

The City as a Commons - Research Symposium
Book of Abstracts
University of Pavia, 2-4 September 2019

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Contents

Introduction and Call for Contributions	5
Programme Committee	7
Keynote speakers	11
Peer review process	15
Programme	17
Abstracts	29
List of Corresponding Authors	117
Aknowledgements	121

Introduction and Call for Contributions

The notion of the commons has recently gained renewed attention thanks to Ostrom's foundational 1990s work, which ended a period in which the commons had been forgotten after Hardin's 'The Tragedy of the Commons' (1968). Several scholars have investigated commons from different perspectives, including their theoretical framework and their social, economic and political dimensions (De Angelis 2010; Hardt and Negri 2009; Harvey 2012). The commons has been deeply investigated through its constituent components (Roggero 2010) and through its particular forms of governance; the latter facilitate the functioning and sustainability of the commons over time (Bollier and Helfrich 2012; Ostrom 1990).

More recently, some scholars have focused on the relationship between the urban commons and the city (Ramos, 2016; Stavrides, 2014, 2016), demonstrating that its specific setting in urban environments is central to its definition (Müller et al., 2015), although the urban requires appropriate framing in terms of resources and interdependency with operational landscapes (Müller et al., 2015). As commoning practices reveal a relational attitude within urban spaces (Chatterton, 2010), they may actively contribute to redefining spatial entities like urban islands (Ungers & Vieths, 1999) or enclosures in the urban archipelago (Jeffrey et al., 2011), which features internal thresholds (Stavrides, 2010).

However, there is room for better understanding the mutual relationship between commons and the urban, or urban commons and the city. This applies to the theoretical as well as to a practice-based agenda. Moreover, applies to open spaces as well as to underused or vacant buildings.

The research symposium aims at investigating the notion of Urban Commons and their spatial unfolding in relationship to the City. Taking into considerations the wider debate

on Commons and its relevance to several disciplines (economics, geography, law, etc.), the symposium will focus on their spatial implications, in terms of theoretical agenda, case studies, spatial practices and design agencies. We welcome contributions investigating and questioning the following aspects: in what sense the notion of urban commons is actually linked to the city and, more in general, to the urban dimension? What are the implications of this potential link in terms of spatial configurations and figures? As nowadays processes of (alter) urban transformations are based on commoning practices, co-production and/or by recognising the emergence of commons in urban areas, what are the similarities and the differences in between public spaces and commons spaces in towns and cities? What is the degree of publicity in common spaces? What are the potential conflicts that generates from commoning practices, and how can these be managed? To what extent the right to the city is preserved and recognised among different communities/ users' groups? What are the historical precedents of commoning practices in towns/cities, and how these relate to urban spaces? Looking at historical precedents, how various rights co-existed within the same local community? What was the link between urban commons and spatial practices, or the production of space in towns/cities? With reference to architectural spaces, to what extent or in what ways commoning practices/ideals affect spatial configurations or typologies and vice versa? Further enlarging the field of action, what are the implications in terms of spatial practices and design agencies? How can practitioners facilitate the co-production of space by local groups, communities and stakeholders? What is the relationship between co-production and place making?

Ioanni Delsante, March 2019.

Programme Committee

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University of Huddersfield (UK)

Keynote Speakers

Prof. Christian Iaione and Dr. Elena De Nictolis

Guglielmo Marconi University of Rome, and LabGov-LABoratory for the GOVERNance of the Commons

Christian Iaione is associate professor of public law at Guglielmo Marconi University of Rome, fellow of the Urban Law Center at Fordham University, visiting professor of urban law and policy at LUISS Guido Carli and faculty director of LabGov – LABoratory for the GOVERNance of the Commons (www.labgov.it). He is UIA – Urban Innovative Actions expert appointed by European Commission for the Co-City project of the City of Turin, ad-hoc expert of the EU Urbact program, member of the Urban Partnership on Innovative and Responsible Procurement within the Urban Agenda for the EU.

Christian has published several articles in the field of public and administrative law and, in particular, land use, public goods and the commons, public services and public contracts, urban law and local government. He has authored two books on In house publicly-owned companies. Contribution to the principle of self-organizatin and self-production of local governments (Jovene, 2007 – 2012, II ed.) and The regulation of urban mobility (Jovene, 2008) and has co-authored Italy of the Commons (Carocci, 2012) and The Age of Sharing (Carocci, 2015). Iaione's current research focus is on the governance of the commons, in particular urban commons and knowledge commons, sharing economy, collaborative economy, social innovation, and public-private-commons partnerships.

Prof. Stavros Stavrides

National Technical University of Athens

Architect and activist, he is Professor at the School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, Greece, where he teaches graduate courses on housing design (social housing design included), as well as a postgraduate course on the meaning of metropolitan experience. He has published numerous articles on spatial theory and urban struggles. His books: *The Symbolic Relation to Space* (Athens, 1990), *Advertising and the Meaning of Space* (Athens, 1996), *The Texture of Things* (with E. Kotsou, Athens, 1996), *From the City-as-Screen to the City-as-Stage* (Athens, 2002 National Book Award), *Suspended Spaces of Alterity* (Athens, 2010), and *Towards the City of Thresholds* (in English, 2010, in Spanish, 2016 and in Turkish 2016). His research is currently focused on forms of emancipating spatial practices and urban commoning, characteristically developed in his last books *Common Space: The City as Commons*, (2016 in English, in Greek 2018 in Turkish 2018 and in Portuguese, forthcoming), and *Common Spaces of Urban Emancipation* (forthcoming in English). He has lectured in European and Latin American Universities on urban struggles and practices of urban commoning.

Prof. Doina Petrescu

University of Sheffield

Chair of Architecture and Design Activism at the School of Architecture, Visiting Professor of Urban Design at Harvard Graduate School of Design (2014-15) and have previously taught at Architectural Association London, Iowa State University, EA Paris-Malaquais and the UAIM Bucharest. Her research addresses outstanding questions in architecture and urban planning focusing on issues of co-design, civic participation, gendered practices, political ecology, co-production and urban resilience.

In the last decade, Doina has given over 50 keynotes and invited lectures and co-founded the Building Local Resilience Research Platform at SSOA, and Field peer review journal. She is also co-founder of Atelier d'Architecture Autogeree, an internationally acclaimed research based practice, pioneering participation in architecture and urbanism since 2001. Her work has received international recognition including the European Prize for Political Innovation – category ecology (2017) Zumtobel Foundation Award for Research & Initiative (2012), the Curry Stone Prize for Social Design Innovation (2011) being included in the Public Interest Design list (2012) of top 100 global leaders of the 'future of a ground-breaking movement'.

Finally, with reference to Stavrides and de Angelis, the paradigm, processes and intentions of the (urban) commons are compared to Karatani and Kant's ideal. Specifically, the framing of commons and commoning as a social and relational process of co-creation, rather than an ideal future state, is the factor that most closely allies to Kant's 'transcendental illusion' and directly and productively opposes the logic of neoliberalism.

45

Dorina Pllumbi,
Delft University of Technology.

Transitional Tirana: Commoning as material engagement.

In this presentation I discuss the role that commoning practices have played in the city of Tirana during the transitional period from a totalitarian communist regime to a recently consolidating neoliberal regime. I employ the concept of the common-place, to explore the relation agencies between processes of commoning as social practices and their placeness. Here practices of commoning are seen as always situated in a spatial and material environment, as forms of encounters, as contact zones of human, non-human and material worlds that often generate new approaches of architectural practices. Here the spatial and the material of a place are seen as active agents in the process. In that sense, the common-place is produced by commoning as a process, and vice-versa, the common-place feeds the process of commoning itself. Therefore, common-place is simultaneously produced and productive. The double connotation of common-place also indicates the idea of dealing with the mundane, the ordinary, the everyday life, which is related to the ambition of establishing new generative ontologies of thinking about the society and the built environment. The aim of this discourse is to contribute

to an interdisciplinary situated knowledge, which is strongly embedded in the chosen situations avoiding generalization.

During 45 years of dictatorship in Albania that lasted until 1991, the centralized communalism has been the main ideological tool that the state apparatus has used to over-control up to every single practice of everyday life. This is the time when Albanian society has recognized the darkest side of communalism which has damaged the belief in its potential. With the fall of the regime a tendency towards the complete opposite direction has been an understandable counter-reaction. The orientation towards individualism right after the fall of the regime has created a general idea of a total lack of commoning practices happening in the city. In this presentation I argue the opposite while delineating the difference between the state communism experimented during the previous regime and the beyond-state commoning practices that manifested with the fall of the former regime and that currently occur as resistance towards a new neoliberal regime that is being established. During this transitional period, from 1991 to the present days, different forms of commoning can be recognized to play a role in city formation. These forms are different from the forced and centrally controlled ones during the dictatorship times. Rather they unfold in spontaneous, anarchic and self-organizing practices.

In this presentation I discuss three commoning situations in the city of Tirana encountered as places of resilience, survival and resistance. I start with the transformation of the communist erected neighborhoods in the inner city as a resilience practice, to continue with survival practices in the area of Ish Kombinati Tekstil, and to conclude with a resistance practice in the movement against the demolition of the heritage building of the National Theater. Even though, as a counter-reaction to forced communism during times of state totalitarianism, in the first years after the collapse of

the regime there was an orientation towards individualism, nevertheless, I argue that commoning practices were always present, from the very beginning as anarchic anti-state manifestations up to consolidated self-organized practices today. These practices occur and unfold in multiple forms, even though the new neoliberal city does not give much space to them to be part of city creation, and attempts to control these spontaneous practices consolidate with time. In conclusion, I reflect on the role played by the practice of doing architecture, along with the spatiality and materiality of space as agents entangled within these commoning practices.

46

**Pelin K rođlu,
Middle East Technical University.**

An Inquiry on the Architecture of the Commons.

The debates on the commons, and the practice of commoning has emerged in the 1990s as a critical reaction towards the dominant property rights arrangements based on neoliberal, top-down policies. Commons refers to shared places, communal property, or things that cannot be appropriated while spatially it addresses the threshold between the public and the private. From this perspective, the contemporary commoning practices such as social and alternative economy cooperatives, solidarity initiatives around housing, and also, educational and cultural self-organized ventures has strengthened the bonds of the communities and their relation with the city.

This study aims to develop theoretical mapping of the commoning debate that comprises different perspectives from different disciplines. Afterwards, the study investigates how the practices of commons have developed in their environments through an in depth analysis of various international examples, and Dersim's Ovacik district as a

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cityascommons.unipv.it

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CUDAS is an international research centre in the study of architecture, the built environment and urban design, based at the University of Huddersfield.

The centre has a membership of 20 active research staff and 15 PhD students, and comprises three research groups: Urban Futures and Design Lab, chaired by Dr Ioanni Delsante, Architectural Humanities, chaired by Professor Nicholas Temple and Sustainable Environments and Practice chaired by Professor Adrian Pitts.

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