

Placing the Commoning First: Getting Beyond the Patronage Trap in Natural Resource Decentralization Policies

Nurhady Sirimorok ^{1, 2}, Micah R. Fisher ^{2, 3}, Bart Verheijen ^{2, 4}, and Muhammad Alif K. Sahide ^{2, *}

AFFILIATIONS

- ¹. Doctoral Candidate at Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia
 - ². Forest and Society Research Group (FSRG), Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia
 - ³. East-West Center, Hawai'i, United States
 - ⁴. Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands
- *Corresponding author:
muhammad.alif@unhas.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Research on the commons have been an inspiration for initiatives on natural resource decentralization over the past three decades. Researchers are increasingly recognizing however, that these commons initiatives are mostly failing to support rights, improve livelihoods, and conserve natural resources. These “commons projects,” defined as approaches that claim to devolve natural resource governance to local institutions, have their origins in various formulations of theories of the commons but are usually interpreted and applied by states and donor organizations. This paper identifies and analyzes deficiencies in theories of the commons through the slight but significant refocusing on perspectives of commoning. We found that commons scholarship lacks a grounding in power relations, and furthermore, tends to portray commons-governing groups as homogenous communities enacting long-established practices. Conversely, a commoning perspective provides a more dynamic and relational approach, and thus distinctly centers political dimensions of collective practices among diverse groups of citizens. We also extend this argument by showing that a fundamental shift in understanding commoning will help advocate for, and anticipate what commoners can actually do in regions of the Global South undergoing widespread enclosures in the face of powerful informal patronage networks controlled by state power actors and interests.

RECEIVED 2023-03-09

ACCEPTED 2023-08-12

COPYRIGHT © 2023 by Forest and Society. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

KEYWORDS

Commoning; State informality; Decentralization; Developing countries; Political ecology.

1. INTRODUCTION

The past three decades has seen a growing emphasis on, commitment to, and initiatives for global efforts to devolve natural resource governance in developing countries (Agrawal, 2002; Larson & Soto, 2008; Berkes, 2021). Community based resource management, social and community forestry, and other forms of similar global initiatives invoking the commons have increasingly been translated into national development policies and strategies for rural development and conservation (Agrawal, 2001; Saunders, 2014). The discursive framing rests on the notion that local institutions closer to the resource are better positioned to sustainably manage the resource because they have better local knowledge of doing so and have a greater stake in the outcomes. Further, proponents presume that these initiatives can better provide at least partial protection to local land tenure systems (Larson & Soto, 2008; Ocampo-Diaz et al., 2022). Such a framing for natural resource management devolution emerged from explanations on the failures of centralist state- or corporate-driven resource management (De Angelis, 2017; Saunders, 2014). It also served as a defense against the rise of land grabbing practices taking place most visibly through leasing contracts directed for mining and estate concessions, but which have also been justified through conservation, or through more localized smallholder enclosures (Astuti & McGregor,

2017; Hall et al., 2011; Edelman et. al., 2015). Initiatives in support of the common thus aim to support local resource management as a premise for improved conservation outcomes, as a way to empower local community livelihoods, and as a means to afford protection against enclosure by external actors.

Nevertheless, while there has been a sharp increase of strategies, policies, and projects in support of the commons, research and critical assessments only point to a handful of actual applied successes in terms of improving equity and sustainability (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999; Larson & Soto, 2008; Moeliono et al., 2017; Saunders, 2014). Reasons for failure generally rests on explanations of technicalities that eclipse local capacity. Shortcomings are thus explained as administrative, managerial, and technical barriers impeding devolution of decision making and practices (Fisher et al., 2019; Riggs et al., 2018; Turner et al., 2021). The outcomes are such that commons projects rarely provide the means to further empower the capacity and authority of local institutions, and at worst, redirect authority towards institutional frameworks that further undermine commons institutions, resulting in inequitable outcomes, and unraveling local institutions that support environmental sustainability. Elite capture and individualization of land acquisition are rife in these case studies, specifically in state programs on land reform and across social forestry schemes (Moeliono et al., 2017). When compounded with the rush for large scale industrial enclosures for land, the additional impacts from commons projects on local institutions and tenure systems has exerted a high pressure on the remaining commons resources, reshaping landscapes of access and rural livelihoods.

This contradiction invokes a tension in studies of the commons between long enduring communities governing the commons, and the contemporary practice of commons management by newly established groups of citizens, including those from decentralization initiatives (Saunders, 2014). It begs the question: why do commons projects in developing countries fail despite the extant of studies of the commons that inform them, and the precedence of durable communities who are able to sustain the commons? In what way could we better comprehend this recurring contradiction? How might refocusing attention on commoning offer a way out?

Following on from these questions, our paper serves three purposes. First, we present a review on the shortcomings of commons theory as viewed from a commoning perspective. The overview identifies and clusters different aspects of commons theories and their persistent shortcomings when translated into practice. This review is especially important since theories of the commons are responsible for informing various policies of natural resource management devolution (Agrawal, 2001; Saunders, 2014). Second, we highlight the role of state informality in decentralization and commoning practice¹, especially given the prominence of state informality in postcolonial, resource rich, and developing countries such as Indonesia (Aspinall & van Klinken (eds.), 2011; Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018; Berenschot & van Klinken (eds.), 2019). These countries are especially affected by informal networks that encompass state-societal boundaries and also contribute to the current state of democratic decentralization policy and practice (Aspinall & van Klinken (2011); Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). Therefore, understanding state informality presents fundamental context on the decentralization of resource governance and the ways in which the commoning practices negotiate with the state. Third, we propose a commoning framework that offers a lens for understanding the intricate relationships between

¹ Commoning here understood as social practice since it represents a routinized type of behavior in which different unique activities are related to each other and produce a pattern, the practice (Euler, 2018: 12-13).

commoning practices and state informality, as well as their contexts and implications. Comprehending these relationships is important given that despite decentralization, ordinary citizens remain in need of commoning practices to secure access to local resources.

2. COMMONING AND STATE INFORMALITY

We understand commoning as a collective social practice to establish, manage, use, and maintain shared resources for collective ends (Fournier, 2013; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016). Specifically, we review critiques on commons theory against commoning perspectives that apply a political ecology approach (see for instance, Basurto & Lozano, 2021; DeVore, 2017; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; Hall et al., 2014; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Turner, 2017). Political ecology tends to examine conflict underpinning relationships that shape ecological change and governance, revealing the dynamics of struggle and network affiliations, attending to multi scalar and non-linear dynamics, but also rooted in historical antecedents of access and use of resources (Blaikie, 1999; Cleaver & de Koning, 2015; Paulson et al., 2003). Specifically commoning studies in developing countries from a political ecology perspectives yield more nuanced illustrations of how organized citizens practice commoning, and help explain interactions with state programs and regulations (Agrawal, 2000; Batiran et al., 2021; DeVore, 2017; Dressler & Roth, 2011; Meilasari-Sugiana, 2012; Mosse, 2006).

From a commoning perspective, commons theory appears to have several shortcomings. Specifically, the commons literature downplays commoning practices around property relations beyond those that manage common pool resources (CPR). Generally speaking, research and policy on the commons also tends to overlook the dynamic and complex social relations of commons governance systems. In doing so, authors neglect power relations, conflate the driving motivations of actors/institutions involving themselves in collective action, and essentialize the complex assemblages of participants in commoning. We argue that the concept of commoning is better suited to analyzing the political and relational characteristics of ecological change and governance. This is especially true for at least two reasons. First, a commoning perspective foregrounds social practices of commoning instead of focusing on the 'goods' that are being governed (the commons). This slight but significant shift from noun to verb has profound implications because it emphasizes social and power relations around specific practices (De Angelis, 2017; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Turner, 2017). Second, commoning opens up avenues for exploring informal networks and institutions that feature prominently in decentralization policymaking and implementation in post-colonial, developing, and resource-rich countries.

Post-colonial, resource-rich countries continue to experience pressures of enclosure in rural areas (Astuti & McGregor, 2017; Hall et al., 2011; McCarthy et al., 2012), which is a condition underpinned by informal relationships (Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011; Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018). In contexts where the state is dominated by informal networks, a commoning framework better explains decentralization processes and outcomes. It provides ways to understand diverse social relations and dynamic interactions to establish and sustain commoning (Basurto & Lozano, 2021). It allows us to view the state as part of the respective societies which embed local rules, networks, and interests, instead of an impartial formal organization that stands outside of society. By implication, we can focus more on the commoning groups that mobilize the same dynamics of informality to negotiate with formal decentralization policies and influence implementation (Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011; Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018; Li, 1999; van der Muur et al., 2019).

Such a perspective brings us back to the question of power in decentralization, which helps to better understand the failures of commons projects and why commoning perspectives might offer a sharper analytical lens. Larson & Soto (2008) show that in order to ensure equity and sustainability in the context of decentralization, local citizens should have sufficient power to be able to successfully make demands in relation to the more powerful parties. This is essential, for example, in securing their rights, which are often aspects that remain vague or inadequately enacted. This implies that informality can eschew citizen's rights, but that citizen collective action offers an antidote, and further provides a degree of autonomy to work within policies (Sirimorok & Asfriyanto, 2020). In some cases, collective action can translate simply into taking matters into their own hands (DeVore, 2019). Less powerful organized citizen groups need to be able to build sufficient power to level the playing field before diverse stakeholder resource management arrangements can achieve meaningful results for all parties (Barletti & Larson, 2019; Sirimorok & Rusdianto, 2020). Furthermore, studies also suggest that local citizens need to be able to negotiate among themselves to go beyond the essentialist 'community' point of view and create 'democratic spaces' for all, including those marginalized in the community (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Shaw, 2014).

In sum, in the context of decentralization, local institutions governing the commons reshape themselves, while constantly negotiating with the state (Basurto & Lozano, 2021; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2021). We assume that while commons-governing groups cannot escape interactions with the state, the state itself is a site of struggle where informal institutions and networks are battling to dominate the redistribution of resources. Therefore, in order to more successfully secure citizen rights from states that often operate through informal connections and institutions, and to avoid being locked into entrenched patronage networks, citizens need to cultivate commoning practices. We thus argue that scholars should work more deliberately to identify and facilitate enabling conditions and empower commoning practices.

3. QUESTIONING THE STUDY OF THE COMMONS, AND RESPONDING WITH COMMONING

Studies on institutions governing the commons have identified and tested possible conditions for successful (sustainable and equitable) commons especially by establishing and testing 'design principles' (Cox et al., 2010; Ostrom, 1990). Classic design principles comprise of: 1) clearly defined boundaries of users and resources; 2) congruence between rules and local condition, and between provisional rules (cost) and benefits; 3) collective-choice arrangements; 4) active and accountable monitoring mechanisms; 5) graduated sanctions; 6) affordable conflict resolution mechanisms; 7) recognition of rights to organize; and 8) nested enterprise. Subsequent research have engaged theoretically and empirically on these principles to identify combinations ('co-occurrence') most important to sustain different types of resource systems (Baggio et al., 2016), or to disaggregate components of the principles to enhance the analytical power of the framework (Cox et al., 2010).

Despite having had a profound impact on rethinking natural resource governance and policy, this scholarship has provided little by way of explanation on how the design principles are achieved and sustained. For example, in what ways do participants in their specific political-economic contexts establish and uphold the principles themselves? How would groups negotiate their respective contexts in biophysical, social, political, and cultural terms, and by what means do they do so?

In the section below, we survey diverse critiques on the commons to highlight shortcomings of its theoretical underpinnings. This includes theories of property,

institutional analyses, collective action theories, and others. We also show how slightly tilting the lens of engagement by re-examining commons around the notion of commoning helps to address some of the analytical deficiencies we presented above. To be clear, some of these critiques of the commons have come from within, and proponents of commoning studies ‘borrow’ and extend these instances as constructive criticism.

3.1 Commoning as social practice and relation

The basic shortcoming of the study of the commons in commoning scholarship is spotlighting the tendency to treat the commons as a noun. Earlier studies imagine the commons as a relatively static process. Such portrayals identify the rules, norms, and institutional arrangement - i.e., the ‘design principles’ - at a point in time that then predict successful commons management in a “single-time period, single-location case study” (Agrawal, 2002: 59). Reframing the idea as a verb, “commoning” reveals two important features of the practice.

First, commoning enhances the visibility of the intentional nature of the commons. The commons requires that participants/commoners organize themselves to engage in multiple arenas so as to achieve shared goals. Organizing must first establish and maintain collective action for various reasons, including: to manage production and provisions; to deal with multiple actors and institutions within and outside the group that have diverse values, norms and interests; and, to negotiate with dynamic and multi-scalar ecological features (Basurto & Lozano, 2021). Fournier (2013: 434) summarizes this as follows: “The commons not only [serves as] a finite pool of resources but also as a social process of production and organization.” The commons thus cannot materialize without intentional collective action, which occur in dynamic socio-ecological contexts.

Second, the concept of commoning entails continuous and dynamic processes, rather than a fixed arrangement or an ‘equilibrium’. Commoning is something that has to be continuously maintained in changing conditions in order to be sustained (Agrawal, 2002; Boucquey & Fly, 2021; Eizenberg, 2012; Euler, 2018; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Mosse, 2006). This framing helps us make sense of how the commons continuously faces pressures of enclosure from the state and capital, or a hybrid of the two in which – for instance – states lease large tracts of land for use by corporations in long-term contracts. Capitalism is constantly in need of new spaces of accumulation, a prerequisite for the system’s existence, and therefore always puts pressure on the remaining commons (Harvey, 2003). This is especially the case during periods when capital experiences global crises (De Angelis, 2017; Fournier, 2013).

Global discourses on climate change, furthermore, has pushed tropical countries such as Indonesia to commit large tracts of lands for conservation at the expense of local cultivators (Hall et al., 2011; Thorburn, 2013; Thorburn et al., 2011). Hence, as commoning weakens, enclosures deepen, and since enclosures do not only occur at the early development of capitalism (i.e. primitive accumulation) they also propel and exacerbate an ongoing need for capital accumulation, a condition for survival that increasingly depletes resources operating via accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003), including dispossession of the remaining commons (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015; Fournier, 2013; Kamath & Dubey, 2020). A more productive analytical way forward through this context is to investigate the ways in which commoning constantly interacts with wider social forces.

Studies that have critically examined the commons also point out shortcomings in the preoccupation with studying the type and characteristic of ‘goods’ forming the commons (Basurto & Lozano, 2021). Ostrom (1990) categorizes these goods into public, private, club/toll goods, and CPR based on the combination of degree of excludability

and subtractability. She often used the term CPR interchangeably with the term commons (Euler, 2018; Turner, 2017; Vaccaro & Beltran, 2019). Furthermore, some studies characterize goods as either static or mobile; for instance, water and fish are mobile, and land and crops are static (see e.g., Baggio et al., 2016).

A commons is much more than the type, nature, and characteristic of goods, but also includes its diverse types and nature of social relations. As such, studies have asserted the importance of investigating numerous social interactions such as struggle and negotiation and networking and affiliations-making – both among groups of people and between humans and non-humans – in order to secure access and establish institutional regimes for sustained use and conservation of the goods/resources (Euler, 2018; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; Hall et al., 2014; Turner, 2017). The emphasis on resources, among others, has confined commons studies predominantly to focusing more on the analysis of the CPR, while neglecting other types of goods or hybrids among these types, as well as the dynamic social relations among actors involved in the making and sustaining of the commons (Fournier, 2013). Basurto & Lozano (2021) argue that placing CPR as an analytical starting point would make it more difficult to understand how actors, practices, and relations interact with each other to establish and sustain the commons. Instead, by looking at commoning practices as an entry point, they analyzed the constellations of institutions and relations governing the commons that manage diverse types of goods (Basurto & Lozano, 2021; Turner, 2017).

While earlier commons studies tend to investigate groups managing CPR, in reality groups of citizens may decide to collectively manage other types of goods (Euler, 2018; Turner, 2017; Vaccaro & Beltran, 2019). Aside from highlighting groups that govern multiple types of goods, the studies of commoning have also emphasized the diverse nature and types of groups that manage the commons. Kamath & Dubey (2020), for instance, explain how multiple marginalized groups – such as the urban poor, hunter, forager, and fishing groups – excluded from legal ownership, launch collective practices of commoning by converting state and private properties into commons. Furthermore, it is now possible to think of how “enclosed and unmanaged resources can be commoned not by changing ownership but by changing how access, use, benefit, care, and responsibility occur” (Gibson-Graham et al., 2016: 196).

While important, concentration on the type and nature of goods in order to find the best institutional arrangement to manage shared resources may drive attention away from different social forces that struggle to control the commons (De Angelis, 2017; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Turner, 2017).² Kamath & Dubey (2020) suggest that,

“Conceptualising commoning as a verb [...] moves away from a material conception of common pool resources towards analysing them as a set of political practices of constituting space by competing interests of different groups. Such commoning practices convey that the commons are socially constructed, drawing from claims to land that unsettle the certainties of private property.”

Scholarships on commoning has also suggested that collective practices typically manage multiple commons as it tends to be generative and creative. Commoning practices can generate other new commons over time as it continues to manage the old

² Baggio et al. (2016.), for instance, show that a combination of several principles is more successful for different resources (the mobile water and fish is different from stationary land and crops). The authors are however aware that this study tells us less about structural conditions in which these principles are possible and can be maintained.

ones (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; Noterman, 2016). Furthermore, Fournier (2013) contends that Ostrom's (1990, 2010) commons analysis is more concentrated on how shared resource units are allocated rather than how a group of people consume the units collectively, and indeed how the commons can generate yet new commons.

To put it simply, commoning is related to what collectives decide to start and continue to do in order to establish and sustain the commons, regardless of the type of property relations and characteristics of the resource. This shift of focus to the action-oriented dimensions of the commons is based on the idea that the commons does not exist prior to the commoning. Indeed, a resource only becomes a commons after a group of people decide to initiate a set of commoning practices (Basurto & Lozano, 2021).

3.2 Commoning as a set of collective, inclusive, and diversely motivated practices

Critiques of collective action and institutional aspects of the commons highlight the individualist and rational choice view of the commons perspective, where the participants only join as 'rational' individuals that base their participation on cost-benefit calculations. By implication, the critiques we presented argue against the problem of (small) group size and the free-rider issue that dominate mainstream collective action theories. These shortcomings also result in the downplay of other types of rationales that mobilize and sustain collective actions, uncritically treating the community as a rather homogenous and isolated group, and as such, understate the power relations within the collective action groups and those outside of the groups.

These critiques maintain that collective action in managing shared resources are not always based on rational choices with cost-benefit equilibriums as their sole consideration for the individualist participants, but rather that the source of collective mobilization of personal time, effort, and resources can also be habitual, normative, creative, or moral (Clever, 2001; Mosse, 2006; Wright, 2008). They call attention to non-individualist motivations for participation in collective action. Gibson-Graham et al. (2016) characterize commoning as "establishing rules or protocols for access and use, taking care of and accepting responsibility for a resource, and distributing the benefits in ways that take into account the well-being of others" (Gibson-Graham et al., 2016). In other words, commoning has a distributional character that goes against individualist approaches as a driver of collective action.

In conjunction with these critiques, collective action can be effective not only by defining a clear and small number of participants so as to avoid the free-rider problem as predicted by several authors (Olson, 1965; Ostrom, 1990), but indeed the opposite can also be true. Writing from the case of community-based forest councils in the middle Himalayas in India, Agrawal (2000) found that the larger councils are better at organizing themselves for collective action to manage and secure forests, and the small ones are less successful. The larger ones are able to collect a sizable enough volume of participant contributions to fund forest rangers and address violations in their areas as well as being able to influence policy making, while smaller councils are unable to do the same (Agrawal, 2000). The studies by Agrawal (2000), Fournier (2013), and Kamath & Dubey (2020) show that the more people are involved in commoning, the better chance that commons can be produced and sustained. In addition, commoning participants are not always involved in a similar manner: they may have different abilities or priorities in life, so they can contribute at different levels in terms of amount of time, intensity, and capacity ("differential commoning") (Noterman, 2016). Bresnihan & Byrne (2015) have noted that groups managing collective and independent public spaces in urban Ireland are not limited to those who can use the commons, and instead, define what type of activities can and cannot be allowed in such spaces (see also

Fournier, 2013). Hence, commoning have more inclusive characteristics as participants may come from different social groupings. Their contributions are variable, but they still organize for common goals.

In fact, other commentators from critical studies on commoning have noted that organizing around the commons, understood as resources, can have exclusionary ramifications (Hall et al., 2014; Harvey, 2011). The same can be said about organizing around ‘indigenous’ identity that privileges indigenous elites or local power holders over the common members of the indigenous groups (van der Muur et al., 2019; Fisher and van der Muur, 2020).

The critiques that scrutinize both property and collective action of the commons (i.e. the institutionalist approach) also shy away from explicating political aspects of the commons and treat private and collective property relations as a binary opposition while in reality they often intersect and fuse (DeVore, 2017; Meilasari-Sugiana, 2012; Turner, 2017). They argue that the commons are not always managed by a “community,” assumed to consist of relatively homogenous groups with a shared cultural outlook and geographical coverage (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999).³ Newly formed groups may initiate commoning and manage some type of commons, and they can emerge in different shapes from time to time (see for instance DeVore, 2017; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Turner, 2017). This argument echoes the inclusive character of commoning described above. These studies maintain that commoning groups are in fact not fixed and isolated groups. They may change over time and are in constant interaction with networks or institutions outside of them, such as trade networks, migration patterns, and political affiliations (Agrawal, 2000; Caffentzis, 2012; Hall et al., 2014).

A study on state forest governance in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Riggs et al., 2018), for instance, neglects the internal difference among “community” members since the authors frame the community as a single entity or a “stakeholder” in relation to others. They render the “local community” as a single category of stakeholder, while dividing government organizations into several stakeholders. Although they correctly point out the problems of power asymmetry and enclosure that shrink people’s access to the forest, their stakeholder analysis draws a clear-cut line between the formal and informal actors: the state and society. This framing neglects the possible multiple alliances and groupings of actors within the corollary and complicated ‘civil society’ category, and the possibility of the operation of ‘informal institutions’ (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006) to mobilize participants from both state and local community categories. Alliances can cut across the state-society divide, as we will see in the next section.

One important implication of the non-isolated community argument is that the ‘old’ knowledge and practices underpinning the commoning—sometimes rendered as ‘endogenous’ or ‘traditional’—may well be an adoption or a blend with past state rules that have become traditional practices, surviving long after the old ruling regime have gone (Hall et al., 2014). In other words, “local is itself ‘translocal’ or even ‘transnational’, meaning a *community’s* distinctiveness is carved out from an already interconnected space” (Hall et al., 2014: 75). This blending and adoption become a constant pattern when a commoning initiative attempts to shape and modify collective management in the face of changing political, economic, and biophysical factors. They may practice ‘institutional bricolage’ where an organized form of institutions adopts knowledge and practices from outside, amplifying the function of their institutions (Cleverly & de Koning, 2015; Jones, 2015).

³ Even participants with different interests can organize commoning practices (Noterman, 2016).

Commoning scholarship argues that commons studies applying frameworks from design principles or using the institutional analysis and development (IAD) are prone to view power relations less explicitly, internally, and in relation to outside parties. Instead, commoning studies place greater focus on the institutional arrangements internal to commons group alongside the technical and managerial aspects of commons (Caffentzis, 2012; Hall et al., 2014; Haryanto et al., 2022; Mudliar & Koontz, 2021; Saunders, 2014). Table 1 summarizes these comparisons.

Table 1. Comparison between Commons and Commoning

Commons Theories	Commoning Perspectives
Commons as ‘noun’	Commons as ‘verb’
Focuses on resources with a combination of certain types and characteristics.	Focuses on social (inter)actions—such as struggle and negotiation, networking and affiliations-making—both among groups of people and between human and non-humans to secure access and establish institutional regimes for sustained use and conservation to the goods/resources (Euler, 2018; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; K. Hall et al., 2014; Turner, 2017)
Commons as a static/historic entity: identify the best institutional arrangement to manage CPR at one point in time, in one case study; use the identified patterns (principles) as a set of indicators for successful commons.	Commoning is dynamic, ongoing, contingent; focus on collective practices that may manage different resource types such as private and or public goods; each commoning is specific, practiced in different contexts, and deals with different social, political, ecological forces (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2021)
Focuses on CPR	
Manages a single commons	Commoning may manage multiple commons, generate new commons while maintaining the old ones (Boucquey & Fly, 2021; Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015; Eizenberg, 2012; Euler, 2018; Fournier, 2013; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; Noterman, 2016)
‘Institutionalist approach’	Commoning approach
Individualist/rational choice	Plurality of rationale to join commoning: habitual, normative, moral, etc. (DeVore, 2017; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Noterman, 2016)
The problem of group size / free-riders	Complicates group size / free rider dynamic, e.g. larger size of group can be effective (Agrawal, 2002)
Assumes homogeneous and isolated groups of commons (small group, usually rural, with shared history, norms, and value)	Diverse members can come together to initiate commoning (inclusive); change over time; in constant interaction with outside actors, institutions, contexts (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015; DeVore, 2017; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Noterman, 2016).
Focuses more on internal governance regime & apolitical (i.e., finding the best institutional arrangement to manage CPR, such as better combination of principles).	Commoning is in constant struggle with outside social forces; power asymmetry constantly unfolding internally and in relation to outside parties, which may threaten commons governance arrangement (Basurto & Lozano, 2021; Eizenberg, 2012; Hall et al., 2014; Noterman, 2016; Turner, 2017).

4. COMMONING AND STATE DECENTRALIZATION PROGRAMS

The discussion above established the notion of commoning as a dynamic, multi-scalar, collective, and generative process, but also an ongoing, intentional, inclusive, distributive, power-laden, and hence deeply relational one. These complex social features inevitably demand a more detailed analysis on the non-resource dimensions of the commons, and therefore encourage us to shift our attention to the practice of commoning. Furthermore, considering the importance of the state in commons governance (Agrawal, 2002; Epstein, 2017; Ryan, 2013; Turner, 2017), and how commoning practices help to ensure local wellbeing and sustainable use of resources (DeVore, 2017; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2021), we need to engage deeper into scholarship that analyzes the different relationships between commoning and the state.

Studies from an autonomist socialist perspective seem pessimistic about the relations of commoning and the state. They argue that commoning emerges from the failures of the state and market to provide for human needs resulting in unprecedented crises (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2015; De Angelis, 2017; Fournier, 2013; Noterman, 2016). Through enclosure, driven by 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2003), unchecked markets create unequal distribution of wealth, alienate people from their means of production, excessively exploit natural resources to dangerous levels, and result in widespread environmental and climate damages.

On the other hand, studies of the commons from an institutionalist perspective seem more optimistic about the role of the state. They contend that commoning may be able to work within rules set by the state, provided that the state has a degree of democratic decision-making at all levels, described as polycentrism (e.g., Herrawan et al., 2022; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2021; Ostrom, 2010). Meanwhile, studies from a more critical perspective, such as by critical institutionalists (Cleaver & de Koning, 2015; Jones, 2015) and political ecology (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022; Shaw, 2014) contend that commoning may push for and take advantage of different political spaces created by the state through diverse programs, cleavages or 'cracks' in formal rules of law (Ryan, 2013). Alternatively, spaces for decentralization of natural resource management can also be initiated by citizens prior to related policies, such as through social movements. This is evident in the case of land occupation by Brazil's Landless Workers Movement, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)* (DeVore, 2017), or the practice of commoning around mangrove forest conservation in Indonesia (Meilasari-Sugiana, 2012). Either way, these studies suggest that state policies require willing, informed, and organized citizens to effectively implement policies that accommodate people's interests (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2021). In addition, as decentralization policies are implemented in certain localities, they often depend on local actors and their diverse institutional arrangements.

A number of critical anthropological studies, especially in development and environmental studies, go deeper in order to understand the nature of the state itself and how the state works on a day-to-day basis at different levels in relation to natural resource management, both in policy making and implementation. One important aspect highlighted by these critical perspectives, especially among ethnographic studies, is that states are not run according to Weberian state prototypes (Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011; Mosse, 2006). In this light, Saunders (2014) notes the incapability of translating thin institutional analyses of CPR into "commons projects." Given the 'messiness' of field conditions, the implementor has to deal with 'thick' relations that are both internal and external of the targeted groups. Internally, the projects need to understand local norms, values, relationships and positionalities of different groups

and individuals involved in commons projects. Externally, they need to pay attention to “the specific and broader socio-economic setting or context (historically and spatially) in which actors are ‘embedded’” in order to comprehend “the circumstances that affect individual decision-making over resource use” (Saunders, 2014: 644).

In such situations, policy implementation does not always translate to a direct interpretation of policy texts ‘from above’ applied by local state officials on the ground. The actual day-to-day practices of the state are, more often than not, operated *in relation to* diverse groups of citizens (Annavarapu & Levenson, 2021; Mosse, 2004). In studies on project implementation in Indonesia, for instance, the state is often described as an arena of struggle between actors or alliances that cut across bureaucratic-societal lines as individuals try to gain political authority and access to resources. Informal institutions can even create tension or conflict within the state itself, through the conscious and concerted work of various actors to privilege certain groups and exclude others by legal and illegal mechanisms (Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011).

As a result, devolution policies designed to push back against inequality of resource control do not always achieve their goals. Often, local government institutions may lack resources to implement policies in complex socio-ecological contexts (Riggs et al., 2018), policies may be unsuitable to local ecological conditions (Herrawan et al., 2022), and local actors and informal institutions may contest or manipulate a project for their own interests (Annavarapu & Levenson, 2021; Hall et al., 2014; Moeliono et al., 2017; Saunders, 2014).

Policies can even be designed to be unimplementable, at least in their official formulation. Mosse (2004) has convincingly shown in an Indian case how policies are designed based on past reports that offer ‘interpretation of events.’ Such interpretations fit idealized and fashionable models of the time, such as ‘participatory’ or ‘good governance,’ rather than acting upon evidence emerging from actual practices and events. They are then framed in such a way to accommodate diverse and sometimes contradictory interests to attract supporters with the ability to mobilize financial and political support. The resulting complexity will come alive and intensify when policies enter local institutional systems (typically also very complex), making them virtually unimplementable. Hence, rather than a cause for planned practices, the policy itself is a result or an end to an intricate social process. Accordingly, projects guised as devolution are considered successful because their reports show the ability to sustain policy models by offering an ‘interpretation of events’ intelligible by its supporters (the ‘epistemic community’), instead of their ability to consistently turn policy text into reality. In other words, Mosse (2004: 664) explains: “the gap between policy and practice is constantly negotiated away”.

This constant negotiation in the gap between policy and practice has prompted a rich combination of studies on natural resource decentralization on one hand, and studies of commons and commoning on the other. Some studies begin by diving into state initiatives, such as decentralization programs for local resource governance (Agrawal, 2000; Dressler & Roth, 2011; Riggs et al., 2018). Meanwhile other studies focus more on citizens’ initiatives to manage the commons in response to certain state policies (Kamath & Dubey, 2020; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2021). Others still, focus on collective actions that emerge prior to or in the absence of decentralization policies (Basurto & Lozano, 2021; DeVore, 2017; Meilasari-Sugiana, 2012).

Nevertheless, average citizens (i.e., the governed, or those outside of the power holder circles) often depend on varied informal organizations that are better able to secure and protect their rights. Berenschot & van Klinken (2018) suggest that in post-

colonial states such as Indonesia, collective organizations that range from labor unions to gangs can often mediate citizens' efforts to get the state apparatus to provide for their lawful rights. This places citizens as constantly needing to negotiate with state institutions, providing a strong counterpoint to Ostrom's view of 'institutions' (Ostrom, 2005). Where the state tends to operate through informal connections, citizen-state negotiations usually work better through diverse collective organizations that have sufficient power vis-à-vis targeted state institutions/apparatuses. In fact, a study that reviewed commoning cases from around the world found that "local groups, communities or entire villages realized that the way to confront unequal governmental policies was to form collective responses and strive for social solidarity" (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022: 154).

Following this perspective, we assume that commoning practice is to become an effective citizen in countries like Indonesia, which means to become relatively independent from the hierarchical and often parasitic informal institutions such as patron-client ties. That is to say the commoner needs collective practices to satisfy shared needs, practices which are inclusive and redistributive, ones that have to be constantly maintained for shared interests in order to persist against ongoing and diverse forms of enclosure.

Table 2. Comparison between the commons and commoning perspectives

"Commons projects"	Commoning from a political ecology perspective
Assumes the state as a unified power that hold the highest authority over others (Weberian)	Commoning focuses on citizen's initiatives (Basurto & Lozano, 2021; Meilasari-Sugiana, 2012)
Assumes informality of the state as a sign of a 'deviant', 'shallow', or 'weak state', 'hollow regime', etc.	Assumes the state can operate through informal institutions and connections (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018; Mosse, 2006)
Policy dictates practice, and related impacts	Commoning interactions with the state may be antagonistic, collaborative, an tactical alliance, etc., but also dynamics based on changing power relations (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022; Caffentzis, 2012; Fournier, 2013; Mosse, 2006; Ryan, 2013)
Commons (CPR) governance is informal, and therefore requires formalization (e.g state requirements to form groups such as farmer groups)	
Public resources are to be handed down to formalized "community" groups	Commoning may create its own commons, stimulate and stimulated by state policy/programs, or take advantage of policies/programs (DeVore, 2017; Herrawan et al., 2022) (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022; Caffentzis, 2012; Fournier, 2013; Mosse, 2006; Ryan, 2013)

5. STATE INFORMALITY AND COMMONING IN INDONESIA

Studying commoning practices in Indonesia would provides especially rich analytical potential for two key reasons. The first is that policy design and implementation are heavily laden with informality (Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011; Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018; van der Muur et al., 2019), while second, there has been a sharp increase in commons projects to recognize state forests under local institutional authority (Fisher et al., 2018; Maryudi et al., 2022). The mode of informality is embodied by informal institutions, understood as "socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels" (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006: 5-6). This type of institution is practiced through varied forms range

from patron-client ties, kinship, cronies, and oligarchy, are widespread across Indonesia, and involve state officials (Schulte-Nordholt & van Klinken, 2007; Aspinall & van Klinken (eds.), 2011; Berenschot & van Klinken (eds.), 2019). They are connected across informal networks and underpinned by local values and norms inasmuch that illegal acts of the state are sometimes considered 'licit' by sections of the local public (Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011).

Studies on state informality in Indonesia locate bureaucracies within their local social and cultural settings and focus on actual practice rather than ideal types (van Schendel & Abraham, 2005; Aspinall & van Klinken, 2011). Such studies help us to rethink clear-cut distinctions between 'state' and 'society,' or 'formal' and 'informal,' which dominated past research in Indonesia (Schulte-Nordholt & van Klinken, 2007) and beyond. Contestation for formal positions in high offices, for instance, are dominated by circles of local elite-patrons (Buehler, 2014). Moreover, their tenure tends to operate through informal connections such as kinship and patron-client ties where local public official seats are dominated by these relations (Buehler, 2010; Schulte-Nordholt & van Klinken, 2007). Ethnographic accounts show how local elite-patrons often hold formal high offices at different levels of state institutions, and therefore are able to influence public policy making processes and their implementation, particularly those related to the management of natural resources.

Given these state informalities, citizen groups who practice commoning are in constant negotiation with state officials in order to secure their access to resources through some degree of collective governance of local resources. Interactions between decentralization (formal state initiatives) with commoning practices (initiated by citizen groups) to negotiate for local resource management at different levels have been recorded across Indonesia. Sirimorok and Asfriyanto (2020) note how a local coastal community in East Nusa Tenggara organized participatory mapping and a series of meetings to devise rules for local resource protection and use, then negotiate with the village government to formalize resulting maps and rules. Sarmiento-Barletti and Larson (2019) reported local citizens in a regency in Kalimantan whom, among others, organized enough people to successfully perform a vote pooling to ensure that the elected local official is responsive to their demands and grievances in relation to palm oil companies operating in the regency.

Typical commons project in Indonesia generally take the form of community forestry schemes that grant parts of state forests to local citizens. To be successful, Herrawan et al. (2022) describe how grantee groups must bend several formal rules which can only be done through a series of informal negotiations with networks of local forestry officials. Recent movements on the recognition of Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia, Van der Muur et al. (2019) noted that respective regency's formal recognition of *adat* served as a prerequisite to secure customary land rights. Recognition is negotiated through informal connections between indigenous groups and regencies' bureaucratic elites (Fisher and Vand der Muur, 2019). While such recognition for indigenous lands have become state programs sanctioned by national law, only a handful of the hundreds of indigenous groups have successfully reclaimed their land rights (van der Muur et al., 2019: 390). Recognition has to be negotiated. It requires organized citizens to push for their rights. Similar practices are also reported from other developing country contexts (see for instance, Kamath & Dubey (2020) and Meinzen-Dick et al. (2021) for Indian cases; DeVore (2017) for the Brazilian context; Saunders (2014) for an overview of African cases).

Meilasari-Sugiana's (2012) analysis on a local commoning initiative around mangrove protection in Indonesia provide a rather prototypical example on how the

citizen groups constantly face various challenges from state informality in the context of decentralization. Coastal community members built and maintained mangrove forests since the 1980s as a need for protection from high winds and waves, but also served as a legitimate claim to land and access to additional livelihoods. Decentralization policies in the early 2000s facilitated the regency government to convert community mangroves into a state forest, resulting in overlapping and contradiction with the local rules. Moreover, this formal conversion encouraged the local state agency to exact additional taxes from citizen properties, in order to raise the local government income. This change deepens economic pressures that might threaten mangrove forest sustainability. Meanwhile, the regency government took credit for the intact mangrove forest, an outcome that had actually emerged as a result of commoning. And the success of the site attracted more recognition and funds. Internal conflicts ensued as a result of incoming mangrove protection programs that began after state forest designation, and developed informal and exclusive relationships between state officials with certain actors in the community group.

In the end, the community group succeeded in protecting the mangrove forest because they were organized enough to depose their allegedly corruptible leaders, as well as challenging, and casually neglecting, official rules. The case shows how a group of organized citizens, through constant practice of commoning, were able to overcome encroachment of their commons initiated by informal acts of the local government, which were ironically underwritten by formal decentralization policies. As such, while decentralization or other types of commons projects are often initiated by the state, development, and donor organizations, commoning is initiated and sustained by groups of communities.

6. TOWARDS THE STUDY OF COMMONING IN DECENTRALIZED STATES

As we have argued throughout the paper, the focus on commoning enables us to delve more closely into diverse groups, old and new, that govern different sets of CPR. Doing so helps resolve tensions between research on long-enduring groups governing CPRs depicted in many commons studies and those that examine newly established groups managing different types of property in commoning studies (Saunders, 2014). Taken together, any group that decides to co-manage resources with varying characteristics are worth being a subject of the study of commoning. The focus on commoning unshackles the study of the commons from the tendency to focus on exclusive groups that govern only one type of property relation, the CPR, and helps pay closer attention to diverse types of collective action groups who commit to initiating and sustaining shared management of any type of property regime, including public properties. Furthermore, commoning participants can get involved in collective action with different levels of ability and contributions (Noterman, 2016), which may contradict the rational-choice theory fundamental to explanations of collective action. This is especially true about the perceived free-rider problem.

Besides the emphasis on diversity of groups and participants in commoning practices, a commoning perspective provides a more dynamic understanding of collective action of the commons. Instead of merely looking at the results at one point in time, we can explore *how* organized citizens shape the success or failure of resource management *over* time, outside or within the context of commons projects. They may evolve from simple livelihood necessities to perceived and real environmental crises or injustices, as well as from new opportunities offered by broader political economic dynamics (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022; Seixas & Davy, 2007). It thus enables us to delve into how these groups established themselves and to deliberately deal with diverse

challenges or opportunities, as well as continuing to explain how they evolve and reshape themselves. This entails that commoning practices not only advocate for change, but also encourage the means for making actual changes. Groups of disenfranchised citizens, for instance, may self-organize and create commons, and thus may establish means for managing CPR amid challenges from those encroaching on their commons. The study of commoning allows us to understand the reasons and processes in which a group of citizens create and sustain their commons, instead of merely evaluating the emerging results of the processes that aim to label them 'successful' or 'failed' commons.

In addition, the focus on social relations in commoning brings us further into examining the informal institutions and networks, which serve as important features in state functionality within commons projects, especially in post-colonial settings. Herein, we discussed how state-society divides are blurred, showed ways states operate outside of their formal rules, and explained how policies are often the result of struggles for resource redistribution (Mosse, 2004). These struggles are usually dominated by an acute imbalance of power relations, whereby ordinary citizens (commoners) in countries like Indonesia often have to resort to informal networks to secure their rights. In the context of land grabbing and privatization of other public resources, as well as coercive conservation measures, state informality in commons or decentralization projects reshape initiatives that are supposed to redistribute the remaining resources and/or public resources to citizens, adding greater pressure to the disenfranchised. State decentralization then, as we have argued, can even usher in previously centralized pressures closer to the commoners at the local level (Sahide et al., 2016).

Hence, building commoning practices at the local level would more likely prepare the commoning groups to face further enclosures and encroachment of the remaining commons on the one hand, and on the other hand, assists in imagining and experimenting with a different future outside of capitalist-dominated institutions. The practice of commoning can create democratic and inclusive spaces for citizens by beginning to govern shared resources of any type and character, creating new institutions beyond the dominant market and neoliberal state institutions along the way (Shaw, 2014). Social movement groups that advocate for more access and control of resources, and those that create new democratic spaces and practices, can be seen as a form of commoning (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022; Caffentzis, 2012). Locally organized citizens, as we have shown, would better be able to handle internal conflict, make direct demands, and secure access and control of local resources, as well as to take advantage of 'cracks' (Ryan, 2013) and or 'invited' political-economic spaces (Gaventa, 2006) as a result of wider advocacy. In addition, they could potentially develop wider networks based on solidarity, common grievances, and alternative imagination for the future of commons governance (Apostolopoulou et al., 2022).

Taken together, we translated our overall review into an analytical framework that can assist in better delving into commoning initiatives in ways that continue to pay attention to relations with the growing popularity of state decentralization programs. To do this, there are at least four areas that require attention. First, in order to avoid an ahistorical and static description of commoning, we need to extend analysis temporally and spatially to explore the contexts surrounding the establishment of commoning practices. In doing so, we can identify factors that stimulate and shape initial commoning practices. Second, having established context we can further examine the actual commoning practices to examine daily operations, rules, and mechanisms, as well as power relations within the group. All of this much remain sensitive to the inclusive and reproductive dynamics of the commoning. Third, given the importance of

state informality, it is helpful to investigate the state's actual interactions with commoning groups, as well as how both parties respond to one another. These dynamics may or may not be related to decentralization initiatives. This leads us to explain the extent to which the on-going and contingent character of commoning materializes, as well as the dynamics of power relations within the groups and between the state and the groups. This can range from cooperation, ambivalent relationships, to outright confrontation, or a combination of them. Lastly, analyzing outcome of commoning internally is fundamental, but also understanding the external dimensions are also key, including the biophysical, economic, and social outcomes, such as emerging relations and institutions surrounding the groups.

Below we translate our findings into possible aspects and questions to explore, which we believe would help to analyze the practice of commoning in relation to state decentralization initiatives, especially where informality of the state highly influences decentralization policies and practices:

- *History and context of commoning.* In order to understand commoning as an un-isolated practice, a historical analysis and examination of broader social, political, and ecological context is fundamental. This requires historically explaining how people join together to establish commoning initiatives, as well as how they maintain practices collectively. Therefore, when Meinzen-Dick et al. (2021) described commons as formed when a group of people decide to collectively manage a resource, the corresponding questions would include: How did commoning decisions take shape? What were the structural prerequisites that enabled such decisions? In addition, the following questions provide additional analytical grounding that serves as a necessary guide: What conditions stimulated people to get organized around commoning? What were the ensuing social, political, and ecological conditions at the time of key moments of commoning? How do international and national policies, as well as market dynamics come into play? Who was involved, how and why?
- *The practice of commoning.* To dive deeper into the actual practices of commoning groups, we need to first acknowledge that the commoning may govern various types of resources and manage multiple common resources. They could include long enduring groups or could also be newly established collectives. Daily commoning activities may follow certain rules and mechanisms that are affected by power relationships within and external to the group. Questions to explore on this aspect of commoning include: What rules and mechanisms are formulated? What monitoring and enforcement approaches are applied? How are the benefits and responsibilities distributed? What are values and knowledge that ground the rules, mechanism, and distribution? How is conflict and rule violation resolved, and what results do they yield? How do internal power relations impact commoning? How is collective action nurtured? What sorts of modifications and innovations do they make to preserve collective action? What challenges do they face?
- *Commoning-state relationships.* To understand the relationship between commoning and the state, an exploration of the actual day-to-day interactions that unfold between commoning and state entities is fundamental. Questions to address would include: What kind of conflicts occur? How do commoning groups manage the conflicts, and what kinds of social and ecological outcomes does it produce? Specific examination is also needed to understand the role of norms, values, and interests of each party in relation to decentralization programs, as well as market impacts on state policies and commoning.
- *Emerging conditions and results.* Finally, there is a need to detail the emerging

results of the interaction between commoning and state devolution programs. Questions to seek answers to include: How are emerging power relations established and reshaped within the group and with external parties? What is the possibility of sustainable use of resources? Is the commoning initiatives reproductive and are new types of social relations emerging? If so, are they inclusive or distributive? Are they democratic?

7. CONCLUSION

We have discussed the complexity involved in the relationship between commoning and the state, especially in cases of a growing number of natural resource management decentralization initiatives in developing countries. We argue that commoning is a social practice with complex relations that structure access and use of resources. They are made up of collective, inclusive, and diversely motivated practices. We described the importance of commoning practices, through which collective citizens' initiatives can negotiate with state decentralization policies and programs.

Overall, the dynamic relations between the state and commoning is varied. Commoning can be either a direct or an indirect response to state failures, or conversely, can emerge from opportunities opened up by state policies. Commoning can also be established independently with little early interaction with states. Important here to recognize is that state policies and their implementation by formal authorities may fail to achieve equitable, inclusive, and sustainable results without organized citizen groups striving for common wellbeing.

Our paper highlighted the importance of informality on both policy-making and implementation of commons projects, especially in developing countries. Informality, which blurs the distinction between the 'state' and 'society,' sets the stage for ongoing negotiation and tension among groups for access and use of natural resources that cut across state-society divides. This insight warns against seeing policies and practices from a thinly veiled formal perspective and showcases the need to go beyond examining them solely as an initiative of the state or other formal organizations. Such misconceptions, we have argued, are widely held in decentralization policies and commons projects. Nevertheless, we also acknowledge the relative dependency of commoning on state power, especially in the case of non- or weakly-organized citizens who have to depend on informal connections to secure their rights and gain access to resources. Therefore, we argue that the average citizens need commoning practices in order to become effective citizens, ones that are relatively free from informal institutions.

Finally, we complemented the conceptual discussion with an analytical framework for exploring commoning practices around decentralization of natural resource management in developing countries. We do this to provide ways for future research to more explicitly operationalize research on commoning in the context of the growing popularity of natural resource decentralization programs. The simple heuristic, listed as a set of broad questions is as follows: How did commoning develop, survive, dissolve, and reconstitute? What are the social-political contexts, histories, and institutions surrounding these processes? And finally, in what ways do citizen commoning initiatives interact with the broader policies, and more specifically, the formal and informal practices of the state?

Author Contributions: All authors have a similar role in this paper.

Competing Interests: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments: We thank the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology for its support through the program of General Doctoral Research Grant (Contract Number: 124/E5/PG.02.00.PL/2023).

REFERENCES

- Agrawal, A. & Ribot, J. (1999). Accountability in decentralization: A framework with South Asian and West African cases. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 33(4), 473–502.
- Agrawal, A. (2000). Small Is Beautiful, but Is Larger Better? Forest-Management Institutions in the Kumaon Himalaya, India. In C. C. Gibson, M. A. McKean, & E. Ostrom (Eds.), *People and Forests: Communities, Institutions, and Governance* (pp. 57–86). MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/5286.003.0009>
- Agrawal, A. (2001). Common property institutions and sustainable governance of resources. *World Development*, 29(10), 1649–1672. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X\(01\)00063-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(01)00063-8)
- Agrawal, A. (2002). Common resources and institutional sustainability. In National Academy of Sciences (Ed.), *The Drama of the Commons* (pp. 41–85). The National Academies Press.
- Agrawal, A., & Gibson, C. C. (1999). Enchantment and Disenchantment: The Role of Community in Natural Resource Conservation. *World Development*, 27(4), 629–649. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X\(98\)00161-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(98)00161-2)
- Annarapu, S., & Levenson, Z. (2021). The Social Life of the State: Relational Ethnography and Political Sociology. *Qualitative Sociology*, 44(3), 337–348. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-021-09491-2>
- Apostolopoulou, E., Bormpoudakis, D., Chatzipavlidis, A., Cortés Vázquez, J. J., Florea, I., Gearey, M., ... & Wahby, N. (2022). Radical social innovations and the spatialities of grassroots activism: navigating pathways for tackling inequality and reinventing the commons. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 29(1), 144–188. <https://doi.org/10.2458/jpe.2292>
- Aspinall, E., & van Klinken, G. (2011). The state and illegality in Indonesia. In Aspinall, E. & van Klinken, G. (Eds.), *The State and Illegality in Indonesia* (pp. 1–28). KITLV Press.
- Aspinall, E., & van Klinken, G. (Eds.). (2011). *The state and illegality in Indonesia*. KITLV Press.
- Astuti, R., & McGregor, A. (2017). Indigenous land claims or green grabs? Inclusions and exclusions within forest carbon politics in Indonesia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44(2), 445–466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1197908>
- Baggio, J. A., Barnett, A. J., Perez-Ibarra, I., Brady, U., Ratajczyk, E., Rollins, N., ... & Janssen, M. A. (2016). Explaining success and failure in the commons: the configural nature of Ostrom's institutional design principles. *International Journal of the Commons*, 10(2), 417. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.634>
- Bartlett, J. P. S., & Larson, A. (2019). *The role of multi-stakeholder forums in subnational jurisdictions: Framing literature review for in-depth field research*. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). <https://doi.org/10.17528/cifor/007150>
- Basurto, X., & Lozano, A. G. (2021). Commoning and the commons as more-than-resources: A historical perspective on Comcaac or Seri fishing. In P. K. Nayak (Ed.), *Making Commons Dynamic: Understanding Change Through Commonisation and Decommonisation* (pp. 167–190). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429028632-13>
- Batiran, K., Sirimorok, N., Verheijen, B., Fisher, M. R., & Sahide, M. A. K. (2021). Creating

- Commons: Reflections on Creating Natural Resource Management Regimes in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Feminist Studies: FS*, 5(2), 619–630. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v5i2.14768>
- Berenschot, W., & van Klinken, G. (2018). Informality and citizenship: the everyday state in Indonesia. *Citizenship Studies*, 22(2), 95–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2018.1445494>
- Berenschot, W., & van Klinken, G. (eds.) (2019). *Citizenship in Indonesia: Perjuangan Atas Hak, Identitas, dan Partisipasi*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia
- Berkes, F. (2021). *Advanced Introduction to Community-based Conservation*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Blaikie, P. (1999). A Review of Political Ecology: Issues, Epistemology and Analytical Narratives. *Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsgeographie*, 43(1), 131–147. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zfw.1999.0009>
- Boucquey, N., & Fly, J. (2021). Contested Commoning: Urban Fishing Spaces and Community Wellbeing. *International Journal of the Commons*, 15(1), 305–319. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1095>
- Bresnihan, P., & Byrne, M. (2015). Escape into the city: Everyday practices of commoning and the production of urban space in Dublin. *Antipode*, 47(1), 36–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12105>
- Buehler, M. (2010). Decentralisation and Local Democracy in Indonesia: The Marginalisation of the Public Sphere. In E. Aspinall & M. Mietzner (Eds.), *Problems of Democratisation in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions and Society* (pp. 267–285). ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute.
- Buehler, M. (2014). Elite Competition and Changing State-Society Relations: Shari'a Policymaking in Indonesia. In M. Ford & T. B. Pepinsky (Eds.), *Beyond Oligarchy: Wealth, Power, and Contemporary Indonesian Politics* (pp. 157–176). Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501719158-011>
- Caffentzis, G. (2012). A tale of two conferences: globalization, the crisis of neoliberalism and the question of the commons. *Borderlands*, 11(2).
- Cleaver, F. (2001). Institutional bricolage, conflict and cooperation in usangu, Tanzania. *IDS Bulletin*, 32(4), 26–35. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2001.mp32004004.x>
- Cleaver, F., & de Koning, J. (2015). Furthering critical institutionalism. *International Journal of the Commons*, 9(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.605>
- Cox, M., Arnold, G., & Tomás, S. V. (2010). A Review of Design Principles for Community-based Natural Resource Management. *Ecology and Society*, 15(4), 38. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-03704-150438>
- De Angelis, M. (2017). *Omnia Sunt Communia: On the Commons and the Transformation to Postcapitalism*. Zed Books. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350221611>
- DeVore, J. (2017). Trees and springs as social property: a perspective on degrowth and redistributive democracy from a Brazilian squatter community. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 24(1), 644–666. <https://doi.org/10.2458/v24i1.20904>
- Dressler, W., & Roth, R. (2011). The Good, the Bad, and the Contradictory: Neoliberal Conservation Governance in Rural Southeast Asia. *World Development*, 39(5), 851–862. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2010.08.016>
- Edelman, M., Oya, C., Borrás, S. (2015). *Global Land Grabs: History, Theory, and Method*. Routledge.
- Eizenberg, E. (2012). Actually existing commons: Three moments of space of community gardens in New York city. *Antipode*, 44(3), 764–782. <https://doi.org/>

- 10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00892.x
- Epstein, G. (2017). Local rulemaking, enforcement and compliance in state-owned forest commons. *Ecological Economics: The Journal of the International Society for Ecological Economics*, 131, 312–321. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2016.09.012>
- Euler, J. (2018). Conceptualizing the Commons: Moving Beyond the Goods-based Definition by Introducing the Social Practices of Commoning as Vital Determinant. *Ecological Economics: The Journal of the International Society for Ecological Economics*, 143, 10–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2017.06.020>
- Fisher, M. R., & van der Muur, W. (2020). Misleading icons of communal lands in Indonesia: Implications of adat forest recognition from a model site in Kajang, Sulawesi. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 21(1), 55–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2019.1670244>
- Fisher, M. R., Dhialu, A., & Sahide, M. A. K. (2019). The politics, economies, and ecologies of Indonesia's third generation of social forestry: An introduction to the special section. *Forest and Society*, 3(1), 152–170. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v3i1.6348>
- Fournier, V. (2013). Commoning: on the social organisation of the commons. *M@n@gement*, 16(4), 433–453. <https://doi.org/10.3917/mana.164.0433>
- Gaventa, J. (2006). Finding the spaces for change: A power analysis. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(6), 23–33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2006.tb00320.x>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, J., & Healy, S. (2016). Commoning as a postcapitalist politics 1. In A. Amin & P. Howell (Eds.), *Releasing the Commons* (pp. 192–212). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315673172-12>
- Hall, D., Hirsch, P., & Li, T. M. (2011). *Powers of Exclusion: Land Dilemmas in Southeast Asia*. NUS Press.
- Hall, K., Cleaver, F., Franks, T., & Maganga, F. (2014). Capturing Critical Institutionalism: A Synthesis of Key Themes and Debates. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 26(1), 71–86. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2013.48>
- Harvey, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2011). The Future of the Commons. *Radical History Review*, 109, 101–107. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-2010-017>
- Haryanto, T., van Zeven, J., & Purnhagen, K. (2022). Ostrom's Design Principles as Steering Principles for Contractual Governance in "Hotbeds." *Forest and Society*, 6(1), 175–201. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v6i1.17993>
- Helmke, G., & Levitsky, S. (2006). *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*. JHU Press.
- Herrawan, H., Sirimorok, N., Nursaputra, M., Mas'ud, E. I., Faturachmat, F., Sadapotto, A., ... & Sahide, M. A. K. (2022). Commoning the State Forest: Crafting Commons through an Indonesian Social Forestry Program. *Forest and Society*, 6(1), 20–39. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v6i1.10680>
- Jones, S. D. (2015). Bridging political economy analysis and critical institutionalism: an approach to help analyse institutional change for rural water services. *International Journal of the Commons*, 9(1), 65–86. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.520>
- Kamath, L., & Dubey, G. (2020). Commoning the Established Order of Property: Reclaiming Fishing Commons in Mumbai. *Urbanisation*, 5(2), 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2455747120972983>
- Larson, A. M., & Soto, F. (2008). Decentralization of Natural Resource Governance

- Regimes. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 33(1), 213–239. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.envIRON.33.020607.095522>
- Li, T. M. (1999). Compromising power: Development, culture, and rule in Indonesia. *Cultural Anthropology: Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology*, 14(3), 295–322. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.1999.14.3.295>
- Li, T. M. (2002). Engaging Simplifications: Community-Based Resource Management, Market Processes and State Agendas in Upland Southeast Asia. *World Development*, 30(2), 265–283. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X\(01\)00103-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(01)00103-6)
- McCarthy, J. F., Vel, J. A. C., & Afiff, S. (2012). Trajectories of land acquisition and enclosure: development schemes, virtual land grabs, and green acquisitions in Indonesia's Outer Islands. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39(2), 521–549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2012.671768>
- Meilasari-Sugiana, A. (2012). Collective action and ecological sensibility for sustainable mangrove governance in Indonesia: challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 19(1), 184–201. <https://doi.org/10.2458/v19i1.21726>
- Meinzen-Dick, R., Chaturvedi, R., Kandikuppa, S., Rao, K., Rao, J. P., Bruns, B., & ElDidi, H. (2021). Securing the commons in India: Mapping polycentric governance. *International Journal of the Commons*, 15(1), 218. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1082>
- Moeliono, M., Thuy, P. T., Bong, I. W., Wong, G. Y., & Brockhaus, M. (2017). Social Forestry - why and for whom? A comparison of policies in Vietnam and Indonesia. *Forest and Society*, 1(2), 78–97. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v1i2.2484>
- Mosse, D. (2004). Is good policy unimplementable? Reflections on the ethnography of aid policy and practice. *Development and Change*, 35(4), 639–671. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0012-155X.2004.00374.x>
- Mosse, D. (2006). Collective Action, Common Property, and Social Capital in South India: An Anthropological Commentary. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 54(3), 695–724. <https://doi.org/10.1086/500034>
- Mudliar, P., & Koontz, T. M. (2021). Locating power in Ostrom's design principles: Watershed management in India and the United States. *Society & Natural Resources*, 34(5), 639–658. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2020.1864535>
- Noterman, E. (2016). Beyond tragedy: Differential commoning in a manufactured housing cooperative. *Antipode*, 48(2), 433–452. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12182>
- Ocampo-Diaz, N., Lopez, M. C., Axelrod, M., & Norris, P. (2022). Decentralizing the Governance of Inland Fisheries in the Pacific Region of Colombia. *International Journal of the Commons*, 16(1), 78–93. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1131>
- Olson, M. (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups, With a New Preface and Appendix*. Harvard University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2005). *Understanding Institutional Diversity*. Princeton University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems. *The American Economic Review*, 100(3), 641–672. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.100.3.641>
- Paulson, S., Gezon, L. L., & Watts, M. (2003). Locating the political in political ecology: An introduction. *Human Organization*, 62(3), 205–217. <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.62.3.e5xcjnd6y8v09n6b>
- Peluso, N. L., Afiff, S., & Rachman, N. F. (2008). Claiming the grounds for reform:

- Agrarian and environmental movements in Indonesia. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 8(2-3), 377–407. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2008.00174.x>
- Riggs, R. A., Langston, J. D., Margules, C., Boedhihartono, A. K., Lim, H. S., Sari, D. A., Sururi, Y., & Sayer, J. (2018). Governance Challenges in an Eastern Indonesian Forest Landscape. *Sustainability: Science Practice and Policy*, 10(1), 169. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10010169>
- Ryan, A. B. (2013). The Transformative Capacity of the Commons and Commoning. *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 21(2), 90–102. <https://doi.org/10.7227/IJS.21.2.7>
- Sahide, M. A. K., Supratman, S., Maryudi, A., Kim, Y. S., & Giessen, L. (2016). Decentralisation policy as recentralisation strategy: forest management units and community forestry in Indonesia. *International Forestry Review*, 18(1), 78–95. <https://doi.org/10.1505/146554816818206168>
- Sarmiento Barletti, JP and Larson AM. (2019). *The role of multi-stakeholder forums in subnational jurisdiction*. Occasional Paper 194. CIFOR.
- Saunders, F. P. (2014). The promise of common pool resource theory and the reality of commons projects. *International Journal of the Commons*, 8(2), 636–656. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.477>
- Schulte-Nordholt, H., & van Klinken, G. (Eds.). (2007). *Renegotiating Boundaries: Local Politics in Post-Soeharto Indonesia* (Vol. 238, pp. 373–384). KITLV Press. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004260436_017
- Seixas, C. S., & Davy, B. (2007). Self-organization in integrated conservation and development initiatives. *International Journal of the Commons*, 2(1), 99–125. <https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.24>
- Shaw, M. (2014). Learning From the Wealth of the Commons: A Review Essay. *Community Development Journal*, 49(suppl_1), i12–i20. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsu012>
- Sirimorok, N., & Asfriyanto, A. (2020). The return of the muro: Institutional bricolage, customary institutions, and protection of the commons in Lembata Island, Nusa Tenggara. *Forest and Society*, 4(1), 61–80. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v4i1.7676>
- Sirimorok, N., & Rusdianto, E. (2020). The Importance of Being Political: Emergence of a Multi-stakeholder Forum at the Lake Malili Complex, South Sulawesi. *Forest and Society*, 4(1), 98–114. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v4i1.7442>
- Thorburn, C. (2013). Seeing the Forest for the Carbon: Interrogating Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). In D. Kingsbury (Ed.), *Critical Reflections on Development* (pp. 139–161). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230389052_9
- Thorburn, C., Dewees, P., Leach, M., Mearns, R., Scoones, I., Beltrán, F., ... & Others. (2011). *The REDD Rush in Indonesia*. Sustaining Commons: Sustaining Our Future, the Thirteenth Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of the Commons, Hyderabad, India. <https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/handle/10535/7202>
- Turner, M. D. (2017). Political ecology III: The commons and commoning. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(6), 795–802. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516664433>
- Turner, M. D., Carney, T., Lawler, L., Reynolds, J., Kelly, L., Teague, M. S., & Brottem, L. (2021). Environmental rehabilitation and the vulnerability of the poor: The case of the Great Green Wall. *Land Use Policy*, 111, 105750. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2021.105750>
- Vaccaro, I., & Beltran, O. (2019). What Do We Mean by “the Commons?” An Examination of Conceptual Blurring Over Time. *Human Ecology*, 47(3), 331–340.

- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-019-00081-z>
- van der Muur, W., Vel, J., Fisher, M. R., & Robinson, K. (2019). Changing Indigeneity Politics in Indonesia: From Revival to Projects. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 20(5), 379–396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2019.1669520>
- van Schendel, W., & Abraham, I. (Eds.). (2005). *Illicit Flows and Criminal Things: States, Borders, and the Other Side of Globalization*. Indiana University Press.
- Vel, J., Zakaria, Y., & Bedner, A. (2017). Law-Making as a Strategy for Change: Indonesia's New Village Law. *Asian Journal of Law and Society*, 4(2), 447–471. <https://doi.org/10.1017/als.2017.21>
- Wright, E. O. (2008). Commentary 2: Sociologists and economists on the commons. In P. Bardhan & I. Ray (Eds.), *The Contested Commons: Conversations between Economists and Anthropologists* (pp. 234–238). Blackwell Publishers.