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## Future of cities: commoning and collective approaches to urban space

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## **FUTURE OF CITIES: COMMONING AND COLLECTIVE APPROACHES TO URBAN SPACE**

*John Bingham-Hall, Theatrum Mundi, LSE Cities, London School of Economics and Political Science*

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### **1. Introduction**

The increasing privatisation of urban space is one of the more controversial developments that have accompanied the real estate boom of many inner cities over recent years. Many new ‘public’ spaces are owned and managed by private development companies, with restrictive by-laws limiting the range of activity they can play host to, rather than local authorities with public mandates to allow gathering, protest and so on. This was most starkly demonstrated during the Occupy movement, when it became clear that private owners such as the Corporation of London and Canary Wharf Group had rights to evict protesters from streets and squares that by their nature as open spaces in the city might have been assumed to be in public hands. If cities are to remain viable places for people to develop the strong associational and social life fundamental to healthy human existence they must incorporate a range of public spaces and “third” places<sup>i</sup> outside of work and home, in which urban citizens can come together. Certainly, privately-owned businesses such as cafés, pubs and nightclubs can provide this and all over the city they support public social life and street buzz. A purely consumption-based approach to public space, though, leaves little room for people to come together over productive activities – producing, growing, decision-making – around which can form much stronger bonds and communities, and thus urban societies. Not only does the commercial public realm lack in ways to support strong forms of public togetherness, but it excludes many whose financial circumstances do not allow them to partake in the activities it offers – shopping, dining and staged entertainment. Those without the means to pay for entertainment, meeting space and even fresh food for example, are also separated from the means to use urban space to create these things for themselves. Attempts to claim a space in the new public are often branded as anti-social behaviour and legislated out by the culture of by-laws that exists to preserve the best possible commercial environment.

This leads to a dangerous segregation in cities and a widening gap between those with and without a legitimate way of participating in public space. The investment that comes with private development is now essential to the maintenance of the urban streetscape, with changes to local authority funding, and the market logic that this investment obeys will of course favour a business-led model. However the tensions and disaffection emerging from the inequality of access this creates are a growing problem, evidenced by increasing unrest in cities across the world<sup>ii</sup>. This poses a huge challenge for urban governments, as well as developers whose interests are harmed by this conflict, to find more diverse models to apply to the operation and design of urban space, allowing room for forms of gathering and working together in public that lie outside of the market logic. Just as the urban economy will be revitalised by the return of making and craft to the inner city, urban society will be revitalised by the provision of space for people to produce their own food, energy, culture, democracy and learning in strong organisational and associational ways. There already exist plentiful examples of grassroots projects supporting this kind of collective participation in and ownership of urban space, often under the banner of ‘urban commons’.

## 2. Defining 'commons'

Commons are traditionally uncultivated fields around a town or village allowing the 'commoners' of that community the right to sustain themselves by grazing animals and collecting wood and wild food. More recently Elinor Ostrom was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics by showing that natural resources like forests and fisheries are highly effectively managed by commons-like organisations that allow a self-managed community of users equal access, without private ownership or state control.<sup>iii</sup> Common, then, is not the same as public: a difficult term but in this context one that can be thought of as denoting an asset owned by a local or national authority on behalf of all the citizens of that jurisdiction, whether or not they make use of it. 'Common' on the other hand suggests a community of commoners that actively utilise and upkeep whatever it is that is being commoned, in the new social definition the term has taken on through grassroots projects and scholarly rethinking. The UK Government currently defines common land as under specific ownership but with a 'right to roam'<sup>iv</sup> – including walking, picnicking, and running – granted to anyone who wishes to do so. In other words, it offers nothing more proactive than the right to recreational use that we expect of urban parks and rural attractions. The ownership of land with the right to roam is often private, such as in the case of rural landlords who grant common rights. Some village greens also have the 'rights of common' – such as grazing livestock – and associations of commoners have formed to encourage the enactment of these rights.<sup>v</sup> These are isolated and rural in nature though, and there are even fewer instances in which ordinary citizens can work collectively to make use of *urban* land or spaces for productive means that go beyond the recreational.

After Elinor Ostrom brought the notion of commoning back in to wider consciousness via the Nobel Prize, scholars started to look at how it could be practiced or applied conceptually to realms beyond the natural world. Benkler<sup>vi</sup> described the emergence of communication networks and the great possibilities for individual freedom that emerge from the possibility to exchange and share information separately to financial exchange: the more people participate in this exchange, the richer it becomes and yet it only exists because of its users. He also warns that the way the ownership of our communication infrastructures plays out – whether they are held in common or privately – will drastically shape the degree to which individuals will be able to partake in the "networked information economy". This has been evidenced in the Creative Commons movement, which aims to make it easier for individuals to share writing, images, music and art for non-profit purposes, creating a common pool of creative resources that, again, is enriched the more it is used and produced by its participants.<sup>vii</sup> In cities, the presence of others confers value in ways that cannot be quantified. Safety, street buzz and neighbourliness are all things that have been conceptualised as commons: intangible assets that cannot be owned yet can be both produced and enjoyed collectively by the city's users and inhabitants.<sup>viii</sup> The city also contains natural resources that are neither publicly nor privately owned, but common to all its inhabitants. Clean air, for example, which is a critically threatened resource that all those who use the city have a responsibility to upkeep and a right to enjoy. Although the state can intervene in its management, no organisational body can confer or deny access to it.

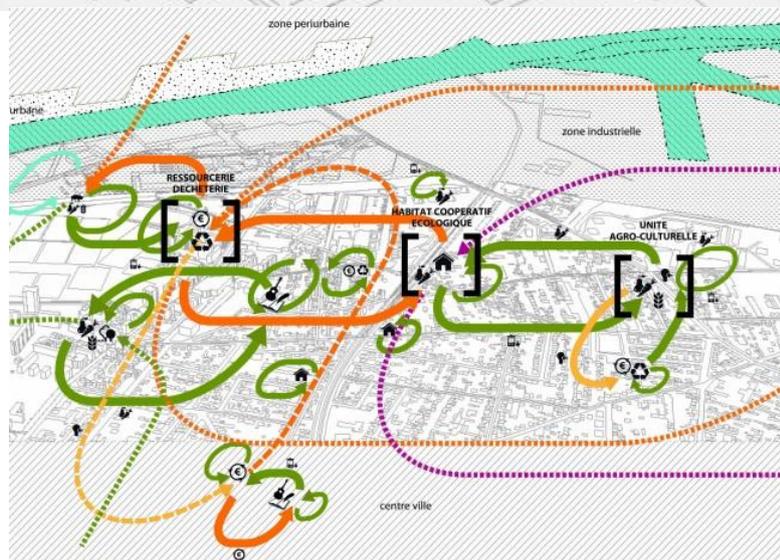
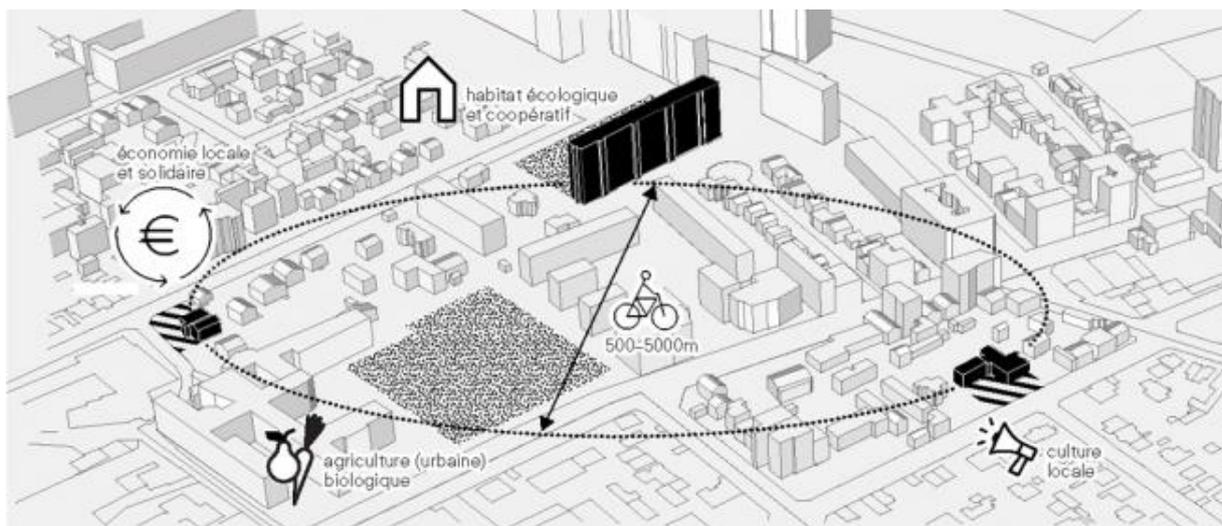
In fact, the city as a whole has been thought of as a common. Cities are hyper-complex systems consisting of a vast multitude of individuals, institutions, processes and physical entities, all of which give rise to the buildings, cultures, laws and services that we think of as the urban. Though each one of these may be owned or controlled in a specific way, the holistic entity we call a city (in many cases a towering achievement of human culture) grows in an uncontrollable way from the synthesis of these many parts, with no singular ownership, and is therefore something we have "in common" rather than co-own.

It is important also to note what are *not* commons. Urban sociologist David Harvey describes clearly how things we think of as public are not always common in the way that has been described here:

“There is an important distinction here between public spaces and public goods, on the one hand, and the commons on the other. Public spaces and public goods in the city have always been a matter of state power and public administration, and such spaces and goods do not necessarily a commons make. Throughout the history of urbanization, the provision of public spaces and public goods (such as sanitation, public health, education, and the like) by either public or private means has been crucial for capitalist development... While these public spaces and public goods contribute mightily to the qualities of the commons, it takes political action on the part of citizens and the people to appropriate them or to make them so”<sup>ix</sup>

There are many ways, then, in which urban can be thought of as common rather than either public or private. As debates about the extent of state responsibility and the degree to which private enterprise can build cities becomes increasingly acute, it may be extremely valuable to bring this terminology into play. It offers a third way between the sometimes simplistic and ideological counterpoint between “public” – which does not always mean accessible to all – and “private” – which does not always mean closed off to all – in the city. The question, then, is whether new urban commons can be designed-in to the city and what form these would take. The *Theatrum Mundi*<sup>x</sup> project *Designing the Urban Commons*<sup>xi</sup> called for proposals responding to this challenge, resulting in 10 featured projects offering new possibilities for commoning in the city, which we will return to after seeing an example of urban commoning in action.

### 3. Case Study: R-URBAN; a Parisian network of commons



R-URBAN<sup>xii</sup> is a large-scale project in the Parisian suburb of Colombes that demonstrates clearly how an urban common could be formed. Its fundamental aim is to create a network of spaces in which commoning takes place, sharing the products and resources generated by those activities in “closed-loop” cycles that keep value within the project rather than allowing it to be capitalised upon. In the Parisian suburb of Colombes, Atelier d’architecture autogérée (Studio for self-managed

R-URBAN’s operating model of local closed loops between projects  
Source: <http://r-urban.net/>

architecture)<sup>xiii</sup> have designed three interrelated projects, with two realised and one currently under development. Agrocité is an urban agriculture project, turning a previously disused lot into land for community gardening, composting, energy production and a building unit including a café and education space. Opening up this space to a community of local users has given rise to an informal economy as well as a surplus of produce that feeds into R-URBAN's wider cycles. Individuals volunteer in up keeping the farm and in doing so gain skills that they are able to sell on directly to other users – such as composting – allowing them to sustain themselves directly from the productive capacity of urban land. Profits from the volunteer-run café as well as food and energy produced contribute to the running of nearby Recyclab, a unit in which artists and craftspeople help local residents to recycle unwanted materials directly into new, usable objects through workshops, training in craft skills and eco-construction. Longer term, these skills, and the profits and energy generated by Agrocité, will support the construction of seven social housing units by members of the wider project. R-URBAN aim to demonstrate that commoning can be a serious response to developing resilience in urban communities by allowing direct access to the means of production of energy, food and housing, as well as opportunities for informal economies. As a network of similar spaces and projects develops across a city they increase their ability to support one another through the direct sharing of resources at a city-wide scale large enough to build a movement for change in social conditions in that city but local enough that cycles can remain direct and closed, without the intervention of markets of intermediary 'public' organisations.



Recyclab (left) and Agrocite (right. Source: <http://r-urban.net/> )

#### 4. Designing the Urban Commons

*“Urban commoning neither simply “happens” in urban space, nor does it simply produce urban space as a commodity to be distributed. Urban commoning treats and establishes urban space as a medium through which institutions of commoning take shape” Stavros Stavrides<sup>xiv</sup>*

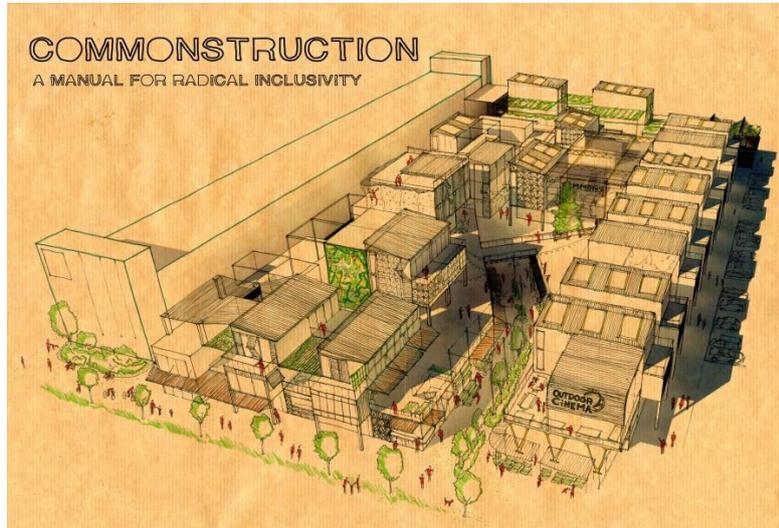
Can new urban commons be designed in to the city? Theatrum Mundi (TM), a research project of LSE Cities, aimed to explore this through an open call asking for proposals to identify a public space, a physical asset or a resource in London that could benefit its users better through collective management or occupation. The key was that proposals should not be in the form of a finalised design but detail the institutions, organisational structures or social processes through which commoning could take shape. Designs for physical spaces or online platforms that allow commoning to take place should be seen as the medium giving rise to a social process.<sup>xv</sup> The eight projects selected by jury, and two by public vote, as the most promising show a range of ways that commoning could be interpreted.

## Housing and Shelter

### Commonstruction: A Manual For Radical Inclusivity

Konstantinos Lerias, Orestis Michelakis

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/commonstruction-a-manual-for-radical-inclusivity/>



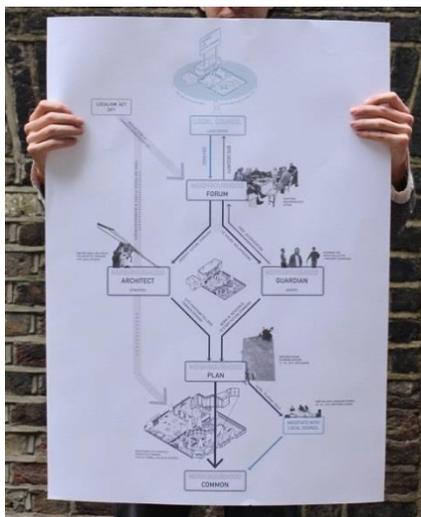
This project offers a design manual along with an organisational structure that affords the building of housing and workspace with a collective ownership element that prevents the space from entering the free market. It focuses on Tottenham, where local community groups are resisting planned regeneration with the claim that a policy of social cleansing is being used to facilitate a land grab by developers and speculators. The design manual coordinates collective action and enriches

threatened public life in the area. There are three key combinations of spaces that constitute it: live-work and community workshops; public social spaces; residential and start-up spaces. A collective of commoners start a community land trust that will allow them to pursue funding as a group. The project begins with 100% equity owned by the collective. Works start by constructing the permanent core of the project consisting of live-work units, social spaces (i.e. community workshops), basic circulation and services. Afterwards, members of the collective take on the development of residential units that plug into the existing core; self-build or voluntarily-build projects earn 25% equity on completion. The live-work spaces will accommodate professionals that can help in running the community workshops while the residential units on the higher levels add density and are fundamental in sustaining the project economically until the loan is repaid. By gradually repaying their share of the loan residents can earn up to 75% equity; 25% remains collective to ensure that the design will not be capitalised upon. Collective work, on-site production and external contributions sustain workshops in community planning, sustainable living, urban agriculture, art and design.

### Guardians of the Common

Andy Belfield

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/guardians-of-the-common/>



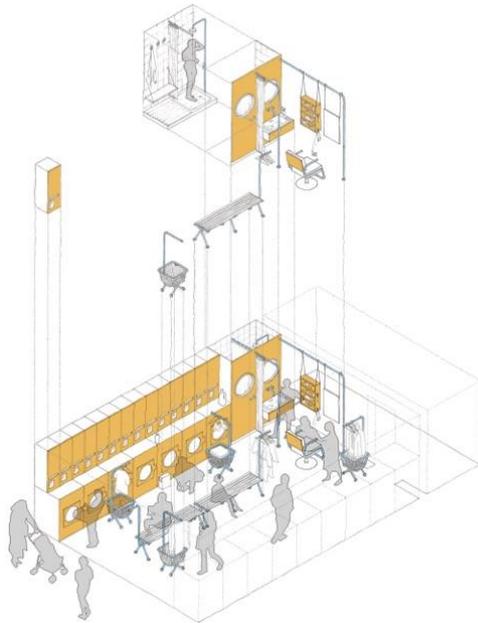
Property guardianship is increasingly popular, benefiting both from tenants priced out of traditional rental markets and landlords more keen than ever to protect valuable property assets from squatting and disrepair. With tenants both charged rent and performing a service this practice can be seen as exploitative, whilst keeping underused physical assets, sometimes those owned by the local authority, closed off to their surrounding communities. This project proposes a more proactive alternative. Through powers handed down by the 2011 Localism Act, citizens can claim power over local planning policy through the Neighbourhood Forum. Using empty

buildings in their area as a common resource, the Neighbourhood Forum would be given the ability to offer free accommodation to guardians in return for their time and skills in helping the Forum to draw up and implements its strategies.

### Service Wash

*Alpa Depan, Thomas Randall-Page*

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/service-wash/>



The launderette is a familiar sight in high streets and local centres across London, places dominated by the more private experiences of shopping and eating, and the sites of regeneration that exclude many existing populations and particularly the homeless. An urban phenomenon, the launderette is a relic of post-war social infrastructure, a provision intended to be egalitarian. Despite the launderette's decline in popularity an A1 use class designation prohibits change of use, preserving these sometimes bygone spaces. Service Wash proposes an initiative to turn these commonly found places into common resources. Small design interventions – lockers for personal items doubling as an address, personal washing facilities and robes for those with no change of clothes – allow them to become a vital public service for homeless people. Collaborations with local tailors and hairdressers augment the services on offer, giving them a renewed sense of purpose as community hubs.

## **Environment and Food**

### Carbon Sync

*Edward Gant, Sarah Tolley, Rowan Case, Arlene Decker*

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/carbonsync/>



This project drew attention to the huge amount of space in an around London's past industrial infrastructure, and in particular the gasometers dotted around the city, that is being targeted for privately-developed housing but has the potential to produce a very different kind of value for Londoners. It proposes the planting and management of dense urban forests in these spaces, as a communal and educational activity undertaken by

citizens who simultaneously learn forestry skills and contribute to cleaner air through the capture of carbon. These forests then offer future generations multiple opportunities for communing as a way to manage and enjoy the natural resources they will offer.

## Studley Commons

*Oscar Rodriguez, Christina Edoja, David Rowe, Eike Sindlinger, Paul Challinor, Barry Mulholland*

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/studley-commons/>

Another project focused on the potential common value to be generated from open spaces in housing estates, Studley Commons proposes a detailed model for a micro-economy and decision-making system around food production for the Studley Estate in Stockwell. Studley Commons is an organisational framework for social housing in which residents becomes commoners. The key enabling innovation is the introduction of Studley Hyperlocal; a commercial, retrofitted rooftop greenhouse horticultural operation on the roofscape of the 16 blocks of the estate. Studley Hyperlocal would cede a proportion of its equity to Studley Commons affording it a dependable 'social dividend', which would be used to develop its programme of activities and initiatives, managed from a communal forum built at the centre of the estate. Studley Hyperlocal draws horticultural inputs from Studley Commons/Studley Estate, resources including labour, waste (organic, thermal losses, carbon exhausts, etc.) and incident (sunlight, rainwater, etc.).



## Culture and Community

### Rainbow of Desires

*Orsalia Dimitriou, Dejan Mrdja, Kleanthis Kyriakou, Emma Twine, Veronika Szabó, Ilma Molna*  
<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/rainbow-of-desires/>

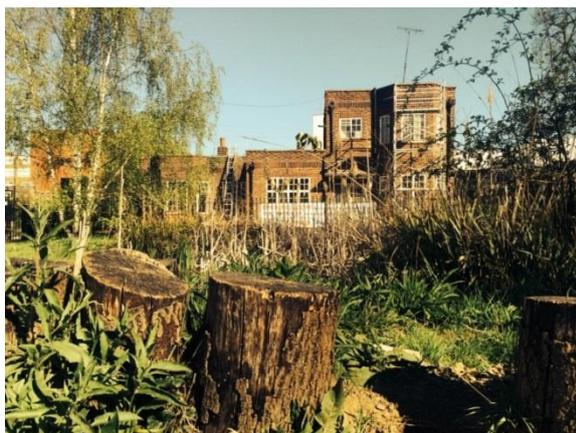
This proposal also focused on the abundance of underused open spaces to be found within London housing estates, and particularly the Rhodes Estate in Dalston. In Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed', theatre is used as a way for audiences to both witness and tell stories of their experience to drive social and political change. These pavilions would be used as performance spaces, with workshops based on Boal's techniques, to facilitate residents of the estate to highlight issues around the neglect and/or gentrification of their community, as well as transforming dormant communal spaces into active common spaces for cultural production. When not being used for performance, the pavilions can also act as book exchanges, shared kitchens and seating areas.



### Reinventing the Lodge

*Kate Mactiernan, Ken Greenway, Lizzy Daish, Jessica Sutton, India Hamilton, Grace Boyle, Maisie Rowe*

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/reinventing-the-lodge/>



This project demonstrates the way 'public' ownership can support, but is not the same as, common access. Shuffle is an ongoing annual festival at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, where the cemetery Lodge building is in disuse. The festival has raised money to renovate the Lodge, which is leased to the festival rent-free by the local authority and would otherwise be inaccessible to the local community. Reinventing the Lodge seeks

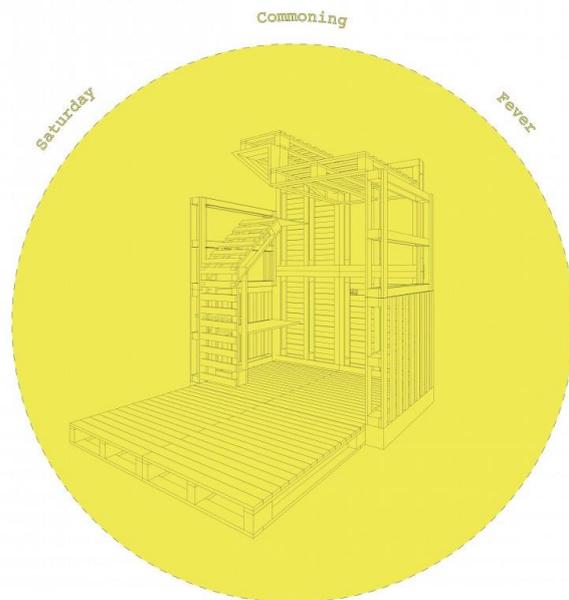
to bring the building back into common use through a social enterprise model. A café provides a meeting space and social hub for the area, while reinvesting its profits into community activity in the festival and providing training for local people. Meanwhile the renewal of an important piece of architectural heritage for and by community activity generates common cultural value as a landmark and source of pride.

## Commoning Online

### Saturday Commoning Fever

Luc Sanciaume, Laylac Shahed, Ben Brakspear

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/saturday-commoning-fever/>



The laws and by-laws of public and public-private space in the city can be extremely confusing and prohibitive for those wishing to make use of streets and squares to stage art, protest, performance and public gathering. An online platform that simplifies the licensing and regulation of temporary structures and events, detailing what *is* permissible, would allow more Londoners to take advantage of the possibilities of public space. Selecting an activity – a pop-up art gallery, a graphic display or a ‘Speaker’s Corner’ – users could download open source templates to build temporary structures from cheap standard materials such as shipping pallets, and share with one another tips for how to take full advantage of their common rights in various spaces.

### The School of Losing Time

Angela Osorio, Chiara Basile

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/the-school-of-losing-time-tslt/>

This project draws attention to games as inherently commons-like activities, and encourages urban citizens to share their most fundamental resource – time – in playful activities that sit outside of market logics. As described by Johan Huizinga in his 1949 book *Homo Ludens*: “we might call [play] a free activity standing quite consciously outside ‘ordinary’ life... connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it... It promotes the formation of social groupings.” Games are social settings formed entirely by active participation, benefiting all those who partake in them psychologically without any mediation via marketised entertainment. By sharing invitations through an online platform to join games and play in the city, as well as mapping and documenting them online, The School of Losing Time turns us all into accomplices in the process of imagining, creating, and performing different ways to “lose time” by taking it outside of economically productive activities and turning it into a commons to be shared directly with one another.

## Commons Economy Generator

Ludovica Rogers

<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/gallery/commons-economy-generator/>

There is an outburst of experimentation in new forms of organising, living, working, producing and exchanging, that are redefining the way people relate to one another and to their environment. These alternative structures, based on principles of self-management, direct democracy, self-sufficiency and de-growth, can be considered the transformative cells of a radically new society. However, projects often remain invisible and hidden not only to the great majority of us but also to each other, as by their very nature they tend to be local and autonomous, scattered and disconnected. This project aims to create an online commons of commons – a network of groups of commoners through which information, skills and tangible resources can be exchanged. This economy of free exchange not only increases the visibility and resilience of individual projects, but is a commons itself, enriched by and of benefit to all those who use it, on the basis of solidarity rather than finance.

### **5. The Challenges of Urban Commoning**

*“It has become fashionable to talk about the “urban commons”, and it’s clear why. What we traditionally conceive of as “the public” is in retreat: public services are at the mercy of austerity policies, public housing is being sold off and public space is increasingly no such thing. In a relentlessly neoliberal climate, the commons seems to offer an alternative to the battle between public and private. The idea of land or services that are commonly owned and managed speaks to a 21st-century sensibility of, to use some jargon, participative citizenship and peer-to-peer production. In theory, at least, the commons is full of radical potential.*

*Why is it, then, that every time the urban commons is mentioned it is in reference to a community garden? How is it that the pioneers of a new urban politics are always planting kale and rhubarb? Can commoning be scaled up to influence the workings of a metropolis – able to tackle questions of housing, energy use, food distribution and clean air? In other words, can the city be reimagined as commons, or is commoning the realm of tiny acts of autarchy and resistance?”*

*Justin McGuirk, Guardian Cities 2015<sup>xvi</sup>*

As we have seen, the idea of commoning, in which people work together to build, sustain and benefit from urban spaces and resources, offers potential approaches to challenges within housing, food production, the environment and urban culture. Currently, all of these arenas are almost entirely marketised in the city, presenting serious challenges for the resilience of communities through economic and social change. Commons do not necessarily threaten or compete with the free market, which is to a degree an essential driver of urban vitality. Allowing space for these type of undertakings though would be a powerful catalyst for associational life in urban communities, with not only tangible benefits in terms of the types of resources that can be produced but also the indirect effect of building community identity. As it stands, public space design is almost entirely focused on aesthetics and makes reference to its local community symbolically, through public art for example. Togetherness is supposed to emerge from the sharing of streets and squares. This kind of simple co-presence, however, only brings people alongside one another and not into direct contact. By allowing urban space to become malleable and productive – something that people can collectively apply energy and time to with a tangible return – the range of spaces away from home and work could be hugely diversified beyond the consumption-based model of the urban public. For this approach to gain traction, developers, public bodies and the activists and organisations undertaking projects, will need to address some serious questions, a few of which we raise here.<sup>xvii</sup>

As mentioned, public and common are not the same, and common access has the potential to offer a richer form of interaction with the city than public ownership. There are tensions in this though. Commons very often rely on a self-managed organisational structure, requiring a core, stable group of

commoners. When they are working with physical resources like land, rather than online networks, the number of people who can sustainably become active members of this structure must be limited. Unlike a truly public space, into which every citizen has unfettered access and which does not rely on their direct effort for its upkeep, commons may sometimes need to become somewhat closed groupings, even if within that all commoners have fully shared responsibility and a much richer form of access to the space they are using. The balance between access and sustainability will be a key issue for urban commons. This issue is particularly acute in the context of global cities like London, where communities are constantly in flux, with changing populations through constant in- and out-migration. For the benefits of commoning to be distributed widely, organisations undertaking commoning must find ways to resist the tendency to become entrenched within and exclusive to the stable elements of communities, which are often the more privileged.

There is also an issue of scale for urban commons. Justin McGuirk, reflecting on his involvement in TM's Designing the Urban Commons project in an article for Guardian Cities, asks whether commons can achieve a level of reach beyond the very local, and their usual manifestation in the form of community gardening. For people to work directly together through self-management, scale is a natural limiting factor. The social reach of any given project in urban space might be limited to walking distance from its location, for example. For city-wide undertakings, tackling urban challenges at a much larger scale, overarching organisational structures inevitably emerge, which start to look like corporations or public bodies. McGuirk suggests that this scale can only be achieved through a systemic restructuring, in which the existing bodies of urban governance start to incorporate this style of thinking and apply commoning to our urban infrastructures en masse. For this to happen, the challenge for commoners now is to find a much more cohesive language for defining their way of working, the value it creates and the organisational systems they use. Only in doing this will they build a movement convincing and mainstream enough to influence governmental thinking on the scale that the Green movement has since the 1960s. If they can, the future city might have the chance of re-arranging itself around models of public life that involve cooperative action and benefit rather than an unsustainable model in which all necessities of urban survival are distanced from consumers by markets, corporations and public bodies.

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<sup>i</sup> Ramon Oldenburg and Dennis Brissett, "The Third Place," *Qualitative Sociology* 5, no. 4 (December 1982): 265–84.

<sup>ii</sup> See multiple references to global civil unrest since 2010 including: the Arab Spring movements; the Occupy movement and its global proliferation; and the Umbrella Revolution. All of these protests were sparked by wider economic and political issues but became, in part, battles over the diminishing public right to use urban spaces for gathering, collective action and other non-commercial uses. For discussion see for example <http://www.architectural-review.com/rethink/viewpoints/umbrella-urbanism-hong-kong-protests/8671652.fullarticle>, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2012/jan/18/occupy-london-eviction-freedom-expression-private>, <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/one-lasting-occupy-effect-an-awareness-of-private-public-space>

<sup>iii</sup> Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/common-land-village-greens>

<sup>v</sup> The Federation of Cumbria Commoners promotes these rights in Cumbria (<http://www.cumbriacommoners.org.uk/>) and according to the Forestry Commission 300 commoners graze cattle year round in the New Forest (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf6-6a4kql>)

<sup>vi</sup> Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (Yale University Press, 2006).

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vii <http://creativecommons.org/>

viii Charlotte Hess, "Mapping the New Commons," *Libraries' and Librarians' Publications*, June 1, 2008, <http://surface.syr.edu/sul/25>.

ix David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (Verso Books, 2012), 73.

x Theatrum Mundi is a professional network of urbanists and artists based at LSE Cities (lsecities.net), offering a forum for cross-disciplinary discussion about cultural and public space in the city.

xi Designing the Urban Commons (<http://designingtheurbancommons.org/>) took place in London from April - July 2015 and was the second of Theatrum Mundi's ideas competitions focusing on the activation of public space in the city, following 2014's Designing for Free Speech (<http://designingforreespeech.org/>) in New York.

xii <http://r-urban.net/en/>

xiii <http://www.urbantactics.org/>

xiv Stavros Stavrides, "On Urban Commoning: The City Shapes Institutions of Sharing," in *Make\_Shift City: Renegotiating the Urban Commons* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 83–85.

xv The full brief can be viewed at <http://designingtheurbancommons.org/details/>

xvi <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jun/15/urban-common-radical-community-gardens>

xvii These are just a small number of the questions raised in a workshop held at the LSE including winners from the competition and members of Theatrum Mundi and Public Works Group