

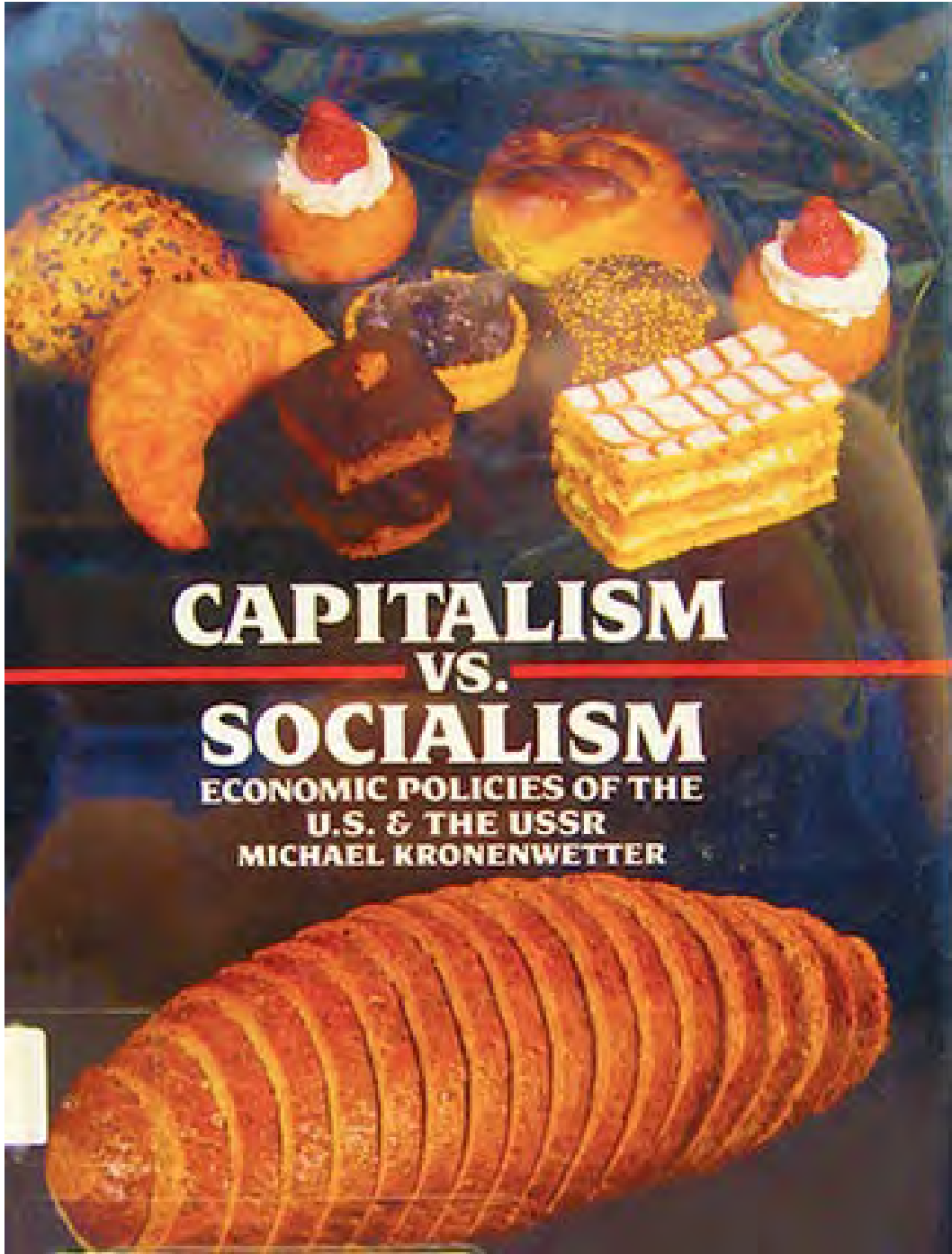
Creating and Protecting Commons in a Market/State World

Transforming the Non-Profit Sector Conference 2022
May 25, 2022

David Bollier

Schumacher Center for a New Economics

**Can the commons
help us imagine
new pathways
for growing a new world?**

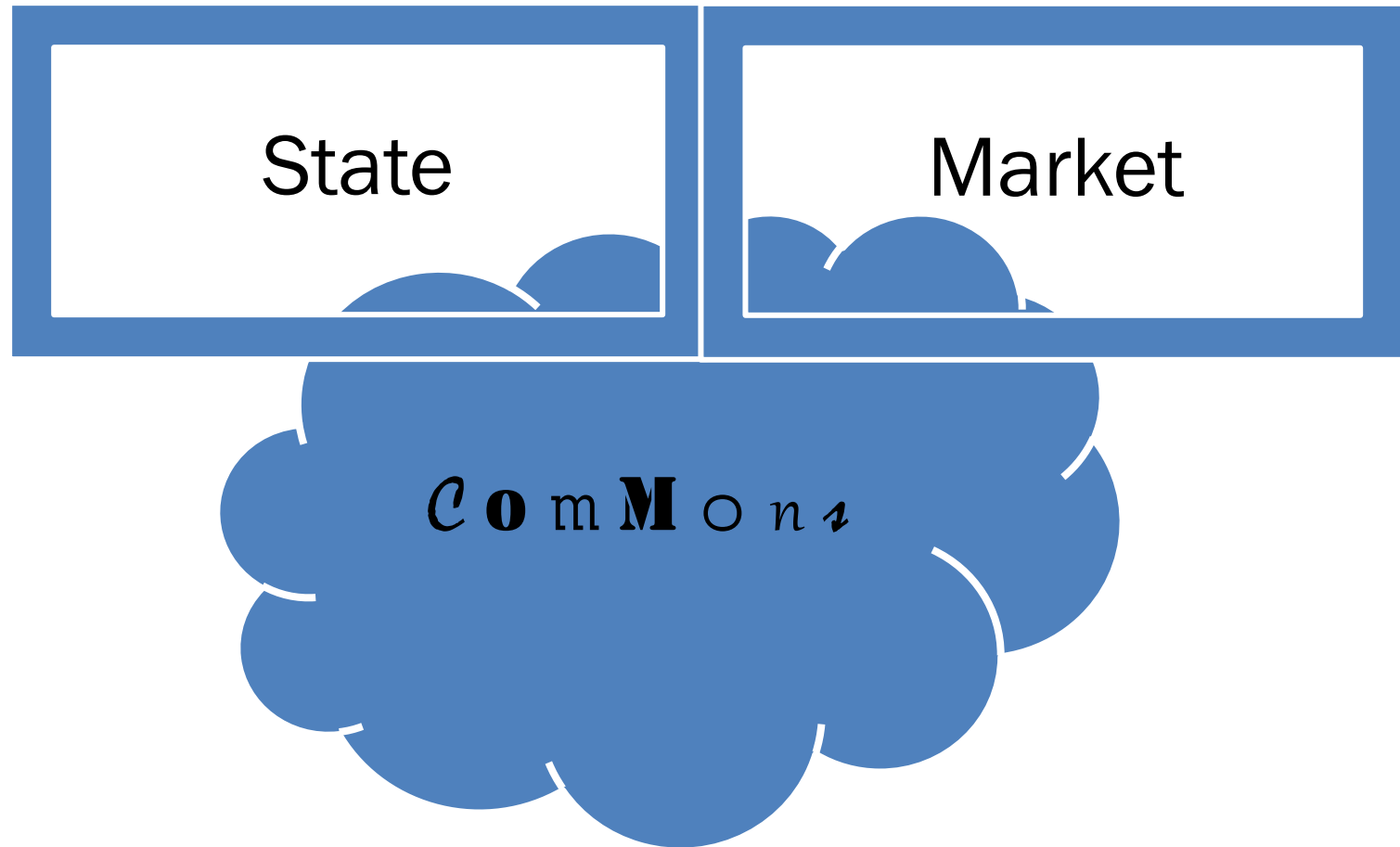


CAPITALISM
VS.

SOCIALISM

**ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE
U.S. & THE USSR
MICHAEL KRONENWETTER**

The Invisible & Misunderstood Commons





Garrett Hardin

A “tragedy of the commons”?

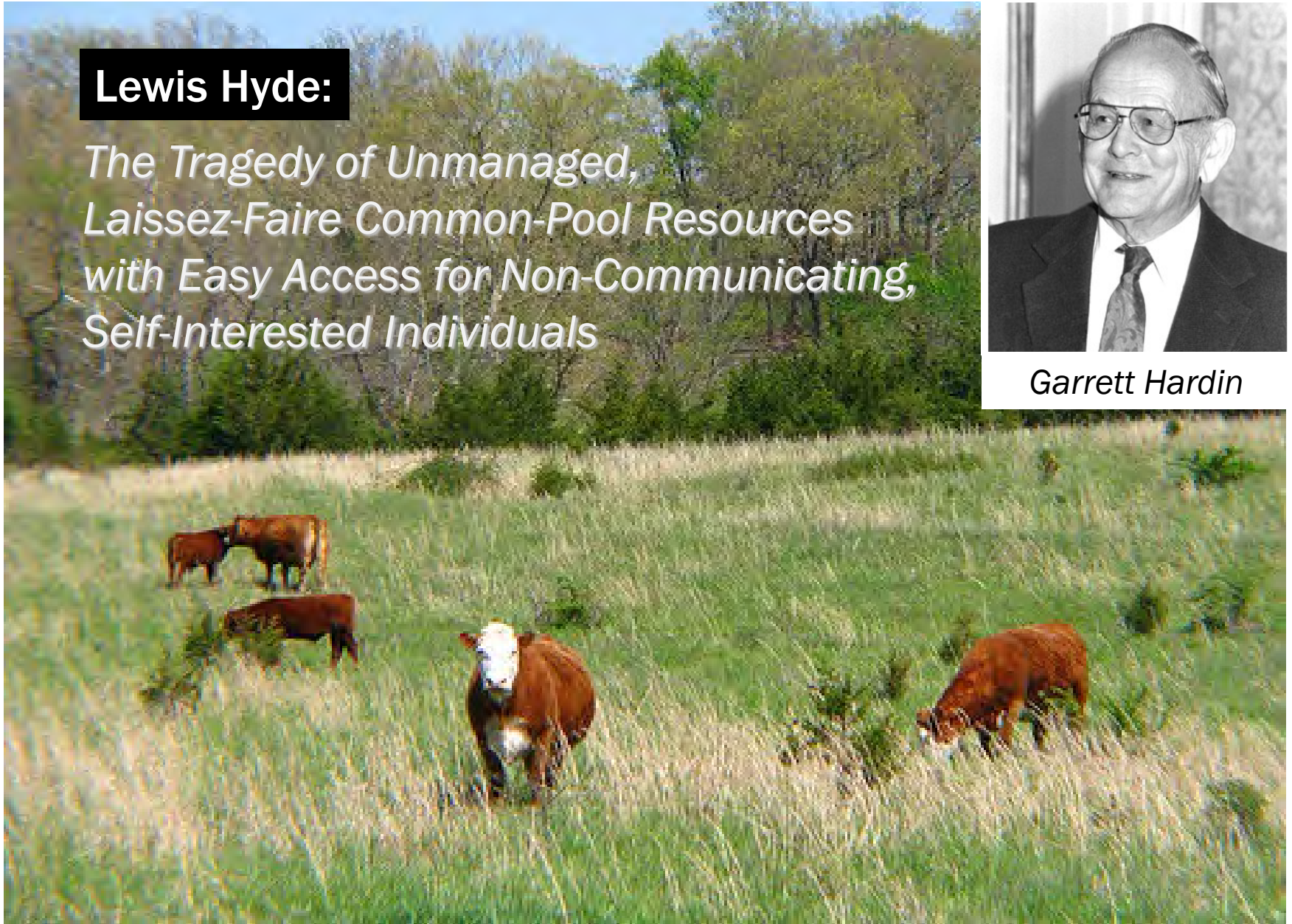


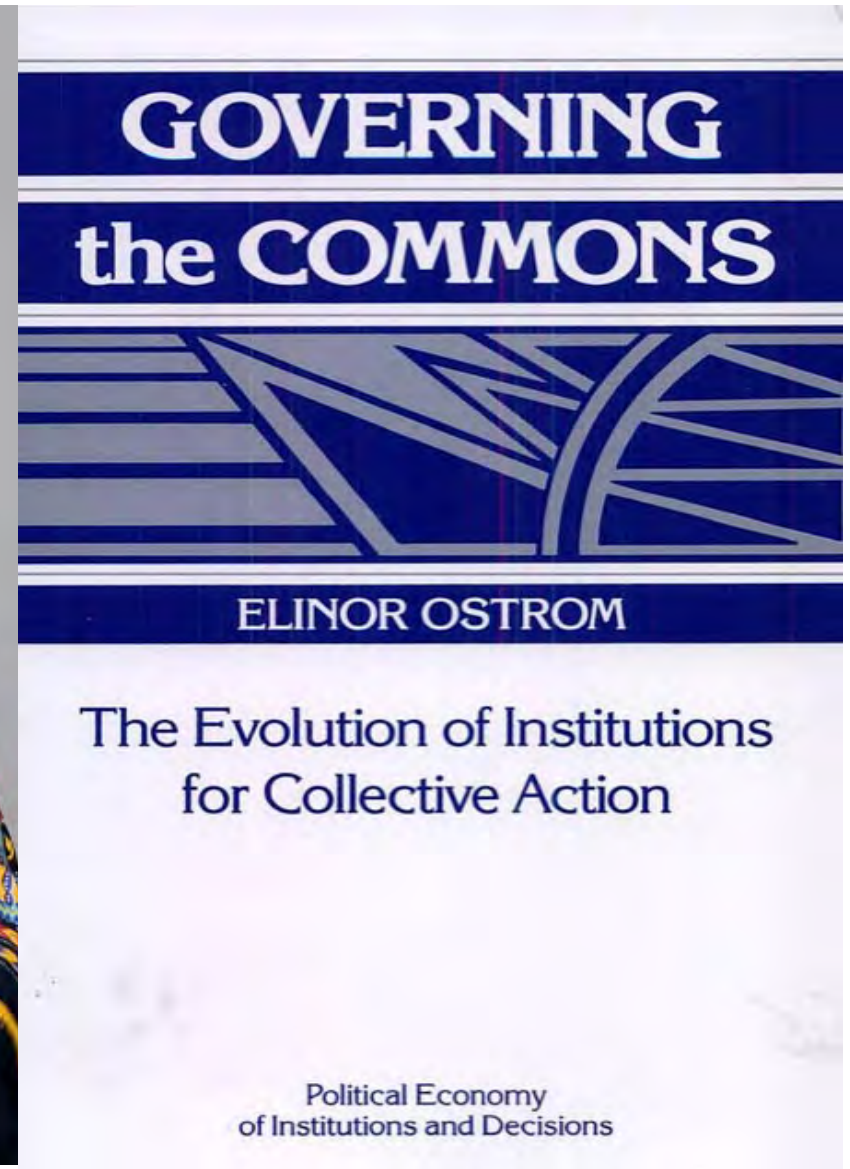
Lewis Hyde:

*The Tragedy of Unmanaged,
Laissez-Faire Common-Pool Resources
with Easy Access for Non-Communicating,
Self-Interested Individuals*



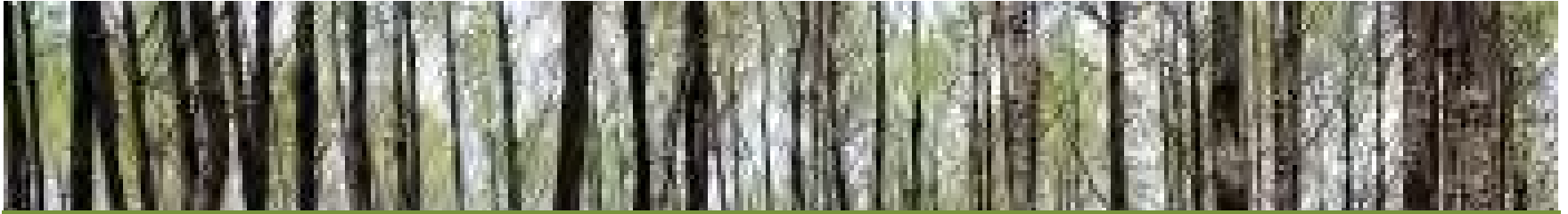
Garrett Hardin





Professor Elinor Ostrom

Flickr photo by Int'l Land Coalition, CC BY-NC-SA.

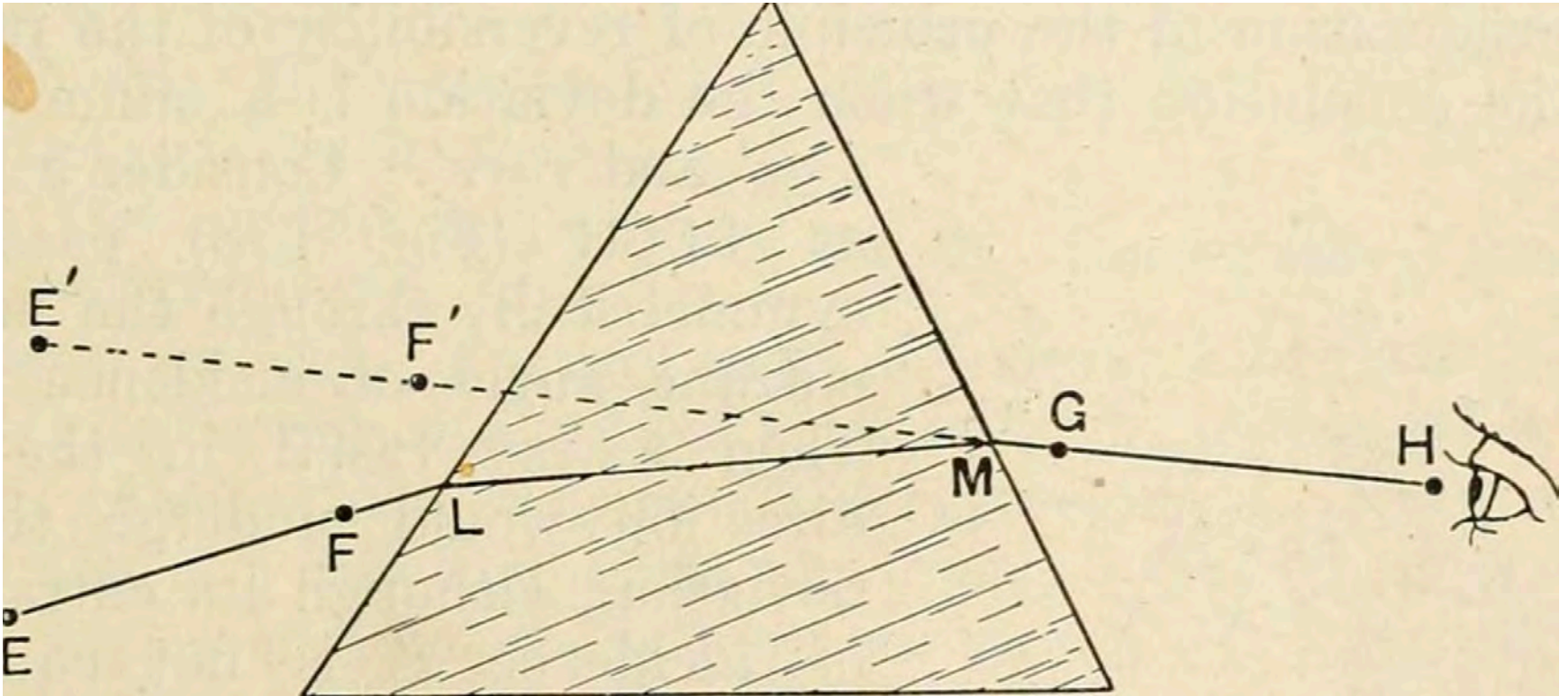


**A commons is not *a resource*.
... it's a *self-organized social system*.**



**A community + a resource + social norms/practices
(more than just sharing & cooperation)**

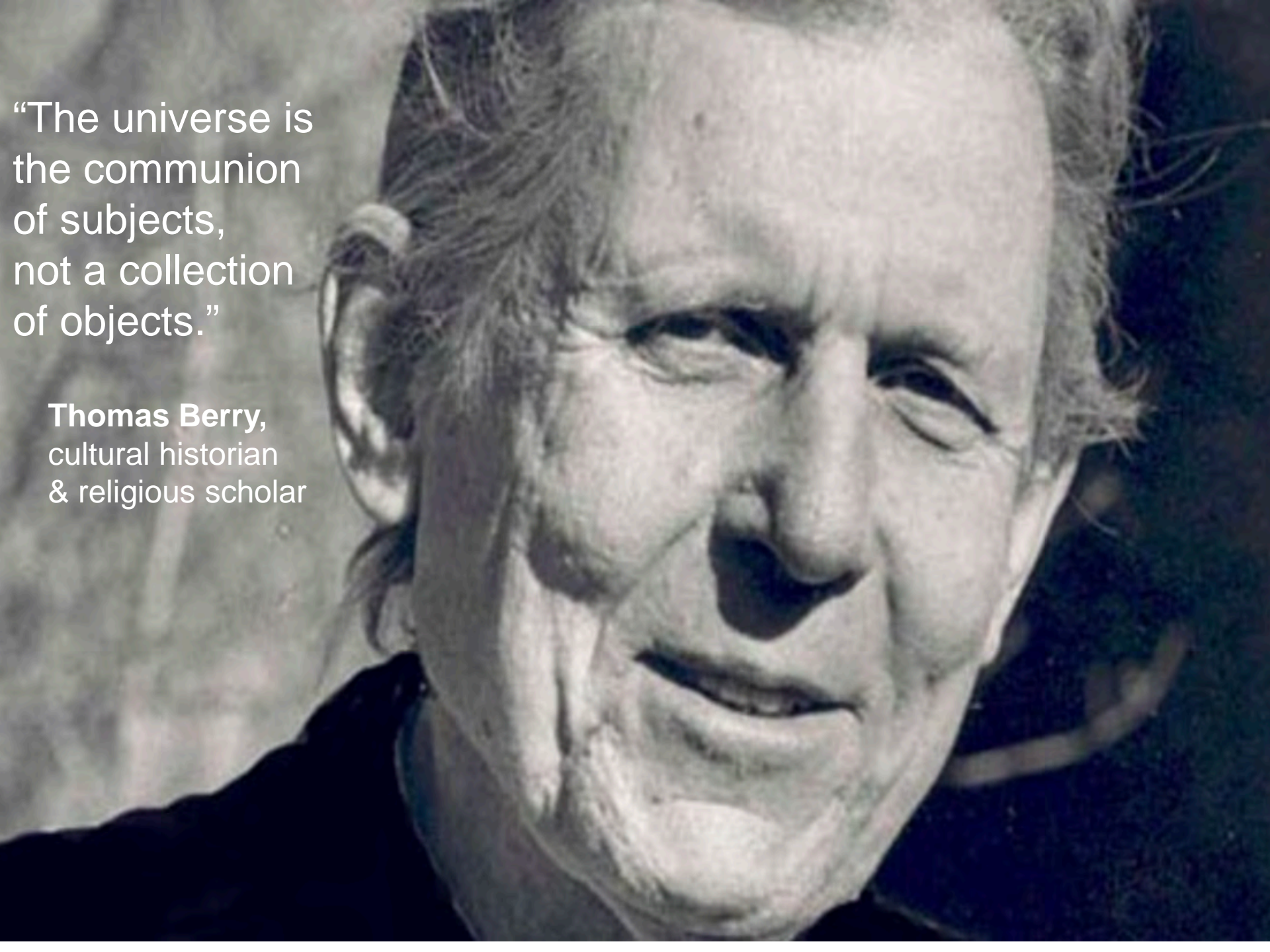
Relationality is what counts

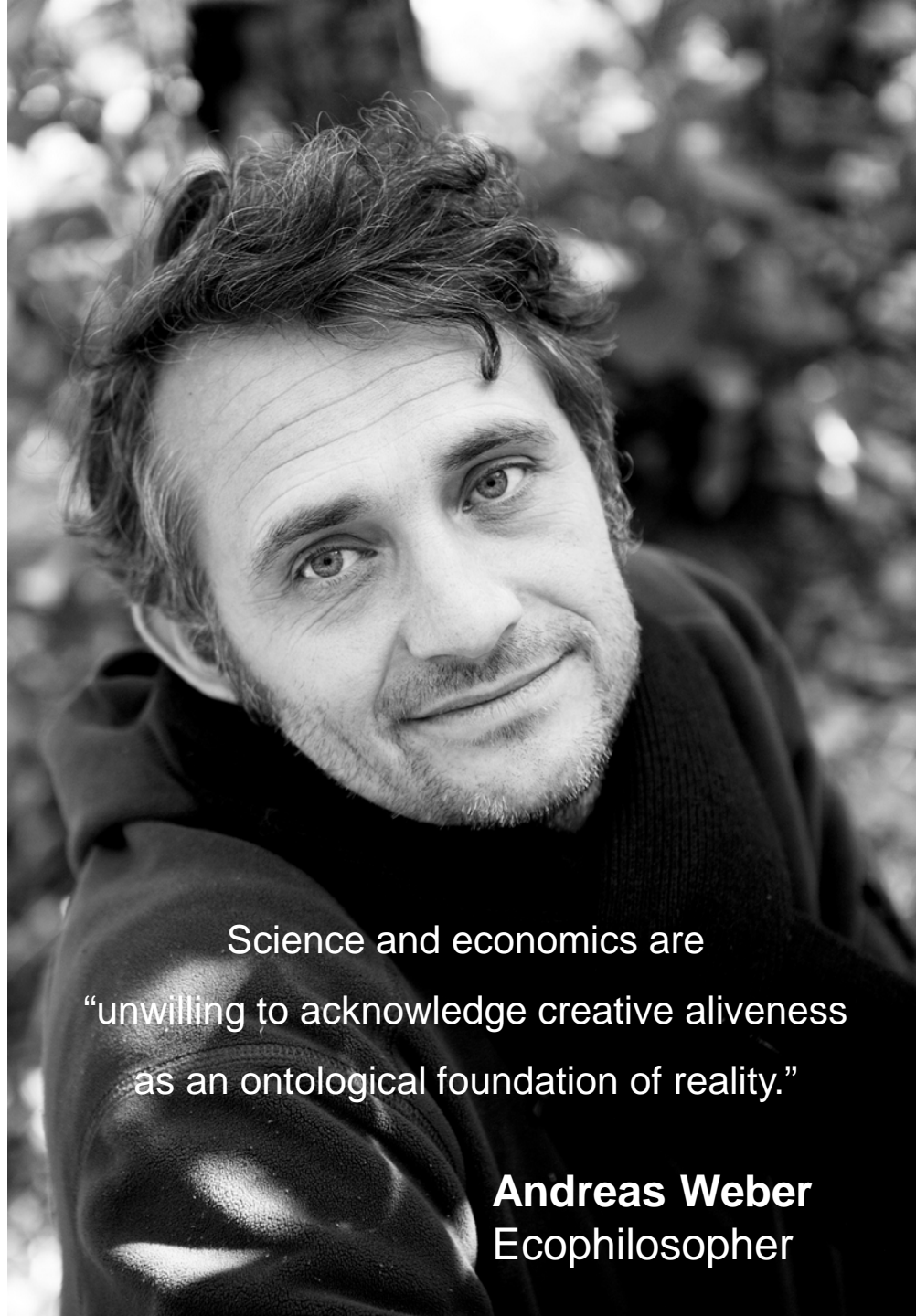


The commons requires us to reconsider
how we view the world

“The universe is
the communion
of subjects,
not a collection
of objects.”

Thomas Berry,
cultural historian
& religious scholar





Science and economics are
“unwilling to acknowledge creative aliveness
as an ontological foundation of reality.”

Andreas Weber
Ecophilosopher



Symbiotic relations & cooperation create value

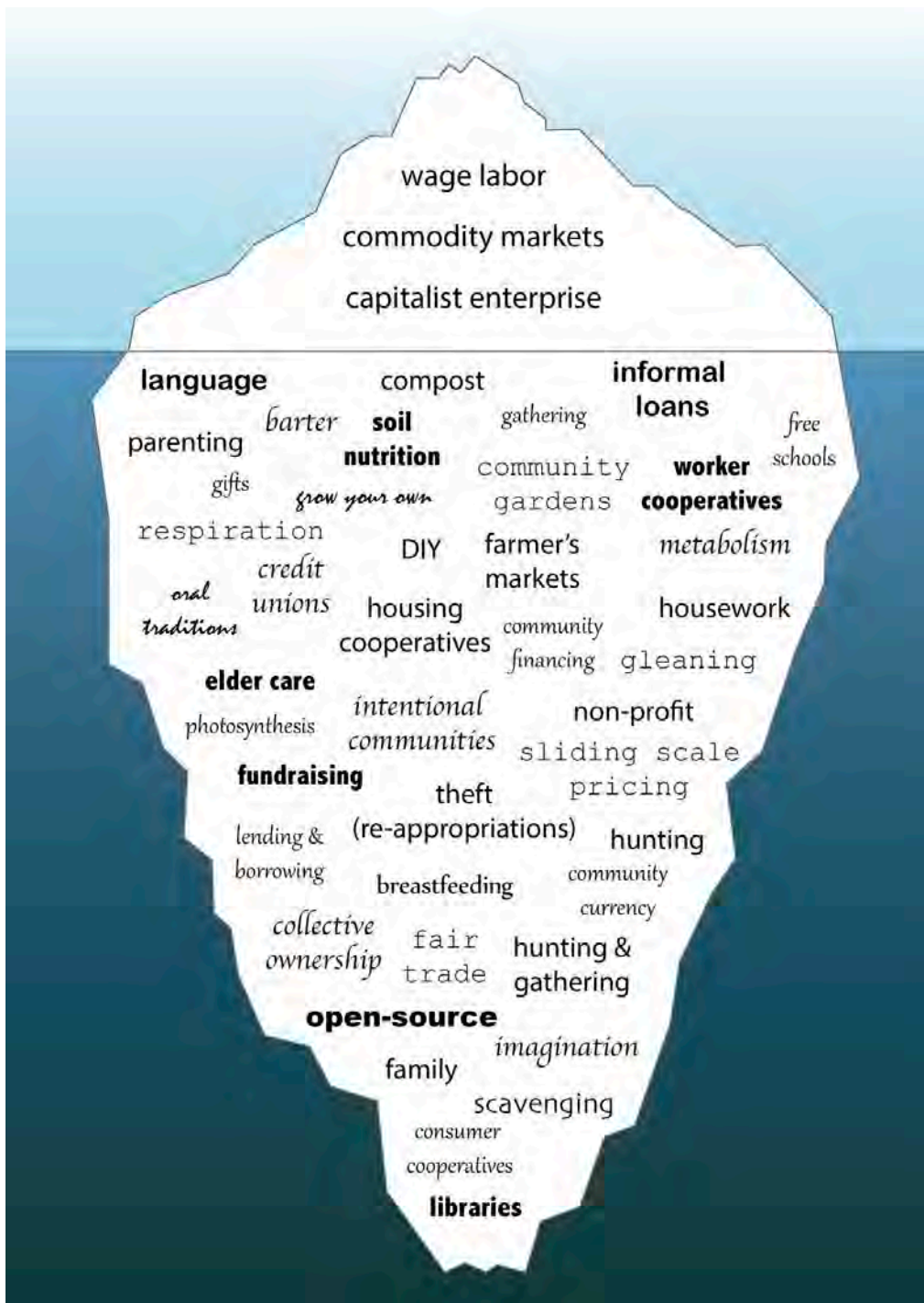
(*outside* of markets & hierarchies!)

A different worldview, ethos, and operational logic
than capitalist modernity

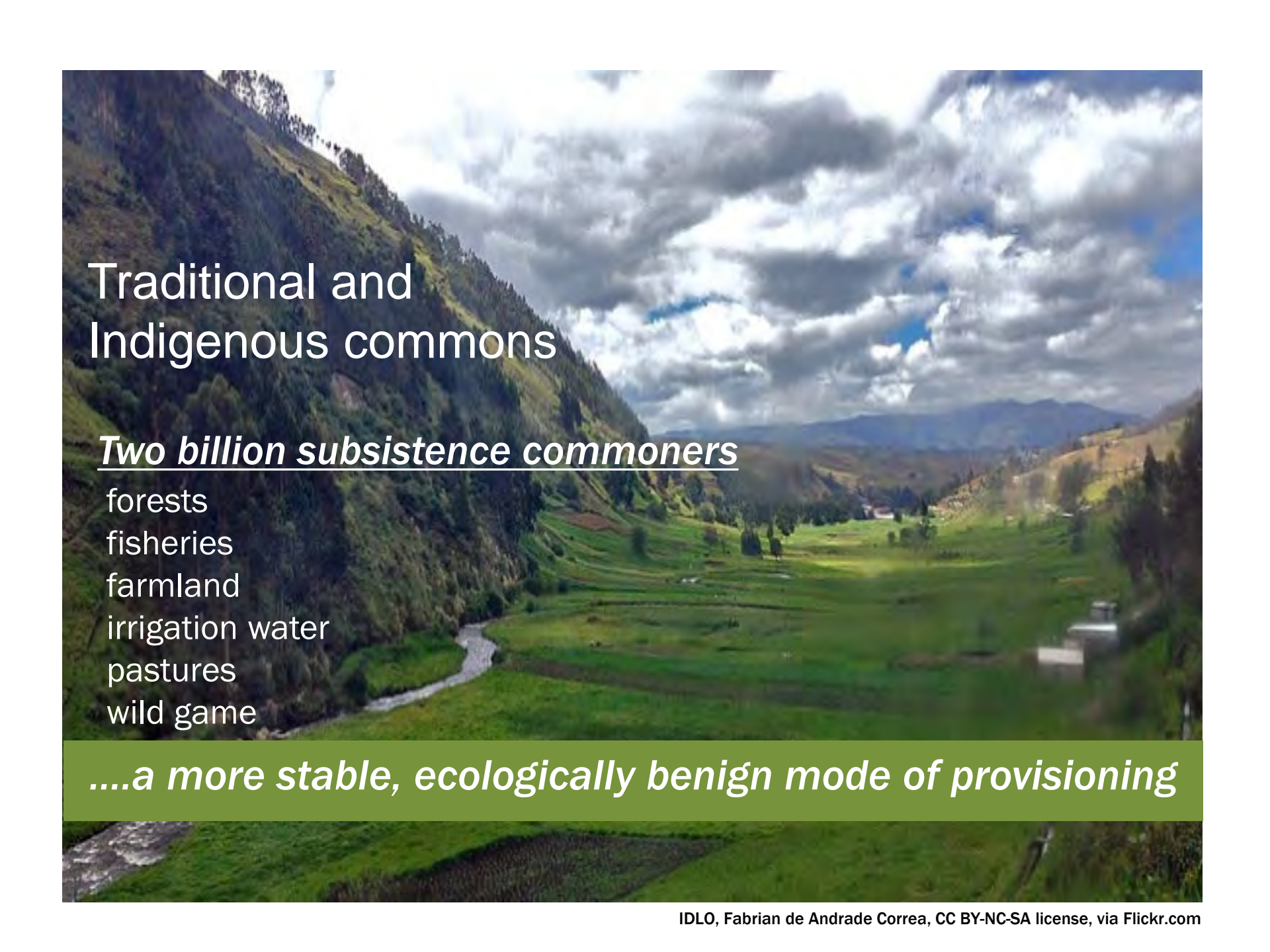
The unacknowledged (nonmarket) value that living systems create

“More public resources could be managed as commons without much loss of efficiency.”

–The Economist magazine, September 12, 2019



A Brief Tour of the Commonsverse



Traditional and Indigenous commons

Two billion subsistence commoners

forests
fisheries
farmland
irrigation water
pastures
wild game

....a more stable, ecologically benign mode of provisioning

Local food sovereignty

Agroecology
Permaculture
Community supported agriculture
Slow Food
Organic farming
Fresno Commons
Relocalized food systems
....and much more!





The City as a Commons



Urban land trusts

Community gardens

Municipal data commons

Citizen crowdsourcing

Guifi.net (Barcelona)

Open Commons Linz (Austria)





Alternative currencies to re-circulate community value



Faircoin





**The Web:
a hosting infrastructure for commons**

The Open Source Software Explosion





Creative Commons licenses to authorize legal sharing of content

(now used in more than 170 legal jurisdictions for 1 billion+ works)

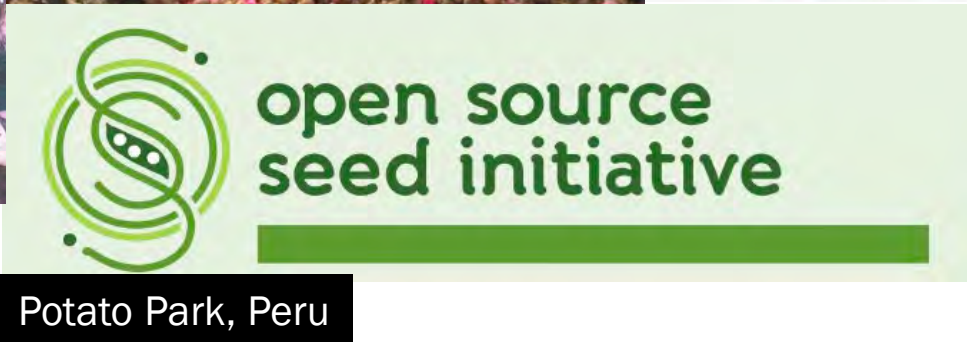


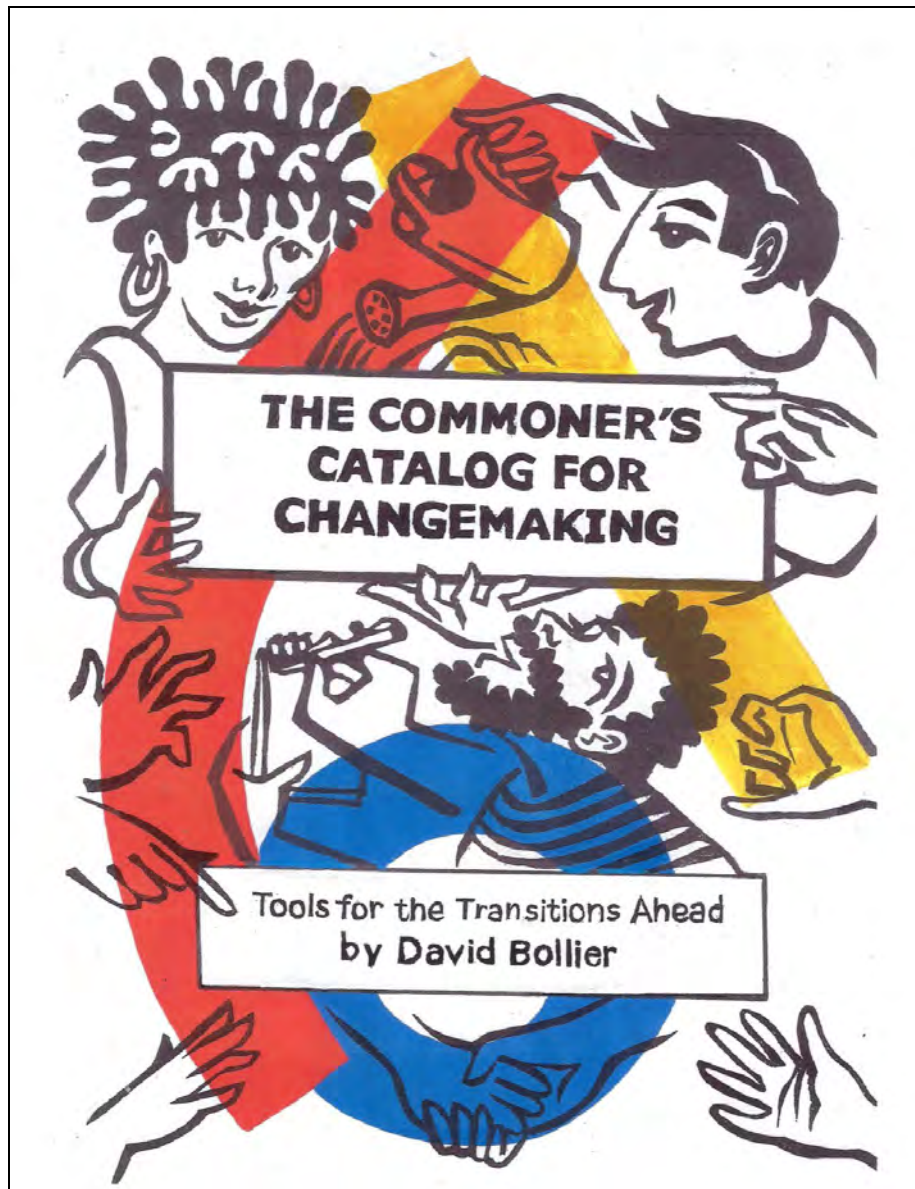
Cosmo-local production

(global design & knowledge sharing for local production)



Commons can arise *anywhere!*





Sections on....

Commons in history
Relocalizing the economy
Reclaiming Land
Food and Agriculture
The More-than-Human
Urban commons
Peer production
Digital infrastructures
Law and the commons
Money and finance
Honoring care
Cooperatives
Art and culture
System-change movements
....among others

So how does all this relate to nonprofits?

Is a nonprofit a commons?

Not necessarily.

Commons are about social practice and peer governance

-- *commoning* --

not about legal or organizational formalities.



Key patterns Of commoning

New Society Publishers

German and Spanish editions
French and Greek editions
later this year

www.freefairandalive.org

A close-up portrait of Christopher Alexander, an older man with grey hair and a light beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt. He is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred green and brown foliage.

Christopher Alexander

Pattern language -- a methodology that helps us see social regularities amidst diversity

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The Triad of Commoning

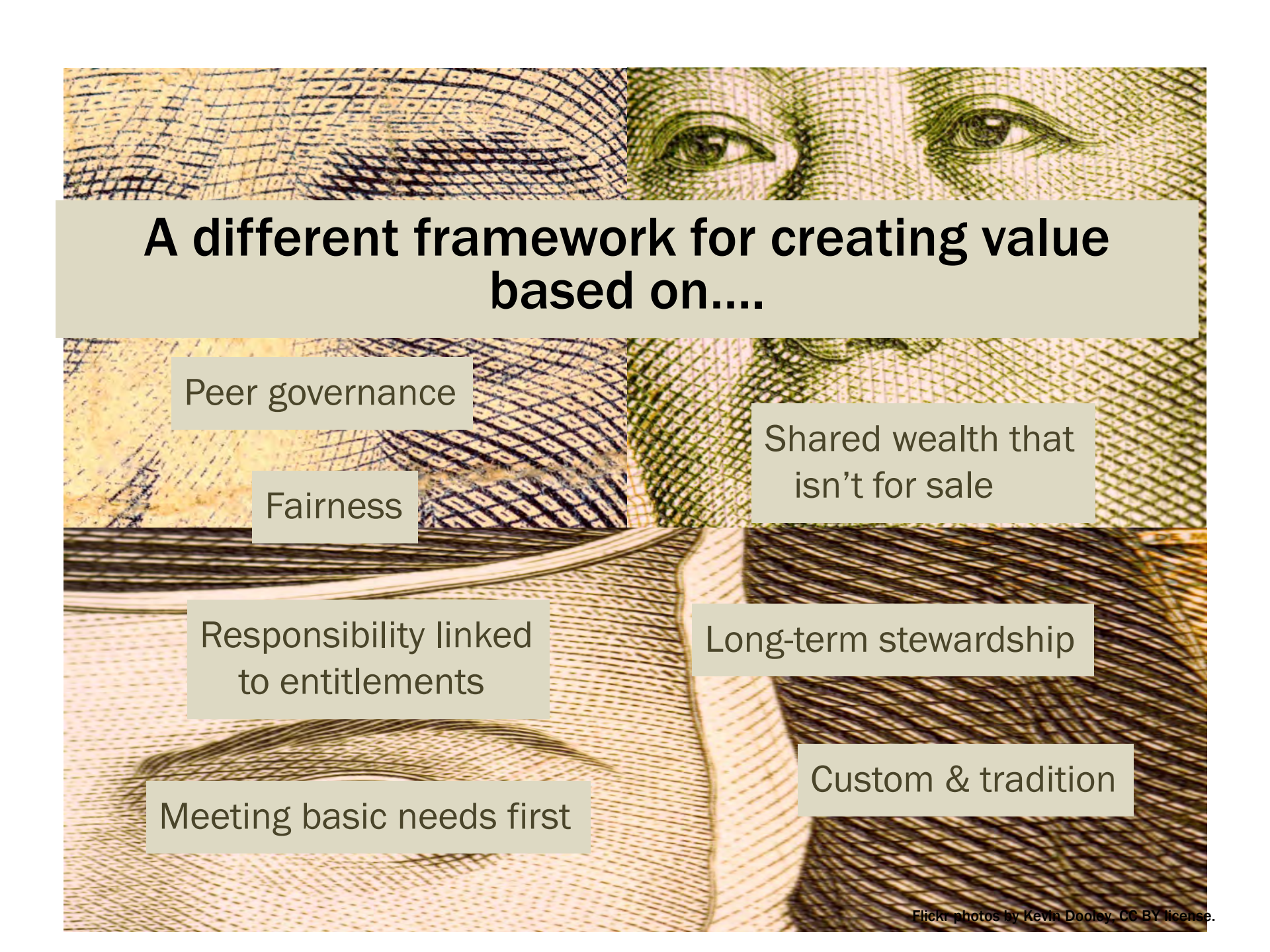
A latticework of interrelated patterns



Peer Governance

(a few patterns)

- Bring Diversity into Shared Purpose —
- Assure Commoners' Consent in Decisionmaking —
- Ensure Transparency in a Sphere of Trust —
 - Share Knowledge Generously —
 - Rely on Heterarchies —
- *Dealings with Markets & Money* —
- Keep Commons & Commerce Distinct —
 - Relationalize Property —



A different framework for creating value based on....

Peer governance

Fairness

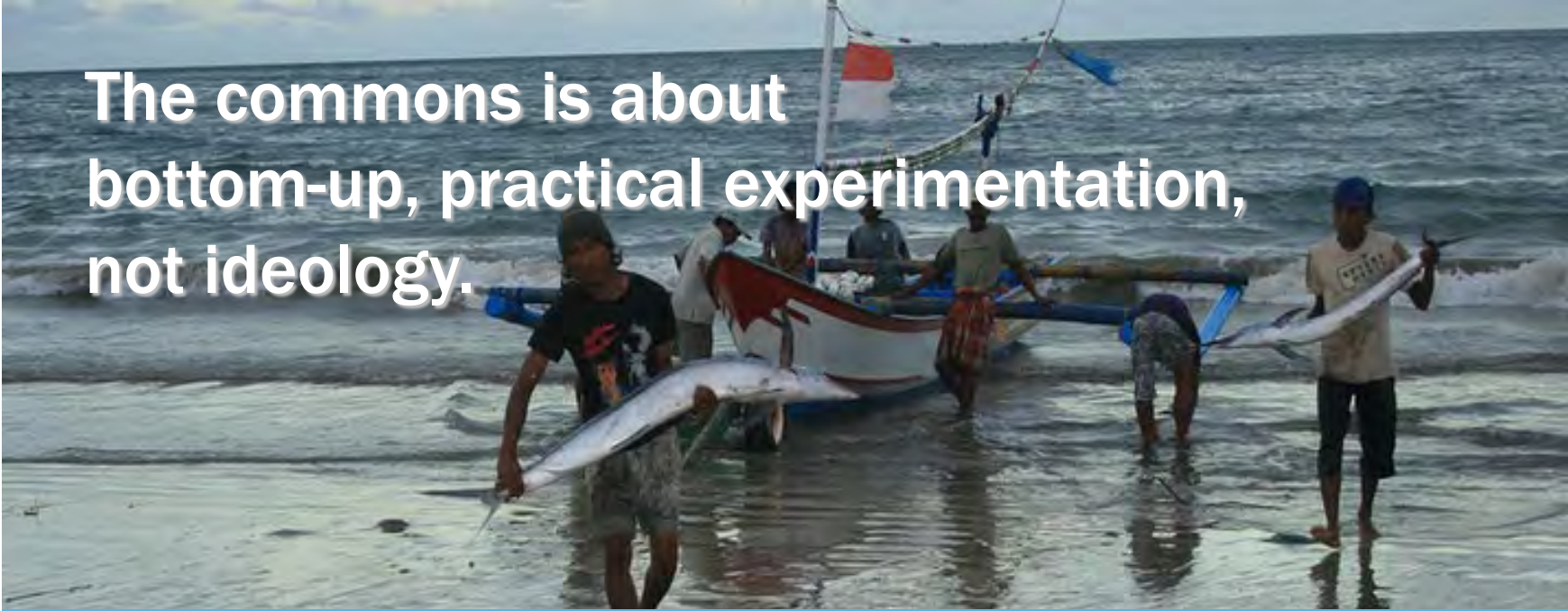
Shared wealth that isn't for sale

Responsibility linked to entitlements

Long-term stewardship

Meeting basic needs first

Custom & tradition

A group of fishermen are on a small boat in the ocean. Several large, silver fish are being held up by the men. The boat has a red and white flag on a pole. The water is dark and choppy.

The commons is about
bottom-up, practical experimentation,
not ideology.

“There is no commons without commoning.”
— Historian Peter Linebaugh



**A different vocabulary
can help us understand commons better**

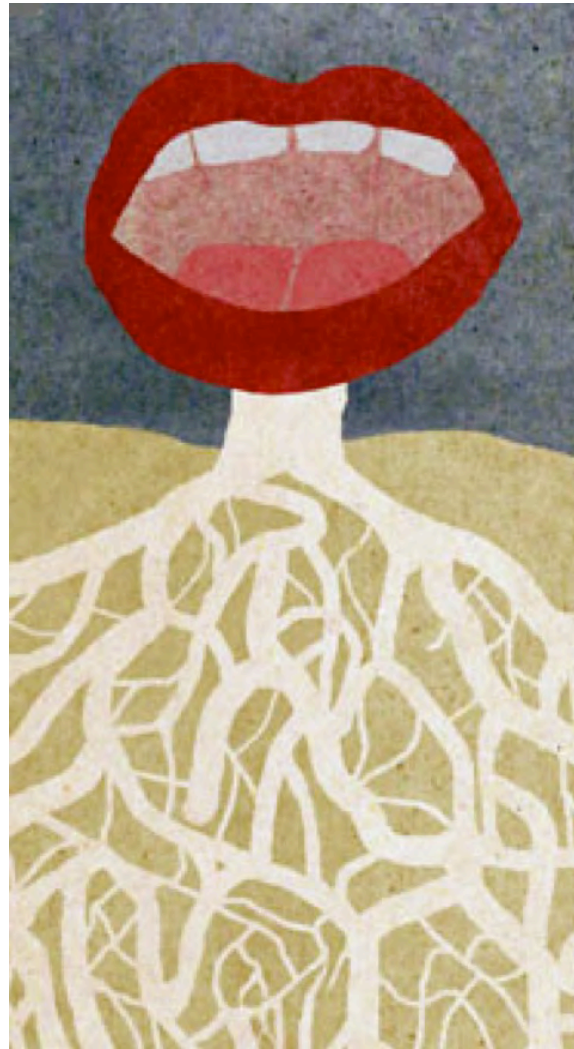
Care-wealth

Nested-I

Ubuntu Rationality

Convivial Tools

Heterarchy



Relationalized Property

World-making

Pluriverse

Vernacular Law

**Beyond
“misleading binaries”**

A photograph of a brick wall with three arched windows. The windows are covered with corrugated metal. Below the windows, the phrase "Together, We Create!" is painted in a large, black, gothic-style font on a white background. The wall is made of red bricks, and there are some bare tree branches visible at the top.


Together, We Create!

- A politics of belonging
- An economics of sufficiency
- A culture that decommodifies & shares

The Commonsense as a resilient parallel economy



- * Richer collective wisdom
- * Distributed power
- * Dense social & eco-relationships
- * Trustworthy feedback loops
- * Protections against enclosure
- * Long-term, holistic value



**The next big thing
will be a lot of small things.**

Thomas Lommée's installation at the University of Ghent in solidarity with the Climate Summit in Paris, December 2015. Photograph: <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org>



THINK LIKE A COMMONER

A Short Introduction to
the Life of the Commons

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David Bollier & Silke Helfrich
Editors

Patterns of Commoning

THE COMMONS
STRATEGIES GROUP



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