

1st IASC Thematic Conference on Urban Commons
www.labgov.it/urbancommons

THE CITY AS A COMMONS

reconceiving urban space, common goods and city governance

#cocities

NOVEMBER 6-7, 2015, BOLOGNA, ITALY

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

SHEILA FOSTER - Fordham University School of Law - (LabGov – USA)
CHRISTIAN IAIONE - UniMarconi and LUISS Guido Carli - (LabGov – Italy/Europe)

CALL FOR PAPERS

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: August 10th, 2015

In collaboration with:

COMUNE DI BOLOGNA
FONDAZIONE DEL MONTE DI BOLOGNA E RAVENNA
Commons Strategies Group

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CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

How can city squares, urban green spaces, cultural heritage, abandoned buildings, roads and other urban infrastructure, services or other resources and goods be governed as commons? Can cities be conceived as institutions for collective action and therefore run as commons?

Inspired by the recently implemented *Bologna Regulation on Collaboration for the Care and Regeneration of the Urban Commons*, as well as by other commons-based experiments in cities around Italy by the LabGov project (e.g. Co-Mantova, Co-Battipaglia and Co-Palermo), the 1st IASC Thematic Conference on the Urban Commons will bring together leading scholars, researchers, policymakers, practitioners and social innovators to take stock of the developments in the interdisciplinary study of the urban commons and related questions of urban governance. Although the urban commons has increasingly appeared as a topic of scholarly inquiry, there has yet to be sustained attention to the research questions, methodologies, and disciplinary approaches necessary to more fully conceptualize and develop the idea of the "urban commons" and the new challenges and facets it introduces into the ongoing study of the commons in diverse fields.

The conference will seek to better understand the idea of urban commons at different scales, under what circumstances and contexts urban commons emerge, what contributes to their durability and effectiveness, and what undermines them. The conference will stress the importance of an "urban commons narrative" for urban infrastructure, urban welfare, and urban development. Additionally, the conference will focus on questions of urban governance and will explore different frameworks for governing common urban resources, and the city, in a collaborative manner.

The conference will highlight six thematic questions, which are:

1. Conceiving the Urban Commons
2. Mapping the Urban Commons
3. The Urban Commons and Democratic Innovation
4. The Collaborative/Sharing Economy as the Basis for a Commons-Based Urban Economy
5. Social innovation as the Basis for a Commons-Based Urban Welfare
6. Designing and Governing the City as a Commons

These thematic areas will be examined through two full days of plenary panels, keynote presentations, and parallel sessions with selected papers from the call for papers. The conference will conclude with a roundtable discussion intended to reflect on the methods and future directions for urban commons research. The Conference Organizers invite paper submissions in any of the six thematic areas, which are described in more detail below.

CONFERENCE TRACKS

TRACK 1: WHERE DO THE URBAN COMMONS COME FROM?

The idea of the commons has a long historical and intellectual lineage ranging from the enclosure movement in England, to Garrett Hardin's famous Tragedy of the Commons parable, to Elinor Ostrom's Nobel prize-winning work on governing common pool resources. More recently, scholars across an array of specialties have conceptualized and articulated new kinds of commons, including knowledge commons, cultural commons, infrastructure commons, and neighborhood commons, among others. How should we conceive of the "urban commons" and what utility does the idea of the "commons" bring to the urban arena? What resources and services are or should be conceived as "urban commons? How do they emerge or get produced? At what scales?

TRACK 2: WHERE CAN WE FIND THE URBAN COMMONS?

There already exists a number of small and large-scale urban common pool resources which are being collaborative managed by groups of heterogeneous users who are able to design norms and rules to collaborate, work together, allocate shared resources, and obtain joint benefits from the resource within a collaborative governance structure. Some examples that have already been examined by scholars include community gardening, neighborhood improvement districts, neighborhood foot patrols, and limited equity housing cooperatives but also sanitation, flood control and other public infrastructures. Each of these institutions involve several stakeholders that interact and collaborate in order to manage crucial assets for the community—parks, gardens, open space, neighborhood safety, housing, etc.— and also to produce socially productive goods that support human flourishing in urban communities. What other institutions in which public and private actors collaborate might be considered an urban commons institution? What are the research questions and methodologies that should drive examination of these institutions?

TRACK 3: HOW DEMOCRATIC ARE THE URBAN COMMONS?

There are many kinds of resources and goods that urban residents have access to, share together, collaborate for and depend upon. Some of these resources are contested resources, meaning that they may not be considered to be open or accessible to the public but many believe that they should be considered a common resource of good and in fact are often treated as such, even informally. How do we design collective institutions to manage the complexity of these resources, solve conflicts and engage for urban commoning/collaboration public, private and community actors? Can collaboration among citizens in an urban context be considered a democratic innovation and improve the quality of democracy? Is urban commoning/collaboration an update to old forms of democracy (e.g. participatory, deliberative, associative, representative) or a new form of democracy (e.g. collaborative democracy)? What is the role left to representative democracy institutions in all this? Can policentricity help to facilitate decision making processes on how urban commons are used, who has access to them, and how to more fairly distribute access to common pool resources for the production of common goods?

TRACK 4: CAN THE COLLABORATIVE/SHARING ECONOMY FORM A BASIS FOR A COMMONS-BASED URBAN ECONOMY?

The emerging sharing or collaborative economy, across all sectors of society, suggests strong, more democratic and horizontal alternatives to producing, distributing and managing a host of private and public goods across society. What are the lessons and forms of innovation that we can learn from this literature and this movement in managing the urban commons? Some possibilities are the regeneration of common spaces in cities for co-working and co-manufacturing, forms of cooperative ownership models such as community land trusts and real estate investment cooperatives, and the conscious emergence of a collaborative class in cities which transforms the economic relations between urban inhabitants. Is the collaborative/sharing economy the way to a commons-based urban economy?

TRACK 5: DOES COMMONS-BASED URBAN WELFARE CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL COHESION?

Sharing and collaboration is also emerging as a model for a new urban lifestyle and new forms of social cohesion. Urban residents increasingly conceive private spaces and goods as common spaces and resources open to access or use by other people, share needs and tasks, help each other, give birth to new ways of living and moving within urban contexts, generate new forms of reciprocity, self- and mutual aid. Local governments following the capability approach are enabling forms of generative welfare to foster human flourishing. What are the lessons and forms of social innovation that we can learn from? One possibility is the regeneration of neighborhoods, private spaces and buildings to transform them into common spaces for co-living, co-housing, and other forms of collaborative living and welfare. The emergence of an urban collaboration class is transforming social relations between urban inhabitants and therefore should trigger a rethinking of welfare systems at the urban level.

TRACK 6: DESIGNING AND GOVERNING THE CITY AS A COMMON RESOURCE?

The city itself is perhaps the most complex shared resource for its inhabitants. Yet, it is still designed as a place where the public/private divide is predominant and governed by public institutions designed as Leviathan-like institutions which negotiate urban development mainly or solely with private stakeholders. One of the problems with this model of urban and governance design is that the decline of public financing and cyclical real estate and fiscal crises have forced cities to struggle to prevent urban shrinking or gentrification processes, as well as to support and maintain shared resources and common goods or regulate urban development to keep cities as a fair, just, diverse, human flourishing and creative environment. This has left an opening for other forms of governance to emerge, going beyond the public/private dichotomy, raising anew the question of the appropriate type of urban infrastructure, urban land taxation, city planning decision making process and other urban governance design issues. Are there other models to design or re-design urban settlements and other governance solutions to manage cities themselves as not just market-friendly, but also as human-friendly urban collaborative commons?

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for submission is **August 10th, 2015 at 12:00 AM CET**.

Abstracts may be submitted for any of the six thematic tracks described above. The abstracts shall consist of a 500 word maximum description of the research or paper and its originality or value for urban commons studies.

All submissions will be reviewed by an international review committee on the basis of scientific quality, relevance to the conference themes and originality.
Acceptance will be notified by August 31th.
Those with accepted abstracts **must confirm attendance by registering and paying the conference fee through the conference website**.

The deadline for registration by presenters is **September 13th, 2015**.
The registration deadline for other auditors is **October 2nd, 2015**.

For full paper presentations, the paper must be submitted no later than **October 12th, 2015 at 12:00 AM CET.**

It is possible to participate to the conference as a paper presenter or as an auditor.
The registration and fee payment module is available on the Conference Website (http://bit.ly/1fzfjM1)
The conference fee is required both for paper presenters and auditors.

Conference organizers are undertaking all efforts to ensure funding to reimburse travel costs and participation fees of presenters coming from non-OECD countries.

Conference Website

www.labgov.it/urbancommons

POSTER SESSION

During the conference is planned a session devoted to the presentation of cases of studies in which models of collaboration for the care and regeneration of urban commons have been realized. Administrators, citizens, associations and researchers could present the realized projects by sending a high-resolution jpg file (minimum 300 dpi) in a poster format A0 (84cm x 120cm – vertically paginated). The poster must contain all the information needed to locate and understand the project (place, date of realization, institutions and citizens involved in the collaborative process, photos and texts,). The selected posters will be printed and displayed in an exhibition that will open on the day of the convention.

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CO-CITIES

LabGov is a research project to experiment collaborative and polycentric urban/local governance. There are currently five ground experimentations led in cooperation with cities and communities in Italy and many others are about to open in Italy and abroad.

In every city or community we open a “co-city” or “co-territory” LabGov:

CO W CITIES 2+2=5

CO Bo BOLOGNA 2+2=5

CO Mn MANTOVA 2+2=5

CO Rm ROMA 2+2=5

CO Pa PALERMO 2+2=5

CO Sa BATTIPAGLIA 2+2=5

ABOUT

The **International Association for the Study of the Commons** (IASC) is a nonprofit Association devoted to understanding and improving institutions for the management of resources that are (or could be) held or used collectively by communities in developing or developed countries. IASC's goals are to encourage exchange of knowledge among diverse disciplines, areas, and resource types; to foster mutual exchange of scholarship and practical experience; and to promote appropriate institutional design.

The **Fordham Urban Law Center** is committed to understanding and affecting the legal system's place in contemporary urbanism. Law is central to almost every aspect of the life of 21st-century cities, influencing critical issues as diverse as the structure of local governance, the regulation of the built environment, and social justice in the urban context. In turn, the complexity, density, and diversity of urban life shape the law. Through its innovative programs and in collaboration with its academic partners, the Urban Law Center aims to be a premier resource for exploring the role of law in the myriad challenges and opportunities that face the global urban commons. The Center is dedicated to: examining the role of the legal system in contemporary urbanism; advancing the scholarship, pedagogy, and practice of urban law; and affecting the most pressing issues facing America's metropolitan areas.

LABGOV

LABORATORY FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF COMMONS



In a world where cities are shrinking and exploding, impoverishing and getting richer, excluding new citizens, dismissing buildings and surfaces, creating spaces full of contradictions and conflicts, cities authorities are not able to govern the on going processes as they have always done. In order to define a new model of urban and local governance, it's necessary to change the paradigm, to explore new theories, policies and development models. It's time to create a new institutional and economic system based on the model of collaborative/polycentric urban/local governance in which citizens, the community, local businesses, knowledge institutions, civil society organizations take care of and manage the commons together with public institutions (Iaione, 2013).

The new trends in global urban theory and policy go towards new collaborative ways to manage the urban space and the common/collective goods. The **LABoratory for the GOVernance of Commons - LabGov** (**http://www.labgov.it**) was founded in 2011 at LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome (through the Department of Political Science and the International Center on Democracy and Democratization). The intent is to build an educational and research platform able to train a brand-new breed of professionals, scholars, practitioners, experts in the governance of commons, young women and men able to create forms of partnerships between citizens, NGOs, public administrations, knowledge institutions and local business fostering the smart specialization of urban and local communities. In ever changing urban contexts worldwide, LabGov is based upon the idea that only an experimental approach could be propaedeutic to the construction of new instruments of collaborative/polycentric governance.

The students are trained through practical experience on the field: innovation can be achieved only through practical experience. Today innovation consists on the renewal of the role of public authorities and other traditional actors (civil society organizations, businesses, schools, universities) by leveraging the collective, civic intelligence. New instruments can be found in existing rules useful to design and build collaborative institutional circuits in order to achieve new urban and territorial transformation processes. The education process is structured in workshops, interactive co-working sessions and fieldworks. The implementation of this model requires specific inter-disciplinary competences that are exactly those that LabGov aims at creating. LabGov is based upon the idea that for urban, social and institutional regeneration it is necessary to create collaborative relationships between citizens, administrations and business to share the scarce resources in their individual availability to take care of the commons, tangible or intangible, of urban and local communities. LabGov, a place of experimentation in all respects, is actually working on groundbreaking commons governance experimental projects in several Italian cities (e.g. Rome, Bologna, Mantova, Palermo and Battipaglia) and at the European level.



The ICEDD was founded in 2011 as part of the **Department of Political Science at Libera Università degli Studi Sociali** (LUISS) in Rome, Italy. The center studies the democratization process in different areas of the world and also looks at other, more specific topics, such as evaluating the quality of democracy. It follows in the footsteps of the International Center for Transition Studies, established in 2002. Its research is mainly of a multi-disciplinary nature, with a special focus on political science and contemporary history. It takes a multi-method approach that is at once quantitative and qualitative, comparative and centered on individual cases.

Research is conducted by LUISS faculty members and by other scholars who are affiliated with universities both in Italy and abroad. The center is part of a wider network of international centers, all of which are dedicated to studying the democratization process.