Vincent and Elinor Ostrom
Memorial Lecture

Governing the Commons, 30 Years Later —
An Inventory of Good Advice for Commoners

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Thursday, October 1, 2020: 12:00 – 1:00 pm EST
Webinar via Zoom: Click here for link to registration page

The puzzle addressed in Governing the Commons doesn’t appear all that complex: How can groups of people best govern a shared resource, sustainably? Since 1990, an enormous amount of energy has been poured into answering this question. How has this spinoff research helped commoners to make better decisions? How can we proceed to further improve our service to the people for whom we are doing this?

Event is also part of World Commons Week as the North American Keynote Webinar.
Scientific relevance

Building theory

Developing methods

Solving problems-in-context

Solving problems-in-general

Fundamental science

Societal relevance

Applied science
What is the main current focus of your own work?

- Building theory: 30
- Developing methods: 8
- Solving common problems-in-context: 65
- Solving common problems-in-general: 12
The horror of the H-Index

- Perverse incentives?
- Strategies to publish more?
  - “Slicing thin baloney” – convert what should have been 1 article into 10 articles, instead.
  - Favor short paper production cycles (e.g. with a short data collection period)
  - Favor incremental theory development over solving practical problems
  - Get grad students to buy into the publication myth, and have them accepting you as a co-author
- Strategies to get cited?
  - Co-author with highly-productive and highly-cited peers
  - Favor review articles over work based on primary data and original ideas
  - I-cite-you-you-cite-me; cite-your-friends fests (here’s where gender & diversity issues in academia arise!)
  - Gravitate to the topics that have proven to result in a guaranteed high number of citations
GOVERNING the COMMONS

ELINOR OSTROM

The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action

2009 Nobel Prize Winner

Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions
RETABLIR LE LIEN ENTRE L'HOMME ET LA TERRE

Homes et Terre développe et exécute des projets de restauration des écosystèmes et d'agroforesterie en collaboration avec les communautés locales. Nous rectifions un lien dynamique entre l'homme et la terre afin de restaurer l'économie et d'autonomiser les communautés.
Do you feel you'd be able to give a training like this?

- No way! Never! (26)
- If you give me enough time to prepare...perhaps (64)
- Yes! I can do it! Right now, if you want to! (15)
My work is accessible to commoners. In it, they will find plug-and-play types of practical suggestions that will help them governing their commons.
The commons during the World Commons Week 2020 (Oct 9, 2020)
<table>
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<th>Sample</th>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>298</td>
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What type of commons do you mostly work on?

15
forests

17
water

12
fisheries

14
urban commons

7
pasture & range land

16
knowledge commons

4
irrigation

21
something else

2
not applicable
In what countries are your cases located? (if applicable)
Theory development

- Main ambition is to build theory: 43%
- Secondary ambition is to build theory: 29%
- No explicit ambition to build theory: 28%
Methods development

- Main ambition is to develop new methods: 4%
- Secondary ambition is to develop new methods: 5%
- No explicit ambition to develop methods: 91%
Solving practical problems (general)

- Main ambition is to solve general commons problems: 17%
- Secondary ambition is to solve general commons problems: 21%
- No explicit ambition to solve general commons problems: 61%
Solving practical problems (in context)

- Main ambition is to solve a common problem-in-context: 24%
- Secondary ambition is to solve a common problem-in-context: 29%
- No explicit ambition to solve a common problem-in-context: 47%
Main recommendation is geared at:

- Future research: 16%
- Policy makers: 40%
- Commoners: 11%
- No explicit recommendation: 33%
The recommendation is..

- Very specific: 20%
- Somewhat specific: 20%
- Very general & abstract: 27%
- No explicit recommendation: 33%
solving practical problems-in-context

Recommendation geared at:

- commoners: 9% very general, 0% somewhat specific
- policy makers: 35% very general, 26% somewhat specific, 22% very specific

number of articles (n=23) (31% of sample)
Governing the Commons

The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action

An Owners’ Manual

Nobel Prize Winner

Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions

Frank van Laerhoven

2029

your
Making it last? Analysing the role of NGO interventions in the development of institutions for durable collective action in Indian community forestry

Helping to self-help? External interventions to stimulate local collective action in Joint Forest Management, Maharashtra, India

Communities and commons: the role of community development support in sustaining the commons

Research articles
Uniting forest and livelihood outcomes? Analyzing external actor interventions in sustainable livelihoods in a community forest management context
Authors: Clare Barnes, Rachel Claus, Peter Driessen, Maria Joao Ferreira Dos Santos, Mary Ann George, Frank Van Laehoven

Communities and commons: the role of community development support in sustaining the commons
Authors: Barnes, C.; Van Laehoven, F.
Source: International Forestry Review, Volume 15, Number 1, March 2013, pp. 1-17(17)
Publisher: Commonwealth Forestry Association
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1505/146554813805927246

Published: 01 January 2014
Ex-post understanding => build theory

Ex-ante prediction => test theory
Mindful Science
DeltaMAR
Tailoring participatory action research to deal with the latent problem of an invasive alien vine on Saba, Caribbean Netherlands

Jetske Yaar, Peter P. J. Driessen, Mendel Gieszen, Frank van Laerhoven & Martin J. Wassen

Regional Environmental Change 20, Article number: 30 (2020) | Cite this article

1040 Accesses | 5 Altmetric | Metrics
Recommendations

• Keep doing what you’re doing with regarding the generation and testing of theory and methods!

• Formulate clear and precise recommendations

• Specify who you are addressing

• Address and accommodate commoners and their supporters more often

• Try to solve practical problems minimally as much as you try to build theory

• Try out mindful science approaches such as research uptake strategies and PAR
Go to www.menti.com and use the code 7772384

What is your best recommendation for commoners?
Thank you

When in the US: VOTE!

(Oh….and I’ll put (part of) my money where my mouth is)