



Welcome to the Autumn edition of *The Commons Digest*! In this issue we present a snapshot of the regional conference, "Commons in a 'Glocal' World: Global Connections and Local Responses" held in Bern, Switzerland 10-13 May 2016. The issue opens with an essay by **Tobias Haller**, the conference organiser, together with **Stephan Rist**, co-organiser of the conference, explaining what commons in a "glocal" world is all about. Next, **Madlen Kobi** and **Thomas Niederberger** discuss how mineral and metal resources can be framed as "Glocal Commons." **Ramez Eid** then presents a case using the theoretical approach termed "constitutionality" in Mallorca. This is followed by a conference report written by **Robert Heinze**, **Martin Stuber**, **Thomas Heusser**, **Rahel Jud**, **Ana Kurdgelashvili**, and **Carmen Zurkinden**, and a summary of two panels on the "Blue Communities" Project, written by **Elisabeth Bürgi-Bonanomi** and **Andreas Kläy**. This issue closes with **Elisabeth Schubiger** and **Samuel Weissman**, who give a feel for the conference through their experiences on one of the fieldtrips to a Swiss commons.

This issue also includes announcements and, of course, Emily Castle's list of Recent Publications. **Enjoy!**

## CONTENTS

### COMMONS FORUM: Commons in a "Glocal" World - Global Connections and local Responses

<b>Welcome Address at the IASC European conference in Bern</b> Tobias Haller.....	1
<b>Framing Mineral and Metal Resources as "Glocal Commons"</b> Madlen Kobi & Thomas Niederberger.....	5
<b>Constitutionality in Mallorca: the Case Against Environmental Corruption</b> Ramez Eid.....	10
<b>Conference report: IASC European Regional Conference</b> Robert Heinze, Martin Stuber, Thomas Heusser, Rahel Jud, Ana Kurdgelashvili & Carmen Zurkinden.....	14
<b>Highlighting "Blue Communities"</b> Elisabeth Bürgi-Bonanomi and Andreas Kläy.....	19
<b>Gantrisch Nature Park and its local responses to a global connection</b> Elisabeth Schubiger and Samuel Weissman.....	22
<b>Recent Publications</b> Emily Castle.....	25
<b>Announcements</b> .....	30



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## Commons Forum

### *Reflections*

## Welcome Address at the IASC European conference in Bern

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## Why Switzerland and Europe?

What was the *Commons in a ,Glocal' World* conference about? Certainly at first glance it was about the management of commons-pool resources and common property institutions in Europe. Being a Swiss citizen it might look strange to host a European conference in a country that is paradoxically European and not European at the same time. Switzerland is in the middle of Europe topographically, economically as well as legally to a certain extent. But at the same time it is a sort of global outer-space, as it stand out compared with other places in the world especially as a positive example of decentralization, governance and the principle of subsidiarity. This has inspired the idea of the conference in many ways. If the debate is on the management of common pool resources such as pasture, forestry and water, the label Swiss is since the work of Elinor Ostrom fletched with the prime label robust and sustainable. It is the "yes they can" notion of sustainable



common pool resource management and one of the prime replies to the notion of the tragedy of the commons. The person behind this Swissness is not Swiss but US-American: His name is Robert Netting, a Social Anthropologist with many talents, who conducted fieldwork in Nigeria in the 1960s on peasantry and after that prepared for a project in Switzerland in the 1970s (see Netting 1993 for an overview on his research). But Netting was not just looking for a place where he had the participant observation sensation in the "calm and comfort tourist zone". He was looking forward to combine participant observation methods based on good longitudinal demographic data that were sleeping in the archives of the catholic church in the place he chose: Törbel, a small village in the German speaking part of the Canton Valais. "Balancing on an Alp" (Netting 1981) was the title of his book on how the villagers managed common pool resources based on common property institutions in this place in the mountains. His work was much later on used by Elinor Ostrom for her Nobel Price winning book *Governing the Commons* (1990) as one of the prime examples from which she distilled the famous so-called design principles for robust institutions.

This Swiss case showed two important things, which are central for this conference: First, after reaching a certain political independence members of the commune themselves did develop flexible solutions for resource management problems in an environment with extreme seasonal, temperature and soil conditions. Second, the basic institutional design was the peculiar mix between private and common property. Common property and its management institutions for the pastures made sense because on the privately owned meadows one needed to

produce hay as fodder for the winter, thus the need to feed and collectively herd the cattle on a communal pasture in the higher less productive areas during the summer. At the same time to have sufficient hay production on private land there was a needed for collective efforts to bring water to the village, which thus became a communal property. This link between different institutional designs – common AND private property – as well as the embedding into religious norms and values of neighbourhood, reciprocity and trust made the commons management in this case so-called robust.

However, I guess that this is not only unique to Switzerland but can also be found in Europe and all over the world, often under pre-colonial conditions (see also Oerebech et al 2005). Nevertheless, European contexts today are interesting because these are cases, in which the state is strongly present and providing legalized opportunities for bottom-up management, not always to the same extend as in Switzerland, but certainly so in contrast with many other parts in the world and especially in the Global South.

## **Why Glocal? Answer one: Global impacts on Europe**

Therefore, this conference looked at Swiss and European robustness, but it also focused on the political implications and transformations from the past until today. The conference addresses topics, which included not just New Institutionalism Approaches but as well a Political Ecology Perspectives. It integrated questions of power and institutional change, which are to be looked at in Europe, too. Thus, it is not just about the local but the interplay





Tobias Haller, Conference organiser

Photo credit: Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

between the local AND the global, which is why the term ‚glocal‘ appears in the title of this conference. Switzerland and Europe face structural changes in agriculture and land use planning which are linked to global pressures regarding economies of scales as well as political and environmental legislations. The trade negotiations called TTIP between the US and Europe – the US wants us to enjoy genetically modified US-cereals and hormone-treated beef - are just the tip of the iceberg. Below the tip of the iceberg are further legal concentration and privatization processes, which disconnect us more and more from the commons. Thus the conference addressed the question of responses to these global connections in Europe and Switzerland as labs for collective action under political and economic contestations.

### **Why Glocal? Answer two: Europe’s impact on the world commons**

And then there was at second glance another basic topic of the ‚glocal‘ conference: European countries and especially Switzerland host major transnational companies, which have an

important impact on the global commons especially in the Global South. These companies are also major driving forces behind “Large-Scale Land Acquisitions” (LSLA) or „Land Grabbing” processes. They are looking for land for mining or industrial agricultural production, they provide and install technology for energy production from dams to solar energy consuming the commons in the global south. They demand open borders for their products and protection for the privatization of the commons. They push conservation and tourism policies and projects that have an impact on local livelihoods and reduce access to the commons for vulnerable and marginal households. And the nagging thing is: Often we are involved without knowing as investments of our pension money – just to mention one example - is hidden.

This development has repercussions on the way men and women and generations as well as indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups and classes are excluded in different ways from accessing what was their shared resources base. The basic issue is that LSLA processes - which are said to bring development - do not just take away only “land” but always land-related common pool resources such as water, forest, pasture, veldt products etc. More powerful groups and men (who suddenly become landowners) might be compensated, marginal groups and women are not. In addition, as land prices rise in areas of investment marginal groups and women holding specific land right in traditional tenure systems might lose these rights because the commercial value of the land has increased. Thus, the way the commons are lost has to do with the economic and political system in which we are embedded as our countries host international companies, control markets



and financial flows and engage consumers in a system that externalized costs on all levels. One can speak also of commons grabbing, while actually in research conducted at our Institute we witness “resilience grabbing”, as these processes reduce the capacity of local resource users to recover after climate or other shocks. LSLA-Research is partially shedding light on these processes and the University of Bern hosts more than 15 different research projects on this issue at the moment.

## What Responses? A Central Research Question

However, and this was the third topic of the conference, there are also responses to these global connections: There are cases in Switzerland and in Europe as well as in the Global South where locally developed responses and solutions to these global challenges might give rise to resistance against commons grabbing. Several of the presentations will illustrate how local actors and groups are able to overcome political and power gaps in order to craft new solutions in a bottom-up institution building processes, giving back a sense of ownership of how to manage the commons. However, this demands from states to return and also assist in protecting basic property rights on the local level! Only time will tell how sustainable these solutions – in the ecological as well as in the social sense – will be. But there are good reasons to argue that such solutions are of central importance to be studied and that these deserve our research attention as important lessons can be learned from them.

It was thus the explicit aim of this conference to bridge the gap between

collective action and political economy and ecology in order to bring these approaches together. We thus hopefully can move towards what could be called a New Institutional Political Ecology perspective.

With this background we have selected 37 Panels with a total of about 190 presentations. We were also very happy to have been able to provide financial support to about 25 colleagues from the global south to make this a real ‘glocal’ conference. Thanks to this great effort by the conference staff team a rich commoning and sharing experience was had by all.

Let me make a last comment on the food and especially drinking side of the event and the music in the end: The University of Bern joined the Blue Community initiative. It encourages and pushes the use of public water services as a reaction to privatization of water. Thus we did not have bottled privatized water from a certain Swiss company but instead had water from the tap, which is of excellent quality and open to this community. And finally, the music in the end of the conference was ‘glocal’: Swiss music interacted with music from Senegal to bring ‘glocal’ tunes into our common senses!

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## Framing Mineral and Metal Resources as “Glocal Commons”

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**M**ining as a transnationally organized, but locally executed activity was a perfect example to illustrate this year’s IASC European Regional Conference themed, “Commons in a ‘glocal’ world: global connections and local responses.” The impacts of mining on the natural environment as well as the institutional organization of local communities in order to deal with transnational corporations active in the extraction of mineral resources has gained momentum in the recent decade. The large-scale open mining pits are not only cuts in the landscape, but their consequences challenge local institutions. In the recently released edited book *The Open Cut: Mining, Transnational Corporations and Local Populations* (Niederberger et al. 2016), we undertook a comparative study of 13 case studies of mining conflicts with the objective to assess social and environmental impacts of large-scale mining activities and address the

complexity of local and transnational interactions between the different actors involved in this business sector.

As the title of the study indicates, the chapters focus on three interrelated fields, namely mining (as an activity), transnational corporations (as confusing entities with various interests and strategies) and local populations (with diverse interests and degrees of organization). The case studies presented cover the extraction of different materials like copper, coal, limestone, uranium, diamonds, and gold among others. The study provides a regional diversity with 4 case studies from Africa (Guinea, Zambia, Niger and Sierra Leone), 3 case studies from Latin America (Peru, Colombia, Guatemala), 1 case study from Australia (Northern Territory) and 2 case studies from Asia (India, Philippines), and 3 case studies linked to Switzerland. The case studies cover a broad range of different





natural environments (from deserts to rainforests) and also a diversity in the stage of operation of the mining sites (from early exploration to over 80 years in exploration).

By framing mineral and metal resources as “glocal commons”, our main argument here is that despite mining being a global business – in the sense that exploitation has become global through the involvement of transnationally operating corporations – the socio-environmental impacts happen on the local level. In that sense, mining activities do not fit the classical scheme of a “Tragedy of the Commons” (Hardin 1968) because the resources are not exploited by the proprietors themselves. In today’s era framed often as “neoliberal”, resources like land and water are more and more privatized, but the role of underground resources like minerals or metals is a complex one: although the land (surface area) often belongs to individual – or in the case of indigenous peoples also collective – owners, the underground resources are not part of this ownership, but belong to the state. In many of the presented case studies, state institutions plays an active role in providing transnational corporations with access to mineral or metal resources. Through the granting of extraction licences to business corporations, the state often circumvents the rights of local communities to provide freely over their land resources as the concept of FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) and other international and national guidelines promote. We have hence not a setting where the actual commons are destroyed by the users themselves, but by external actors extracting local resources. At the same time, local individuals and communities in a short term economically benefit from the



Photo by Stephen Codrington, CC BY 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=221253>

Mining as a transnationally organized, but locally executed activity

mining activities on their territories, with the disadvantage of losing the right to determine freely over access and use of their land and water. Once mining activities have polluted or destroyed natural resources, it becomes difficult to make a long-term living from local livelihood strategies.

Our study shows that local populations are often not interested in owning, extracting and managing mineral or metal resources themselves, but their emphasis is placed on the ownership and management of resources like water or land. The maintenance of these common-pool resources is most relevant to continue local livelihood strategies which are bound to the availability of natural resources. Many of the case studies presented in the book address this issue. In the case of uranium mining in Niger, the mining sites crosscut transhumant migration routes and make some of the seasonally accessed pastures inaccessible for the Tuareg herders. These herders do not only lose access to resources like land and water, but their entire livelihood strategies based on a mobile or semi-mobile lifestyle are interrupted. Many of these pastoralists, as a consequence of the installed mining sites, end up in the cities or suburbs where they do poorly paid labor jobs for the mining industry or dependent sectors



like the service sector (Oxby and Walentowitz 2016, 176–177).

The example of Niger and many other case studies in our comparative study show that the values and interests of the different actors involved in the institutional setting of mining vary broadly. In the original idea of the management of the commons, the members of one community search for ways to manage the resources together. In the case of the “glocal commons” of mining, the involved community is very heterogeneous and due to power imbalances and different “livelihood strategies” it is almost impossible, to bring them together around one table to discuss the best possible use of mineral and metal resources. In the case of the Las Bambas Copper Mine Project in Apurimac, Peru, for example (see Wallimann 2016), the involved stakeholders include among others the CEO of Xstrata; the peasant women from the community who will be resettled due to the proposed mining site; the representative from the Peruvian state Ministry for Environment responsible to survey mining activities and intervene in case of environmental damages; the copper trader in his office in Geneva (Switzerland); the lorry driver from the an impoverished village in the region who comes to the mining site to get a job in the construction sector, and so on. Considering mineral and metal resources as “glocal commons” hence also implies the development of strategies for their management and the bringing together of these very diverse actors in a glocal setting.

The comparison of the case studies in our book, however, also show a broad variety of institutional settings that shape mining exploitation. Each case offers its own challenges for resource management. The

three main actors “state”, “transnational corporation” and “local population” do not present themselves as uniform entities, but are internally fragmented (cf. Ballard and Banks 2003). We find corporate actors increasingly engaged in institution-building and partial take-over of state responsibilities, such as the provision of public services, infrastructure and “security”, in a kind of “corporate-state-partnership”, which of course has direct implications on the relationship between local population groups and the state. We find divided local communities where one half is in favour of mineral extraction on their territories and the other half is against it (e.g. the case of Tampakán on the Philippines). And we also find corporation-internal challenges for the management of mining sites, where the management only cares for higher revenues while the departments dedicated to Corporate Social Responsibility issues are more eager to develop community projects improving local livelihoods. However, „glocal commons” management is still highly characterized through the externalization of the environmental costs to a local level in the countries of extraction. Although the extracted resources like copper or limestone circulate globally, water pollution and denied access to land are not leaving the places of extraction, but are localized consequences.

Some of the cases point to the bargaining power of local groups, but our general argument is that there should be a shift of decision power in the mining industry towards local populations whose commons are directly affected by the extraction. Therefore, in an ideal setting, every stakeholder should have an equal right to define about the use of available mineral and metal commons to be exploited.





Photo: Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

A talk during the Conference

Considering the remaining mining deposits as “common heritage of humankind” (Moody 2007, 12), there are actually solid global reasons for why to leave the resources in the ground, as for example climate change is further fuelled not only by the CO<sub>2</sub>-extensive extraction but also by the later use of these resources. While some resources like gold are mainly used for jewellery or safe deposits, others like copper seem more fundamental for industrial processes and thus more necessary taken from a global perspective. Decisions about the extracted materials should hence include considerations about the general value that a resource has for humankind and according to it, develop the best possible standards for its exploitation or non-exploitation. Further, in areas where local populations explicitly reject mining operations, companies should refrain from extraction and search for alternatives.

While at the beginning of our comparison of the different case studies, we expected to find quite many similarities between the different cases, it turned out that due to the different institutional settings and involved actors, the strategies for resistance against or negotiation for a less damaging extraction of resources are in fact not universal, but that each case needs careful consideration of the

institutional setting to minimize damages. Therefore, our argument is similar to Ostrom (1990) who also encouraged the careful consideration of the particular institutional setting for each case before developing strategies for a successful management of the commons. Our study underlines her conclusion that there is no “best case-scenario” due to the varieties inherent in each case study. The mining conflicts are embedded in multiple contradictions and often (in)compatible interests of the different actors involved. Even if generally, it is easier to prevent the installation of new mining operations at an earlier stage of planning, a comparison between the case studies of Tampakan (Philippines) and Las Bambas (Peru), both explored by Xstrata, highlights that the outcome of early-stage resistance can vary considerably: while in Las Bambas, the CSR-driven approach to convince local populations of their benefits from a future mining site was quite successful, the Tampakan project had to be put on hold due to internal conflicts among the community members with few beneficiaries involved by the company and a large number of dissatisfied and left-out parts of the population.

Our activist-anthropological approach in the project for the compilation of the book brought together not only PhD students, but also undergraduates, professors, people from indigenous communities and NGO representatives. The aim was to provide an overview of different local mining case scenarios as well as to give an impetus for the broad discussion of the (glocal) value that we ascribe to mining and metal resources. While here (and in the book), we mainly addressed the supply side of mining, there is the whole other side of demand, namely the consumption of these resources, which plays a



considerable role in the further development of mining sites. Copper and uranium are of course not comparable to products like bananas and coffee which are directly purchased by the end consumer. However, the few initiatives for more transparent markets in the gold sector (fair gold) and in the diamond sector (Kimberley process) are first steps towards including consumers as responsible and involved actors in the exploitation of resources.

The comparison situates each individual case into a larger framework of mining extraction and in relation to other cases. Mining (and other socio-environmental) conflicts are a field of interlinked local and global struggles over resources and power, created by strategic alliance building, knowledge exchange and the “spill-over” of negative experience from old to new mining areas. Some successful local initiatives from among our case studies (Medel, Jabiluka/Australia) show that mining operations can be prevented in cases where local institutions are well-working, where cross-community coalitions are extended and where emic perceptions are directed towards the idea that mining does not provide a reliable livelihood in the long-term. The institutional complexity to manage the “glocal commons” of the mining sector, however, still challenge the development of alternative visions of more bottom up initiatives.

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## Constitutionality in Mallorca: the Case Against Environmental Corruption

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**A**nthropologists and other social scientists have long documented the tragic effects of weak participatory approaches to common pool resources management. They criticized the implemented schemes as being used as “Trojan horses” (Blaikie 2006) by powerful actors (external or internal), which often led to “elite capture.”

When analyzed according to Ostroms’ distinction between constitutional, collective, and operational choice (Ostrom 2005), locals have been largely restricted to “participatory” roles in collective choice and operational choice, while the operations of constitutional choice have largely been monopolized by such powerful actors as state agents.

In the past few years, Tobias Haller, Greg Acciaoli and Stephan Rist have introduced a new theoretical approach that they called “Constitutionality” (Haller et al. 2015), according to which they analyzed examples of successful local institution building (differing from top-down imposed participation) that highlights natural resource management initiatives, from a perspective that emphasizes community members’ views on participation. It also evaluates their own strategies in negotiating such initiatives, thus emphasizing local agency and creativity in the construction of novel institutions to deal with environmental issues.

Their analysis highlights six components of constitutionality:

- 1-Emic perceptions of the need for new institutions
- 2-Participatory processes of negotiating power asymmetries
- 3-Preexisting institutions as a basis for institution building
- 4-Outside catalyzing agents (fair platform)
- 5-Recognition of local knowledge
- 6-Higher level acknowledgment of new institutions

It is important to mention that this approach pays attention to bargaining-power issues, since local communities are usually heterogeneous in terms of internal power distribution, and characterized by relative lack of power in dealing with outside actors, such as the state or immigrants. Constitutionality illuminates how conflicts over resource management can lead to institutional solutions formalized as compromises with collective benefit for most or even all actors. What emerges is not a win-win constellation, but rather a compromise due to the relative of bargaining power between actors (Chabwela and Haller 2010).

It also focuses attention upon how local levels are linked directly and indirectly to outside legal and political-economic contexts and frameworks (provincial, national and global levels). Such links are crucial not only to enable “institution





shopping” (Haller 2010), but also for the processes of state recognition and legitimation required for the sustained operation of local frameworks achieved through constitutionality.

Based on this theoretical approach, my comparative research on these issues was conducted in two rural and protected areas from the two sides of the Mediterranean: The Serra de Tramuntana in Mallorca, Spain, and the Carmel Mountains in Israel. Both areas are inhabited by peasant linguistic minorities– the Catalan/Spanish-speaking Mallorcans and the Arabic-speaking Palestinian Druze communities respectively.

In both cases there have been many historical claims of state discrimination against the two indigenous ethnic groups. So the two rural populations have similar socio-linguistic and political contexts: they have been using their own languages for hundreds of years of mountainous relative isolation, thus developing their own unique local dialects and cultural identities and some of their traditional economic institutions. At the same time, due to historical circumstances, both rural communities perfectly command the language of the majority group in their own state, Spanish and Hebrew.

In this essay I will focus on some of my ethnographic finds and conclusions in Mallorca, which was presented at the IASC conference in Bern, Switzerland this year.

The research projects examined and compared the process of institution building of bottom-up resource management and conservation efforts by analyzing the perceptions of the local actors. These processes were born locally, cumulating in the UNESCO declaration that

the protected area has “universal” social and natural values, and must be protected according to principles of sustainability.

It is also important to emphasize that the local government in Mallorca had a very weak reputational position thus a weak bargaining power as will be discussed below. It is argued that this context has created an opportunity for local action, combined with the UNESCO label and the state’s international obligation to allow the creation of local management institution for the protected area, leading to debates and measures by the local inhabitants.

Tourism is the main economic sector in Mallorca, yielding 70% of its income. This is the final result of the commodification of the island’s natural and cultural resources since the Franco regime. Tourism became also a political tool for Franco, by which he gained international acceptance, while promoting it as “Paradise” or “Sun, Sea and Sand”, the playground for the rich and the famous. The result has been development pressure that threatens to destroy many natural corners all over the island, mainly the forests that cover 33% of its area, mostly concentrated in the mountains of the Serra de Tramuntana. The traditional economic uses of the forest became less profitable and traditional forest management local institutions were starting to be abandoned.

The research has confirmed earlier studies that found the following results: (1) The economic values of trees were undervalued; (2) Trends of putting the forest in the market for new uses (privatization); (3) Forest fires increased; (4) New understanding for the values of forest emerged; (5) New public debates based on certain ideologies and narratives.



During the past 25 years Mallorca was regarded as “the most corrupt region” in Spain, to the extent that even scandals have names, such as Gurtel, Barcenas, Andratx, and Palma Arena. There have been tens of cases of illegal construction of tourist development projects in naturally protected sites, and about 100 senior current and former politicians in Mallorca accused of using their positions of power for their personal benefits. The result: a de-facto “open access” situation, in which the government is perceived to be a very weak ruling body, and a feeling of a lawless island among its inhabitants.

Under these circumstances, since 2005 a new democratic social movement emerged, which gained the support of tens of organizations, politicians, activists, businesses, academics, land owners, and was able to lead a long process of open public democratically conducted meetings and discussions.

In order to maintain an image of a balanced and "fair platform" for social and economic change, the meetings focused on

issues such as fighting the spread of corruption, to lessen the harm this image has made to the island, reverse neo-liberal notion of economic development, as “sustainability” has become “the word” to use. In addition, this grass-root movement argued for the protection of local cultural elements: their language, heritage, traditional way of living, and local cultural and economic institutions. The main result of the process was the changing international status of the area by declaring the Serra de Tramuntana as a Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site by UNESCO, and a great shift from neo-liberal policies of development to the rise of new laws and by-laws which promoted a more sustainable practices, and the protection of both the local natural world and the traditional systems of forest and water management, traditional agricultural practices and knowledge of stone masonry.

When analyzed according to the main components of the Constitutionality approach, the Serra de Tramuntana case study shows:

<b>Components of Constitutionality</b>	<b>Ethnographic data in the Serra de Tramuntana</b>
1- Emic perceptions of the need for new institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resource depletion (environmental damage, destroyed beaches, destroyed natural habitats, cultural heritage and language under threat).</li> <li>• Loss of access to lands due to immigration from EU.</li> <li>• Corruption cases.</li> </ul>
2- Participatory processes of negotiation power asymmetries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration to create discussion platforms.</li> <li>• Using the UNESCO suggestions as “high status” platform for negotiating sustainability practices.</li> <li>• Re-empowering older institutional arrangements in Mallorca.</li> </ul>
3- Preexisting institutions as a basis for institution building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional reciprocal access arrangements</li> <li>• Forest management institutions</li> </ul>





4- Outside catalyzing agents (fair platform)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local level NGOs</li> <li>• Local level politicians from Mallorca</li> <li>• UNESCO World Heritage Sites platform</li> <li>• Decentralizing laws by left government in the island since 2006</li> </ul>
5- Recognition of local knowledge of resources, creativity and social learning for new problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of cultural landscape and resource dynamics: traditional agricultural practices (olive, citrus, carob and almond trees)</li> <li>• Knowledge of traditional water management practices.</li> <li>• Knowledge of community sustainable forest use.</li> <li>• Knowledge of stone masonry (houses and dry stone walls).</li> </ul>
6- Higher level acknowledgment of new institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local regional autonomy of the Spanish state.</li> <li>• Recognition of the UNESCO for the process in the Serra, and commitment of the central Spanish and local Mallorcan governments to the achieved arrangements and principles for sustainable development and natural and cultural resources management.</li> <li>• New local laws introduced since the declaration.</li> </ul>

To summarize, it is argued that the general distrust for the government acts and its neo-liberal development policies, and due to many corruption cases during the last 15 years, have all fostered a discourse of how ineffective and destructive the state operates, finally contributing to the creation of these new social and political bottom-up dynamics. In this political context approaches such as the UNESCO Biosphere reserve provide an opportunity for legitimate local collective action. A real local-level grassroots democracy can be a tool to bring all local interests on the table, and thus creating better sustainable resource management institutions.

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## IASC European Regional Conference Report: Commons in a 'glocal' world - global connections and local responses

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The annual European Regional Conference of the International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) is an interdisciplinary gathering of academics and practitioners discussing the question of how to deal with the use of resources in capitalism. Thus, the conference went beyond the borders of academia and presented a grand overview of theoretical, empirical and practical approaches to using the commons model as a way to enable communities to organise and manage common resources. This year, the conference addressed the seeming gap between two dominating fields of study: the development of local institutions for the management of the commons on the one hand and effects of the global expansion and deepening of capitalist modes of production and extraction, consumption, and societal reproduction on the other by focusing on the "glocal" connections and interdependencies, reactions of local communities to global processes like climate change, or the local ramifications of and resistance to global economic and social developments.

Naturally, an annual conference of this magnitude presents a wide variety of topics in presentations and discussions. In this essay we present a selection of what

panels the authors have chosen as representative for the overall intention of the conference. (Some of the panels are also represented in other parts of this digest).

JESSE RIBOT (Illinois) opened the conference with one of the central "glocal" issues we face today: climate change. He criticised the concept of "climate refugees" used by the IPCC. This takes one cause and finds multiple outcomes; Ribot instead proposed to take the outcome – migration – and look for the different causes in the analysis. Thus, migration presents as the result of many causes. Most importantly, Ribot emphasized vulnerability as a central concept in the analysis of migration. Climate change is thus one aggravating factor for people who lack assets and social security.

Building on the much-discussed notion of the Anthropocene, DAVID SCHLOSBERG (Sydney) pointed out that there is no such thing as a separate "natural" world. Humans and natural forces interact and human beings have a big impact on the ecological makeup of the planet. Therefore, the "injustice" appearing in this era is an expression of two kinds of disruptions: Slow violence in the form of



Photo: Institute of Social Anthropology,  
University of Bern

Jesse Ribot, keynote speaker at the Conference

long-term degradations and punctual disruption like floods, wildfires and heat waves. According to Schlosberg, we need to adapt to a language of vulnerability, because anthropogenic environmental deterioration will continue to inequitably undermine the cultures, resources, land, and health of vulnerable communities. Further he emphasized that the idea of justice, equity and vulnerability is hardly ever mentioned in the literature of social sciences and humanities regarding the Anthropocene.

PETER KNOEPFEL (Lausanne) gave a keynote on Governance of Local Commons (Local Microcosms) – between Self-Regulation, Public Policies and General Institutions Starting from a definition of the commons as a political rather than legal notion, he explained local microcosms as territorial local commons with unequal participation rights recognized by unequal user rights. In Western Europe the boundaries established within microcosms of local commons separate those who have the ownership right from those who don't. Such microcosms often emerge as a point of resistance against globalization worldwide and are seen as an important element for sustainable development within local communities. The governance of local microcosms is regulated through Local Regulatory Arrangements (LRA),

which assure the legitimization, control of the boundaries, monitoring and sanctioning and fix the rules and the integration of the microcosms into the overall political system. He concluded that context within which such microcosms emerge, live and will be maintained or valued will vary in time and space and cannot be defined in a universal way.

SILKE HELFRICH (Jena) advised a change in terminology, shifting the discussion from "commons" as a fixed state to "commoning" as on-going practice. Stating that "there is no such thing as the commons", she emphasized the actors, the constructed nature of common spaces and the potential of all goods, communities and spaces to be turned into a commons. This would lead to a new discussion about processes, patterns and potentiality that would allow us to connect different projects in new and meaningful ways. Theorising of communing, according to Helfrich, is a missing piece in commons theory that needs to be taken on.

The conference panels expanded in detail on these issues from different, interdisciplinary perspectives.

The panel "Influence of European & International Forest policies" focused on how the European and international forest governance affects local contexts, influences national state frameworks on forestry and how communities respond to it. LYSANN SCHNEIDER (Bern) analysed social and environmental transformation due to international influences on forest resources in Mexico. ANNINA AEBERLI (Bern) presented forest discourses and connected policies in Sarawak, Malaysia, and the influence of European forest concepts until today. PAPA FAYE (Dakar) dealt with the evolution of rationalization



of domination in Senegal and brought out its relations with the dynamics of global economic and environmental policies. RAHEL JUD's (Bern) presentation dealt with the implementation and the effects of the REDD+ policy and the impacts of pilot projects on local communities and livelihoods in Indonesia. JERYLEE WILKES-ALLEMANN (Zürich) highlighted governance systems of forest recreation and its challenges of managing and planning in urban forest areas.

In "Switzerland as a laboratory", panelists discussed different historical approaches. ANNE-LISE HEAD (Geneva) presented a rich overview of the commons in Switzerland in the *longue durée*. In a socio-historical perspective, she emphasized the inclusion/exclusion processes which the positive assessment of the commons, (an evaluation that dominated the conference), relativized. MARTIN SCHAFFNER (Basel) reported on the interdisciplinary research project on the corporation Ursern, where three characteristics of land use are noted: the common ownership of the pastures, an elaborate set of rules, and the management of the land through procedures that include collective making. SARAH BAUMGARTNER (Bern) and MARTIN STUBER (Bern) have analyzed the common fields of the civic corporation of Bern. It became clear that long-term survival of such an institution is only possible through multiple transformations. For example, since the later 19th century the civic corporation transformed their fields in building land by investing in transport infrastructure (bridges, a railway).

The panel on "Common-pool Resource (CPR) Institutions in the shadow of the State" explored from an interdisciplinary

perspective the connection between commons and the state in different actor constellations, social, cultural, historical and political contexts. JEAN-DAVID GERBER (Bern) claimed that Large-Scale Land Acquisitions (LSLA) often result in a creation of new commons, where a state plays significant role in creation of new institutions and redistribution of resources. JOSÉ PABLO PRADO CÓRDOVA (Ciudad Guatemala) presented a case of successful bottom-up initiative for claiming state-mediated property rights and nature conservation through grassroots mobilization. Then, JESSPER LARSSON (Uppsala) explained how open market places could support creation of the commons in 17th Century Northern Scandinavia, where the state supported the creation of the commons, yet commons turned against the state. SARAH RYSER (Bern) discussed invisible uses of the land classified as idle by nature resource dependent people and gendered experience of participation in the government land deal. Lastly, MONICA VESILE (Berlin) examined multiple meanings of forest commons and the role of state in post socialist context in production of laws and policies that resulted in unequal distribution of forest common ownership, membership and access to the resources in post socialist context.

In the panel on "The Climate Change Dilemma: Global and Local Scales in Climate Science" DANIA ACHERMANN (Denmark) illustrated the study of ice as a fundamental part of climate change research that formed the concept of a global climate. An attempt to overcome the abstraction of climate change was presented by BRITTA ACKSEL (Essen); counteracting classical research language, personal stories about local actions should





reach the broader public. KLAUS EISENACK (Berlin) highlighted the heterogeneity of adaptation in water governance where rigid water use rights and externalities challenge adaptation. JOHANNA GOUZOUZAI (Strasbourg) showed the use of different discourses used by two types of claim-makers. SADAF JAVED (New Delhi) illustrated structural differences within tea grower communities that lead to different perception and adaptation possibilities regarding local weather varieties.

The goal of the panel on "The Impacts of Commons Enclosures on Local Power Relations" was to bring back the notion of power and power differences in the study of commons. LAURA WEIDMANN (Fribourg) showed on the basis of Namibia's land right system that including traditional authorities in the system of communal land governance is accompanied with uncertainties in respect to rights, duties, and the scope of power. TIMOTHY ADAMS (Bern) illustrated the unbalanced power relations within contract farming in Malawi. Sugar cane farmers become dependent on world market prices and rural economy loses its resilience. HEINZPETER ZNOJ (Bern) illustrated the complex rules that have arisen due to the transformation of common property regimes in Indonesia on the basis of the changing buffalo law. The complex rules also generated structural conflict between men and woman.

The main findings of the panel on Large-Scale Land Acquisitions (LSLA) and the question of their connection to "resilience-grabbing" showed that the concept of LSLA often ignores water- and related resource-grabbing which were an integral part of commons before the investments. TOBIAS HALLER (Bern) pointed out from



David Schlosberg, keynote speaker at the Conference

Photo: Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern

comparative African case studies institutional changes disconnecting water and other common pool resources. FRANZISKA MARFURT (Bern) showed how access to water is removed from women in a land deal in Sierra Leone and outlined how women tried to resist further land and water grabbing by "institution shopping". On a more aggregated level JAMPEL DELL'ANGELO (Maryland) argued that there is not much data on water grabbing and that one needs to find new criteria while THOMAS BREU (Bern) presented a comparative quantitative state-level analysis to argue that states with much demand for water not necessarily also engaged in LSLA consuming much water. The debate showed that we still have a long way to go to address issues of empirical studies and aggregation on a more quantitative and state level.

The panel "Towards a New Institutional Political Ecology" focused on how to bring in power, conflict and embedding notions into the debate on the commons and thus married the main issues of the conference: Haller presented a power-oriented model of institutionalism. Haller used Ostrom's notion of policentricity to focus equally on decision-making, institutional negotiation and collective action. He showed that Ensminger's Institutional Change Model marries policentricity, new institutional and



political ecology approaches. The second paper by ANGELA KRONENBURG GARCÍA (Leiden) and HAN VAN DIJK (Leiden) argued, based on Ribot's theory of access, that conflicts will lead to processes of institution building to be studied. JOHANNES EULER (Duisburg-Essen) intends to discover how commons are embedded into current social systems. He proposed that commons can be seen as another institutional logic and thus have the potential to become a "meta-logic". This requires a dialectical understanding as formulation for the embeddedness and "mediatedness" of commons.

In a discussion about the institutional implication of sustainable management of water as a commons, CHARLOTTE DE CALLATAY (Louvain) underlined that international law has to develop tools to help local actors to self-organise by defining a legal framework with substantial and procedural rules. INES DOMBROWSKY (Bonn) talked about mining in Mongolia and concluded that political and economic transformation led to a vacuum in water sector while it fostered extraction. Impacts fostered considerable institutional change in water sector, but shortcomings remain overwhelming. "River Basis Administrations" are too weak to mediate competing claims due to the influence of powerful mining companies and public participation.

The conference showed the need for multi-level, interdisciplinary discussions of the commons, a concept that is rightly always written in the plural. The multiplicity of theoretical approaches, empirical research and practical implementations of the concept is certainly one of its strengths; this much became clear in the many panels. Learning from practitioners is as important as refining the theoretical

models and developing a critique of capitalist work and resource exploitation that is grounded in real-world alternatives. The conference also emphasized the importance of using the concept of the commons in on-going debates on global developments, particularly around climate change, to introduce much-needed discussions of agency, resource allocation and vulnerability.

One major question, however, was not explicitly addressed: how much is the concept of the commons dependent upon local organisation and social structures? How "global" can the commons be, not just as a concept, but as an empirical model? Many panels and keynotes dealt with either interventions in global discussions and global activism or local practices and institutions, but there was no discussion of the connections between the two; the "glocal" aspect was mostly discussed as an effect of capitalism, not as an important part of the institutionalization of the commons.

Nevertheless, the conference showed the timeliness of a discussion of different concepts on the commons, which have multiplied since and engaged critically with the original formulation of Elinor Ostrom. Discussions will continue at the IASC conference in Utrecht in July 2017.

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## Highlighting “Blue Communities”: Collective Action for Local and Global Common Pool Resource Institutions

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### **B**lue Communities, a Collective Action for Local and Global Common Pool Resource Institutions

In this essay we present a summary of two panels held at the Bern 2016 Regional conference on the Blue Communities Project. The Blue Communities (BCs) Project was created to help community activists and local leaders protect the water commons – our shared water resources and services. A joint initiative of the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, in 2011 the City of Burnaby in British Columbia became Canada’s first BC; since then, others have followed. In 2013, the City of Bern, Switzerland, and the University of Bern became the first Blue Communities outside Canada. Paris followed suit in March 2016. BCs commit themselves to principles that help them respect the rights to water and sanitation in line with their specific context and duties, and to supporting the ability of other communities to do so. These principles concern local governance, on the one hand, and participation in shaping the higher national and international levels that frame local governance, on the other.

**1. Blue Communities, a collective action for self-declared principles of resource governance: Potential for and limitations of supporting institutional frameworks and**

### **public–public partnerships**

The first panel addressed the local level of governance and how it interacts with the national level. The panel took the form of transdisciplinary action research.

The starting point was a reflection on water resources in relation to landscape and ecosystems. These exercises showed how water resources are interlinked with ecosystem services and depend on their integrity<sup>1</sup>. It also demonstrated the importance of integrating into governance and management supporting services that enable resources to regenerate. Ecosystem characteristics – specifically related to the integrity of the water cycle – are genuinely in the common interest. Any type of water use must consider socioecological interrelations and the potential impact of the water use, in order to defend human rights and sustainable futures<sup>2</sup>.

BCs address these interrelations and increase awareness of the significance of individual behaviour as well as of institutions enabling sustainable resource governance and management. BCs promote common-pool resource (CPR) institutions, defend global commons, and support adequate governance at the local, national, and global levels.

We focused on experiences of collective action by BCs in Canada and Switzerland,





including the University of Bern<sup>3</sup>, and explored the potential for scaling up collective action and increasing impact. For the University of Bern as a BC, we also discussed the meaning of tertiary education and research and how they contribute to sustainable futures. Indeed, the BCs initiative's potential for impact is strongly determined by consciousness and thus by education, as well as by the national and international institutional setting and its support of CPR institutions (cf. panel 2).

The trends of economic globalization, resource overuse, and pollution make it more difficult to defend water as a local and global common. The prevalence of bottled drinking water as a commodity is increasing worldwide, and the human right to water remains precarious. In Canada and Switzerland, defending CPR water mainly depends on the level of awareness and on local concerns. Local and national institutions securing common water resources in the future are under risk, and currently lack the necessary resources and support to be truly effective. BCs play an important role in enhancing local awareness and fostering international public-public partnerships in order to support institutional development. But international development cooperation agencies show little interest in enhancing public-public partnerships and institutions for CPR, and lack concepts for the global commons.

Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs declined to participate in this panel, saying it did not match its priorities. SDC<sup>4</sup> focuses on technical innovation, infrastructure, and public-private partnerships, thus contributing to the commercialization of water and water services.

At the national level, Brazil presented the approach of having the Ministry of Public Affairs<sup>5</sup> support the defence of CPR interests. Indeed, such support could counterbalance the dominant power of international companies when it comes to CPR, and contribute to the defence of human rights and global commons.

In conclusion, through collective action BCs are firstly responding to the challenge that water must be considered a local and global common resource, due to the interrelationship of the water cycle and the ecosystems, and due to its multiple services to humanity. Secondly, BCs cannot limit their activities to the local and national context, but have to address global challenges and contribute to building up institutions for sustainable governance. Thus, research on commons is urged to develop concepts for global common resource governance and institutions.

## **2. Is the right to water and sanitation supported or undermined by the new mega trade agreements TTIP, TPP, TISA, and CETA?**

The second panel addressed the problem of policy coherence in the context of international trade agreements. A starting point was that the BCs Project is based on the right to water and sanitation, and was created to protect public access to water as a CPR. In recent years, there has been growing debate on whether new mega trade agreements such as TTIP, TPP, CETA, or TISA<sup>6</sup> – which are under negotiation or close to being implemented – would support or undermine the right to water and related common-property regimes. The panel hence explored the extent to which mega trade agreements might



impact on water governance and on initiatives such as the BCs. While it became obvious that more financial investment in water governance is urgently needed in many places, right-to-water related stakeholders have little confidence that the trade and investment deals will contribute positively to the solution. This is basically due to their bias towards the privatization of water governance, instead of strengthening the role of the government in satisfying basic water needs. However, it remains contested to what extent the private sector should play a role in securing water infrastructure, and whether investment treaties – if formulated in a balanced way – are a necessary tool to secure responsible investments in the sector. Trade and investment treaties that are more balanced would not only protect the rights of investors, but also require them to respect the rights of local inhabitants to “their” water resources and to respect national strategies for sustainable development. If these rights are not respected, the rights of the investor would not be protected either. Hence, the debate links up to the more general debate on more sustainable trade and investment agreements.

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## Notes

1. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Island Press, Washington, DC.
2. The concept of sustainable futures relates to sustainable development (UN World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) but avoids the term development in order not to recall development paradigms but to acknowledge the need for societal transformations (Agenda 2030).
3. [http://www.unibe.ch/university/portrait/self\\_image/sustainability/blue\\_university/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/university/portrait/self_image/sustainability/blue_university/index_eng.html)
4. <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Water>
5. The Brazilian Public Prosecutor’s Office (PPO) is one of the most important institutional innovations stemming from the 1988 Constitution. The prosecutors not only have autonomy, but also tools and wide-ranging powers. These characteristics have allowed the PPO to play more than a traditional role in applying public actions concerning criminal matters together with the Judiciary branch, thus transforming Brazilian prosecutors into significant political players. (Fábio Kerche 2014 *O Ministério Público no Brasil: relevância, características e uma agenda para o future*. In: *REVISTA USP • São Paulo • n. 101 • p. 113-120 • março/abril/maio 2014*, 115)
6. TTIP: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership; TPP: Trans-Pacific Partnership; CETA: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement; TISA: Trade in Services Agreement

## For further information, visit

- <http://canadians.org/bluecommunities>

- <http://bluecommunity.ch/>



## Excursion to a Swiss Commons: Gantrisch Nature Park and its local responses to a global connection

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**I**t might not have been what the excursion participants of the conference on Commons in a 'Glocal' World had hoped for in terms of suitable weather. But as soon as they learned from an enthusiastic forest warden, that this kind of constant, soft rain provides perfect conditions for 'his' fir trees, the participants' spirits rose to the experience of enjoying a drizzly day in the Gantrisch Nature Park. Therefore, off they were, all fifteen of them cosily wrapped into their raincoats, shielding their heads with umbrellas, eager to scour the municipal forest and intent on learning more about local forest management. While the forest ranger did an excellent job at motivating the participants, they had another reason to being there that day; it was a unique opportunity to see participatory community management approaches in the Bernese Oberland in action and to get more examples of what is labelled as the Swiss Commons case.

### **A unique form of forestry**

Following a trail through the forest, the participants learned that Gantrisch is a locally-driven and state-ratified example of bottom-up institution building for resource management in its form as a Nature Park. A label given by the Swiss Government for a sustainably managed landscape. For quite some time, the forestry in the region has been influenced strongly by the close-knit collaboration of various forest owners. The forest in the park belongs, to some

parts, to the 'Bürgergemeinde', which is a Swiss form of citizen's community. Other smaller parcels belong to private owners and yet others to the governing body of the Canton. To coordinate cultivation and distribution of wood, these different actors have to work closely together. Having heard this, some participants more interested in land rights were keen to learn who among these parties was allowed to forest and who would profit from the produce of the wood. The collaboration between different administrative levels of Swiss authorities, it seemed, was not to everyone's immediate understanding. Thus, whilst the group continued on their trail, they were introduced to the more intricate relations of Swiss, Bernese, and local forestry laws and how different regimes of property intersect for the sustainable use of these forests.

### **Land of traditions**

As the forest cleared, so did the entanglement of Swiss policy making become more apparent to the still attentive and lively hikers. They came to understand that decentralised governance has had long held tradition in Switzerland: in its governance of alpine pastures, lakes, forests and common pool resources (CPR) in general. In this case, the forest management of Gantrisch illustrated to the visitors, why Switzerland plays an important role in the debate on the commons. The matter had therefore come





The Gantrisch Nature Park

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full circle and now the group was starting to understand how changing and globalized agrarian policies were affecting commons such as this forest in Gantrisch.

## Nature and culture entwined

After this pleasant hike, the visiting group was greeted by a hearty lunch on a local organic farm prepared by Margrit Haldemann, one of the farmers who specializes in the preparation of the regional produce at her farm. So, while her newly arrived guests enjoyed her local spaghetti and bolognese, she told them the story of how the local woman started organic food production. One of the key moments, she told them, was during a celebration whereby the present people, eating non-local chips and drinking non-local orange juice, were complaining about the poor sales of their cider. Issues such as this one, triggered Margrit and some other women to start using local cheese and apple juice for their farmer's breakfasts and aperitifs and banning international products from their kitchens. After a while this caught on and has now become common practice across the board by the women's group people call the 'Gantrischer Frauen'. They are supporters of the nature park project whereby they are able to certify their products and sell them in delicacy stores in Switzerland. However, this led to one major question

for the visitors: How could all this, as nice as it is, be called a nature park? Here farmers were living inside the park, using the natural resources, managing the forests and water systems, cultivating and farming the land. The interesting thing in this case is that people live inside the park and are not expelled from it as in other cases around the world, especially as in some examples in African contexts. The answer would again come from the 'Gantrischer Frauen', as they, together with farmers and forestwarden, take care of their environment in a way that could be best described as cultural-landscape-care. Because in Switzerland conservation means: Man and nature work hand in hand. Therefore, the Swiss government issues the possibility for regions to submit a request to bear the "Naturpark" (Nature Park) label. At the Gantrisch nature park, groups related to forestry, agriculture, tourism, and marketing - especially also women's groups - successfully organized themselves to apply for the label and received it in 2011.

## Protecting the cultural landscapes

Having had these insights, the participants of the excursion to Gantrisch Nature Park left with a wealth of new and interesting information to add to their knowledge on how global influences and local government handle the today's challenges for a "glocal" resource management. The excursion enabled participants to gain insights into the commons as they are currently organized in Switzerland. Participants learned about Switzerland's management of land, water, biodiversity, food production, and emerging hybrid forms of "new commons" represented by arrangements such as jointly coordinated collaboration among various farming families, inter-farm crop rotation, and



consumer and producer communities.

Despite the locals' heterogeneous interests, the various groups developed rules, and the region as a whole now benefits from the label 'Naturpark', which does not protect a fictitious idea of pure nature but what can more aptly be described as an old cultural landscape.

## **A whole range of Swiss Commons: An Afterword on the Excursions:**

Grantrisch was only one out of six excursions, which the conference offered: One excursion went on the footsteps of Robert Netting to Törbel and experienced olden times as well as institutional changes in Törbel since Netting's times. While he is still alive in people's memories ("our Robert"), they highlighted new challenges on the commons: Less farmers use the pasture and so external farmers are now allowed to send their cows in. In addition, as part time farmers do not have time to wait for their slot of water, sprinkling infrastructure can be seen all over the area. However, the grass and later hay quality is not as good as was in the past as water comes from above and not from the ground as in the old irrigation system. In addition, there are new problems: Many farmers who do not have the labour to keep milking cows do now invest in sheep keeping, which requires less work. At the same time conservationists with the help of the government encourage and tolerate wolves to move into the area, leading to conflicts since these animals attack and kill sheep. Of similar interest was the excursion to Naters which illustrated a well-working irrigation system that was maintained and managed on a communal basis. Other excursions included meeting with officials from the Swiss Agriculture Department



The Gantrisch Nature Park

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and received information on the Swiss Agrarian Policy and their link to the commons by supporting farmers not just for production but also for their landscape management duties. Finally many participants enjoyed having a closer look at the city of Bern (a Cultural Heritage Site) and its communal forests.





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## Announcements

**Send letters and Announcements to Alyne Delaney, Editor, Commons Digest, Innovative Fisheries Management, Aalborg University, Skibbrogade 5, Aalborg 9000, Denmark, ad@ifm.aau.dk Tel: +45 99 40 36 94**

### Be part of IASC!

IASC is itself a commons, and depends on its membership dues for many of the critical activities it undertakes. Become a member!

<https://membership.iasc-commons.org/>

Suscribe to the newsletter! Tell a friend! The newsletter is the easiest way to receive all the news about the association. Contact us at [iasc@iasc-commons.org](mailto:iasc@iasc-commons.org) to post announcements - conferences, job positions, etc. - and reach the +3K members of our community: <https://membership.iasc-commons.org/civicrm/profile/create?gid=12&reset=1>

**Call for (Contributions to) Practitioners' Labs XVI Biennial Conference 'Practicing the Commons: Self-Governance,**



## **Cooperation and Institutional Change - deadline March 31, 2017**

The organizers of the XVI Biennial IASC-Conference 'Practicing the Commons: Self-Governance, Cooperation, and Institutional Change' (Utrecht, 10-14 July 2017), hosted by the Institutions for Collective Action- research team and the Strategic Theme Institutions for Open Societies of Utrecht University, today have issued a Call for Contributions to Practitioners' Labs. Proposals can be submitted via the Conference Module starting today; final deadline is March 31, 2017.

As the organizers intend to bring together not only scholars working on commons, but also practitioners involved in commons or organizations dealing with commons and shared resources from around the globe, several Practitioners' Labs will be organized. At these labs, practitioners have the opportunity to put forward their experience on commons-issues and at the same time discuss the challenges and questions they encounter with academics working on these issues, as well as with fellow-practitioners and policy makers.

You can submit proposals for full panels of 5-6 participants, join panels proposed by fellow-practitioners, take part in one of the Sponsored Practitioners' Labs, or submit your own individual questions you would like to see addressed at one of the Practitioners' Labs.

For all info and the full text of the call, visit <http://www.iasc2017.org/calls/call-for-practitioners-labs/>. Or have a look at one of the already composed Sponsored Practitioners' Labs (<http://www.iasc2017.org/practitioners-labs/>).

## **Call for Proposals for organizing IASC Biennial Conference 2019**

The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) is now accepting preliminary proposals from individuals/organizations interested in HOSTING our 17th Biennial Conference in 2019.

IASC Biennial Conferences bring together commons scholars and practitioners from around the world. Very soon the organizers of the XVI Biennial Conference of the IASC (Utrecht, 10-14 July 2017) will be launching their call for papers, but the IASC Secretariat is already looking for enthusiastic organizers for the 2019 Biennial Conference, given the size of these meetings and the preparation it takes.

The benefits of hosting these conferences for your organization include an expanded network of both global and regional commons scholars, substantial organizational capacity building, and a major opportunity to place a spotlight on the needs of people dependent on commons in your region. The past few conferences have drawn 450-700 participants, from up to 90 different countries.

Those interested should submit a proposal identifying your interests in hosting an IASC conference.

The proposal should include the following detailed information:

1. Title of the conference
2. Proposed conference themes and sub-themes
  - Mention the themes and subthemes you are proposing for the conference, explaining their global relevance
3. Description of Host Institution
  - Name of institute or department within the





institution that is carrying out the conference

- Ongoing research, activities and publications on commons and related themes

- Exemplify the institution's possibilities to organize this academic event. Mention experience, academic, administrative and logistic capacities and personnel

#### 4. Conference Chair and co-chairs

- Listing of qualifications

- Brief description of past events organized by the chair or co-chair

- Relationship with IASC and its members:

- o Have you attended IASC conferences?

- o If yes, which ones?

- Conference Team or Secretariat: Main people involved and their roles before, during, and after the conference

- Brief description of past events organized by the team

#### 5. Conference venue, size and dates

- Describe the venue, stating why it is convenient for hosting a global conference

- Give proposed dates to hold the conference. Please note that biennial conferences are usually held between the middle of May and the middle of September and that the decision about the dates will have to be taken together with the IASC, as a good spread of biennial, regional and thematic IASC-conferences is important to secure sufficient attendance at each type of conference.

- Estimated number of participants and countries to come to the conference (past conferences have drawn 450-700 participants; state if you expect your proposed conference to draw fewer or more participants)

#### 6. Purpose pursued for hosting the IASC Biennial Conference

- What is the impact you intend to achieve with the organization of the conference? Include academic advancement, impact on policy or grassroots action, IASC-membership, and post-conference dissemination of information and activities

#### 7. Proposed keynote and invited speakers for hosting the IASC Biennial Conference

- Names

- Affiliations

- Topics

#### 8. Proposed logistical arrangements

- Field trips

- Other proposed activities (parallel sessions, pre-conference workshops)

- Accessibility of the venue and travel and transportation cost

- Visa or other document arrangements for international participants

- Lodging:

- o Availability of dormitories or hotels at or near the conference venue

- o Approximate cost of lodging

#### 9. Projected budgetary information

- Include an itemized budget considering amounts for a global conference, using the outline (Annex 1)

#### 10. Potential co-sponsors

- List the possible co-sponsors for the conference mentioning the connection with them and the relevance of their participation

NOTE: Please do notice that the IASC will not be funding or sponsoring the conference, other than substantial in-kind support via the IASC-Secretariat

#### 11. Funding agencies for the conference

- Considering that the responsibility of sourcing funds to hold the Conference rests with the host institution and IASC may only assist to derive additional sponsorships, name the potential funding sources to be approached

- Please do notice that the IASC cannot provide funding to the conference other than in-kind (i.e. support by IASC secretariat)

Please do notice that:

- the program of IASC biennial conferences usually consists out of 3.5 days of conference and 1 day of excursions, that conferences usually start on the Monday afternoon end on the Friday evening. Before the start of the conference a number of pre-conference workshops are usually organized;

- the IASC has its own conference module which should be used as the conference



registration system, and which saves the conference organizers substantial time and trouble. It also provides services such as automated management of the review process. The implementation of this module will be done by the IASC-Secretariat as soon as the conference organization starts;

- a conference manual with more precise information on how to organize an IASC conference can be obtained via the IASC-Secretariat. Upon request, the Secretariat can also provide you with examples of successful bids of previous years. It is advisable to get in touch with the Secretariat well before the deadline if you consider to organize a biennial conference.

See the IASC-website for an overview of all past conferences co-organized by the IASC.

Proposals must be submitted electronically no later than 15 December 2016 to René van Weeren, IASC Executive Director at: [iasc@iasc-commons.org](mailto:iasc@iasc-commons.org).

## **New special issue International Journal of the Commons out now**

Editors-in-Chief Frank van Laerhoven and Michael Schoon are pleased to announce the publication of Volume 10, Issue 2, of the International Journal of the Commons (<https://www.thecommonsjournal.org/30/volume/10/issue/2/>). This issue contains no less than three special issues of papers, apart from the regular research papers and book reviews.

Edella Schlager, professor at the School of Government & Public Policy at the University of Arizona, was the guest editor who composed a special issue, entitled 'The role of context, scale, and interdependencies in successful commons governance'. The impetus behind the papers that appear in this special issue was to examine how patterns of Ostrom's design

principles relate to outcomes across diverse CPR settings. The authors of the manuscripts in this special issue, led by Marty Anderies and Marco Janssen of Arizona State University, launched a project to extend the research and data of Cox et al. (2010) in three critical ways.

Miguel Laborda Pemán and Tine De Moor of the research team 'Institutions for Collective Action' are the guest-editors of the special issue on 'Collective action institutions in a long-term perspective'. The papers of this special issue are the outcome of the Workshop 'Common People, Common Rules. Institutions and self-governance in historical perspective', that was held at the Public University of Navarre, Pamplona, October 30-31, 2014, where much attention was paid to the historical analysis of common land regimes.

Finally, Michael Bollig of the Institute for Ethnology at the University of Cologne and Carolyn Lesorogol of the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at the Washington University in St. Louis composed the special issue on 'Pastoralism and the new commons: Co-management, conflict and cooperation', which consists of papers that originated with a panel at the American Anthropological Association's annual conference in 2013 in Chicago, exploring the socio-economic, political, and ecological ramifications of the new pastoral commons in Eastern and Southern Africa.

## **Call for papers - 6th EMES International Research Conference 'Social enterprise for sustainable societies' (Louvain-la-Neuve, July 3-6, 2017) - deadline January 9, 2017**

The EMES International Research Network, in partnership with the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Work, State and Society (CIRTES, Université Catholique de Louvain) and the Belgian Interuniversity Attraction Pole



on Social Enterprise (IAP SOCENT), is pleased to announce the 6th EMES International Research Conference on the theme "Social enterprise for sustainable societies", July 3-6, 2017, at the Université Catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium).

In a truly worldwide and interdisciplinary perspective, this conference will discuss the challenges faced by social enterprises in this critical period and the opportunities they have to build sustainable societies. The conference will aim to bring together research communities from all over the world related to the third sector (non-profit sector, cooperatives, social economy, solidarity economy and civil society) and researchers working on social innovation, social entrepreneurship, the commons, sustainable transition, popular economy, etc.

Abstracts are due by January 9, 2017. Go to the conference website for more information: <http://emes.net/events/conferences/6th-emes-international-research-conference-social-enterprise/>

### **Call for Proposals for hosting and organizing Regional and Thematic IASC-Conferences 2017-2018 - deadline 15 March 2017**

The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) is now accepting preliminary proposals from individuals/organizations interested in hosting and organizing Regional and Thematic IASC-Conferences for 2017-2018. Hosting these conferences are an excellent way to put your institution into the spotlights of commons' practitioners and researchers.

IASC Conferences bring together scholars and practitioners from around the world interested in a specific theme related to commons or from

a specific continent. Hosting these conferences can bring your organization an expanded network of both global and regional commons scholars and a major opportunity to place a spotlight on specific regional or thematic issues related to commons. Regional and Thematic IASC-Conferences usually draw up to 220 participants.

Organizers interested in hosting and organizing an IASC-Conference are advised to contact the IASC-Secretariat well before the deadline, in order to be well-prepared. The IASC-Secretariat offers extensive support to local organizers to set-up the conference, from conference registration to the actual conference

You will find the full text of the call here: [http://iasc-commons.org/\\_CALL\\_Regional-and-Thematic-Conferences-2017-2018;](http://iasc-commons.org/_CALL_Regional-and-Thematic-Conferences-2017-2018;) all proposals are due by ultimately 15 March 2017.

For a full overview of upcoming and past conferences, see <http://iasc-commons.org/conferences>