COMMONS?!?
COMMONS?

All that we share?

Peer-to-peer economy?

Collaborative consumption and production?

Common Property Regimes?

Common Pool Resources?

Common Pool Institutions?

Citizens’ initiatives?
PARALLEL TO RENEWED ATTENTION FOR COMMONS: MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE APPROX. 2005

STATE

PPP

MARKET

Liberalisation since 1980s
COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

State governed

Peer-to-Peer

Citizens' COLLECTIVITY

DELEN VAN BEZIT LOKAAL EN GRENSOVERSCHRIJDEND

The Bright Future of Car Sharing

P2P
COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

COLLECTIVITY BENADERT marketPARTNER

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

market

Samenaankoop-initiatieven

Citizens' COLLECTIVITY
COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

B2C: market benut potentieel van COLLECTIVITY

Citizens' COLLECTIVITY

market
COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION

COLLECTIEVE NOT-FOR-PROFIT PRODUCTIE

Citizens' COLLECTIVITY

market
COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION

COÖPERATIE ALS BUSINESS-MODEL

International Year of Cooperatives 2012
Resilience of the Cooperative Business Model in Times of Crisis

market

Citizens' COLLECTIVITY
COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION

State governed

COLLECTIVITEITEN VOORZIEN IN PUBLIEKE DIENSTEN

Citizens' COLLECTIVITY VOORZIET PUBLIEKE DIENST

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

STATE

MARKET

PPP

Collectivites provide in public services (though access might be limited to participants only)

Collectivites

Collaborative consumption

Collaborative production

Liberalisation since 1980s

Tine De Moor, Utrecht University
PARALLEL TO RENEWED ATTENTION FOR COMMONS: MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE APPROX. 2005

COLLECTIVITIES PROVIDE IN PUBLIC SERVICES (though access might be limited to participants only)

State governed

COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION

COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

PPP's
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products/services are offered by</th>
<th>Products/services are offered to/can be used by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by the collective</td>
<td>To members of the collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bright Future of Car Sharing</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Ubuntu Logo" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public collective partnership</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Wijwillenzon Logo" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Airbnb Logo" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Groupon Logo" /></td>
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<td>To members of the collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the collective</td>
<td>Institutions for collective action/commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the state (cond. Of citizenship)</td>
<td>Public collective partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the market (sale)</td>
<td>wijwillenzon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public goods (NOT = Commons!)
EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF NEW COOPERATIVES PER SECTOR 1990–2012 (NETHERLANDS)

Tine De Moor_Utrecht University
“SHARING” ECONOMY EXPLAINED WITH CARS

- Access
- On demand economy
- Goods
- Product-service economy
- 2nd hand economy
- c2c

FIGURE: KOEN FRENKEN (UU)
### DIFFERENCES WITH SHARING ECONOMY

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

Tine De Moor_Utrecht University
TECHNOLOGY + ECONOMY ≠ GOVERNANCE REGIME

Online app + group of individual users ≠ 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

Common pool RESOURCES

CPR Resources

CPI Institutions

CPrR Members/Users

Efficiency

Utility

Equity

Resilience

External changes

Common Pool INSTITUTION

COMMON PROPERTY REGIME (entitled USERS)

Tine De Moor_Utrecht University

A THREE-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO COMMONS

RESOURCES:
- use has effect on stock
- use can be physically delimited

INSTITUTIONS:
based on Self-regulation
Self-sanctioning
Self-governance

CPI Institutions

CPR Resources

Utility

Efficiency

Resilience

Equity

CPrR Members/Users

External changes

USERS:
prosumers
Builds on reciprocity through participation of a well-defined group of people

Tine De Moor_Utrecht University
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 specified 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

- Markegenootschappen
- Totaal
SECOND WAVE:
COOPERATIVES, ASSOCIATIONS, LABOUR UNIONS, 1880–1920

Tine De Moor_Utrecht University
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”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co–op principles</th>
<th>Guilds</th>
<th>Commons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary and open membership</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic member control</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member economic participation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy and independence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co–operation among co–operatives</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for community</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

RESOURCES

- CPI Institutions
- Utility
- Equity
- Efficiency

CPR Resources

CPR Members/Users

INSTITUTIONS

External changes

RESILIENCE

External changes

USERS

- Political context
- Economic change
- Demographic change
- Climate change
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

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

1. VALUE AND EVALUATE:
   - embrace & trust existing initiatives
   - recognise their potential
   - evaluate equally
   - give initiatives the change to fail

2. EXPLORE
   - which goods and services can benefit from a bigger role for the collectivity?
   - what are the conditions for success?

3. FACILITATE
   - create a juridical and operational framework to set-up initiatives easily
   - PublicCollectivePartnerships
   - Institutions—in—a—box

4. MONITOR & CONTROL
   Make sure interaction between civil collectivity and market are corrected when needed

Tine De Moor_Utrecht University
A PUBLIC–COLLECTIVE–PARTNERSHIP WILL BE A DIFFICULT BALANCING ACT

-> about the reasons and “format” of the solution

DECISION MAKING POWER

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!
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