STRUGGLING FOR COMMONS IN EUROPE

This is a working document that discusses different European experiences[1] of struggling around commons in these times of crisis and enclosure[2]. We consider this a 'living text' that should be circulated, adapted and discussed: feel free to use it as works for you!

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1. STARTING POINTS: CRISIS AND COMMONS

The crisis, understood as a process of financial looting and profound transformation of structures of social reproduction, is in a phase of advanced development, especially in the countries of Southern Europe. This process of government by debt and social engineering is characteristic of neoliberalism and has particularly functioned on the basis of dismantling the Welfare State and social rights. Social rights and mutualist infrastructures that have been consolidated over the past decades became key matters of concern and struggle as the Troika and techno-commissioners of the EU implement their strategies of "accumulation by dispossession".

Departing from different struggles and campaigns that work to defend healthcare, education and other public structures in Europe, this workshop seeks to address the unconditional defense of mutualist structures accessible to everybody as a minimum condition of democracy in Europe. We need a process of 'deep' democratisation that is able to escape the deadlock between private financial accumulation and state management. We need to push towards another horizon: that of commons and of commonfare, linking 'real' democracy with the management of the reproductive and productive commons of society. We speak of the commons of European democracy for various reasons.

On the one hand, because the processes of financial dispossession, privatization and commodification attack our fundamental common grounds for social reproduction,

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[1] See the list of participants below to get a list of struggles and campaigns we heard about.
[2] This document emerges from a workshop that took place on the occasion of the European Encounter "*The new abduction of Europe. Debt, war & democratic revolutions*", held in Madrid between 27 of February and 2 of March. In it some 30 people from some 10-15 European countries discussed, told of their experiences and drafted this text together.

impoverishing and poisoning life as a whole by converting it into financial rent. What is being enclosed and exploited is not only the natural resources that belong to all of us, but also the social resources achieved through myriad struggles in the 20th century, which adopted the institutional form of the welfare state. In the face of these processes of enclosure fighting for the commons becomes central.

The ongoing 'crisis' invites us to (re)imagine commons as a central and crucial notion for political action as well as for social reproduction and governance. It is time to overcome false dichotomies such as public-private or State-market. The long history of the commons is being reactivated due to a change of attitude towards the State, as the idea of universal public access falters and millions of people find themselves without networks of support. The commons is about networks of support that reach beyond individualising provision as well as competitive survival: a space of reappropriation of "the public" arises as an alternative to the neoliberal regime and state planning.

Although at some point the public sphere, public values or the public sector could portend some kind of counterweight to the destructive forces of the market, they have now been subsumed within the capitalist logic. The State, in its contemporary form, has lost all its political potential and in the current context of European austerity is reduced to its coercive and repressive capacities, losing all ability to ensure the material well-being of the population. This is why we see an explosion of community initiatives that seek to replace and displace the ancien regime of public action in order to transform it into commons management that bridges the community level with the public one. Examples include the collective and citizen's management of houses in public buildings, hospitals, energy and water systems. Across all these struggles we find mixed forms of struggles for access (to public services) and struggles for autonomy (self-run institutions). Indeed it is these transversal connections that make the commons so powerful as practice, demand and perspective: we refuse our imaginaries being enclosed within the status quo of private and public.

Finally, although a good part of the struggles at the European level require a process of de-commodification that halt privatisations by appealing to "the public", these struggles do not refer to the public as the state assemblage. Multicolor "mareas", expressions of outrage and fights around social needs are clear examples of a rupture in the signifier which couples 'rights' with 'state'. We see the commons as a basis for demanding as well as realising greater democracy, effective redistributive actions and new institutions that will ensure a life that is worth living. We think it is these forms of claim and action that may lead us to developing a roadmap to commonfare.

In our workshop we shared a series of experiences from different countries in Europe, concerning mostly healthcare, housing, water, energy and territory. Below you see the results of three working group sessions on these issues, as well as reflections on some key points and challenges concerning the commons.

2. LEARNING FROM CONCRETE EXPERIENCES

2.1 HOUSING GROUP TEXT

In many countries in Europe, forms of collective organization are emerging to fight for the rights to housing and the city and against their increasing financialization. This has been one of the most visible struggles during the current crisis.

Although the concept of the commons does not appear in the explicit discourse of these groups/movements, it can be read as an implicit backdrop and horizon for many of their practices.

Different forms of privatization and financialisation of housing are confronted with the counter-claim that housing is a social right not a commodity. Understanding that this social right to housing is not only (or even) granted by the state as custodian, opens the space for a new consideration of how the right to housing can be defined, constituted and exercised by the movements.

The Spanish Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH; Mortgage Holders Platform) is an interesting example of how these two orientations are practiced. On the one hand, the orientation to the state institutions through a set of demands (the legislative change of "dación en pago' or the 'right to start over' and social housing); and on the other hand, the direct institution of these demands through social disobedience.

These two orientations require different practices. For example, engaging with state institutions requires a sharp knowledge of the many legal paths that exist and the best ways to challenge and negotiate a way through them. At the same time, there are more concrete needs that must be met through civil disobedience in the name of an alternative social legitimacy. For those faced with eviction, or already evicted, people are required to mobilize to defend homes or occupy empty housing units held by the bank, as illustrated through the campaign "obra social" (public/social works). In the face of the Government vacuum and the housing emergency these practices of mobilization, "the self-tutelage of rights", have managed to do much more than any public administration.

Analyzing the everyday political practice of the PAH we draw some potential principles for new institution/movement building towards the commons:

- **Creating collectivity and empowerment**
  - ➔ *Collective consultation*: creating and sharing information on rights, political, economic, personal situation.

➔ *Collective decision-making* in assemblies (local, regional etc.)
➔ *Mutual aid* in the community of those affected and concerned
➔ *Collective direct action* for:
  * building solidarity/community in action
  * collective negotiations (with authorities/banks)
  * creating visibility/controversy around issues: "escraches" to highlight responsible actors.
  * meeting concrete needs in a collective way (blocking evictions, protesting/denouncing/pressuring banks, squatting buildings)

● **Building institutions through practice**
'Asking we walk': the dynamics of empowerment and collective participation put in practice by the movement itself makes possible the management of any space or institution of the commons. This form of organization is put in practice through communal principles:
- democratic delving (?),
- self-tutelage of rights,
- self-management,
- protocols that emerge from the community action in itself.

● **Not starting from scratch**
In the case of the PAH there was rich knowledge drawn from previous political experience: V de Vivienda, the squatting movement and social centres with ODS - offices for social rights collective consultation and advocacy for realization for social rights.

● **Scalability** due to necessary criteria for creating a new node:
➔ Offering free collective legal consultancy
➔ Independent from political parties
➔ Nonviolence
➔ Assembly as decision making body

2.2 HEALTH GROUP TEXT

Health is under attack everywhere in Europe, to various extents and in different ways.

The public health services **in Greece**, following government decisions, don't attend to people who are unable to pay their insurance. Hospitals ask them to pre-pay half of their bill or send their bill to a tax office which, in case they don't pay, will proceed to auction off their house. As

a result, 30% of the population does not have any health care coverage. At the same time, public primary care clinics, hospitals and departments of hospitals are closing down and health professionals are being sacked.

To respond to this emergency situation, a nationwide network of "Social Clinics" has been developed at a community level, different than the clinics organized by municipalities, the church or medical associations. In Greece there are about 30 "Social Clinics", connected through a network within which they exchange information, medication and organize common actions to ensure free and universal access to healthcare, which provide primary health services for free to those uninsured people who can not afford it anymore. These clinics and their struggles are not about charity but about self-organizing and creating sustainable community ties.

One of them is the Social Solidarity Clinic of Thessaloniki, initiated by health specialists who took care of 50 immigrants in hunger-strike in 2010. It's an autonomous, self-managed, non-hierarchical and non-profit voluntary organization that has been functioning for 2½ years now. It brings together more than 180 people - health professionals as well as people from other walks of life - who offer primary medical and dental care for free at an everyday basis. People are trained to take on certain roles within the clinic. Around this social assemblage in the clinic there is a network of collaborating private doctors, laboratories and pharmacies in the city. The solidarity clinic, for reasons of independence, does not accept financial support from any state, party or religious organization, nor from the pharmaceutical industries. It receives broad support from social groups and organizations of the city. Its structure includes assemblies of special fields and sectors (the pharmacy, the secretariat etc.), committees as well as workgroups. All these members constitute the general assembly where the important decisions are made. The Solidarity Clinic receives broad support from social groups and organizations of the city.

Apart from its medical services, the clinic organizes interventions to fight for free access to health services for all people, without exception. In this action it connects with various social organizations and cooperates and converses with the other Solidarity Social Clinics in Greece.

In the Social Solidarity Clinic of Thessaloniki there is a constant effort to encourage patients to participate in actions (i.e exerting pressure on Hospitals to accept uninsured patients) and to struggle for their rights themselves. Also there is cooperation with other social and political movements, unions, organizations and so on to discuss and to act together in the fight for free and universally accessible health services.

This process and these initiatives led people to question the way society and health work and how institutions are organized. They get people to come up with organizing principles for rethinking health as a commons, beyond the production of commons at the level of communities. Some key points:

- Doctor/patient relationship.
There must be equality in the relation between health experts and patients. The participation of patients in the decisions that concern them is a central issue of this complex relationship. Patients need to be empowered and to be active subjects and not objects of the care of health professionals. Patient must be encountered as persons and not as bearers of symptoms. Health professionals need to be considered and to consider themselves as health workers whose role it is to help patients be healthy and not to be unquestioned authorities or parental figures.

For the doctor-patient relationship to change, medicine as institution must change. Medicine as an institution and a practice along with the industries, the universities, research, the insurance companies etc, constitutes a major keystone of power in society and a huge mechanism of devaluation of people as autonomous agents. Also, there is a question about a medicine less dependent on technology etc.

In the Social Solidarity Clinic of Thessaloniki, a group has been formed to think and make suggestions about "a different medicine" and **in Italy** medical students[3] are trying to organize new curriculums to rethink the ways doctors are working with their patients and understanding their own roles.

- **Health needs VS market driven care:** Policies and actions of health workers and institutions need to be driven by the health needs of the people and not by the logic of the market. This concerns access to the hospital as well as setting the priorities of health research and innovation policies.

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[3] In Italy Assemblea di Medicina (Medical Students Assembly) is an independent open space in the Sapienza University of Rome where medical students, in 2008, chose to gather together to discuss their view on the Italian financial reform that was going on at the time, which was resulting in the utter destruction of public University. Beyond that, we've kept the discussion alive on education, crisis and relevant health issues, addressing each topic in public assemblies, and animating students movements in 2010 against the Gelmini reform (further cutting public funding, enhancing private interests in the management of Universities and research, and destroying right to education). Starting from the protests whose slogan was "We won't pay the crisis" and from the push of the movements to generalize the mobilization on the topics of life precariousness, Assemblea di Medicina chose to practise a concrete alternative to the model in crisis, connecting with other metropolitan fighting realities and occupying an abandoned building, then called LabPuzzle, in the Tufello neighbourhood in Rome, giving students a chance to concretely take and autonomously maintain a piece of the welfare system, creating a free student-house and education laboratories. Furthermore, in 2012, understanding the importance of the transnational rising moment, we've taken part in the Occupy Movement, in the global European strikes, and in the mobilization against austerity policies in health-care. Rising from an environment that's been completely emptied of its social and educational function, we keep struggling not simply defending what's past, but always trying to create a practicable alternative, able to involve people and to respond to their needs.

- Prices and monopolies (through patents) should not prevent people from accessing healthcare. Impossibility to afford life saving products is now a reality for many patients in Greece who are uninsured or who cannot afford to wait for reimbursement. Many life-saving drugs are extremely expensive – cancer drugs, hepatitis drugs, HIV drugs, etc. This is contributing to bankrupt health-care coverage systems and social security systems, as these drugs represent a large proportion of drug spending. It is also increasingly making these drugs inaccessible to patients.

The reason why the drugs are so expensive is because they are protected by patents granted by the State and providing a monopoly for 20 years (the duration of a patent) to the patent holder, in this case the pharmaceutical multinationals. Patents holders claim that they need to recoup investments in research but research is in a large part funded by public money and pharmaceutical multinationals are one of the most profitable industries. To avoid these absurd and unacceptable situations governments should be much tougher with the industry when agreeing prices and reimbursements. They should also use the legal provision existing in national and international intellectual property rules (called compulsory license) to suspend patent protection and authorize generic medicines when prohibitive prices make life saving drugs inaccessible.

In Spain, healthcare professionals and users got organized together and stopped several privatization processes of hospitals and primary healthcare clinics, rising up against the ongoing attacks on universality of healthcare.

This fight against privatization was particularly wide and strong in Madrid, where the "Marea Blanca" was able to stop a plan by the regional government that aimed to privatize 6 public hospitals and more than 20 primary healthcare centers. Users and healthcare professionals came together and won the fight.

At the same time, the national Government passed a law in April 2012 that attacks universal and free access to the healthcare system all across the Spanish state. This law establishes the labour and administrative situation (what contract they work on if at all, what papers they have if any) of the person as the conditions for access to the system. The law introduces a division between the insured and the uninsured, and obliges patients to co-pay for some treatments as well as prescriptions. It excludes undocumented migrants as well as other groups from the healthcare system, and takes heavy tolls on those who don't have resources to pay for their medicines. To fight this law, users and health professionals have created a civil disobedience movement to defend universal access and to fight exclusion on the ground: one of its key campaigns is called *Yo Si Sanidad Universal*. They organize support groups that go together to clinics and hospitals to inform health professionals about how they can

accommodate everybody within the public system, with the final aim of making exclusion inoperable on the ground.

> **In summary:** Starting from the concrete experience of people organizing themselves to produce commons we can reflect more broadly about how the concept of commons is politically useful to us and to reorganize our societies.

- Health is relational and needs to be thought of as such. Health is socially determined, it is not an issue that can be dealt with on an individual basis. Also it is not an experts issue only, it is a society issue. So everybody should be involved in the struggle for health care in order for health become a common[4].

- Taking health as a common proposes a new vision about healthcare and how to ensure it. While health as a right depends on who ensures it and on what terms, a fact that makes healthcare conditional, the definition of health and care as commons attributes to it a fundamental character: unconditionality.

- In addition to being produced by local communities, commons, such as health, can be taken as a horizon to rethink priorities for society, through setting common interests. Commons can help us respond to specific needs of communities, urgent and vital in times of crisis, but also they can also help put pressure on public institutions, question the logic behind the policies and the institutions and help confront political leaders.

- Self-organising commons are not necessarily the way to organize all forms of activities in society, we believe various organizational forms can exist between public and commons, creating bridges between public and commons.

2.3 TERRITORY GROUP TEXT

The discussion focussed mainly on water and energy and how struggles over access have opened the space for the 'common' as a new category beyond the public/private binary. At the same time many difficult questions remain, not least around the often contradictory struggles that take place around the extraction, distribution and use of water and energy.

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[4] A recording of the conversation at the basis of these reflections on health can be found here
http://soundsofmovement.noblogs.org/post/2014/03/04/15-health-as-commons-struggles-in-europe/

In the general context of privatization and financialization, water and energy have been subject to these processes in Europe before the onset of crisis and austerity. During the 1990s and 2000s, along with other large-scale forms of public infrastructure (housing, health care, telecommunications), partnerships with the private sector were seen to be the only way of securing much needed financial investment and technical expertise in the provision of water and energy to growing populations. This situation arises of course after many years of under-investment by governments in these resources and the infrastructure that processed and distirbuted them.

It did not take long for the promise of this neoliberal quick-fix to be proven wrong. As has been shown many times, the privatization of public infrastructure and services does not lead to greater investment, improved and cheaper service or more ecological forms of resource management. Despite these sharp lessons, the Troika have persisted in making water and energy sector privatization or 'rationalization' a condition of bail-out programs for Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Greece. Even where full privatization is not being implemented, the aim of these processes is to make the provision of water and energy more 'efficient' in neoliberal terms. The consequence will be the further erosion of democratic accountability and social and environmental justice in favor of market rationality and technical managerialism.

For example, the Irish government is currently ´rationalising´ the public water system without having to involve any private companies. 'Irish Water' is a new independent public utility that will centralize the management of the water system (taking power from the 34 local authorities that currently manage local water systems). This ensures that the water system will be managed by professionals who are entirely unaccountable to the people. At the same time, the utility is praised for being 'self-financing'. The high financial costs of repairing and maintaining the water infrastructure will no longer come from general taxation but from water charges. Importantly, these water charges are not in themselves enough to finance the water system. The 'Irish Water' company will thus use future revenue streams to borrow money on financial markets. The water system is thus financialized without having to go through the messy process of privatization.

A struggle against water charges is now beginning in Ireland. While this is not strictly a struggle against privatization it will be a struggle against the hollowing out of the public and a rejection of the austerity on which this is based. In this sense it can learn from struggles against water privatization in Greece, Italy and Spain that have opened a new political space of contestation around water as a commons.

Reclaiming water as a common
In response to the privatization and financialization of water struggles against water

privatization and 'rationalization' have been emerging. These struggles build on successful campaigns to re-municipalise water utilities around the world, including Paris, Berlin and Grenoble. While these reversals of privatization have mostly been initiated at a local level, they reflect a global tendency. (see http://www.remunicipalisation.org/ by Corporate Europe Observatory and Transnational Institute or http://www.partagedeseaux.info in France).

In Greece, where the assault of austerity is most severe, the water utilities in Athens and Thessaloniki have been threatened with privatization. In response, the citizens' of Thessaloniki have not only launched an anti-privatization campaign, but they have also proposed an alternative. Initiative 136 aims to buy the municipal water utility for the people of the city. While the objective is ambitious the process of mobilising and articulating around it produces new social and collective practices and forms of organization. At the neighborhood level assemblies and water unions are being formed that produce and share knowledge about the water situation at the same time as they are building new social ties and solidarity.

Similarly, the success of the broad, popular social coalition against water privatization in Italy not only defeated the government's attempt to sell the public water utilities, it also opened up a space of debate around water as a 'common good'. This came about after a grassroot imposed referundum (400,000 signatures) and local initiatives that explicitly referenced the "commons" in terms of universal accessibility and affordability for all.

Reclaiming energy as a common
There are many obstacles to the process of reclaiming energy as a commons. This was made evident in the example of the Round Chair on Energy in Berlin. The aim was to put the production of energy under democratic control, to ensure a social distribution of energy and to rely on decentralized plants producing renewable energy. The challenge was to construct a common on a scale that involves at least 3 Million people. For that the city of Berlin would first have to rebuy the energy grid and build a new utility. To make this happen the juridical form of a referendum was needed. Thousands of signatures were collected, people were mobilizing, the media was reporting, the public was debating…a good societal step towards a common! But the process was blocked by a single politician who changed the date of the referendum. Since the   election of the referendum was now decoupled from the federal elections, the turnout was too low. Though 80% of people voted for the remunicipalisation of the energy grid, there needed to be 20,000 more names on the ballot.

Contradictions
Besides these particular forms of institutional blockages the challenge of moving towards a water and energy commons must also confronts the question of finance. There are new challenges facing water and energy extraction, distribution and consumption related to changing demographics (urbanization) and climate change. How can these challenges be met

without significant financial investment and institutional forms capable of operating across large territorial scales? How do such large-scale problems relate to the commons understood as a situated form of community decision-making and (re)production?

The interconnection of social fights and environmental fights reminds us of the limits and possible exclusions of the commons. Emancipatory fights over resources can often contradict each other: people fighting against extractivism, in favor of saving their environment, workers in mines fighting for dignified working conditions, people fighting for a warm dwelling and people struggling against the impacts of climate change. We are appropriating natural resources everyday, since they are part of our basic needs. But appropriation of nature is a fundamentally social process, in present capitalistic times involving human exploitation and injustices - from the extraction of resources, to the unequal distribution of consumption goods as well as the production of waste people have to deal with.

3. DEBATES AND PROBLEMATICS CONCERNING COMMONS

- **Definition of the commons**:
"The commons are what is considered essential for life, understood not merely in the biological sense. They are the structures which connect individuals to one another, tangible or intangible elements that we all have in common and which make us members of a society, not isolated entities in competition with each other" (Tomaso Fattori)

- **Different models of management of the commons**:
1) "The tragedy of the commons": rational choice framework that assumes individuals always seek to maximize their own benefits and thus resources will tend towards exhaustion unless individual self-interest is taken into account. Privatization is thus the only way to preserve resources.
2) State custody and allocation of common resources as a defence against privatization.
3) Democratic forms of community based governance or self-government: communities organize around shared resources and self-determine the rules of access and allocation through grassroots practices of commoning.

- **Common goods vs self-managed commons**:
The notion of common goods differs from the notion of situated self-governing commons. When we refer to common goods we are speaking of something that requires universal access, that belongs to us all (ie. climate, water, energy). In tension with this are specific commons built through particular collective self-organisation, the access to which is always limited to certain user groups (i.e. internet?).

- **Mixed practices of commons**:

Practices aren't necessarily pure in this sense, they might involve commoning in order to demand or hack into 'the common good' as related to the public - such as Yo Si Sanidad Universal self-organising/commoning on a neighbourhood level to create access for excluded people to the public health system. This action enacts the demand that healthcare should be universal and freely accessible. A way to cross juridical forms that can break the juridical forms of public and private.

- **The common/s is not a way to supersede conflict or power relations**:

There's a need to recognize contradictions, tensions and power relations when we talk about the common/s. Speaking of 'common needs' can presuppose a unitary subject and shared interest where there may be none (ie. indigenous land ownership vs public resources). Perhaps it is useful to refer to 'common interests' so as to acknowledge that there are always power relations involved?

There is a problem of commons acting on different scales: eg. the atmosphere is a directly global resource. The act of governing/commoning must be enacted by the whole population of the world. With the given world population and modes of production and consumption, we are not in a situation where there is simply 'enough for everybody' - the issue becomes a political one of changing ways of distributing but also living and producing. This can help undo the romance of the commons.

- **Legal forms of protection**:

There are new legal forms to protect collective use rights and free and/or equitable access to the commons. Like the General Public or ShareAlike licenses in the digital field, we are seeing new ownership models in water (Initiative136), in housing (e.g. housing cooperative models Corralas or the "obra social" campaign of La PAH. In the Italian movement "Acqua Bene Comune" they articulated the water as a commons in order to appeal to the constitution as a way of protecting universal access to the resource against the neoliberal state and private power.

- There is a need for a new collective political, community and user based subject that can manage the commons and hold collective property rights as well as participating in a collective decision making process over their production and consumption.

- Protagonists of struggles are the actors of the process of subjectivation that address the new forms of collective living inside a common space.

- There are limitations to the community as a new subjectivity because of the need to define a space. Beyond the local, subjects also create new territories of belongings and acting radically.

Example from Rome: Nuovo Cinema Palazzo. On 2011, a large group of residents, cultural workers, students, precarious and care workers, decided to occupy an old cinema that was supposed to become a Casino. They decided to open a space of culture, art and knowledge production. The court recognized the occupiers as a "resisting multitude" that defended the space and they were allowed to legitimately occupy and manage it. Currently, the challenge is to understand what are the norms that are able to establish a juridical status beyond private/public laws that subtract the space from the private or public property, and to be recognized in its common use.

- **New institutionalism of the commons**:

In the absence of financial means and an incapable State, there is a necessity to start from below, from self-management, from institutional reinvention. This is not only a way to defend and retain rights but a form of experimentation that allows the necessary and much-needed movement towards democratic renewal. There is no recognition of this form of new institutionalism from a juridical perspective. Concrete experiences of how this status could be achieved involve the elaboration of common norms and rules rather than state/governments' laws. These common norms are developed out of the productive use and customs of the "commoners". They are outcome of a constituent process.

Example from Italy: Self-education is a practice of self-production of knowledge inside the university, composed by students, researchers and scholars. This practice creates an in-between space within-and-against the university institution. Self-education seminars take place within the university yet they are recognized as autonomous practices: students get credits from the department to build up seminars. Self-education is a practice of self-organization and process of subjectivation (Unicommon network).

- **Neoliberalism vs Commoning**.

The Neoliberal State intervenes to create competitive markets and to foster citizen participation towards attaining its own goals. This operates as a form of training, a way of shaping us to act and think as individualized and entrepreneurial subjects. At the same time, this process destroys communities and makes wider collective politics almost impossible. By creating commons and participating in commoning we counter this by training ourselves in a different type of subjectivity, as subjects who can act in common. This creates a new social material that makes wider collective (democratic) politics possible again.

- **Challenges to the commons**:

1. *Cooptation and Instrumentalization*. This refers to the way the state uses the commons as a cheap way of ensuring social reproduction while it is dismantling the welfare state. ('Participatory Society' of Holland http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/812184.shtml, etc.). The questions is how to claim space/time/resources/"recognition" for the commons in a capitalist context through community / citizens engagement?

An example of the cooptation of 'commons' is the UK government's Big Society policy that is coupled with the 'Small (and shrinking) State'. This allows the constriction of State welfare provision by advocating communities take over provision of those services. Examples include: Food Banks but more commonly allowing communities to run libraries and swimming pools. Resources are made available for this but it comes with conditions, such as adopting individualising and hierarchical governance structures.

2. *Enclosure*. The process of turning the commons into private property for the benefit of entreprises or individuals (like in this practices named but the label 'collaborative consumption'). How is it possible to raise social awareness that commons and commoning is not a simple "right" to defend but also a duty of citizen participation in creating different models of socio-economic organisation. Example: Solidarity clinic, with its radical and militant practices can be co-opted but there is a danger to be instrumentalized by the government.

3. *Relationship with the state.* The commons are often dependent on the state, for example its legal system. So here the highly contested question arises: in what way must the state be taken in account? One suggestion was that it depends on the context of the specific struggles.

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[5] Here you will find a detailed participants list by working group.

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