COMMONING; CREATING A NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORDER?
A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

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RANDAL JOY THOMPSON

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This dissertation has been accepted for
the faculty of Fielding Graduate University by

Marie P. Farrell, EdD, MPH
Committee Chair

Committee:
Katrina Rogers, PhD, Faculty Reader
David Blake Willis, PhD, Faculty Reader
Kathleen A. Curran, MA, Student Reader
Thomas R. DeGregori, PhD, External Examiner

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Commoning: Creating a New Socio-economic Order?
A Grounded Theory Study
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Abstract

Interest in the commons, a concept that extends back to antiquity, has peaked in recent years as alarming resource depletion and intellectual property restrictions have caused international concern, while the Internet has increasingly linked people globally, creating a robust platform for common action. Generally conceived of as shared resources, communities that create, use, and/or manage them, social protocols that govern their usage, and a sense of mutuality, commons include natural resources and well as created resources such as knowledge and information. This study examined the commons by employing a grounded theory approach that sought to discover a theory regarding the processes underlying this phenomenon. Grounded theory initiates research by asking the question, "What is going on here?" *Commoning* emerged as the core variable and hence the grounded theory of the commons. Commoning is a complex social and psychological process that commoners engage in when they are establishing and managing commons. Commoning entails supplanting the market paradigm, based upon maximizing self-interest and assigning value based on price, with a paradigm that maximizes communal well-being. Through commoning, commoners gain a sense that they are the protagonists of their own lives. They gain this sense by forming a communal identity, seeing themselves as part of the ecological system, and taking control of resources that they feel the state and market have failed to effectively manage. In commoning, commoners are driven from their inner purpose and authentic self. Living this way resonates to society

as a whole, creating a society that reflects more abundance, harmony, peace, social

justice, respect for future generations, and sustainability.

Key words: commons, commoners, commoning, grounded theory, post-capitalism

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Writing a dissertation, I discovered, is as much an exploration of the self as it is of the phenomenon of interest. The commons appeared to me magically and following it took me to a multitude of diverse domains inhabited by distinct groups of individuals sharing the desire to manage their own lives and their worlds in positive ways. I discovered academics whose only seeming similarity was their shared study of the commons, viewed from often-considered warring perspectives. Throughout this journey, I was constantly forced to confront myself, my values, and the significance of my life.

Researching the commons had an almost mysterious impact on me. There is something about the commons that draws one to one's ancestors and to the earth and to exploring the hunger in the human heart for an equitable, harmonious society where people live in peace and beauty. The commons enticed me to explore my past and my ancestors who no doubt began as peasants in England working on the commons. I reflected more on the indigenous in me -- the Native American blood that someone drew me. The commons challenged me to reflect on my life and how my actions and attitudes impact other people and society. The commons strengthened my commitment to fight for social justice.

I would like to thank Dr. Marie Farrell, my mentor and Dissertation Chair for her sage guidance and for enduring my bouts of doubts. She is a master researcher. We, thankfully, shared the beautiful blue skies and suns of Reno, Nevada, which successfully reminded us that the beauty of nature surrounds and nurtures us. I was particularly fortunate that Dr. Katrina Rogers, President of Fielding Graduate University, agreed to serve on my Committee. I learned immensely from her advice and comments and her

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6   Cavaliers by name
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8   all defame
9   Stand up now, stand up now.

10   Your houses they pull down, stand up
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13   now.
14   Your houses they pull down to fright
15   your men in town
16   But the gentry must come down, and the
17   poor shall wear the crown.
18   Stand up now, Diggers all.

19   With spades and hoes and plowes, stand
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21   With spades and hoes and plowes stand
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24   Cavaliers are bold
25   To kill you if they could, and rights from
26   you to hold.
27   Stand up now, Diggers all.

28   Theire self-will is theire law, stand up
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30   Theire self-will is theire law, stand up
31   now.
32   Since tyranny came in they count it now
33   no sin

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43   of our ground
44   Stand up now, stand up now.

45   The lawyers they conjoyne, stand up
46   now, stand up now,
47   The lawyers they conjoyne, stand up
48   now,
49   To arrest you they advise, such fury they
50   devise,
51   The devill in them lies, and hath blinded
52   both their eyes.
53   Stand up now, stand up now.

54   The clergy they come inow, stand up
55   now,
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58   sin
59   That we should now begin, our freedom
60   for to win.
61   Stand up now, Diggers all.

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63   now, stand up now,
64   The tithes they yet will have, stand up
65   now.
66   The tithes they yet will have, and
67   lawyers their fees crave,

68 And this they say is brave, to make the
69   poor their slave.
70   Stand up now, Diggers all.

71 'Gainst lawyers and 'gainst Priests, stand
72 up now, stand up now,
73 'Gainst lawyers and 'gainst Priests stand
74 up now.
75 For tyrants they are both even flatt
76 againnst their oath,
77 To grant us they are loath free meat and
78 drink and cloth.
79 Stand up now, Diggers all.

80   The club is all their law, stand up now,
81   stand up now,
82   The club is all their law, stand up now.
83   The club is all their law to keep men in
84   awe,
85   But they no vision saw to maintain such

86   a law.
87   Stand up now, Diggers all.

88   The Cavaleers are foes, stand up now,
89   stand up now,
90   The Cavaleers are foes, stand up now;
91   The Cavaleers are foes, themselves they
92   do disclose
93   By verses not in prose to please the
94   singing boyes.
95   Stand up now, Diggers all.

96   To conquer them by love, come in now,
97   come in now
98   To conquer them by love, come in now;
99   To conquer them by love, as itt does you
100   behove,
101 For hee is King above, noe power is like
102   to love,
103   Glory heere, Diggers all

Unknown 17th Century Author

Lamenting the enclosure of land on which the commoners grew food crops and grazed livestock, the 17th Century "Digger's Ballad," also called "The World Upside Down," tells of the age-long war between those favoring common access to versus those favoring privatization of shared resources. The Diggers called for a communal social order in which everyone, regardless of class, would establish a system of shared access to and management of land. The Diggers were only one group in a long history of agrarian peasants who fought against the enclosure of farmland in England that eventually caused the demise of the open-field system of agriculture.

Karl Marx (1859) wrote of the centuries-long enclosure movements in England in which lords consolidated land previously farmed by peasants, reducing the peasants to day-laborers and hirelings and establishing a true proletariat class that struggled for its

subsistence. Marx argued that capital, by its very nature, and the process of primitive

accumulation, must increasingly enclose and commodify resources previously considered

common, and that people, by their very nature, must increasingly resist such enclosure in

order to have free access to shared resources.

In contemporary times, when one thinks of the commons, Garret Hardin's

warning about resource depletion in his 1968 article, "The Tragedy of the Commons"

often comes to mind. Yet, the notion of commons has gone far beyond Hardin's

implication that common resources cannot be responsibly managed without privatization

or coercion by the state. Indeed, Elinor Ostrom was awarded the 2009 Noble Prize in

Economics because she successfully demonstrated that common pool resources can be

responsibly managed by individuals cooperating outside the market and the state.

Further, the notion of commons has been expanded to include "the new commons" (Hess,

2008). These include a plethora of phenomena, such as the cultural commons,

knowledge commons, global commons, neighborhood commons, infrastructure

commons, and the medical and health commons, among several others (Hess, 2008).

The proliferation of the commons has led to the emergence of the *commons paradigm*

that may be the barometer of an important social trend, and, those who identify with the

commons, the *commoners,* perhaps a community that beckons a new global order to

come.

There is no generally accepted definition of the commons as evidenced in the

many definitions presented below. Hess argued (2008) that these definitions share

two characteristics, namely, that the commons refers to a shared heritage of all

global citizens and that the commons and commoners "hold a commitment to future

generations, to communities beyond our local sphere, to working for both the local

and the global common good" (Hess, 2008, p. 34).   Uzelman, (2008) contended that

the various uses of the term *commons* are separated by differing and even

conflicting underlying paradigms and consequent applications. Confusion arises as

to whether the commons is a resource, a social space, a movement, a community, an

approach to governance, all of these, or something else. Too numerous to list all,

some of the definitions of *commons* include the following, most of which are quoted

by Hess (2008):

> The commons is "the public cultural terrain where we dream, create, and pass it on." (Quinn, Hotchritt, & Ploof, 2012, p. 5)

> Commons can even be thought of as the social bonds shared by a community, and can include the need for trust, cooperation, and human relationships. These are the very foundation of what makes a 'community' rather than merely a group of individuals living in close proximity to each other. (Arvanitakis, 2006)

> Commons is a resource shared by a group where the resource is vulnerable to enclosure, overuse, and social dilemmas. Unlike a public good, it requires management and protection in order to sustain it. (Hess, 2008)

> The commons is more basic than both government and market. It is the vast realm that is the shared heritage of all of us that we typically use without toll or price. The atmosphere and oceans, languages and cultures, the stores of human knowledge and wisdom, the informal support systems of community, the peace and quiet that we crave, the genetic building blocks of life—these are all aspects of the commons. (Rowe, 2001)

> A social regime for managing shared resources and forging a community of shared values and purpose. Unlike markets, which rely upon price as the sole dimension of value, a commons is organized around a richer blend of human needs—for identity, community, fame, and honor—which are indivisible and inalienable, as well as more 'tangible' rewards." (Clippinger & Bollier, 2005)

> The commons: There's a part of our world, here and now, that we all get to enjoy without the permission of any. (Lessig, 1999)

> People must exhibit mutual trust, habits and skills of collaboration, and public spirit in order to sustain such a common resource against the tendency of individuals to abuse it. (Levine. 2001 p. 206)

The commons was where people could share common stories, common experiences, common aspirations, and common problems. In earlier American history, it also served as a 'the learning center of that day' for civic practices and values. (Friedland & Boyte 2000)

The discourse of the commons is at once descriptive, constitutive, and expressive. It is descriptive because it identifies models of community governance that would otherwise go unexamined. It is constitutive because, by giving us a new language, it helps us to build new communities based on principles of the commons. And it is expressive because the language of the commons is a way for people to assert a personal connection to a set of resources and a social solidarity with each other. (Bollier, 2001, p. 29)

The language of the commons provides a coherent alternative model for bringing economic, social, and ethical concerns into greater alignment. It is able to talk about the inalienability of certain resources and the value of protecting community interests. The commons fills a theoretical void by explaining how significant value can be created and sustained outside the market system. (Bollier, 2007, p. 29)

Talk of the commons has its own language. It includes the active verb *commoning* and identifies people as *commoners*. Hence the commons is apparently populated by certain people, namely commoners, who may or may not share characteristics and who are involved in a behavior called *commoning*.

As I elaborate further on, I entered the commons conversation because I saw it as a space distinguished from civil society, where civil society is defined as the space where nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) pursue policies and programs and where citizens act as citizens outside their professional identity in either the corporate, government, or NGO sectors. At this point, I view the commons as a space where people come together outside of their professional or socioeconomic identity to dream about a social order characterized by greater equality and more harmony with nature, emphasizing protecting and sharing resources and framed in a less profit-oriented motivational system. Hence commons is focused on some aspect of resource management and has a particular value

constellation, not necessarily shared by civil society writ large. Further, commons implies something about property and, is compared with public and private property, a comparison not made with civil society, which is a political concept.

I am personally chagrined by the rampant enclosure and commodification of natural and human resources and am concerned about the rapaciousness of the capitalist system but do not have a vision of a better one. I am perplexed by the use of the term *commons* to refer both to resources as well as to a community as well as the expanding use of the term *commons* to refer to more resources such as knowledge and the human gene. I do not yet know how to situate myself in this milieu. Because I am employing a grounded theory approach, which discovers theory through the analysis of data, I will suspend my presuppositions as I explore the world of the commons

Purpose

Most of the writing about the commons has emanated from various perspectives that explain the commons within divergent theories that scholars support. Although the theoretical perspectives provide an interesting view of the role the commons plays within certain paradigms such as Marxism and neo-liberalism, this perspective leaves out the concerns of individuals actually participating in the commons. The concerns of those individuals who describe themselves as commoners as well as those individuals who are intimately involved with some aspect of the commons are often therefore interpreted according to the theories' assumptions and models rather than from the point of view of commoners, and this fact has contributed to the multiple definitions of and confusion concerning the commons.

By employing grounded theory, I hope to listen to the concerns of commoners

expressed in their own words and thereby to identify the social and/or psychological

processes that underlie these concerns. This is important because it may afford a clearer

picture of what is happening in society that has caused people to be so concerned about

the commons. A theory of the commons grounded in the experience of the commoners

and others intimately involved in some aspect of the commons -- and that would explain

the commonality inherent in its diverse usage -- would hence add to the literature because

it would provide a theory based on the perspective of commoners and those intimately

involved in the commons themselves. Such a theory may provide coherence and

consistency in discussions regarding what commoners are doing and thinking. Hence,

the purpose of my research is to discover such a grounded theory. Further, my intention

is to discover the reasons why, according to commoners, the commons has become such a

popular and seemingly important issue.

Finally, I will go beyond the grounded theory that emerges from my research and

assess whether the commons is a paradigm of a new society. I will do this by analyzing

the grounded theory, together with the extensive commons literature, along with available

data regarding social trends, and emerging theories regarding organizations and humans

as cooperative rather than self-maximizers. My intent here is to contribute to the ongoing

conversation regarding the importance of the commons and to stimulate more research

and further discussion regarding its implications for our global future.

Grounded Theory as a Methodology to Study the Commons

Grounded theory is an appropriate methodology to study the commons and

commoners because it is an approach that will generate a theory that accounts for the

main concerns of commoners and other individuals intimately involved with the

commons. The grounded theory will not be about the commoners *per se* but rather will be about the concepts related to their practices and processes (La Pelle, 1997, p. 20). Grounded theory studies social patterns and processes, which Cathy Charmaz (2010) defined as "unfolding temporal sequences that may have identifiable markers with clear beginnings and endings and benchmarks in between" (p. 10). Grounded theory is appropriate "when the study of social interactions or experiences aims to explain a process, not to test or verify an existing theory" (Lingard, Albertson, & Levinson, 2008, p. 337).

Grounded theory is also an appropriate methodology for the study of the commons because not all of the concepts pertaining to this phenomenon have been identified or defined, nor have the relationships between the various concepts been defined or conceptually clarified (Strauss & Corbin, 1987). In Chapter 2, I provide a detailed description of classic grounded theory and a further rationale for its use for this research. As a prelude, however, it is important to clarify that following a grounded theory approach results in a process distinct from other methodologies and leads to the writing of a dissertation that unfolds in a somewhat unique order.

Instead of beginning with a specific research problem or questions, research following grounded theory commences with a phenomenon of interest (Simmons, 2006). My phenomenon of interest is *the commons* and I approached this phenomenon without seeking answers to specific questions. I was interested in learning what commoners and other individuals working in the commons consider their main concerns. As an inductive process, grounded theory research requires that the researchers suspend their own preconceptions and beliefs and knowledge of the issues in the literature and focus, rather,

on gathering those from the participants. The implication of these requirements is that

the literature review is completed following the collection of data from research

participants, as well as secondary-source interviews and data, not prior to beginning, as is

typically done in dissertations.

Grounded theorists debate whether a researcher should become familiar with the

relevant literature prior to initiating a grounded research study. Whereas Glaser (1978)

implied that a dive into the literature should follow data gathering from participants,

Charmaz (2006) argued that a researcher cannot possibly enter a research domain without

some knowledge of the literature. The literature provides appropriate language and

general concepts that contribute to understanding what participants are talking about.

Hence, I enter this study with some general knowledge of the commons literature but

without having completed an exhaustive and critical literature review.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) recognized that researchers can appropriately employ

grounded theory with "a partial framework of local concepts, designating a few principal

or gross features of the structure and processes in the situations" they will study (p. 45).

Further, some grounded theorists (Charmaz, 2003; 2006; Bowen, 2006) argued that

sensitizing concepts help guide the coding process and identification of concepts. Such

concepts lack the specifications of definitive concepts and guide the researcher in various

directions by providing a general reference and points of departure (Charmaz, 2003;

Bowen, 2006).

Hence, I recognize that I am beginning my study with several sensitizing concepts

associated with the commons including *community*, *sharing resources*, *civic space*.   I

will enrich these concepts by allowing commoners to construct a theory based on their

own experience. I needed to possess a basic understanding of the literature to identify the commons as a phenomenon of interest and to be able to communicate with commoners included in my study   The ways in which I select participants is also based on some limited notions of those who might be considered to be commoners and what domains might be best labeled as commons. In order to minimize the possibility of bias by my labeling, I will select only those participants who participate in a commons as I defined it for this study and who self-identify as commoners. I am willing to suspend my preconceptions and open myself fully to what they have to say.

Grounded theory dissertations are often written in an unorthodox order because this approach requires diving into the data immediately prior to conducting an extensive literature review. Hence, they often proceed by summarizing grounded theory, describing the research approach, presenting the grounded theory, and then enhancing the theory by reviewing the relevant literature. Instead of providing a conceptual framework, the literature review is treated as further data that can help the grounded theory further emerge. This ordering is not, however, mandatory. Although I proceeded in my research according to the correct grounded theory protocol, I have organized my dissertation in order to situate my research and provide the reader with a clearer understanding of the domain of the commons prior to presenting the theory about what the commons is about and why it has become such an important phenomenon.

After this general introduction presented in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 provides an in-depth summary of grounded theory. Chapter 3 presents a brief historical overview of the idea of the commons and the First Enclosure Movement, which privatized lands and forest commons that peasants depended upon for their livelihood. Chapter 4 describes the

contemporary resurgence of interest in the commons and Chapter 5 summarizes the

Second Enclosure Movement, which has commodified a number of natural and human

resources.   These background chapters are included in accordance with what Glaser and

Strauss (1967) asserted, as quoted above, regarding the legitimacy of presenting a

framework of local concepts and designating a few principal or gross features of the

commons. The intent is to orient the reader and situate and localize the research, not to

usurp the emergence of a grounded theory.

Chapter 6 outlines how the grounded theory research was carried out, beginning

by presenting a working definition of the commons. Such a definition is needed in order

to select study participants that share some similar and definable characteristics and are

representative of the commons as most commoners currently define. Chapter 7 describes

the grounded theory that emerged from the experience of interviewed commoners and

then enlarges the theory by incorporating data from the literature.

Chapter 8 presents findings from my research as well the analyses of several

scholars that seek to explain why the commons has become such a key issue in

contemporary society. Chapter 9 includes various views of how the commons fits into

capitalist society or whether commoning by necessity is in the process of creating a new

socio-economic order. Finally, Chapter 10, summarizes the study, presents conclusions,

and makes suggestions for further research.

Appendix A includes a number of the key organizations and individuals who are

promoting the commons globally. This Appendix is included so that the kaleidoscope of

the commons is revealed and the domain into which I entered in order to discover a

grounded theory is illuminated to some extent.

Reflexivity and Self in Grounded Theory

Grounded theory requires a great deal of acumen and engagement on the part of the researcher. Therefore, part of the process is to explore the self as one relates to the phenomenon of interest as well as to one's experiences. In grounded theory, because the point of the methodology is to allow participants to provide their own data that will drive the emergence of the theory, researchers need to make a concerted effort to bracket and put aside their preconceptions and assumptions and take a stance of openness (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1987; 2001, 2003, 2004; Simmons, 2010).

This requires a considerable effort of self-examination, reflection, and patience, allowing the theory to emerge rather than forcing it in one direction or another. Researchers also have to deal with ambiguity because the study cannot be planned out in advance. Nor can participants be selected in advance. Hence, researchers must listen, wait, discern, and learn how to identify core variables that will signal the next direction to go in terms of the selection of participants or other sources of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1987; 2001, 2003, 2004; Simmons, 2010).

Self and the Commons

Having worked in international development for over 35 years, I have been involved in building civil society in many countries**.** While reading about civil society, I came upon the term *the commons*. I had never heard nor read anything about it. I searched the *commons* on Google and found that there exists a vast literature and apparently a growing movement related to this phenomenon. After reading about it, I came to realize that the commons raises important issues and is an important domain. I

noted that the commons literature discusses timely and critical social issues that I wanted to study in more depth.

The commons appeared to me to be a phenomenon of great importance in international development, my professional arena, because land takeovers and environmental pollution and degradation remain major challenges in the developing world. In the most recent country in which I have worked, Liberia, commodification of the last remaining rain forests in West Africa and grabbing of tribal lands, without due process, for the production of palm oil, by the Malaysians and Indonesians, raised my awareness about the controversies involved in protecting resources and common access to land.

Then, I came to know about new areas of concern in the commons, such as open access to knowledge, to genetic material, to social media, to cultural norms and languages, and other areas. I became especially interested after reading James Arvanitakis 2012 book, *The Cultural Commons of Hope: The Attempt to Commodify the Final Frontier of Human Experience,* which examines what he calls *pathological modernity* and its enclosure and commodification of our trust, hope, and safety. I became determined to explore the shared concerns of the commoners and to understand, from their perspective, what, in commons language "is happening here," namely, what their concerns are and how these reflect what is happening in society such that concerns about the commons are expanding. I also wanted to know why the commons has emerged as a growing, global phenomenon and whether it heralds a new socioeconomic order.

Dealing With Ambiguity and Developing Patience

Working in the Ministry of Planning in Iraq, from 2008 to 2010, provided me a lesson about living with ambiguity, laying aside preconceptions, and waiting patiently. The more I attempted to suggest ways to improve the Directorate of International Cooperation, the department I was advisor to, the more my Iraqi counterpart resisted. She had good reasons to refrain from moving ahead with organizational restructuring, process standardization, and transparency. Those responsible for the U.S.-funded administrative capacity building project I worked on wanted her to implement a purely American model of bureaucracy. In conflict situations, such as those in some countries in the Middle East, ambiguity reigns because factions are vying for power, and assassination is a common strategy. In an unstable political situation that lacks the rule of law, individuals who "rock the boat," adopt American models, or move faster than the powers that be want them or direct them to, risk being ostracized or even killed.

My counterpart, a highly educated, intelligent, forward thinking, and ambitious woman, refused to make changes in her directorate before the Iraqi Parliament passed the law restructuring the Ministry of Planning. Moreover, implementing an American management model could have put her at extreme risk. Further, in a society ruled by power politics, a common strategy to maintain one's power, even within a bureaucracy, is to maintain a bit of chaos and ambiguity of staff roles. Such a *status quo* allows managers to assign staff to whatever role and function they need filled at a particular time and prevents staff from complaining that they are being required to assume responsibilities not indicated in their job descriptions, or to protest that their employee evaluations are not accurate, or to complain that they are not given salary increases or

promotions. A manager's authority, hence, is not challenged and managers can more

effectively maintain their bureaucratic power and control.

Working in such an environment taught me to "back off" and await my

counterpart's requests, to refrain from imposing my perspective and worldview on her,

and to listen to and understand her point of view and the society in which she lived.

These lessons prepared me for living in the ambiguity of grounded theory and for putting

aside my preconceptions and patiently waiting for the study participants to describe their

experiences and to allow their data to evolve into a theory.

Significance of the Research

Over the past 30 years, the commons has become an increasingly important

phenomenon employed to describe a variety of different shared resources, social spaces,

communities, and movements. Groups of commoners, organized by their concern over

various commons, have proliferated since the early 1990s. The commons has become a

global phenomenon, with increasing influence on policy makers around the world

(Bollier, 2007). Indiana University Professor Elinor Ostrom was named 2009 Nobel

Laureate in the Economic Sciences for her work on the economic governance of common

pool resources, arguing that communities could effectively manage them outside the

market or the state (Ostrom, 1990).

Charlotte Hess, Dean for Research, Collections, and Scholarly Communication at

Syracuse University, has been tracking the commons literature since the early 1990s and

reports that this literature has proliferated enormously since then (Hess, 2008). The

global commons, according to Hess, are the most established new commons. She found

over 4,000 hits alone for the global commons when she conducted a database search

(Hess, 2008). Hess founded the Digital Library of the Commons

(http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu), which holds more than 50,000 articles on the commons

(Hess, 2013). The documents in this database include books, journal articles,

dissertations, and conference papers from 11,236 authors on 7,294 subjects, from

aborigines to zoning, discussed in terms of issues of enclosure, commodification, and

depletion. Articles refer to 15 sectors including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, general

resources, global commons, grazing, history, information and knowledge, land tenure and

use, new commons, social organization, theory, urban commons, water resource and

irrigation, and wildlife.

My study is significant because it constructs a grounded theory regarding the

concerns of commoners, and other individuals immersed in the topic, and hence describes

social processes that may provide insights regarding social changes. My research

answers the question "What is going on here?" and thereby provides insights into what is

happening in society such that these concerns are increasing. Such a theory, built from

the ground up, furthers the research agenda for this topic. Further, my research gathers

data to help answer the questions regarding the reasons the commons has become a

popular phenomenon and what has led to its popularity. Finally, my data helps to assess

whether the commons is a significant paradigm that heralds a major social change and

socioeconomic order founded upon a paradigm that differs from the market paradigm that

currently dominates.

There are hundreds of thousands of commoners around the world whose

aspiration is to reverse the current, and prevent the future, enclosure and commodification

of resources and who talk of an egalitarian, sharing community and either a kinder

capitalism or a postcapitalist social order. It is important to the furtherance of the study

of the commons to better understand their concerns and why these issues are increasing in

importance. My research may also provide additional insights into why the commons has

become such a popular phenomenon of interest. In this regard, my study is timely,

relevant, and significant. Further, my study will add to the scholarly conversation

regarding whether the commons serves as the paradigm for a new socioeconomic order.

I hope also that my study will further the dialog regarding how the commons serves as a

social organization suitable for citizen participation and action for effecting political

change.

Chapter Two:

Grounded Theory

First introduced by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), grounded theory is a research method that involves the systematic generation of a multivariate conceptual theory from data (Glaser, 1998, 2010). As opposed to positivistic approaches and grand theories that begin with a fixed theoretical framework and interpret data in terms of this framework, grounded theory seeks to build a theory without preconceptions based on what the data actually say. It is a highly empirical approach that seeks to understand how study participants act and think in order to resolve their main concern in the substantive area the researcher is investigating (Glaser, 1998).

Grounded theory asks the participants "What is going on here?" (Glaser, 2010, p. 2) and thereby identifies a core variable that represents "the prime mover of the behavior in the substantive area" (Glaser, 1998, p. 124). Grounded theory is not a descriptive method. Rather, it generates concepts that explain the way people resolve their central concerns regardless of time and place (Glaser, 1998). The methodology "generates theories that are fully grounded in data rather than speculation and ideology" (Simmons, 2010, p. 15).

The question "What is going on here?" is not considered to be a legitimate research question by many scholars who employ methods driven by much more formulated and specific questions. The justification for the grounded theory approach is to enter into data without preconceived notions or focused questions that might overly narrow what the data reveal. The approach is especially appropriate when the underlying

social and psychological processes of a phenomenon have not been identified and when a

theory has not yet been constructed. Once the theory emerges, then researchers can better

formulate research questions and further examine and expand the theory. I selected

grounded theory rather than another research approach because I wanted to discover a

theory regarding the commons and offer this to scholars interested in the commons to

generate more conversation regarding its appropriateness to explain this phenomenon.

At the heart of grounded theory is theoretical sampling, "the process of data

collection for generating theory whereby [researchers] jointly collect, code, and analyze

[their] data and decide what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to

develop [a] theory as it emerges" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). The emerging theory

controls the process of data collection by leading researchers to the next data source.

Coding the data leads to the identification of a core variable, which researchers look for

in other data sources to verify, expand, or even change. As Glaser asserted, "all is data"

(2009, 2010, 2011) and hence the data sources can include participant open-ended, face-

to-face interviews, focus groups, published interviews, autobiographies, movies, videos,

observation, books, articles, as well as any number of other sources. Grounded theory

takes researchers on an adventure of sorts led by the data and the core variable.

Data are collected and analyzed at the same time and constantly compared. This

constant comparative analysis process includes open coding followed by selective

coding, which Glaser (1978) called substantive coding and theoretical coding

respectively. During this process, researchers write memos as conceptual/theoretical

ideas occur to them as they code. Memos are free flowing, somewhat intuitive, almost

stream-of-consciousness writings about concepts that come to the researchers' minds and

which researchers save and review and even expand or update during the research.

Memos and codes, then, create the theoretical concepts that the researchers link together

to construct a theoretical outline that serves as the basis for the theory that explains the

phenomena of interest.

Criticism, Controversy, and Confusion About Grounded Theory

Many academics criticize grounded theory as being insufficiently rigorous to meet

the implicit standards of research. Consequently, researchers that follow this

methodology often have to justify their approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz,

2006; Glaser, 2010). Furthermore, divergent views of the epistemological framework of

grounded theory between the two founders of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss, led to

a schism in the methodology and a separation of researchers into those who follow Glaser

and to those who agree with Strauss. Finally, many of those researchers who have

claimed to be using grounded theory, in fact, have employed it incorrectly or mix it with

other methodologies, hence giving the wrong impression about the methodology (Glaser,

2011).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory partly so that any

researcher might generate theories (Simmons 2010) by using their own concepts

"generated from the data instead of using, and probably forcing, the received concepts of

others, especially those concepts of unduly respected theoretical capitalists" (Glaser,

2002, p. 16). This "democratic ethos" (Simmons, 2010, p. 15) has chagrined many social

scientists. Researchers in the academy wedded to particular methodologies, especially

those stemming from the positivistic "scientific method" see grounded theory, therefore,

as formless and having no framework to prove its validity.

Unfortunately, as Glaser pointed out in *Doing Grounded Theory* (1998), many grounded theory researchers have not practiced the methodology correctly or rigorously and hence have contributed to the criticisms of the methodology. The practice of grounded theory is time consuming, and requires the ability of participants to feel comfortable enough to speak openly about their experiences with the phenomena of interest, to correctly code the data, to identify the true core variables, and to allow the theory to emerge from this data. This is a painstaking and time consuming process and requires acute perceptual and analytical skills on the part of the researcher. Critics cannot successfully refute a grounded theory when it has "grab," fit, and relevance and when it truly "works" (Glaser, 1978).

An internecine debate among those who established and practice grounded theory has contributed to the controversy regarding the methodology. Although remaining friends, Glaser and Strauss conceptually split after initially establishing grounded theory in 1967.   Glaser maintained the original tenants of grounded theory whereas Strauss and others such as Juliet Corbin (1998d) and Cathy Charmaz (2006) altered the methodology into what is known as evolved or constructivist grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).   The split and subsequent debates center around the objectivist-constructivist controversy that has plagued philosophy, science, and research approaches and became especially heated in the decades following the publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. The question that stirs the debate is, "Does the grounded theory researcher construct the theory she is researching or is she really discovering an objective theory evolving only from the participant data?"

So-called constructivist grounded theorists such as Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006) argued that those who deny that researchers are constructing the theory are claiming that the theory is objective, and discovered in the world and hence that these researchers are positivists, the very research culture they deride. As Charmaz argued, classic grounded theory is objectivist and hence positivist because it is unconcerned with "the social context from which the data emerge" (p. 131); it "does not attend to the processes of production" (p. 131), and it claims "value free neutrality" (p. 132),

Glaser argued that the theory is derived from the data and is not constructed by the researcher (2009) and his version of grounded theory is hence often referred to as classic grounded theory. Simmons (2011) argued that the notion of a constructivist grounded theory is an oxymoron and that grounded theory researchers are not so naïve as to discount their capacity to allow their own assumptions and knowledge to impact their research. Such researchers make a concerted and conscious effort to lay aside their preconceptions so that the theory that is generated is "systematically grounded in data in all stages" (Simmons, 2011, p. 21).

Simmons (2011) asserted that classic grounded theory is neither objectivist nor constructivist but reflects elements of both, offering a methodology that grounds theory in data and "provides theoretical foothold for effective actions and change initiatives" (p. 27). I agree with Simmons and contend that the objectivist-constructivist argument, although interesting and perhaps philosophically important, is not necessary to resolve in order to conduct grounded theory research.   All theories are constructed, in any case, and subject to debate and retesting, and all sound theories need data to support them.

The central debated issue in the case of grounded theory is who or what constructs the theory. Classic grounded theorists argue that participants and their data construct the theories. Researchers discover and facilitate this process through their data collection and coding acumen and their acute analytical abilities to spot core variables. Constructivist grounded theorists argue that the researchers construct these theories through their interpretation of the data. Philosophers have debated for centuries whether such data is objective and discovered in a tangible world or subjective and constructed by humans. What is more relevant to a grounded research study is the fact that it allows for the possibility of hearing many voices that are typically marginalized in traditional conceptualizations of qualitative inquiry.

The Methodology of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory begins with the identification of a phenomenon of interest that the researcher wants to learn about with an open mind and an open heart. The researcher does not identify specific research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, or ideas, nor does the researcher assume a theoretical perspective as is the norm in other approaches (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Guthrie & Lowe, 2011; Simmons, 2010). By entering the study without these typical tools and frameworks of research, the researcher remains more open to what the data say. Further, the researcher can more easily lay aside any preconceptions and bracket his or her assumptions and beliefs by entering his or her study without the typical "baggage" of research.

The researcher can "remain sensitive to the data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through…pre-existing

hypotheses and biases" (Glaser, 1978, p. 3).   The researcher enters the substantive field

"without knowing the problem – both on a descriptive and conceptual level – a stance

that requires suspending ones knowledge of the literature and one's own experience and

entering the study with a totally open mind" (Glaser, 1998, p. 122). As Glaser (1998)

said, "grounded theory is multivariate. It happens sequentially, subsequently,

simultaneously, serendipitously, and scheduled" (p. 1).

There are seven phases of classic grounded theory research, namely (a)

preparation, (b) data collection, (c) coding and analyzing data, (d) theoretical memoing,

(e) reviewing and incorporating relevant literature, (f) sorting memos into a theoretical

outline, and (g) writing the theory. Researchers continually and intimately interact with

their data throughout their study, continually comparing coding, core variables, memos,

and emergent theory, looking closely for interrelationships that lead them to a theory

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998).

Preparation

Preparation includes selecting the phenomenon of interest and making a concerted

effort to lay aside preconceptions. I find it helpful to calm and focus my mind and push

aside mental noise, entering a sort of meditative state, as a preparation for initiating my

study. Such a state opens me up more to listen and to be mindful to be in the present.

After selecting the phenomenon of interest, researchers decide on the first data source.

As previously stated, all is data according to Glaser (1998) and hence researchers can

consider beginning data collection by coding written interviews, movies, video clips,

radio shows, conducting participant interviews, conducting surveys, making observations

of participants, among other ways. Quantitative as well as qualitative data can be sought.

Data from the literature is gathered and coded and core variables are identified or expanded after other data sources are exhausted.

The process of identifying core variables in the literature differs from the traditional literature view because grounded theory researchers are looking for data about the phenomenon of interest that describes the main concern of the authors rather than summarizing, comparing, and critiquing the literature and the various theoretical and empirical perspectives of the authors. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that multiple data sources are preferable because they provide "different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties" (p. 65). They titled these "slices of data" (p. 65).

Participant interviews are the most common approach to data collection. The researcher begins with an open-ended "grand tour" question or inquiry "designed to convey to the respondent that they are being invited to discuss what is relevant to them (not the researcher) about the general topic and to do so on their terms" (Simmons, 2012, p. 23). Interview guides are hence not drafted prior to these open-ended interviews. Grounded theorists use "the gentlest definition of the word interview, defining it as a conversation between equals which is led by the participant" (Scott, 2011, p. 87). In lieu of face-to-face interviews, online interviews can be held using synchronous or asynchronous sessions, the approach ideally selected by the participant. The grounded theory researcher needs to help the participant feel technologically and emotionally comfortable and not at risk. Consequently, it is important to consider the technology to be employed in the interview.

Although Glaser (1998) argued that recording and transcribing interviews is too time-consuming and also may threaten the participant, other researchers believe that recording and transcribing helps collect all the information and provide a written text for the researcher to carefully code. *Atmosphering* and *toning*, two techniques Glaser used in seminars, can help make the participants feel comfortable (Scott, 2011). Atmosphering in online meetings includes using software that the participant is comfortable with and that offers privacy. Toning concerns communication style and content "where what is said and done is designed to show the participant that he or she is safe from harm, is respected, and will not be judged" (Scott, 2011, p 89).

Although individual participant interviews are typically the most common approach to data gathering, focus groups can also be employed, Hernandez (2011) asserted that focus groups are a legitimate data collection method of classic grounded theory methodology and can be employed as well as participant interviews "to discover the theory about a core category from data and to determine the problem and its resolution in a particular substantive area" (p. 120). Interview questions are "spill" questions used to get participants to begin, eliciting more questions as the interview proceeds (p. 120).

Further, textual analysis is a legitimate form of data collection in grounded theory Charmaz (2006). Charmaz advised that "researchers use extant text as data to address their research questions although these texts were produced for other – often very different – purposes" (p. 35). Charmaz (2006) and other grounded theorists believed that researchers could not avoid the literature until after alternative data collection approaches are employed. She and they argued that literature is critical in order to understand the

language employed in the domain one is entering and to make sense of the data collected. She also said that the literature is a legitimate source of data during all phases of data collection.

The final step in the preparation phase is to select the initial source and method of data collection and to begin the process of data collection. Researchers must determine what the potentially most fruitful source is to begin exploring the phenomenon of interest.

Collecting Data: Initial and Theoretical Sampling

Researchers do not plan out in advance what all their data sources will be, nor do they get a specific group of participants lined up for the entire study. Instead, once researchers have decided their initial data source and have begun collecting data, they let the data direct them to the next data source (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process of data analysis, which happens simultaneously with data collection, guides the next step. The research process itself "leads to the discovery of the relevant questions in the data" (Simmons & Gregory, 2003). Researchers cannot cite the number and types of study participants or other sources of data until their research is completed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory researchers employ theoretical sampling, which directs the data collection process. Because the sources of data are not planned in advance, as in typical sampling techniques, the researcher must collect, code, and analyze the data and "decide what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (Glaser, 1987, p. 36). By practicing theoretical sampling, researchers allow the emerging concepts to direct the data collection process rather than a preconceived framework or hypothesis (Glaser, 1978). Further, because grounded theory is comparing

"ideational characteristics of groups that in turn delineate behavioral and attitudinal patterns" (Glaser, 1978, p. 44) rather than populations, groups do not have to be similar. The criterion for selecting comparison groups is "their theoretical relevance for furthering the development of emerging categories" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 49). Group comparisons are theoretical and researchers can choose any groups that will help generate "as many properties of the categories as possible, and that will help relate categories to each other and to their properties" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 49). This aspect of grounded theory led me to be open to exploring and interviewing individuals working in any or all of the commons groups even if their focus was on differing resources in different national and cultural contexts.

Theoretical sampling includes constant comparison of data to begin to identify emerging concepts and "the emergence of concepts never fails, as it cannot since social organization of life is always in the process of resolving relevant problems for the participants in an action scene" (Glaser, 1978, p. 45). Constant comparison is a qualitative analytic technique that can be used to analyze any type of data, whether qualitative or quantitative (Glaser, 2008).

Data collection progressively becomes more selective until it leads to theoretical saturation. Because researchers cannot know how large a sample size is required until such saturation occurs, the research sample size cannot be preselected. Data collection is controlled and "directed to relevance and workability" (Glaser, 1978, p. 47) but questions to participants remain open-ended and non-leading so that the focus stays on their experience.

Coding and Analyzing Data

Constant comparative method. The constant comparative method is the

approach grounded theory employs to code and analyze data simultaneously to generate

theory more systematically than other qualitative research approaches (Glaser & Strauss,

1967). As Glaser (1978) pointed out, codes conceptualize "the underlying pattern of a

set of empirical indicators within the data" (p. 55) and provide an abstract yet grounded

view of the data. Charmaz (2006) elaborated that:

> As grounded theorists, we study our early data and begin to separate, sort, and
> synthesize these data through qualitative coding. Coding means that we attach
> labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. Coding distills
> data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other
> segments of data. Grounded theorists emphasize what is happening in the scene
> when they code data. (p. 3)

The initial categorizing of incidents reveals "similarities, differences, and degrees

of consistency of meaning" (Glaser, 1978, p. 62). Researchers must have "theoretical

sensitivity" during this process because they are looking for conceptualizations, not

descriptions. Simmons (1995) argued that "theoretical sensitivity is both an attitude

towards data and theory as well as a researcher's combined knowledge, understanding,

and skills, which can be applied to data collection and interpretation" (p. 692).

Coding. Substantive and theoretical coding are both employed in the constant

comparative method. Substantive coding conceptualizes the data and is employed from

the start of the research. Theoretical coding conceptualizes the relationships and patterns

of substantive codes and generates hypotheses. Substantive coding is used to discover

codes in data and includes open coding and selective coding (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical

coding is used to create, sort, and integrate conceptual memos, which will be discussed

later (Glaser, 1978).

Open coding. Open coding is employed initially to identify categories and their properties (Glaser, 1992). Without using a codebook, researchers using open coding "read the data closely and code the data according to what the data are doing" (Glaser, 1978, p. 56). Then, substantive coding is used to group related concepts that "codify the substance of the data" (Stern, 1980, p. 21).

Open coding is governed by rules (Glaser, 1978). The most important rule stipulates questions that researchers should continually ask themselves include: "What is this data a study of? . . . What category or property of a category . . . does this incident indicate? What is actually happening in the data" (Glaser, 1978, p. 57)?   These questions help researchers remain "theoretically sensitive and transcending when analyzing, collecting, and coding his data." (Glaser, 1978, p. 57). They compel researchers to "focus on patterns among incidents which yield codes" (Glaser, 1978, p. 57). Researchers complete their own coding and analyze the data, line by line, "constantly coding each sentence" for theoretical meaning (Glaser, 1978, p. 57). Researchers need to establish the core variable and its properties before they leave the substantive area of their study (Glaser, 1978, p. 60). Moreover, they need to maintain a neutral attitude toward variables such as age, sex, social class, race, skin color, variable that can potentially prejudice the findings, unless these emerge as relevant (Glaser, 1978, p. 60).

Theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation occurs when "in coding and analyzing both no new properties emerge and the same properties continually emerge as one goes through the full extent of the data" (Glaser, 1978, p. 53) and the core variable emerges. Researchers can make sure that the variable is definitely core and "stretch

diversity of data as far as possible, just to make certain that saturation is based on the widest possible range of data on the category" (Glaser, 1978, p. 61).

The core variable. Researchers continue coding until they identify the core variable "that accounts for the most variation in the data, the thing to which everything in the data relates…what people are working on" (Simmons, 2010, p. 28).   There may be more than one potential core variable but researchers need to pursue only one that they then selectively code. Selective coding guides researchers to the next data source as part of the theoretical sampling process.

The ways in which researchers name codes and the core variable is critical. Two categories of names are possible: (a) either sociological constructs, which researchers construct themselves, or, (b) as *in vivo* codes that "have been abstracted from the language of the research situation" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 107). Codes are obviously extremely important to guide the emergence of the theory and they must have both analytical ability and imagery so they can evolve into theory and they are descriptive enough that readers will "see" their meaning (Glaser, 1978). Simmons argued that codes should also have fit to the pattern they represent so the theory will be truthfully grounded in the data. For this reason, original terms are often employed to minimize the likelihood of readers imposing their preconceived notions onto common terms.

In terms of my study of the commons, I will be looking for a core variable that represents what commoners are working on and the concept to which the data seems to mostly relate. This variable may either be a sociological concept that I name or an *in vivo* concept that commoners themselves employ and which stands out above all others as their major concern or preoccupation.

Selective coding. Once researchers have identified their core variable, they engage in selective coding. Here, researchers limit their coding to "those variables that relate to the core variable in a significant way—such that they might be included in the emerging theory" (Glaser, 1978, p. 61). As a result of this process, researchers select the most explanatory and conceptual core variable, relegating others to subordinate roles.

Theoretical coding. In addition to core variables emerging, core categories emerge also in the process of data collection and analysis. Once researchers identify a core category, they will initiate theoretical coding that focuses on relationships between substantive codes as hypotheses that eventually will be integrated into the emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998). Theoretical codes "weave the fractured story back together again...[and] give interpretive scope, broad pictures, and a new perspective" (Glaser, 1978, p. 72).

Glaser (1998) argued that the most common theoretical code families include: (a) a basic social structural process: (b) a basic social structural condition; (c) a basic social psychological process such as child rearing, teaching, learning curves, becoming, education, grieving, maturing; (d) a basic psychological process such as identity development, character formation, loving, unconscious agendas, etc.; and, (e) a political process, cultural process, historical process, financial process, etc.

Glaser (1978, 1998, 2005) gave names to these coding families. Besides the "six C's" that include causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions, other families bear names such as *process, degree, dimension, type, strategy, interactive, identity, cutting point, means-goal, cultural, consensus, mainline, theoretical, ordering* or *elaboration, unit, reading, models, and basics*. Such diverse family names

indicate that theories can emerge in multiple social and psychological domains and

provide explanations for a multiplicity of social and psychological processes.

Theoretical codes are best expressed in terms of gerunds (Glaser, 1978). As

Charmaz (2010) argued:

> Adopting gerunds fosters theoretical sensitivity because these words nudge us out
> of static topics and into enacted processes. Gerunds prompt thinking about
> actions— large and small. If you can focus your coding on actions, you have
> ready grist for seeing sequences and making connections. If your gerunds quickly
> give way to coding for topics, you may synthesize and summarize data but the
> connections between them will remain more implicit. Thus, I suggest renewed
> emphasis on actions and processes, not on individuals, as a strategy in
> constructing theory and moving beyond categorizing types of individuals. (p. 136)

Theoretical Memoing

Memos are a critical aspect of grounded theory research. Glaser and Strauss

(1967) wrote that researchers will know it is time to write a memo when they begin to

muse over theoretical notions at the same time trying to concentrate on their study of the

next incident (p. 107). This creates a sort of mental conflict and signals that researchers

should begin to memo to pour out their thoughts and get their ideas on paper as soon as

possible. Memoing remains a part of grounded theory from the beginning through the

final theory write-up (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Memoing "captures the frontier of the analyst's thinking" (Glaser, 1978, p. 83).

Memos have several roles in grounded theory. They are vehicles for researchers to

"theoretically develop ideas (codes) with complete freedom into a memo fund that is

highly sortable" (Glaser, 1978, p. 83). Memos are "about concepts and the relationships

between them, particularly their relationship to the core variable" (Simmons, 2010, p.

32). Researchers need to write with freedom –- almost stream of consciousness –-

allowing their ideas to flow out brainstorming about conceptualizing descriptive data and

finding relationships. Memos include "*connections* and *significance* to both the data and the major theoretical themes in the data" (Glaser, 1978, p. 85). Memos must be sortable and Glaser (1978) also recommended that they be kept separate from data. Memos can be expanded throughout the research process. When they are sorted, theoretical codes may also emerge.

Reviewing and Incorporating Relevant Literature

After researchers have identified the emerging theory with considerable confidence, they turn to the literature that concerns their phenomenon of interest and integrate the literature into their theory by coding and analyzing and memoing it, In so doing, researchers enrich the theory that emerged from the researchers' data collection process. Grounded theorists also argue that it is legitimate to locate the emerging theory in the literature (Glaser, 1978).

Sorting Memos Into a Theoretical Outline

Researchers begin to sort their memos when they believe that they have saturated their data and fully developed their fund of memos (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Knowing when this time has arrived requires acute analytical and intuitive skills. Conceptually sorting memos is the process "of integrating and organizing what has been written about in memos" (Simmons, 1995, p. 116) and is "the key to formulating the theory" (Glaser, 1978, p. 116). Such conceptual or theoretical sorting "produces a generalized, integrated model by which to write the theory since it forces connections between categories and properties. In doing this it maintains a conceptual level, while preventing the regression back to mainly writing up data" (Glaser 1978, p. 117).

The sorting process should generate a theoretical outline, which in turn should generate a theory that is both dense and complex (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Charmaz (2006) advised that

> Taking a closer look at processual analyses may aid your efforts to construct theory. Studying a process fosters your efforts to construct theory because you define and conceptualize relationships between experiences and events. Then you can define the major phases and concentrate on the relationships between them. (p. 136)

Writing the Theory

Writing the grounded theory is where researchers express the full conceptual theory that has evolved from data collection and analysis. As Glaser, 1978) said, the write-up has a "slice of reality" character and represents a "theory of a core variable which freezes the ongoing for a moment" (p. 129). Glaser (1978) noted that, "the most important thing to remember is to *write about concepts, not people. . . .* The power of the theory resides in concepts, not in description" (p. 134).

The written theory is explanatory and "captures and explains the behavior relevant to the problems or issues at hand" (Simmons & Gregory, 2003, p. 16) and focuses on the core variable and the categories, properties, and dimensions of the theory that have emerged (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The theory write-up illustrates "the theory's place among others working on the same topic or ideas. . . . It refers to other ideas in the literature of a related but tangential direction. And it conceptually transcends, while grouping together, empirical articles which just present findings" (Glaser, 1978, p. 138).

There is an apparent danger that a grounded theory may be "too low level" to really account for a more generalizable human process. Charmaz (2006) argued that

researchers can guard against this by following Glaser's (1978, 1998) advice to begin the

analytic process by asking, 'What is this data a study of?' (1978, p. 57):

> If we ask the question at each stage of analytic process and seek the most
> fundamental answer that fits, we might discover that particular meanings and
> actions in our studied world suggest theoretical links to compelling ideas that had
> not occurred to us. As we pursue theoretical possibilities, we may make
> connections between our theoretical categories and ideas concerning the core of
> human experience. If so, our study may be about fundamental views and values
> such as those concerning human nature, selfhood, autonomy and attachment,
> moral life and responsibility, legitimacy and control, and certainty and truth. (p.
> 138)

Criteria for evaluating grounded theory

The grounded theory must evidence *fit, workability, relevance*, and *modifiability*,

(Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First of all, "the categories of the

theory must *fit* the data. Data should not be forced or selected to fit pre-conceived or pre-

existent categories, or discarded in favor of keeping an extant theory intact" (Glaser,

1978, p. 4). The theory must explain what is really happening in the phenomenon of

interest. It must be relevant to what is happening, past, present, and future, and hence it

works and manifests the characteristic of workability. The theory must be relevant in that

it must be meaningful and "allows core problems and processes to emerge" (Glaser,

1978, p. 5). Finally, the theory must reflect modifiability in that it must be adaptable and

capable of explaining new variations as more data is analyzed. It should also be relevant

to other contexts than those narrowly defined by the phenomenon of interest (Glaser,

1978).

Conclusion

In conclusion, my grounded theory research of the commons intends to find out

what "is going on here," that is, what are the concerns of commoners and others involved

in the commons and hence what are the social processes underlying the commons. I also

intend to employ grounded theory research to discern a theory regarding the causes of the

proliferation of commons and commoners around the world. What has caused this

phenomenon to emerge and spread so dramatically?

Further, I intend to go beyond grounded theory in order to my grounded theory

research will generate data to answer my question regarding whether the commons is a

paradigm of social change and of a new society in which commons replaces the market as

the defining scaffolding or whether the commons is a third sector that can function in a

capitalist system besides the market and the state.

Grounded theory is an appropriate methodology for this study for a number of

reasons. Grounded theory has the capacity to interpret complex phenomena (Charmaz,

2006). The commons is such a complex phenomenon. Grounded theory accommodates

social issues and describes social processes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It helps to explain,

in conceptual terms, what is going on in the substantive field of research (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1998).

Chapter Three:

Evolution of the Idea of the Commons

and the First Enclosure Movement

The term *commons* has a wide range of meanings and uses in English (Williams, 1983). Its Latin root word, *communis* is derived from *com*, meaning "together" and *munis*, meaning "under obligation" and from com, meaning "and" and *unis,* meaning "one." French political activists Alain Lipietz traced the word *commun* back to the Norman, William the Conquerer. *Commun*, according to Lipietz, derives from *munis,* which means "gift" and "duty," a dualism that describes the two sides of the concept in its contemporary usage (Bollier, 2014).

The term has often been inextricably related to the term *community*, referring to a group or to all human kind, as well as to a particular, lower social class, a place where the public meets, or to a shared resource. It is used to refer to something shared at the same time it is used to refer to something ordinary or even lowly and vulgar. Also derived from the Latin root *communis*, the related term *community* generally refers to a group having direct, even intimate relationships in contrast to terms such as *society* or *state*, where relationships are organized and instrumental (Williams, 1983).

The idea of the commons as a public space and also as a shared resource accessible by the community has existed since antiquity. Hunting-and-gathering societies had open access to animals and plants on lands belonging to the community. Ancient Egypt and the Roman Empire had common-based laws. In 535 AD, Emperor Justinian recognized the commons in law as he included *res communes* in his Institutes of Justinian body of law (Bollier, 2014). As Bollier pointed out, the Emperor declared that

by the law of nature these things are common to mankind – the air, running water, the seas and consequently the shores of the sea…Also all rivers and ports are public so that the right of fishing in a port and in rivers is common to all. And by the law of nations the use of the shore is also public, and in the same manner, the sea itself. The right of fishing in the sea from the shore belongs to all men. (p. 10)

"The pubic trust doctrine" is a legacy of Justinians's law. In the United States, this doctrine dictates that the state has the duty to protect natural resources and that it cannot sell or give away land, water, or wildlife to any private party (Bollier, 2014; Rose, 1986). *Res communes* differs from *res publicus*. The former refers to things common to all and incapable of private appropriation and beyond the power of the state, whereas the latter refers to that which belongs to or is administered by the state.

Wall (2014) pointed out that the commons historically had cultural and social connotations beyond their economic value. Commons often held mythical or religious meanings and were celebrated by intimate relations with the people who depended upon them. As Wall wrote (2014), regarding one such example, "indigenous people in Australian who sing to the land or Mongolian herders who believe that dragons own the soil provide beautiful examples of commoning beyond cost-benefit analysis and class struggle" (p. 107).

The Commons in Feudal Europe

Commoning was a particular way of weaving the threads of daily life, the how of things
with the why to give meaning and a sense of what's real and relevant,
and it lasted for centuries, with the blessing of church and state including the Tudor
kings and the early Stuarts. *Heather Menzies (2014)*

Drafted in 1215, the Magna Carta and its companion Charter of the Forest, initially issued in 1217, established legal principles that greatly impacted Western law. The Charter granted access of commoners to the royal forest resources (Bollier, 2014; Linebaugh, 2009). At the time, the forests were the most important source of fuel and

pasture and also an important source of meat. Hence, they were critical for the

subsistence of the commoners.

  In Europe, during the feudal system, open-access agriculture was accepted

practice. Although the land and forests were owned by nobles, peasant tenants enjoyed

the use of their land and forests according to the notion of *usufruct*, a concept derived

from Roman law that afforded individuals the use of other's property, as long as they did

not destroy it (Wall, 2014). Common land was provided to peasants for *estover*, a

concept that means "it is necessary," derived from the Latin phrase *est opus* (Wall, 2014).

The Law of the Commons and Commoners of 1720 explained that estover was necessary

for tenants to have access to land and forests for their sustenance, and to generate money

to pay rent and provide services (Wall, 2014).

Rifkin (2014) explained that the notion of property during feudal times was quite

different from that in contemporary times. Creation was considered to belong to God

who had ultimate decision-making authority within a *Great Chain Being,* a "rigidly

constructed hierarchy of responsibilities that ascended upward from the lowest creatures

to the angels in heaven" (Rifkin, 2014, p. 30). Rifkin (2014) recounted that

> within this theological framework, property was conceptualized as a series of
> trusts administered pyramidally from the celestial throne down to the peasants
> working the communal fields. In this schema, property was never exclusively
> owned, but rather divvied up into spheres of responsibility conforming to a fixed
> code of proprietary obligations. For example, when the king granted land to a lord
> or vassal, 'his rights over the land remained, except for the particular interest he
> had parted with.' (p. 30)

Peasants grazed their animals and raised their crops and foraged their pigs on

common lands and in common forests. *Pannage* referred to the peasants' right to forage

their pigs for beech mast and acorns. The right to dig peat or turf for fuel was called

turbary whereas the right to catch fish was called *piscary*. Peasants could also take

bracken to provide animal bedding and sand, gravel, and stone for building or paths

(Wall, 2014).

Common fields were comprised of arable land and pasture that the village or town

controlled and divided into strips that peasant families cultivated. The strips were

designated and managed to equalize the distribution of rich soils and to reduce risks.

Fields would be opened to allow the grazing of livestock after the harvest or during

fallow periods. The use of common fields was regulated by the community of users to

ensure that rules were followed. Violators were disciplined. Manorial courts served as

the regulators of the commons during the medieval period. Wastelands and forests were

also subject to common use for firewood, building materials, fuel, meat, and pasture, and

were likewise regulated (Bollier, 2014; Linebaugh, 2009; Uzelman, 2008).

During this period, the commons did not merely refer to the land, forests, or

wasteland, but also the relationship of individuals to these resources and to each other.

This relationship was an economic, political, and social relationship and was enacted in a

constellation of subjective values typically captured by the title of *commoner*. Peasants

possessed a "common right" to possess the land without owning it (Linebaugh, 2009;

Neeson, 1993), a right conferred by law and custom. This right was granted not to

everyone for every resource, but only to a defined community based on negotiation and

agreement. Rifkin (2014) wrote that the commons

> became the first primitive exercise in democratic decision making in Europe.
> Peasant councils were responsible for overseeing economic activity, including
> planting and harvesting, crop rotation, the use of forest and water resources, and
> the number of animals that could graze on the common pastures. (p. 30)

However, beginning in the 15th Century and continuing to the 19th Century, the

landed gentry began a process of enclosure that dramatically altered the system of

agriculture. Lands, forests, and wastelands previously considered common were fenced

off, preventing peasants from growing their crops, grazing their livestock, and hunting for

food and medicinal plants. Enclosure became and continues to be a key concept to which

contemporary scholars and commoners refer to. Enclosure of land was accompanied by

the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, which privatized their land and made land a

commodity in England (Linebaugh, 2009).

The Enclosure Movement in England

> They hang the man and flog the woman
> That steal the goose from off the common,
> But let the greater villain loose
> That steals the common from the goose.
> The Law demands that we atone
> When we take things we do not own
> But leaves the lords and ladies fine
> Who take things that are yours and mine.
> The poor and wretched don't escape
> If they conspire the law to break;
> This must be so but they endure
> Those who conspire to make the law.
> The law locks up the man or woman
> Who steals the goose from off the common'
> And geese will still a common lack
> Till they go and steal it back.

English folk poem, circa 1764

Marking the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the birth of modernity,

the concept of enclosure is generally traced back to the fencing of land in England that

occurred from the 1400s through the 1800s. Prior to enclosure, peasants employed open-

field farming. Farmers collectively owned rights to large portions of land on which they

grew crops and grazed livestock. Open-field farming was appropriate for subsistence

farming, but with the advent of capitalism and eventually the industrial revolution, agriculture became a profitable industry capable of generating excess capital on larger, commercially-oriented and commodified plots of land. Land, the capitalist farmers argued, had to be enclosed.

Enclosure took several forms. During the population decline, caused by the Black Death, between 1450 and 1550, landlords further depopulated areas by turning arable land to pasture for sheep whose wool was used to make wool clothing for export. The burgeoning textile industry meant increased market prices for wool, motivating landlords to increase their grazing lands. Urban populations grew and increased food production was required in order to feed them. This caused inflation which put "hardships on feudal landlords whose land rents were fixed at preinflationary rates" (Rifkin, 2014), p. 30.

A second form of enclosure, occurring in the 17th Century, involved the draining of the wetlands and converting them into cropland and pastures, thus destroying the Fenland way of life, founded on fishing, in East Anglia. Enclosure also included engrossing smaller plots of land and enclosing wasteland, those lands not under cultivation but serving to provide sustenance for the peasants. Finally, enclosure through formal, legal means served to put the nail in the coffin of common rights in England (Uzelman, 2008). Recognizing the profits they could make in the burgeoning capitalist system, the landed gentry in England lobbied Parliament to pass laws allowing them to fence in lands and raise livestock and grow crops themselves. The Industrial Revolution and increasing urban populations made food production highly profitable for landlords. Between 1750 and 1860, Parliament passed 5,000 enclosure acts.

The enclosure of the forests, or *emparkment,* by the nobles to preserve their private hunting grounds, caused depopulation and hardship for the peasants. Peasants who hunted for food on these lands became "poachers" and were severely punished, often shipped off to penal colonies in Australia. Technological advances, as well as the formalization of the market, also resulted in enclosure because agricultural machinery allowed for large production, which required large plots of land, and improved transportation allowed for the extension of the market.

By 1886, .6% of the English population owned 98.5% of the land in England. Further, the concept of common rights was replaced with the concept of absolute individual rights (Uzelman, 2008). Agrarian peasants, now unable to subsist on common land, were forced to move to the cities to become wage laborers in the growing industrial sector, ushering in the era of urban sweatshops and poverty. Interesting also, enclosure of land led to the establishment of prisons and also fueled the exile of poachers and others who violated the rules of enclosure to foreign colonies such as Australia (Fairlie, 2010; Linebaugh, 2009; Uzelman, 2008).

In essence, enclosure, the burgeoning industrial sector, and capitalism gave birth to a new social and economic system, based on privatization and the market (Bollier, 2003). Karl Polanyi (1944) identified this shift as "the Great Transformation," and characterized it as a reversal of the role of the market in society. Instead of the market being embedded in the community kinship, moral codes, or religion, these would be henceforth embedded in the market. No longer would an autonomous community control the economy. Instead, the "ideal of an autonomous, self-regulating market" would

become "the dominant ideal of social governance" (Bollier, 2003, p. 46). Enclosure, Polanyi declared, "was the revolution of the rich against the poor" (1944, p. 36).

Embedding social relations in the market had enormous consequences on social relations as well as on subjective values. New relations between communities and resources, relations within communities, and relations of people to themselves were spawned (Uzelman, 2008). Competition replaced sharing and mutual help as fundamental values; individualism replaced community; and dependency replaced autonomy. Forced into the cities to work for wages, rather than being allowed to eek out their living on the land, the lives of peasants became precarious because their survival relied on the trustworthiness of their employers rather than on themselves. No longer could they provide their own subsistence on the land but rather were forced to rely on their wages and the market.

Society became characterized by the monetization of social relations such that all transactions were turned into money transactions (Polanyi, 1944; Uzelman, 2008). The relationship to time and leisure was also transformed as time became something that could not be wasted and must be devoted to productive labor, whereas leisure became a threat to productivity. Moral values were assigned to wasting of time and engaging in non-productive activities, such as were practiced in popular culture, were considered wasteful if not immoral. Further, the consumer culture emerged as people, in industrial society, were required to purchase the necessities of life and the accumulation of commodities became the foundation of a new sense of self. Governance and production, unified in the management of the commons, were separated, with governance becoming

the domain of the state and production becoming the domain of the market. As Bollier

reminded us, "the modern liberal state was born" (Bollier, 2014, p. 43).

Justification of Enclosure

Enclosure was justified on the basis of three main arguments. First of all, it was

argued that the peasants who relied on the common land were lazy and had no ambition

to improve their lot nor to accumulate wealth. Given the emergence of capitalism, the

Protestant ethic of saving, accumulation, and wealth, the perceived values of subsistence

farmers were anathema to the emerging dominant ethic. The commons was thought to

nurture the "primitive, savage, and barbaric peoples whose lives of indolence and vice

represented an affront to the moral sensibilities of the upper class" (Uzelman, 2008, p.

137). Commoners had no alternative to subsistence farming but to sell their labor for

wages.

The landowners, on the other hand, were touted to be ambitious and thrifty, able

to save capital in order to invest and grow it. They saw enclosure and mechanization as

the means to greatly enhance their production, their profits, and hence their wealth.

Enclosure would lead to increased production and further economic development and the

enhancement of the quality of life, those in favor argued. The argument that enclosure is

necessary to increase agricultural production has been used to justify enclosure

throughout the world and is still being used today.   However, the benefits of this

production are not universally shared, and the peasants who are prevented from using the

land are generally impoverished. Furthermore, contemporary research has shown that the

production of many small farms can match the production of a single large farm in many

milieus.

Second, as the British economic writer William Forster Lloyd (1995-1852) argued, if the land were not enclosed, peasants would overgraze the land because they would continue to graze their livestock without restraint to maximize their individual benefit. Such self-maximizing behavior would result in overgrazing and the eventual depletion of the commons and an overall loss of benefits to the group of peasants. Lloyd's argument, basically foreseeing Garrett Hardin's argument regarding "the tragedy of the commons," was key in furthering the economic argument of diminishing marginal utility (Bollier, 2014; Fairlie, 2009; Linebaugh, 2014; Uzelman, 2008). Third, proponents of enclosure argued that enclosure would increase agricultural and industrial labor, expand productivity, and multiply national wealth.

Marx, on the other hand, in his 1856 tome *Das Capital*, employed the historical fact of enclosure to posit his theory of primitive accumulation, and explain the origin of capital and class distinctions between those who possessed and those who did not. The capitalist mode of production came into being, according to Marx, by the accumulation and reinvestment of capital and this accumulation derived from resource extraction, conquest and plunder, and enslavement.   In his case study of enclosure in England, Marx looked at how serfs who became free peasant proprietors and small farmers were driven off the land by enclosure and, having their livelihoods eradicated and hence separated from the means of production, became wage earners and proletariats.

Subsequent laws regimented and controlled these wage earners while the landed became capitalists. Primitive accumulation serves to privatize the means of production and allows capitalists to make money from the surplus labor of the workers. Capitalist private property rests, according to Marx, upon the exploitation of wage-labor (Marx,

1856, 1977 edition). Enclosure, Marxists argued, is a necessary and continuing process as

capital seeks new opportunities to capture resources and transform them into

commodities.

Resistance to Enclosure and the Moral Justification for the Commons

Enclosure was not a completely peaceful process. There were many bouts of

rebellion and protests. The Diggers, the Levellers, and the Blacks were noteworthy

groups of protestors. Several religious organizations also protested, including in the

Pilgrimmage of Grace for the Commonwealth in 1536 and the Prayer Book Rebellion of

1549 (Linebaugh, 2009).

English clergyman, printer, poet, and social critic Robert Crowley petitioned the

House of Commons in 1548 to return common rights, arguing that the whole earth

belonged to humankind. He attacked human greed, as did many critics of enclosure at

the time, calling those who owned and engrossed the land "men with no name, men of no

conscience, men utterly devoid of God, men who live as if there were no God"

(Linebaugh, 2009, p. 57). Crowley often quoted the following truism from *Langland's*

Piers Ploughman, written in the 1300s: "For human intelligence is like water, air, and fire

– it cannot be bought or sold. These four things, the Father in Heaven made to be shared

in common" (Linebaugh, 2009, p. 56).

Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, preached that there were two types of

enclosure, of the spirit and of the body. He argued against the enclosure of the forests,

which served as pannage for the peasants' pigs. Peasants in that period depended upon

pigs for survival and the survival of their pigs depended upon pannage in common

forests. Pannage also helped the lords because the pigs ate the green acorns that poisoned

the lords' horses and cattle. Enclosure of the forests hence stripped the peasants of their livelihood. Latimer, like other protestors, argued largely on the basis of social justice.

In 1649, Gerrard Winstanley, a liberation theologian, clothier, cowherd, and communist who founded the Diggers, signed, along with forty-three others, "A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England" that resolved "to plant the Commons withal…seeing the Earth was made for us, as well as for you" (Linebaugh, 2014, p. 84).

Born in 1750, English radical Thomas Spence wrote the pamphlet "Property in Land Everyone's Right" in 1775. The pamphlet declared that "the country of any people is properly their common, in which each of them has an equal property, with free liberty to sustain himself and family with animals, fruits, and other products thereof" (Linebaugh, 2014, p.136).

Justification for peasants' use of the commons, hence, was based on several factors. First, supporters referenced God's provision and the fact that resources, such as land and forests, were bequeathed upon all of human kind and should thus be accessible by all. Second, the survival of the peasants depended in large part on access to the commons and hence an argument for the commons was made on the basis of social justice. Third, to a large extent, the peasants' use of the commons helped maintain its ecology and served to help the lords.

The commons – "water, air, earth, fire— these were the historic substances of subsistence…the archaic physics upon which metaphysics was built" (Linebaugh, 2014, p. 10). As it was written in the English Middle Ages

> But to buy water or wind or wit or fire the fourth,
> These four the Father of Heaven formed for this earth in common;

These are Truth's treasures to help true folk

Linebaugh (2014) argued that common rights differ from human rights in that they are embedded in a particular ecology and its local husbandry. Using the example of the commons in England, Linebaugh (2009) contended that commoners did not think of title deeds to the land but rather ways to till the land, illustrating that the commons is embedded in a labor process. The commons is communal and independent of the temporality of law and the state because it grants perpetuities not rights, Linebaugh (2014) concluded.

The End of Land Enclosure in England

By 1860, influential middle-class city dwellers became concerned that enclosures were ridding them of recreational land. Some of them formed a Commons Preservation Society, later called the Open Spaces Society. The National Trust, another environmental society, was also formed. Members of these societies protested continuing enclosure, became activists, and initiated lawsuits. They succeeded in influencing Parliament to pass the 1876 Commons Act that limited enclosures to instances only when a public benefit could be shown (Fairlie, 2009).

The Commons and Enclosure Beyond England

The commons and their enclosure have occurred around the world and continue in contemporary society. Common lands and the right of usufruct existed in all indigenous cultures and in European cultures prior to the advent of capitalism. Moreover, commoners instituted rules to govern access to and use of the commons. In Iceland, for example, between 930 and 1262, Grey Goose laws established an institutional structure that avoided overgrazing on common lands. Commoners were able to call for an

independent assessment of grazing capacity. Once the land was assessed, commoners were assigned a quota and faced fines for exceeding them. The Mughal system of subsistence farming on commons in India existed for centuries prior to British rule. When the system broke down in the second half of the 18th Century, the concept of private property was introduced, resulting in the loss of subsistence for many farmers. This loss catalyzed a series of peasant revolts and finally the Great Revolt of 1857 (Bandyopadhyay, 2011).

In North America, indigenous groups hunted, gathered, and farmed on indigenous lands and early colonialists often established commons on lands taken from Native Americans. As colonialist move westward, they established a system of commons until the number of migrants became so great that homesteads were privatized (Rikfin, 2014). Puritans who practiced enclosure of indigenous lands justified it on the grounds that commons were "great nurseries of idleness and beggary" (Wall, 2014, p. 51). Other colonialists justified European control of indigenous lands on the grounds that indigenous peoples failed to enrich themselves (Wall, 2014).

In a landmark 1823 Supreme Court case challenging the sale by Native Americans of land they had lived on for generations, Chief Justice Marshall ruled that although Native Americans were in possession of 43,000 square miles of disputed land, they did not have the right to sell the land and sold it illegally to developers. He ruled that the British became owners of all lands in America by virtue of their conquest and that British law was in force (Wily, 2014). His decision amounted to a formal recognition of the right of enclosure.

Commons are still significant in many parts of the world, including countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and North and South America. Fishing commons exist in multiple countries. The lobster commons in Maine has existed for many years, catalyzed by the fishermen's recognition that without a commons that regulated their profession, the lobster would likely become over-fished and their livelihood would be jeopardized. The enclosure of indigenous lands in the Americas, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere, a historical reality, occurs today as industrialized nations buy off forests, tribal lands, and mineral deposits from governments who routinely take these resources away from people who have been relying on them for their survival. The people, in turn, are required to become wage laborers in order to live.   Colonialism and more recently imperialism fostered this process of enclosure.

It is sometimes true, that when peasants and indigenous peoples are enclosed from their lands and become wage earners, that they can earn more, and, if they move into the cities, often have access to better education and professional opportunities. Rural to urban migration, hence, is a recurring phenomenon around the world, as peasants seek higher incomes and better lives. However, there are also many examples of impoverishment caused by enclosure and consequent human tragedy such as the mass suicides of peasant farmers in India.   As Bollier pointed out, improvements in material production came

> at a terrible cost: dissolution of communities, deep economic inequality, an erosion of self-governance and a loss of social solidarity and identity. Governance became a matter of government, the province of professional politicians, lawyers, bureaucrats and monied special interest lobbies. Democratic participation became mostly a matter of voting, a right limited to men (and at first, property owners). Enclosure also isolated people from direct encounters with the natural world and marginalized social and spiritual life. (p. 43)

Gender and the Commons

Women especially resisted the enclosure of communal lands in England, other European countries, and in the New World, due to the fact that they were especially dependent upon commons for their sustenance because they were often the ones who farmed and cared for animals. They were also often the gleaners who gathered the left over harvest. Because of their resistance, according to Silvia Frederici (2004, 2013), women suffered the infamous witch hunts that mottled the 16th and 17th Century. When Spanish conquistadores grabbed indigenous lands in Peru, the women fled to the mountains to establish communal agricultural communities that still survive today (Frederici, 2013). Women continue today to be the primary subsistence farmers in the world. Their families' subsistence largely depends upon their labor.

Mullick (2011) wrote that the enclosure of the forest commons in Jarkhand, India had an unequal impact on women because the forest commons had been "the storehouse of their natural and ritual knowledge, a bastion of their economy, and more importantly a source of their power and status" (Mullick, 2011, p. 42). The enclosure of the forests generated patriarchy, which was not indigenous to tribes in this region.

Opposing Economic Systems

Much of the early writing on enclosure was written by Marx and much debate has obviously taken place since the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the initiation of communism in Russia. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss these various points of view. It is nonetheless important to point out that despite the upheaval that rural society underwent during the period of enclosure (described above) and the suffering faced by urban labor and associated poverty, there are certainly numerous

arguments and empirical studies that document that this transition brought heretofore

unheard of economic development and an enhanced standard of living to countries that

adopted capitalism. Indeed, rural to urban migration continues to occur throughout the

world as people move to the cities for employment, education, and better services. The

communist experiment of the former Soviet Union, likewise, experienced its agonies and

ecstasies. Despite the ideological debates regarding the advantages and ills of capitalism,

the history of enclosure is important from the perspective of contemporary commoners

since it provides the historical backdrop required to analyze the current market enclosures

that are described in the following chapter.

The Industrial Paradigm

The enclosures of England and other parts of the world ushered in the industrial

age and the industrial paradigm that began to define all aspects of our lives and our

relationship to nature. Rather than being viewed as a source of sustenance and life,

nature, to some extent, became perceived as a dumping ground for the waste products of

industrial production. As Cheria and Edwin (2011) articulated, "air is considered empty

and lifeless – so smoke can be let into it….The rivers and seas are empty so pour all the

sewage and toxic waste into them" (pp. 5-6).

The industrial era modified language so that development came to mean the

exploitation of nature for economic development and growth, and "efficiency" meant the

fastest time at the lowest cost. And as Cheria and Edwin explained (2014), "the

vocabulary of private property and individual rights developed co-terminus with science,

industrialization, capitalism, and democracy" (p. 4). Spaces absent of industrial

production were considered inferior and the "natives' minds as empty and bereft of

culture – *terra nullius* of the mindscape" (Cheria & Edwin, 2011, p. 6). The notion of the

commons and all those individuals living and producing on the commons became looked

down upon as "undeveloped." Communities living on the commons that were un-

polluting were labeled "uncivilized and barbaric," and, as *the other*, they became *the*

enemy deserving banishment from the commons (Cheria & Edwin, 2011, p. 6).

Chapter Four

Re-emergence of the Commons in Contemporary Society

Tragedy of the Commons

Garret Hardin's 1968 article titled "The Tragedy of the Commons" established the initial model for contemporary discussions regarding the commons, here defined as shared natural resources. An ecologist whose main concern was the threat of human overpopulation, Hardin argued that a herder would have the incentive to overgraze and hence deplete common land in order to maximize his individual profit and would not be motivated by concern either for the sustainability of the land or for the welfare of the group of herders. The herder, Hardin contended, will purchase an additional livestock that will graze on common land because the gains to be received from selling that livestock exceed the costs incurred by him individually by overgrazing the land, due to the fact that these costs will be shared by all herders. Hardin expressed this reality in terms of marginal utility based on a model of a rational herder. Hardin asserted that the tragedy of the commons lies in the fact that - "each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit-in a world that is limited" (Hardin, 1968, p. 1245). He concluded that "freedom in a commons brings ruin to all" (Hardin, 1968, p. 1245).

According to Hardin, only coercive measures could usefully curb the destruction of the commons. He listed all possible solutions as less than optimal but nonetheless necessary, including privatization, public control and limitation of access, allocation on the basis of wealth, auction, lottery, merit, or appeals to conscience. Hardin wrote that

such commons ideally should be privately owned by "those who are biologically more fit

to be the custodians of property and power" (p. 1245). Admitting that the legal order is

imperfect, he stated that we put up with it "because we are not convinced, at the moment,

that anyone has invented a better system. The alternative of the commons is too

horrifying to contemplate. Injustice is preferable to total ruin" (p. 1245). Hardin failed to

mention the possibility of a group devising rules and regulations for use of a commons,

although years later he admitted he should have done so.

Contemporary Interest in the Idea of the Commons

Hardin's article stimulated much discussion about the management of shared

natural resources, and his argument was the harbinger of the rising body of environmental

law related to "common" and "private." Still, contemporary interest in the idea of the

commons did not burgeon until the 1980s. The interest came partly out of the concerns

of public interest advocacy groups and the expanding environmentalist movement that

posed the challenge of how to best manage resources to prevent their depletion. Scholarly

work and activism emerged simultaneously.

Commons activist and former Nader Raider, David Bollier (2009) explained that a

1980 conference convened by Nader, "Controlling What We Own" catalyzed Bollier's

interest in the commons. The conference dealt with resources that Nader argued

belonged to the people but whose access was restricted or prevented by government

regulations and corporate interests. Some of these included drugs which the taxpayers

financed through government grants but then were protected by patents and offered to the

public at exorbitant prices; mineral extraction rights on public lands granted for $5 an

acre or less; and commercial access to the public airwaves free of charge without any benefits returning to the public for this use (Linksvayer, 2009).

The contemporary environmentalist movement, which also influenced the re-emergence of interest in the commons, began to gain momentum in the 1970s at the United Nations Conference on Human Development that took place in Stockholm in 1972, and with the establishment of Earth Day, a watershed event that formally recognized the potentially damaging impact of human and corporate activity on the environment (Edwards, 2005). The United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development *Worldwatch Report* of 1984 warned that humankind was living beyond the capacity of the world to sustain our current way of living. The Brundtland Report of 1987, *Our Common Future*, argued that development should be sustainable, that is, that it should meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future to meet their own needs.

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, also enhanced awareness regarding the environment and our responsibility to manage it responsibly. The Summit developed the Rio Declaration, which includes 27 fundamental principles, and Agenda 21 that comprises a framework for future action. Further, President Clinton established the President's Council on Sustainable Development in 1993 to develop a domestic agenda for sustainability. In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, reviewed progress made in the 10 years following the 1992 Earth Summit, and drafted the Plan of Implementation and the Johannesburg Declaration

on Sustainable Development that incorporated concerns facing the world such as poverty,

health, production and consumption, as they relate to sustainability (Edwards, 2005).

In his introduction to *The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift*

by Andres Edwards (2005), Ecologist David W. Orr postulated that the environmental

and later sustainability movement introduced a new way of thinking about our role in the

world that represents

> a recalibration of human intentions to coincide with the way our biophysical
> world works. It is a slowing down to the rhythms of our bodies, convivial
> association, and nature. The concern for the longevity as a species represents a
> maturing of our kind to consider ourselves first as 'plain members and citizens" of
> an ecological community and second, as trustees of all that is past with all that is
> yet to come – a mystic chain of gratitude, obligation, compassion, and hope.

Edwards introduced four new criteria against which to evaluate any initiative. He

called these the "Three E's plus one" They include evaluating the interaction between:

ecology/environment, economy/employment, equity/equality, and education. The

interaction between ecology and environment dictates a long-term rather than a short-

term horizon, a systemic rather than piecemeal view, and a recognition that there are

limits to growth. The assumption that there can be employment and an economy that

provides for everyone based on a respect and care of the ecosystem underlies the

economy/employment dynamic. Finally, a commitment to fostering equity and equality

derived from a deep sense of community characterizes the third "E." Education for all

promotes these values and ensures their achievement.

In addition, Edwards (2005) contended that four dominant concerns entered the

conversation, including,

> 1) an awareness of the profound spiritual links between human beings and the
> natural world; 2) a deep understanding of the biological interconnection of all
> parts of nature, including human beings; 3) an abiding concern with the potential

damage of human impact on the environment; and, 4) a strongly held commitment to make ethics an integral part of all environmental activism. (pp. 14-15)

The sustainability mindset expanded among many people and groups around the world, largely facilitated to a great extent by the Internet (Edwards, 2005), that natural resources belonged to everyone and that, since the state and the market were not managing them sustainably, the people and their communities needed to do so. Many of these resources were subsequently titled *the commons*.

"Inherently Public Property" and Common Pool Resources:

In 1986, law professor Carol Rose wrote about "inherently public property" which, since the Middle Ages, has been distinguished from public property managed by the state, and has, rather, been "'owned' and 'managed' by society at large, with claims independent of and indeed superior to the claims of any purported government manager" (Rose, 1986, p. 720).

Rose (1986) explored public trust theory and customary law to account for this type of property and she argued that custom served as an explanation for how a group could manage a commons. As she maintained, "the intriguing aspect of customary rights is that they vest property rights in groups that are indefinite and informal, yet nevertheless capable of self-management" (Rose, 1986, p. 742). Rose explained that customary use of the medieval commons had been managed by rules that prevented the depletion of resources.   Rose also suggested that in some cases, property might be more valuable as a commons because the management costs would be less than those of individual property. She pointed out that the claim for public property during the nineteenth century rested upon two arguments. The property had to physically capable of monopolization by private persons and the property had to be more valuable when used

by a large number of individuals. Rose also referenced the socializing and democratizing

effects of such "inherently public property," found in recreational activities, experiencing

nature, and other spaces and activities where the public gathers and interacts. As Rose

(1986) concluded:

> In the absence of the socializing activities that take place on 'inherently public
> property,' the public is a shapeless mob, whose members neither trade nor
> converse nor play, but only fight in a setting where life is, in Hobbes' all too
> famous phrase, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. (p. 781)

Other early scholars distinguished between commons as a resource or resource

system, called common-pool resources, and commons as a property rights regime.

Common pool resources are "natural or human-made resources where one person's use

subtracts from the others and where it is difficult to exclude other users" (Hess, 200, p.

4). That is, common pool resources are economic goods, independent of property rights

whereas common property is a legal regime and is one of the property regimes, but not

the only one, that can be employed to manage common pool resources. (Hess & Ostrom,

2007, p. 5).

2009 Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom began exploring the management of

common pool resources in the 1970s as an extension of her dissertation and subsequent

research into institutional arrangements for the public management of water resources in

Southern California. Her 1977 publication, coauthored with her Husband Vincent

Ostrom, "A Theory for Institutional Analysis of Common Pool Resources" argued that

the articulation of institutions is the critical factor in effective common resource

management (Kaunekis, 2014 forthcoming). Studying the ways in which villagers

manage pastures in Africa and how they manage irrigation systems in Nepal, Ostrom and

colleagues developed the comprehensive "Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework"

that continues to serve as a major construct within which research is conducted regarding common-pool resources and collective self-governance.

During the 1980s, Ostrom and other scholars studied successfully managed commons throughout the world to derive shared governance principles. In 1984, one of these scholars, Ron Oakerson, crafted a model establishing the principles of effective common pool resource management, defining these resources as those over which no one has property rights or exclusive control. Oakerson's model included (a) the technical and physical nature of the common resource, (b) the decision-making arrangements that govern the interaction among users, (c) the patterns of interactions among decision makers, and, (d) outcomes or consequences (Oakerson, 1984).

The 1985 National Research Council Conference in Annapolis gathered scholars to determine how and why certain groups have been able to successfully manage common pool resources (CPRs) and what institutional arrangements contributed to their success (Hess, 2000). The conference attendees agreed that common pool resources are characterized by subtractability and difficulty excluding others from their use. Subtractability refers to the fact that one person's usage of a common pool resource subtracts from how much of the resource is available for others' usage because such a resource is finite. Further, since common pool resources are shared, users have access to them, and without rules that all users agree to, cannot be prevented from using them. The scholars in attendance committed themselves to studying CPR management in developing countries because these countries historically shared a number of common pool resources and had developed community-based management systems that conscribed their usage.

Studying them, hence, might provide a management model worth recommending for developed countries.

Ostrom's landmark 1990 book *Governing the Commons* stimulated more scholarly research and writing about CPRs and their management. Ostrom developed an institutionalist approach to managing CPRs, based upon extensive empirical research of successfully managed CPRs in developing and developed countries. She elaborated conditions that should normally hold in order to manage such resources outside of the state or market.

Ostrom argued in *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Ostrom, 1990), that previous resource management models were based on erroneous conceptions of human behavior. She pointed out that Hardin's *Tragedy of the Commons*, for one, is based on the erroneous concept of "the rational herder." Hardin's concept is founded on a longstanding view of humans as seeking their own good above all. The rational herder, Hardin argued, will overgraze because he or she receives the direct benefit for his or her animals while only bearing a share of the costs of overgrazing, leading to the conclusion that "the total of resource units withdrawn from the resource will be greater than the optimal economic level of withdrawal" (Ostrom, 1990, p. 3). The only plausible solution to prevent overgrazing, Hardin contended, is to privatize property so the owner would reap both the benefits and costs of overgrazing or for the state to institute coercive policies. Ostrom countered that Hardin ignored the possibility that herders would cooperate and derive rules that would conscribe usage and penalize misuse.

Ostrom also criticized the prisoner dilemma game, often employed to model Hardin's argument because it is based on the assumption of two non-cooperative players who cannot communicate with each other and who each maximize their own gain, resulting in a non-optimal overall solution. In addition, Ostrom argued that Mancur Olsen's central argument in *The Logic of Collective Action* is flawed. At the time, Olsen's model was the accepted benchmark for collective action. Olsen concluded that rational, self-interested individuals would not act to achieve their common or group interests, unless the group was very small and was not externally coerced. All three approaches, Ostrom contended, assume the free-rider problem, namely that when a person cannot be excluded from the benefits that others provide, he or she is not motivated to contribute but rather to free-ride (Ostrom, 1990, p. 6).

Because the above three models are generally followed, most approaches to collective action assume that external coercion, or "a Leviathan" is required, Ostrom pointed out. Such a view leads policy makers to recommend that central governments should control natural resource systems. Alternatively, some policy makers contend that privatization of natural resources is required in order to control their use and prevent their depletion. These solutions are posited because, according to most theorists, the management of natural resources presents a social dilemma because of the conflict between individual rationality and the optimal solution for a group (Poteete, Jansen, & Ostrom, 2010).

Ostrom proposed a model in which a group organizes itself, establishes rules and enforcement systems, and monitors compliance. She then established a set of conditions that may need to exist if such self-organizing, self-governing groups succeed at collective

action. She developed these conditions after conducting empirical studies of groups that

have successfully managed CPRs and those who have failed to do so (Ostrom, 1990).

Key in establishing institutions to effectively manage commons is the consideration of

equity, efficiency, and sustainability (Hess & Ostrom, 2011).   Equity concerns the just

appropriation of and contribution to the maintenance of the resource or commons.

Efficiency refers to the optimal production, management, and use of the commons.

Sustainability focuses on outcomes over the long-run and is concerned with the well-

being of the commons and its users in the future.

　　　With these three considerations in mind, the conditions Ostrom proposed for

effectively managing commons begin with the necessity for participants to clearly define

the boundaries of the CPRs and to specify those who are authorized to use them.

Commoners, which Ostrom also called appropriators, need to design appropriation rules

restricted to time, place, technology, and quantity of resource that are clearly related to

local conditions and also design provision rules requiring labor, material, and money. In

successful examples, Ostrom found that most individuals affected by the operational rules

could participate in modifying them, that is, that there were collective choice

arrangements.

　　　Ostrom concluded from her studies that monitoring CPR conditions and

commoner behavior is a critical function in successfully managed CPRs and monitors

need to be either among the commoners or accountable to them. Successfully managed

commons that she studied generally had graduated sanctions for violators. Such

commons both had clearly defined and low-cost conflict resolution mechanisms. Further,

the rights of commoners to devise their own institutions were not challenged by

governmental authorities in successful commons. Overall, Ostrom concluded that

effective design of commons and management of CPRs requires "successful collective

action and self-governing behaviors; trust and reciprocity; and the continual design

and/or evolution of appropriate rules" (Hess & Ostrom, 2911, p. 43).

Although Ostrom admitted that more research needed to be conducted on

successfully managed and less successfully managed commons, she clearly paved the

way for a conceptual framework for self-organizing, self-governing commons. Ostrom's

research also challenged the conventional tripartite division of property into public,

private, and common, where common property meant open access and no right of

exclusion. Ostrom illustrated that effective management of CPRs generally includes

rights of exclusion that are necessary in order to guard against overuse and assure

sustainability.

Ostrom's Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework serves as the

major theoretical structure employed by commons scholars to analyze situations in which

people interact with rules and norms that guide their behavior (Ostrom, 1990; Bollier,

2003; Hess & Ostrom, 2011). The IAD is an institutional analysis framework, not a

model, that asks how people work together, create communities and organizations, and

make rules and decisions regarding ways to sustain a resource or achieve a particular

joint objective (Hess & Ostrom, 2011).

The IAD takes an expansive view of a commons, recognizing that any group is

nested within a larger biophysical environment; that the attributes of the community, such

as users, providers, and policymakers impact how a resource is managed; and that rules-

in-use, whether constitutional, collective choice, or operational, guide the interaction of

the community. The IAD places the action arena within this broader environment. The action arena consists of members of the commons making decisions that are inevitably impacted by the physical, community, and institutional characteristics and that lead to patterns of action that, in turn, lead to outcomes.

Ostrom contended that since the commons are part of a larger system of governance and should thereby be organized in multiple layers of nested enterprises, they should be characterized by polycentric governance, meaning that the authority to govern the resource is shared across several levels from the local to the regional to the national to the international (Ostrom, 2007; Bollier, 2014).

A ubiquitous example of what Ostrom argued, air is a common pool resource that is governed by vernacular or customary law devised by a community, as well as by formal law, both of which are subject to evolution and change. Whereas in the past it was socially acceptable to pollute the air in a shared space with cigarette smoke, over time this became unacceptable socially as well as legally, as interest groups, concerned about the negative health effects of secondary smoke, began to lobby for changes in laws.

Further, customary laws have long conscribed what is socially unacceptable to diffuse into the shared air such as certain odors including perspiration, fragrances, odors from refuse or effluent, food odors, or odors from burning rubbish. Likewise, rules regarding what pollutants from factories and vehicles are allowed and not allowed in the shared air commons have been promulgated by laws generally the result of extensive lobbying by interest groups. Whether odor pollution by factories such as those processing onions and chili peppers is allowed has also been brought before the courts.

Similar examples can be offered in regard to water commons, space commons, and so on. The extent of involvement of different levels of governing bodies depends upon how large the boundaries are drawn around the commons in question. A small community garden can be self-governed by commoner gardeners, but the commoners will still be required to comply with local ordinances and regulations, and may depend upon local laws to prevent trespassing and free riders. Despite their nested reality, commons still offer a model of self-organizing governance.

Other scholars have posited decentralized communal approaches to managing the commons. A psychologist, Fox (1985), for one, proposed models taken from anarchy and utopia. Anarchists reject the notion that violence and competition are inevitable characteristics of human society and promote instead cooperative, autonomous, self-organizing and interdependent societies. Fox (1985) quoted ecologists who argue that only an anarchist society can be ecological. He also quipped the psychologist Maslow who identified anarchy and its focus on an ecological relationship with nature as the level of organization in politics and economics for those who had transcended self-actualization.

Public choice theorists, especially those concerned with socio-ecological systems, continue to seek empirical evidence and develop theories regarding under what circumstances and given various properties such as size, quantity, user base, and so on, CPRs can be ideally managed locally by commons, or whether private, municipal, county, state, national, or international organizations serve as more effective management arrangements, as evaluated against the three metrics of equity, efficiency, and sustainability.

The Commons in Subsistence Economies

The commons have historically been and continue to be crucial to survival in subsistence economies. Whether the commons consists of villagers collecting cow dung for fuel in India, living off the rain forests in South America and Africa, collecting water from nearby streams, or hunting on the plains, large groups of people live in a symbiotic relationship with nature and its bounty and outside of marketized society. Ostrom selected some of her examples of self-governing commons from the so-called developing nations in an interesting twist to the typical transfer of knowhow from the developed to the developing countries. She, as well as many other scholars and commoners, argue that people in the West have much to learn about management of CPRs from people who have been successfully managing them in poorer nations of the world for centuries.

Socioecological Systems

Along with a number of colleagues, Ostrom continued to study the "impact of institutions at both the micro-level of individual behavior and the macro-level landscapes" (Kaunekis, 2014, forthcoming, p. 7). Ostrom and her colleagues sought to understand how trust and reciprocity serve as the foundation of cooperative behavior. Ostrom made her mark by helping to establish a body of literature regarding socioecological systems. Such systems derive from the recognition of the interaction of social and biophysical factors and employ concepts such as self-organization, complexity, equity, and human wellbeing, concepts that thread through discussions of the commons.

The Internet as Commons

During the 1990s, with the expansion of the Internet, scholars started writing about the Internet, information, and knowledge as commons (Hess & Ostrom, 2011).

Users of the Internet began to recognize that they were in fact participating in a commons

and that challenges associated with all commons were emerging, namely, access,

enclosure, pollution, free-riding, conflict, overuse, unethical and criminal activities, and

so on (Hess, 1996).   By the mid 1995s, scholars also began to identify as commons the

Internet's hardware and software, communication networks, and online social groups.

The expansion of the Internet was accompanied by an increased focus on networks and

their role in linking people and facilitating their communication.

      The Internet enables sharing and innovation and its logic of online cooperation

"can trump the economic logic of conventional markets" resulting in "a profound global

cultural revolution whose full disruptive potential is still ahead" (Bollier, 2014, p. 123).

As Bollier (2014) asserted:

> Now that so many people have tasted the freedom, innovation and accountability
> of open networks and digital commons, there is no going back to the command
> and control business models of the 20th century. Among the born digital
> generation, commercial motives and indifference to the common good over the
> long term seem decidedly old fashion if not antisocial. (p.126)

The Knowledge and Information Commons

      Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, a number of mostly legal scholars such as

Peter Jaszi, David Lange, Pamela Samuleson, Jessica Litman, Yochai Benkler, James

Boyle, and Larry Lessig began to study copyright law and identify intellectual products

as the commons. Lessig (2001) argued that the extensive system of intellectual property

copyrights prevents innovation whereas an online intellectual commons nurtures such

innovation.

      Knowledge, according to Hess and Ostrom (2011), includes "understanding

gained through experience or study, whether indigenous, scientific, scholarly, or

otherwise nonacademic" (p. 8) and includes creative works from the arts.   Scholarly

knowledge and communication, and later non-scholarly communication, identified as a

commons, comprise areas such as computer codes and infrastructure, intellectual property

rights, academic libraries, invention and creativity, open-source software, collaborative

science, information economics, and the management, dissemination, and preservation of

scholarly record (Hess & Ostrom, 2011).   In addition Hess and Ostrom (2011) included

citizenship and democratic processes and collective action as knowledge commons. Peter

Levin (2007) called commons focused on democracy as associational commons, as

opposed to what he calls libertarian commons where everyone has the right to usage.

   Knowledge and communications commons differ from common pool resources

in that they are not subtractive or rivalrous like natural resources are. That is, one

person's access does not limit or reduce another's access. Like common pool resources,

knowledge and communications commons require collective action and self-governing

mechanisms as well as a high degree of social capital in order to manage them

successfully (Hess & Ostrom, 2011).

Subsequently, the "new commons" (Hess, 2011) emerged and an increasing

number of domains were encapsulated into the commons. As Bollier (2007) wrote:

> A quiet revolution is going on right now as a growing number of activists,
> thinkers, and practitioners adopt a commons vocabulary to describe and explain
> their respective fields. Librarians, scholars, scientists, environmentalists, software
> programmers, Internet users, biotech researchers, fisheries scholars, and many
> others share a dissatisfaction with the standard market narrative. (p. 25)

On a parallel track, the commons began to be viewed as the road to a kinder

capitalist or post-capitalist society, based on a subjectivity of sharing, equality, and

community. The commons, that is, was touted as the missing piece between the public-

private dichotomy or what many scholars are increasingly calling the pubic-private

duopoly because of the seeming collaboration of these sectors in upholding the neoliberal

market devoid of government regulation (Bollier, 2014; Linebaugh, 2014).

Commons-Based Peer Production

Benkler (2003) suggested that the networked environment created through the

Internet and other communication technologies created a new modality of organizing

production. This modality, called *commons-based peer production*, is "radically

decentralized, collaborative, and nonproprietary; based on sharing resources and outputs

among widely distributed, loosely connected individuals who cooperate with each other

without relying on either market signals or managerial commands" (Benkler, 2003, p.

130).   Peer-production, a subset of commons-based peer production, is generated by self-

selected and decentralized individual action rather than action hierarchically assigned.

The development of the open access Linux computer operating system by a group

of commoners is typically used as an example of the emergence of commons-based peer

production which takes place outside of the market or the state. Peer production depends

only on the collaboration of individuals who take the initiative to work together to create

a product whose use is transformative and accessible on an open platform (Benkler, 2003,

2006; Bollier, 2014).

Other Commons Emerge as Part of the "New Commons"

Many other shared resources and services have become identified as commons,

including genes, culture, language, health and education services, radio, literature, music,

heritage sites, the performing and visual arts, even trust (Arvanitakis, 2006, 2012; Bollier,

2002; Lessig, 2004). Identified as shared resources or gifts, such resources are

considered by commoners to belong to everyone and hence unable to be enclosed by the

market or the state. Arvanitakis (2006, 2012) included, as a part of the cultural

commons, human relationships characterized by community, trust, safety, and shared

intellect. Hess (2008) categorized the scores of new commons into seven categories in

addition to the knowledge commons, including cultural, medical, global, neighborhood,

infrastructure, traditional, and market. She derived these categories by researching

articles, books, and other publications whose authors classified their subjects as

belonging to the commons.

International Support for the Commons

The World Social Forum, an annual meeting of civil society organizations

dedicated to countering neoliberal globalization, issued a *Reclaim the Commons*

Manifesto in their 2009 meeting in Belem Para, Brazil. Referring to what the

supporting NGOs call the negative consequences of the neoliberal approach to

globalization, the Manifesto recognized the new vision of society promulgated by

the notion of the commons. The Manifesto committed the World Social Forum to

mobilize, to reclaim and de-privatize the commons, and to recognize that

"commons-based approaches -- participatory, collaborative, and transparent -- offer

practical solutions for protecting water and rivers, agricultural soils, seeds,

knowledge, sciences, forest, oceans, wind, money, communication and online

collaborations, culture, music and other arts, open technologies, free software,

public services of education, health or sanitization, biodiversity and the wisdom of

traditional knowledges" (World Social Forum, 2009).

James Quilligan and Lisinka Ulatowska established The Commons Action for the United Nations in 2009 to introduce a commons-based approach to sustainability. The group is represented at the UN by the Institute for Planetary Synthesis and the Association for World Citizens. In 2011, as part of the overall effort of NGOs to form cluster groups, the Commons Cluster was formed in addition to clusters focusing on women, youth, and indigenous peoples. Recently, the Commons Abundance Cluster Network was formed to facilitate the cooperation of commons groups and websites to form a legitimate commons sector, the third leg of socioeconomic organization besides the public and private sectors. The ultimate purpose of the group is to establish a commons-based, global economy and polity.

Alter-Globalization, Global Justice Movements, and the Commons

Beginning in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, while Ostrom and other social scientists were discovering the commons as an interesting and useful organizational form for managing common pool resources, people around the globe were beginning to question globalization and the results of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were imposing on developing countries. As these international donor organizations devised policies to privatize common property in many countries, indigenous groups began struggling against the loss of their livelihoods (Caffentzis, 2004). Riots and bloody battles were staged in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as indigenous peoples struggled to protect their lands. Simultaneously, the homeless and squatters in the Western countries began to actively fight the police for their common spaces (Caffentzis, 2004).

The commons enclosure discourse emerged in the 1990s as the result of these struggles, along with the struggles of environmentalists who decried the destruction meted upon the natural environment by profit-hungry multinationals, and the software creators who wanted to share their creations and battled against enclosures. Demonstrations were spawned against the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the G6, and the World Trade Organization, among others. Global Justice Movements included the Zapatista revolt in Chiapas, Mexico; the Cochabamba, water protests; demonstrations against austerity in Europe; the Arab Spring; the recent demonstrations in Venezuela; Occupy Wall Street, and other movements around the world.

Such movements pose challenges to the assumptions and social structures that have formed in the post-industrial world, the socio-economic inequalities that have arisen, and the self-promotional, socially irresponsible behavior of global corporations (Bollier, 2014; Caffentzis, 2004; Long, 2013; Uzelman, 2008). As will be evidenced further on, some commoners identify the movements as actually spawning the anti-capitalist commons.

Examples of Commons

As has been made clear from foregoing discussions, there exist a panoply of distinct commons, some of which were identified by Silke Helfrich, German commons activist and founder of the Commons Strategy Group, at the May 22-24, 2013 Conference in Berlin, titled "Economics and the Common(s): From Seed Form to Core Paradigm." Helfrich (2013) highlighted the following commons to provide a sampling of their diversity:

> The *Bisse de Saviesse* in the canton of Valais, Switzerland, consist of a sophisticated irrigation system in the Swiss mountains that catches melting

water directly from glaciers and brings it into villages and the farms in the valley down below. The Bisse have been managed as a commons since they were built in the first half of the 20th century.

The *Protei* is a revolutionary open-source sailing drone, now in a prototype phase, designed to help clean up oil spills in the oceans. Based on an idea of Cesar Harada and built by a large international community of collaborators, the boat is the first significant design innovation in the basic shape of boat hulls in millennia.

The *Kakula Healers of Bushbuckridge*, South Africa, are a collective of over 300 healers from two provinces in South Africa. They routinely pool their knowledge and resources about returning people to good health.

The *hackerspace, FabLab and Maker* movements are pioneering spaces to develop collaborative innovations in software, customized fabrication, and open hardware design and manufacturing. Examples include the Embassy of the Commons in Poland, the Hack of Good Initiative in Spain, Fabulous St. Pauli in Germany, and Move Commons, a tagging system for commons-based Internet projects.

The *Guassa area in Ethiopia*, has been managed by the Menz people as commons for grass collection (for thatching) and firewood for over 400 years. Although not designed to conserve wildlife, the system has allowed the co-existence of wildlife with the local community, and reduced poverty by providing the community with natural resources that can be sold and exchanged in the market during times of drought.

The *Great Lakes Commons* is a cross-border grassroots effort to establish the Great Lakes as a commons and legally protected bioregion. The project, still in its early stages, aspires to build new systems of participation, advocacy and cooperation to remake the policy governance for the endangered Great Lakes.

LibreOffice is a rare instance of a tech community taking back a software product (OpenOffice) owned by a company (Oracle), and turning it into a new commons-based software project. (p. 13)

In addition, commoners have established thousands of commons, such as food cooperatives, community gardens, online communities and blog commons, among many others, and millions of people in the world continue to gain their livelihood on communal lands and forests and cooperatives. Moreover, commoners have established hundreds of associations and organizations around the world to promote the commons (Appendix A).

The International Society for the Study of the Commons (IASC), for one, was established in 1986 and includes hundreds of members from around the world.

Commoners have founded commons education projects around the world. Some of these include the annual Summer School on the Commons, in Bechstedt/Thüringen, Germany; the School of Commoning in London; the Green Academy Vis, serving people from Croatia and the Balkans; the Free Technology Academy; and the School of Commons, in Barcelona.

Chapter Five

The Second Enclosure Movement

Contemporary Enclosure and Commodification of the Commons

Nowadays, people know the price of everything and the value of nothing

Oscar Wilde

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying, this
is mine and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil
society…beware of listening to this imposter; you are undone if you once forget that the
fruits of the earth belong to us all and the earth itself to nobody.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Commoners of today have resurrected the concept of enclosure, a term taken from

the enclosure of the land in England, discussed in Chapter 3, in current discussions about

the commons. Enclosure in the contemporary world refers to privatization,

marketization, and/or commodification of commonly held natural, human, and non-

human resources such as forests, water, space, air, human, animal, and plant genes,

knowledge, urban spaces, social commons, among many others (Barnes, 2008; Bollier,

2013; Bowers, 2006; Linebaugh, 2014).

Enclosure transfers resources that were either freely accessible (totally non-

commodified) or regulated for a specific group or community to "a situation in which

these resources become exclusively owned by private individuals or corporate actors and

their use becomes regulated by the market" (Uzelman, 2008, p. 215). Through enclosure,

"the transformation of social life previously un-owned, collectively held, or managed by

the state for the public good becomes the absolute and exclusive property of individuals

or corporations" (Uzelman, 2008, p.118). Enclosure means that the public either has to pay to have access to these resources or is barred from access legally.

A particular set of values and assumptions underlies the label of enclosure regarding what resources should be owned and managed by commoners separate from the state or market; what resources should be managed in the public domain for the public good by states as trustees for the people; and those resources to which the public should have open, albeit regulated, access. These resources include those that were not traditionally bought and sold. I discuss some of these values and assumptions further on in this chapter.

According to historian Peter Linebaugh (2014), four events of the 21st Century catalyzed the concern for contemporary new enclosures. The first event, occurring in 1994, was the Zapatista-led uprising in Chiapas, Mexico. The uprisings were caused by the repeal of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which traditionally had provided for common lands or *ejidos* for each village. The common lands were going to be privatized and the Zapatistas also feared that the newly signed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would widen the gap between rich and poor, a fear that was proven out over time. During the same period, a process of "new enclosures," took place in Africa and Indonesia, as multinational corporations signed concession agreements with governments that gave them access to tribal lands, forests, and indigenous medicinal herbs and plants without the tribal or community consent.

Second, the emergence of the Internet and the World Wide Web along with issues related to Intellectual Property rights raised issues of enclosure and these issues became the topic of protests against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the Battle of

Seattle in 1999. Third, air pollution and water poisoning became huge global issues and

were caused largely by corporations, leading people to challenge the ethical justification

for commodification. Fourth, the fall of the Soviet Union provided the opening to talk

about enclosure, a key concept analyzed by Marx, without being accused of being a

communist, because the Cold War was officially over.

The Great Recession of 2008 catalyzed increased discussion regarding the

marketization of Western and increasingly non-Western societies. The Recession

convinced a great number of people that the neoliberal economic model, reified by

Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and instituted in American society by subsequent

presidents, including Bill Clinton, had greatly disappointed, if not failed to provide the

economic and social benefits the theory touted. Neoliberalism had also been exported

abroad via the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and many bilateral

donors. Based on neoliberal economic models, the rapid privatization schemes in Central

and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union gave rise to the oligarchy and

dramatically lowered the standard of living for the majority of people, as I personally

witnessed in Romania and Ukraine.

Enclosure of Water

> Over the past thirty years the accelerating pace of enclosures, and the increasing
> scale of the theft, have brought our planet to the edge of destruction.
> *Raj Patel*

The enclosure of water has received a great deal of attention in recent years as it

becomes more obvious that the world faces a shortage of fresh water especially as

corporations with the consent of governments have increasingly privatized and sold

water, often at prices that poorer communities cannot pay. The commodification of water

by large multinational companies has become an international issue. A handful of

companies have purchased water rights from governments around the world and either

managed local water supply systems or bottled and sold the water at prices the lower

income populations cannot afford.   A number of cases have been publicized where the

private companies who controlled city water supplies either did not provide potable water

to the community or provided it an exorbitant costs that many people could not afford

(Bozzo, 2009). International organizations, such as the World Bank, have been

instrumental in the move to privatize water, arguing that privatization is the most efficient

way to handle water scarcity.

In 1998, the World Bank recommended that the government in Cochabamba,

Bolivia privatize water distribution because it concluded that the government state

agency, SEMAPA, was too corrupt to effectively manage it.   The World Bank pressured

the government to auction off SEMAPA to Aguas del Tunari, a consortium that included

the British firm International Waters, a subsidiary of Bechtel, and several other firms.

Prices rose dramatically, disenfranchising many people from accessing the water. As a

result, between December 1999 and April 2000, people took to the streets in protest.

After months of civil unrest that reached the international stage, the Bolivian government

finally agreed to rescind the contract and take back control of managing water (Bollier,

2014; Peppard, 2014; Shiva, 2013).

The documentary *Blue Gold: World Water Wars* (Bozzo, 2009) illustrates that

the war over access to water is far from over and that enclosure and commodification of

water by multinational corporations is intensifying. A Canadian water activist, Maude

Barlow argued in the documentary, as she did in her book *Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop*

the Corporate Theft of the World's Water, corporations have for many years seen the

huge profits that commodifying water can bring. The bottling of water for sale has

become a highly profitable business and most major soft drink, fruit drink, and health

food drink companies have their brand of bottled water that, in many countries, sells at a

higher price than soft drinks such as Coke, preventing lower income populations from

purchasing it. Such disenfranchisement is occurring in countries where the same people

do not have access to clean water and suffer devastating water-borne diseases.

The documentary exposed the mammoth plans that water companies have on the

horizon, including transporting water in huge, floating, plastic udder-like barges and

building desalinization plants to facilitate continued marketing of water after they have

depleted fresh water sources. Many communities have protested their takings of water

freely from lakes and rivers around the world, including the Great Lakes. Some

communities have succeeded in taking back the water but others have failed because of

the bribes that corporations have provided to government officials and even judges.

When water is privatized, companies are not accountable to the public but only to

their shareholders. Hence, such companies can more easily resist the public's demands

for safe or better quality water at affordable prices (Bollier, 2013). The Italian legal

scholar, Ugo Mattei, reported that privatized water in Naples resulted in higher prices and

lower quality (2013). As a consequence, the citizens of Naples voted in a referendum to

de-privatize the water, a process that Mattei describes was extremely difficult because the

laws in Western countries are geared to supporting private, not public, ownership.

Indian physicist and activist Vandana Shiva has written about the destructive

impact of water commodification in India, a Third World perspective not typically

included in the mainstream commons literature. The privatization of water in India had been led by the World Bank who, Shiva argued, shifted the paradigm from "'water for life' to 'water for profit' and 'water democracy' to 'water apartheid' and 'some for all' to 'all for some'" (2013, p. 84). She asserted that water-intensive, World Bank projects have led to the devastation of water resources, such as the Ganges, and have left many Indians without adequate water for their livelihood. Water security is at great risk, Shiva warned (2013). Attempts to privatize water in Delhi, under the auspices of a World Bank loan, led to resistance and protests (Shiva, 2013).

Enclosure in the Agricultural Sector

Tribal and village land and forest enclosure is happening all over the Third World, with governments either confiscating or buying at below-market prices lands that have traditionally belonged to tribes and village farmers and leasing it or selling it to corporations for large profits. Rarely are the corporations under any obligation to make improvements that will provide benefits to the original landowners. Shiva (2013) pointed out that in India, land grabbing has become a huge profit-making business for the local and national governments.

By 2011, over 220 million hectares of communal lands globally had been enclosed, with two thirds of these in poor areas of Africa. These land grabs are part of the global land rush that has resulted from investors seeking lucrative investments following the oil, food, and fiscal crisis (Wily, 2012). Foreign governments and investors are seeking to grow crops to use as biofuels, food and livestock at costs lower than those in international markets, and horticultural, floricultural, and carbon credit schemes (Wily, 2012).

In Liberia, large plots of tribal lands have been confiscated and leased or sold to Indonesian oil palm producers (Shitu, 2013). Instead of being able to grow their own oil palm, tribal peoples become low wage workers for the huge corporations who build cheap worker quarters and provide a few social benefits. The Liberian government is trying to attract foreign investment to rebuild the country's economy, but it is not clear that the terms of investment will fund further internal development projects that will raise the standard of living of Liberians or go into the pocketbooks of the elite. Much of the profit will leave the country and benefit Indonesia. Malaysian oil palm companies are also establishing huge oil palm farms on tribal lands confiscated by the government. Further, the Liberian government is not giving loans to Liberians who are capable of managing oil palm farms or even compelling the multinationals to provide technical assistance to Liberians in order to sustain oil farm production in the future.

The Chinese are buying forests all over Africa and are poaching huge herds of elephants and rhinoceros to feed the consumer tastes of the Chinese for ivory and aphrodisiacs. The rain forests over most of Africa have already been depleted. Liberia has the last standing forest in West Africa. Corporations are already trying to gain access to these forests that provide a livelihood for the villages and also serve an important global ecological function.

The justification by African governments for allowing these land grabs is the requirement of foreign investment to build their economies. As a former World Bank economist, the President of Liberia views the development of Liberia from a top-down, macroeconomic policy perspective and is seeking foreign investment in order to provide funds to finance the expansion of government functions and investments. Such an

approach can effectively help to rebuild the country. The problem comes from government corruption, the shifting of benefits from the poor to the elite, and the loss of livelihood for the tribes, coupled with the disregard for tribal rights, a disregard that fuels discontent. The terms of investment may not have been favorable enough to Liberia, there could hence be extensive capital flight, the Liberians benefitting from the deal could invest their profits outside the country, and opportunities for employment for the poor could remain minimal.

The Green Revolution introduced fertilizers, pesticides, and improved seeds into the third world and was subsequently applauded as being a major success. At the time, the revolution did provide food for countries such as India, which suffered a major food shortage. However, according to environmentalists and commoners, many seeds have been enclosed and made unavailable to subsistence farmers (Bollier, 2014). International Agricultural Research Institutes, funded largely by the U.S. government, created genetically modified seeds to be drought-resistant, disease resistant, and highly productive. These seeds are protected by patents and hence are scarce and expensive and their availability is not guaranteed. As a consequence, poor farmers, according to Scharper and Cunningham (2007), are subjected to a sort of bioserfdom. Patented seeds are accompanied by technological fences, in the sense that genetically modified seed are often bred to be enhanced by fertilizers and pesticides that are expensive for village farmers to purchase.

In order to survive, many subsistence farmers form commons and collect and share traditional seeds that have been growing in their environment for centuries. Traditional, seed-sharing commons have been successful in helping subsistence farmers

in India survive (Bollier, 2014; Shiva, 2013). Shiva (2013) further argues that the green revolution's use of chemicals and monoculture has resulted in negative environmental and social impacts, including water shortage, vulnerability to pests, diseases such as cancer, and violent conflicts and further social marginalization.

Commodities Consensus

Argentinian Professor Maristella Svampa (2013) contended that Latin America is suffering from what she called the commodities consensus in which global powers seek massive amounts of natural resources, typically through land grabs, which leads to their over-exploitation as well as deprivation for millions of peasants. Svampa said that all Latin American governments support this strategy because they see no other alternative to development than capitalism and thus manifest what she calls "an ideology of resignation."   Many indigenous movements and struggles have fought against this consensus, and many groups are forming alternative communities, Svampa explained.

Enclosure of Commons by Employing Commons

The category of commons has been used to enclose common land farmed by peasants according to Rao and Appadurai (2008). They described the case of the submersion of lands in Hyderabad, India by a new dam to create a reservoir. The lands held hundreds of villages and hundreds of historical temples that the Indian government meticulously dissembled and moved to higher grounds. The government decided to install one of the temples on a plot of land along the reservoir. The lands were designated as grazing lands but had been cultivated by generations of *dalits*, or "untouchables," with the permission of the local *zamindar*. The government claimed these lands for the temple on the grounds that they were common lands, although this designation had not existed

prior to the submergence. The *dalits* were immediately classified as squatters and were thrown off the land without any compensation, an act that destined them to abject poverty.

The *dalits* had been able to cultivate the land for many generations on the basis of customary law that provided for the means of livelihood for the poorest members of the community. The commons, hence, had been defined by custom, not law. When the government moved in, they classified the lands as commons and applied the law of eminent domain to them. Hence, the legal category of commons was used to enclose commons held historically according to local custom. As Rao and Appadurai (2014) reported, the commons were recognized only through customary relations and the "law of the commons as such was an artifact of distributive practices" (p. 161).

This example illustrates a point made by Wall (2014) and Bollier (2014) that commons are historically entwined with culture and custom and hence governed by vernacular rather than civil law. Applying a contemporary legal definition of the commons can hence categorize a traditional commons in such a way that government can justify enclosing it.

Steps of Appropriation

Cheria and Edwin (2011) laid out the typical steps governments take to appropriate the commons. The first stage, according to these authors is "we are all one" (p. 7) in which resources, including those of the marginalized are declared to belong to everyone. Stage two involves the state defining he rights of everyone including the dominated. In stage three, all rights are vested with the dominant. Finally, during the fourth stage, rights are rationalized and the rights of the dominated become gifts (p. 7).

As gifts, they can be given or taken away because the dominated have no right to them. The government, hence, can easily justify enclosure and appropriation.

Enclosure of the Knowledge Commons

The enclosure of knowledge through patents, trademarks, and the consolidation of corporations in charge of publishing academic journals at exorbitant costs has been highlighted by many as a destructive trend that is limiting innovation. This enclosure has catalyzed the development of sharing and open access knowledge commons (Bollier, 2014; Linebaugh, 2014). In order to provide an incentive for research and creativity, the Constitution sets the stage for intellectual property rights in the United States. Article 1, Section 8, Clause 8 grants to Congress the power "to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries." However, according to several legal scholars, recent interpretations and laws regarding intellectual property rights have been expanded and interpreted in ways anathema to the original intent in the Constitution.

According to the commons literature, enclosure of knowledge began following World War II and was expanded during Reagan's presidency with the privatization of government information that subsequently cost to access. Further, universities also started turning over their journal publishing to private firms and journal costs soared. Increased cost along with licensing restrictions meant that neither individuals nor libraries could afford as many journals as they may have thought necessary nor were they allowed to borrow them through inter-library loan. In the 1990s, mergers of publishing corporations further restricted access through monopolistic pricing (Kranich, 2011).

Congress further enclosed knowledge through the passage of several laws that restricted the downloading and sharing of information on the Internet and also extended copyrights. The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 provided justification to further enclose information that the government deemed sensitive. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act, of 1998 or DMCA, enacted by Congress in 1998 makes it illegal for anyone to overcome a technological measure that restricts access to digital works or to even share information about how to open a technological lock. For example, a person violates the law if she or he deciphers the encryption keys on a DVD (Bollier, 2013).

Words and phrases are being trademarked and protected by law so that if people utter certain phrases or use certain words, they are in violation of the law. McDonalds, for example, owns 131 words and phrases including "Black History Makers of Tomorrow," "America's Favorite Fries," and "Healthy Growing Up" (Bollier, 2013). Legal scholar James Boyle pointed out the irony that flag burning is now protected by the Constitution whereas no one dares use the names of commercial icons such as the Golden Arches, Mickey Mouse, or the Taco Bell Chihuahua, which have become venerable objects under the law (Bollier, 2013). Such trademarking that claims proprietary control of public facts and words, tends to shut down creativity and discussion because people need to tread lightly and limit their vocabularies and symbols for fear of violating the law, Bollier (2014) believed.

Patents that enclose scientific research findings and products impede future scientific research by limiting access to knowledge, limiting academic dialogue, stifling political life and raising the cost of information (Bollier, 2013). For example, as intellectual property scholars J.H. Reichman and Pamela Samuleson pointed out, the cost

to access the data bank containing the Landsat satellite images that are used to map and

monitor terrestrial ecosystems increased from $400 to $4,400 per image after it was

privatized (Bollier, 2013).

Hess and Ostrom (2006) coined the term *dueling revolutions* to describe the battle

between enclosing the scientific information commons and increased information

sharing, catalyzed by globalization combined with information technology. This capture

of information by information technology transformed that information from a public

good to a commons at the same time facilitating its enclosure.

New copyright laws also allow proprietary information to monopolize markets

and tarnish the reasonably priced and ease of access of the Internet (Bollier, 2013, 2014).

Bollier (2013) called this the rise of a copyright police state because, as he pointed out,

software technologies are being designed so that copyright holders can track who

accesses their digital works. Digital right management collects information on consumer

usage to design marketing strategies or sell to third parties as well as to institute

discriminatory pricing for different market segments. Bollier (2013) contended that

geolocation technology can be used not only for individually targeted marketing but also

for political control.

Intellectual resources are non-rival goods, unlike natural resources, meaning that

when one individual engages in knowledge creation and produces a body of knowledge,

this does not diminish other people doing likewise. Many scholars argue that knowledge

commons is created and regenerated through social exchange and that knowledge

beneficial to society at large is enhanced by sharing it openly and freely. Sharing adds to

the common pool of knowledge and stimulates reflection upon and enhancement of that

pool. Knowledge commons are hence "both non-subtractive and generative" (Nonini, 2007, p. 7). Enclosing them is harmful to the good of society. Copyright scholar James Boyle (2007) has penned that we are in the midst of a "Second Enclosure Movement," the first being the English enclosure movement discussed in Chapter 3.   Technology has speeded up this enclosure (Bollier, 2013, 2014).

Boyle (2007) quoted Chief Justice Brandeis's 1918 statement to illustrate how far the US has veered from earlier principles. Brandeis argued that "the general rule of law is that the noblest of human productions – knowledge, truths ascertained, conceptions, and ideas – become, after voluntary communication to others, free as the air to common use" (p. 20). In fact, as Boyle said, protection of the commons was a major goal of intellectual property law. Yet, Boyle (2007) illustrated that patents have been extended to cover ideas that twenty years ago all scholars would have conceived as unpatentable and have also been extended to facts that are the foundation of further innovation and knowledge creation.

Globalization and the Expansion of Intellectual Property Rights

The expanded enclosure of intellectual property, much scorned by commoners, was catalyzed to some extent by globalization and increased global competition threatening the profits of U.S. industries, especially the pharmaceutical and chemical industry, the computer and software industry, and the entertainment industry (Ostergard, 2003). Lobbying by these industries resulted in enhanced laws protecting intellectual property both in countries of origin and also in developing countries via aggressive foreign policy negotiations.   One of the major policy objectives of the U.S. Department

of State is negotiating copyright laws to protect American products, especially music and movies, that can be easily pirated and sold at affordable local prices.

The enclosure of academic journals has stimulated discussions and action by individuals to search for alternative, less costly, and more accessible ways to publish articles and books. Open access journals have begun to proliferate along with self-publishing milieus that are increasingly accepted as legitimate academic publishing arenas. There are currently over 2,000 such journals. Some of the remaining elite academic publishing houses have tried to enter the open access movement, however, at a large cost. Wiley, for example, a major academic publisher, offers authors an open access publishing option, but at the cost of $3,000.

In addition to excessive cost enclosing many academic journals, the increasing questionability of research findings published in journals owned by corporations was highlighted by one of the participants in this study. Some scholars have perceived that corporations are paying researchers to produce findings that support their agendas and that the results of many of the research studies in corporate-owned journals are therefore not reliable. Open access journals are viewed by many scholars as a forum where legitimate findings can be published to maintain the integrity of scientific research.

Privatization of Public Services and Investment Opportunities

Wall Street has begun to sell equity ownership or long-term leases that taxpayers have paid for on public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and airports. Investors have acquired a long-term lease on Interstate 90 in Indiana and the Chicago Skyway road and now both of them are toll roads (Bollier, 2014). Chicago's Inspector General recently discovered that the city's sale of their parking meters to a private company owned by

Morgan Stanley was undervalued by $974 million. Since the company has owned the

meters, parking rates have tripled, meters have expanded, and service has declined

(Bollier, 2014).

Bollier (2014) asserted that these supposed public/private partnerships are a sort

of corporate socialism that scams the public. Private corporations earn the profits while

the government, that is, the taxpayers, assumes the risk. Hidden government subsidies

include loan guarantees or regulatory schemes that guarantee profits (Bollier, 2014).

Privatization as a Cost-Cutting Approach for Increased Efficiency

A major argument for the privatization of public services that commoners

consider to be enclosure is based on the view that the private sector is more efficient and

cost-conscious than the public sector and can therefore for effectively and efficiently

deliver services once considered the responsibility of the state. Such an argument has

become commonly accepted in the United States especially since the turn to

neoliberalism, initiated in the 1980s by the Reagan Presidency and continued until the

2008 Great Recession, after which its dominance has been questioned but its hegemony

undaunted. The balance of public-private and the role of the state versus the private

sector have shifted in favor of the corporate world and only recently have been more

intensely questioned.

Neoliberalism and Enclosure of Public Property and the Commons

Driven by the profit-motive, neoliberalism of the last 35 years has led to the

expansive privatization and commodification of both public property and commons,

including both natural resource commons and the commons of human creativity,

including ideas, knowledge, the arts, and other creations. Enclosure of the latter

commons includes *biopiracy*, the patenting and sale of indigenous knowledges or genetic information from plants, animals or humans (Hardt, 2013). Such enclosures include, for example, the marketization of an indigenous healing plant or the use of an indigenous seed for it natural qualities as a pesticide (Hardt, 2013).

Rifkin (2014) cited the 1979 Supreme Court case filed by General Electric to seek a patent for a genetically engineered microorganism designed to consume oil spills on the ocean. Although the United States Patent Office had refused to grant a patent on the basis of the argument that living things are not patentable according to US law, the Supreme Court granted the patent to the first genetically engineered organism. As Rifkin (2014) illustrated, biotech companies, such as Genentech, became hugely profitable and sought out living organisms to genetically modify and patent. In 1987, the US Patent Office reversed its policy and allowed the patenting of 'multicellular living organisms, including animals" (Rifkin, 2-14, p. 166).   Despite the efforts of groups such as the Foundation on Economic Trends (FOET), who, in 1995, even amassed a coalition of more than 200 religious leaders in the United States, to fight the patenting of animal and human genes, tissues, organisms, such patenting has continued (Rifkin, 2014).

Ethical Arguments Against Enclosure

> Enclosure indicates private property and capital: it seems to promise both individual ownership and social productivity, but in fact the concept of enclosure is inseparable from terror and the destruction of independence and community.
> *Peter Linebaugh* (2014)

A number of ethical arguments have been made against enclosure or the monetization and commodification of resources, services, and actions that traditionally have been non-monetized or advertised to be free. Arguments against "market triumphalism" (Sandel, 2013) can be segregated into the categories of arguments

including: "inalienable attributes of living persons" (Nonini, 2007, p. 8), gifts of nature for human benefit and essential for survival, democratic values of equality, values of the redistribution of the wealth, values that uphold rather than corrupt the human spirit, and values of community responsibility and sharing. As Sandel (2013) wrote, marketization changes the nature of a thing by embedding its value in its price rather than in any higher ethical standard related to fairness or inherent goodness.

The counter argument generally employed against Sandel and others who argue against excessive marketization is the "freedom of choice mantra" that has magnified along with the marketization process. For example, in the United States. the Supreme Court's interpretation of the first Amendment's "freedom of speech" prerogative has been expanded to include unlimited financial contributions to political candidates despite longstanding campaign finance laws based on the recognition that money can buy favors that contradict fundamental values of democracy and equality.

The inalienable attributes of living persons is employed in reference to so-called "species commons" to argue against commodification of body parts, embryos, human trafficking, child adoption, and laboratory derived and modified human gene sequences. Commoners have argued that such attributes are not fungible and their separation from a person or the commodification of a person results in irrevocable injury (Nonini, 2007).

A welfare society is based upon the notion that some of the collective wealth should be transferred to the poor in order to sustain them and provide them with a minimum standard of living. Implicit in this value is the notion that, to the extent possible, people should have jobs in order to generate their own income. However, what

is missing in these calculations is the recognition that there is an increasing number of working poor whose jobs do not provide enough income to live above the poverty line.

People earning minimum wage in the U.S., for example, still qualify for public assistance, at least in terms of food stamps and medical assistance. Taxpayers are thus not only subsidizing these workers, but are also subsiding the corporations who fail to provide them with a living wage in order to maximize their profits and the payoffs provided to senior executives and shareholders. Hence, taxpayers are redistributing their collective wealth, not only to underpaid workers, but also to corporations.

All around the world, minimum wage workers continue to live in poverty and are forced to work in sweatshops and unhealthy and unsafe factories. The series of fires in and collapses of factories in Bangladesh, many of which were producing goods for US companies, witnessed the disregard some corporations hold for human labor.

Likewise, the public sector privatization schemes that are being contracted at below market rates entail a taxpayer subsidization program. In addition, as many of the commoners argue, the taxpayers are subsidizing much of the research by scientists, universities, and corporations, but the profits from the findings and inventions, protected by patents, are distributed only to a small group of individuals or stockholders. It is the redistribution of taxpayers' earnings to the wealthy that is at the heart of the ethical argument against much of the contemporary enclosure.

Protecting the creativity of individuals and companies through patents is easier to justify than protecting commodities such as pharmaceuticals that are designed to enhance the welfare of people. Patenting medicines needed to fight the AIDs epidemic in Africa caused extremely high prices for treatment, prices that were borne by African

governments or American taxpayers funding medicines sent through the United States

Agency for International Development. The high prices created a barrier to treatment for

vast numbers of patients in Africa and eventually catalyzed protests both in the United

States and in Africa, resulting in the reduction of prices and ultimately to the use of

generic brands (Ostergard, 2003).

Open access to knowledge is generally justified by reference to shared human

progress and the importance of building upon the common knowledge base in order to be

able to advance science, technology, treatment options, and the general enhancement of

life for people around the world. In addition, sharing of ideas often increases the value of

these ideas to their authors (Hardt, 2013). Furthermore, arguments also occasionally

refer to the right for access to gifts of nature, naturally endowed to human kind, and

hence of equal benefit to all, not only the elite few.

Increasing Enclosure of the Internet

Both the government and the market are increasingly enclosing the Internet.

Many countries have historically enclosed web sites that encourage critique of the

government or the formation of politically active communities. Recently, Internet search

companies, such as Google and Yahoo, have been exposed as providing personal

information to both the government and corporations, revelations that threaten the use of

the Internet to form commons that may be promoting social change or sharing a critique

of the government. Furthermore, Internet providers are developing tiered systems such

that individuals and companies can pay extra for faster Internet service. This policy,

some have argued, may potentially disenfranchise those who are unable to pay the

additional costs because the slower service may prevent them from undertaking certain

actions on line. Such a policy further reinforces the inequality in society and the fact that

those who cannot pay are increasingly enclosed from access to products and services that

initially had been offered to everyone.

The above concerns regarding the freedom and cost to access the Internet

illustrate a challenge the commons faces when co-existing with the market and the state.

The public has identified the Internet as a commons and the majority of users determined

that it is a democracy-building milieu that should be shared openly and freely. However,

the Internet is also shared with the market and the State and, naturally, they will employ it

to achieve their own purposes. Profit-making corporations provide it by-and-large and

employ it as a key platform for marketing. In fact, a major function of the Internet is

serving as a marketplace.

The Digital Divide

Given the fact that so much has been written about the Internet as a liberating

commons and as a possible vehicle for a participatory democracy, the digital divide is

cause for concern and is a form of enclosure. The digital divide is often discussed in

three categories. The global divide refers to the fact that industrial countries have a

distinct advantage over developing countries in terms of their ability to access the

Internet and other digital technologies. The social divide is the differential access

between the rich and poor within all countries. The democratic divide "signifies the

difference between those who do, and do not, use the panoply of digital resources to

engage, mobilize, and participate in public life" (Norris, 2001, p. 4).

Enclosure of commons caused by socio-economic privilege or lack of it as well as

feelings of exclusion are serious social justice issues that need to be addressed alongside

of the issue of commodification of commons. As Bollier emphasized (2014), enclosures

are

> attacks on communities and their practices of commoning. Their primary goal
> may be the seizure of resources, but they also seek to impose a "regime change"
> on people. Enclosures convert a system of collective management and social
> mutuality into a market order that privileges private ownership, prices, market
> relationships and consumerism. The goal is to treat people as individuals and
> consumers, not as communities with shared, long-term, nonmarket interests. (p.
> 40)

The Battle Against Enclosure

Groups of citizens around the world continue to battle against various kinds of

enclosure. For example, FOET coordinated the efforts of 250 diverse organizations from

50 countries at the 2002 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, to support the

Treaty to Share the Genetic Commons (Rifkin, 2014). The Treaty proclaimed that the

earth's gene pool is a global commons that must be preserved and respected and

collectively managed and should not be claimed "as commercially negotiable genetic

information or intellectual property by governments, commercial enterprises, or other

institutions or individuals" (Rifkin, 2014, p. 168).

The Global Crop Diversity Trust erected an underground vault on the island of

Svalbard, Norway to store thousands of seeds for use by future generations (Rifkin,

2014). Young scientists are increasingly publishing papers arguing for the open access to

genetic materials and their management by commons, in opposition to their enclosure by

profit-making enterprises (Rifkin, 2014). Many more efforts to stave off enclosure of

commons are taking place around the world and some of these are being carried out by

organizations described in the Appendix of this dissertation.

Chapter Six:

Methods

This chapter outlines the methods that guided this study and the emergence of a grounded theory from the data I gathered. I purposely provided a historical and contemporary background regarding the commons in previous chapters in order to contextualize my methodology and my research findings. In this chapter, I describe how I negotiated the seven phases of classic grounded theory: (a) preparation; (b) data collection; (c) coding and analyzing data; (d) theoretical memoing; (e) reviewing and incorporating relevant literature; (f) sorting memos into theoretical outline; and (g) writing the theory. Further, I lay out specifics of the setting, research design, and sample, outline the research procedures and data collection; and present my approach to data management and analysis. I entered my research without any preconceptions regarding what the commons is. I remained largely devoid of conceptions throughout the study until the theory began to emerge from the data.

As illustrated in the previous chapters and in Appendix A, the world of the commons is a complex, heterogeneous domain inhabited by a plethora of organizations and individuals. The purpose of my research was to enter this domain at various points and according to numerous perspectives by employing a grounded theory approach, to discover "What is going on here," that is, to ask: "What are commoners experiencing, what are they trying to do, and what are they hoping to accomplish?" This question led to the emergence of social and psychological processes associated with the phenomenon of the commons. A broader question that I was seeking an answer to was "What is

happening in society that explains the commons as phenomenon?" and "Why is it a

growing phenomenon?" In addition, I also hoped to answer the question whether the

commons offers a paradigm for a new socioeconomic order or whether it is simply

another way of organizing in a capitalist society that complements the market and the

state.

As I stated in Chapter 1, answering this latter question required that I shift into a

research approach that went beyond the grounded theory. To answer this question, I

considered the grounded theory that emerged from my study along with data from the

commons literature. I then assessed changes in the theory of ideas as well as emerging

models of organizations and of humans that parallel commons thinking. I also considered

data regarding the current economic crisis catalyzed by the Great Recession of 2008.   I

reflected on the arguments of commoners regarding whether commoning was a

supplemental way of being and acting in the capitalist system, or whether it contains the

seeds for a new socioeconomic order. Finally, I drew my own conclusions.

A Working Definition of the Commons

As I stated in Chapter 1, I began my research by positing a working definition of

the commons. I did so in order to identify participants that shared similar characteristics

and hence to define more transparent inclusion criteria. As I attempted to make clear in

the previous chapters, many phenomena have been renamed "commons" without general

consensus on what comprises a commons.

The working definition I employed is one recently expressed by Bollier (2014)

and also expressed by several other commoners. This definition defines commons as a

resource, a community that shares and manages it, and a social protocol that includes

governance, rules of usage, and criteria for inclusion and exclusion. I do not include

publically managed commons in this definition, nor do I include entities such as land

trusts that are used to either conserve a resource or hold it for an owner. The definition I

am using requires that the commons is being managed by members for their own use.

Sharing is an essential aspect of this definition. This basic working definition can be

enriched by adding a definition proposed by Menzies (2014), namely that commons "is a

habitat of interrelationships, bound by mutuality: mutual obligation and mutual self-

interest, and hopefully, affinity" (p. 88). Menzies' definition adds a quality of "caring"

that defines a commons as distinct from such entities as a land trust, which manages a

resource according to a protocol but does not necessarily include care.

Research Setting

I conducted the data collection and analysis component of this grounded research

study from May 2013 to May 2014. During this time, I collected data from people living

in various parts of the world via electronic communication and online sources. The

setting hence was geographically dispersed. The data I collected from primary and

secondary sources derived from sources in several countries in addition to the United

States, including Canada, Germany, England, France, India, Liberia, Italy, Greece,

Bolivia, Argentina, and Jamaica. I collected this information from in-person interviews

as well as from posted interviews and presentations. Table 1 below specifies the places

from which I gathered data.

Following a grounded theory approach requires that the researcher not focus on a

particular population but rather focus on the phenomenon of interest (Glaser, 1978).

Such a stance means that data can be gathered from a number of different sources and

that the population can be diverse. Consequently, grounded theory does not approach

research by predefining and gathering a group of participants. Rather, the participants

and other data sources are discovered after each interview depending upon the variables

identified and the codes that begin to emerge in the previous data collection effort.

Hence, I did not pre-identify a specific number of participants but rather selected

participants and other sources of data as I navigated the data collection process. I

immersed myself in the commons for over one year, observing closely how this

phenomenon is spreading globally and becoming increasingly a phenomenon of interest

for people in many walks of life.

I immersed myself by spending a great deal of time observing the setting,

developing relationships with commoners, participating in a commons, and talking with a

range of people and, hence, I gained an understanding of the commons culture and social

setting. I joined a food cooperative and participated in meetings and events so that I

could better understand the dynamics of a commons. I was able to rise above my own

preconceptions by allowing participants to direct their own interviews and by putting

myself in the role of observer. I persistently observed the data the emerged from the data

collection process and obtained an in depth understanding of the commons through the

variables that emerged during this process.

Table 1. *Research design by type, content, frequency, and duration*

Participant	Type	Content	Frequency	Duration
Primary Data Sources				
Participant Interview	Qualitative, one on-one open-ended Non-scripted	Launched with grand-tour question: "Tell me about your experience of the….."	One interview	1 ½ hours
Food Coop leader	"	"coop"	One interview	1 ½ hours
Food Coop member	"	"coop"	One interview	1 hour
IASC leader	"	"commons"	One interview	1 hour
Occupy participant	"	"Occupy movement"	One interview	1 1/2 hours
Community garden Leader	"	"garden"	One interview	1 ½ hours
Sustainability Leader	"	"sustainability"	One interview	1 ¼ hours
Rastafarian	"	"Rastafarianism"	One interview	1 hour
Blogger	"	"Blog community"	One interview	1 hour
Commoner/farmer	"	"commons"	One interview	30 minutes
Scholar of common pool resources	" "	"commons"	One interview	1 hour
8 Participants **"**Burner"	Qualitative focus group	Launched with grand tour question: "Tell me about your experiences at Burning Man."	One group encounter	2 ½ hours
Secondary Data Sources				
YouTube interviews and Presentations of:				
David Bollier	Qualitative	Asked about meaning of	5 interviews	8 hours total
James Quilligan	"	commons and involvement	4	7 hours
Michael Hardt	"	"	3	6 hours
Silke Helfrich	"	"	2	1 ½ hour
Elinor Ostrom	"	"	3	2 hours
Vendana Shiva	"	"	1	1 hour
Silvia Frederici	"	"	1	1 hour
George Caffentzis	"	"	1	20 minutes
www.eflex.com				
Massimo DeAngelis	"	"	1	written

Stavros Stavrides

http://www.commoner.org.uk/, Massimo DeAngelis	"	"	1	written
http://www.16beavergroup.org/silvia_george_david/ Silvia Frederici George Caffentzis David Greber	"	"	3	3 hours
www.bollier.org David Bollier Podcasts	"	"	5	5 hours

Research Design

My research design consisted of participant interviews, a focus group, and several

different types of secondary data, as described below. I conducted interviews of

participants that lasted from 1 hour to 2 hours, driven by the interest of the participants. I

began my interviews with a grand tour question and audio recorded and transcribed the

interviews if the participants agreed.

The interviews were open-ended and non-scripted. I kept the focus of the

interview on what the experience of the participant was in their particular commons and

on what was important to them, not me (Simmons, 2011). I asked each participant if they

would be willing to participate in an additional interview and I promised them that I

would send them my research results for their review.   I also held one focus group,

which I recorded and subsequently coded.

My research approach also included an in depth review and coding of the

commons literature and especially any literature that dealt with the core variable

"commoning." As I explained in Chapter 2, literature is treated as data in grounded

theory. That is, literature is coded and incorporated into the theory to enhance it.

In addition, in order to determine whether commoning will lead to a new socio-

economic order, my research approach included reviewing what commoners said in the

literature regarding whether the commons is another form of organizing and managing

resources that co-exists with the market and the state or whether it marks the beginning of

a socio-economic transformation. I then drew my own inferences and conclusions

regarding the role of commoning.

Sample

Intended Sample

At the onset of my research, I intended to be interview individuals involved in

different types of commons, people known as commons activists, and those known as

scholars of the commons.   I did not have a preselected sample size because, as I stated

previously, grounded theory does not identify a pre-determined sample size. Rather,

sample size is determined during the research process by theoretical coding, which drives

data collection until the phenomenon of interest can be adequately explained by an

emergent theory (Glaser, 1978). The focus must remain on the phenomenon of interest,

not on participants and hence, the data can be gathered from primary and secondary data

sources directed by the theoretical codes that are identified during data collection. By

predefining a group of participants, a researcher risks discovering a low-level theory that

is not adequately representative of the phenomenon of interest. My sample was drawn

from primary and secondary data sources, including individual interviews, a focus group,

and online and published videotaped and written interviews.

Going in these directions took me to the multiplicity of groups who consider themselves to be part of the commons, toward theoreticians analyzing the commons from different ideological perspectives, and toward activists in various walks of life, including civil society, organizations, academia, independent consultants, and concerned citizens. At the outset of my research, although I did not have a particular number of participants in mind, I had intended to interview participants in all these categories. What drew me in these different directions were common behavioral and attitudinal patterns and commonly held concepts across all the groups and individuals, despite being located in different social categories and ideological camps. I entered these different arenas through participant interviews, a focus group, YouTube interviews and lectures, conference presentations, several online commons courses and workshops, commons websites, blogs, documentaries, and an extensive collection of literature presenting various perspectives on the commons.   Some of my intended participants did not respond to my request for an interview. Many of the commons activists and scholars either were too busy for an interview, or were too busy for an interview from a PhD student, only consider being interviewed by someone notable. Fortunately, I was able to find online interviews conducted by more important individuals than I, to code. In addition, I suspect that some of them may have wondered what I would do with the information I gathered from them, whether it would be properly reported, and what implications it would have on their reputations. I believe that by having more formal interviews with media persons may have provided them with more control of the use of the data.

In grounded theory, the researcher continues to gather data until all conceptual categories are saturated and the phenomenon of interest is adequately explained and the

emerging theory fits and is generalizable to human experience in other domains. Glaser (1978) cautioned the researcher not to confuse saturation with fatigue and to be mindful that theoretical codes that emerge from continuing the data collection process confirm previous theoretical codes rather than add new ones.

I continued to gather data from interviews that I conducted and interviews that were published or videotaped, from a focus group, and from online presentations until theoretical codes were saturated and the grounded theory emerged and was reinforced by additional data collection. I was careful to code only published and videotaped interviews that were open-ended and in which participants described their experiences in the commons and answered similar questions to those that I asked participants. Because the commons is such a complex and highly geographically dispersed phenomenon, had I identified a group of participants, the theory that emerged would have been representative of a biased selection. Hence, I employed a very open approach that extended in many directions, as described below.

Selecting the initial data source is key in grounded theory. I determined that I wanted to begin by interviewing an individual who was deeply involved in the commons. Since I was entering the research totally uninformed about the commons, I "googled" the term "commons" and wrote down names of commoners that emerged from the search. Without knowing the background or theoretical perspective of the individuals, I began to email several of them to request an interview. Most of them did not respond to my email. Some that did told me they were too busy for an interview. Some gave me references to their online interviews and presentations. One person finally responded to my email and agreed to an interview. She happened to be a key person, well connected to the commons

phenomenon, with extensive involvement with the Ostroms' Workshop in Political

Theory and Policy Analysis, and with a broad understanding of the phenomenon and the

people involved as well as a rich historical perspective. She also had been the first

person to identify the Internet as a commons. She set me off on my fascinating and

sometimes overwhelming road of discovery.

My first interview revealed that commoners value sharing and are committed to

self-governing communities, and that commoners could be divided into practitioners, that

is, the commoners who were actively engaged in commons; theoreticians who were

studying commons and writing theories about them; and activists, who were promoting

the phenomenon of commons to solve issues of social justice and transform society.

Hence, my subsequent interviews included data from these three groups.

Due to the fact that the commons is a burgeoning phenomenon garnering

considerable interest and debate, much ongoing discussion is taking place on social

media as commoners are trying to make sense of what the commons is and what it bodes

for the future of the world. Thee secondary data sources I coded were not theoretical, but

rather represented the experiences of commoners in many parts of the world who hold

differing ideologies. Hence, during data collection, I was not influenced by theories of

the commons, which, in any case, are in the process of being made and are by no means

set in concrete or universally accepted.

Final Sample

My final sample is illustrated in Table 1 in this chapter. I interviewed individuals

in a variety of different commons, including an individual who plays a key role in the

International Association for the Study of the Commons; members of a food cooperative;

a person who participated in the Occupy Wall Street Movement protesting genetically

modified food; individuals who regularly attend Burning Man, an annual event of 60,000

people who gather in the desert in Nevada and create a city for one week, and consider

themselves to be "Burners"; a scholar who focuses on common pool resources and

participates in a watershed commons in Lake Tahoe, California; an individual who writes

about the knowledge commons; an individual who started a communal garden; a member

of a blogging commons; a member of a Rastafarian community in Jamaica; an individual

deeply involved in the sustainability movement; and a self-proclaimed commoner farmer.

In addition, I accessed and coded published open-ended interviews of a number of

well-known commons scholars, activists, and practitioners. Both YouTube as well as

various commons websites contained presentations by commoners at conferences and

universities that provided data that I coded. I also coded a great deal of the commons

literature that discussed the commons from various perspectives without being

theoretical. My final sample of participants included 17 participants who I personally

gathered data from and 11 participants whose open-ended written or videotaped

interviews were published.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

I employed two criteria of inclusion. Participants were required to belong to a

commons that fit the working definition that I presented earlier in this chapter, namely, a

community that shared and/or managed an identified resource and had governance

procedures and rules of usage, inclusion and exclusion, coupled with a sense of

mutuality. *Resource* could be defined broadly to include the natural, material, and non-

material. In addition, participants were included who identified themselves as members

of commons and who call themselves commoners. I excluded participants who were
members of groups that were not bound by a connection to a clearly defined resource that
they were collectively managing and that did not associate themselves with the commons.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection Instrument

My data collection instrument for collecting primary data was an open-ended
interview for individual participants and an open-ended guide for my focus groups. I
began the data collection process by telling participants that the purpose of my study was
to explore their experience with the commons. I told them that I would conduct an open-
ended interview during which they would drive the interview process and they would
determine how long they wanted to discuss their experiences. I began my interviews
with a grand tour question and audio recorded and transcribed the interviews if the
participants agreed. My grand tour question generally was "Tell me about your
experience of the _____ (whatever domain of the commons they were involved in)." I
asked what drew individuals to the commons, either to participate in them or to study and
promote them; what their experience was by being inside of a commons; and the views
on the role of commons in society and the magnitude of the social transformation that the
commons is igniting. During the interview, I probed the participants to discuss their
experiences when they veered into more abstract comments to encourage them to
personalize their conversation. I did this without taking control of the interview process
or directing them in my preconceived direction. I did not force them if they did not
respond to my probe.

Data Collection

After each interview, I coded the data and decided where next to go in terms of interviews, focus groups, or online material. I transcribed and coded taped interviews, and in cases, in which participants did not want to be taped, I coded the notes that I took during the interview process. In terms of published, written interviews, I copied and coded them. As for videotaped interviews, I took notes as I watched the video and coded my notes immediately afterward. I often listened to the interviews a second and even a third time to be sure that I captured al the nuances of what the participants were expressing. Depending upon what codes emerged from each interview, I selected the next participant.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research establishes the validity of the findings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the trustworthiness of qualitative studies includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to confidence in the truth of the findings. Credibility is established by prolonged engagement and persistent observation, among other approaches (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability refers to the applicability of the findings to other contexts. This criterion is similar to Glaser's (1978) contention that the emergent grounded theory must be applicable to other contexts because it explains recognizable social and/or psychological processes. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that transferability can be guaranteed through providing a thick description of the phenomenon of interest so that the applicability of the findings to other contexts becomes obvious. Transferability is also achieved by including participants from a wide range of different commons. I have

provided an in depth description of the variables that emerged from my research so that the applicability of the theory that emerged can be seen. Moreover, the theories that emerged are generalizable to recognizable social and psychological processes.

Dependability of qualitative research is assured by showing that findings are consistent and could be repeated.   This is often established by an external audit by a professional familiar with the subject. Grounded theory research does not follow a prescribed path that will necessarily be followed by different researchers, and, thus, the notion of audit does not apply, although I can demonstrate the path I took by showing coded interviews. Further, Farrell (2009b) asserted that dependability can be achieved by providing "an accurate "rendition of the participant's candid experience [of] how 761 they…understand the events of interest" (Farrell, 2009b). This is similar to grounded theory's metric of relevance, which asserts that a theory is relevant when it deals with the real concerns of participants and has "grab" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I shared the theories with participants so that they could confirm that they recognized the processes I identified.

Confirmability refers to a degree of neutrality or the recognition that study findings are true reflections of what the participants said and are not biased by the researchers' preconceptions. I entered the domain of the commons with very little knowledge of or experience with this phenomenon and I checked myself along the way to push aside any preconceptions that may have been. Further, as I stated above, I shared my findings with participants so that they could confirm that what I wrote matched what they said. The fittingness of the findings is also a criterion of confirmability as it deals with the likelihood that the grounded theory will have meaning for others who have

experience with the phenomenon of interest (Farrell, 2009b). Glaser's notions of "imagery, grab, and fit" (Simmons, 2010, pg. 30) are also appropriate metrics of confirmability because these indicate that the theories are accurate representations of the phenomenon of interest and that they stimulate people to reflect deeply about their experience.

Procedures

Access to Participants

Grounded theory takes the researcher on an adventure of sorts in that she does not know beforehand where she is necessarily going. She will have a general idea regarding which participants she wants to interview, but the codes that emerge from each interview direct her to the next participant via theoretical sampling. Her focus must always remain on the phenomenon of interest, not on a particular sample. As I previously stated, I identified my initial participant by googling the term *commons* and contacting individuals until one of them accepted. After my initial interview, and based on the codes that emerged, I selected the next participant and followed this process throughout my study. I initially contacted individuals with emails. Once, I determined their preliminary interest and availability to be interviewed, I sent them the informed consent form. I conducted interviews sequentially after coding the previous one. I conducted the majority of interviews by Skype and some in person. In terms of published interviews, I accessed published interviews on a number of websites, which I laid out in the table on Table 1.

Interview Procedures

After I assured that participants had signed the informed consent form, I orally reviewed the general interview procedure, not the content, and assured participants of

confidentiality and that they could talk as long as they wanted and direct the interview

process since I did not have a script. I also confirmed that I was willing to send them the

summary of my study and also obtained their permission to follow-up with them. As I

stated previously, I began the interview with a grand tour question related to their

experience in the particular commons with which they were associated.

Protection of Human Participants

Fielding Graduate University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved my

research application in July, 2013. My research posed no anticipated concerns.

Participants directed their own interviews and could stop at any time. Being open ended,

grounded theory interviews only explore areas that participants want to explore. Further,

participants were free to ask me any questions they wanted and to express any concerns

they had. I was prepared to provide them help resources in the case that they felt any

discomfort, but this was not expected to occur.

All interviews were confidential and anonymous. I assigned numbers that

correlated with participants on the transcribed interviews that had been audio recorded

and on the notes that a jotted down for those interviews that were not numbered. I kept a

master list of interviewees and their numbers in my safe. All of my transcribed

interviews were kept in a file on my computer and I scanned and saved onto my computer

my handwritten notes of other interviews in addition to all the coded interviews.

Pilot Study

Grounded theory does not require a pilot study. Nonetheless, I considered my

initial interview as the pilot so that I could test the technologies I was using, i.e. Skype

and an audio recorder, as well as the conditions surrounding the collection of data and

adjust them if necessary for subsequent interviews. I found out that Skype worked

reasonably well for interviewing. I found out that I could easily record the interview

while using Skype, so that I could later transcribe it. The grand tour question worked

reasonably well but I found that I needed to tailor some of my follow-on questions to help

the participant explain her actual experiences in addition to her point of view.

Approach to Data Analysis

Throughout the data collection process, I continued to employ the constant

comparative method to code and analyze data that emerged from the interviews, focus

group, YouTube videos, online courses, conference presentations, and literature.

Categories and their properties began to emerge from open coding. Both *in vivo* codes

and sociological constructs emerged as the commons is rich with concepts that

commoners themselves consistently use as well as concepts that fit broad sociological

and psychological categories. I identified *in vivo* codes early on including *commoning,*

self-provisioning, sharing, self-governing, and *de-commodifying*. Codes emerged that

characterized the societal level and the individual level as well as the interaction between

individuals and their societies and the influence those individuals have on the nature of

these societies.   I eventually identified the core variable and then I initiated theoretical

coding by focusing on relationships between substantive codes. Theoretical memoing

allowed me to pour out my stream-of-consciousness and intuitive thoughts and images

elicited by theoretical codes.

The Theories and Theoretical Write-Up

Grounded theory research yields results that are presented as theoretical write-

ups. The core variable of *communing* emerged early on in my research. A word

employed by many commoners, it is a process that has not been intimately explored and is generally used as "that which commoners do," a process that has been considered self-evident. As commoning informed my data collection process, I came to realize that it is a highly complex social and psychological process. Three variables emerged that interact to explain the process of commoning and these I call *supplanting a paradigm, self-protagonizing,* and *resonating self and society.*

Limitations of the Study

There are potential limitations to this study. As noted earlier, a number of phenomena have been re-named commons, without a universally accepted definition of commons. In this study, I included specific inclusion criteria based on a working definition of the commons. The study sample size was small and also included mostly Americans and hence there may be a cultural bias in the data. The small sample size also indicates that the findings may not be generalizable. Given the reality that the domain of the commons is continuing to expand and its reach is global, ultimately the grounded theory that emerged from my research will be modified and/or expanded as the phenomenon of the commons continues to flourish. One of the characteristics of grounded theories is modifiability, and my theory is no exception.

Chapter Seven

Toward a Grounded Theory of Commons

Return, pure Faith! Return, meek piety!
The kingdoms of the world are yours:
each heart Self-governed,
the vast Family of Love
Rais'd from the common earth by common toil,
Enjoy the equal produce …
Old English poem

So all over the world, we're figuring out ways to live without the land and capital
of the classes who think they own the planet, ways to make their land and capital
useless to them with no one to work it for them. And they can't stop us because
we have no leaders.
Caron

Commoning emerged as the core variable of my study and what follows is a

grounded theory of commons. Three variables emerged that interact to create the *process*

of commoning, namely *supplanting a paradigm*, *self-protagonizing*, and re*sonating self*

and society. Commoning is a complex social and psychological process that both creates

and motivates the creation and management of commons, at the same time providing

commoners with a sense of self, emancipated from the values that the market has

imposed on contemporary society. Commoning is a social production process as well as

a constellation of subjectivities. Commoning is an ethical and moral process that

resonates with society such that society begins to reflect a value system based on

communal wellbeing rather than individual gain, social justice, harmony with nature, and

sustainability. Commoning builds organizational forms, productive processes,

relationships with self, others, the environment, and society that emanate from the belief

that we can live in harmony with each other and with nature and that people can fully

participate in making the policies and taking the actions that impact our lives. Commoning derives from and thrives on love.

Commoning allows us to see under the label *commons* at the work that people are actually engaging in, what their motivations are, what are the subjectivities underlying their actions, and what impact on the world they are having. The participants in my study often did not call their projects *commons per se*, but they unanimously described a similar underlying process captured by the term "commoning." A perceived need is the initiating event that stimulates the process of commoning. Generally, a leader initiator or a group of leaders initiators communicate about a resource in crisis or a resource that a group shares that either will be depleted if not communally managed or will be better managed by a community. In the latter case, a commons differs from a community of interest in that a commons, rather than being a learning community, is a social production community. Commoning involves a mental shift from an individualistic stance in which an individual desires to obtain something exclusively for himself or herself to a communal stance in which individuals see the advantages to the commons and maximizing their communal wellbeing.

Commoning next proceeds to the organizing process and commoners agree on their organizational form and also legal status. They may have to seek approval from the state for their existence or alternatively decide to exist in order to protest despite push back from the authorities or they may need to function without the need for any permission or state control. Commoning includes how the commoners access and manage their shared resource or resources and how they handle rule-breaking and free-riding, as well as other management issues that arise. Commons charters are becoming

more often drafted, such a the Great Lakes Commons Charter that lays out principles

related to the preservation and use of the lake water, builds a collaborative network

among interested communities, and creates public awareness of the plight of the lakes

and the people who rely on their waters.

Sub-Variables Comprising Commoning

Commoning is comprised of three sub-variables that together explain the process

of commoning, namely, supplanting a paradigm; self-protagonizing; and resonating self-

and-society. Supplanting a paradigm is a sociological process that explains what the

process of commoning creates in the world, namely, what type of organization,

governance processes, relationships, networks, productive processes, values, and so on.

Self-protagonizing is a psychological process that explains the subjectivities of

commoners, including their concept of self, their orientation to the world and others, their

deeply held values, their motivation and benefits from participating in commoning, and

other subjectivities. Resonating self-and-society is a social-psychological process that

explains commoners' attitudes toward and stance regarding how their actions impact

society and how they live as a result. Each of these three sub-variables is, in turn,

comprised of a number of sub-variables. These are laid out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: *Core variable: Commoning*

Process	Sub-Variable	Dimensions
Social: Objective actions-in-the-world	**Supplanting a Paradigm:** Replacing the market paradigm based on maximizing self gain and measuring value by price with one in which community welfare and sustainability are the goals	• Self-organizing • Self-governing • Democratizing • Collaborating • Sharing • Localizing • Translocalizing
Psychological: Subjectivities	**Self-Protagonizing**: Creating a life narrative in which one plays a key role and feels that one has accomplished something that emerged from deep within oneself	• We-ing • De-Commodifying • Self-Provisioning • Reverencing • Eco-Synergizing • Protesting
Social-Psychological:	**Resonating-Self-and-Society:** Living mindfully knowing that ones actions are creating a society reflecting ones values	• Prototyping • Visioning • Living purposefully • Co-creating

Supplanting a Paradigm

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. *Acts 4:24*

Commoning involves supplanting a paradigm. Through commoning, commoners are supplanting the paradigm dictated by the market that commodifies things and employs the metric of price as their determinant of value. Commoning supplants the paradigm that dictates that things – whether produced or captured – should become commodities and sold in the market. Commoning replaces competition with cooperation

as the core driving force of social production and acts on the foundations of community as opposed to individual choice.   Commoning puts into place a paradigm in which the central value is long-term communal well-being and sustainability. Such well-being may be defined differently in different commons. Sustainability is generally defined as living in such a way as to provide sufficient resources for and to assure the well-being of future generations. Commoning involves living mindfully with the question "What kind of world do I want to leave for my children and grandchildren and how can I live now to create such a world?" Through the process of commoning, commoners create commons that are self-organizing and self-governing and that facilitate the processes of self-provisioning, sharing, collaborating, localizing, translocalizing through networking, democratizing, and humanizing.   Through commoning, commoners claim a resource and manage it collectively, sustainably, and with a view that extends beyond short-term gain.

Commoning supplants the market paradigm regardless of whether commoners believe that commons can co-exist with some form of capitalism; whether they are seeking a yet to-be-defined post capitalist society; or whether they are Marxist, autonomist, anarchist, communist, "mindful conservatives" (Bowers, 2006), or other. The extent of this process of paradigm supplanting, of course, differs according to various underlying ideologies. For commoners content with or resigned to the capitalist system, commoners supplant the market paradigm in small, isolated ways, without disrupting the overall socio-economic order. They believe that commons is a viable sector that can exist alongside of the market and the state.   In this case, resources

previously managed by the state or the market are managed by communities as commons, or commons are created to manage new resources.

For some of these commoners, commoning provides an escape from the logic of the market and a sense of autonomy and integrity. Through commoning, commoners can provide for their subsistence, manage and protect resources essential to the wellbeing of the society at large, serve to assure the open distribution of gifted resources, share their creative projects, and guarantee the continuation of traditions and practices that the market has deemed to be unprofitable. Other commoners expand the paradigm supplanting to the transformation of the current capitalist system to another socioeconomic order, yet to be defined, but organized according to the logic and imaginary of the commons. I discuss these various viewpoints in subsequent chapters after introducing the commons literature to the conversation.

Two closely related dimensions of supplanting a paradigm are the variables *self-organizing* and *self-governing*. By commoning, commoners self-organize their commons around a resource that they share by working out the details of common usage and inclusion and exclusion, generally by sharing leadership roles and by collaboratively defining the commons' structure and processes. These may emerge and shift. Commoners also design commons that are self-governed without command-and-control structures. Leadership is shared and structures are horizontal. Self-governed commons thrive because of trust and mutual respect, and responsibilities are assumed without being necessarily assigned. Commoners contribute and assume responsibilities for the good of the community. They make decisions collaboratively and democratically.

Burning Man is a clear example of a self-organizing commons.   Study

participants who call themselves "Burners," because they attend Burning Man annually

and participate in a virtual global Burner community throughout the year, explained that

Black Rock City in the Nevada desert seems to "simply appear," organize, and function

as the result of a massive self-organizing process. Over 60,000 people, many of whom

are first-time Burners, pour into the scorching desert, establish large camps or simply

individual camp sites, and live together, managing the City virtually spontaneously,

disappearing without a trace one week later.

Besides the Rangers, who walk the city to assure that things are running

smoothly, the various roles required to manage the Black Rock City are not assigned

ahead of time but emerge as the city gets built and Burners assume functions that they see

are required. Various camps comprise sub-commons and these interact to share the

resources of the city. Burners in the focus group admitted that the self-organizing

process is much like magic, with people reading verbal and nonverbal cues, and acting to

maintain the functioning and equilibrium of the city.

Participants who have participated in Occupy or other social justice movements

tell a similar story of how the camps self-organize and how people adopt roles that they

feel are supportive of the functioning of the community. In the case of these movements,

the threat of attack by the police is always an immanent danger and this also serves to

heighten the desire of participants to play roles essential to the operation and safety of the

community, especially when children are living there.

Commons are self-governing in the sense of establishing their own approach to

management, use, and exclusion. Autonomy is closely associated with self-governance,

according to study participants. Commoners perceive that commons are autonomous from the logic of both the market and the state.   Inherent in the concept of self-governance is the notion that participating individuals have a say in the rules governing the commons as well as in decisions regarding their operation.

Study participants talked a lot about the self-governance process as a process of give and take that may take longer than a hierarchical command-and-control organization in which leaders directs the governance process. Self-governance requires skills in bringing people together, but such a process provides an enhanced sense of accomplishment. Further, the process is guided by the overarching value of community wellbeing so that individuals are willing to subsume their personal gain to the community goals.

Self-governance is also closely related to *democratizing* and *collaborating.* Regardless of the ideological perspective of commoners and commons theorists, commons are perceived as democratizing phenomena. Commoners practice deliberative and participatory democracy and all members make decisions regarding how the commons operates. Such a process has its challenges. As one participant said, "We make this happen across our differences and these differences are great." However, she added that participatory decisions are better in the long run because more insights are brought to bear. She commented that participatory decisions are possible even with large groups of people, referring to towns in Mexico where 1000 people come out into the central square to make decisions for the community. This, she said, is a model worth considering.

Closely related to democratizing is collaborating. Commoners collaborate on projects of mutual benefit as part of their commons. They produce social production by means of the collaborative process. The Linux collaborative operating system provides a clear example of how collaboration produced a system of extensive social worth that facilitates a much broader global collaborative process. Wikipedia is another example of how collaboration produces a knowledge system of potentially great social value. Women in poor communities in Latin America collaborate to assure that all the children in their community are adequately fed and help each other care for the children whose mothers need to work outside the community (Frederici, 2013).

The study respondent who participated in the Occupy movement against genetically modified foods (GMOs) explained how members of the movement collaborated to organize their protest against Monsanto. The participant remarked about how well informed the Occupiers are regarding the research on GMOs and about the negative health outcomes of eating GMOs. Collaboration formed around a shared concern about these negative impacts. As the knowledge of the negative impact of GMOs was disseminated and spread, so did the collaboration. Occupiers organized around their shared concern for their own health and for the health of the world and they also provided support to help fight each other's other battles. Collaboration creates a sense of solidarity.

Sharing is a major characteristic of supplanting a paradigm. Much can be shared in a nexus of reciprocities without becoming commodities that are bought and sold, commoners argue. Many commoners are content to have use privileges and access rather than to purchase and own things. Further, many commoners share the excess of what

they produce with others, perhaps less fortunate. Sharing is a dominant cultural value. The Occupiers' potlatch serves as a ritual of sharing, a ritual that serves to further cement the emotional bond between members and to build the trust necessary to shift from an individual to a communal perspective. Community gardens share a portion of their harvest with food banks. They may have both a giving garden as part of their garden and also do a light, medium or heavy harvest on individual plots to give to those in need to food. Black Rock City operates totally on sharing in place of buying and selling.

In a sharing culture, things one needs seem to manifest. As a Burner said: "I was walking with a woman and she suddenly said 'It is really hot out here. I wish I had brought my bandana.' Out of nowhere a woman appeared with a beautiful red bandana dipped in cold water. She wrapped it around the woman's head and disappeared just as mysteriously as she appeared." He went on the recall many similar occurrences and ended by saying: "Burning Man has my back."

By commoning, commoners *localize* and also *trans-localize* through networks. Many commoners focus on enhancing the local ecosystem through growing their own food or buying locally-grown food, purchasing goods either made locally or made by themselves with open-access blueprints and materials. Localizing comprises an essential dimension of supplanting a paradigm because it directly challenges the market paradigm, which grows and distributes food and other commodities based on cost and potential profit above all. The Internet facilitates the commoning practice of trans-localizing through networks. Commoners, such as those that comprise the peer-to-peer (P2P) commons, create global networks that bring people and their ideas together and build knowledge and creative solutions through integrating multiple perspectives.

Study participants belonging to the food cooperative value localizing more than price. They defined the value of supporting local farmers and the local ecosystem as essential to their commons. They are willing to pay more for local products in order to live this value because the sense of satisfaction they receive by honoring this ecosystem is worth more to them than price. Commoning may include rituals to honor what the local ecosystem provides. Work parties in community gardens take place during planting and harvesting season to "wake up the garden and put the garden to bed" in honor of its provision.

By localizing, commoners also gain more control over the quality of the food they eat and hence more control over their health and the wellbeing of the community. Research participants belonging to food cooperatives, community gardens, and Occupy all expressed this sentiment, acknowledging that the corporate food production and marketing system has become so motivated by price that the quality of the food is no longer an important corporate value. Further, commoners are contributing to the good of the earth by reducing emissions that contribute to climate change by the energy consumed to fuel the corporate global food production and distribution system. .

Commoners are experimenting with various types of communities. They are setting up time banks, work, food, and emergency response cooperatives, for example. Some believe that communities will be the key to surviving the crisis of global climate change and a financial system still teetering on the edge. One participant said that she envisions that smaller groups living communally and concerned less about wealth will have a greater chance of surviving after "things fall apart."

A participant referred to Occupy Sandy as the type of emergency response commons that is becoming more prevalent as the number of natural disasters increases and the response of government bureaucracies becomes increasingly sluggish and incompetent. Commoners form emergency commons in order to respond to the urgent needs of people and such commons are being spawned all over the world as first-responders and also as commons that warn people of potential disasters. Commoners are taking charge of helping others as state systems become increasingly clogged and out-of-touch.

Commoners are supplanting a paradigm from the grassroots through building actual and virtual communities and through social production outside of the market and the state. Commoning is not generally anti-capitalist for the commoners I interviewed. Capitalism *per se* did not emerge as the enemy, but the neoliberal form of unfettered, unregulated capitalism did. For many, multinational corporations are the main source of the current crisis and the current struggle. Commoning humanizes the relationships between people.

Commoning involves supplanting the paradigm of fear that pervades a marketized society with the paradigm of love and acceptance. Participants described their commons as accepting their members across the lines of diversity and grouping that society currently imposes.   As one Burner expressed:

> Burning Man is the way that people want the world to be and might not even know it. I had always been scared of people, judgment, things. Walking into the space, the fear was just gone. It is the fear that people live in day-to-day and there the fear is gone. A lot of silliness comes with that kind of expression. You are accepted no matter what you are who you are. It just doesn't matter.

Commoning attempts to create something that has been lost during the process of globalization, a participant said, to explain why so many people in her community had contributed financially and with volunteer labor to the community garden, even if they did not have a garden plot. As she said:

> People have an attachment to the place. This is something that has been lost in the globalized world. It is lovely to see all the flowers growing. But the garden is more than just a place to go to watch the sunset or feel good. It is an experience of attachment to the place. This attachment was cut-off. People are starved for that connection to place.

Self-protagonizing

> The movement to resurrect the commons, then, is about more than conserving nature and the equivalents of village trees. Ultimately, it is about resurrecting something in ourselves

Jonathan Rowe and Peter Barnes

Self-protagonizing emerged as a key dimension of commoning in my grounded research. Participants repeatedly expressed the view that through commoning, they create a life narrative in which they play a key role and feel that they have accomplished something that emerged from deep within themselves. They expressed the view that commoning afforded them a sense of autonomy, a feeling of belonging to something important and impactful, rather than subordinating themselves to someone else's project or working for wages in a market-driven organization in which they felt like a cog in the proverbial machine. Self-protagonizing includes *we-ing, de-commodifying*, *self-provisioning, reverencing*, *eco-synergizing*, and *protesting*.

Self-protagonizing does not mean putting self first, nor maximizing self-gain. Rather, it expresses a certain sense of freedom to be what commoners are meant to be, to have some control over their lives, and to be in a position to influence decisions made in

their communities and societies. Self-protagonizing is based on the realization that

commoners are part of community, that they are part of an ecosystem, and that they can

choose to live meaningful lives that positively impact community, the ecosystem, and

future generations. Self-protagonizing thus includes *we-ing*, the mysterious process of

moving from a purely "I" orientation to a communal "we." Participants uniformly talked

as "we," rather than "I" when describing their experience in the commons. They have

cemented a self-concept that was very much based on a sense of unity with others in the

commons.

As part of self-protagonizing, commoners spoke of de-commodifying themselves,

of giving themselves a value beyond the value that the market has given them. By

commoning, they live without "a price on their heads," defining themselves by the value

they offer to society and humanity.   Many of them said that commoning provides them a

space to create their value based on sharing, helping others, and contributing to a better

world.

Self-provisioning comprises an important dimension of self-protagonizing. Self-

provisioning is an approach to economic and social production that depends upon the

cooperative labor of the commoners rather than dealing directly with the market or the

state. Commoners can self-provision a number of needed resources, goods, or ideas. In

the current socioeconomic order, commoners by necessity interact with the market and

the state in various ways and to differing degrees but their concept of self-provisioning

points out a key value of independence from reliance on the provisioning of the market or

the state for survival and thriving. Self-provisioning is an important process for building

commoners' sense-of-self because they know they can survive without dependence on the market or state. Self-provisioning is achieved by working together in community. Self-provisioning incudes social production, the coordination of the creative energy of a group of commoners in a non-hierarchical relationship to produce projects that add value to society without expecting monetary gain, but rather are generally shared.

Commoning involves an attitude of reverencing and living with an awe of everything that has been gifted to humankind in nature, language, culture, and knowledge. This attitude leads commoners to become stewards of these gifts and to want to gift others. Commoning also involves eco-synergizing, that is, seeing oneself within rather than separate from the ecosystem and hence constructing a harmonious life of co-inhabiting with nature and all its abundance and bounty. As one participant explained, people who hold values of sustainability believe that

> they are not the center of the universe. Rather, they themselves are part of something, the natural universe. They sense that they are not the center of an economic universe either, with but live in harmony with the earth and take on good work that does not harm others or the planet.

Protesting is considered a legitimate expression of self-protagonizing. Protesting about injustices, enclosure, and so on, and protesting in order to effect specific policy or legal changes is considered a responsibility by many commoners. Commoning is often considered as synonymous with actively seeking and living social justice. In fact, when Michel Bauwens asked commoners attending the May 22-24, 2013 Conference in Berlin, "Economics and the Common: From Seed Form to Core Paradigm" to define the term *commons*, many of them answered "social justice." A major project in constructing a commoners sense of self in the world is standing up against injustices and working to achieve social justice. The global social justice movements and guerrilla gardening are

just a couple of manifestations of protesting as aspect of commoning.   Guerrilla gardeners plant stealth gardens to beautify ugly urban spaces, to claim that unused spaces are commons, and to protest land use policies, among other motives.

One participant recounted the incident of the yellow bulldozer that destroyed Arthur Dent's house to build a byway in Chapter 1 of *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*. As she said, "That's what happens when people are not involved in something that is important to them. If something matters to you, if you do something, at least you have done your best to make sure your inaction doesn't show up when things are measured."

Resonating Self and Society

Commoning creates a resonance between self and society. Commoners' way-of-being and acting impact society and shape it in positive ways as they are committed to an ethical life, social justice, and values that place the well-being of the people of the world and of the planet, above price. Commoning holds the hope of ushering in a more just, egalitarian society in which people live in harmony with each other and with nature. Commoning resonates self and society.

I have selected the term *resonating* because it elicits the image of the self producing a sound or vibration in society that reflects its intentions and values. Resonance also is a quality that, as the *Merrian-Webster Online Dictionary* defined, "makes something personally meaningful or important to someone."   The term elicits the seriousness by which commoners take their mission to create a world that reflects their values through being a presence in the world that will resonate with the whole. Singh (2013) employed resonance as a "sonic metaphor" (p. 8) to illustrate the relationship

between forms of politico-economic and theological thought. Resonance between

generally distinct conceptual categories, Singh argues, "reveals effects, as one object

vibrates to the tune of another; yet the manner of impact remains almost imperceptible

and 'magical.'" (p. 8). Resonance expresses

> the mysterious effects of one system upon another, effects whose lines of
> causality and fixed structures of relation are elusive, constantly receding from the
> observable horizon. Not unlike an imprint—the stamp, seal, or coin impress—
> resonance speaks to the mark that is left by the other, and yet expresses it in
> dynamic fashion. (p. 10)

Singh referred to the philosopher Giorgio Agamben who likened the resonance

between distinct conceptual categories as "an electro magnetic field" (Singh, 2013, p. 10)

that eliminates the distinction between the domains, evaporating the identities of both.

Curran (2014) employed the term global resonance to describe the dynamic

relationship between two individuals in an intercultural setting. She highlighted intent to

connect as the foundational intent of such a relationship; joint commitment to the shared

discovery process cleared of culturally influence preconceptions; and the mysterious

unifying bonds that form through this project. Yu (2013) referred to limbic resonance in

her discussion of intercultural coaching and the inter-subjectivities that emerge in

transformational relationships between coaches and their coachees. She argued that such

intersubjectivities emerge and lead to co-creation by the coaches "committing a total

investment of intentional attention set on the coachee's development" (p. ii).

Commoners are intentional about positively leaving their mark on society and

changing it for the better through commoning. Commoners do not view society as a

mammoth, impersonal, impenetrable beast. They view society as a set of relationships

that can be influenced for the overall good of all through the commoning project. By

living an ethical life, driven by one's inner purpose, and creating resonant relationships,

society can be recreated for the better. Commoning entails living such a life.

Commoners live mindfully, fully aware that society is a manifestation of their values.

They engage in *visioning*, *prototyping*, *living purposefully*, and *co-creating*. Visioning

involves actively placing before oneself a description of a society "the way it should be,"

characterized by equality, justice, and peace, and believing that one can help bring this

society into reality. Prototyping involves serving as an example of the ideal society, both

in ones actions, beliefs, words, and also in the systems one creates such as the commons.

Living purposefully is living ever mindful that one is creating this ideal society and co-

creating this ideal in unity with other commoners of the same mindset and consciousness

and purpose.

A Burner study participant recounted that Black Rock City does not have all the

problems of a typical society in terms of crime or violence because everyone is engaged

in a creative process. As he said,

> This is an event where you are exposed to extremes of kindness and creativity.
> People have taken their ideas, no matter how small or how big they are, to fruition
> without any monetary expectations….whether it is building a huge structure or
> creating a specialized camp or whether it is bringing food or other things to
> share…Whether it is handing you fresh ice cream or strawberries or inviting you
> to their wine bar, it is a very humbling environment….Everything is gifted.

He implied that living by being driven by the inner creative spirit, related to ones

inner purpose, along with living the Burner culture of kindness, sharing and mutual

support, resonated to the whole society, creating a more positive unity.

Being in authentic relationships with others results in a better life for all. As one

online participant from George Por's School of Commoning said, "Commoning is being

in authentic relationship with others, when communication is clear, direct, and trust-

engendering.   Commoning happens for the sake of creating something alive, together,

taking care of, co-creating enhanced life for all."

Acting from abundance rather than scarcity is a foundational way of being in the

world that defines commoning. As one participant said, "If one acts out of abundance,

more comes back for everybody." In other words, such abundance resonates in society.

In turn, if we set up the societal system so that it allows people to act out of abundance,

abundance resonates back to individuals.

Acting from abundance creates gratefulness and this gratefulness replaces fear.

Gratefulness is another foundational way of being that defines commoning. Several

participants mentioned that fear prevents gratefulness and that it prevents community.

Several also mentioned the power of "neighborliness" as expressions of commoning and

as a powerful force in creating the commons and then resonating to society as a whole.

Incorporating the Literature into the Grounded Theory

> The imaginary of the commons helps extricate us from the morass. It provides
> the opportunity to start anew, with a different conceptual foundation, a new
> framework of analysis and a more robust moral and political vocabulary
>   *Hajen*

Although Linebaugh (2008) declared that "there is no commons without

commoning," the majority of the scholars writing on the commons discuss the commons

as a noun. They imply that commoning means what commoners do, as if that is obvious

and to be taken for granted.   DeAngelis, however, cautioned that "turning a noun into a

verb is not a little step and requires some daring" (2010, p. 955). And, as I found in my

research, commoning emerged as a highly complex and important social and

psychological process not easily captured simply by saying that "it is what commoners

do." The problem with focusing on commons as a noun is that it risks becoming reified,

much like the state and the market, and taking on an identity blind to the reality that the

commons is comprised of people, called commoners, who are actively creating

something of growing importance. Incorporating the literature into the grounded theory

that has emerged may require, at times, turning the discussion of commons into one of

commoning to emphasize that it is very much a social and psychological process.

Linebaugh (2014) wrote that a commons is formed when a community has the

right to use some good and a law protects it. Commoning is the process by which a

group agrees that certain resources and/or goods should be held in common, and they act

together in a way that preserves the commons. This is a cultural process. During the

process, the commoners undergo a subjective transformation that creates a collective

psychological shift into the "common." As Rayner (2014) said:

> Affirming the plenitude of their shared stock, and inspired by the goodwill that
> they receive from others and feel eager to return, they contest the limits of public
> and private ownership and demand a law that secures their common rights to
> sustain themselves, to live with dignity, and to assemble with their peers. (para 1)

The subjective transformation into the common is based on an often unspoken

pact of mutual care as well as a particular set of values regarding ownership of and

obligation to particular resources. Commoning "draws on a network of relationships

made under the expectation that we will each take care of one another and with a shared

understanding that some things belong to all of us" (Ristau, 2013, para.4).

The School of Commoning (Por, 2013) named three aspects of commoning, which

track well with the three dimensions of commoning that emerged in my grounded theory

research. These include:

1. The ensemble of practices used by people in the course of managing shared
   resources and reclaiming the commons. In its simplest form, commoning is
   creating and maintaining something collectively.   2. Moving from the Me to the

We, where people become capable of thinking, feeling and acting as co-creative collective entities, without surrendering their individual autonomy.   3. Recognizing the inherent connectedness of humanity as a whole, and keeping our individual and collective "center of gravity" one with it.

Here, Por pointed out that commoning refers to collective not individual action and hence supplants the market paradigm of the individual self-maximizer with one that honors collective wellbeing. Por also emphasized that commoning involves the transformation from the solipsistic self to the communal self, a self that does not deny individual identity or agency but rather realizes itself through its communal involvement. Por recognized the resonance between people and humanity – or society – as a whole and called this resonance being in touch with the "center of gravity" such that individual and collective actions are in harmony and shape and transform society in positive and productive directions.

In the literature, commoners approach the commons from several different ideological perspectives, including Marxists, autonomist, anti-capitalist, *mindful conservatives* (Bowers, 2006), anarchists, liberals and reformist liberals, World Bank economists, the apolitical, and security analysts. Across all these perspective, commons is generally characterized by particular resources and social relations conscribed by a model of governance and rules of inclusion and exclusion constructed by the community outside of the market and the state. Commons are generally part of a community, which constructs rules of interaction and resources access and usage, as well as rules regarding penalties for breaching community norms.

Many scholars who research common pool resources define commons as "a resource subject to social dilemma" (Hess & Ostrom, 2007). Certainly, there are social dilemmas surrounding resources because there are often disputes regarding who owns the

resource, who has the right to control access and usage, what the cost of access is, who benefits from the resource, overuse, congestion, pollution, lack of trust, and so on. However, defining a commons strictly as a resource does not acknowledge the fact that a resource only has meaning "in use," that is, in relationship to how individuals, animals, or plants relate to the resource for a particular purpose. Resources, that is, are always in relationship to someone or something. They are useful, and more than that, they, by definition promote life, well-being, or another positive condition or state. Outside of their relationship, they are only an element, a "thing." Many such "things" only become resources when technology has advanced enough to make them useful for human survival or betterment (DeGregori, 2002). Technological advances also, then, can lead to the enclosure of such resources (Hess, 2008). Hence, commons by necessity is more than a resource itself. It is by necessity a resource in a relationship to someone or something that relates to it for some purpose.

Further, this relationship is of a particular kind because the resources included in a commons are shared by more than one person, animal, or plant. Hence, the notion of community is inherent in the notion of commons. The notion of community implies relationships, and with relationships come rules about interaction, values, or what Bollier (2014) calls social protocols. Bollier's definition of commons as "a resource + a community + a set of social protocols" (2014) provides a succinct statement of the main characteristics of a commons. Menzies (2014) adds the notion of mutuality to this definition, a concept that emphasizes the concern commoners have for each other as well as for the resources for which they formed a community.

Many scholars and activists also include the notion of a gift in their conception of the commons. Indeed, many of the arguments leveled against enclosure during the transition from feudalism to capitalism referred to the gifts of nature and even knowledge that had been bestowed upon humankind by the Creator, and this notion still survives in the literature. Gifts are also linked to the attitude of reverence and trusteeship found in the environmental movement. Since gifts have been given to humanity, they should be shared and not owned and sold, scholars argue (Barnes, 2006).   The notion of gifts narrows down the commons to resources whose origins cannot be directly traced to human creation.

Supplanting a Paradigm from the Literature

Commons scholars and activists describe communing as supplanting the market paradigm by creating a unique form of governance that differs from that typically associated with the market or state and that is appropriate to shared resources. Indeed, a group of scholars who focus on the knowledge commons and its potential to change a number of professions and ultimately society define commons as "forms of governance and governance strategies for resources created and owned collectively" (IASC website, 2014).   The literature refers to these forms of governance as self-organizing, self-governing, democratizing, collaborating, sharing, localizing and translocalizing much like the participants in my study did.

Commoning functions outside the market and the state and supplants the market paradigm in which commodities are bought and sold for a price. It provides "an alternative, non-commodified means to fulfill social needs…obtain social wealth and organize social production" (DeAngelis, 2002, p. 1). Commoning involves

"(re)producing in common…[and] deciding the norms, values, and measures of things"

(p. 955). DeAngelis (2010) is one of the few scholars who includes commoning as an

essential part of the definition of the commons:

> Commons are not simply resources we share—conceptualizing the commons
> involves three things at the same time. First, all commons involve some sort of
> common pool of resources, understood as non-commodified means of fulfilling
> people's needs. Second, the commons are necessarily created and sustained
> by *communities*—this of course is a very problematic term and topic, but
> nonetheless we have to think about it. Communities are sets of commoners who
> share these resources and who define for themselves the rules according to which
> they are accessed and used. Communities, however, do not necessarily have to be
> bound to a locality, they could also operate through translocal spaces. They also
> need not be understood as "homogeneous" in their cultural and material features.
> In addition to these two elements—the pool of resources and the set of
> communities—the third and most important element in terms of conceptualizing
> the commons is the verb "to common"—the social process that creates and
> reproduces the commons. (pg. 2)

Distinctive values are generally attached to the commons and most scholars and

activists employ commons with a positive resonance. They generally associate the

commons with democracy, fairness, even the public good. The commons is typically

juxtaposed with enclosure, which, as its "ugly twin," is associated with "unfairness,

rapaciousness, and public harm" (Uzelman, 2008, p. 211).   Implicit in the values of the

commons is the right of subsistence, which means that commoners have the right to have

their basic needs met and these cannot be limited by price.

The commons "acts as a compelling conceptual lens or metaphor for ways of

being in common that function according to very different logics and norms than those

constituting the capital relation" (Uzelman 2008, p. 211). Commons is a metaphor for

"forms of life radically different from the capital relation, a crucial step is disrupting the

"capitalocentrism" clearly dominating mainstream discourse" (p. 210). Commons is

viewed as an immanent social relation or form of life.   Marxists, such as Uzelman, maintained that we must become "other" to capital.

Commoners hold that the commons manifests a different set of values than those included in conventional economics' focus on price as the overarching value. The commons "encompasses a far wider, qualitatively different universe of value…a more humanistic and socially grounded matrix of value in an intellectually coherent framework that has its own logic and principles" (Bollier, 2009, p. 10).   Commons are a means of social value and social production. Commons "constitutes a versatile system for organizing reliable flows of productive, creative social energy" (Bollier, 2014, p. 372). Patel (2010) posited that commons keeps the baser qualities of humans in check.

Tracing its roots back to traditional societies, commoning is based on vernacular rather than formal law and hence is independent of the state and of the "temporality of the law and the state" and "remains vitally important as a bulwark against the abuses of formal law because it represents one of the few ways that formal law can be made accountable to the people" (Bollier, 2014, pp. 89-90).

Commoning supplants the paradigm of the self-maximizing *homo economicus,* which has been assumed in economic thinking, policy making, and many ethical theories since the advent of modernity and the reign of scientific empiricism. According to commoners, this self-maximizing model assumes and projects a flawed notion of humankind that has led to inequality, exploitation, and the deification of money as the primary metric of social and economic value. Commoning involves cooperating, collaborating to achieve a common goal, complying with group norms, and contributing to the common good.

O'Boyle (2007) pushed for a requiem for *homo economicus* on the basis of evidence gathered from electronic communication that people are inherently networkers and social economic agents. Hence, he substituted the basic human model as *homo socio-economicus*. O'Boyle employed his model to advise marketing companies how better to pitch their products over the Internet. Anderson (2000) substituted *homo sociologus*, an underlying concept that emphasizes social or cultural rationality. Anderson's term helps her to model why humans accept and obey social norms. Perhaps *homo cooperantus* is a more appropriate underlying model of humans, from the commons point-of-view.

The commons supplants the market paradigm and is also distinguished from the state. The commons is "an ecological-qualitative category based on inclusion, access and community duties, whereas property and State sovereignty are economical-quantitative categories based on exclusion (produced scarcity): a rhetoric of individual-centered rights and the violent concentration of power into a few hands" (Weber, 2013).

Commoning is an essential process to renew deliberative and participatory democracy, Antonio, (2013) asserted. As the process of sharing socio-cultural and natural resources, commoning extends

> equality in the means of participation to the populace and cultivate[s] an active, civic-minded citizenry appreciative of their ties to others and capable of sustaining a deliberative democracy that acts with an awareness of substantially increased global interdependence and lives in relative harmony with other peoples and species with which we share the in planet. (Antonio, 2013, p. 20)

> Slavoj Zizek (2011) defined commons as the shared socio-cultural and natural

resources needed to extend equality in the means of participation to the populace to cultivate an active, civic-minded citizenry appreciative of their ties to others. By

inference, commoning to Zizek would include sustaining a deliberative democracy,

acting with an awareness of substantially increased global interdependence, and living in

relative harmony with other peoples and species.

A number of commons scholars contend that the commons offers the door to a

new society, that it serves as a paradigm of a new subjective and objective meaning.

Commoning, according to Hardt and Negri is the "process of the multitude learning self-

rule and inventing lasting forms of social organization" (Hardt & Negri, 2007, p. 20). As

Bollier (2014) proposed, commons entails a different way of knowing and acting in the

world.

Supplanting a paradigm ultimately involves eventually changing the nature of

work and productivity. Technology will increasingly replace human labor to produce

commodities shifting human labor to helping. As David Greber (2013) postulated,

> Labor is virtuous if it helps others. A renegotiated definition of productivity
> should make it easier to reimagine the very nature of what work is, since, among
> other things, it will mean that technological development will be redirected less
> toward creating ever more consumer products and ever more disciplined labor,
> and more toward eliminating those forms of labor entirely. (para 24)

> What would remain is the kind of work only human beings will ever be able to
> do: those forms of caring and helping labor that are at the very center of the crisis
> that brought about Occupy Wall Street to begin with. What would happen if we
> stopped acting as if the primordial form of work is laboring at a production line,
> or wheat field, or iron foundry, or even in an office cubicle, and instead started
> from a mother, a teacher, or a caregiver? We might be forced to conclude that the
> real business of human life is not contributing toward something called "the
> economy" (a concept that didn't even exist three hundred years ago), but the fact
> that we are all, and have always been, projects of mutual creation. (para 25)

Self-Protagonizing from the Literature

The process of self-protagonizing, although not specifically referred to as such, is

threaded throughout the scholarly work on the commons. Commons scholars and

activists refer to process that may be encapsulated in variables I discovered in my study, including we-ing, de-commodifying, self-provisioning, reverencing, eco-synergizing, and protesting. Commoning, to Uzelman (2008) serves as an avenue for self-valorization, for valuing oneself separate from the way capital values one and to obtaining some autonomy and control over one's life outside of the realm of the market, which places a monetary value on one's work and economic contribution.   Self-valorization, as Uzelman described it, contains many of the elements that I found in self-protagonizing, as it reflects a hunger in the human heart to find one's intrinsic value outside the value placed by an external and false system of valuation, increasingly monetized.

DeAngelis (2012) wrote that commons "are a vehicle for claiming ownership in the conditions needed for life and its reproduction." He contended that the demand for greater democracy is in actuality the demand for control over social production, a demand that entails responsibilities. The commons, he wrote, "are vehicles for negotiating these responsibilities and corresponding social relations and modes of production" (p. 20).

Commoning involves *we-ing*, forming a collective identity while maintaining a strong and authentic sense of self. As Bollier pointed out (2014), individualism and collectivism are juxtaposed in the commons and act like "dynamic yin-and-yang complement" (p. 80). Individual and group identities and interests become aligned and reinforce each other.   Mueller (2012) employed the example of urban gardens to illustrate that through commoning, commoners reconnect with their internal consciousness and fundamental human need for connectedness and reject the fallacious assumption of *homo economicus* that humans only focus on their own self-advantage. Mueller argued that urban gardening also shows that the schism between mind and body,

which she contended has been used to justify hegemonic domination, is false.

Commoning, according to Mueller, is "a practice of life that enable[s] even the highly

individualized subjects of the 21st century to turn their attention to one another, and not

least to slow down their lives" (2012).

Hardt and Negri envisioned the process of we-ing as deriving from the process

first of becoming a "singularity" (2012, p. 37) rather than an individual. Singularities, as

they recounted, "are defined by being multiple internally and finding themselves

externally only in relation to others" (2012, p. 37). Singularities, they maintained,

express themselves continuously in networks as chorals, and this expression is always

related to "a doing" such that we are "making ourselves while being together" (2012, pp.

37-38). Commoning, originating in governing a shared resource, then creates for us a

sense that we are protagonists in the story of our lives and that our lives are intimately

connected to the lives of others, to society, and to creation itself.

The importance of self-provisioning is emphasized by many scholars in the

literature and is an essential aspect of self-protagonizing and commoning. As Linebaugh

(2014) emphasized, the commoners in England were not concerned with the title of the

land they farmed but rather with tilling it, with laboring on it. Hence, the notion of

commoning that contemporary commoners engage in is inextricably linked to

provisioning.

Further, commoning involves the process of people coming together to manage

resources essential to their livelihood and even survival. Georges Por, Co-Director and

the School of Commoning in London and Silke Helfrich defined commoning as "people

coming together and self-organizing for producing and governing together the resources

essential to their livelihood and wellbeing" (Por, 2012). Commoning connects

commoners "to the material and social things they share and use to survive and operate

outside of – but most frequently alongside – capitalist markets" (Nonini, 2007, p. 4).

Self-provisioning creates new expressions of self and community. As Mueller

(2012) said, "Do-it-yourself and grow-it-yourself also means finding one's own

expression in the products of one's labor. It means setting oneself apart from a life of

consuming objects of industrial production. Seeking individual expression is also a quest

for new forms and places of community" (p. 430).

Self-provisioning is closely related to autonomy and intricately linked to self-

protagonizing. As Ristau (2013) pointed out:

> Commoning has always been a way of being, although we seem to notice its
> importance more readily when the commons are taken away from us. The loss of
> the commons robs people of their autonomy to meet basic needs for sustenance,
> economic security, and social connections. Thus, commoning involves taking
> your life into your own hands, rather than depending solely on outside forces to
> sell you what you need or to provide a pre-scripted path forward ...
> Much of commoning depends on memory when we resurrect forgotten traditions
> and cultural practices. So it's true that we are not just discovering the commons –
> we are inventing it as well. As we rediscover how to interact and take
> responsibility in ways that are both old and new, and as we discover more
> elemental ways of interacting and organizing social and economic life, we engage
> in one of the oldest ways of being – that is, commoning. (para. 7, 10)

Wolcher (2009) asserted that commoning entails "people expressing a form of life

to support their autonomy and subsistence needs…It's about taking one's own life into

one's own hands, and not waiting for the crumbs to drop from the king's table" (para 3).

Frederici (2013) argued that "the 'commoning' of the material means of reproduction is

the primary mechanism by which a collective interest and mutual bonds are created. It is

also the first line of resistance to a life of enslavement and the condition for the

construction of autonomous spaces undermining from within the hold that capitalism has on our lives" (p. 50).

Eco-synergizing is the foundation upon which commoners construct their identities and tear down the subject-object duality that separates them from nature and other resources. As embedded in the ecosystem, human identity is defined as individual-existence-in connection and this identity gives humans the feeling of sense and belonging (Weber, 2013). Menzies (2014) maintained that just as "commoning practices were historically the medium weaving the message of life's priorities," we can reclaim the commons "by reconstituting our capacity to common together with the land, with plants and animals and work tools and with others" (p. 124). Furthermore, commoning creates the conditions for renewal of the commons, especially natural resource commons, in contrast to "current capitalist processes of production or state interventions" (Nonini, 2007, p. 5).

Antonio asserted that neoliberalism denies and attempts to annihilate the commons and that the public needs to take it back. He held the point of view that commoning to mitigate the potentially cataclysmic impact of global climate change offers the opportunity to rebuild the commons. Recognizing global climate change requires that we recognize that we are part of the ecosystem and that our actions impact it just as it impacts us and that we are synergistically involved with it.

For some, the commons is associated with abundance and even enlivenment because the commons mimics the ecology of nature and the human's integration into nature (Weber, 2012). Weber (2013) argued that the commoning is an "existential

condition of life in all its forms from cellular matter to human beings" (2012). As he

wrote (2012):

> The idea of the commons provides a unifying principle that dissolves the
> supposed opposition between nature and society/culture…It cancels the separation
> of the ecological and the social…It provides us with a means to reimagine the
> universe and our role in it. (para. 5)

Bollier (2014) maintained that commoners come "to love this forest or that lake or

that patch of farmland" because "the relationships between people and their resources

matter" (p. 5). Bollier (2014) referred to a seed commons comprised of women who have

a "'social,' almost mystical relationship with the seeds, which is a subtle but important

reasons that the women were able to emancipate themselves" (p. 10). Bollier quoted P.V.

Satheesh of the Deccan Development Society who said that "Every crop has a meaning in

a woman's life….The seeds are a source of dignity" (p. 11).

Menzies (2014) viewed commoning as generating knowledge and learning that

emerges "from within situations, knowing through being tuned in to working

relationships, and, by extension, the larger matrix of living relationships in which all life

(including social and economic life) is immersed" (p. 122). She perceived commoning as

"a way of governing and regulating society from the smallest scale to the largest in ways

that are accountable to the wellbeing of these interrelationships and the habitats where

they unfold, including, of course, the larger habitat of Earth" (p. 122).

Menzies (2014) recounted that she discovered herself as subject, by implication,

able to self-protagonize, by "knowing through presence" as an extension of her

embedded relationship with the land. As she reflected, "It was knowing as connection, as

an implicated participant, and in the actions I took acquiring and applying that

knowledge, I affirmed myself as agent of change in this place, this habitat and

accountable to it too…I cultivated a sense of myself as subject…Reclaiming this

immersed way of knowing is part of reclaiming the commons" (p. 92).

Commons scholars and activists also discuss protesting as an essential aspect of

commoning and indeed many, such as Frederici, de Angelis, Zizek, Hardt, and Negri

emphasized the importance of the global rights movements as progenitors of the

commons movement and as necessary ongoing struggles. Frederici (2013) proposed

personal protest by refusing to buy-into and live from the exploitative market-oriented

system that thrives on the sweat, blood, and tears of underpaid workers, but rather to live

via commons that provide one's basic needs.

Hardt and Negri (2012) extend commoning beyond the management of shared

wealth toward the formation of political organization through forming alliances with

groups in struggle, such as the poor, the unemployed, the marginalized, minorities,

students, workers among others. Commoning as a political action involves interacting

"as singularities" and becoming "enlightened, inspired and transformed" (Hardt & Negri,

2012, p. 96) by exchanges with these groups.

For Hardt & Negri (2012), the protests of the social justice movements that have

emerged since 2011 have been critical for creating the forms of participatory and

democratic governance that comprise the basis of a post-capitalist order and that hold the

potential to shift the negative subjectivities of neoliberalism to sources of power. Hardt

(2014) specifically discusses the importance of counterpowers exercised by the multitude

to protest major contemporary issues, including global climate change and environmental

sustainability, among others. Such counterparts are short-term actions that serve as

important milestones in the longer-term struggle toward the democracy of the multitude.

I will discuss further the importance of protest in the following chapters.

Resonating Self and Society from the Literature

Recognizing the inescapable resonance between self and society, many scholars

writing on the commons recognize that commoning entails re-creating ourselves as

distinct from the self that has been built up to reflect the market paradigm (Uzelman,

2008), and in so doing, recreating society. The marketized self has derived its self-worth

from financial achievement, consumerism, the self-definition ascribed from the

accumulation of things and the social position that results from this accumulation.

 Creating commoning subjectivities would consist of a concept of self-worth

derived from harmonizing ourselves with nature and others and projecting these

subjectivities objectively onto a society governed as a truly participatory democracy. Ad

characterized by social equity. Uzelman (2008) suggested that some of these

subjectivities might include: acceptance of "new norms and habits of work; new

expectations regarding a right to sustenance and obligations to community; naturalization

of democratic process and free action; gross inequality as ethically repulsive; [and] less

mediated relations to food and other consumer items" (p. 273). Uzelman argued that

these and other subjectivities "would make the re-emergence of the capital relation less

likely" (p. 273).

Bollier put forth that commoning is "a kind of moral, social, and political

gyroscope" that "provides stability and focus" (2014, p. 19). Commoning leads to the

emergence of "productive social circuits" that "create enduring patterns of social energy

that can accomplish serious work" and resemble "a magnetic field of social and moral

energy" (2014, p. 19). Bollier, also, emphasized the resonance between self – both

individual and collective – and society and the power of commoning to construct a more

just and equitable society that holds the wellbeing of the community as the highest value.

Both Weber (2013) and Italian legal scholar Umo Mattei (2013) contended that

the phenomenology of the commons offers a holistic ecological experience that ends,

once and for all, the subject-object dualism that has been the hallmark of modernity and

has supported the notion that humankind can cannibalize nature for profit and has even

created a schism between mind and body that has led to a view that our bodies are also to

be used and abused in order to achieve and reap material gain. Weber (2012) proposed

that the commons serves as the basic law of nature, which includes the notion of

embodied freedom. He maintained that choices for self-realization come from prospering

the life and social systems one lives in.

Rayner (2012) described the principles underlying "the ethos or way of being"

of commoning and that shape "the psycho-symbolic space that is sustained by those who

participate in commoning." These principles include:

> 1. Plenitude: Commoning proceeds from a place of wealth. We do not need to accumulate more than we possess. Together we have all that we require.
>
> 2. Mutual benefit: Commoning hinges on a spirit of reciprocity and justice. My gain does not need to mean your loss. Genuine success produces mutual benefit.
>
> 3. Spiritual abundance: Commoning challenges us to discover our inner abundance and to add it to a shared stock of potential. The term abundance comes from the Latin *ab-unda*, meaning the wave, which overflows. Commoning requires us to cultivate the overflowing generosity that represents true spiritual health.
>
> 4. Transition: Commoning is a threshold activity. To make common is to participate in an unfolding movement for social change, with positive implications for politics, economics, and the planet. Each act of commoning – be it a matter of collaborative consumption, peer-to-peer production, open space

technology, or democratic assembly – is an experimental contribution towards a new social and economic paradigm. (para. 8)

DeAngelis (2010) asserted that through commoning, commoners, which he calls "subjects in struggle" generate themselves (p. 239) and create meaning. Just as capital "generates itself through enclosures…Subjects in struggle generate themselves through commons," he maintained (p. 239). Commoning is the process of living through dignity and building social relations that manifest different values than those inculcated by the market, and especial neoliberalism. DeAngelis believed that this is possible in the midst of a capitalist regime. As he said, "Life despite capitalism, as a constituent process, not after capitalism, as a constituted future state of things" is required as an essential aspect of the ongoing struggle (p. 239).

Weber's (2013) "biopoetics" is a metaphysics and a biological theory that purports to explain the deep relationship between felt experience and biological principles. Weber wrote that commoning needs to bring about a new era, which he calls "enlivenment in which we recognize and experience the interaction of subjects producing and providing meaning and hence laying the ground for understanding the meaningful cosmos of human imagination" (2013, p.19). Only through commoning, Weber maintained, do we reintegrate ourselves with nature and with each other.

Frederici (2013) compelled us to live with the recognition that the products that we enjoy may have been made with the blood of exploited workers and that what we consume may be have a negative impact on people as well as the environment. There is an urgency to see ourselves as one with all the people of the world. As she argued,

> …if commoning has any meaning, it must be the production of ourselves as a common subject. This is how we must understand the slogan "no commons without community." But "community" has to be intended not as a gated reality, a

grouping of people joined by exclusive interests separating them from others, as with communities formed on the basis of religion or ethnicity, but rather as a quality of relations, a principle of cooperation and of responsibility to each other and to the earth, the forests, the seas, the animals. (p. 70)

Such a practice of commoning resonates to society as a whole.

Although they do not employ the concept of the commons, the authors of the World Café contended that world cafes generate a sort of commoning process of creating and harvesting communal wisdom. World Café's underlying values mirror those of the commons as does its intentions of building community around "questions that matter" and "conversations that matter" regarding issues facing our communities (Brown, Isaacs, and the World Café Community, 2005).   Through commoning, commoners co-create communal wisdom by cross-pollinating and combining their individual perspectives and harvesting the wisdom so that they ultimately co-create society.

Grounded Theory of Commons

The grounded theory presented in this chapter emerged from extensive coding of data both in primary and secondary source interviews and presentations, as well as from the commons literature. *Commoning* emerged as the core variable that answers the question "what is happening" in the commons, the question that initiated this study. This is an *in vivo* variable, meaning that this is a concept employed by commoners, but not elaborated in any detail in the literature. As this chapter has shown, commoning is both a psychological and social process that underlies the commons and explains what commoners are doing and what their beliefs, attitudes, and values are.

As has been shown, commoning consists of three major processes, *supplanting a paradigm, self-protagonizing,* and *resonating self and society*.   Commoning involves supplanting the market paradigm and creating an organizational constellation based on

cooperative behavior. Deriving originally from working the earth, commoning is inherently grounded in tangibles and involves communities working in harmony in a give-and-take relationship. Commoning is a process that enables commoners to engage in self-protagonizing and take control of their lives, while recognizing that their identity is embedded in the ecosystem. Commoning involves resonating self and society, meaning that commoners live according to a particular value system that includes a commitment to social justice and equity, and that they believe that this way of living will resonate to society as a whole, ultimately improving it. Commoning, hence, directly connects to the desire deep in the human heart to create and live in a perfect society characterized by abundance, harmony, peace, and equality for all. The literature reinforced the psychological and social processes that my interviews revealed.

In the next chapter, findings are presented regarding why the commons has become such an important phenomenon. Results from interviews will be presented before turning to the literature to present theoretical explanations for the emergence of the commons as a key concept.

Chapter Eight

Reasons for the Rise of the Commons

We're losing the ground of our subsistence to the privileged and the mighty. With the theft of our pensions, houses, universities, and land, people all over the world cry, 'Stop, thief!' and start to think about the commons and act in its name.

Linebaugh, 2014

There are several factors that emerged from the data I gathered during my research that help to explain why the commons has emerged as an increasingly important phenomenon in contemporary society. These factors include consciousness raising about environmental degradation and climate change; the commodification and enclosure of many aspects of life; the perceived stranglehold of the neoliberal model of capitalism; the corporate emphasis on profit above any other metric of value; the nature of jobs and the labor market and the groups of individuals who have been enclosed from meaningful work; the Internet, which has provided a vehicle for expression and the hope of more actively participating in a deliberative democracy; and local movements, such as those around food. Furthermore, the underlying paradigm of what humans are is changing from one based on self-maximization to one of cooperation. A number of researchers have published studies illustrating that humans are, by nature, cooperative as much if not more than competitive. This recognition, justified scientifically, combined with the emergence of sharing businesses, has reinforced the notion of the commons.

The environmental awakening and subsequent environmental movement and increasing concern regarding environmental destruction and health risks caused by irresponsible corporations raised many people's awareness of the need for the public to play a stronger role in managing common resources. Continued enclosure and commodification of commons by corporations enhanced the feelings of many citizens

that they were being squeezed out of access to resources they considered should be open to all through privatization and commodification, a major example being water.

The increasing inequality in the United States and recognition that the people have little influence on decisions made by Congress and the perception that government and corporations are allies have enhanced the belief of many citizens that a shift in the political order is necessary in order to enact a participatory democracy (Antonio, 2013). Globalization has intensified that hope along with the increased concern that multinational corporations are increasingly privatizing resources and international governmental agencies are unwilling or unable to adequately manage the global commons.

The advent of the Internet and the recognition that citizens around the world can openly communicate and share information and ideas has further spurred the idea that a commons is accessible for citizen action around the world (Bollier, 2014). As Bollier elaborated, "the Internet has demonstrated that cooperation and collaboration can work and scale, contrary to the 'rational,' self-interested *homo economicus* model of human beings that economists say we are. This opens a huge new vista of alternatives to market production and consumption" (para 2).

The term *commons* is infused with a great deal of emotion and has been used to rename things that have for centuries gone by different names. Language, indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, trust, and a multitude of other phenomena are now labeled commons. Beginning as a term referring to common pool resources being studied from the point of view of public choice theory and institutionalist economics, the term has become the watchword for an international movement of socioeconomic reform. What

has emerged from the research data is that the commons label has been applied to a

growing number of "gifts of nature" as a sort claim of ownership by the people, a stance

of empowerment and announcement that the people will take control of these and manage

them according to a higher standard, and as a sort of battle cry that "we need to take

charge because the state and the market have failed us, and more than that, want to

annihilate us."   As a sort of battle cry, the risk is that the term will be applied to

phenomena arbitrarily, becoming a fad instead of truly meaningful of the value shift that

it claims, and losing its value as a vehicle of social change. Indeed, as I noted earlier,

many commoners define the "commons" as "social justice."

　　　　Bollier (2013) maintained that "the 'noose' of neoliberal economics and policy is

not only making everyday life much more difficult, but also more psychically

oppressive…and open, non-commercial spaces in daily life in which people can make

their own rules and have a genuine sense of autonomy and self-governance are fast-

dissipating" (para 1).   Bollier viewed the commons as a space that provides some

autonomy when society has eroded it, as symbolized "by the surge of ubiquitous

commercialism, the crackdown against Occupy encampments by militarized local police

forces (public assembly and dissent are now physically risky activities), and the

corruption of representative democracy" (para 1).

　　　　In addition, study participants expressed the need to "take care of themselves" in

order to survive because dependence upon the market or the state has become

increasingly uncertain. The nature of work for Americans has changed dramatically over

the last several decades. In addition to dramatically increasing inequality as clearly

documented in Robert Reich's 2013 documentary *Inequality for All,* places of

employment expect more from their workers than ever before. As sociologist Juliette

Schor has shown (1998), annual hours of employment have grown from 1,745 in 1979 to

1,868 (or more) in 1996 and people in the workforce are working under increased stress,

job insecurity, and less leisure and family time. Schor's analysis was made prior to the

great Recession of 2008 when, on top of increased workload, unemployment has

skyrocketed.

The middle class is fast eroding in the United States and technology is displacing

more workers that ever. As the *New York Times* reported (Schwartz, 2014), consumer

patterns have sharply changed in the last few years. The upper class is purchasing more

expensive consumer items while the middle class is buying less. In 2012, the share of

consumption expenditures for the top 5% of earners grew from 27% in 1992 to 38% in

2012; the share for the top 20% of earners grew from 53.4% to 61% during the same time

whereas the share for the bottom 80% of earners declined from 46.6% to 39% (Schwartz,

2014). The current economic recovery has been driven largely by the top 5% with their

spending rising by 17% since 2009 compared to 1% among the other 95%.

Other alarming statistics include the fact that median household income and real

disposable income have both declined for the last five years, along with the rate of

homeownership. While in 2008, 53% of Americans considered themselves middle class,

in 2014 only 44% did. Also in 2014, 49% of 18 to 29 year olds considered themselves

lower class, up from 25% in 2008. One in ten workers fall below the poverty line. Other

indicators of economic wellbeing have also deteriorated (Snyder 2014).

Technology, outsourcing, productivity efficiencies, self-service, and a growing

temporary staffing industry have replaced the middle class. "Robots are the new middle

class" (Altucher, 2013, para 5).   Computer-generated voices take care of us on the phone; sweat shop labor makes our designer clothes; drones will deliver our packages soon; we work without pay when we check ourselves out at stores; benefit-less temporary staff perform the work still requiring human-labor.

Further, well-educated professionals are also struggling. It is not just the working class. Jobs are hard to find for PhD graduates, especially those in the humanities.   The number of PhDs working as adjunct professors who require food stamps to survive has increased at the same time the salaries of university presidents have soared over the years with 43 out of 500 presidents of private universities and an increasing number of public universities earning well over $1 million per year (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2013). Now, knowledge workers and intellectuals are being pushed off their American dream paths and are being increasingly forced into a new exploited role.

According to Jeremy Rifkin (2014), given the expansion of workerless factories and offices, virtual retailing and automated logistics and transport networks, new employment opportunities "lie in the collaborative commons in fields that tend to be nonprofit and strengthen social infrastructure — education, health care, aiding the poor, environmental restoration, child care and care for the elderly, the promotion of the arts and recreation" (para 6). Rifkin apparently equates working in the commons with working in nonprofit organizations and points to their increase in the United States vis-à-vis for-profit enterprises. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of nonprofit organizations grew by approximately 25%, from 1.3 million to 1.6 million. During the same period, profit-making enterprises grew by .05%. Employment in nonprofits exceed 10% of the workforce in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain (Rifkin, 2014).

Rifkin's equation of non-profits with the commons is not always supported by the notion of the commons. The non-profit sector has grown as the government-funded social safety net has shrunk and as corporate layoffs have forced people to create jobs in the non-profit sector. Non-profits promote and support a wide sweep of different social issues and are funded by government grants in addition to public donations. A number of non-profits work in international development and by no means are these organizations part of the commons because they are implementing U.S. government policies worldwide. Many others deliver humanitarian assistance, an important role, but not the commons. Commons focus on sharing and managing resources and include a particular organizational form and value system and are distinct from non-profits. Equating them with non-profits fails to understand why commons are a unique entity.

The Great Moral Divide

In addition to being separated by a growing economic divide, people are increasingly being driven into sharply delineated moral factions. To the elite, the dollar and accumulating wealth are still the measure of success, while to others, excessive wealth is considered ethically questionable. Commoners are driven to a large extent by moral indignation, watching the elite amass ever more wealth, live selfishly, and monopolize opportunities. Character is no longer a requirement so long as corporations make money. Being a felon in professional basketball and football does not serve to exclude players as long as they are making money for the team.

The wastefulness of wealth is highlighted more than ever given the media and globalization. The movie, *Queen of Versailles,* is a symbol of the extremes of excessive wealth and greed. When asked why he wants to build the biggest house in the United

States, 90,000 square feet, David Siegel answers "because I can." Siegel laid off

thousands of employees and his son explained how the company makes sales by

exploiting people's desire to live like the rich, and their desire to get something free,

namely the little gifts that timeshares offer for viewing their properties.

Reasons for the Emergence of the New Commons

In her extensive study of the emergence of the new commons, Hess (2008)

identified six common entry points that help to explain why an increasing number of

phenomena have been labeled "commons." These include:

> (1) the need to protect a resource from enclosure, privatization, or
> commodification; (2) the observation or action of peer production and mass
> collaboration primarily in electronic media; (3) evidence of new types of tragedies
> of the commons; (4) the desire to build civic education and commons-like
> thinking; (5) identification of new or evolving types of commons within
> traditional commons; and (6) rediscovery of the commons. (p. 6)

Hess wrote that often the development of a new technology leads to the enclosure

of a resource heretofore common and accessible, such as space, the deep seas, or

knowledge. People respond by laying claim to the resource as a commons in order to

continue to access it and to assure that it is managed sustainable. As has been shown, the

development of the Internet and other communication technologists led to the recognition

that electronic media is a commons. Corporations have also recognized this and

attempted to enclose it, leading many scholars to initiate action to preserve access. The

recognition that democracy is eroding has led many, such as Peter Levine, to identify

public places to practice participatory democracy as commons in order for the public to

have some degree of control over policy decisions made by government. The recognition

that many resources are unmanaged and are leading to "tragedies" has also led people to

identify these as commons in order to gain some control over them and manage them more appropriately, Hess (2008) argues.

Models of Humans as Cooperative Rather than Competitive

The shift in the underlying economic model of humans as only self-focused, self-interested maximizers of personal gain to a model that recognizes that humans are inherently cooperative has opened up the theoretical possibility of self-organizing, self-managing commons as an accepted model. This shift has been supported by organizational theories flattening out hierarchical organizations and stressing self-organizing organizations and participatory planning and managing approaches. Network thinking and analysis also has strengthened the notion of humans as cooperative, even in highly complex systems. Examples of successfully managed commons without state or market intervention have provided evidence for what types of institutions are required for a commons sector to thrive.

Elinor Ostrom's work has had a profound impact on public choice theory and also on approaches to the management of complex socioecological systems. She illustrated that centralized management of common pool resources was not always the most efficient approach, but rather that multiple, self-governing, local level systems appropriate to surrounding conditions and nested in larger systems could provide more effective options (Kaunekis, 2014 forthcoming). Ostrom questioned the "rational man" approach to decision making, joining other scholars in asserting that a bounded rationality approach to decision making provided a more realistic model. She illustrated through her empirical work that cooperative behavior based on trust and reciprocity is possible and even a preferable approach to effectively manage CPRs.

Ostrom's empirical work measured the impact of self-governing systems on the sustainable use of local resources and landscape level effects through geographic information system (GIS) and remote sensing technologies (Kauneckis, 2014 forthcoming). In addition to illustrating the success of local-level self-governing systems as complements to higher level systems, Ostrom illustrated the advantages of multidisciplinary approaches to resource management and to the importance of trust, reciprocity, emergent systems, networks, and coupled dynamics, themes that have been extended by other scholars and also integrated into the commons discourse.

The Leviathan Versus the Penguin

Legal scholar Yochai Benkler's 2011 book *The Penguin and the Leviathan: How Cooperation Triumphs over Self-Interest* argues that the rational man underlying economic theory and based on the view that humans are only self-interested is antedated and that advances in evolutionary biology and experiments in human interaction have illustrated that humans have an innate propensity for cooperation. Benkler pointed to successful cooperative ventures such as the Linux operating system, Wikipedia, and Southwest Airlines and Toyota's shop floor processes as notable examples. Benkler argued that people can cooperate to achieve mutual goals and that systems can be designed that foster cooperative rather than competitive behavior.

The Flattening of Organizations and Self-Organizing Systems

In recent years, organizational theory has increasingly supported flatter organizations and self-organizing systems that recognize that all members of organizations share in decision-making and participate in planning and managing. In the literature, hierarchical organizations that rely on autocratic leaders and rigid procedures,

rules, and regulations have been by-and-large relegated to the past and have been replaced by organizations in which leadership is dispersed throughout all levels of the organization. Participatory and team approaches have been recognized as the most efficacious approach to achieving the organizational goals while fostering shared responsibility and rewards.

Networks and Network Thinking

The advent of network thinking derived from the Internet, also applied to social network theory, has also influenced the discourse of the commons. According to Benkler (2006), the communications network created by the Internet coupled with the shift from an industrial to an information society has allowed for an increasing role for individual cooperative action carried out through "nonmarket production in the information and cultural production sector, organized in a radically more decentralized pattern" (Benkler, 2006, p. 106).   Benkler (2006) argued that computation with its lack of physical constraints on information productions "has made human creativity and the economics of information itself the core structuring facts in the new networked information economy" (p. 107).

Benkler (2006) explored cooperative peer-to-peer production of information, knowledge and culture. These include production systems that depend on individual action that is self-selected and decentralized, rather than hierarchically assigned. He concluded that these collective and decentralized action practices do not rely either on the price system or managerial structure for coordination and can provide platforms for widely dispersed individuals to cooperate without contractual claims or imposed managerial command systems.

Collaborative Consumption and the Sharing Economy

Collaborative systems and sharing are revolutionizing the way people consume and run businesses and the value inherent in these systems mimics the values of the commons to a large extent. Businesses are proliferating in which consumers share spaces, a multitude of different consumer items, and vehicles. Airbnb, Landshare, Flickr, uber, Citizendium, Neurocommons, Wikipedia, GoGet, zip car, bike sharing, car sharing, and a multitude of other sharing businesses are being spawned around the world.

Botsman and Rogers (2010) identified four underlying principles of these businesses, namely, "critical mass, idling capacity, belief in the commons; and trust between strangers." The authors pointed to the commons as critical to these businesses because it the commons is based on the belief that providing value to a community enhances one's own social value. Further, there is a network effect the more people join or use the sharing platform and each individual creates value for the others (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Much has been written about the Millennials who apparently want access but not necessarily ownership (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Rifkin, 2014) and this shift in values supports this evolving business sector and also supports the adoption of the subjectivities of the commons. Value can be increased by being able to use consumer items without the responsibility of maintaining and storing them.   Sharing consumer items is also viewed as a way to establish relationships and friendships and to build social capital.

Such sharing has historically been practiced throughout the world and continues to be practiced in poor segments of the West as well as in developing countries, as a means of maximizing access to useful items that one individually cannot afford. Sharing

is certainly practiced informally in Africa, where I have lived for the past two years.
When one individual purchases a useful item, such an a lawnmower or tractor, he or she
is expected to share it with his or her neighbors and broader community. The
disadvantage of such an informal system stems from issues of liability and responsibility
to repair a borrowed item that one damages or loses.

In the informal system of expected sharing, the person who borrows is under no
obligation to repair or replace an item. In traditional tribal systems, the tribal chief or
elders would decide what obligation the borrower had, but as these systems have broken
down in the cities, a lender can only rely on the good will of the borrower. He or she may
actually not have the money to repair or replace an item.   Of course, in order to continue
borrowing and to maintain ones reputation in the community, one must make an effort to
Hence, there can be ill will generated. By formalizing this sharing culture, participants
can agree on rules of access and forfeiture. However, the risk remains that this business
model will be captured for profit by the corporate sector.

Riding sharing also has also been practiced in many developing countries for
many years as a part of the informal sector. One can hire an individual at the airport or in
town instead of a taxi. These individuals are supplementing their incomes, which are
never high enough for a comfortable living. Hence, after living in the Third World for
over thirty years, my immediate response to some of the sharing businesses is that they
indicate economic crisis and the need for individuals to earn money in the informal sector
to supplement their inadequate earnings in the formal sector.

The jury is still out on the sharing economy in terms of whether it truly reflects
the values of the commons. Sociologist Juliet Schor has been studying the sector for the

last three years and in a recent article, she pointed out that although some of the for-profit sharing companies may have been marketized and are acting like capitalist corporations (Zip car, for example, is now a sub-brand of Avis), the peer-to-peer model holds great potential "for building a social movement centered on genuine practices of sharing and cooperation in the production and consumption of goods and services" if they further democratize their ownership and governance platforms (Schor, 2014, para. 1).

Schor found that many businesses in the sharing economy did not increase social interaction and social capital, that many of them maintain gender and ethnic inequality, and also promote racism and classism. Hence, it may be too early to say that this economy represents a major objective and subjective change in the way individuals interact. Yet, the existence of this economy says something significant about how values are changing in society that support the values of commons and communing. To date, capitalist markets continue to capture many of these businesses.

Theoretical Perspectives on the Rise of the Commons

Scholars provide a number of theoretical explanations for the rise of the importance of commons in political, social, and ecological discourse. Most scholars point out that the increasing enclosure of resources is a major reason for the current emphasis on commons. Marxists and autonomists explain the increasing importance of the commons in terms of the logic of capitalism and the nature of capital accumulation. These scholars emphasize that capital is currently facing a crisis and that this crisis has led capital to enclose areas not heretofore enclosed that have thus far remained the domain of the commons. At the same time, these scholars argue that the commons could

be the phenomenon that allows for the transformation of society to one that fosters more

equity and humanity.

Capitalism and Capitol Accumulation

Nonini (2007) maintained that capitalism is traversing one of its periodic crises of

over accumulation combined with the reality that there has been a widespread global

degradation of material life that is necessary in order to support capitalism.   Although

capitalism historically commodifies and encloses resources, what is distinctive about the

current crisis is that this economic system has reached its global limits along with "an

increasing probability of exhaustion of the recovery of resources that are undergoing

continuous, intensive use" (Nonini, 2007, p. 12). The commons arrangements upon

which capitalism depends have been worn down.

Capitalism accumulates capital and it seeks to reinvest it. Due to the decline in

demand for commodities worldwide, caused by the devaluation of labor globally,

capitalism is struggling to find places to invest its huge amount of surplus capital.

Financial and credit schemes have been created to stimulate global demand and to

increase the ability of the middle and working class in wealthier countries to bear

increased debt, but there are indications that this large accumulation of debt is

destabilizing the global financial system and it may be nearing collapse.

In an effort to invest all its accumulated capital, capitalism is seeking new

resources to commodify and marketwise and this is why enclosure and commodification

of so many commons has occurred in recent years. Because such incursions into

heretofore non-commodified commons have increased so dramatically, and since such

commons have not heretofore been subject to market logic because "those who share

them are not included on their own to capitalize them" (Nonini, 2007, p. 13), enclosure

has required the collaboration of the state, often by violence. Hence, commons shared by

ethnic and indigenous groups have been forcibly taken and commodified and public

goods previously under state management, such as water and electricity, have also been

privatized. The expansion of intellectual property rights and increased commodification

of and illegal marketing of arms, drugs, human beings and body parts have also

represented the effort of capitalism to invest surplus capital (Nonini, 2007).

Simultaneously, corporations seek to reduce their costs of production, which

includes reducing the costs of labor, natural resources, and urban spaces for

manufacturing plants. Cost reduction requires squeezing workers by lowering wages,

initiating massive layoffs, removing pensions and health insurance plans, increasing their

hours of work and reducing vacation time, and forcing them to work in unhealthy and

dangerous conditions. Reductions are also effected by extracting natural resources

without replenishing them, polluting the environment without remediation efforts,

withholding tax payments, enclosing knowledge and cultural commons and making it

difficult for people to maintain their cultural traditions, and so on (Nonini, 2007).

Capitalism is at a pivotal point as a result of the above-described process. Nonini

(2007) contended that if this pivotal point does not lead to some radically different

economic system, such as socialism, that it may lead to social disorder, violence,

"demographic crashes," re-feudalization, and global scarcity. He believed that the old

dilemma of socialism versus barbarism is bringing commoning to the fore along with the

new dilemma, namely commons or barbarism (Nonini, 2007, p. 18).

When corporations face a crisis of over accumulation, the state steps in to attempt to take actions to remediate the situation such as rationalization of resource management, planning, welfare and so on. But these cause a political crisis and the public, recognizing the collusion between corporations and states, get involved in social movements against the social abuses such collusion causes, leading to crises in supposedly democratic states. Nonini maintained that states are increasingly becoming "oligarchic-corporate state formations" (Nonini, 2007, p.20) that have abandoned support that will assure the survival of dependent populations and lead to the withdrawal of the social contract.

Meanwhile transnational corporations have increasingly taken on state-like functions by controlling lands and resources, hiring armies and mafias, and administering to privileged groups. International donor organizations and financial institutions help corporations by rationalizing "the capture of these resources for future corporate exploitation" (Nonini, 2007, p. 21).

The resulting situation leaves commoners as the only ones who will manage the commons, Nonini (2007) concluded. As he said,

> People across the world who are linked to these commons are becoming increasingly aware that they themselves must act, not only to preserve their connections to the material resources that sustain their lives but also to protect and regenerate these resources as such. This is why social movements…will continue to pose major threats to corporations' savage 'business as usual' and to the oligarchic-corporate states that support them…Much is at stake. Although this new counter-movement has many elements and articulates very heterogeneous interests, one of its axial, global ideas is that of the commons. (pp. 21-22)

However, although Nanina's analysis makes sense and clearly describes the current crisis, he fails to point out that only a small percentage of the global population has recognized the need to take action and actually has become involved in the protest

movements or the commons. Many groups continue to deny that we are in a precarious global situation and continue to use their power to further erode the social safety nets that have thus far allowed people to continue to survive. Further, some feel that human creativity will develop technology to create new resources and that the fear of resource scarcity and depletion does not ring doom but rather is the stimulus required for human ingenuity to emerge.

Pro-Capitalist Versus Anti-Capitalist Perspectives on the Commons

Caffentzis (2010) argued that the resurgence of commons thinking is the result of "a confluence of two streams from opposing perspectives" (p. 23). One the one hand, the commons was revived in the 1980's and 1990's by scholars supporting the capitalist system to help argue against neoliberalism and to propose alternative models for participating in the market. On the other hand, ant capitalist scholars revived the commons in the same period to create a concept to deal with "the crisis of socialism, communism, and Third World nationalism" (p. 23) that questioned the wisdom of relying on the state to implement these ideologies because of the collapse of communism and the victory of neoliberal globalization. Caffentzis (2010) maintained that the commons is a convenient term to deal with the crisis of neoliberalism and socialism, communism, and nationalism. He believed that a major question of our times is whether social coordination is best accomplished by "the rules and sentiments of money and capital or by the rules and sentiments of anti-capitalist, commons organization" (p. 26).

Caffentzis (2010) contended that ant capitalist theorists and activists use the phenomenon of the commons to illustrate that "collective non-capitalist forms of organizing material life are alive and struggling throughout the world" (p. 24) as

evidenced by the continuation of subsistence commons in poorer countries that make it possible for people living on sub-human wages to survive and by the rise of the new environmental and information commons.

Caffentzis (2010) examined the significance of the focus by anti-capitalist scholars and activists on all the commons around the world that have been successfully managing shared resources such as agricultural and pastoral land for crops, irrigation, groundwater, fishing, and surface mining since before capitalism emerged as the defining economic paradigm. This focus has been of interest and concern to me, having worked for over thirty years in countries where a great number of people depend upon such commons for their livelihood.

Caffentzis asserted that the crisis began in the 1970s when governments around the world realized that Keynesian economics and state socialist policies could not control social justice movements in Europe, North America, and the Third World. Neoliberal economists, according to Caffentzis, concluded that these social upheavals were due to entitlements, DE commodification of goods and services and collectivization of natural resources. Hence, they began their political campaign to begin removing these in order to quell the demands raised by the global movements.

Caffentzis pointed to key policy shifts that began the process of privatization both in the North and the South. Donors instituted policies to begin to privatize indigenous and communal lands and resources in the South and to privatize public goods that had heretofore been managed by states, such as water, sewer, and electricity. World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) led the charge in implementing this global privatization scheme, which was carried forward in

the United States and England by Reagan and Thatcher. Emphasis was also made on reducing the burgeoning population in the South through modern contraceptive methods. DE communalizing land in Africa was a major focus of these programs.

Caffentzis believed that international development professionals internalized Garrett Hardin's theory of the tragedy of the commons and his conclusion that either privatization or coercion by the state was required to management common pool resources. Privatization schemes fomented struggles of resistance against the resultant land grabs. Because of the destabilizing impact of these struggles, donors changed their policies in the 1990s by allowing limited communal land use policies in order to stave off further protests and social upheaval.

Caffentzis reminded us that cooperation and communal powers are not the exclusive characteristics of commons but that capitalist labor organization has also relied on these formations. Indeed, as he pointed out, the notion of social capital and the importance of community promulgated by such theorists as Francis Fukuyama and Amite E-zine, comprise an essential component of capitalism, albeit perhaps not of its neoliberal manifestation. Further, apologists for capitalism, after the dot.com debacle and the Enron and Tyco scandals in the late 1990s and the subprime mortgage crisis of 2007, focus on regenerating trust in the system. International organizations such as the World Bank, recognizing the role of resource management groups has included them in their neoliberal policy proclamations, including establishing the Common Property Resource Management Group. Caffentzis (2010) pointed out.

Caffentzis argued that in order to capture the labor power it needs in order for production to expand, capital has to deprive workers of alternative modes of subsistence

and make them dependent upon wage labor. Hence, capital constantly tries to enclose

commons and remove people's livelihood and means of subsistence so that they enter

into the capitalist machine. Many workers, realizing that their dependence can lead to

their annihilation, continue to establish commons in order to provide themselves a safety

net and guarantee their survival. These workers often rely on the advent of new

technology to form these commons, such as the pirates of the 18th Century, the hoboes of

the 19th and 20th Century, and the programmers and hackers of the free software

movement who are expropriating technology and creating rules for sharing in order to

undermine large software corporations.

Caffentzis concluded that the confusion between pro-capitalist and anti-capitalist

commons has created a crisis and made it more difficult to ascertain whether the

commons is really a path to a more equitable socio-economic order, a tool being used to

hoist up neoliberal economics, or a survival mode that commoners will rely on to survive

through the upcoming collapse of the global financial system. This, frankly, has been a

concern of mine throughout my research. Caffentzis concluded that the true anti-

capitalist commons is the path and the only hopeful path for a better future and that

commoning is creating the future outside of capital's time. Caffentzis saw the alliance

between commons in the North with those pre-capitalist commons that have survived for

thousands of years in the South as a positive move toward liberations.

.   Caffentzis argued convincingly how even Obama's seemingly liberal policies to

provide an enhanced social safety net for the middle and lower classes who have been hit

hard by the 2008 Great Recession are a stop gap measure to revive neoliberal economics.

The Political Right's efforts to maintain the reign of the neoliberal regime by cutting

entitlements, continuing non-regulatory policies, and defining corporations as individuals

are forcing Americans into developing commons as survival mechanisms.

In the documentary *Collapse,* now deceased radical thinker Michael Rupert

prognosticated that the current system is on the verge of collapse and that there will soon

be a major paradigm shift. He predicted that only those who cooperate and collaborate

would survive during the transition to a new paradigm, which he did not identify but

which he estimated would take about 25 years.

Rupert's prophesy raised the question regarding whether the current interest in the

commons stems from a deep-seated survival instinct and that commoners somehow sense

that they need to prepare for the worse. Certainly, many commoners are convinced that

climate change has gotten out of control and many are convinced that the financial sector

is still teetering on the edge.

Social Crisis and the Precariat

For many scholars, the current global financial, social, economic, and

environmental crisis has created a situation of precariousness for millions around the

world. Historian Peter Linebaugh (2014) contended that the concept of the premarital has

replaced the proletariat:

> This simply means that life for us, the common people, has become more
> insecure, more uncertain, and more precarious. Whether we are old or whether we
> are young, whether we are poor or getting by, the institutions that used to help us
> have disappeared and their names have become bad words, like "welfare" or
> "social security." As we have learned from our experiences of Katrina or the
> mortgage crisis, neither government nor corporations are able to abate the
> situation. As the disasters accumulate we are left more and more to our own
> devices and find we must dig deeper. The remembered commons of old as well as
> the spontaneous commons of now need to be available when need arises. Who
> runs the workplaces anyway? (p.10)

Autonomist DeAngelis agreed that capital is experiencing a social crisis caused by the global economic and financial crisis and that a shift in the governance structures is needed so that capital can accumulate and grow (2012). Capital's crisis is caused in turn by a crisis in the two domains that capital requires and together these have created an impasse for capital. First of all, there is a crisis in the environment in that environmental resources are becoming depleted and capital needs these resources to transform them into goods. Due to the environmental movement, the costs associated with resource extraction have increased. Secondly, capital needs the non-commodified world of the household to purchase commodities that it produces, but due to the economic crisis, wages have declined and work has become more precarious, causing a reduction in demand.

De Angelis argued that if capital continues to try to grow and accumulate in this environment, that social unrest will grow and reach a catastrophic level. Hence, capital needs to change its strategy so that it can grow and accumulate without creating devastation. According to De Angelis, capital needs to rely more on the commons in order to continue its necessary growth and accumulation life cycle. Capital needs "a commons fix" he maintained. At the same time, people could use this opportunity to create a new socio-economic order not driven by capital by expanding the commons. Commons, De Angelis contended, is not a third sector juxtaposed to the state and the market, but a new way of organizing social reproduction and achieving participatory democracy, a system that people are increasingly clamoring for. De Angelis concluded that both capital and the commons are at an impasse since capital needs the commons and

the commons need to grow and fight against enclosure in order to resist and ultimately defeat capital. A frontline battle is hence possible.

If the commons is too self-sufficient and can sustain itself, then people are less likely to seek jobs in the labor market and wages will rise, putting pressure on capital's profits. If the commons produces too little, then capital will not have sufficient labor power and will have to create it through spending money on education and training. Capital seeks to depend upon the commons to solve social problems and to manage resources in order to survive the current crisis and hence the commons is used for a purpose outside of what it was designed for and inadvertently supports capital. Likewise, sustainable communities, which De Angelis called oxymoronic utopias, compete against other communities that are oppressive, and hence are "used" by capital.

De Angelis (2012) argued that commons contain the powers to achieve a new social order through forming networks through which people multiply their powers and resist capital's power over them. However, he cautioned against romanticizing the commons and creating them on the basis of certain identities, which will stifle their emancipatory potential. He advised that commons initially be based on the satisfaction of basic needs such as food, shelter, water, energy, education, and care so that commoners will no longer be dependent upon capital and the market. From these commons will grow a network of commons that can take on other economic and political projects.

De Angelis and Frederici pointed to the emergence of the Global Social Justice Movements as the beginning of the current dialog regarding the commons. The Global Social Justice Movements, with their organizational forms and practices of direct democracy, horizontality, participation, and inclusiveness have given rise to the

commons organizational form and to communities as the unity of action, DeAngelis

maintained (DeAngelis, 2010).

Frederici (2012) pointed to enclosure in addition to the movements as reasons

why the commons have become such an important phenomenon and as the potential

liberating form. Enclosures, Frederici argued, have brought into focus communal

relations and properties that many believed did not exist until they were threatened by

neoliberalism. Enclosures also have revealed the fact that new forms of social

cooperation are being produced, catalyzed largely by the Internet. The commons

provides an ideological unifying concept for a more cooperative society that many people

seek, Frederici maintained. Like De Angelis, Frederici argued that *commoning* of the

material means of reproduction provides the necessary starting point for building a

commons-based society and gaining autonomy from the vagaries of capitalism as well as

opening up a process of self-valorization.

Shifting Nature of Production

Hardt and Negri (2009) posited that the "common" (they refuse to use the terms

"commons") has emerged from bio political production and that it contains the seeds of

the demise of the capitalist system. These authors argued that bio political production

has emerged as the information age has become digitized. The production of information,

knowledge, codes, affects, products of the digital age, require social interaction, which

produces the common. Bio political production thrives on "linguistic tools, affective

tools for constructing relationships, tools for thinking, and so forth" (Hardt & Negri,

2009, p. 150). Bio political production produces subjectivities rather than commodities,

Hardt and Negri believed. Bio political production is immaterial. The common is

characterized by cooperation and "productive interdependence" (Hardt & Negri, 2012, p. 34) and has become the basis of social production. It is the foundation of social productivity and power.

In addition, the natural common of the world is also shared. Hardt and Negri contended that the sharing of the natural common and the common produced by bio political production will eventually lead to a "democracy of the multitude" (2009, p. 1). The common, they state, "is becoming completely 'internalized'" (Hardt & Negri, 2009, p. 1). They argued that this democracy of the multitude is in fact communism and that the common marks a huge leap forward to this ideal economic and political system. That communism necessarily emerges derives from the fact that "valorization and accumulation necessarily take on a social rather than an individual character" (Hardt & Negri, 2009, p. 150).

Bio political production differs from industrial production in that it does not function according to the logic of scarcity that dictates that, for example, raw materials are consumed in production. Bio political economic growth leads to social composition and increases society's social powers. As Hardt and Negri (2009) argued,

> Bio political production puts bios to work without consuming it. Furthermore, its product is not exclusive. When I share an idea or image with you, my capacity to think with it is not lessened; on the contrary, our exchange of ideas and images increases my capacities. And the production of affects, circuits of communication, and nodes of cooperation are immediately social and shared. (p. 150)

Given the above, it becomes clearer why so many legal scholars in the United States and Europe are fighting intellectual property laws because limiting the sharing of knowledge and information as bio political power, limits the possibility of growth and the increase of social powers. One can also see why many corporations might view this as a

threat to their dominion. And, further, it becomes clearer, according to Hart's and

Negril's analysis why entrepreneurs are increasingly escaping the grip of corporations

and are establishing the sharing industries in the nonformula sector outside of the realm

of the formal market.

Hardt and Negri (2009, 2012) maintained that bio political production is assuming

a hegemonic position in the contemporary economy and that just as agriculture had to

industrialize, adopting industry's mechanical methods, wage relations, property regimes,

and working day, industry now will have to become bio political and integrate ever more

centrally communicative networks, intellectual and cultural circuits, the production of

images and effects (p. 150). People, the bio political producers, will require more

autonomy from both the state and the market.

Zizek (2011) maintained that capitalism inevitably has to come to an end and that

democracy can no longer co-exist with it. He contended that the commons needs to take

care of things that neither the state nor the market has been able to handle effectively.

Zizek offered four reasons why capitalism cannot be sustained much longer. First, he

emphasized that capitalism only works under specific conditions, which no longer exist.

These conditions assume that there is time for the market to adjust and for economies to

make decisions by trial and error. Zizek contended that the world is at the point of

catastrophe and decisions need to be made immediately. Second, private property is not

appropriate for intellectual labor. The market is acting irrationally with intellectual

property. His point-of-view is similar to that of the legal scholars discussed in the section

on enclosures. Third, Zizek also maintained that biogenetic materials should not be

privatized, also a view held by commoners.   Fourth, slums and other walls are defining

an apartheid society as the gap between rich and poor expands and the number of

excluded increases. He predicted that low-level civil wars between haves and have-nots

will erupt. The state is withdrawing itself from parts of its territory, such as the slums,

leaving them vulnerable to unrest.

What will happen with the growing number of excluded, is the biggest question of

the 22nd Century, Zizek foresaw. How these antagonisms to capitalism relate to each

other is a concern. Exclusion is separated from the three other ones. Zizek argued that

the first three conditions without the last condition of exclusion do not pose a threat.

Ecology becomes sustainable development. Intellectual property enclosure becomes a

legal issue. Biogenetics enclosure becomes an ethical issue. But combined with the

excluded, the conditions form a powder keg, he maintained. The included are threatened

by the polluting excluded.   In the United States, one can see this rhetoric escalating

among right wing Republicans who increasingly protest the shifting of government

resources to welfare populations.

Zizek argued that three domains of commons are emerging, the commons of

culture, external commons such as the environment and shared infrastructure, and

internal commons such as our biogenetic inheritance. He held that the public, the people,

need to manage these. Zizek predicted that some sort of communism would eventually

emerge, a communism that does not focus on property or the state. He also maintained

that these new form of communism will not emerge by the state limiting the market.

Zizek criticized liberalism for not focusing on the key issues facing the world and

being obsessed instead with various "rights" movements. He viewed the extreme right as

the only group that is standing up against the real issues in the current global system,

although he did not agree with them. He concluded that a radical left would have to

emerge to lead the transformation of the system, after a near term disaster.

Shifting Conception of the Public

Mulligan pointed out (2012) that the concept of the public has shifted

dramatically since the 1980s when neoliberalism gained a stronghold. *Public* used to

signify "belonging to the people" and managed by the government. However, the

government has increasingly privatized resource and service delivery such as water,

sewer, utilities, and has largely surrendered its function of regulating the private sector,

so the notion of public no longer refers to "that which belongs to the citizens." As

Quilligan maintained (2012):

> The strong epistemological frame of reference that once linked the "public sector"
> to our collective potential for governing and valuing our own resources and
> asserting a countervailing authority to private markets, has virtually disappeared.
> In theory, public still means people; in practice, public means government (as
> captured by elite interests who regularly impede the people's political rights and
> capacity to control their common goods).

Citizen mindset has shifted in many countries such as the United States regarding

these basic resources and services because of privatization and so many people no longer

consider them as part of the public trust. The Irish are still fighting for some control over

at least water as demonstrations in late October 2014 against the pricing of water

fomented. To some extent, the rise of the commons and the consciousness that basic

resources do belong to us and that we need to manage them stems from the recognition

that the government has broken the public trust.

Commons and the Economic, Political, and Social Crisis

Both as viewed from the personal perspective and as viewed from the perspective of how capital behaves in a capitalist system, especially a neoliberal capitalist system, there appears to be an environmental, economic, political, and social crisis. Commons both seems to be a phenomenon that capital is seeking to enclose and commodify and also as a phenomenon that holds the potential to carve a path out of the current crisis toward a more hopeful, equitable, sustainable future. By its nature, capital will not stop attempting to enclose resources and hence it seems that it will continue to attempt to enclose commons. Hardt and Negri believed that just as capital has generated the common, so the commons holds the seeds of a new order and rule by the multitude. How, when and where this might occur is left open. What it will take for commoning to lead to a new socio-economic system will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter Nine

Commoning: Creating a New Socio-Economic Order?

Participants as well as the scholars examined in this study differ in their beliefs in regard to the direction commoning takes us. Is it a stopgap measure to help us traverse the current crisis? Is it a process that will support a commons sector that can co-exist with the market and the state? Is it a process of becoming something new, a new socioeconomic order? Is it merely an imaginary community, a utopian dream? Is it merely a social and psychological process that helps us survive whenever our survival is threatened? Does commoning take us to poor communities in developing countries or to feudal times? Is commoning simply the latest manifestation in a long history of phenomena giving people hope that their ideal society is possible?

The majority of commons scholars and activists envisioned a participatory democracy as the ideal polity toward which we should strive and see the governance processes of the commons as a prototype of that political system. Many spoke of a commons society and economy in which the values of the commons are inculcated into the existing socio-economic systems and virtually all of them wrote of the need for a legal framework that supports the commons as a legitimate form of management and sector. They disagree regarding where a commons-accepting or commons-based society is leading in terms of its economic label, although virtually all of them reject neo-liberal capitalism.

Commons as a Third Sector

Several commons scholars and activists argued that commons is a legitimate organizational form capable of solving particular resource management issues and that it

can continue to exist in the current economy as it is, and that it should be recognized as a legitimate third sector and exist alongside the market and the state. Academics who research socio-ecological systems, in the tradition of Elinor Ostrom, view the commons as a way of organizing and management that may have an increasingly important role in the management of common pool resources and even public goods, and that this form of management is compatible with the current system. Some of these scholars, such as Kauneckis (2014), have recognized that collaborative approaches to managing resources have increased over the years. Perhaps this indicates a transition to a more collaborative society, albeit small.   Many of these scholars argued that many of the shortages in resources such as water could be solved by better management systems.

Several commons activists maintained that the commons should be recognized as a legitimate third sector in a society characterized by a more humane and liberal form of capitalism (Barnes, 2006; Bauwens & Iacomella, 2013; Bollier, 2014; Burke, 2012; Helfrich, 2013). They argued that a market-state-commons governing diarchy can effectively negotiate the distribution of management responsibilities between privately owned, publically managed, and common property, and that a number of threatened resources can be more efficiently managed by commons outside the market or the state.

Bauwens and Iacomella (2013) asserted that the peer-to-peer production currently being practiced can be expanded and extended. They contended that their "peer-to-peer" vision relies on the three sectors, namely the market, state, and commons. Their view of the emerging society places peer production at the center with markets and states assuming a more benevolent and supportive role.   They noted that investors see the potential in companies involved in peer-production and foresaw that the dominance of

this sector would require both the market and the state to play a supportive rather that

dictatorial role vis-à-vis commons production. Bauwens and Iacomella maintained that

civil society will play a more significant role in the commons-based society and will have

enhanced authority in relationship to the "partner state." They argued that such a new

society can emerge if those involved in anti-enclosure knowledge-based, peer-production

unite with environmental activists and those working for global social justice.

Barnes (2006) and Bollier (2014) laid out the distinction between the commons,

market, and state sectors and proposed that there is a place for all three in a liberal

capitalist society. The commons is distinct from the state or the market in a number of

ways. The commons is comprised of a direct relationship between a community and a

resource. Commons function according to the principles of self-governance and self-

regulation. Convention and custom, or what Bollier (2009, 2014) calls "vernacular law"

guides the operation of the commons. As a collective right, common right is limited by

obligation to other commoners and hence subject to the rules that the community

establishes. The rules limit use rights. Commons can be transferred only with the

consent of the community and hence, unlike private property, they have limited

transferability.

Unlike the market, supply and demand do not determine decisions such as pricing,

labor allocation, or redistribution, if these factors indeed are relevant. The key function

of the commons is to serve as a trustee of and to manage resources and protect them so

that future generations will have access to them. Hence, commons are accountable not

only to the current members, but also to future generations, including, according to some

commoners, non-human species and natural resources (Barnes, 2006).

Public goods, on the other hand, are regulated by the state and include "a mediated relationship between experts, bureaucrats, managers, service providers employed within state institutions and customers as recipients" (Uzelman, 2008, p. 150). Public goods are designed so that the entire public, regardless of economic level, can have access to basic services, often at a pro-rated rate. Such goods are often provided in order to mitigate the negative impacts of the market whose price mechanism may disenfranchise certain groups from access to resources and services that have been deemed part of the bundle of goods a society has determined are rights.

The commons have also been afforded to the public to manage as a trustee and hence the public manages and/or establishes laws in regard to the use of common resources such as lakes, forests, lands, air, etc. under the public trust. The public functions to define, design and balance rights (Barnes, 2006) and these are defined in democracies in collaboration with the citizenry. Hence, the public is accountable to the citizens, in general, and the voters, in particular. Some resources, such as health care and education, are considered by some to be public goods and by others common goods and hence there are enormous debates about management of and access to goods such as these. Scholars writing about the commons such as Hardt and Negri (2012) and Quilligan (2012) caution against turning resources that have been privatized back over to the public to be managed due to the fact that the concept of the public has changed under neo-liberalism, as I have discussed elsewhere.

Market goods are managed by private entities, corporations, and are subject to the laws of supply and demand and valued by the price mechanism. Corporations are accountable to their shareholders alone. Corporations operate to maximize profit and

emanate the model of *homo economicus* that commoners eschew. Under neo-liberal

policies that have systematically privatized previously publicly-owned resources, profits

and associated benefits have gone to corporations, their shareholders and senior

managers, rather than to the citizenry as a whole. Governments consequently have

suffered losses in revenue to pay for public services and in the process lost their identity

as being representatives of the people.

Peer-to-peer production of information and direct access to customers has had a

dramatic impact on business models in some industries. The music industry, for

example, is no longer dominated by record companies. Such companies may still market

the few music superstars but the majority of musicians are following direct marketing and

even do-it-yourself production models. Distribution was the key constraint to direct

marketing before and was one of the factors maintaining the monopoly of labels. Now,

musicians can directly distribute their music via the Internet and build up a followership.

Moreover, most music lovers, especially the younger generation, are used to getting

music free, so musicians and companies are forced to find other ways to make money.

Advertising is one approach. Internet music subscriptions is another. A third approach is

"versioning," which refers to creating different version of a product and marketing them

to different market segments, perhaps free to younger music lovers and had premium

prices to higher income fans. In music, higher prices items might include

commemorative CDs, for example. Although he maintained that much of the free access

is part of a marketing scheme initiated by big corporations, Rifkin (2014) called the free

access to music and information part of the zero marginal cost revolution that he

predicted that is eroding capitalism.

Bollier (2014) decried the liberal imaginary and viewed the commons as the

paradigm of a new socioeconomic order. However, he did not call such an order post-

capitalist. In fact, he laid out a tripartite society in which commons co-exists with the

market and the state. Nonetheless, Bollier imagined a future peer-producing economy.

He and Helfrich (2013) proposed such a peer-producing economy based on the following

six principles:

> 1. Use value trumps exchange value. The needs of one's family and household for basic subsistence take precedence over sales and profit from market activity.
>
> 2. He or she who takes from the commons must contribute to the commons. This contribution must be de-linked both in time and quantity – an indirect reciprocity, not a direct quid pro quo.
>
> 3. Self-organization and self-healing. A commons arises to meet specific collective concerns, often by assigning distributed responsibilities and structured interdependencies. Centralization interferes with this process of self-organizing and healing.
>
> 4. Share what you can. A basic principle of the commons is to share what you can so that others can improve upon existing models and designs, and continue the cycle of improvement and sharing.
>
> 5. Beating the bounds. A custom in medieval English commons was to "beat the bounds" – a community walk around the perimeter of the commons to identify any enclosures, and remove them. We need modern-day practices for beating the bounds in order to protect commons.
>
> 6. Iteration. The process for innovation and commons protection requires trial-and-error, a tolerance for mistakes and ongoing reflection.

Necessary Steps for Commons to be a Legitimate Third Sector

Bollier (2014) put forth his position that the state would have to change in order

for the commons to serve as a meaningful sector. This change would have to come from

political pressure, he maintained. The state would have to recognize "commons- and

rights-based ecological governance as a practical alternative to the state and market; the

principle that the Earth belongs to all; a state duty to prevent enclosures of common resources; state trustee commons as a way to protect large-scale common-pool resources; state chartering of commons; legal limitations on private property as needed to ensure long-term viability of ecological systems; and human right to establish and maintain ecological commons" (2014, p. 160).

Samantara (2011) made a similar argument in regard to the Government of India. The Government would have to rewrite laws that allowed the government to take over commons lands and forests and would have to officially recognize the need to protect common resources and their usage by communities, especially tribes and dalits, who have been systematically marginalized and excluded. It is estimated that 15-20% of India, amounting to 45-60 million acres, is comprised of commons (Rao, 2014). 80-90% of rural Indians continue to depend upon common access to water, fodder, firewood, food, and medicine for survival (Rao, 2014).

Commons as the Path to a New Order

A number of scholars and activists see the commons as leading to a post-capitalist socio-economic order of a yet-to-be-described configuration. Some scholars such as Hard and Negri and Zizek argued that this order would not be socialist but, rather, would be a form of communism. A number of scholars, including Hardt, Frederici, and de Angelis, recognized the roots of the new order in the social justice movements occurring at many places around the world.

Frederici contended that commons are a means for creating qualitatively different social relations and for changing the current neoliberal system (Revolution at Point Zero, 2014). She pointed to the Occupy movement as an example of the forms of reproduction

that were more communal and cooperative. A society based on the commons would be "built on the principle of solidarity rather than the principle of self-interest and competition...a society in which wealth is shared, there is collective decision-making, and production is for our wellbeing and not for monetary accumulation" (Revolution at Point Zero, 2014, para 24).

Frederici (2013) argued that commoners need to live off the commons outside the market and the state to live morally and to refuse to live within the neoliberal capitalist order. She contended that the more commoners live successfully outside the current system, the greater the chance for transformation toward a just commons-based society. Frederici saw this as a moral imperative also. She argued that only by delinking our basic sustenance from the market could we overcome what she calls the "state of irresponsibility" because when we consume what the market provides, we nurture our lives based on the blood and death of others in the world who are being exploited (2012).

Frederici argued that we need to live our lives with the realization that we are in a global community and that we are "common" with people everywhere, including the exploited poor, and that we need to be mindful that our comforts are not at the expense of the discomforts of others. Commoning must mean that we are producing ourselves as a global common subject and live accordingly. We must begin this journey in the existing system while moving toward a new more equitable, communal system. And, Frederici, concluded, it is women who must build the new commons to become the foundation for new forms of social reproduction rather than temporary and fleeting autonomous zones.

Frederici (2012) called on women to be inspired by the story of Boxcar Bertha and to form inclusive communities based on a principle of responsibility and cooperation

to community members as well as to the natural environment and species. She

maintained that the capitalist market system has revealed its limitations and that women

are in the best position to create commons within the current socio-economic order with

the view to creating a new one.

Menzies (2014) asserted that by practicing commoning, we are asserting "the

legitimacy of commoning ways of thinking and relating to the Earth" and by so doing, we

will "set the stage for formalizing this claim," eventually leading to a tipping point (p.

125). She anticipated lawsuits, demonstrations, organizing, sustained commitment,

seeking political office, and "cultivating the support of existing political parties" (p. 125).

Commoning is "a stance of persistence…the persistence of another reality – one where

living together-as-one with the Earth and honoring that connection matter at every level

of existence from personal lifestyle to public policy" (p. 127). Menzies (2014) called her

manuscript a manifesto, an invitation to act, and she expressed the confidence that

commoning, indeed, will lead to a new society.

Hardt and Negri (2012) maintained that the multitude transition from declaration

to constitution. Declaration was manifest in the global social justice movements that

arose after 2011 that were attached to the common and focused on local and national

issues caused by neo-liberalism rather than globalization issues, which caused protesters

to move around to international organization meetings during earlier years

The authors contended that the multitude can make the necessary shift by turning

their four subjectivities which have been generated by the neoliberal system and which

cause them to suffer into "figures of power" (Hardt & Negri, 2012, p. 7). These

subjectivities include "the i*ndebted*, the *mediatized*, the *securitized*, and the *represented* -

all of which are impoverished and their powers for social action are masked or mystified"
(Hardt & Negri, 2012, pp. 6-7).

It is not clear how universal these subjectivities are. They certainly describe
Americans and perhaps some Western Europeans, but do not resonate with most
developing or even middle income countries, whose citizens have not depended upon
debt, nor have they been mediatized as we in the United States have, or even represented.
Certainly, in most countries people have been securitized, but that emanated as much if
not more, from totalitarian and communist governments. It is not clear, then, if Hardt and
Negri maintained that Americans and other Westerners will lead the shift to a post-
capitalist society or if they are generalizing for the world. They do clarify that
indebtedness refers not only to financial debt but to work and other nooses that tie the
99% to the 1% in a stance of servitude.

In the current global crisis, people tormented by the above four subjectivities
discover a togetherness because everyone is suffering them. As Hardt and Negri assessed
(2012), these four subjectivities comprise a collective condition that creates "a *kairos* of
resistance as well as a *kairos* of community" (p. 31). Through resistance and revolt,
people brought together in this collective condition can shift these destructive
subjectivities into subjectivities that characterize empowered commoners, the authors
argued. The flipped subjectivities include the debt of social bonds; new truths generated
from social interaction that replace media dribble; a renewed sense of security among
those who are no longer frightened by the securitized society; and robust and effective
political participation by those who refuse to be represented. Hardt and Negri maintained

(2012) that these positive subjectivities and social interdependence have been established

and hegemonized by biopolitical production, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Hardt and Negri (2012) recognized the constituent power capable of creating a

truly participatory democracy in the post 2011 social justice movements. The power of

these movements as commons lays in the fact that people are in proximity, that they have

participatory governance processes that serve as a model for the coming truly

participatory democracy, and that they are resisting neo-liberalism and the

financialization of our lives. In addition, we are required to exercise counterpowers to

global crises of environmental degradation climate change, enclosure, financial injustices,

among others.

Hardt and Negri (2012), like other scholars and activists, wrote that a

constitutional process needs to be established in society "regarding a set of goods

managed through the direct participation of citizens" (p. 71). This would require the

completion of three steps.   A juridical process of the common is required so that a

community can control and manage a resource.   A management system needs to be

designed that "incorporates the principles of the common uses of goods" (p. 71).

Democratic participation must then become "the political terrain regarding both

ownership and management" (p. 71).

Although Hardt and Negri (2012) take a long term perspective and view the

common as a transformative phenomenon leading ultimately to communism, they

recognize a list of short term reforms that need to be made in banks, in education, with

the executive judicial, and legislative branches in the United States, and in a number of

other areas so that the values of the common and participatory democracy can become inculcated in, at least, American society.

Hardt (2013) predicted that the hegemony of bio-production and the commons will inevitably evolve to a post-capitalist society which calls a true communism, not the socialism dominated by the state, but a society governed by the multitude. Hardt asserted that communism should be defined by its affirmation of the commons not solely on the basis of its abolition of property. This means "the affirmation of open and autonomous production of subjectivity, social relations, and the forms of life; the self-governed continuous creation of new humanity. In the most synthetic terms, what private property is to capitalism and what state property is to socialism, the common is to communism" (Hardt, 2013, para 4).

Love as a political concept plays a key role in the creation of this new humanity and serves as a conduit to constructing a true democracy, according to Hardt (2009). Love extends beyond the calculus of rationality. It goes beyond solidarity. It develops a different kind of relationship between reason and passion. Love involves transformation. We lose ourselves in love. In love, we become different. The forms of love require training. Where are appropriate places to practice this politicized notion of love other than in the commons, which is based on mutuality, sharing, and a commitment to social justice for all?

Quilligan (2012) laid out steps that he believed need to be taken in order for the commons to become the foundation for a renewed global economy. He maintained that a major overhaul of the socio-economic system and relations would be required. Like other scholars and activists, Quilligan (2012) argued that common goods provide the

basis of a world order based on true, participatory democracy. He maintained that

commoners at the local level would have to bring their claims to the commons forward as

the basis for global citizenship as well as for a new world order based on commons rather

than private property. By giving the commons a legal and political claim outside the

State, Quilligan maintained that they could eventually form the basis of a revived form of

true democracy at all levels of government from the local to the global. He asserted that

each resource would have to be negotiated separately at each level of government and a

"new epistemology of resource sovereignty, shared responsibility, and legal

accountability" would need to be developed such that the rights of world citizens and

their commons would be recognized. Following the development of this new

epistemology, the "self-organized and participatory systems of common property, social

charters and commons trusts" would be infused into global constitutional governance and

> the checks and balances that already exist within many nations will find a more
> perfect expression in the representative decision-making and political equality of
> democratic commons institutions. The new global economic system and its social
> contract will be grounded, not in corporate claims or state sovereignty, but in the
> sovereign rights of citizens to their common goods. (Quilligan, 2012)

Rifkin (2014) predicted that the Collaborative Commons would become the

dominant economic system by 2050, with a skimpy residue of capitalism operating on the

side-lines. He traced the impact of communication revolutions and renewable energy as

forces of change throughout history, and in particular, from the onset of modern

capitalism. The current IT revolution and the mergence of sustainable energy continue

this change-promoting phalange, Rifkin argued and these contemporary communication

and energy advances stoke the commons. Rifkin also pointed to the importance of the 3-

D maker movement that is dramatically changing the way things are produced in many

domains. The maker movement also posits open access and collaborative approaches

also touted by the commons and forms a major player in what Rifkin called the

Collaborative Commons. He emphasized that the "Makers Infrastructure" (Rifkin, 2014,

p. 99), which he traced back to the appropriate technology movement that began in the

1970s, and also expands upon the hackers movement born from the Internet, is fueling

the zero-marginal cost phenomenon. The Makers Movement, Rifkin maintained (2014)

> has been driven by four principles: the open-source sharing of new inventions, the
> promotion of a collaborative learning culture, a belief in community self-
> sufficiency, and a commitment to sustainable production practices. But
> underneath the surface, an even more radical agenda is beginning to unfold, albeit
> undeveloped and still largely unconscious. If we were to put all the disparate
> pieces of the 3D printing culture together, what we begin to see is a powerful new
> narrative arising that could change the way civilization is organized in the twenty-
> first century. (p. 99)

As technology takes over an increasing amount of production and human labor

becomes increasingly obsolete, social production on the commons will become the

dominant organizing paradigm, Rifkin argued (2014). Consumers will become

"prosumers," those who produce and consume renewable energy. Rifkin asserted (2014,

p. 135). How the world finances zero-marginal cost will determine the social and

economic order, he maintained.

Rifkin (2014) contended that "the Third Industrial Revolution

communication/energy matrix is enabling consumers to become their own producers" (p.

173). Individuals involved in the "Free Culture Movement, the Environmental

Movement, and the movement to reclaim the public commons" (Rifkin, 2014, pp. 172-

173) are leading the shift in the dominant socio-economic paradigm. As they

increasingly collaborate and share goods globally in commons, they disrupt capitalist

markets and help to define a new narrative of humanity (Rifkin, 2014).

Rifkin (2014) argued that the Communications Internet, the Energy Internet, and the Logistics Internet would comprise the Internet of Things and form the infrastructure required for a commons-based society. As Rifkin wrote:

> When linked together in a single interactive system— the Internet of Things— these three Internets provide a stream of Big Data on the comings and goings of society that can be accessed and shared collaboratively on an open global Commons by the whole of humanity in the pursuit of "extreme productivity" and a zero marginal cost society. (p. 195)

The challenge derives from the current battle being waged between governments, private corporations, and people who support the commons. To date, governments have succeeded in reducing the open-access to the Internet and corporations have increasingly marketized it. Whether the commons will eventually prevail is an open question, despite the optimism of the scholars whose analysis I summarized above.

Weber (2013) proposed an "enlivened economy," one that promotes synergistic relationships among living, natural processes. "If nature actually is a commons," wrote Weber, "it follows that the only possible way to achieve a stable, long-term productive relationship with it is by building an economy of the commons. It can help dissolve the traditional duality of humans and nature, and orient us toward respectful, sustainable models of engaging with the more-than-human aspects of nature" (para. 6).

Schor (2011) recommended economics of plenitude to extract us from the current crisis and to establish a sustainable world. Directed at affluent individuals in wealthy countries and wealthy individuals in poorer countries, Schor's approach includes working less in a declining market and focusing on other activities and abilities; reducing ones ecological footprint; and living a much more collaborative and creative lifestyle. Schor

(2008) previously conducted extensive research on the changing nature of work in the

United States, including forced over-work made necessary by corporate lay-offs and the

reduction of available jobs, trends that she saw as continuing. Schor (2011) admitted that

countries such as the United States would have to build a social safety net that has been

systematically destroyed during the neoliberal era that would make education and health

affordable in order to support plenitude economics. Schor (2011) recommended more

self-provisioning and sharing, in order to build such plenitude and live within the limits

of the earth.

Commons and Developing Countries and Feudalism

Many commoner scholars and activists look to subsistence commons in

developing countries with an attitude of reverence and awe and also look back at the

English medieval commons nostalgically. Some commoners argue that alliance with

subsistence commoners in poorer countries is necessary for pushing forward to a new

commons-based socio-economic order. In a way, it seems that we are asking the poor to

help us redefine ourselves outside our consumerist subjectivities, to look for other

internal meanings. We are, in a way, idealizing them, when their lives are very much a

daily struggle. We also look back at the commons in feudal times, masking the hardships

that peasants experienced on the commons. Although commons very much value

inclusivity as commoners, we should incorporate history in our narrative and definitely

learn from and include the poor in developing countries, we also need to be mindful that

the perspective of communing in contemporary society reflects a significant change of

consciousness. Italian legal scholar Rodota cautioned commoners to focus on a forward

looking paradigm and to be cautious about slipping into the past. As he queried (2013):

But in "trying to enter into post-modernity, are we risking a regression to pre-modernity?" asked Rodotà, citing "an emerging, risky trend toward what can be looked at as a kind of nostalgic approach, of a metaphysical foundation of the commons," or "an institutional neo-medievalism." (para.5)

Levels of Changes Represented by the Commons

The emergence of the commons as a major focus and as the potential defining organization for future society is reflected on changes on a number of different levels, from the individual to the universal, as have been discussed throughout this dissertation. Taken together, they manifest a potential major transition in the socio-economic system but it is not yet clear if this transition will, at least in the short run, will be positive, or will rather be a way of surviving the major paradigm shift.

Individual Consciousness and Subjectivities: Commoning reflects a significant evolution in consciousness and a constellation of subjectivities that contrast with the individually focused subjectivities of neoliberalism. Sharing is considered a way of maximizing benefits for everyone in a community and it is not based on poverty or economic necessity but rather on the desire to enhance the lives of others and ourselves in unity. The notion that commons belongs to us and that we have the right and even obligation to manage them has become an accepted value and subjectivities that defined communing according to research participants, scholars, and activist. The youth are increasingly positing these values as their standard approach to each other and to acting in the world.

Organizational Level: The governance structures and processes of commons – the horizontal, self-management style – are becoming an accepted model for the majority of organizations and represents a dramatic shift from the hierarchical model that has had

dominion for so many generations. This model promotes participation of everyone within an organization to influence key decisions and express their point of view. In flatter organizations, people gain experience in all aspects of management and gain confidence in the decision making that will remake the world to benefit the people rather than the narrow corporate and government interests that are dominant today. This approach and connect values are becoming increasingly infused in the global culture and support the emergence of the commons as a dominant paradigm.

Level of Production: Hardt and Negri (2009) argue that biopolitical production is becoming the hegemonic paradigm and Rifkin (2014) titles a similar paradigm the "Internet of Things" and "Collaborative Consumption." As this mode of production that emphasizes knowledge and information and the benefits of sharing become increasingly dominant, the commons paradigm may gain ascendance. The as ascendancy of knowledge and information as the *avant garde* in the social transformative process will continue to change the nature of relationships and the nature of production and sharing and may eventually change the nature of society.

Level of Society: Many reforms will need to be made in order to open the door for the commons to remold society and social relationships, as many scholars and activists have pointed out. The recognition of the commons as a legitimate sector will be required at least in the short term and this will require a great deal of lobbying and even protest. The economics of abundance and plenitude will have to be infused in society for the commons to become hegemonic.

Capital: By its nature, capital will continue to enclose resources, and given the large amount of excess capital in the global system, such enclosure will continue. For

how long remains the key question. The system remains under extreme stress and the discontent in the world with democracy and other forms of governance is increasing and is not being adequately addressed.

Universal level: The continued manifestation of the desire embedded in the human heart for an egalitarian ideal society in which basic needs are provided for and everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential and live in harmony, equality, and peace has been moved a step forward through the focus on the commons and the drive toward this ideal will continue through protest and through continuing to act according to the values of the commons.

Resistance to the Realization of the Commons

There are many forces that continue to resist the realization of the vision of the commons. Corporations continue to attempt to enclose the commons and, as we have already seen, have succeeded in enclosing many of the businesses in the sharing economy. Give that there is an enormous amount of excess capital, capital will continue to enclose commons and enhanced resistance will be required. The financial system continues to generate debt and to motivate CEOs and other senior managers to peddle unsustainable and personally profitable financial packages and perhaps, sadly, only a totally collapse will succeed in changing the system.

Wars, power struggles, and the violence perpetrated upon our children and each other will continue. Internet wars and the stealing of personal information will ever be more active, and surveillance facilitated by IT technology will ever expand, all militating against the realization of the values and visions of the commons.

The commons as the defining paradigm and a participatory democracy led by the multitude appears to be a very long way off, given the fact that power politics, religious strife, and tribalism remain major paradigms in the world and the majority of people do not yet the "other" as a viable partner. People are still living with the fundamental fear that their survival depends upon the domination of their "enemies" and the hogging of resources and all riches for their group. The recent wars and struggles in the world appear to lead to sharp schisms and deep divides. Perhaps commons can function within this world of violence, but its hope of being the global paradigm appears minor in the short run. Still the march of human ingenuity continues and the invention of new technologies will continue to transform human relationships, dramatically alter production and the nature of work, and the values that people hold dear.

Neoliberal Response to the Commons

Corporations and the supporters of the free market and neoliberalism are not willing to accept the commons because this sector is a threat to their profit potential and they will continue to promote enclosure on the basis of efficiency and public good. Fox News reporter John Stossel filmed a program called "The Tragedy of the Commons" during which he argued that privatization of public spaces and common resources is more effective and efficient than sharing. He interviewed George Mason University Economist Russ Roberts who presented Hardin's argument about overuse and free riding by using as an example the Pilgrims' strategy of sharing. Roberts argued that the Pilgrims almost starved to death because they shared a community garden and had no incentive to volunteer their labor to tend the garden because they knew that they could reap the benefits of the garden without working. Roberts concluded by asserting that the Pilgrims

ultimate survival depended upon dividing the common garden into privately managed plots.

Stossel and Roberts failed to explain the reality of commoning, which, as has been shown in this dissertation, involves communication and governing process, not open access and use. Stossel also has produced television shows that argue that climate change is a myth and that inequality is caused not by corporate behavior but by an over-regulating government. Stossel is an example of the corporate-sponsored right wing broadcasters who are spreading falsehoods based on erroneous or incomplete information.

Many of the peer-to-peer sharing businesses that are based on platforms that connect clients to providers such as ride sharing or couch sharing are under fire from both the government and corporations. Taxi drivers are complaining furiously about ride sharing and hotels are complaining about services that provide private homes as an alternative to hotels. Governments assert that they are missing out of revenues that are paid by such businesses and also that they cannot regulate the standards of services provided or the legitimacy of people that provide them.

Such businesses are commonplace in other countries of the world, especially in developing countries where the informal economy provides a livelihood for a large portion of the society. Indeed, one argument that is made in the United States is that these businesses have provided a livelihood for individuals hard-hit by the 2008 Recession and that they have also provided a source of income for students or aspiring actors or individuals in transition. The dynamic between the peer-to-peer business model

the state, and corporations is clearly a dynamic one and the latter two sectors have not

accepted wholeheartedly the former. These sectors will continue to attempt to limit them.

Capitalism is "Alive and Well in Asia"

I visited Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi, India in November 2014,

the university where I studied for a year and a half in the 1970s, and met with my advisor,

a well-known economist and expert in international trade. I asked my professor whether

he thought that capitalism was transitioning to a new order. He replied that although

capitalism may be "sick" in the West, it is alive and well and thriving in Asia and there is

an enormous amount of excess capital in this region that is seeking investment

opportunities. Indeed, I was amazed at the amount of investment in India and the

expansion of infrastructure since I had lived there in the mid-seventies when the

Government of India had constructed strong barriers to entry to foreign investment and

had a protectionist policy for Indian industry. My professor explained that beginning in

the 1990s, India relaxed its onerous rules for business and eliminated many of the steps to

obtain licenses and had obviously changed its stance toward foreign investment because

most of the international hotel chains are now there, as well as American fast food

restaurants and many Western owned corporations.

Indeed, living in Myanmar, I witnessed how much excess capital exists in Asia as

the huge hotels and condominium developments being built and businesses being

established are funded by money coming from Vietnam, Singapore, China, Malaysia, and

other Asian countries. It appears that government-led capitalism in Asia is currently

thriving, as my professor explained.   Excess Asian capital is certainly also being

invested in the United States, Europe, and Africa. What does this imply for the chances

of the commons to become the hegemonic paradigm globally?

I have been equally surprised that much in India and Myanmar has not changed,

that the marginalized and the poor live much the same as they did before this capitalist

infusion. Class barriers and the social glass ceiling still endure, despite movies like *Slum

dog Millionaire* that tout the rags to riches stories that we all love. Social mobility is still

limited in many Asian countries, indeed, as it has become increasingly limited in the

United States.

The other thing that I found interesting is that I met one of my Liberian former

staff member in India where he is earning his Master's Degree in Public Policy. He

spoke the narrative that I have summarized in this dissertation from the perspective of

commons scholars. He talked of the crisis in capitalism, the global discontent with

democracy, the inequality that is close to fomenting world revolution, and the financial

crisis. He talked of the need for a new post-capitalist, post democracy or true democracy

social order. I had virtually the same conversation months earlier in Jamaica with the

young Jamaican women manicurist. The same conversation is happening around the

world and, despite the appearance that capitalism is alive and well, at least in Asia, there

is a crisis and a dramatic shift in perspective among "the people." Give the fact that

words can create realities, I believe that these conversations reflect issues in the

overarching global system and may create a response and even ignite a more obvious and

widespread change process.

The Commons as a Development Model

Some activists (Bollier, 2014) recommended the commons as an effective development model. Certainly, there is a legitimate bottom-up development approach. However, as long as States are organized such that they have development budgets and fund major infrastructure, services, and industries, a top-down approach will be necessary to complement a bottom-up approach possibly led by the commons. States still draft strategic plans that include projects to help develop their countries and investments are still required to provide the infrastructure that can deliver utilities and clean water and sewer and to provide educational facilities and health clinics and hospitals, among other social services.

Further, states, as members of the global system of states, are still subject to the pressures of international institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, especially when they seek external resources or foreign private investment. Depending exclusively upon the commons is not likely to produce the capital necessary to invest in such infrastructure and services. Certainly some smaller, green technologies such as rain water catchment systems in tropical environments, solar power, village wells, and local schools and clinics may be able to be supported by local commons, but more significant investments still require the state. Further, given the globalized world, it is difficult to isolate commons from interaction with global business and other influences. Governments still seek foreign investment and still have control over local resources to a large extent.

The development model continues to be premised upon the notion of economic growth. This paradigm would have to change, as many commons scholars and activists argue, including Hardt, Bollier, Quilligan, and Bowers. A model that focuses on creating

generalized and balanced well-being in the world as well as a more equal distribution of income, combined with a respect for resource limitations and sustainability would have to replace the current paradigm. Many symptoms of "over-development," such as the obesity, cancer, and diabetes epidemics are manifesting, shining the light on the negative aspects of an over-emphasis on growth.

The Commons Imaginary as a Utopian Vision

Commoning, as George Por (2013) related, derives from the deep seated longing of the human heart for a just, peaceful society in which everyone has enough to live at a universally established standard. This longing has been driving humankind since its inception and will continue to drive humankind until this utopian vision becomes the imaginary of a new socio-economic order.

What will be the next steps in working toward the realization of this longing remains to be seen. Commoners admit that they are at the beginning of their journey and that the verdict is out regarding where commoning will lead. DeAngelis (2013) expressed caution, warning commoners to take action. He maintained that just as capital currently needs the commons to help sustain the resources that capital needs to enclose for its production, the commons currently also needs capital because it cannot survive completely on its own. He offered a cautionary tale (2013):

> Writing in prison at a time of the consolidation of fascism in Italy, Antonio Gramsci wrote in an often quoted passage: "The old world is dying away, and the new world struggles to come forth: now is the time of monsters" (Gramsci 1971). A monster is an imaginary or legendary creature that combines parts from various animal or human forms. Fascism and Nazism were one type of this monster. Stalinism was another. Today, the articulation between capital, a system that recognizes no limit in its boundless accumulation, and a system that must recognize limits because it is only from within limits that it can reproduce life, love, affects, care and sustainability, may well give way to another monstrous social construction... or not. Much will depend on us…. (p. 300)

After summarizing various views, I argue that the commons as a component of a socioeconomic triarchy will eventually lose it potential to effect positive social change and will become polluted by the negative values and processes that it was created to escape. By necessity, commoning needs to be a social and psychological process of continued struggle, a struggle toward the ideal society that humankind has carried in our hearts since our beginnings.

Chapter Ten

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

As I stated in the introduction to this dissertation, my intent was to enter the world of the commons to determine "what is going on here?' and "why has the commons become a much-discussed phenomenon?" In order to answer these questions, I employed a grounded theory approach aimed at revealing psychological and social processes underlying the commons. Grounded theories are generally expressed as gerunds because they focus on processes that people are engaged in.

I situated my study historically because commoners reach back to the enclosure of common lands and forests in England as a parallel to what they consider is happening in the current stage of capitalism. Many commoners argue that the marketization and enclosure of important resources today represents a major transformation in the economic system similar to what happened in the shift from feudalism to capitalism. What the current transformation will lead to is not yet clear. I traced the contemporary interest in the commons to the Hardin's often-quoted article "The Tragedy of the Commons," the rise of the environmental movement and ecological consciousness, and Elinor Ostrom's seminal work.   I examined the identification of a number of phenomena as commons, including information and knowledge, genes, indigenous knowledge, culture, language, even trust, among other phenomena heretofore differently labeled. I explored what many scholars are calling "the Second Enclosure Movement" regarding how the market is enclosing and commodifying different commons, including natural resources, knowledge and information, genes, and other "gifts" that have been given to humankind.

I also summarized the argument by legal scholars that artificially enclosing and marketizing information and knowledge stifles creativity and the furtherance of knowledge discovery. Their argument is based on the fact that information and knowledge are non-excludable and non-subtractable. Corporations have found ways to artificially enclose information and knowledge and to make them scarce through trademarks and patents so that they can make profits. However, such enclosure has had negative effects in the area of scientific research and knowledge because corporations are paying scientists for findings that support their agendas. Further, corporations have bought many major academic, peer-reviewed journals, bringing question to issues of pure scientific research and conflicts of interest and also preventing a number of academic institutions and individuals from accessing the journals because of barriers created by high costs. The U.S. government has been party to the enclosure of information and knowledge by making more restrictive copyright laws. Situating my research thusly established a framework within which to then ask commoners "what is going on here?"

I conducted and coded open-ended qualitative interviews of 17 participants who are members of a variety of commons and I coded 11 interviews and presentations from secondary sources that were available online. The primary and secondary participants that comprised my study are laid out in Table 1. I followed the grounded theory process that I describe in detail in Chapter 2 and the core variable of *commoning* emerged. The coding process revealed that three variables combined to explain commoning, namely *supplanting a paradigm, self-protagonizing,* and *resonating self and society*. As I argued, *supplanting a paradigm* refers to the process of social production generated out of a cooperative process outside of the market paradigm. *Supplanting a paradigm* includes

several essential processes such as self-organizing, self-governing, sharing, collaborating,

localizing, translocalizing through networking, democratizing, and humanizing.

Through commoning, commoners claim a resource and manage it collectively,

sustainably, and with a view that extends beyond short-term gain.

Self-protagonizing refers to the psychological process of taking charge of one's

life and making oneself the author of one's legacy. This implies that people can construct

a sense of self outside of the value the market places on them. As I argued, this is not a

solipsistic notion, derived form an underlying notion of a self-maximizing *homo*

economicus, but rather from a notion that we can best take charge of our own lives by

working collaboratively with others and co-creating together. Self-protagonizing

includes de-commodifying, self-provisioning, reverencing, eco-synergizing, and

protesting. Self-protagonizing has *self-provisioning* at its heart. Commoners survive and

provision by cooperating. Commoners have a view of themselves as intrinsically linked

to others and to the environment. Their identity is *eco-synergized*. They reverence

creation and see themselves as trustees rather than as consumers and conquerors of our

gifted resources. Protest is an intrinsic aspect of self-protagonizing because commoners

see as an essential aspect of their identity the protest of injustices and the importance of

ever struggling to create a just and equitable society.

Resonating self-and-society reflects the commoners deep-seated belief that their

actions will have a profound impact on remolding society into one more just and

equitable and that they do not have to live at the mercy of how the current neoliberal

capitalist system is defining value. Commoners hold the belief that their communal

actions can co-create a new reality, that what they do will "count" toward co-designing a new world order and a positive legacy for their progeny.

The grounded theory of the commons, namely *commoning*, manifested by its psychological and social processes is consistent with recent trends in the theory of ideas as well as in the emergence of peer-production and a sharing business model. I summarized several of these emerging trends in organizational theory, in collaborative models of software production and other types of human interaction. The presence of these emerging models and trends leads credence to commoning as an impactful way of being and acting in the world.

I found that the recognition of the enclosure of many resources, that their commodification and marketization has led many people to label a number of phenomena as *commons* as an effort to claim them before they are taken away, priced, and thus placed out of reach of a growing number of people in the world. The 2008 Recession and global financial crisis have contributed to the rise of the commons imaginary. The inequality in the world, already growing before 2008, has become extreme following this recession and the middle-class in the United States has eroded, further widening the schism between rich and poor. In some sense, commons has become a survival mechanism and many commoners are looking to historical commons in the developing world as a model to help them learn how to self-provision and survive. It is the survival aspect of the commons that is most troubling to me because this could mean that the market could continue its enclosure of resources and further widen the gap between rich and poor such that even people in wealthy nations would be forced to create commons in order to subsist.

A number of scholars, whose theories I have summarized, have written about the reasons for the emergence of the commons and some of them, such as Hardt and Negri, see the commons as both created by capitalism and also as holding the seeds of its demise and transition toward a cooperative society, which these authors, are not abashed about labeling "communism" in its pure form, not related to its bashed-up history in the former Soviet Union and China, and still exerting its stranglehold in North Korea.

I took a step beyond grounded theory and looked at whether commoning is a psychological and social process that beckons a new socio-economic order. I concluded that it is too early to see what the impact of commoning on the world will be. A number of scholars and activists argue that in the short-term it serves as a third-leg to the bifurcated public-private model of society and is a viable complement in the current socio-economic order. Others see commoning as an essential practice to bring in a new socio-economic order. At this point, I see commoning as the fundamental process of struggle, struggle that humans have been engaged in since the beginning of time, struggle to achieve the sort of human interaction and society that lies deep in our hearts, and one the drives the human spirit and is projected as a sort of vision that we carry inside us.

Critique of my Grounded Theory

Glaser (2001, 2002, 2004, 2005) asserts that the ultimate test of grounded theory is whether it has "grab," that is, when others examine it, that it makes sense to them and a light bulb goes off that leads them to nod acknowledgement. I will await the response of others to determine whether my theory does, in fact, possess "grab." The jury is still out. I also examined my grounded theory by employing the six steps outlined in "Critiquing a Theory" (Walker & Avant, 1983), namely (1) determine the origins of the theory; (2)

examine the meaning of the theory; (3) analyze the logical adequacy of the theory; (4)

determine the usefulness of the theory; (5) define the degree of generalizability and the

parsimony of the theory; and (6) determine the testability of the theory.

As I have discussed, grounded theory research is an inductive research method

that examines experiences of individuals by asking them to describe "what is happening

here?" and codes their responses until a core variable emerges and is accompanied by a

cadre of sub-variables. The origin of my theory hence lies in the data that I gathered

from primary and secondary sources.

The meaning of my theory derives from the concepts included as well as how they

relate to each other. Grounded theories refer more to processes rather than concepts, but

I will attempt to relate them. There is a relationship between *self-protagonizing* and

supplanting a paradigm in the sense that individuals who see themselves as inherently

part of a larger ecosystem that includes both partnerships with other people as well as the

need to self-provision are likely to join organizations that are relatively horizontal and in

which individuals share leadership responsibilities and approach projects collaboratively

rather than competitively. However, this relationship certainly needs to be tested

empirically in order to prove that such a connection actual happens. The more

challenging relationship is that between resonating-self-and-society and supplanting a

paradigm and self-protagonizing. Resonating self and society cannot stand alone without

its implicit values of standing for and working toward social justice and equality for all.

If one includes such values in the definition of resonating self and society, then its

relationship to the other two variables becomes clearer. People who are cooperating,

sharing, and creating organizational forms outside the market and the state and who are

acting according to an inherent value system of social justice are likely to co-create a more equitable social order. This aspect of the theory is, at this point, quite a leap, and will have to be further tested by extensive data gathering.

My grounded theory was also derived from a limited data pool and needs to be further examined. The logical adequacy of my theory will depend on the feedback by commoners and other scholars, because my theory explains psychological and social processes and it is difficult to employ the theory as a predictive one since social changes will be slow in becoming evident. I noted in the literature that commoners often refer to commoning and highlight its importance, yet I could not find any in depth study of exactly what commoning entails. I am therefore hopeful that my theory will be useful as an explanatory model that can be further elaborated and tested. The theory needs to be employed in studies of different types of commons than those I examined in order to determine if it is generalizable and whether it can be more parsimonious. There needs to be more research in this area and I hope that other scholars will begin to do so. There are inherent in the theory some testable hypotheses such as whether the self indeed resonates with the social but such a hypotheses would require an enormous amount of empirical data to test. By examining my theory, I certainly conclude that it requires the critique of other scholars and testing in other commons.

I also believe that a larger group of commons needs to be investigated. My study was limited to only a few different types. And, commoners in developing countries need to be interviewed in order to determine whether there are universal variables or whether cultural factors will alter the theory.

Further Research

A major area where the commons is applied is that of deliberative democracy and the commons qua gathering of individuals focusing on and reaching either a mutual understanding of a major policy issue or agreeing to disagree and still work toward finding some mutually-accepted approach to addressing the issue.   Research needs to be completed to inquire about the experiences of individuals participating in a deliberative democracy process to determine if "commoning" emerges as the core variable and if the sub-variables of "supplanting a paradigm," "self-protagonizing," and "resonating self and society" also emerge and fully explain "what is going on here." Certainly some of the key writers on deliberative democracy such as Peter Levine also write about the commons, so there may well be a connection and ideally, the grounded theory that emerged from my study would also be applicable to the political commons of deliberative democracy. Grounded theories may take years to verify and are always modifiable, so a study of such political commons would be an excellent domain to further research in order to not only verify my theory but also to modify or expand it.

The role of consciousness and the impact of a higher level of consciousness on the identification of the commons as a path toward socio-economic transformation should be further developed. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) argue that action emerges out of consciousness and that a certain level of consciousness, which they call "eco-system awareness," is required in order to reach an eco-centric worldview. The commoners I interviewed and whose online interviews I coded appear to have achieved an eco-centric consciousness, but I did not examine level of consciousness in my research. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) also argue that this level of consciousness is characterized by

"presencing" or "awareness-based collective action," another concept I did not examine among commoners, although the commons is based on a shift from an "I" to a "we" collective perspective.

Schein (2014) examined the worldviews and action logics of over sixty corporate executives responsible for sustainability issues and found that they held eco-centric world views and post-conventional action logics. These corporate sustainability leaders have similar values as commoners but have chosen the corporate sector to express their values. An interesting study would be to compare their impact with that of commoners who believe that corporations have caused many of the problems that they are protesting.

More research needs to be carried out regarding the impact of commons on contemporary society, since discussions of the commons as more than an alternative management structure and processes for socio-ecological systems, but rather as the seeds of a potential socio-economic transformation is a relatively recent conversation. The implications of the sharing and peer-to-peer productive industries need to be better understood and their impact on corporations as heretofore defined. Commoning needs to be better understood and the shift between subjectivities that support the individualistic, consumerist society to those that support sharing and collaboration needs to be clarified. The impact of the linkage between subsistence commoners in developing countries with emerging commoners in industrialized countries also requires further research. In the meantime, the emergence of the commons imaginary challenges all of us with concerns about our environment and about the legacy we will leave for future generations

Implications for Practice

By its very nature, commoning is a practice. It begins with a recognition that a resource needs to be managed by a group of individuals – commoners – who develop an organization and/or management system to effectively manage the resource outside of the market and the state and with a commitment to sustainability, social justice, and equity. Commoners are practitioners on a mission to help transform the world into one where more is shared and where communal value exceeds the value imposed by price. As the number of commoners increases, the chances of creating such a world will greatly increase. In the short run, this implies living as much as possible outside the market through sharing and self-provisioning, continual protest, speaking out for justice, electing officials who are committed to transforming the system, and organizing commons that have greater political influence.

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APPENDIX A

THE WORLD OF THE COMMONS

The world of the commons is a diverse, multifaceted global world, inhabited by a multiplicity of persons with different concerns and a plethora of groups and organizations and associations devoted to addressing these concerns in a variety of ways. Navigating this labyrinth reveals a kaleidoscope of perspectives and personalities that challenge the possibility of a commonality among the commons. As a prelude to my research findings and in order to understand the domain into which I entered, I describe, in this chapter, some of the most influential scholars, writers, and activists who associate themselves with the commons and some of the leading organizations building the commons. This chapter serves only as an introduction to these organizations and individuals not an analysis or critique of their work. More groups and individuals are continually joining the ranks as commoners as interest in the commons proliferates. I present these organizations to highlight the challenge of discovering a grounded theory in the midst of such diversity and complexity.

Associations and Groups

The International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC), founded in 1989, is a non profit association with the stated mission to understand and improve institutions for the management of resources that are (or could be) held or used collectively by communities in developing or developed countries. Nobel Prize winner, Elinor Ostrom, was the founding president of IASC.

The IASC originally included "property" in its title but removed this in 2006 due to the expansion of the notion of the commons to cover more than common property and

natural resources, including the internet, culture, knowledge, genes, and many other domains included in the "new commons." Charlotte Hess, currently Associate Dean for Research and Scholarly Collections at Syracuse University, was influential in expanding the focus of the IASC from natural resources and common property to the new commons. Hess collaborated with Ostrom at the Workshop at Indiana University where she was hired to establish a library and was one of the first scholars to identify the Internet as a commons.   Together with Ostrom, she hosted a meeting in 2004 titled "Workshop on Scholarly Communications as a Commons" at which scholars and activists gathered to examine the current state of research and development of scholarly communication and the knowledge commons. She worked closely with Ostrom on the 2007 book that includes the papers given at this workshop, *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice* and remains actively involved in the IASC. Hess built the Digital Library of the Commons, a growing collection of thousands of commons-related publications.

Outgoing IASC President is Mexican Dr. Leticia Merino who focuses on forestry communities and management. She is a professor of social science, ecology, and policy at the National University of Mexico (UNAM). IASC president elect for 2015 is Tine de Moor, Professor of Institutions for Collective Action in Historical Perspective in Utrecht University.

The IASC publishes *The Commons Digest* and *The International Journal of the Commons*. They also have an "Initiative on Commons" that recently posted on the IASC website the *Vocabulary on Commons*, a "socio-linguistic inquiry into the legal and

livelihood consequences of the term commons." This Initiative is written exclusively by commoners in India who are members of the Foundation for Ecological Security.

Founded in 2001, "On the Commons" (http://onthecommons.org) calls itself a "commons movement strategy center [that] promotes commons-based solutions for environmental restoration, social justice, and other global and community initiatives." Its self-described mission is to build and bring visibility to the commons movement; initiate and catalyze commons work; and develop and encourage commons leadership. The web-based group publishes the *Commons Magazine* and fosters the Commons Network. The network strengthens connections between commoners, shares knowledge, and raises the visibility of commons. On the Commons was founded by David Bollier, Jonathan Rowe, and Peter Barnes.

David Bollier, one of the major commons activists, blogs on his own website where he describes his mission to promote commons-based solutions for environmental restoration, social justice, and other global and community initiatives. Currently Senior Fellow at the Annenburg School of Communication at the University of Southern California, he also founded Public Knowledge, a non-profit dedicated to an open/standard ends-to-end internet and deals with issues of intellectual property law, competition, and choice in the digital marketplace. Since 2000, he has written about the commons in several books and articles, including *Silent Theft*, *Brand Name Bullies*, *Viral Spiral, and Think Like a Commoner.*

Now deceased, Jonathan Rowe was an activist who authored the book *Our Common Wealth: The Hidden Economy that Makes Everything Else Work.* He was also editor at the Washington Monthly, a U.S. Senate aid, and a "Nader's Raider." Peter

Barnes is an environmentalist and journalist-activist. His book *Capitalism3* talks of a

new operating system for a kinder version of capitalism that protects the commons

through a commons trust, a market-based entity that limits the use of scare commons.

Bollier together with Silke Helfrich, Michel Bauwens, and Beatrix Busanich

formed the Commons Strategies Group (CSG) to help advance the commons as a

paradigm in diverse settings in both theory and practice.   The self-stated purpose of the

CSG is "to help consolidate and extend the many existing commons initiatives around the

world." The group forms partnerships with diverse organizations, researches and writes

about contemporary commons developments, and engages in public speaking and

education. The CSG's networks of influence reach across Europe, North America, Asia

and Latin America. The founders of CSG argue that the commons "provides practical,

effective forms of governance and resource management that can address the growing

failures of centralized, hierarchical institutions and the market fundamentalist order."

Michel Bauwens, based in Bangkok, Thailand, is also the Founder of the

Foundation for Peer-to-Peer Alternatives, the P2P Foundation, a knowledge commons

focused on the peer-to- peer and commons dynamics of a wide variety of social fields,

consisting of a global network of researchers interested in peer production, governance

and property in the Internet age. Bauwens is a theoretician of the political economy and

digital culture who regularly collaborates with Adam Arvidsson, University of Milan,

Athina Karatzgionnanni, University of Hull, Phoebe Moore, Salford University, Tere

Vaden Finland, among many others.

A decentralized global organization headquartered in Amsterdam, the P2P

Foundation (http://p2pfoundation.net/P2P_Foundation:About) is premised upon a number

of principles of cooperation and peer-to-peer organizing principles which are posited to bring about a new form of non-representative democracy and a new distributed network approach to decision making that will bring about transformed consciousness and new forms of subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, objectivity, and inter-objectivity.

Beatriz Busaniche, based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is a Board Member of Vía Libre Foundation, founding member of Wikimedia Argentina, and Free Software Foundation Latin America. A free software and free culture activist in Latin America, Busaniche has been promoting access to knowledge for about a decade. Busaniche is also a professor at the Social Sciences Department at the University of Buenos Aires. She has written articles about copyrights and patents, and about the so-called "convergence of movements" that seeks to foster new dialogues among free software developers, Wikipedians, peasants, indigenous peoples, artists, academics and other social movements. She participated in the World Summit on the Information Society and the World Intellectual Property Organization debates, as well as in national and regional legislation processes to promote free software, privacy and access to knowledge in Argentina and other Latin American countries.

Silke Helfrich, based in Jena, Germany, headed the Regional office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation for Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean from 1999 to 2007, where she worked on globalization, gender and human rights. Helfrich advocates commons through her German-speaking Commonsblog and published *Who Owns the World? The Rediscovery of the Commons* and several articles including "Commons: Prosperity by Sharing," written with Rainer Kuhlen, Christian Siefkes and Wolfgang

Sachs in 2010. She consults on the commons with civil society and academic

organizations.

The Heinrich Boll Foundation is a non-profit organization associated with the

German Green Party. With 30 offices worldwide, the foundation calls itself a green think

tank and policy network that works on issues related to gender, ecology, and human

rights. The Foundation, together with the Commons Strategy Group, has hosted two

conferences in Berlin, one in 2010 and the second in 2013, to further develop the concept

of the commons. The 2013 Conference, titled "Economics and the Commons: from Seed

Form to Core Paradigm," focused on the commons as a paradigm of self-organized

governance to reshape the world and to create a commons sector to balance out the State

and the corporate sectors.

The World Social Forum embraced the commons in its 2010 meeting in Brazil by

inviting Silke Helfrich to speak about the commons and how the commons is catalyzing a

social movement to refashion the future into a more cooperative society in which people

collaborate to manage the commons.

Remix The Commons, "an intercultural space for sharing and co-creating

multimedia documents about the commons," is hosted by a collective of people and

organizations convinced that "the curation, exchange and remixing of diverse narratives,

definitions and images of the commons are a dynamic and participatory way of

appropriating and disseminating the concept of the commons." Remix the Commons

identifies it mission to "promote social and intercultural appropriation of the theories and

practices of the commons through creating and sharing multimedia documents; to

develop an open and collaborative infrastructure for creating, promoting and

documenting the commons; and to contribute to the emergence of the commons movement by enhancing the ability of communities and collectivities to document their practices and develop their reflection on the commons."

Remix The Commons provides a web platform for uploading, sharing, cataloguing, remixing and distributing multimedia documents about the commons; develops a catalogue of multimedia documents about the commons accessible to commoners, researchers and communicators of the Commons; supplies tools and venues facilitating the co-design, co-creation and facilitation for media projects related to the commons; organizes projects, conferences and initiatives that stimulate initiatives to produce multimedia documents related to the commons; and contributes to strategic and political debate/thinking within the movement for the protection and development of the commons.

iCommons promotes collaboration among proponents of open education, access to knowledge, free software, open access publishing and free culture communities around the world. Its mission is to support "the adoption of the tools, models and practice that facilitate universal participation in the cultural and knowledge domains…. [and] to reduce the costs of access to knowledge and culture and to increase the user's ability to re-purpose it for more productive use by promoting free tools and practices, easy permissioning mechanisms and a robust public domain." iCommons was spawned by Creative Commons, a nonprofit organization that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. It provides free copyright licenses that allow the public to share their work in the way they want to.

The Commons – Open Society Sustainability Initiative is a "platform for new thinking and world wide collaborative problem solving. Work on the Kyoto cities challenge program have hundreds of advisors and include 500 cities of over 1 million population – focus on transportation in cities.

Knowledge Ecology International (KEI) is devoted to expanding the knowledge commons. KEI's work has been divided into two general areas, namely, innovation and access to medical technologies, and general topics of access to knowledge. Over time, KEI's work has branched into several other areas, such as those that relate to the economic and policy models to enhance the supply of creativity and innovation as a public good. KEI promotes the right to read for people with reading disabilities; access to medical technologies; the economics of creativity and knowledge; general access to knowledge issues; and transparency.

The Global Commons Trust comprises a group of individuals, organizations and "other non-proprietary stakeholders" who believe that resources should be held in trust for the commonwealth of the planet. They are working to preserve the fund of depletable commons for future generations; rent a portion of the depletable commons for the production and consumption of the current generations; generate dividends to preserve the commons; and enhance and generate replenish able commons. They are attempting to establish a nexus of commons organizations through Commons Action for the United Nations and elicit input from individuals and groups on commons issues and to unite world leaders and policy makers through a multilateral platform for the commons. The trust is calling for the creation of a Commission on the Global Commons, a high-level international panel to discuss global commons issues. They are calling for a Global

Commons Charter, drafted by stakeholders around the world expressing the intent to hold a commons trust to protect communities' common resources.

James Quilligan is serving to coordinate the Commission on the Global Commons. He is a major player in the commons and has written a number of articles on the subject. He has been involved in international development for many years and also has served as a policy advisor for key political figures such as Pierre Trudeau, Francois Mitterand, Edward Heath, Julius Nyerere, Olof Palme, Willy Brandt, Jimmy Carter, and Tony Blair.

The Creative Commons is a non-profit organization located in Mountain View, California, that grants six types of licenses that allow creative individuals to share their works according to different criteria. Creative Commons has over 100 affiliates that work in 70 jurisdictions around the world to promote sharing of creativity through tailored licenses. The Obama-Biden Official Whitehouse website incorporates a Creative Commons license.

The London-based School of Commoning, established by George Por, gives classes in commoning and has a wiki-based Knowledge Garden, one of the largest repositories of commons-related non-academic documents. The school also hosts a Commoning Café in London, a networking event to introduce individuals to the world of commons. The host an online workshop titled "Reclaiming the Commons as a Social Theory of Collective Action" and give a series called "Commons in our Life," aimed at fostering commons in social practice (Por, 2012). Also founder of Community Intelligence, Ltd, Por has focused his career on promoting the emergence of collective consciousness in teams, organizations, and communities.

Initiatives of Change is a non-profit global organization focusing on the transformation of society through change in human motivation. The organization hosts the Caux Forum each summer in Caux, Switzerland. The Forum calls itself a "worldwide coalition of conscience, based on a transformation of attitudes and relationships at all levels, linking the personal to the global, where decision-making is guided by a holistic understanding of human security, grounded in relationships of trust that are built among people committed to moral integrity, justice and uplifting the other."

Sopinspace, a Paris-based society supporting the information commons, iwas founded by Philippe Aigrain who is a leading thinker about the commons, especially from the free software/free culture perspective; and author of *Cause Commun* (2005) and *Sharing* (forthcoming), among other books.

The Free Software Foundation, founded in 1985 by Richard Stallman in Massachusetts, supports free software development, and provides a General Public License (GPL). The London-based New Economics Foundation is focused on bringing about a new economic order that better serves the people.

A growing number of organizations around the world are working toward a shareable society. The Sharing Cities Network, for example, is seeking to build a commons by 2014 of 100 cities worldwide. A Sharing City is one where transportation, energy, housing, food, and money are locally owned and democratically managed. It is a place where citizens create their own work together and express their creativity in community centers, urban farms, makerspaces (also called hackerspaces), and ar collectives and share resources and skills through peer-to-peer exchanges, lending libraries, and gifting. As of January, 2014, there were 50 cities in the network, including

cities in Europe the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas. The network envisions a community of network nodes working in a decentralized and resilient style.

Peers is another group whose goal is to support the sharing economy worldwide. A number of sharing companies have spring up and are thriving, much to the chagrin of traditional, market-oriented companies. Some of these include Airbnb, Lyft, Task Tabbit, Get Around, Zaarly, SideCar, RelayRide, Yerdle.

In addition to the above organizations, there exists a multitude of organizations around the world devoted to protecting the commons of particular shared natural resources. In addition, international organizations such as the United Nations are beginning to address the issues raised in particular by Elinor Ostrum, namely how to globally better manage shared resources.

Other Influential Commoners

There are thousands of commoners around the world who are working to pursue the commons paradigm and to help the transition to a more collaborative global order. Several of the key figures who are leading various components of the commons are identified herein. Massimo De Angelis is Professor of political science at the University of East London and Editor of *The Commoner,* an online journal that examines the commons from a socialist perspective.

Yochai Benkler is a Harvard Law School professor, author of *The Wealth of Networks* and a leading theorist of Internet culture. His book *The Penguin and the Leviathan: How Cooperation Triumphs over Self-Interest* argues that a cooperative culture can bring about positive social change and that cooperation actually emanates more naturally from the human spirit than self-interest.

Darryl Birkenfeld is an educator and social entrepreneur who founded the Ogalalla Commons, a nonprofit dedicated to community development across parts of eight Great Plains states that depend upon the High Plain-Ogallala Aquifer. Solidarity Economy is an online think tank without walls that catalyzes discussion and debate about the mass movements of today including the commons.

STIR to Anger, Analysis, and Action is a British online and print magazine devoted to covering issues related to the commons, democracy, and a more cooperative future. Think Commons is an organization in Spain devoted to creating "an ambient intelligence network" in which people around the world can form community and share ideas about re-creating the future. The organization holds meetings several times a month on key commons issues and these sessions are available through live streaming.

James Boyle is a Professor of intellectual property law at Duke Law School Professor. He is specialist in the public domain; co-founder of the Center for the Study of the Public Domain; co-founder of Science Commons and former Chair of Creative Commons. John Clippinger is Co-Director of the Law Lab at Harvard University's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, a multi-disciplinary project that studies the role of social, neurological, and economic mechanisms in establishing law and facilitating cooperation and entrepreneurial innovation. Jamie Cloud is the Founder and President, The Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education. Brett Rischmann is Professor of Law at Benjamin Cardozo School of Law specializing in Internet and intellectual property law, who as written extensively about the relationships between infrastructural resources, property rights, commons, and spillovers.

Appendix B

Consent Letter

Fielding Graduate University Informed Consent Form

The Commons: A Grounded Theory

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Randal Joy Thompson, a doctoral student in the School of Human and Organization Development at Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, CA. This research is supervised by Dr. Marie P. Farrell, and involves the study of individuals who have been involved in some aspect of the Commons and is part of Randal's dissertation research at Fielding.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you ……………………….. The study involves one audio-recorded interview of approximately 60 minutes, to be arranged at your convenience and to last as long as you wish to talk. You will be asked at the beginning of the interview whether or not you agree to have the conversation audio recorded. If you decline to have your interview audio recorded, you will still be eligible to participate in the research; the researcher will simply take handwritten notes. You may not be driving while participating in the interview. If the researcher thinks this is the case, the interview will end and you will be asked to reschedule. You may decline to reschedule. Should you decline to reschedule, your data will be eliminated from the study and will be destroyed. You may, or may not, be asked to participate in a brief follow-up conversation not to exceed 30 minutes in length. You may decline to participate in any such follow-up conversations. You will be provided an electronic copy of the initial results of the research and will be invited to provide any insight or feedback on those results via email or telephone. Information provided as part of that feedback process will be considered data for this study and will be treated per the conditions outlined in this form. You are not required to provide feedback on the initial results. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. This informed consent form and other identifying information will be kept separate from the data. All materials will be stored electronically on a secure virtual storage site. Any records that would identify you as a participant in this study, such as this informed consent form, will be destroyed three years after the study is completed. You will be contacted for permission if any of your direct quotes will be included in research reports. If you grant permission, you will be asked to provide a pseudonym.

The results of this research will be published Randal Thompson's dissertation, and possibly in subsequent journals or books. You may develop a greater personal awareness of your experience with paradoxical tensions as a result of your participation in this research. The risks to you are considered minimal, and there is little chance that you will experience emotional discomfort during or after your

participation. You may withdraw from this study at any time, either during or after your participation, without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, your data will be eliminated from the study and will be destroyed. No compensation will be provided for participation. You will be provided an electronic copy of the final results of the study. If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please tell Randal before signing this form. You may also contact Dr. Marie Farrell if you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study. Her contact information is provided at the bottom of this form. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact the Fielding Graduate University IRB by email at irb@fielding.edu or by telephone at 805-898- 4033. Please sign this form, indicating you have read, understood, and agree to participate in this research. Return a copy to researcher via the email or postal address provided below, and keep a copy for your files. The Institutional Review Board of Fielding Graduate University retains the right to access the signed informed consent forms and other study documents.

_____ SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

_____NAME OF PARTICIPANT (please print)

_____ DATE

Dr. Marie Farrell, mfarrell@fielding.edu

Randal Joy Thompson, rjoythomspon@yahoo.com

Fielding Graduate University
2112 Santa Barbara Street 2815 12th Street South Santa Barbara, CA 93105