



# Practicing the COMMONS

Self-governance, cooperation and institutional change

10-14 July 2017  
Utrecht, the Netherlands  
XVI Biennial IASC-Conference

## Call for papers, panels, and posters

XVI Biennial Conference  
International Association for the Study of the Commons  
Utrecht, 10-14 July 2017

**‘Practicing the Commons:  
Self-Governance, Cooperation, and Institutional Change’**

Deadline: 15 October 2016

The [local organizers](#) of the [XVIth Biennial Conference](#) of the [International Association for the Study of the Commons](#) welcome abstracts for papers, panels, and posters to be presented at this conference, to be held in Utrecht, The Netherlands, from 10 to 14 July 2017. The meeting will be held in the wonderful historic city center of [Utrecht](#), a major university town in the middle of the Netherlands and will be hosted by the [Institutions for Collective Action](#) research team and the Strategic Theme [Institutions for Open Societies](#) of [Utrecht University](#).

With the theme of the conference, “Practicing the Commons: Self-Governance, Cooperation, and Institutional Change”, we intend to bring together the fast growing body of scientific knowledge on the commons as an alternative governance model. The increasing popularity of commons as a governance model is visible across the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe. Citizens increasingly form new collectives to provide energy, care, food, et cetera, and work together on the basis of self-governance and reciprocity.

During the conference there will be plenty of opportunities to connect academic research to practitioners’ experience and vice versa. Underneath you find an overview of the main themes to be addressed, including a list of potential research questions that might be the topic of paper presentations. Soon, a call for contributions to practitioners’ labs will also be issued.

We invite you to visit the conference website at [www.iasc2017.org](http://www.iasc2017.org). Here you can learn about the conference timeline, keynote speakers, policy sessions and opportunities to organize your own project meetings. You can also find out about the city of Utrecht, the conference venues, planned excursions, and much more.

### Keynote speakers (all confirmed)

Prof. dr. Saskia Sassen (Columbia University, US)  
Prof. dr. Juan Camilo Cárdenas Campo (Universidad de los Andes, Colombia)  
Prof. dr. Jane Humphries (All Souls College Oxford University, UK)

## Conference tracks, including examples of possible research questions that can be addressed in submitted panels, papers, and posters

### 1. Recipes for resilient cooperation

- How did the management and use of commons evolve over time?
- Does the longevity of an institution for collective action have a positive effect on continuation? What is the role of path dependency in long-enduring commons?
- Which factors influence(d) the emergence and continuation of commons?
- How do commons cope with shocks and countervailing powers?
- In what way does management of common pool-resources depend on the type of resource?
- ...

### 2. Issues of exclusion and control in the formation, defence, and governance of commons

- Who sets the boundaries to commons?
- Under which conditions are strict boundaries/access rules better for resilience and under which conditions are vague, open boundaries preferable?
- Can technology help to make commons more inclusive?
- What are the moral implications of limiting access to common pool-resources?
- What are the mechanisms that include or exclude women, poor households, or particular ethnic groups from the commons?
- Which instruments for monitoring, controlling and sanctioning behavior can be found in self-governing institutions and how do these evolve over time?
- What is the impact of group size and composition on the commons' functioning?
- How does inclusion and exclusion work in digital resources governed as commons?
- ....

### 3. The impact of the commons

- What role can commons play in enhancing food security?
- Do commons have a positive effect on livelihoods, well-being, social justice, inequality?
- How can knowledge on commons be used to secure the future of global resources?
- How can (knowledge on) local resource governance contribute to mitigating climate change?
- What is the impact of technological change on self-governance and resource appropriation?
- ....

### 4. Methods and models to study the commons

- How can institutional change on the commons be studied (methodology, coding of case studies, individual cases)?
- How can different methodologies to study commons better be integrated?
- How can micro-/macro-relations be modelled to understand the functioning of commons?
- How can our current knowledge on natural resource commons be used to improve our understanding of collective action in digital environments, genetics, etc., and vice versa?
- ....

### 5. Polycentric governance of global resources

- How can polycentric governance contribute to governing global resources?
- Which are the legal constraints to polycentric governance?
- What can be the impact of local change on the future of global resources?
- How and in which ways is leadership important in polycentric governance?
- ....

## 6. Crisis on the commons?

- How do commoners overcome periods of extreme stress and crisis?
- Are commons as governance regimes more resilient to shocks and crises, compared to e.g. state or market-governed resources?
- How well can commoners mediate conflicts both within their own group and with other groups within society?
- How to study failure instead of success of commons?
- ....

## 7. Commons and the city

- For which urban spaces and resources can commons be a viable alternative governance model?
- Which specific opportunities and challenges does the urban environment offer to commons' initiatives?
- How to establish durable collaboration between commons and local governments?
- ....

## 8. Corporations, governments and commons

- What impact do businesses and private investment have on the commons?
- What are mechanisms for constructive engagement between corporations and the commons?
- What role can commons play in the struggle for land rights, in particular of indigenous communities?
- Which role can local and national governments play in the development of new commons?
- What is the role of external agents (e.g. NGOs, government agencies, etc.) in the governance of the commons and has this changed over time?
- ....

## Submission guidelines

- 📄 Abstracts can be submitted for posters, individual papers, panels, and papers belonging to a coherent panel. See further for details.
- 📄 All abstracts should be submitted via the IASC Conference Registration system: <http://conferences.iasc-commons.org/index.php/iasc/IASC2017/author/submit?requiresAuthor=1>
- 📄 All submissions should be in English (either US or UK spelling are allowed)
- 📄 The text of your abstract should be no longer than 500 words (including references) and entered as flat-text via the online registration procedure by the **15 October 2016** at the latest
- 📄 Please also submit relevant keywords regarding topics, region, and time period in the registration system
- 📄 All abstracts will be peer-reviewed by at least two selected reviewers
- 📄 You will be notified about the reviewing result ultimately by 31 January 2017
- 📄 Full papers and posters are expected to be submitted ultimately by 20 June 2017
- 📄 Please notice that by submitting your paper, you will allow the paper to be included into the [Digital Library on the Commons](#)
- 📄 In case you wish to **submit a panel proposal** (consisting of 4 papers), please note that:
  - the main organizer of the panel first needs to submit a panel proposal with an abstract on the session's content, and needs to inform the authors of the 4 papers about the submission ID that will be provided after submission of the panel (via a confirmation email).
  - sessions are only considered if all 4 paper proposals are also individually submitted by their authors, including the reference to the submission number of the panel. It is the responsibility of the main session organizer to inform the authors of the participating papers about this procedure.
  - panels are only included in the program if all four individual papers are accepted by the reviewers and if all authors have registered **by 10 May 2017**. If the authors have not registered in time, the organizers will allocate the papers of registered authors to other panels, if possible.

## Please do also note that....

- For practitioners interested in presenting their initiative/organization to other delegates at the conference, a special “Call for contributions to practitioners’ labs” will be issued in the fall of 2016, giving practitioners the opportunity to present their organization and engage in the academic debate. The conference is of course also open to practitioners, scholars, or any other interested parties to attend the conference without presenting their initiative or research.
- There will be a number of grants available to delegates from the Global South and to PhD-students which will comprise a waiver of the conference fee, free accommodation during the conference (arrival on Monday, departure on Saturday), participation in the conference events (pre-conference workshop, dinner, excursion) and – depending on the grant – a limited contribution to travel costs. Authors of accepted abstracts will receive notice before 31 January 2017 explaining the application procedure for a grant. Please note that reimbursements of costs related to a grant are made after presentation of the paper at the conference only.
- Conference fees will be announced via the conference website [www.iasc2017.org](http://www.iasc2017.org) in the fall of 2016 and will be income-dependent, but they will also be **substantially lower for members of the IASC**. Register now as IASC-member via <https://membership.iasc-commons.org> and start benefiting right away from your IASC-membership.
- As the conference is an excellent opportunity to meet your international project partners, the organizers will be offering high-quality low-cost meeting rooms (approx. 100 EUR/day, incl. equipment) for your project meetings on the opening day of the conference (Monday 10 July, 9 am – 3 pm). You can register for this via the conference website <http://www.iasc2017.org/when/project-meetings/>.

## Questions?

Get in touch with the conference organizers: [iasc2017@iasc2017.org](mailto:iasc2017@iasc2017.org). If you wish to be updated about the IASC-conference and other IASC-events, please register for the IASC-newsletter via <http://iasc-commons.org/>

We are looking forward to see you in Utrecht!

## Local Organizing Committee

- Prof. dr. Tine De Moor (Professor of Institutions for Collective Action in Historical Perspective, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University). Chair of the LOC, <http://www.uu.nl/hum/staff/MDeMoor1/0>
- Prof. dr. ir. Vincent Buskens (Professor of Theoretical Sociology, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University), <http://www.uu.nl/staff/vbuskens>
- Prof. dr. Marco A. Janssen (Professor School of Sustainability / Director of the Center for Behavior, Institutions and the Environment, Arizona State University and visiting professor of the Institutions for Open Societies Program at Utrecht University), <http://www.marcojanssen.info/>
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## Conference Team / Secretariat

- Charlotte Witte MA (Research Assistant Research Team ‘Institutions for Collective Action’, Utrecht University), [http://www.collective-action.info/\\_TEA\\_Charlotte-Witte](http://www.collective-action.info/_TEA_Charlotte-Witte)
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