



Beyond Liberalism: Commons, Constitutionalism, and the Common Good

Workshop at the Catholic Academy of Berlin
May 31 – June 2, 2023



Abb: Stiftsatlas des Klosters Neuzelle, Quelle: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

In collaboration with:

Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law
and International Law Heidelberg
Law Department at the University of Würzburg
THE NEW INSTITUTE

Organisers:

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Alexandra Kemmerer, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law
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Stephan Steiner, Catholic Academy of Berlin



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR COMPARATIVE PUBLIC LAW
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW



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Venue:

Katholische Akademie Berlin
Hannoversche Straße 5, 10115 Berlin
Katholische-Akademie-Berlin.de



KATHOLISCHE AKADEMIE
IN BERLIN e.V.

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

- 4:00 pm **Welcome Reception & Introduction**
Isabel Feichtner (University of Würzburg),
Alexandra Kemmerer (MPIL Heidelberg),
Stephan Steiner (Katholische Akademie Berlin)
- 5:30 pm Coffee break
- 6:00 pm **Public Evening Debate**
**The Commonsense as a Parallel Polis:
Opportunities and Challenges**
David Bollier (Schumacher Center)
Comments: Edmund Waldstein OCist (Heiligenkreuz) &
Teresa Forcades i Vila OSB (Montserrat)
Chair: Isabel Feichtner (University of Würzburg)
- 8:00 pm Joint dinner for the conference participants

Thursday, June 1, 2023

- 8:45 am **Morning Prayer** at the Chapel Saint Thomas Aquinas
- 9:15 am **Panel I: Communio**
Kick-off: Christine Büchner (University of Würzburg) &
Bettina Barthel (TU Berlin)
- 10:45 am Coffee break
- 11:15 am Kick-off: Daniel Bogner (University of Fribourg) &
Asher Biemann (University of Virginia)
- 12:45 pm Lunch
- 2:00 pm **Panel II: Labor**
Kick-off: Elise Kissling (Speyer) &
Madhulika Banerjee (University of Delhi / THE NEW INSTITUTE)
- 3:30 pm Coffee break
- 4:00 pm Kick-off: Margot Salomon (London School of Economics) &
Michelle Becka (University of Würzburg)
- 6:00 pm Supper
- 7:00 pm **Public Evening Debate**
Non Nova, Sed Nove: The Common Good in Constitutional Law
Adrian Vermeule (Harvard University)
Comments: Corine Pelluchon (Université Gustave Eiffel) &
Joseph Weiler (New York University)
Chair: Alexandra Kemmerer (MPIL Heidelberg)

The Public Evening Debates on Youtube



May 31 Livestream



June 1 Livestream

Friday, June 2, 2023

- 8:45 am **Morning Prayer** at the Chapel Saint Thomas Aquinas
- 9:15 am **Panel III: Constitutio**
Kick-off: Monica Garcia Salmones (University of Pamplona) &
Alex Ozar (Yale University)
- 10:15 am Coffee break
- 10:30 am Kick-off: Sabine Hark (TU Berlin) &
Tim Wihl (University of Erfurt)
- 11:30 am Coffee break
- 11:45 am **Round Table Debate**
Comments: Bruno Godefroy (University of Lyon) & Louis Berger (IfP
Catholic School of Journalism München)
- 1:00 pm Lunch & farewell

One characteristic of the postliberal era are initiatives that converge around the common, commons and the common good – that reclaim common wealth or refocus on the common good. The spectrum ranges from attempts to insulate the common good from democratic contestation by reinterpreting human rights as expressions of natural law to initiatives and social struggles for deprivatization, the transfer of economic resources and infrastructures into common ownership and their governance as commons according to principles of commoning. In this workshop we seek to explore this renewed interest in the commons and the common good starting from practical and intellectual projects that recenter collective practices in ways of living and provisioning. We explore their roots in and connections with past collective practices, and the theoretical grounding they may find in theology, philosophy, law and more broadly the social sciences. To make sense of and to situate these projects and accompanying practices we hold to be particularly relevant democratic traditions of Catholic Social thought and their (largely unexplored) continuities and repercussions in the work of Bruno Latour, Pierre Rosanvallon, and others as well as scholarship on common good constitutionalism. A further possible avenue to rethink these trajectories in light of present and future challenges might be current work on "style" in various disciplinary and political settings, drawing from thinkers of the French phenomenological tradition (Merleau-Ponty et al.).

We are aware of the significant differences and potential conflicts between initiatives of commoning that can build on socialist, liberal and democratic traditions rooted in Christian social ethics and Jewish political thought on the one hand and protagonists of common good constitutionalism and their theological interlocutors that are prone to authoritarian and integralist / theocratic perceptions of political community on the other hand. Yet, instead of foregrounding such conflicts, we seek to explore shared discontents, differences and possible common ground through a focus on concrete projects and practices.

We want to map projects of the common good and commoning, their situatedness in different traditions and their grounding in social, religious and philosophical thought.



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