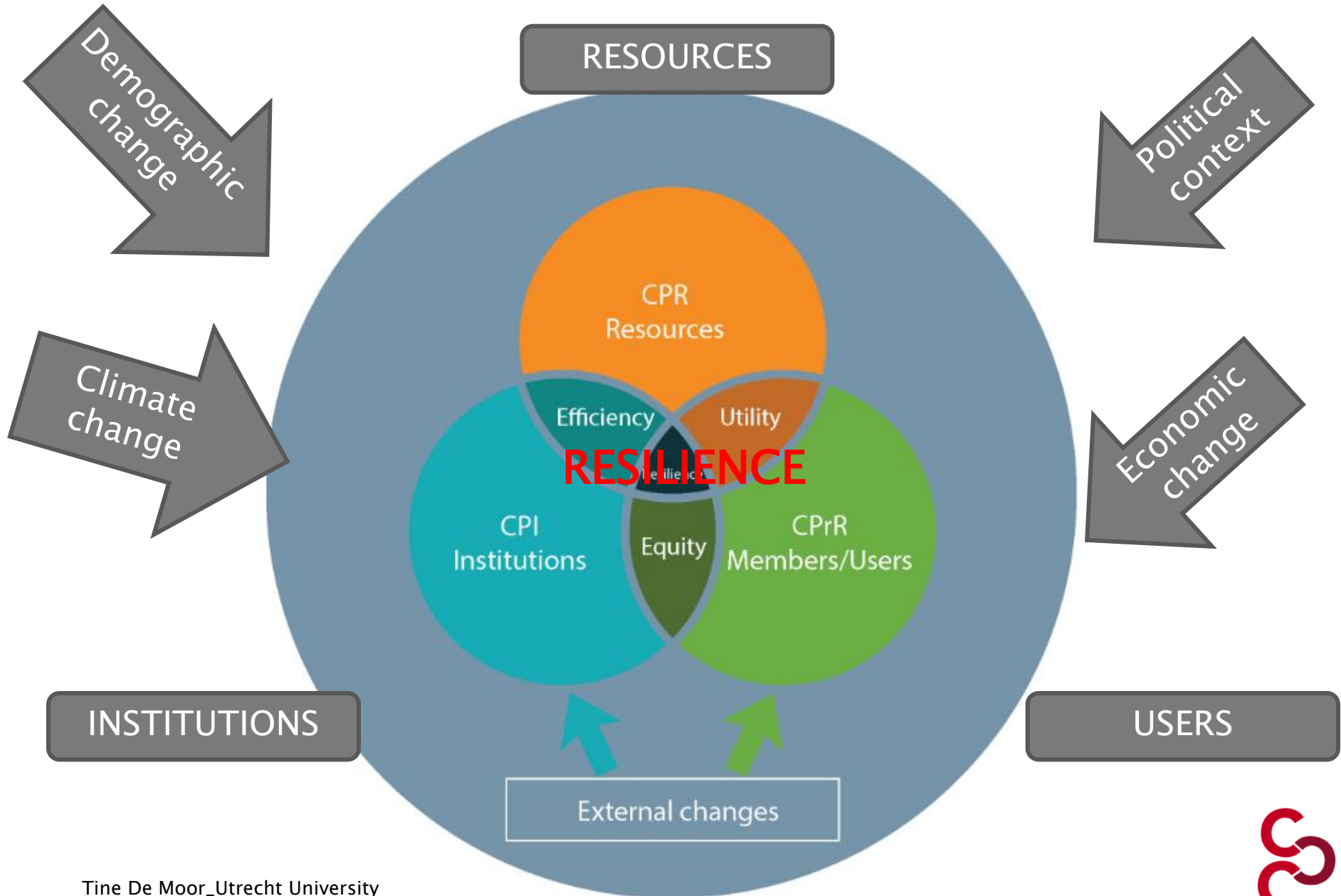
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ICAS IN THE PAST AND TODAY

- **Goals have been “split-up”:**
 - Historical:
 - Social and economic benefits/purposes brought together into one collective
 - Consumption and production together
 - Now: participating in several different collectivities is essential to provide for all everyday needs
- > Disadvantage:
 - Reduces the opportunities for using reciprocal behaviour as a complementary incentive
 - To provide for all needs, one needs to be a member of several different collectivities
- **Memberships of individual members last considerably shorter**
- **Life span of modern institutions is remarkably shorter than life span of institutions that emerged in the first wave**

–> **less resilient institutions?**



A THREE-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO COMMONS



THE CHALLENGE TO COMMONS-RESEARCHERS & PRACTITIONERS IN GENERAL

- Be specific & clear! Not everything is a common!
- Resilience, not stability!
 - To avoid vulnerability to crises and system instability
 - Evolution and change in response to changing external conditions
 - Efficiency, utility and equity need to be in balance
- Consider how to make sure that the commons as governance model become a choice out of wealth, out of positive choice, instead out of need

ULTIMATE GOAL: a society with a high degree of institutional diversity, *including* commons

- > Identify the circumstances under which commons can be organisations that offer high resource efficiency, high user utility and very equitable institutions so that RESILIENCE becomes possible
- > identify the circumstances and resources for which commons do not work as governance model

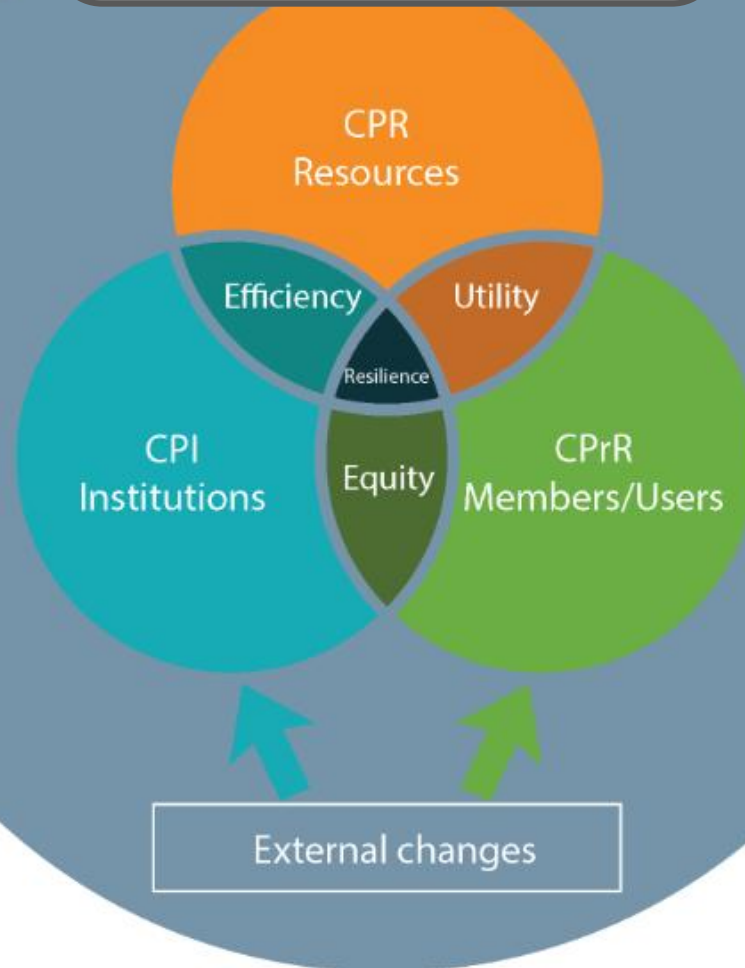


THREE ADVISES TO GOVERNMENTS

RESOURCES:

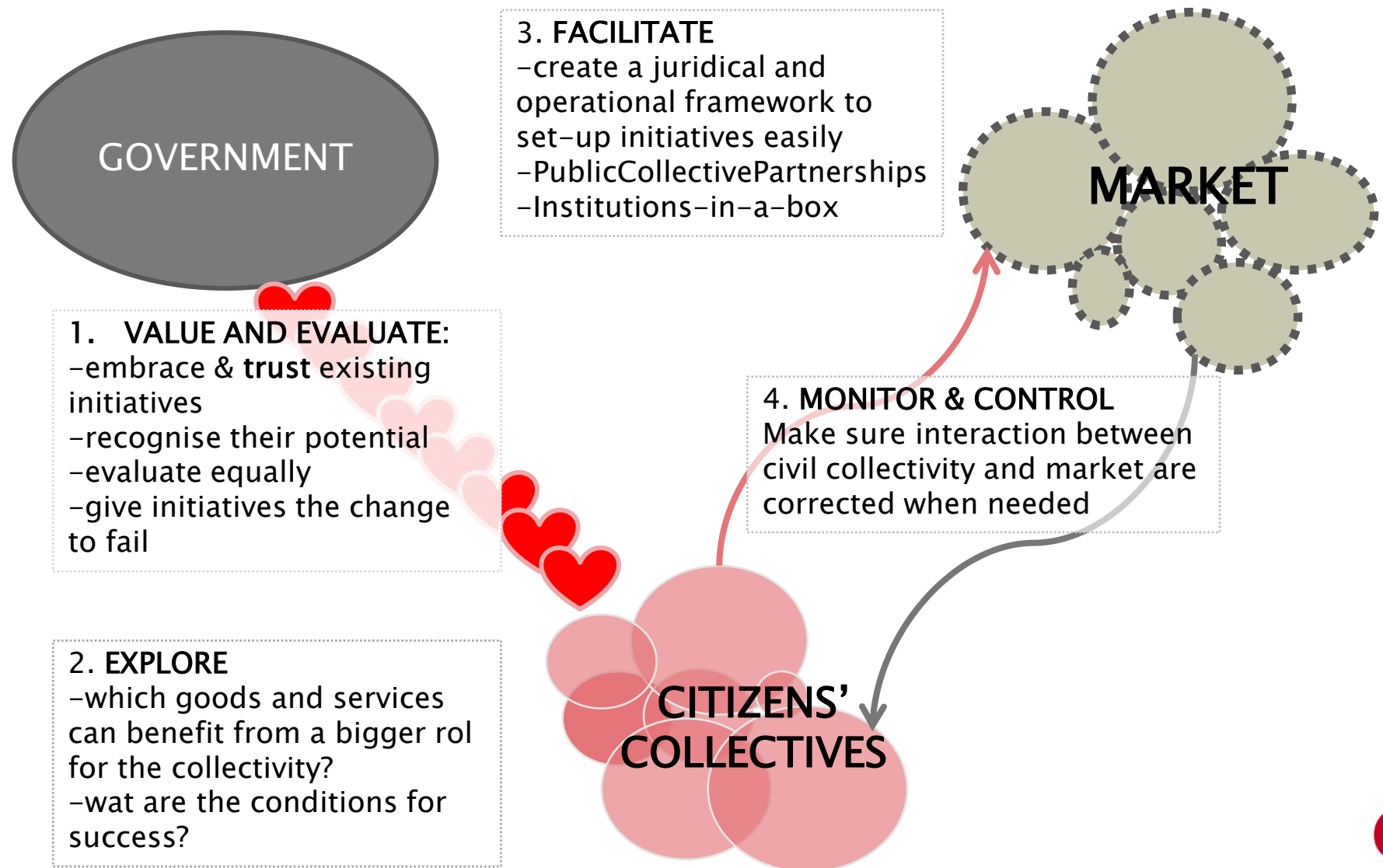
Note that not all resources are suitable to be governed as a common

INSTITUTIONS:
Offer room to citizens to design independently their own rules and management structures (within the boundaries of the law)



USERS:
Provide use rights to those who provide products and services

STEPS NEEDED TO “INTEGRATE” ICAS/COMMONS IN CURRENT GOVERNANCE MODEL



A PUBLIC-COLLECTIVE-PARTNERSHIP WILL BE A DIFFICULT BALANCING ACT

DECISION MAKING POWER

-> about the
reasons and
'format' of the
solution

OWNERSHIP

-> experience the effect of
improvements and involvement by
stakeholders instead of shareholders;
participation in profit of various kinds

Tine De Moor_Utrecht University

RESPONSIBILITY

-> including dealing with
negative consequences!





Institutions for Collective Action

WWW.COLLECTIVE-ACTION.INFO

*'Cooperation is not a
sentiment – it is an economic
necessity'*

Charles Steinmetz

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Congress Commons: Citizens, Law and Governments organized by Oikos Belgium – Brussels, 4 December 2015



The independent socio-ecological platform Oikos.be organizes the one-day conference 'Commons: Citizens, Law and Governments', which will be held in the Royal Library in Brussels, 4 December 2015. The focus of this conference will be on the challenges new forms of cooperation, such as commons, have to offer, as well as the challenges they have to face. New forms of cooperation often meet resistance: current legislation primarily favors private property, as governments do not want to loosen their bureaucratic control. Commons however offer unique opportunities for a sustainable society. Resources managed by local communities can provide a guarantee against overexploitation, cities can revitalize through urban commons initiatives. The challenge is to develop new partnerships between citizens and governments, with new laws and stimulating mechanisms for citizen engagement, and to anticipate on potential problems and new challenges. The program involves not only lectures by renowned scholars in the field of commons, but also presentations of practical examples of such new initiatives. Attending this conference is free of charge, but registration is required. Read more about this conference [here](#) or register directly [via this link](#).

Call for panels, papers, and posters Regional European Conference (Bern, 10-13 May 2016) - deadline for abstracts EXTENDED until 30 November 2015



The organizers of the 4th Regional European IASC-Conference welcome abstract proposals for panels, papers, and posters for the 4th Regional European IASC-Conference, to be held in Bern, 10-13 May 2016. The main theme of the conference will be 'Commons in a "Glocal" World: Global Connections and Local Responses'. This conference therefore aims to look at the interfaces between local and global processes in order to bring together research arenas that have often been kept quite separate until now. We especially welcome contributions that aim to address the above mentioned themes through novel forms of integrating theoretical approaches. In addition, the focus of the conference will be on a dialogue among representatives of different academic disciplines (e.g. geography, social anthropology, history, development studies, economics, political science, and law) and between academics and non-academic actors (e.g. practitioners, business representatives, policy makers, or NGOs)... > [Click here for the call](#)

New publication on reconstructing historical populations from genealogical data

The academic journal *Feminist Economics* very recently has published an online article by affiliated researcher and our former research team member Felix Meier zu Selhausen, entitled 'What Determines Women's Participation in Collective Action? Evidence from a Western Ugandan Coffee

AGENDA

4 December 2015

Brussels

Conference

'Commons: Citizens,
Law and Governments'

[More info](#)

30 March-2 April 2016

Valencia

Conference

11th European Social

Science History

Conference

[More info](#)

10-13 May 2016

Bern

Conference

IASC Regional

Conference (Europe)

'Commons in a

"glocal" world'

[More info](#)