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Research on the Commons, Common-Pool Resources, and Common Property

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Definitions

Commons

The commons is a general term for shared resources in which each stakeholder has an equal interest. Studies on the commons include the information commons with issues about public knowledge, the public domain, open science, and the free exchange of ideas -- all issues at the core of a direct democracy.

Common-pool resources

Common-pool resources (CPRs) are natural or human-made resources where one person's use subtracts from another's use and where it is often necessary, but difficult and costly, to exclude other users outside the group from using the resource.. The majority of the CPR research to date has been in the areas of fisheries, forests, grazing systems, wildlife, water resources, irrigation systems, agriculture, land tenure and use, social organization, theory (social dilemmas, game theory, experimental economics, etc.), and global commons (climate change, air pollution, transboundary disputes, etc.). There is a growing corpus of work on "new" or "nontraditional" commons, which focuses on urban commons (apartment buildings, parking spaces, playgrounds, etc.), the Internet, electro-magnetic spectrum, genetic data, budgets, etc.

Common property

Common property is a formal or informal property regime that allocates a bundle of rights to a group. Such rights may include ownership, management, use, exclusion, access of a shared resource.

C. Hess
October 2006

Agriculture	**Land Tenure and Use**
Fisheries	**New Commons (also called Nontraditional CPRs)**
Forest Resources	**Social Organization**
General and Multiple-use Commons	**Theory & Experimental**
Global Commons	**Urban Commons**
Grazing Areas	**Water Resources**
History	**Wildlife**
Information and Knowledge Commons	

This section describes the broad range of commons research subjects and foci.

- Research on commons usually focuses on some aspect of the relation between the physical resource and human institutions designed in the use and maintenance of that resource.
- Focus areas are diverse and multi-disciplinary, including: adaptive systems, efficiency, environmental policy, equity, experimental economics, free riding, game theory, gender, institutional design principles, new institutional economics, participatory management systems, property rights regimes, resilience, regulation, sustainability, etc. See **Subject Thesaurus** for a fuller list
- Much of the research focuses on a specific country or countries, or geographical regions.
- Resource sectors should fall within the following categories:

Agriculture

Includes: agarian reform; agricultural expansion; agroecology; agroforestry; agrotechnology; alley farming; cash cropping; communal or group farming; cropping systems; desertification; drought and erosion management; dryland management; ejidos; family farming; farm forestry; farm policy; farmers' associations; gardening; history of agricultural management; household food production; indigenous agriculture; participatory rural appraisal (PRA); rapid rural appraisal (RRA); rural development; shifting cultivation; soil conservation; swidden fallows; terracing; etc.

Also, names of individual crops: cocoa, cotton, rice, etc.

(See also Forestry, Land Tenure and Use, and Water Resources Sectors)

Fisheries

Includes: aquaculture; artisanal fisheries; co-management; coral reefs; fisheries' history; ITQs; limited entry; mariculture; marine property rights; quotas; sealing; seine fishing, shellfisheries; stewardship, whaling etc.

Also, types of fish: cod, crab, salmon, etc.

Also, types of fishing vessels and fishing technologies

(See also Water Resources and Global Commons Sectors)

Forest Resources

Includes: afforestation; agroforestry; buffer zones; certification clearcutting; community forestry; deforestation; ejidos; forest management; forest policy; forest products; fuelwood; harvesting, hunters and gatherers; plantations; rainforests; sacred groves; savannahs; silviculture; soil conservation; stewardship, timber; tropical forests; woodlots, etc.

Also: names of trees and forest products: acacia, bamboo, mangrove, palm, etc.

Also: research technology and methods, such as GIS, mapping, remote sensing, etc.

(See also Agriculture, Grazing, Land Tenure and Use, Water Resources, Wildlife Sectors)

General and Multiple-use Commons

Includes: biodiversity; conservation; ecology; ecosystems, environmental management; environmental policy; multiple resource management; multiple-use; natural resources; pollution; resource sharing; rural development; sustainable development, etc.

(See also: Global Commons Sector)

Global Commons

Includes: acid rain, air pollution, air slots, atmosphere, carbon sequestration; climate change, electro-magnetic spectrum, governance and management of arctic regions; global warming, greenhouse effect; international treaties; oceans, outer space; governance, law and management of transboundary resources; transboundary disputes, radio spectrum, etc.

Grazing Areas

Includes: cattle grazing; herding systems; husbandry; livestock management; nomads; overgrazing; pastoralism; range management; rangelands, transhumance, etc. Also: reindeer, caribou,etc.

(See also Agriculture, Land Tenure and Use, Forestry, and Wildlife Sectors)

History

Includes historical publications

ex.: Cook, G. W. [1856] *The Acts for Facilitating the Inclosure of Commons in England and Wales...*

Also includes modern publications about the history of common pool and common property resources

ex.: Norberg, K. [1988] "Dividing up the Commons: Institutional Change in Rural France, 1789-1799." *Politics and Society* 16:265-286.

Information and Knowledge Commons

Includes: anticommons, copyright, indigenous, local, scientific knowledge issues, intellectual property rights, the Internet, libraries, patents, virtual commons, etc.

(See also Nontraditional CPRs and Social Organization Sectors)

Land Tenure and Use

Includes: arid regions; boundaries; communal lands; customary land law; enclosure; land degradation; land economics; landowners; property rights; public lands; smallholder, etc.

(See also Agriculture, Grazing, Forestry)

New Commons (also called Nontraditional CPRs)

Examples: air slots, budgets, cable TV, campus commons, radio spectrum, tourism management, roads, etc.

(See also Information and Knowledge Commons and Urban Commons)

Social Organization

Includes: capacity building; clans; class structure; collectives; community organization and participation; cultural history; ejidos; ethnicity; family structure; gender; governance systems; group behavior; households; indigenous institutions; institutional change; kibbutzim; kinship; panchayats; participatory management; peasants; sherpas; social change; social conflict; social norms; tribal structure, village organization; women, etc.

(See also Information and Knowledge, Theory and General & Multiple-Use Sectors)

Theory & Experimental

Includes: adaptive systems; agent-based computational economics; club goods; collective action; common property regimes and rights; complexity; conflict resolution; cooperation; covenantal theory; decision making; design principles; economics, institutional, and legal history; ecological economics; efficiency; experimental economics; free riding; game theory; IAD framework; institutional analysis; institutional economics; mechanism design; models; new institutionalism; norms; policy, prisoner's dilemma' property rights; public goods and bads; reciprocity; rent seeking; rules; scarcity; self-governance; simulations; social capital; tragedy of the commons; trust, etc.

(Also search above keywords in combination with all other Sectors).

Urban Commons

Includes: apartment complexes and housing collectives; city commons; industrialized areas; parking, playgrounds, sidewalks, waste management, urban greenspace, urban forestry, etc.

(See also New Commons Sector).

Water Resources

Includes: canals; coastal management; coral reefs; dams; dyke management; groundwater, huertas; irrigation systems; marine policy; river management; riparian rights; sea tenure; watersheds; water pollution; water scarcity, etc.

(See also Fisheries, Agriculture, & Forestry Sectors).

Wildlife

Examples: animal conservation and protection; biological diversity; CAMPFIRE (Zimbabwean project); endangered species; hunters and gatherers; indigenous management systems; poaching; etc.

(See also Fisheries Sector for aquatic animals; and Grazing for livestock, cattle and rangeland management).