

How local re-commoning initiatives set a spark for global challenges

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Climate change has been described as the ultimate tragedy of the commons, in which we observe on a global scale how the use of scarce resources in self-interest often develop in contradiction to a collective use of resources (cf. Hardin, 1968; Paavola, in: Cole, Ostrom, 2012). The mitigation of (and adaptation to) climate effects are discussed at international environmental conventions, yet also deployed in many local communities. We argue here that a good share of answers to climate change, and closely related also to the problematic use of scarce resources such as land, can be found in active (re-)commoning practices, where citizens act as responsible stewards for land uses.

Contemporary practices of ‘commoning’ depart from shared ownership and/or shared use rights by a ‘host community’ of commoners who collectively agree on a set of rules, which mobilize the existing institutional-political system and who intervene for the maintenance of a collective good. The operational implementation of these grand principles of landed commons for a series of micro-cases in Flanders region (Belgium) have been extensively studied in the INDIGO- project¹. Based on this research of landed commons, we here elaborate on three domains where commons have been negotiated to intervene in (peri-)urban metabolisms, i.e. in organic farming, in social housing and for slow roads. The (re-)commoning initiatives in these domains develop as sustainable practices to directly or indirectly slow down climate change. Re-commoning is equally raising awareness of communities and the resilience of places, and as such, it is contributing to capacities for adaptation. We briefly discuss the values in which commoning practices are rooted, and how the underlying value patterns can be relevant for the wider discussion on climate change.

1. Structure of the paper

We start from a concise overview of the ‘grand principles of landed commons’, and we then introduce three commoning examples in Flanders, i.e. on Collectief Goed in the city of Antwerp, on the micro-case Wervehoef with stakeholder ‘De Landgenoten’ in Wijnegem and on the micro-case Hoofse Hoek with stakeholder ‘Trage Wegen’ (i.e. ‘Slow roads’). In this, we briefly present the main actors and stakeholders in the negotiation of landed commons, and their respective roles as stewards, custodians or users, as well as the role of local authorities to support citizen-led initiatives on commons. From this, we move a step ahead to elaborate on the institutional diversity and on the hybrid forms of governance for (re-) commoning initiatives. Last but not least, we briefly discuss how single cases can set the spark for a more generalized practice, and how the cumulative effort of relatively small scale interventions can possibly

¹ A collaborative research project, with partners from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, OMGEVING cvba, Universiteit Antwerpen and Harokopio University, from 2015-2018.

contribute to wider societal challenges. We here assume that a large, encompassing problematic such as global warming requires a fundamental change of behavior and lifestyle of users, which is stronger if rooted in a multiplicity of bottom-up initiatives such as the citizen-induced initiatives on landed commons.

2. Grand principles of landed commons

The Grand Principles of Landed Commons (GPLC) describe the nature of the Landed Commons (LC), and refer to ten principles which are at the core of any discussion on the commons (P1-P10). They are based on a survey of academic literature on urban and rural commons, experiences of activist agents, policy documents, etc. (Saavedra Bruno e.a., in: Van den Broeck e.a. (eds.), forthcoming). The following briefly explain the ten principles, which are listed in table 1. We 'reshuffle' the list of principles to create a match with three widely recognized core features of commons, i.e. the common-pool **resources**, governed as commons by a group of **commoners** and developed within the possibilities and/or boundaries of existing **institutions** (i.e. commoning practices).

Resources

Landed Commons develop as a **collectively agreed or mediated system of inclusive land ownership and/or shared rights of use (P1 and P3)**. This diversity of uses, access and management of land develop beyond the current market-oriented dichotomy between private and public ownership. Landed Commons arise where public authorities and the market fail, and where individuals unite to deal with these shortcomings. With this, they attempt to answer to contemporary economic, ecological or social issues, where adequate formal frameworks are lacking, e.g. in taxation, legal rules, organizational forms or land use conditions. Both private and publicly managed goods have been increasingly subject to commodification for several decades, i.e. enclosure, privatization and marketing, which are affecting natural resources and lead to the disappearance of collective spaces. A characteristic incorporated in the landed commons assets, is their 'sharable nature'. Landed commons are sharable in the sense that the resources can be accessed and used by multiple users; at the same time however these resources vary in their capacity to accommodate different users, exhibit different consumption/ valorization thresholds and embody variable reproductive potential.

The **community-based use and/or ownership of landed commons (P2)** depart from two constellations. There are, on the one hand, places that can be regarded as 'community goods' by their nature, such as a coastal strip and dune belt, the banks of an inland lake or a river, the rivers themselves or large areas of nature and forest. In practice, we also see exclusive access rights here though, e.g. with gardens of private homes near riverbanks, private catering establishments along lakes, on beaches and in dunes, e.g. along the Belgian coast, or in privatized green areas. On the other hand, there are also landed commons based on a specific recognition of shared ownership or shared use for a specific group of users (e.g. a passage that remains open on basis of customary law).

Commoners

Commons ask for commoning: in order to develop shared use or shared ownership, a **host community (P9)** tries to obtain user or property rights, and to govern the property carefully. A host community can be a collective, a group, a community, an association, a movement or for instance a cooperative. Landed commons develop where a social-ecological relationship is established between the country and its multiple resources and a group of people who take on

the **stewardship for these resources (P6)**. Openness and inclusion are important values in managing it. It is the host community and not the market or the government, which is responsible for the governance of the Landed Commons. The collective is a group of people with the same value orientation regarding the use of certain goods. **Collectively agreed rules (P10)** should prevent from the alienation of rights and they should foresee exit and entry rights.

Institutions

A landed common aims for a diversity of **more inclusive property and land use regimes (P4)**. For example, a tenant cooperative involves its members in the ownership of its homes and land, and this is not the exclusive right of individual families. Commons usually require a (re-)interpretation of property or user rights, supported by the intervention of a collective and often leading to collective agreements. Landed commons equally require **a hybrid form of 'governance' (P5)**, with arrangements that combine hierarchical relations, market regulation, self-organization, affective relations, etc. In order to develop such inclusive regimes and hybrid governance arrangement, **the existing institutional-political system is mobilized (P8)**: which interpretations of laws and rules are possible? Is an adaptation of the current regulations necessary to organize shared land use in a flexible way?

P1. Diversity of use: 'Landed Commons' are a collectively agreed or mediated system of diverse land use rights practiced individually, jointly, interactively or in a time-sharing mode.
P2. Community-based use and/or ownership , based in two possible perspectives, i.e. as resources which by their nature and use may be regarded as more naturally communal, or as resources that are acknowledged in the context of communal ownership.
P3. Institutional diversity: Landed Commons cover a wide array of ownership regimes between private and public, defined by mixed legal arrangements (e.g. the situation of a tenant, of a landlord, situations of usufruct, etc.) and institutional configurations.
P4. Inclusiveness: The Landed Commons involve more inclusive ownership regimes which make the practice of shared individual land use rights or the benefiting from common pool resources easier and more efficient in use.
P5. Hybrid governance arrangements: Governance as a commons is usually a hybrid relationship combining hierarchical relations (state, corporate structure), market regulation, self-organization through networks and associations, affective relations....
P6. Stewardship: The landed commons should be considered as a social-ecological relationship between land, its resources and a group of people who accept stewardship over the resources.
P7. Resource-based governance arrangements , which are related to the nature of the resources, the manner in which the resources are utilized, the extent to which they generate value, their institutional and community setting.
P8. Application of the institutional-political system: The institutional-political system of spatial planning, property laws and regulations must be mobilized and modified to make the smooth functioning of existent and desired landed commons possible.
P9. Host Communities mediate use claims: These communities should by preference be communities in a position to establish the aforementioned social relationship.
P10. Rules of exploitation: Landed commons should be governed not just through open access, but by clear rules to prevent overexploitation.

Table 1: Grand Principles of Landed Commons (based on Saavedra Bruno e.a., in: Van den Broeck e.a. (eds.), forthcoming)

3. Commoning examples

The Grand Principles of Landed Commons (GPLC) can be used as a tool to assess the features of Concrete Landed Commons (CLC), in terms of governance, resource use, commoning practices, etc. These features evolve as the commons develop. Over the last fifteen years, we see many different landed commons initiatives appearing throughout Europe in many different domains, e.g. community land trusts and cooperatives in housing, collaborations on energy provision and/or projects in circular economy, cooperative land funds and consumer-cooperatives for organic agriculture, community gardens, negotiations and user groups for the use of open spaces – whether private or public- or for instance negotiations over slow roads. The initiatives differ largely in how they apply and develop various principles of landed commons from temporary shared use to formally agreed inclusive ownership (P1), from naturally communal spaces to privately owned spaces that are forcefully reclaimed for collective use² (P2). There are commons that develop within existing institutional boundaries and at times with the support of it, as well as commons-initiatives that powerfully complement, challenge or stretch existing configurations, ownership regimes and governance arrangements³ (P3 to P5, and P8). There are initiatives with relatively small host communities where stewardship is quite literally ‘guarding’ a space to the more abstract stewardship through participation in a larger cooperative (P6 and P9), with initiatives that hardly formalize agreements over the use up to initiatives that have clearly formalized rules and explicitly articulated values⁴ (P10). Whereas the versatility of new commons as well as re-commoning initiatives risk to stretch the notion of commons, there is also a richness and explorative power in this multitude of actions. We will back to this in the concluding reflection. We first want to zoom in on three micro-cases in Flanders, which we studied in the INDIGO research project.

Three Flemish cases

We studied three cases to see how a host community forms, how ownership regimes are interpreted, and through which hybrid form of governance the land-based common property is managed. The three cases apply a landed commons perspective to contribute in different ways to a more sustainable use of land. The housing cooperative ‘Collectief Goed’ promotes the re-use of existing housing units and stresses social sustainability. The land fund and cooperative ‘De Landgenoten’ invests in organic farming and attempts to preserve agricultural land for local, sustainable food production. ‘Trage Wegen’ then intervenes in the intertwining of different open space claims, and aims at the creation of networks of slow roads at the benefit and health of the most vulnerable traffic users, e.g. hikers.

Commons and housing

‘Collectief Goed’ is a recently established housing cooperative in Antwerp aimed at providing qualitative and affordable dwellings for large families with low incomes. The cooperation renovates the accommodations and rents them out to vulnerable households. Because of this focus on people in poverty Collectief Goed is rather an exception amongst housing cooperatives, who generally work with middle-class families.

² Cf. Picnic the streets and picnic the park in Brussels

³ Cf. the Ghent transition plan as compared to the CommonsLab Antwerp

⁴ Cf. Bologna manifesto

Protagonists in the construction of a housing cooperative

The origins of Collectief Goed lie in the association 'Arm in Arm', where fathers of families with a low income talk about the problems they confront and help each other to find solutions. The association is supported by social work organization Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen. An often-recurring theme in these sessions is the problem of inadequate housing. Bad quality housing affects every aspect of life: health, social life, job chances, school performance, etc.

For these families the search for affordable housing in Antwerp is virtually hopeless. It is impossible to find accommodation for less than 700 or 800 euro a month, which is unaffordable for families with a total monthly budget of 1200 euro. Meanwhile the waiting lists for social housing are extremely long, in particular for large families. Social housing societies simply have too few dwellings and struggle to keep up with necessary renovation work.

This situation led Arm in Arm to start searching for own solutions. In 2012, not by chance the year of the cooperative, the idea arises with the fathers and social workers of Arm in Arm to establish a housing cooperative. One year later, resulting from a cooperation between Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen (city administration) and social housing agency De Ideale Woning (DIW), a temporary solution is found: large low-budget families can take residence in empty social housing that is awaiting renovation. During this collaboration it became clear that DIW was struggling to keep up with renovation work and Samenlevingsopbouw saw an opportunity to include them in the housing cooperative: DIW would provide the dwellings, the cooperation would take care of the renovation and support matching tenants. In return for providing the dwellings, DIW receives shares and becomes a partner. The cooperation is called 'Collectief Goed', a clever play on words on collective good(s).

One of the biggest challenges for Collectief Goed was to establish a financially stable model. Creating affordable housing means that the amount of money going to rent cannot be bigger than one third of the total budget, for most families around 400 euro. By adding a rent subsidy to that amount, the cooperation arrives at a rent of 600 euro, just enough to stay financially healthy. But the cooperation also finds more innovative solutions. To reduce the costs of the renovation, Collectief Goed works with internships under the guidance of a professional renovation instructor. An added renovation subsidy of the city of Antwerp reduces the costs even more. This allowed to start with a first project of 9 housing units in Merksem.

The long-term goal however is to become completely independent by 2021 from the support of Samenlevingsopbouw, i.e. for the structural costs of personnel. 1. To reach this goal, the cooperation has to grow at a relatively fast pace of ten dwellings a year. The 'Achilles heel' is not the provision of houses ready for renovation, but the speed of renovation with trainees. Additionally, the guiding and mentoring of suitable candidates consumes time and energy, introducing a certain inertia in the process.

Even though the cooperative Collectief Goed inevitably comes with a certain fragility, it is still an innovative and truly social housing model. Over time, Collectief Goed will have to outgrow its niche character to make a significant societal impact on the lives of the most vulnerable citizens of Antwerp.

Commons and agriculture

A second case is the fund and cooperation 'De Landgenoten'. This Flemish organization attempts to grant access to agricultural land for organic farmers. The plots are purchased with money from the shares of the cooperative, and the farmers sign user agreements for the use of land. Whereas the agricultural land is usually rented by farmers from the CPAS, church property or private landowners, the land at De Landgenoten is owned by a cooperative. This ensures that the current and subsequent generations of farmers will only cultivate the land organically. A number of projects are also self-harvest or CSA-farms, where the farmer's income is supported by a community and a multi-level shared ownership arises. In the case of self-harvest, this group of shareholders also literally has access to the land for harvesting.

Commoning land for agriculture at Werve Hoef in Wijnegem

The site 'Werve Hoef' in Wijnegem is one of many micro-cases of De Landgenoten. It is located in the urban fringe of Antwerp. The name 'Werve Hoef' refers to a farm from the 16th century on the site of the current farmhouse. There were also medieval traces of a cemetery and an associated church from the 15th century on the other side of the site. With about 11 hectares in the middle of a densely build-up 20th century suburban area with a multitude of local facilities, the site of Werve Hoef is a premium location for housing development in Wijnegem. Today, the area presents itself as a vast open space, with only one building left that could be used for agriculture. Whereas the area is largely intended as a residential expansion area (and as such defined in terms of land use), the vacant lots are mostly used today for agriculture.

The local authority of Wijnegem and the social housing company De Ideale Woning (DIW) intend to jointly develop a sustainable neighbourhood at Werve Hoef. There has been a chain of interactions with different actors towards a commons-inspired use of the site. Many steps towards commoning hold a fragile, future-oriented and at times utopian promise of commoning, without certainty to actually translate grand principles into concrete landed commons. We can distinguish five stages of interaction in this "run-up towards commoning": (1) First, the social housing company De Ideale Woning (DIW), who is the owner of the plot, takes the initiative to develop the site. (2) When 'De Landgenoten' (DLg) joins the negotiations, different plans have already been drafted. (3) The next stage then is to draft a shared project description with DIW and DLg, (4) which equally allows to screen different farmers and to select one. (5) The provisory last stage finalises a series of formal consolidations between the owner, the cooperative and the farmer. An important stage to come is the construction of the social housing units, the actual farming activities and the links with the new inhabitants.

Throughout these interactions, there are three important dynamics in the development of agricultural land as a concrete landed commons. First of all, there is the discussion on the use of land with the social housing company DIW, the cooperative De Landgenoten, the new farmer, the current users of the land and the local community. The discussion is mainly about the collective character of land use and particularly about the link to the existing and the new community. Secondly, the interactions focus on building a host community to govern the agricultural land as a commons. Thirdly, there is a long run-up needed to get to an agreement about the ownership regime, which develop with relatively few actors.

Commons and slow roads

The projects of the 'Slow Roads' organization is another central case in the INIDGO-study.⁵ Slow paths are roads that are not accessible for motorized traffic. In the case-study, it is being investigated how shifts in the use of land in private as well as other ownership regimes contribute to making a Flemish network of slow roads accessible (or keeping it) and to increase the collective space. It is not excluded that other, more "common" forms of ownership may arise in the long term.

Commoning slow paths in the case of Hoofse Hoek in South of Antwerp

The Hoofse Hoek path is connecting the municipalities of Hove and Lint in the peri-urban South of Antwerp. The wider area already came under the attention of the newly established inter-municipal network 'Landschapspark Zuidrand' in 2012, when 9 municipalities agreed to collaborate to create a regional landscape, i.e. preserving the region-specific open spaces. Slow roads could become a 'capillary system to the open space', that would serve to 'counteract the creeping urbanisation of the region' (Saavedra Bruno e.a., in: Van den Broeck e.a. (eds.), forthcoming). It took three years from the start of the project to create slow paths to the official opening of the Hoofse Hoek path (May 2012 until October 2015). The project team with a project facilitator from the 'Trage Wegen' organisation, a representative of the inter-municipal network and members of the municipal public administrations of Hove and Lint organised the collaboration with both local and supralocal actors to make this happen, e.g. with farm tenants, with the Flemish Agency for Forestry and Nature, as well as with the environmental organisation Natuurpunt. The definition of the trajectory required in-depth analysis of options based on site visits, public advisory rounds and many separate talks with land owners and land users. Even if it only concerns a relatively short trajectory of 400 metres, it required a relatively broad scope of collaboration, i.e. also including the social welfare organisations from Antwerp and Lier as owners of major parts of land across which the path would run, as well as the Dienst Integraal Waterbeleid since this water management agency demands a 5 meters strip for service next to a brook across which the path would run. The organisation Trage Wegen drafted a 'use right package' to be negotiated individually with land owners and land users (e.g. including a right of passage to be reviewed after one year, and to present the idea of local stewards to guarantee enforcement of the agreement). They equally discussed issues of maintenance, issues on constructions, inclusion in a regional hiking map, etc. The process of negotiating use rights reveals 'how delicately the project team had to manoeuvre in order to deal with property issues, emphasizing the predominance of the logic of ownership' (Saavedra Bruno e.a., in: Van den Broeck e.a. (eds.), forthcoming).

4. Lessons learnt from the cases

The three micro-cases from different Flemish organizations illustrate how concrete commons-initiatives mobilize different principles of landed commons, which requires negotiations with a variety of actors to develop tailor-made approaches and hybrid governance arrangements (cf. P5) for particular land uses (cf. P1) and/or ownership regimes (cf. P3). The arrangements need

⁵ The main researchers for this case are Sofia Saavedra Bruno, Pieter Van den Broeck, Constanza Parra and Frank Moulaert (and until 2016 also Mattias Bussels), also KULeuven.

to comply with the specificity of the targeted common-pool resource (cf. P7), with local conditions and spatial claims of respective host communities (cf. P9) as well as with conditions from the wider institutional-political system (cf. P 8). Whereas commons are a category 'in-between' public and private assets, commons-initiatives clearly also relate to market or governmental practices, to hierarchical and market-led structures, as well as to self-organization and specific affective relations.

Tailormade hybrid governance arrangements

For instance the hybrid governance arrangement of Collectief Goed involved the city of Antwerp as a partner with a management role (i.e. Samenlevingsopbouw), as well as the social housing company De Ideale Woning and the association 'Arm in Arm'. Crucial in this micro-case was the decision to renounce from selling plots at market values, and instead to convert the value into shares for a cooperative, in which also the social housing company is involved as a shareholder. Even if converted: the market logic and value of the plot has been relevant in the calculation of the shares. Collectief Goed stresses social objectives: the involvement of tenants in the renovation of their houses is but one example of how to implement these aims in a tangible way. It incorporates a logic of social economy and of self-organization. Last but not least, the hybrid governance arrangement for Collectief Goed also relied for a large part on the personal commitment of particularly one person: also affective relations and involvement can explain an important share of the tailor-made approach.

We detect an equally large hybridity in the arrangement for De Landgenoten: the fund receives donations as well as incomes from the share of the cooperative in order to purchase agricultural land (at market prices). In its functioning, the cooperative partly relies on government subsidies. On top of this, local authorities can be a partner in a project as a land owner or a mediator. In order to create public support for specific cases, that also leans upon the voluntary commitment of 40 ambassadors, and the support of many interested people and organization for crowd-funding actions. Whereas each micro-case for De Landgenoten knows its particularities, and requires a tailor-made approach, the Werve Hoef case is a novelty for three specific aspects: for the first time, De Landgenoten would agree on a long lease for the land instead of being the owner of the agricultural land. This novel constellation also has a financial impact, since the annual payments for a lease require much less financial means. With the owner still involved when the land is used for organic farming, the owner also has a say over land use and the hybrid arrangement thus is somewhat more complex.

Likewise, the case of slow paths lead to hybrid governance arrangements, which are constructed with the owners and users of paths, who were previously largely disconnected. It is a truly collective, and therefore also fragile endeavour to agree on use rights and ownership regimes. It is desirable to find a stable agreement for these linear structures, which are part of a larger network, also for the case that one or more owners would decide to sell their land.

Renewed interest despite little legal anchoring

If you depart from the strict legal theory, there is currently no room for landed commons in Flanders: there is a finite number of separate legal figures (e.g. in commercial law), that regulate property and use, including naked ownership, easement, leasehold, tenancy rights, co-ownership and usufruct. The 'collective' is largely abolished by law as an organizational

form and a legal figure at the beginning of the 19th century. For instance common meadows, guilds or beguinages received a private or a public owner, and well-defined rights. The renewed interest in the Commons, for example in cooperatives, guarantee funds or trade unions, for the collective provision of energy (Ecopower), food production (CSAs) or housing (e.g. Samenhuizen), puts pressure on existing legal restrictions. We witness the emergence of intermediate forms and interpretations of existing legal figures, often starting from commons-based remnants in legislation, such as easements, municipal goods and co-ownership. The question is how from such legal figures the common good can again be given a formal place in the legislation, in order to better support the complex reality of (shared) ownership.

Towards a generalized practice

The different cases and particularly also the organisations behind the case have one shared and recognisable pressing concern, which is to ensure the long term survival for commoning initiatives, or – more optimistically- the growth of the organisation and the evolution towards more generalised practices. This can lead to a scaling up, i.e. a larger organisation or to a process of scaling out, i.e. with a multiplication of the number of micro-cases. All three main INDIGO-cases are confronted with these issues, at time with both scaling up and scaling out. This challenge of organisational positioning leads to different issues⁶:

1. How can a stable financial model and flow of means be built that leads to self-sustaining organisations? Whereas a cooperative or association may at first rely on starting grants or subsidies, this usually does not provide a sustainable perspective for the long term. A financial strategy towards a self-sustainable organisation often implies economies of scale.
2. Building and strengthening an organisation equally requires a widening of the host community. This implies issues of mobilisation, communication and participation, but possibly also issues of consistency and continuity. How can tenants become responsible stewards for the common good? How can a large group of ambassadors for De Landgenoten and farmers be up-to-date with the organisations' evolution? How can be assured that 'road spotters' share the (evolving) concerns of the slow road organisation? What are the limits in upscaling a participatory model to involve commoners?
3. Last but not least, shifts in scales also change relations with other actors, which possibly also forces a transition in the own organisation. A cooperative or association moves beyond being a niche player when it becomes recognised as an actor in a larger transition, but possibly also perceived as a 'competitor' or even 'threat' to mainstream approaches. With this, the organisation's own logic might shift, e.g. from a small-scale movement that emphasised solidarity and sustainability, towards a larger upscale organisation, that equally reflects on economic rational, scientific validity and a business-like project-based logic. Is this a true shift in focus or can it be reconciled with the initial ambitions? For instance the relations of Collectief Goed with other parties would possibly change when it becomes a bigger player for the supply of housing. Targeting at a more general approach in terms of audience (attracting higher incomes) and marketable activities (the provision of services by the residents) may perhaps strengthen the capital base and ultimately help more large poor families from their housing problem. But does it distract from the core aims? Similarly, the cooperative De Landgenoten is expected to grow faster through an alliance with actors from local food strategies, whereas it has to recognise that these actors not necessarily also subscribe to organic farming. At what cost is upscaling defensible?

⁶ These issues were developed at a workshop, which was organized by the INDIGO-consortium for the IASC conference on commons, Utrecht, July 2017.

The ambitions towards more generalised practices differ in the three cases. For instance, the cooperative De Landgenoten expects to be able to run autonomously with at least 100 ha of land (i.e. to receive a return from user agreements with farmers large enough to support the operational costs of the cooperative). The organisation Trage Wegen is equally involved in the realisation of different micro-cases, but there is no direct relation to the income of the organisation. Also, the micro-cases ideally contribute to a larger network of slow roads.

Also Collectief Goed illustrates that changing scales does not necessarily lead to more means for an organisation: the tenants cooperative uses rent income to renovate the houses in a breakeven way. Introducing a more generalised practice would imply a multiplication of projects such as the housing project in Merksem, probably still within the same cooperative. In the long run, the cooperative can try to become an institutionalised partner in the housing system, and possibly even a third pillar to private and public/social suppliers.

5. Commons-practices as a game-changer for climate issues?

In a brief epilogue, we would like to link the here described practices to the 'cool' theme of the conference, i.e. the role of urban planning for climate issues. We here focused on commons-initiatives, which generally start from civil actions, although the hybrid governance arrangement proved that all projects also have links to public authorities as well as to market logics and market actors. Whereas the projects are no direct contributions to climate action plans, the development of landed commons principally does contribute to a logic of sustainable use of land, involving many different actors as stewards for sustainable use, and therefore also relate to issues of climate issue. The first question of the fifth conference track suggests to consider how climate change can affect citizen participation. Based on the study of the relatively small-scale commons-initiatives, we here would like to invert this question into an active bottom-up perspective: 'How can citizen participation affect climate change?'

The British professor for Environmental Social Science Jouni Paavola⁷ addressed the relation of Commons and Climate Change in the book "Property in Land and other resources"⁸. He states that "*Climate change can be understood as a problem of using common-pool resources*" (Paavola, p. 422), but that "*Land use and land use change (...) are examples of issues that remain wholly or largely unaddressed by the current climate change regime.*" (ibid.). The different examples of *landed* commons take land use and ownership as a point of departure to foster sustainable use of common-pool resources.

Time and scale of commons initiatives matter in this, since they are rooted in local host communities, who act as stewards for a specific common-pool resource. The local communities develop a socio-ecological relationship concerning a specific common-pool resource, for which they agree on a set of rules, based in a consensus on the interests and claims of the various communities of practice and individual users involved. Host communities become effective agents of sustainable development, mediating in possible social or environmental conflicts, ideally not overlooking minority voices. The relation to the resource is developed on the local scale, i.e. a scale that allows for consensus over a detailed scheme of regulations and a scale that allows enforcement.

⁷ Professor of Environmental Social Science at the University of Leeds

⁸ Published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Massachusetts

Agreements on the scale of planet earth, with a vast multitude of actors and socio-spatial claims risk to strand on lowest denominators⁹, and/or to actually repeat the tragedy of the commons. Over longer periods of time and in a larger scale, one risks to have situations of free-riding, over- or underuse, or even a majority acting according to individual rationalities.

SMALL SCALE COMMONS Joint use as a commons = favorable to all people in a given community, possible to reinforce rules	Scaling up and/or long term use Joint use with a risk of free-riding and over-use
Scaling up and/or long term use Joint use with a risk of under-use	GLOBAL COMMONS Risks that a majority acts according to individual rationalities > tragedy of the commons?

Table 2: Commoning practices in small and large scale.

The swiss-based scholar Anthony Patt¹⁰ argues in this that the ‘tragedy of the commons’ is no longer a relevant problem frame for climate issues when every country and every single household has incentives to actively contribute to climate measures, regardless of what neighbors do (Patt, 2017: 2). He equally stumbles over the idea of negotiated binding agreements when it comes to global targets, and instead, proposes to base policy instruments in an evolutionary approach. We here want to argue that the tragedy of the commons-framing allows to understand why global agreements as well as the implementation thereof risk to be poor. At the same time, the narrative can – as an alternative ‘invisible hand’- mobilise many different new commons and re-commoning initiatives on a local scale, which jointly contribute to a polycentric approach for climate governance (cf. Paavola, 2012: 429). Similar to the covenant of mayors for climate and energy objectives, the multiplicity of commons-initiatives that intervene in (peri-)urban metabolisms can have an important accumulated and systemic effect for global common-pool resources. It allows to raise awareness, change behaviours, lifestyles and practices starting from small, tangible examples, yet leading to a multiplication (and not necessarily always also to scaling-up) of collective action interventions that can add to the resilience of places and communities.

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⁹ Cf. Paavola on this, who compares the Montreal and the Kyoto protocol: “The MP (...) has achieved Greenhouse Gas emission reductions four times greater than those of the KP. The MP was easier to negotiate because (it) involved fewer parties.” (Paavola, p. 422)

¹⁰ Full professor of Climate Policy at the Institute for Environmental Decisions at ETH Zürich.

The INDIGO-consortium will publish main results from the analysis of Landed Commons in a special issue in the professional journal 'Ruimte' (September 2018). In November 2018, EPO will publish the book 'Op grond van Samenwerking: Open ruimte, Landbouw en Huisvesting als commons', in a collaboration between Dirk Holemans (Oikos) and the INDIGO research consortium. In addition to the cases from this research, we also involved a number of external partners, including Michel Bauwens about P2P, Geert Depauw about Community Land Trust in Brussels, Griet Celen about the toolbox of the Flemish Land Agency or Michiel Dehaene about Agro-ecological urbanism. The INDIGO research consortium is equally preparing an English academic volume on Landed commons, to be published with EE publications in 2019.

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