

**Dagmar Pelger
Anita Kaspar
Jörg Stollmann
(Eds.)**

**SPATIAL COMMONS:
URBAN OPEN SPACES AS
A RESOURCE**

**0) Introduction:
WHY “SPATIAL” COMMONS?**

**1) Thesis:
THE COMMONS AS AN URBAN
TYPE OF COLLECTIVE USE**

**2) Attempt at a Conceptual
Clarification:
THE COMMONS DISCOURSE**

**3) Spatial Principles of Commons:
HISTORICAL COMMON LANDS**

**4) Categories of Open Spaces
for Contemporary and Future
Commons:
SPECULATIVE CARTOGRAPHY
IN BERLIN KREUZBERG**

**5) Conditions for Spatial Commons:
RECOGNIZING AND DESIGNING
THE “THIRD SPACE”**

**Dagmar Pelger
Anita Kaspar
Jörg Stollmann
(Eds.)**

**SPATIAL COMMONS:
URBAN OPEN SPACES AS
A RESOURCE**

Authors:

**Dagmar Pelger
Paul Klever
Steffen Klotz
Lukas Pappert
Jens Schulze**

Universitätsverlag der TU Berlin



0) Introduction:

WHY “SPATIAL” COMMONS?

Engaging with commons—those fundamental natural and cultural resources that serve a community’s wellbeing—also requires coming to terms with spaces. This is because the question of resource availability always extends to the question of the *place* where such resources are available, or are made available for the community—and therefore to the question of a community’s spatial organization.

The term Allmende (“common land” or “commons” in English usage) describes shared ownership stake in a resource. This shared ownership establishes a “third space” between public resource space, which is potentially freely available, and the privatized space used by individuals or corporations. The common goods extracted from or created within this resource space can be both material and immaterial, and therefore this third space can be either physical or virtual. As a collectively administered partition of a resource, however, this third space is always given a spatial organization and corresponds with the sociopolitical organization of the community.

The meaning and use of commons or *Allmende* have changed over time, taking many different forms. In the feudal system of medieval Northern Europe, *Allmende* (from the Middle High German *al[ge]meind* describing, for example, shared woodland) denoted unparceled land that was cultivated in common by the peasantry, usually with the sanction of the lawful owner, the feudal lord. In modern Europe, these once collectively administrated woodlands, pastures, or Alpine meadows were converted into private or public property. For this reason, we rarely encounter common land as a rural form of collective cultivation today. In the late 1960s, the commons was ultimately rediscovered as a consequence of scarce resources and the discussion about sustainability kicked off in late-capitalist Western societies. But in this iteration, the commons primarily described universal resources such as water and air.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the increasing prominence of digitalization and neoliberalization processes have contributed to another shift in the meaning ascribed to commons. On one hand, due to the spread of information technology, we have seen a collectivization of knowledge and authorship take place within the virtual space of the internet. Shared production of and participation in knowledge has become the motor for a new debate about the commons, leading to the concept of the knowledge commons (*Wissens-Allmende* in German). Working in the opposite direction, the intangible cultural common goods produced by this technology—namely the free availability of information—is being curtailed step by step through barriers to entry, commercialization, or criminalization. These limitations to access bring about a shortage or constraint upon immaterial resources, and thus increasingly enclose the knowledge commons.

On the other hand, at a concrete spatial level around the globe, the increasing retreat of governmental regulation and provision, and a growing competitiveness across various areas of life, have led to enlarged resource scarcity at all levels of scale, in both the environmental and social realms. As in the case of the knowledge commons, this circumstance—in particular, the growing privatization of public goods—has prompted calls for more participation, at all levels of society, in economic production processes as well as in political and planning decisions. It has also prompted calls to preserve and to create new open spaces, both rural and urban, that function as commons accessible to everyone. Movements like “Occupy,” “Direct Democracy,” or the “right to the city”—similar to phenomena like “open source” or “wiki”—amount to collective practices of resistance and appropriation that can also be related to concrete urban space, rural space, or architectural space.

In this field of tension—between communities calling for increased participation in processes of planning and spatial production on one side, and ongoing privatization and fiscalization of urban habitats on the other side—it becomes ever more urgent that we focus on developing and describing concrete spatial models capable of being experienced and recognized for the organization of community life.

What can the spatial commons contribute to this?

1) Thesis:

THE COMMONS AS AN URBAN TYPE OF COLLECTIVE USE

The spatial dimension of the commons can be investigated at different levels of scale. Investigations at the geographical scale treat commons as resource spaces—such as forests, pastures, mountains, lakes, and oceans—and concentrate on their administration and cultivation. Investigating commons at the scale of urban space, on the other hand, can shed light on the commons as an urban type of collective use. Today, self-organized groups of urban citizens have taken the place of the peasantry, establishing a new relationship between both natural and cultural resource spaces and the local commons as a site where these resources see collective use.

It is especially in urban open spaces, that resource reduction and scarcity are becoming directly palpable today. Those areas designated as “public space” and which thus belong to everyone—parks, squares, streets, waterfronts, but also undeveloped areas and urban wasteland—are increasingly exposed to neglect or commercialization. It is these open spaces within cities that can be read as today’s equivalent to the traditional medieval common lands: administrated and maintained by municipal, state, or even increasingly private hands, these spaces form a reservoir of urban life, an urban natural environment, that should enable everyone to participate in the life of the city. Understood as an extension of the natural resource space that surrounds the city, urban open spaces generate a connection between the city and nature. This interpretation of urban open spaces as a part of the greater resource space makes it possible to translate the traditional relationship between natural space, the commons, and the village over to the contemporary city.

To date, urban studies haven't devoted much research to this spatial aspect that underlies the connection between large-scale resource space and settlement space, and how it relates to the organizational, action-bound, often small-scale dimensions of the commons. Moreover, in the commons discourse, action as a factor essential to space formation often plays a subordinated role. These two aspects—the urban commons as a spatial system and the degree that spatial production is conditioned by action—therefore deserve more detailed investigation.

It seems that the social and political transformations that were described in the introduction, which have made the commons newly relevant, will have an even exacerbated impact on the urban challenges we can expect to face in the future. Increasing cultural and social segregation, as well as ever less predictable population growth and/or decline in European cities, are leading to a state of bewilderment about what purposes can or should be served by urban open spaces. These circumstances, in which planners can no longer presume the existence of a supposedly homogenous general public, but must instead negotiate with diverse groups of users, are fueling calls for alternative models of producing urban space. Such models would help reactivate, and make legible, collectively used urban space as a "mediator" (Latour, 2007) for a diversifying society.

Considering its community-building qualities, an updated form of the commons could—here we put forward our thesis—be an urban type of collective use that represents a sociopolitical and spatial alternative to existing forms of urban space production.

To examine this thesis step by step, one must begin by gathering the different facets of the varying definitions of commons and considering them in terms of their respective relationship to spatial production. Therefore, chapter two will take an overview of the commons discourse in an attempt to reach a better understanding of the principle of the commons, to reveal certain spatial criteria, and to counteract appropriations of the concept by tracing it back to its original principles. This will be followed by an analysis of historical examples in chapter three, which will serve to further develop the question of the typological patterns that underlie the commons principle. On this basis, we will extrapolate the spatial principles of the types of commons identified, which can then be used to help read today's urban open spaces in a new light, from the perspective of collective use and production.

Ultimately, it's only by working on location that we can assess the actual potential of the commons principle for the future development of urban open spaces. By undertaking a speculative cartography of concrete locations in Berlin in chapter four, not only do we derive different spatial categories of potential commons, but also point toward possible design approaches for those spatial reserves that have yet to be discovered, the future urban commons.

With this short investigation we hope to lay out a trail for understanding the commons principle as a tool that can be used for a more cautious and responsible handling of the city's spatial resources—taking into account everyone who contributes to the city's creation and participates in its experience.





2) Attempt at a Conceptual Clarification:

THE COMMONS DISCOURSE

Revisiting the commons discourse of the past decades should help clarify what approaches to defining commons predominate in the different disciplines. In history, philosophy, economics, political science, and gender studies, just as well as geography, city planning, and architecture, questions about commons' community-based production process are on the agenda all over. Commons are being described, on the basis of their historical development, as highly complex and contradictory systems of organization that never actually disappear, but must always be fought over afresh.

Nearly every study and approach to commons takes their historical origin in medieval Europe's feudal system as the primary point of reference. The concentration of capital that took place in the early fifteenth century (what Marx later described as primitive accumulation) also took the form of enclosing the commons. This loss of a proprietary stake in the emerging market economy had serious consequences for the collective goods that had formerly been overseen by the peasantry. The traditional commons principle largely disappeared in Europe, with a few exceptions such as Great Britain's state-registered common lands. On other continents, by contrast, the commons tradition has persisted for a considerably longer time, as demonstrated by the philosopher Silvia Federici using the example of Nigeria, in the introduction to her study on the commons (Federici 2004).

Some key features of this original form of the commons are: an open-access resource space and a self-organized commoner community that acquires from a portion of this space the raw materials necessary for survival. Often what emerges from this is a clearly delineated but unparceled community space that is designated as a commons. The final, indispensable component to the definition of a commons is the shared use of the yield generated by cultivating this collective space. However, the owner doesn't necessarily need to have given permission to use the resource.

Therefore, for a resource to be a common good, by definition it must permit open access for all—yet some form of boundary is often indispensable if a commons is to be cultivated collectively, as the political scientist Elinor Ostrom demonstrated in her investigation of the commons principle using the example of fishermen (Ostrom 1990). Overfishing can only be avoided by limiting use rights for everybody. With this she confirms the well-known, and often misinterpreted, thesis of the “tragedy of the (unregulated, remark of author) commons,” as formulated by Garrett Hardin (Hardin 1968). Ostrom expanded the definition of the commons by including a set of elemental principles. These principles call for, among other things, resources to be handled more responsibly and thus by necessity with more regulation—by the commoners themselves. But, within her principles of governance, the problem of scale remains unsolved: how can large resource spaces be administrated just as responsibly by commoners as smaller-sized, traditional common lands where use and access can be monitored easily.

At this point, it already becomes clear what kinds of problems are posed by a commons definition that makes no conceptual distinction between resource space, a concretely cultivated territorial portion of that space, and the yield that is generated from it—but instead characterizes all of these equally as “commons.” This leads to inconsistency, not only regarding one’s viewpoint toward the commons as a product or space, but also regarding the scale—natural resource space or territorial portion of that space—and the accompanying questions of demarcation, monitoring, and access.

The historian Peter Linebaugh builds on Marx’s analysis of primitive accumulation and compares the medieval waves of enclosure with the waves of privatization in neoliberal economic systems by identifying an ongoing, continuous process of accumulation (Linebaugh 2008). From the fact that new resources are continually being privatized, he reaches the conclusion that there is a correlated process of new commons continually being produced, which are threatened in turn by further privatization. He describes this dynamic as the action-bound nature of commons, using the phrase “no commons without commoning,” thus expanding the traditional concept of commons by including the act of commoning—in other words, the coordinated social process that first creates the commons and then preserves it. Other approaches to the commons have adopted this important aspect and expanded on it.

Alongside the definition of commoning as a major element of commons, philosopher and feminist Silvia Federici adds the notion of reproductive work in the medieval commons system to the definition. Reproductive work—concretely, the bearing and raising of subsequent generations, as well as other activities ascribed to the female sphere of activity—created important yields for the commoner community. Yet these activities were excluded from the wage labor introduced with the advent of capitalism. At the same time, the yields of reproductive work—above all, offspring capable of supplying labor—were integrated into the production cycle and thus, similarly, expropriated from the community (Federici 2004).

Making reference to this, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri adopted Foucault’s concept of biopolitics to argue for a newly emerging biopolitical power. As work is increasingly rendered “immaterial” by information technology, services like “providing information” or “producing contacts and interactions” receive ever higher wages. They interpret this as a “reintegration” of reproductive work, which formerly received no compensation, into the capitalization process (Schatz 2014). A new economic sector is emerging based on the reproduction of immaterial information goods, carried out in working environments that are virtual, unconfined, and therefore difficult to control. In a very optimistic interpretation, Hardt and Negri see this circumstance as an ‘opportunity space’ for a form of commoning that opposes this commercialization, and might extricate collectively created immaterial products from the process of commodification. In making this argument, they reshape Federici’s component of the commons definition—reproductive work—into a positive perspective toward the future.

These components to the commons definition—commoning, reproductive work, and immaterial products—have far-reaching significance for the question of the spatial commons, that is, the specific spatiality of commons. They serve to expand the traditional definition of commons from a purely territorial concept for securing material subsistence by incorporating a fundamental attachment to action and, with it, a temporal dimension.

This expanded definition, whether applied to historical examples or present-day and future phenomena, describes the commons as a socio-spatial principle for securing one's subsistence—immaterial subsistence included. And the expansion also represents a significant shift in perspective when analyzing urban spaces that are used in a commons-like fashion. The architect Stavros Stavrides has provided an impressive demonstration of this using the example of a parking garage in Athens. The garage was occupied and converted into Navarinou Park through a self-organized process (Stavrides 2009). Here, urban space was appropriated for a certain length of time and transformed into an urban commons. According to Stavrides, this aspect of the commons, its temporality, goes hand in hand with a conception of a fragmented urban spatial network that is difficult to comprehend formally or morphologically, and must primarily be read in regard to its socio-spatial qualities.

The nature of this description, characterized by its emphasis on process, is echoed by David Harvey's call for the "creation of the urban commons," where commons are understood as "an unstable and malleable social relation between a particular self-defined group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/or physical environment" (Harvey 2012). According to Harvey, the urban commons can only emerge through a "double-pronged political attack," where a distinction is made between the large-scale resource space, which requires state protection and preservation as universal common good, and small-scale portions of this space or subspaces that are constantly being re-appropriated by self-empowered commoners.

A collection of essays published in 2014 by the philosopher Lieven De Cauter shall close the circle, incisively consolidating a number of the "components of a definition" mentioned above and addressing questions about the spatial dimensions of the commons. He too draws a distinction between the commons' two fundamental levels of scale and relates these to issues of commoners and ownership. Universal commons he characterizes as large-scale, shared natural and cultural resources, such as air and language. These belong to everybody and nobody, exist without a community, and must be protected and secured by international or national law. Particular commons he characterizes as those subspaces that first emerge through a practice of commoning by a community—that is, classic common lands and their expanded form—and thus require an ongoing process of reproduction. Spatial commons he understands as sites with the potential to be temporarily appropriated by a commoner community. Since the classic common land, defined as a territory, no longer really exists as a legal form, these sites always retain an unstable status. Among spatial commons, he differentiates between urban commons, or location-bound "objects" in the form of open spaces, city squares, squats, or urban voids, and the common as process, that is, "the decision making on how to act on this object" (De Cauter 2014). Urban commons, in their free accessibility, bear the potential for practices of commoning founded in a community-coordinated process.

As commons are neither public nor private, but instead belong to everybody and nobody at the same time, De Cauter argues they form a “third category” that is neither political nor economic: if the location of the community can be assigned to neither the *polis* as a space of public negotiation, nor to the *oikos* as a private economic space, then the commons by definition eludes state appropriation and economic exploitation (De Cauter). According to David Harvey and Lieven de Cauter, the potential of the commons is thereby both non-formalized—in other words, not administered by the state, but by the community—and non-commercial—that is, productive, but not capitalizing.

In summary, the principle of the commons is built on an archetype grounded in territory. This original definition, however, by implying social activity and describing a certain system of organization, involves a series of contradictions and hazy formulations. Expanding the definition to include the immaterial and reproductive realm, and drawing logical conclusions about how its temporality and instability affect space, serves to rewrite the commons as a sensible socio-spatial construct, which is only preserved through an ongoing process of negotiation. From this somewhat diffuse point, jumping into a spatial analysis of historical examples will begin to provide more clear insights about spatial and typological interrelations.

REGULATION:

THE TRAGEDY OF THE “UNREGULATED” COMMONS

According to Hardin, when a resource is made available without limitations, everyone will attempt to maximize their individual gain. This will work, Hardin argues, as long as the resource is not depleted. The moment, however, that the number of commoners rises above a certain extent, the tragedy of the commons takes hold: everyone attempts, as before, to maximize their individual gain. But the resource is no longer sufficient for everybody. The costs produced by overexploitation are borne by society as a whole. But for the individual, Hardin argues, the momentary gains produced by overexploitation are fundamentally higher than the costs, which only become noticeable in the long term. Thus ultimately each individual contributes to both their own and society's ruin.

“Freedom in the commons brings ruin to all.”

Garrett Hardin (microbiologist, ecologist): “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science* 162 (1968): 1243–1248.

12

PROTECTION OF RESOURCES:

PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING A COMMONS

“1) Clearly defined boundaries: Individuals or households who have rights to withdraw resource units from the CPR (Common Pool Resource) must be clearly defined as must be the boundaries of the CPR itself.

2) Congruence between appropriation and provision rules and local conditions: Appropriation rules restricting time, place, technology, and/or quantity of resource units are related to local conditions and to provision rules requiring labor, material, and/or money.

3) Collective-choice arrangements: Most individuals affected by the operational rules can participate in modifying the operational rules.

4) Monitoring: Monitors, who actively audit CPR conditions and appropriator behavior, are accountable to the appropriators or are the appropriators.

5) Graduated sanctions: Appropriators who violate operational rules are likely to be assessed graduated sanctions (depending on the seriousness and context of the offense) by other appropriators, by officials accountable to the appropriators or between appropriators and officials.

6) Conflict-resolution mechanisms: Appropriators and their officials have rapid access to low-cost local arenas to resolve conflicts among appropriators or between appropriators and officials.

7) Recognition of rights: External governmental authorities allow local commoners a minimal degree of rights to devise and implement their own rules.

8) Nested institutions: Management of shared property is only successful at the small scale. Larger structures should be split into smaller units.” (p. 90)

Main thesis: A successful commons is defined, among other things, by the ability to generate a maximum yield for the totality of commoners, a balanced distribution of resource units to appropriators, and to responsibly handle the particular resource system.

Elinor Ostrom (political scientist): *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

REPRODUCTION:

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

Context 1: (Medieval Europe, up to around the fifteenth century)
Meadows, woods, lakes, wild pastures, and hills used by serfs with the sanction of the feudal lord.

Context 2: (Medieval Europe, end of the fifteenth century)
Increasing enclosures by feudal lords affect not only collectively managed land, but social relations as well. The peasantry's struggle against feudal power is a “struggle for the commons.”

“So important were the ‘commons’ in the political economy and struggles of the medieval rural population that their memory still excites our imagination, projecting the vision of a world where goods can be shared and solidarity, rather than desire for self-aggrandizement, can be the substance of social relations.” (p. 24)

Context 3: (Europe after the fifteenth century)

“Capitalism was the counter-revolution that destroyed the possibilities that had emerged from the anti-feudal struggle.” (p. 21)

Some of the “possibilities” in this context were continuing to harvest resources from the commons, and the minimal economic reliance that resulted from this.

Context 4: (Twentieth-century global developments using the example of Nigeria, 1984)

The Structural Adjustment Program imposed by the World Bank to integrate Nigeria into the global market amounted to a new round of primitive accumulation: land privatization by enclosing communal property and disciplinary measures to regulate procreation rates can be traced back to the struggle for commons and the capitalist disciplining of women in medieval Europe.

Main thesis: In the transition from feudalism to capitalism, reproductive female work is subordinated to productive male work and excluded from wage compensation, while at the same time the product of reproductive labor, the reproduced workforce, is integrated into the production cycle.

Silvia Federici (philosopher): *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004).

“COMMONING”:

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

1) Medieval era: Reproduction (self-preservation) through regulated access to spaces and resources on royal land, tolerated as a “de facto right.”

2) Early modern period (example of England in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries): Enclosure of common lands as a process of separating people from the means of production. Training of the modern proletariat (“primitive accumulation”).

3) Autonomia movement, 1960s: First revival of the commons debate during the independence movement in Italy.

4) Globalization since the 1980s: Neoliberalism as increasing enclosure in the form of privatization; squats, alternative markets, and network trading as a reaction.

“It was the essence of the open field system of agriculture – at once its strength and its weakness – that its maintenance reposed upon a common custom and tradition (...).” (p. 50, quoting R. H. Tawney)

“The fellowship of mutual aid, the partnership of service and protection, which characterized the village community Tawney calls ‘a little commonwealth.’” (p. 51)

“There are no commons without commoning.”

Massimo De Angelis, citing Peter Linebaugh, *An Architecture* 23, “On the Commons” (2010): 7.

Peter Linebaugh (historian): *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

IMMATERIAL PRODUCTS:

A CONCEPTUAL CHANGE IN MEANING

Commons as a traditional concept: The natural world outside of society (soil, air, etc.).

Commons as a biopolitical concept: All ancillary realms of life and society, for example the “commonalities of language, customs and mores, gestures, emotions, codes, and so on.”

The commons are neither private nor public.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE COMMONS

“This ‘becoming female,’ or ‘feminization of work’ (Hardt, Negri 2010; 147), it is argued, leads to a blurring of the boundaries between labor and life, between production and reproduction, to labor ‘becoming biopolitical.’ Seen optimistically, this labor is only ‘externally’ governed by the logic of capital: as ‘affective labor,’ ‘immaterial labor’ it produces ‘social networks, forms of society, forms of biopower,’ and is ‘not compelled or organized from the outside, as was the case for earlier forms of work.’”

Holger Schatz writing about Commonwealth, in *Infobrief* 14, “Die Debatte um Commons und Gemeingüter” (Zürich: Denznetz, 2011).

“The change in the capitalist production from material to immaterial labor provides the opportunity to think about commons that are produced in the system but can be extracted and potentially turned against the system. We can take the notion of immaterial labor as an example of a possible future beyond capitalism, where the conditions of labor produce opportunities for understanding what it means to work in common but also to produce commons.”

Stavros Stavrides writing about *Commonwealth*, in *An Architektur* 23 (2010): 17.

Michael Hardt (literary theorist) and Antonio Negri (political scientist): *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009).

EMPHASIS ON PROCESS:

COMPONENTS TO THE DEFINITION OF COMMONS

Pooled resources: Commons comprise some kind of shared resource pool—a non-commodified means of satisfying needs.

Community: Commons are created by communities and controlled by their own rules. This can be trans-local; commons are not necessarily bound by location.

Verb, “To common”: Commons emerge and reproduce themselves first through a social process.

CONTEXTS AND CONDITIONS

Capital and commoning: “Capital is promoting the commons in its own way . . . capital will need the commons and capital will need enclosures, and the commoners at these two ends of capital will be reshuffled in new planetary hierarchies and divisions.”

Public and commoning: “The community refers to an entity . . . whereas the idea of the public puts an emphasis on the relation between different communities. . . . Relating commons to groups of ‘similar’ people bears the danger of eventually creating closed communities. . . . Conceptualizing commons on the basis of the public . . . [focuses] on the very differences between people that can possibly meet on a purposefully instituted common ground.”

State and commoning: “The state is a guarantor of property and land rights, which . . . establish forms of control . . . Claims of property rights concern specific places that belong to certain people or establishments, which might also be international corporations. The state . . . is in fact the most specific arrangement of powers against which we can struggle.”

Reproduction and commoning: “We have learned from feminists . . . that for every visible work of production there is an invisible work of reproduction. The people who want to keep the [Navarinou] park will have to work hard for its reproduction. . . . Thinking about the work of reproduction is actually one of the most fundamental aspects of commoning.”

Spatiality and commoning: “Starting to think about space as related to the commons means to conceptualize it as a form of relations rather than as an entity, as a condition of comparisons instead of an established arrangement of positions . . . as a potential network of passages linking one open place to another.”

Public interview from 2009 with Massimo De Angelis (economist) and Stavros Stavrides (architect): “Beyond Markets or States: Commoning as Collective Practice,” *An Architektur* 23 (2010).

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:

PROBLEMATIC OF THE COMMONS

Private goods or goods that are publicly available and managed must be appropriated by citizens to become common goods (Syntagma Square, Tahrir Square, Placa de Catalunya). Neoliberal policy, by diminishing public goods, also diminishes the accessibility of common goods.

Without regulation, individualized capital accumulation destroys the two fundamental societal resources, workers and land.

Urban common goods feature all the political contradictions of common goods in a highly concentrated form—above all the problem of scale.

Ostrom’s approach of nested forms of organization can only be effective if decentralization and autonomy are grounded by overriding rules—and it is unclear how to achieve this. Since the 1980s, neoliberal policy has deflected the costs for the social reproduction of the workforce and the costs of environmental destruction onto our global common goods, creative negative common goods in the process.

Since the crisis of 2007, neoliberal policy has been facilitating the private appropriation of common goods, amounting to a comprehensive attack on environmental commons and the common goods of social reproduction.

“Unfortunately the idea of the commons (like the right to the city) is just as easily appropriated by existing political power as is the value to be extracted from an actual urban common by real estate interests.” (p. 87)

A “double-pronged political attack” is necessary to extend and enhance the quality of common goods: the state must be forced to supply more public goods, and populations must organize to take proprietorship over these goods.

“The common is . . . to be construed, therefore, as . . . an unstable and malleable social relation between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/or physical environment.” (p. 73)

David Harvey (human geographer, social theorist): *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012).

UNIVERSAL/PARTICULAR:

THESES ON THE COMMONS

Lieven De Cauter outlines 15 theses on the contemporary relevance of commons:

1. The Common is under threat. Both Nature and Culture are under severe pressure. As the common is under threat, we become aware of the common.
2. We have to reinvent the common. The dichotomy between private and public has obscured it. . . .
3. The common is what is neither public nor private. The common is what belongs to everybody and to nobody (like air and language).
4. The common space is not necessarily a political space. . . .
5. The universal commons are generic, ‘commons without community’ (nature and culture as such); the particular commons are practices of commoning by a specific community. . . .
6. Modernity opens up with the enclosure of the (spatial) commons. Capitalism begins with the original appropriation: the stealing of the common and the criminalisation of the expropriated. . . .
10. Scale is one of the big problems of the commons: direct democracy, self-organisation, bottom-up practices etc, are ill equipped for the larger scales. In the age of globalisation problems play at a planetary scale. . . .
12. The spatial common is temporary, more a moment than a space ‘a moment of space.’ More a use, than a property. . . .
15. The urban commons as object (open space, urban void, squat, terrain vague) is something else than the common as process (the decision making on how to act on this object). The unity of form and content is the beauty of many actions under the sign of the commons.”

Lieven De Cauter (philosopher, art historian): “Common Places. Theses on the commons,” available online at: <http://www.depressioner.nl/lieven-de-cauter-i>, 2014

3) Spatial Principles of Commons: HISTORICAL COMMON LANDS

In what follows, we will investigate four historical types of commons—alp pastures, common pastures, fallow pastures, and village greens (*Alm*, *Hutweide*, *Vöde*, and *Anger* in German)—by using key criteria from the discourse as they relate to the following considerations: location within the resource space, rules of ownership, historical form of cultivation, and contemporary use. From this analysis, we can derive a series of spatial principles that are characteristic of the relationship between natural resource space, the common land, and parceled settlement area. These insights will help sharpen our focus as we proceed into the following section, a cartography of potential spatial commons within the urban fabric of Berlin.

Comparing historical types of commons—whether seen as community-organized economic forms or concrete spatial entities—demonstrates the relationship between the social practice of commoners and the formation of space that results from it. The individual types distinguish themselves not only in their spatial relationships to settlement areas, but also in their use frequency and the degree to which commoners identify with the common area.

Having emerged in the chronological order of alp pasture, common pasture, fallow pasture, and village green, the examples investigated here can be interpreted as stages in a line of development. In this developmental path, spatial positioning with regard to the settlement area exerts a strong influence on the use of the commons, while the interaction between the resource space, the group of users, and the form of cultivation becomes increasingly dense and complex. Seen in this light, this developmental sequence can be characterized as a kind of urbanization of common lands.

While the location of the alp pasture (*Alm*), in the mountains far away from the village, necessitates the construction of lodging for its seasonal operation, the common pasture's (*Hutweide*) location on leftover agricultural spaces, not far from the village, enables a use frequency for people and animals on a daily or weekly basis. And although the fallow pasture (*Vöde*)—a locally created form from the late Middle Ages amounting to a “moving” commons—is used similar to a common pasture, the fact that it moves to different fallow fields each year means that the village community has less identification with the actual common land. Finally, the village green (*Anger*), the most urban form of common land with its central location in the village, results in its own type of settlement—what was called the *Angerdorf* (“village-green town”), a widespread model across central and eastern Europe up and into the nineteenth century.

Even today, the spatial situation determines how the types of common land being examined are used. The mountainous location of the alp pasture, for example, defines the form of seasonal cultivation still seen today. Its contemporary social significance, where it's considered as a seasonal site of retreat away from the cities, also derives from the cycle of grazing, milk production, and cheese manufacture designed to ensure a steady food supply throughout the winter. As a cultural commons, this space and its operation now function to preserve and reproduce a cultural landscape that is charged with ecological significance and importance to the tourism economy. One could interpret the alp pasture's social significance—seen as a space for retreat and remembrance—as an element that enhances to make it legible as a commons-like phenomenon today.

The somewhat rarer example of a common pasture (*Hutweide*) differs in this respect. Because the common pasture allows greater ease of access, both then and today, it can be used according to a more everyday rhythm, linking it more closely to settlement space. Its peripheral location adjacent to fields, streams, or the edges of forests fosters a very specific form of use. The contemporary use of the Hornbosteler Hutweide in Lower Saxony, for example, which today is cultivated collectively as a private business, ties back to its traditional use through animal husbandry and small-scale farming. This contributes to a culture of remembrance, the dissemination of knowledge, the conservation of landscape, and the retention of cultural heritage.

In the example of the fallow pasture (*Vöde*), the traces of use have disappeared because of the administrative complexity. The former *Vöde* areas, which were temporarily held in common by landless peasants, have gradually transformed from fields with changing crop-use areas to freely accessible municipal property, like the Bochum City Park, and have thus become public space.

The case of the village green (*Anger*), of which many examples are preserved, represents a fully developed, urban type of open space that resulted from the broadening of the main road connecting the village with its surroundings. Because village greens are public open spaces and form the center of the settlement, held in municipal care and maintenance, no collective practices are necessary to maintain them in the present day. Nevertheless, the contemporary form of the village green raises the question of how we handle our resources, not the least because of its spatial qualities: the central location, spatial compactness, pervious surface, and free accessibility make it a comprehensible example of a ‘possibility space’ where the different interests of local residents can be negotiated jointly.

Today, hardly any of the open spaces that originally served as common land are maintained as commons in the traditional sense. Instead, investigating how they're used today affirms the thesis formulated at the beginning: the traditional spaces of commons have been dispersed into both the public sphere (*Vöde*, *Anger*) and the private sphere (*Alm*, *Hutweide*). However, deeper research into the contemporary use of former common lands can help identify contemporary traces and future potential for commoning as a community-based practice for the production of urban space.

ALP PASTURE (ALM, ALPE, ALB)

RESOURCE
UNIVERSAL COMMONS,
“MOUNTAINS”

Alp pastures (*Alm*, plural *Almen*) emerged in mountainous regions in three different foundational periods, at a steadily lower altitude and thus diminishing distance from settlement areas: (1) from 3000 B.C.–800 A.D., emergence of “*Uralmen*” on high plateaus or mountain pass crossings above 1500 meters; (2) from 800–1500 A.D., alp meadows established at heights of around 1000–1400 meters; (3) from 1500–1700 A.D., emergence of alp meadows in alpine forest clearings at heights of around 600 meters.



OWNERSHIP RULES AND COMMONERS
INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY IN
COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP

The first organizational form of alp meadows were collective *Markgenossenschaften* (historical cooperatives of villages or farmsteads with shared law and markets). In the second and third foundational periods, however, most alp pastures were established as settlements led by landlords. Thus four organizational forms developed in tandem: community meadows with property rights and use rights (e.g., used by an entire village or multiple individuals); meadows owned by cooperatives; private meadows; and tenancy meadows owned by the state or lords, with use rights limited to a specific user group.

TRADITIONAL CULTIVATION
> COMMONING
MULTIFUNCTIONAL
ENCLAVES

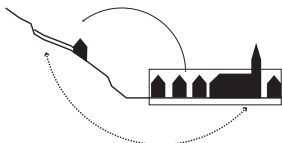
As mountainous regions for pasturing livestock during the summer, most alp meadows are not cadastral areas with consistent land use, but instead entire landscapes that are cultivated seasonally and sometimes also temporarily occupied. Depending on the extent of development, the alp meadow infrastructure (other than the pasture land) consists of buildings and stables, livestock shelters, fences, paths, freight elevators, troughs, as well as facilities for water and energy supply.

CONTEMPORARY USE
> TRACES OF COMMONING
TOURIST & CULTURAL
SIGNIFICANCE AS A PLACE
OF RETREAT

In addition to its original economic function, tourists began using the alp meadow in the twenty-first century. As a result, the meadows shifted from focusing exclusively on production to becoming cultural spaces with a holistic social relevance. Today, their use and cultivation is no longer driven purely from economic considerations, but instead takes into account natural, environmental, cultural, and social perspectives. Tourism adds another form of use to the picture: the task of retaining and reproducing the alp meadow as a landscape type. This brings a high potential for conflict with existing uses; the meadow’s location as an enclave, withdrawn from societal control, has turned into a collective symbol that is open to social projections. This discourse has gone beyond the alp meadow and shifted to urban space—and the products of this discourse find spatial expression in alp meadows.

SPATIAL PRINCIPLE
“SEASONAL RELOCATION”

The most significant spatial feature of the alp meadow is its elevation between 600 to 2400 meters. The alp-meadow economy is a three-stage process that is also reflected spatially. The first level in the valley contains the domestic farms, where one stays through the winter, as well as the lower meadows belonging to it. The middle meadows, at around 1000 meters, are used in the early and late summer, while the high meadows from 1600 to 2000 meters are occupied during the peak of summer. If you see the alp meadow as a cultural space that has a holistic social relevance, as a collective space it puts up no barriers to visiting and passing through.



Pasture lands used collectively on a seasonal basis, that serve as subspaces within the universal resource “mountains,” far away from populated areas.

COMMON PASTURES (HUTWEIDE)

RESOURCE
UNIVERSAL COMMONS,
“MEADOWS AND PASTURES”

As regulated livestock farming spread across medieval Europe, common pastures (*Hutweide*) emerged as grazing land for sheep, horses, cows, or goats. To create common pastures, existing overgrown forest was often pruned back slowly over time.

OWNERSHIP RULES AND COMMONERS
TOLERATION AND
APPROPRIATION

The earliest forms of common pastures, like other commons, were land held as private property by feudal lords, who tolerated their use as commons.

TRADITIONAL CULTIVATION
> COMMONING
MONOFUNCTIONAL
SUBSISTENCE SUPPORT

As designated pasture areas cultivated by the village community, common pastures served a monofunctional agricultural purpose of helping the peasants involved meet their subsistence needs.



CONTEMPORARY USE
> TRACES OF COMMONING
TOURIST & CULTURAL
REVIVAL

The Hornbosteler Hutweide in Lower Saxony, which was revitalized in 2009, is partly grazed throughout the year by wild horses and Heck cattle in an effort to protect nature and preserve the cultural landscape. Other aspects of its contemporary use include natural-experience tourism, local recreation, and hunting. The *Hutweide* operations, held in community hands on land leased from the state, specialize in conveying information to visitors. The habitat for uncommon animals and plant species is maintained in its original form through targeted livestock husbandry. As a nature preserve, it gives insights into the wildlife and ecosystem that would have existed at the location some centuries prior.

SPATIAL PRINCIPLE
“VILLAGE EXPANSION”

The term *Hutweide*, or common pasture, is not encountered frequently today, but lives on as a way to characterize a specific form of land use—a pasture outside a village—and in numerous field names across Germany. Looked over by a shepherd or individual villagers, livestock on the common pasture is tended on a daily basis. This daily rhythm serves to strengthen the spatial connection between the village and the common pasture outside.



Pasture lands used collectively, on a daily basis, located on leftover areas outside of the settlement space.

FALLOW PASTURES (VÖDE)

RESOURCE TEMPORARY COMMONS, “FALLOW LAND”

Vöden were lands with alternating agricultural use. For some years in a row, they were farmed using compulsory crop rotation, and then left fallow for the same amount of time (a process known as the open-field system). While the fields were fallow, landless peasants ran their livestock on them and used them as pastureland, also called *Hude*. Therefore, owning at least two *Vöde* fields was a prerequisite for maintaining a continuous crop cultivation. Another characteristic feature of *Vöden* was that they were shared by multiple peasant communities.



OWNERSHIP RULES AND COMMONERS PRIVATIZATION AND COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP

When the *Vöde*'s form of cultivation switched over to pasturing, so too did the ownership and use rights within it. Feudal lords controlled the use rights. In crop years, access was limited to the small group of farm owners. When used as a *Hude* (pasture), in contrast, any citizen who owned livestock could have their animals graze the pasture. Owners, who couldn't use the land while it was being grazed, received financial compensation—during *Hude* times, they only paid half their property taxes.

TRADITIONAL CULTIVATION > COMMONING

MONOFUNCTIONAL SUBSISTENCE SUPPORT

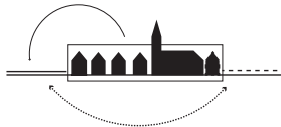
For the populous class of poor livestock owners, the pasturelands of the *Vöde* were essential for their daily subsistence.

CONTEMPORARY USE > TRACES OF COMMONING “REGULATED INTERIM USE”

The *Vöde* remained intact as an institution until the mid-nineteenth century. In the aftermath of industrialization, however, ever fewer livestock were run on pastures. On the *Vöde* in the Bochum area, pasture operations were shut down in 1870. The majority of the land fell into the hands of the city, which created Bochum City Park, a cemetery, and a central prison in its place—in other words, the city gave the land over to public use. One can read the present-day principle of “interim use” as a contemporary way of using resources on barren sites in a manner similar to the *Vöde*. Such forms of use are quite varied, ranging from tolerated squares to trailer villages, all the way to community gardens or informal business collectives.

SPATIAL PRINCIPLE “THE MOVING COMMONS”

Considering that the location of this commons changed annually to a new site in the landscape surrounding the village, we can assume that *Vöde* had a loose spatial connection to the corresponding villages. For this reason, it's primarily the group of peasants, as a community of users, who generate the continuously evolving relationship between the village and the collective pasture outside.



Pasture lands used collectively, on a daily basis, at different locations in between populated areas that change on a seasonal basis.

VILLAGE GREEN (ANGER)

RESOURCE PARTICULAR COMMONS, “VILLAGE CENTER”

The typology of the village green (*Anger*) stretches back to the Germanic tribes, understood as a square located in front of or near a settlement, used primarily for cultural purposes. While the increasing density of settlements pushed the village green toward the center of villages, during the medieval era it was consciously established in the village midpoint, where it shifted to being used as a central space for (agri-)culture within the village limits.

OWNERSHIP RULES AND COMMONERS LIMITED USE RIGHTS

In medieval Europe, all settlers had basic rights to use the commons—which included the village green, the woods, bodies of water, and loam pits—even if these rights were sometimes restricted. This economic dependence on the commons among commoners created a simultaneous relationship of dependence upon each other, which made it essential that commons were protected on a collective basis. The village green, as a central and spatially defined unit, was therefore subjected to an unusual degree of social control, which ensured its ongoing preservation as a limited resource.



TRADITIONAL CULTIVATION > COMMONING

MULTIFUNCTIONAL CULTURAL PRACTICE

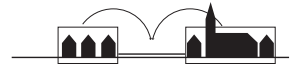
Among Germanic tribes, the *Anger*, located on the village outskirts, was distinguished by its cultural function as fairground, ritual ground, and execution site. When the village green shifted to the town center, different sorts of institutions relevant to the community could be located there. Traditionally, these institutions might include the parish hall, the bakehouse, the forge, the shepherds' cottage, or the church—often including an attached sacristy and cemetery. As a result, villagers had a close relationship to the village green, which functioned to safeguard basic food provision through fish storage and poultry enclosures, to accommodate the population in times of crisis, to shelter the sick, and to hold animals in preparation for slaughter. The village green was also used as a place to slaughter animals and wash laundry.

CONTEMPORARY USE > TRACES OF COMMONING RECREATION SPACE, IDENTIFIABLE “CENTER”

Today, the village green usually forms a square or small park at the center of town, without necessarily having any commercial or cultural significance.

SPATIAL PRINCIPLE “ANGERDORF”

The *Anger*, or village green, a mostly grass-covered area in the middle of the settlement, is held in collective hands, and thus part of the commons structure. The space is usually surrounded on both sides by a forking thoroughfare. As common land, the village green is generally unparceled. The word “*Angerdorf*” (“village-green town”) is therefore used to characterize a type of village whose main ordering element is a central and publicly accessible village green. The *Angerdorf* has existed since the Middle Ages as a purposefully planned form of village settlement.



Pasture, park, or buildable lands used collectively, serving as a central infrastructural component of the settlement.

4) Categories of Open Spaces for Contemporary and Future Commons: SPECULATIVE CARTOGRAPHY IN BERLIN-KREUZBERG

If one considers Berlin's urban landscape as an infrastructural fabric, what becomes visible is an open-access spatial system composed of transportation routes connecting the city to its environment—rivers and canals, arterial roads, levees, railway lines, viaducts. As linear open spaces, these transit lines generate a spatial continuity between the parceled urban carpet of the city and the extensive regional resource space beyond it, composed of meadows, fields, lakes, and woods. Inside this infrastructural network, bulges, dead ends, and overlaps allow for the emergence of parks, squares, alleys, or bodies of water, but also give rise to undefined spaces in the urban figure.

In what follows, we will consider these urban open spaces—interpreted as smaller-scale extensions and thus segments of the larger regional resource space—as possible urban commons. From this perspective, we will investigate their potential to generate alternative, community-based practices of appropriation.

The Berlin district of Kreuzberg would seem predestined for such an investigation. It's a district characterized by a high level of diversity—in terms of both its built environment, thanks in part to severe rebuilding programs implemented in the 1970s, and its socio-cultural environment, due to its former location near the border between East and West Berlin. Additionally, while Kreuzberg has witnessed intense gentrification in recent years, it also features a population that has actively opposed this process. Within such a heterogeneous urban setting, we were able to find substantive examples of collective appropriation as well as practices that can be interpreted as commoning.

For example, since 2012, in the southern area of the public junction at Kottbusser Tor, there is located a informal space for protest, events, and discussions. Called “Gecekondu” (1) (*built overnight* in Turkish), the space is operated collectively by the tenants’ initiative Kotti & Co, functioning as an enclave within the public space, constructed outside of any official authorization process. Not far from here, the southern area of Oranienplatz was used by refugees and activists as an informal residence and protest camp (2) with no legal status from 2012 to 2014. This occupation excluded the site temporarily from the public sphere until the camp was evicted by police, despite widespread public protest. Many other alternative-living projects in Berlin can be interpreted as something akin to commons, including the Lohmühle trailer camp on the former frontier zone between East and West, the spontaneous settlement on a vacant lot on the River Spree called Cuvry-Brache, and various cooperative housing and cultural initiatives like the Haus der Statistik, begun in late 2015 as a project focusing on common welfare and social issues for refugees, artists, and creatives in the Mitte district. Lastly, Berlin as a whole—and Kreuzberg in particular—features many community gardens like the Allmende-Kontor (3) on Tempelhofer Feld, which now, since being founded in 2011, has 500 members tending the gardens and is legally protected by an interim-use contract leased in the form of a lump sum, as well as the Prinzessinnengarten (4), a mobile urban farm on a vacant lot next to Moritzplatz founded in 2009, or the Interkulturelle Garten Rosenduft (5), founded in 2006 and enclosed inside the Gleisdreieck Park complex that was built shortly after.

The area running along the Landwehr Canal, which crosses Kreuzberg from east to west, is a good candidate for a more in-depth spatial consideration. Here, connected to the canal and the intersecting system of pathways and parks running alongside it, one finds a variety of spatial bulges that are well-suited for a speculative cartography of commons—not only because of their ambiguous, evolving character, but also because of their precarious status. For example, the unfinished Flaschenhals Park alternates between an over-defined play area and a neglected, vacant lot, appropriated in many different ways. The Dragoner-Areal, a state-owned former military barracks used by small local companies and cultural projects on a seemingly semi-legal basis, has become an object of resistance for urban-political initiatives fighting against speculators and the attempted sale of the site by the Federal Agency for Real Estate Management (*Bundesanstalt für Immobilienaufgaben*, or BImA). Further up the canal, Mehringplatz is undergoing a municipality-driven enhancement treatment, Urbanhafen, a popular recreation area, is being partially privatized, Wassertorplatz has mostly deteriorated into a pass-through area, and Kottbusser Tor is both a busy, complex transit hub and a cultural and local-business center for wide-ranging segments of the population—a setting for regular manifestations, a heavy police presence, and nightlife tourism. These six locations form the foundation of our cartographic analysis: what spatial qualities encourage commoning-like practices, and how do these practices, in turn, impact the existing urban spaces?

Through interpretive cartographies of these six locations, traces of contemporary commons-like use of open spaces were precisely located, mapped, and described. Using graphic and written accounts, these open-space areas were analyzed according to the following main criteria: their spatial qualities (for example their texture or surface condition), ownership status, and thereby their accessibility and degree of demarcation; the groups that are active at the location, evaluated on the basis of activity patterns, practices, or traces of use; and estimations concerning use frequency, collective-choice arrangements, and potential yields. Criteria that might speak against the site being interpreted as a commons or the practice being interpreted as commoning were also taken into account. Building on this analysis and the investigated examples, we made a speculative projection into the future, not only in an effort to rethink what already exists, but in service of identifying new spatial reserves, making legible new forms of commons and new practices for possible commoning. Therefore, the cartographic descriptions target both the contemporary and future conditions for spatial commons.

MAPPINGS IN
BERLIN-KREUZBERG



ICE-Linie 28

U1

Gitschiner Straße

Friedrichstraße

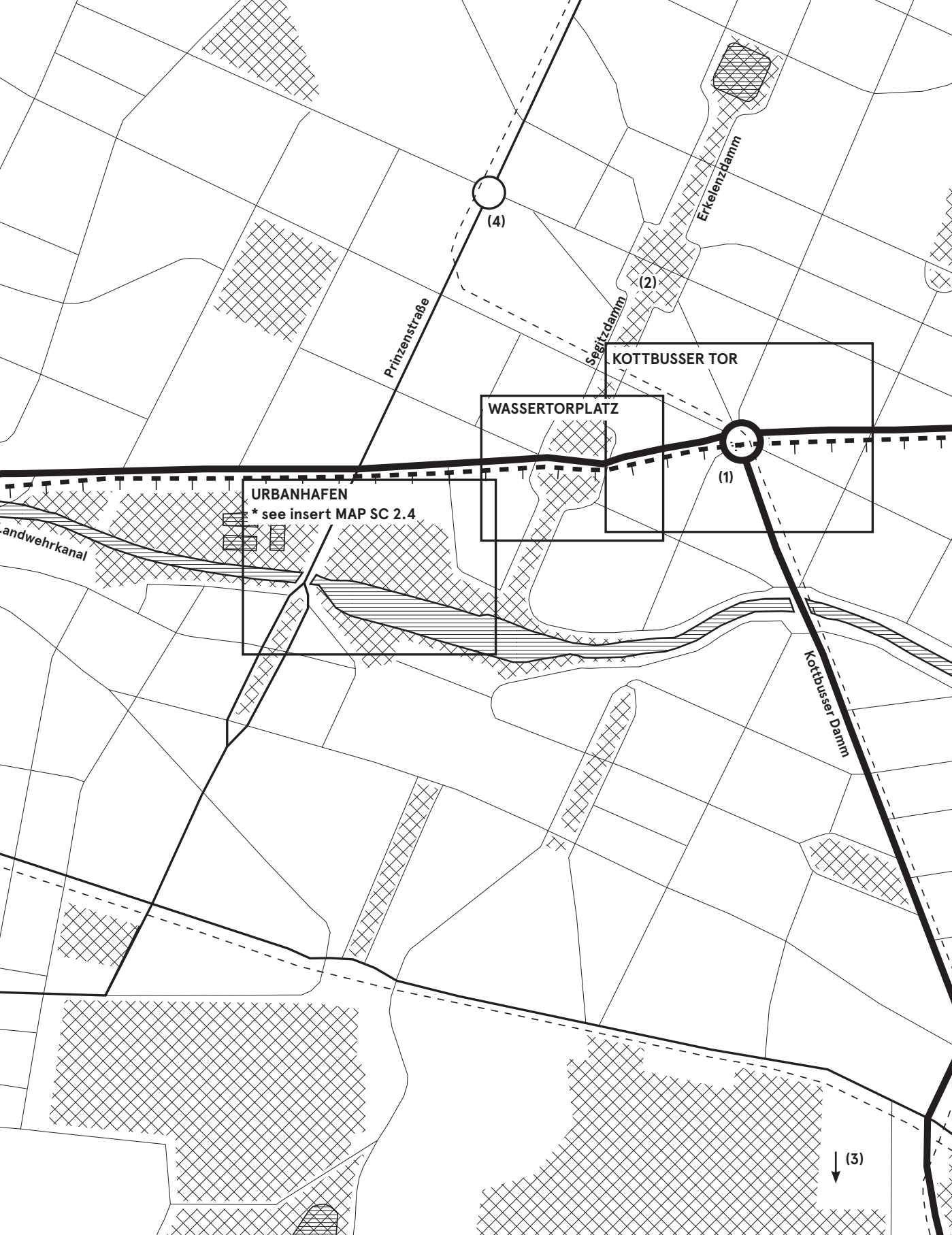
MEHRINGPLATZ
* see insert MAP SC 2.3

DRAGONER-AREAL

FLASCHENHALSPARK

(5)

Mehringdamm



Put in concrete terms, we can divide the open spaces found in the investigated areas into four different spatial categories. These categories differ in relation to the following criteria: the spatial qualities of the resource; the legal status of the space being used; the size of the commoner community; the use frequency of the location; the collective-choice arrangements used by commoners as well as resource owners; and the yield created by using the space collectively. Properly speaking, none of the spaces and practices identified can be classified as commons in the full sense of the term. Nevertheless, describing the practices observed, and comparing these to historical types, makes the urban spaces legible in terms of their potential for collective creation and reproduction by commoners. Therefore, in what follows, four types of spatial commons will be associated with the four categories of open spaces.

1) The central areas of the open spaces under investigation—usually planned as a clear form or “object” (De Cauter)—represent a publicly available cultural good functioning as a location-bound spatial commons that, in principle, is accessible to everyone. These spaces form a center, a midpoint, that serves to strengthen local identification while maintaining supra-local ties to the entire city. The quality that especially defines this category of “public urban space” is the presence of a vacancy or gap in the built environment, a void that offers space for spontaneous gatherings, broader social interpretations, or various forms of temporary use.

Examples of this category include the circular plaza at Mehringplatz, the diamond-shaped basin at Urbanhafen surrounded by waterside meadows, or the open octagon of Kottbusser Tor.

2) The spatial category of nomadic spatial commons is constituted by temporary occupations within central or peripheral open-space areas. As a form of “particular commons” (De Cauter), this is the most unstable and informal category. These commons are constantly varying in their extent and position, and, in contrast to location-bound commons, are always being formulated afresh by a few users, on a daily and above all seasonal basis.

Examples of this category include non-formalized, (ir)-regular spatial occupations of U-Bahn entrances, groups of trees, or park benches, as well as more conventionalized appropriations of green spaces for recreational purposes.

3) In transition zones of residential areas or the areas peripheral to infrastructure, small groups make temporary claims. Appropriating these ambiguous spaces with a more clear objective in mind than the users of nomadic commons, they establish a relationship between the site and their own place of residence nearby. These self-organized or municipally initiated groups operate small community projects that are commons-like in nature, consciously pursuing material or immaterial gains and undertaking activities collectively that serve purposes like gardening, cultural exchange, or the exchange of knowledge. This spatial category could be characterized as neighborly spatial commons and is usually connected to a location-bound commons, is more regulated and traditional, and can be expanded more easily to private spatial reserves.

Some examples of this are the gardens found on the outer sections of the circle at Mehringplatz and on its public ground-floor areas, or the flower beds planted and maintained by neighborhood residents on a public median west of Urbanhafen.

4) The fourth category, which lies outside the field of view and only becomes evident at second or third glance, is referred to as exterritorial spatial commons. Such commons are potentially possible in the future but remain hitherto inaccessible. Similar to a thicket in an unexplored wood or the swampy meadow of a stream bed, these commons have the capacity to be discovered and made accessible. On one hand, these kinds of potential spaces—vacant lots, surplus spaces, unused or forgotten areas—can emerge as extensions of location-bound spatial commons. Yet in a completely opposite way, exterritorial commons could also be produced by reshaping spatial reserves that are over-determined, highly organized, or overused, and face enclosure or privatization. What ties the two poles together, regardless of the degree to which the spaces are already predefined or used, is that a space's current status as public or private is undergoing a challenge. In being challenged, it becomes available for collective appropriation by many, or even almost everyone.

Examples of a space that is underused and under-determined, and thus open to being imagined as an exterritorial commons, would be the partly neglected first-floor zones of the circular plaza on Mehringplatz, or the parking lot behind, owned by the housing association. An example of overuse or overextension on the part of local authorities forced into austerity might be the Prinzenbad at Urbanhafen, a public pool threatened by privatization—a fate to which the hospital across the water was consigned in 2012—and which could possibly be rediscovered as a particular commons.

These two examples, both offered on a speculative basis, differ fundamentally in their possibilities and the demands they place on potential commoner communities. A flexible parking-garage structure, for instance, might allow for a wide variety of uses, at different regularities, with little investment—think of the parking garage atop the Neukölln Arkaden shopping mall, which was turned into a bar and garden a few years back—whereas a public swimming pool is composed of multiple types of spatial, technical, and natural resources, each of which must be maintained individually by quite different nested communities (Ostrom), which would likely lead to a fundamentally different sort of use for the pool.

This still somewhat rough classification of spatial commons into location-bound, nomadic, neighborly, and exterritorial commons is meant to bolster the “double-pronged” call (Harvey) for *forceful municipal protection of universal resource spaces* and the exhortation to *collectively claim, on a daily basis*, particular urban subspaces. Many kinds of space are at risk here. By depicting them, we hope to enable the reader to carry over the cartographic interpretation together with the components of the commons definition (including its contradictions) and the abstract historical spatial analysis to form an independent, if also somewhat blurry, overall perspective—a perspective that makes it possible to imagine a wholly *different, commonitized handling of urban space*.

FOUR SPATIAL
CATEGORIES OF
COMMONS

IDENTIFICATION
CRITERIA:

- Q: SPATIAL QUALITIES
- S: STATUS
- C: COMMONER COMMUNITY
- U: USE FREQUENCY
- A: COLLETIVE-CHOICE AR-RANGEMENTS
- Y: YIELDS
- X: CRITERIA THAT RESTRICT COMMONING

DESIGN CRITERIA:

- P: POTENTIAL HANDLING

- 1) LOCATION-BOUND SPATIAL COMMONS (similar to village greens)
- 2) NOMADIC SPATIAL COMMONS (similar to fallow pastures)

Q: central area of the open space, usually has supra-local significance

S: municipal property; public space

C: open to all; indirect relationship to place of residence; spatial dimension of the resource exceeds the concrete number of users

U: irregular, seasonal, dependent on weather

A: municipally administered, legally protected and if necessary controlled, conventionalized use

Y: immaterial cultural good, recreational use; social participation in public life, a place for gathering and protesting

X: formality; reliance on state authority and control

P: enhancing the legibility and experience of open spaces as a form; adjusting form to (match) content for better usability; enabling temporary appropriation of subspaces for specific types of commons by investing sufficiently in the spatial resource and its protection; defining, spatially and legally, the peripheral zones and possible expansion areas of the central open space

Q: variable subspace of the central open space; protected from sight and wind; often furnished, illuminated, or landscaped

S: non-formalized appropriation of public space, seldom tolerated by owners; can result in temporary demarcation, contamination, or beautification of the subspace; nevertheless publically accessible

C: few users; usually an indirect relationship to place of residence; variable number of users directly defines the extent of the community space

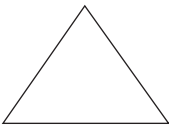
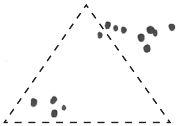
U: short-term, irregular, seasonal, dependent on weather

A: circumventing regulations for public space, subversive, unconventional

Y: immaterial; social subsistence, cultural practice in the broadest sense

X: involves little care or maintenance, seldom responsible handling, little coordination

P: allowing temporary interventions in the public sphere; enabling temporal interventions, occupations, cultivations while simultaneously preventing preferential treatment for individual groups of people; establishing new forms of temporary architecture like gecekondus, camps, and trailers as an urban tool for mobile participation in urban space—which, in successful cases, take root permanently



3) NEIGHBORLY SPATIAL COMMONS (similar to common pastures)

Q: peripheral and transition areas from central open space to surrounding built environment; ambiguous or specific spatial zones

S: (seldom) formalized appropriation of public or private space; mostly tolerated by municipal or private/corporate owners; demarcation obvious or necessary

C: some users; usually a direct relationship to place of residence; a steadier number of users indirectly define the subspace's extent on the basis of its use

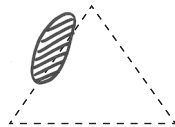
U: relatively stable and longer-term

A: goal-driven, legally legitimated where necessary; resource- and/or context-bound

Y: material and immaterial goods; yields can be social, cultural, natural, spatial, or differently construed; goods and yields range from care and preservation of a neighborhood to subsistence provision

X: threatened by formalization or commercialization; can lack care and responsible handling; too little collective choice

P: continuing to develop existing regulations like special-use contracts, hereditary leases, etc. to simplify commoning for organized groups; legally and spatially defining the transition areas between central open space and surrounding built environment; preventing the privatization of spatial reserves that have an urban significance, and/or gradually municipalizing these reserves



4) EXTERRITORIAL NEW SPATIAL COMMONS (similar to summer alp pastures)

Q: underused or over-used spatial reserves—whether vacant lots, vacant buildings, or municipal institutions; spatial relationship to a central open space is possible but not necessary

S: appropriation of municipal or private/corporate property; the aspiration to preserve accessibility

C: many users or, even better, everyone; high and flexible number of users with highly varying levels of individual investment

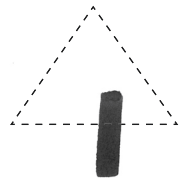
U: open

A: very open when little infrastructure is involved, very nuanced for more complex infrastructure

Y: material and immaterial goods; yields can be social, cultural, natural, or differently construed; goods and yields range from care and preservation of a neighborhood to subsistence provision; enshrines the cultural practice of creating, preserving, and caring for common goods

X: pressure to formalize or commercialize because of heavy investment; unproven nature of legal regulations for protecting the resource

P: developing new forms of commons, even (commons that are) independent of central open spaces; strengthening the direct relationship to place of residence, enabling an indirect relationship; complementing the network of existing open spaces by bringing in new common land; integrating social, political, economic, and ecological factors into spatial design; formulating organizational fundamentals for self-empowered, self-initiated, community-based spatial production as “invisible” strategic designs for spatial commons; gradually developing potential commons into visible, formally legible, and inherently balanced spatial systems of temporally anchored spatial commons



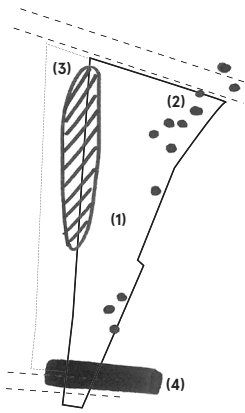
CARTOGRAPHY AND PROJECTION

Interpretations and speculations based on the works of Tobias Birkefeld, Carlo Costabel, Claudia Fraust, Paul Klever, Steffen Klotz, Martin Morsbach, Peter Müller, Lukas Pappert, Caroline Pfetzer, Franziska Polleter, Simone Prill, Jens Schulze, and Hang Yuan.

FLASCHENHALS PARK MAP SC 2.1

INTERPRETATION
This section of Gleisdreieck Park, the newest, is dominated by old train rails and what is called the “Gleiswildnis” (railway wilderness), where native vegetation and pioneer woodlands have reconquered the space. As the park grows narrower, at Monumentenbrücke (monument bridge), three pathways merge together. These designed and thus “externally determined” pathway zones are defined clearly, and have been conceived to accommodate heavy use. In contrast, signs caution against entering the Gleiswildnis to the side of the paved pathways. The clear contrast between the wild, overgrown “surplus spaces” and the highly organized “park spaces” is noteworthy considering the hazy boundaries. Most users pass through the triangle-shaped park (1) on the bicycle path, without leaving much trace of use. A second group of users tarries a little longer on the established pathways, paved surfaces, or protected sections of railway track and uses the athletic courts and playgrounds set up there, which generates wear and tear as well as maintenance costs. A third group of users, in contrast, appropriates the wild, overgrown, uncontrolled, partly fenced-in, and predominantly hidden-from-view Gleiswildnis (2). This latter community pursues a wide variety of activities in the secluded areas, seeming to follow a shared code. Firepits, beaten paths, tire tracks, and graffiti are some of the traces or products of this codified use. One tent indicates longer-term occupation.

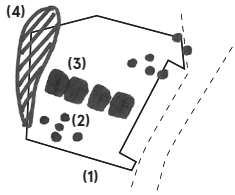
SPECULATION
In being redesigned and opened as a park, the former vacant zone has been given new significance as an urban commons for a wide spectrum of potential commoners. When projecting into the future, of interest would be the negotiations between different groups of users, who don’t currently practice particular care or maintenance. Some possible approaches to using the open space more cooperatively, while maintaining the Gleiswildnis as a cultural space and natural space, might be to make collective decisions about the un-integrated spatial resources near the fenced-in railway yard beside the old residential development (3), or on Monumentenbrücke directly in front of the new residential area (4).



DRAGONER-AREAL MAP SC 2.2

INTERPRETATION
Apart from two entrances, this pentagon-shaped site (1) is enclosed by the built environment, making it difficult to see inside—although, as federal property, it is freely accessible. The landmark-protected buildings of this former military barracks amount to a cultural or universal commons, yet the majority are empty, dilapidated, or barred up, and thus inaccessible. Traces of political demonstrations and placards testify to the public’s interest in the site and its importance as a contested living environment for the neighborhood. Examples of informal appropriation of the formally public space—of it being used as a “particular commons”—range from small businesses that have expanded across the entire open areas in front of their car garages (2) to a stonemason’s workshop that stores material in between two brick halls. The site’s resource spaces are used as work and recreation spaces alongside the equally informal businesses that operate there. Outdoor grills used by the tradesmen lay amidst the wreckage of tires and car parts.

SPECULATION
The already extant traces of commoning could be fortified and expanded. For example, the shared spaces of the workshops could be better organized and maintained by making greater concessions to users. Indicating more clearly that the entrances are open would serve to activate the vacant areas—which would also become open to neighborhood activities—and revive the empty landmark-protected buildings (3). However, any conceivable use of the space organized on a neighborhood basis, from interaction with the surrounding residential developments to the establishment of collective housing, would necessitate a clear commitment from the public owners not to privatize this valuable cultural good—a commitment on the part of authorities to respectfully develop the asset together with residents and users.



MEHRINGPLATZ

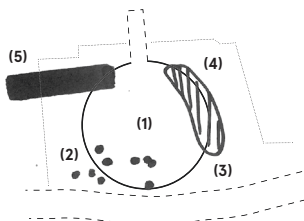
MAP SC 2.3 *see insert

INTERPRETATION

Once a thriving, prestigious urban plaza, the circle (1) with the *Friedenssäule* (peace column) remains a spatial figure with identification value and symbolic value. The historical and political discourse that is tangible at the site must be incorporated into any consideration of the plaza as an urban commons. The group using such a commons is the whole of society; its product is discursive commoning. The niches and protected spaces (2) on the roundabout, however, have been appropriated and marked out by users who are displaced from other locations. This group of users depends on public resources with easy access and places to congregate. Similar spaces can be found in the green areas, protected passageways, and mezzanines of U-Bahn stations, between which the user group migrates depending on the time of year—which can be read as a form of seasonal commoning. The residents of the complex's inner ring, in contrast, use the plant-beds and green patches on the circle's periphery (3) as "their" front gardens, activated on a seasonal basis, and take a cautious hand in designing the spaces by setting up birdhouses, for example. Some of the rented-out interior and exterior spaces of the outer ring (4) are being activated by incorporating the residents. The latter, municipally initiated projects raise the question of how successful a neighborhood garden can be if its commoning process is prescribed, leaving little room for self-determination by effectively necessitating membership in the administrative organization.

SPECULATION

A form of open commoning would enable the protected niches within the public space to continue being used on a short-term basis for a variety of purposes. Organized commoning, on the other hand, could take place in the communicative ground-floor zones of the buildings, which would have a reinforcing impact on the exterior street space. More straightforward self-empowerment on the part of commoners toward local authorities and businesses would be an essential prerequisite for this. Lastly, universal commoning would happen through practices and actions with supra-local reach taking place on the large open spaces. This vision for future commons would involve all three forms of commoning coinciding at the same place. The underutilized parking garages (5) owned by the housing association could offer new spatial reserves for this purpose, where the various forms of commoning could be tested out over time.



URBANHAFFEN

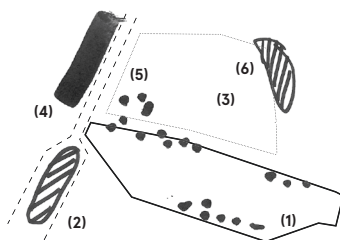
MAP SC 2.4 *see insert

INTERPRETATION

The landscaped area along the Urbanhafen (1), which features an embankment area and a body of water, can be described as a universal commons. Here, the site's spatial qualities and public status make permanent appropriation difficult, privileging more spontaneous, ad-hoc uses. The wildflower meadow on Baerwaldstrasse (2) is an urban sanctuary for plants and animals in the local system of green space. Within the investigated area, this biotope evinces certain commons-like tendencies, as it meets many criteria of self-management. Additionally, the Statthaus (3) in Böckler Park is run collaboratively as an institution for cultural and social exchange for children and teens. As an enclave within the park, it amounts to a social refuge that escapes any clear designation as public or private.

SPECULATION

The Prinzenbad swimming pool (4) is composed of different resource areas: landscaped space (a sunbathing lawn and athletic fields), infrastructure (the swimming pool and its technical services), and provision (a cafeteria and kiosk). Public pools are a central feature of basic social provision, yet they're increasingly being divested from municipal hands and privatized. A (partially) user-operated Prinzenbad would unite residents, operators, and its user base, leading to a new identification with the pool. In a future Prinzenbad commons, municipal management could be paired with user administration to protect the resource space while activating processes of co-production. Depending on the complexity of the subspace, different-sized communities could be offered the opportunity to appropriate the space for short-term or long-term initiatives—even outside summer months. Böckler Park (5), in contrast, is confronted with an excess of use and a dearth of maintenance. Local authorities and visitors alike have failed to take responsibility for the site, leading to neglect. The park's spatial system also includes the meadow and playgrounds of the adjoining housing estate (6). One approach might be to involve a select public in caring for the site and generating yields from the gardens or recreational areas, thus transforming Böckler Park into user-administrated subspaces, i.e. urban commons. At the same time, it would be necessary for the spaces to remain open to the general public, as an invitation for others to participate. Questions about handling the yields and using these resources, as well as installing protections against commodification, would need to be resolved through concerted negotiations with the municipality.



WASSERTORPLATZ

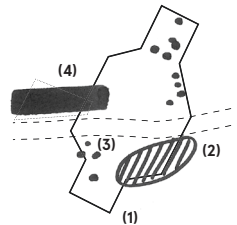
MAP SC 2.5

INTERPRETATION

Wassertorplatz is divided in two by Skalitzer Strasse and the elevated U-Bahn line that runs along it, which severely diminishes its legibility as an oval plaza (1). Yet at the same time, because of its planning history as a part of Luisen-vorstadt (a historical district of Berlin) and its former connection to the Landwehr Canal, it has major significance to the historical landscaping of Berlin. The architecture of the bourgeois residential development surrounding it attests to this, confirming its place as a cultural commons. Yet the most noticeable use of the open space is for parking: under the cover of the elevated subway track, along the median, and even on the pathways that spread across the south-east section of the plaza (2), the public space has been turned into an informal parking lot. The only signs of use that remotely resemble commoning are groups of skaters who hang around the southern segments of the octagonal concrete area (3). The heavy overgrowth around the plaza indicates very little use. Few of the front gardens along the walking paths are used for any purpose; similarly, a triangle-shaped group of seats sees only sporadic use.

SPECULATION

Besides partially restoring the area as an urban asset, two areas in particular could play a central role: the built perimeter around the site features different forecourts that face the plaza (3). These could be used as community crossover zones, similar to the strategy seen in the informal appropriation of the pathways as parking spots. Additionally, there is an unused but clearly demarcated green area (4) between the plaza and the street that could be appropriated as a new spatial reserve, perhaps instigated by social initiatives in the neighborhood.



KOTTBUSSE TOR

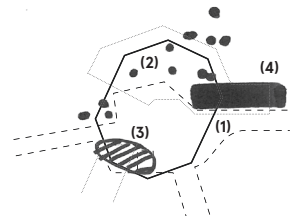
MAP SC 2.6

INTERPRETATION

The spatial figure that distinguishes Kottbusser Tor is a broken-open octagon (1) that frames the area of the plaza, where six streets flow into a traffic circle with an elevated subway line cutting across diagonally. Its historical, cultural, and political significance, in addition to its supra-local embeddedness, contribute to its classification as a universal commons. In its numerous niches, transition zones, underground and overground subway entrances, as well as the open-access ground floor and first-upper-story of the surrounding housing development (2), there are countless forms of spontaneous and coordinated appropriation, undertaken by the most varying group of users imaginable, taking place simultaneously. These range from drug trafficking to informal gastronomy, to urban-policy protests, all the way to collective artistic interventions. The most important commoner community is clearly the tenants' association Kotti & Co, who built and operate a protest structure in the form of a "Gecekondu" (3) on the southern section of the plaza. Installed close to the residential buildings, the Gecekondu serves as a base of operations, from which different subspaces of the plaza-shaped traffic junction are continually being used for different events with the participation of other users from the site.

SPECULATION

Kottbusser Tor is surrounded by multiple spatial reserves that haven't been exploited. In addition to the difficult-to-use areas underneath the elevated subway line, and the surplus spaces that open up in the second row behind the frontmost residential buildings, it's primarily the two-story pavilion buildings in the northeast section of Kottbusser Tor (4) that stitch together the plaza, the arcade passages, the first-upper-stories, and the residential buildings—yet these pavilion buildings are difficult to access, lacking visible entrances and are often closed off. Activating the connective spatial network through community uses might help transform the fragmented and neglected spatial gaps into usable in-between zones. Both the neighborhood inhabitants and local businesses could profit from the vacant spaces, which are presumably in private hands, being opened up, or the empty areas, which are presumably public, receiving new definition.



5) Conditions for Spatial Commons: RECOGNIZING AND DESIGNING THE “THIRD SPACE”

Spatial commons are not a “given”; rather, they’re a hidden potential that can be activated for a certain period of time. They need to be created, protected, and preserved through a complex community process involving immaterial, material, human, and non-human actors. This process organizes itself in space. And beyond how this space is managed and coordinated, it’s the particular quality, the properties of this space, that either enable commoning or thwart it. This turns space itself into an essential participant in commoning.

The description of four spatial categories in the preceding chapter—location-bound, nomadic, neighborly, and exterritorial—dealt with different forms of collective use of open spaces; these forms draw on the respective spatial qualities of a site. These spatial qualities can be described using parameters such as density, porosity, ambiguousness, relationship to built environment, stability, flexibility, and positioning within the overall system of the city. Such a qualitative description serves to establish different zones within the continuity of urban open spaces, to which different forms of collective use are best suited. How then can planning function to bolster these spaces, to help them emerge, and above all to keep from destroying them?

The actual act of transforming open spaces into a “third space,” which is neither public nor private, can only be decided upon and carried out by commoners themselves. Nevertheless, certain spatial qualities can be formulated as conditions that an existing or future urban space must fulfill in order to support commoning. In the reciprocal relationship between spatial conditions and the collective using, caring for, and preserving of those spaces, planning and design institutions must certainly be dependent on the potential community of users—yet such institutions may also advocate on their behalf. To overcome the challenges facing cities of the future, preparing fertile ground for commoning is an important field of action. A more spatially astute concept of commons is a highly relevant model in a world increasingly confronted by resource scarcity, the capitalization of many areas of life, segregation, and cultural diversification. It’s important, therefore, that the urban commons be established as a type and component of the city. The “third space” must become part of the expertise of urban planners and designers.

A unique feature of spatial commons is how available spaces and resources are collectively activated, temporarily translated into a third, heterotopic condition. This enables individuals to meet their own needs as amicably as possible through a process of ongoing negotiation with the needs of others. In this social process, space can take on not only the role of a “container,” but that of a “mediator”—as Bruno Latour demands of objects in his actor-network theory—which, in interacting with other non-spatial and non-human components, “makes someone do something” and thereby facilitates new connections (Latour 2007). Space, for example, can “authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on.” The commons’ quality of putting space, action, and community into relationships with each other is enormously relevant for the disciplines of urban planning and spatial design, as well as for political theory, economics, or sociology. Commons can make an essential contribution toward equipping urban residents with prospects for action despite all the obstacles of the urbanization process.

The importance of commons is confirmed when tested against two extreme scenarios: One scenario of a dystopian future, where deregulation has been carried out to the maximum degree and every facet of life has been commercialized, and another scenario of a utopian future, where all resources are regulated and secured commonly on a transcontinental level. In both scenarios, commons become a central form of organization and means of design: in the first scenario, they're the sole remaining crisis-management strategy left to the precarious and those without means for ensuring their livelihood; in the latter scenario, they're a spontaneously widespread, self-evident cultural practice for collective use of the secured resources. In the case of the crisis-management scenario, however, it's worth critically evaluating whether commons intrinsically function to resist the capitalization of all common goods, or rather might ultimately be instrumentalized as an integral and deliberately tolerated feature of neoliberal policy. Similarly, in the case of commons as cultural practice, it's worth questioning whether collective practices would actually be carried out jointly by all members of the community—or whether they even should be. Regardless, in view of the need to responsibly handle resources, the “ongoing” (Linebaugh) spread of commons should be supported. Moreover, commons facilitate a more diverse organization and preservation of open spaces, both material and immaterial; through collective action, existing open spaces must be protected and maintained as commons, and new open spaces must be conquered and established as common goods (Harvey).

What also becomes clear in discussing concrete examples—in addition to the ‘possibility spaces’ and changes in perspective that might help the commons concept be applied productively—is the potential for conflict entailed by the idea of communization. The commons principle is a challenge on the level of politics and organization, as well as planning and design. To some extent, the broad field of possibilities for designing and organizing the commons can be gleaned from the two future scenarios described above. In both of these, the commons is understood as an intuitive action-based principle, one that organizes the co-existence of people—but to the same degree, it's also understood as a spatial strategy in the fight for survival under political and climatic conditions that continue to worsen. Commons serve to integrate and delimit at the same time; they're based on freedom of choice and the need for protection; they're resource-bound yet entirely dependent on the particular capacities of the commoner community. In both the public and private sphere, a superordinate state power—or better yet, a power with transcontinental legitimacy—which protects resources against damage, encroachment, and disproportionate individual interests, remains a central premise of the commons experiment. Yet, as has been mentioned before, applying the commons principle becomes increasingly difficult for commoner communities of overlapping scales and varying sizes. It's precisely here that the spatial experiment must begin. Only through repeated concrete attempts can the fragility of commoning be tested. In doing so, space presents itself not only as a preexisting structure, but most importantly as a factor that can be designed.

In order to condition open spaces as possible spatial commons, therefore, we must work critically on the possibilities for influencing the space-formation process. The questions that result, similar to commons themselves, require a broad basis of collaboration and a connection to research and practical knowledge, so that answering them contributes to a better understanding of the community possibilities contained in the commons principle. Only through transdisciplinary discourse can we develop spatial concepts for coexisting, networked spatial commons.

To understand the rules that govern different communities—whether associations, cooperatives, activist coalitions, or other cultural circles—or even to ask fundamental questions about alternative forms of regulating ownership, it is necessary to gather insights from disciplines such as law, history, and economics. It's also indispensable to incorporate the sociological perspective for deciphering the interplay between space and action (Löw 2001) in greater detail. Moving forward from this, commons at levels of scale like built structures could be investigated as collective practices similar to dwelling and working, for example, opening a perspective onto architectural space as a connective link.

Furthermore, the increased significance of an action-based concept of space in rural, urban, and architectural settings could be given added impetus by incorporating positions from cultural studies, psychology, or philosophy, contributing to a more precise understanding of the spatial commons as a third space, with its own spatio-temporal qualities. Especially in a Europe undergoing immense change, new methods of planning and design for urban development and redevelopment must be conceived, applied, and tested with a clear emphasis on practice. In particular, we need solutions for handling the open spaces in large late-modernist housing estates and newer estates inside or on the peripheries of growing cities—solutions dedicated to retaining or reinterpreting neighboring spaces.

Today, commons often remain a promise, an ideal, or even worse a rhetorical figure in political discourse. But the spatial commons, the third space between public and private, puts such lip service to the test. Embedded in the physical and socioeconomic reality of the urban, spatial commons are the litmus test for whether members of our society are ready and able to handle our environment in a way that is more respectful and socially just.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Silvia Federici. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: Autonomedia, 2004.

Elinor Ostrom. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Garrett Hardin. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162 (1968): 1243–48.

Peter Linebaugh. *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009.

Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stravrides. Public interview, 2009. "On the Commons. Beyond Markets or States: Commoning as Collective Practice." *An Architektur* 23 (2010).

David Harvey. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: Verso, 2012.

Martina Löw. *Raumsoziologie*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2001.

INTERNET SOURCES

Holger Schatz. "Die Debatte um Commons und Gemeingüter." <http://www.denknetz-online.ch/content/infobrief-14>. Accessed on September 25, 2014.

Lieven De Cauter. "Common Places: Preliminary Notes on the (Spatial) Commons." <http://community.dewereldmorgen.be/blogs/lievendecauter/2013/10/14/common-places-preliminary-notes-spatial-commons>. Accessed on January 8, 2016.

Lieven De Cauter. "Common Places. Theses on the commons." <http://www.depressionera.gr/228010/3373977/texts/lieven-de-cauter-i>. Accessed on November 27, 2014.

IMAGE SOURCES

All photographs and depictions in this publication were created by the authors, with the exception of the figures listed below:

P. 16, summer alp pasture: "Arzler Alm um 1910," <http://www.sagen.at/fotos/showphoto.php/photo/52733>. Accessed on February 15, 2016. Photograph: Kunstverlag Leo Stainer, Innsbruck, Nr. 200, © Bildarchiv SAGEN.at

P. 16, common pasture: "Schafherde bei Tauernfeld 1956," <http://www.deining.de/kultur/geschichte-u-infos/serie-aus-dem-archiv-geplaudert.html>. Accessed on February 15, 2016. Gemeindearchiv Deining, Schulchronik Tauernfeld.

P. 17, fallow pasture: "Stadtpark Bochum, Parkhaus, 1905," <http://www.route-industriekultur.ruhr/themenrouten/29-bochum/stadtpark-bochum.html>. Accessed on February 15, 2016. Sammlung Dr. Dietmar Bleidick.

P. 17, village green: "Tränke-Langenweddingen," <http://www.langenweddingen.info/sonstiges.html>. Accessed on February 15, 2016. © langenweddingen.info.

Picture insert: "Schafwäsche in der Laber bei der Eisenbahnbrücke," <http://www.deining.de/kultur/geschichte-u-infos/serie-aus-dem-archiv-geplaudert.html>. Accessed on February 15, 2016. Gemeindearchiv Deining.

MAP SC 2.3 MEHRINGPLATZ, BERLIN-KREUZBERG

Paul Klever and Steffen Klotz

When considering potential urban commons and commons-like practices, it is important not only to view them in terms of their spatial position and how they are used, but also in light of locally relevant discourses in the realms of urban policy and city history. Immaterial commons—such as, for example, the collective identification with an urban space—can be created and preserved through the collective remembrance of historical and contemporary events that transpired at a place. Conversely, it is possible to trace a place's history through collective acts like building monuments or choosing street names—and therefore, by the same token, to make “collective identification” visible as a commons. Places function as vessels of memory. In doing so, they preserve the commons of “collective identification.” This means, in turn, that a place's meaning can also be co-created through the uses and practices taking place there. In this collective process, we can characterize the product—the common good that results—as a place's “image.” The place becomes known for this “image,” and the use or practice corresponding to this image can even be equated to how the place is understood. This understanding functions to incorporate users with similar intentions and exclude others.

Mehringplatz is a particularly good example of this. Over Berlin's history, this plaza has been perceived and reproduced in widely diverging ways across different eras. The place's meaning and significance have changed many times, sometimes as a result of its function changing. For example, since the city was temporarily divided, the plaza went from being a central location to a peripheral location, then back again. This not only altered how Mehringplatz was perceived, but also entailed different requirements for representation and identification.

When we search for collective forms of organizing and appropriating urban commons, we also need to ask which uses are best-suited to a place. What distinguishes the urban space of Mehringplatz are the low thresholds of its spatial divisions. This lack of rigid boundaries, however, does not entail unrestricted use of the space. Various practices of appropriation—even undesirable sorts—align with the spatial segmentations, and seek out their own hidden niches or unfold where they are given a platform. Moreover, Berlin's climate does not allow open spaces to be used uniformly across an entire year. Seasonality, in other words, is immanent to the spatial production of the city. Depending on the time of year and time of day, spaces see varying levels of use and are handled with different intensity. Commoning-like practices require protected spaces, and even if a space does not seem designed for spontaneous occupation, it can nevertheless be appropriated by skillful groups of users.

That is to say, the plaza's “image” is also co-created by uncoordinated, unconventional practices that shape its meaning as a place. At the moment, Mehringplatz is in flux. In addition to alterations of the built environment, the site is being targeted by policymakers from the political and urban-planning spheres, who are trying to lend the place a new identity that would rehabilitate its symbolic status. In doing so, policymakers must take into account and reassess the practices of appropriation taking place now, and the image associated with these urbanization processes.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACES



asphalt



cast-in-place concrete



concrete plates



concrete paving



large scale stone paving



small scale stone paving



interior floor covering



permeable floor covering



sand



permeable planting area



lawn



shrubs

RESOURCES

HISTORICAL TRACES



vanished structures



former connection



historical designation



SUPERORDINATE INFRASTRUCTURE



running waters



subway tunnel



street



highline

IMPERMEABLE



wall



fence



hedge



PERMEABLE



gabions



kerbstone



barrier finding, poller

RESOURCE BOUNDARY

MORPHOLOGICAL



buildings



open storey



contour lines



VEGETATIVE



trees



bushes



accumulation of leaves

SPATIAL ELEMENTS

PLANNED OBJECTS



play equipment



bench, lightning



bicycle stand, advertising column



tree area, plant container



dog playground

TRACES OF COLLECTIVE USE

UNPLANNED OBJECTS



seating group



palettes, timber



ponding



stones

FORMALIZED



fenced kitchen garden



parking space marks



interior furnishing



roof garden

NON-FORMALIZED



accumulation of crown caps

CURRENT PRACTICES



prescribed



seasonal/locally adapted



change of location

FUTURE COMMONING



universal



organized



free

SPACE FOR COMMONING?

MAP SC 2.4 URBANHAFEN, BERLIN-KREUZBERG

Lukas Pappert and Jens Schulze

In the mid-nineteenth century, shipping increased on Berlin's river Spree. To relieve the burden on the river, the city first constructed the Spandauer Ship Canal, followed by the Landwehr Canal built from 1845 to 1850. The inland harbor called Urbanhafen was constructed inside the Landwehr Canal at its juncture with the mouth of the Luisenstädtischer Canal, which linked the Landwehr Canal with the Spree to the north. To construct Urbanhafen, the canal was widened by 140 meters between the two bridges Admiralbrücke and Baerwaldbrücke, so that it surrounded an artificial, trapezoid-shaped basin with space for 70 ships along the quay walls.

Since being developed, the site around Urbanhafen has been characterized by large-scale infrastructures that can be understood as urban common goods. Use of the harbor guaranteed the city's provision of essential material resources. Water, as a connective transporting element, was the primary common good. Yet because the Urbanhafen lacked room to expand and was not connected to the railway, its importance faded after the construction of Osthafen in 1913 and Westhafen in 1923. In 1963, the city began to remove the harbor basin, filling the side canals and connecting the island with the southern bank.

Urbanhafen has since become part of a superordinate system of urban open space along the Landwehr Canal. The conversion of the harbor facility and relocation of Berlin's first gasworks, once located at the site, enabled the canalscape's open spaces to shift their function, becoming a municipal offering of public welfare and recreation. The extensive converted areas turned out to be predestined for the location of a new social infrastructure. Reloading points that were formerly privatized resource spaces when Urbanhafen was used as a harbor—waterways, embankment zones—became accessible again as universal common resources after the conversion. Over the course of the structural changes of the 1970s, they underwent a radical change in meaning, coming to be understood as recreation spaces for the new "leisure society." Embedded in a park landscape, Urbanhafen became a connective tissue between different social infrastructures, such as a large housing estate, a hospital, a public swimming pool, and a cultural center.

Today, Urbanhafen stands like something of a relic, a remnant of a welfare state that only sparingly cares for leisure spaces and local recreation spaces. Municipal institutions struggle with limited financial means, or find themselves privatized—even when they belong, spatially or functionally, to the universal commons without which the community cannot survive. As a result, our future handling of commons presents challenges but also major opportunities. With political and administrative bodies showing less willingness to take responsibility for municipal welfare, models of user-driven management are increasingly coming to the fore.



water



harbour wall



boat



fence



street furniture



facade toward public space



floors



topography



permeable surface



sportsfield



trees



bushes, grove



physical boundary, permeable



physical boundary, non-permeable



property line



historical infrastructure of goods supply



historical infrastructure of social services

BOUNDARIES



wear and tear



prototypical movement



prototypical action



swans



crown caps



garbage



mattress



Google Earth tag



barbecue area

TRACES OF USE AND SOCIAL PRACTICE



potential: formalized commons



potential: non-formalized commons



activation of commoning

FUTURE COMMONS

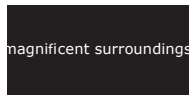
Editors:
Dagmar Pelger
Anita Kaspar
Jörg Stollmann

Technische Universität Berlin
Institut für Architektur – A 30
Fachgebiet für Städtebau und Urbanisierung
Straße des 17. Juni 152
10623 Berlin

www.cud.tu-berlin.de

Authors:
Dagmar Pelger
Paul Klever (historical common lands p.16/17)
Steffen Klotz (historical common lands p.16/17)
Lukas Pappert (commons discourse p.12/13)
Jens Schulze (commons discourse p.12/13)

Research advisory board:
Charlotte Geldof, Ester Goris, Nel Janssens
www.magnificentsurroundings.org



This work is based on findings from “Die Allmende als urbane Typologie” (*The Commons as an Urban Typology*), a cartography seminar offered at the Chair for Urban Design and Urbanization, TU Berlin, in the winter semester 2014/15, with Dagmar Pelger, Tobias Birkefeld, Carlo Costabel, Claudia Fraust, Paul Klever, Steffen Klotz, Martin Morsbach, Peter Müller, Lukas Pappert, Caroline Pfetzer, Franziska Polleter, Simone Prill, Jens Schulze, and Hang Yuan.

The seminar’s point of departure was the research project “The Future Commons 2070 – Map C01: Harwich to Hoek van Holland and the Dover Strait,” an exploratory maritime map translating a future vision for the North Sea and its coastal areas, by Charlotte Geldof, Nel Janssens, Caroline Goossens, Ester Goris, Dagmar Pelger, and Patrick Labarque. Ghent, Belgium (2011).

This publication was first printed in German in 2016 under the title “Spatial Commons. Städtische Freiräume als Ressource”.

IMPRINT

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.



Universitätsverlag der TU Berlin, 2017
<http://verlag.tu-berlin.de>
Fasanenstr. 88, 10623 Berlin
Tel.: +49 (0)30 314 76131 / Fax: -76133
E-Mail: publikationen@ub.tu-berlin.de

This publication—with the exceptions of the figures on pages 16 and 17, the picture insert, and the citations—is licensed under the Creative Commons License CC BY 4.0
License: Creative Commons 4.0 International
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Print: Belgrad Creative. Risograph, Riso RP 3700

Layout and typography: Belgrad Creative with Zara Pfeifer

English Translation: Rob Madole

Edition: 200

ISBN 978-3-7983-2932-4 (print)
ISBN 978-3-7983-2933-1 (online)

Published simultaneously online, on the institutional repository of the Technische Universität Berlin:
DOI 10.14279/depositonce-5968
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14279/depositonce-5968>

Part of this publication takes the form of a 70-by-100-cm map insert: Paul Klever and Steffen Klotz, MAP SC 2.3 Mehringplatz, Berlin-Kreuzberg. Lukas Pappert and Jens Schulze, MAP SC 2.4 Urbanhafen, Berlin-Kreuzberg.

The common is neither public nor private, neither political nor economic. The common belongs to everybody and to nobody – like air and language. No particular commons without community – the universal commons (nature and culture), however, are commons without (or beyond) community.

Lieven de Cauter

ISBN 978-3-7983-2932-4 (print)

ISBN 978-3-7983-2933-1 (online)