



International Conference on Global Commons

20-22 November 2018

Pondicherry, India

Organized by

Department of Politics and International Studies, School of Social Sciences & International Studies, Pondicherry University

in collaboration with the Faculty of Law, Social and Political Sciences, University of Paris 13, Sorbonne Paris-Cité

A Note on Pondicherry University

A Central University established on 16th October 1985 by the Government of India, as a collegiate University with its jurisdiction spread over the Union Territories of Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The University is located in a campus spread over 780 acres, facing the Bay of Bengal on the East Coast Road.

It has 50000 students in its 90 affiliated colleges including 10000 students in the distance education mode. The current strength of students studying on-campus stands at 6500. It has about 5000 students representing 33 states of the country and abroad and over 450 highly qualified faculty members from across the country. The university is providing graduate courses, doctoral studies, post-doctoral fellowships and diploma courses in various fields. It has a state of the art library with remote access to over 31000 digital information resources through a dedicated library portal. It has signed more than 27 MOUs with national institutions and international universities for exchange of faculty and students for quality research and development.

A Note on the University of Paris 13

The University of Paris 13 is a public and pluridisciplinary University forming part of the Université Sorbonne Paris Cité cluster and the Condorcet Campus which is especially devoted to humanities and social sciences. It was founded in 1971 when the original Sorbonne University was expanded into several Parisian universities to democratize access to higher education in the Ile de France region.

The University is spread over five campuses, covering a total area of 35 hectares. It offers courses at the undergraduate, graduate, post graduate and postdoctoral levels apart from engineering degrees, technical diplomas and several other certifications. The number of students registered on its roll is 24000. About 1300 teaching staff and 750 administrative staff are employed to perform the missions of teaching, research, orientation and professional insertion, dissemination of culture and scientific information, construction of European Higher Education Area and international cooperation. The University of Paris 13 has signed 450 cooperation agreements with 260 universities across five continents. The current percentage of foreign students at the university stands at 16%.

The availability of student hostels on the campus, a well-equipped library, a sought-after gymnasium, vibrant cultural activities and active student associations account for the institution's attractiveness.

Contextualizing our Conference

What are the 'boundaries' of human-nature interactions? Where are the 'limits' that define, describe and delimit what we are and what we can be, as societies living in states of mutual interdependencies with our environments? These are traditional questions that disciplines of social sciences have asked for millennia, arguably, right from the times and spaces when these disciplines themselves were differently bordered. The questions, and their answers, across these various life-worlds have remained relevant. This International Conference on Global Commons seeks to carry forward these discussions about such boundaries and the limits, and their reconfigurations.

The world is said to have entered a particular phase of reconfiguration of this space. Human beings, probably for the first time in her history, have very clearly become the dominant force in shaping the boundaries of redistribution of nature and her forces. The vocabulary of 21st century Modern Science has already called it the Anthropocene. The term Anthropocene was coined in 2000 by the Nobel Prize winning scientist Paul Crutzen, who believes the name change for the geological time scale is overdue. The Anthropocene marks a new period, in which, according to Prof Chris Rapley, a climate scientist at the University College London, "our collective activities dominate the planetary machinery"¹. The Guardian quoting Prof. Paul Crutzen points out that "this name change stresses the enormity of humanity's responsibility as stewards of the Earth"². Human activity has pushed extinction rate of animals and plants far above the long-term average. It's time for us to discuss and debate, seriously, the histories of this phase of human existence, and the futures that we would prefer to chart.

The health of the global commons – a domain that lies outside the political reach of any one nation-state – is now guided by the principle of a "common heritage of human kind". The good health of our commons – be it lands, forests, oceans or the climate systems – has become essential in our quest for a sustainable and prosperous future world. Disciplines of advanced Natural Sciences have warned us repeatedly about the "tipping points" that our environments are facing. Points of no-return have been pronounced repeatedly, but the major structures of powers and their mediating institutions have effected policy directions that have often completely overlooked these warnings over the years. Modern institutions of governance have repeatedly fallen behind in the actual recognition of these events of seismic proportions. Efforts to resolve the criticalities of our "common heritage" have been impeded, majority of the times, by the major powers themselves. Patterns of distributions and redistributions of natural resources have often been aligned to favour the priorities of a few, at the expense of the many.

¹ Carrington, Damian. "The Anthropocene Epoch: Scientists Declare Dawn of Human-influenced Age." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 29 Aug. 2016. Web. 05 Mar. 2017.

² Ibid

Contextualizing our Conference...continued

For instance, we live in a world where climate change theories and its multiple experiences are refuted with pride by the powers that be – powers who have often been responsible for the state of our global affairs today. Climate change is predicted to have, and is already having catastrophic impacts on the everyday lives of people today. In fact, the globally marginalized who have been the minority contributors to the problems at hand are unfortunately, often, the majority shareholders of the sufferings of our common conditions. The quickly shifting boundaries within and between the climate system, the stratospheric ozone layer, the oceans, the biodiversity, land systems, and the global hydrological cycles, and the nutrient cycles that power the entire biosphere, along with manufactured chemicals, and aerosol loadings in the atmosphere are compounding the problems for and threatening the very existence of vulnerable geographies and their peoples.

In these circumstances, how can global commons be understood in relation to our conditions of existence? As academicians and citizens, can we problematize it to understand the criticality of our existence? Can a better future be imagined – a more humane, sustainable, progressive one – that helps guide the theory and practice of sustaining our “commons”? These are some of the questions we will be engaging with in our first International Conference on Global Commons, necessarily an inter-disciplinary venture, jointly organized by Pondicherry University and University of Paris 13.

Supreme international coordination is required to overcome the structural problems of global commons at the global level. The global commons are the very foundations of our global economy and are facing the tragedy of over exploitation and rapid degradation. With increasing pressure from people, the need for responsibility towards the preservation and management of global commons is also increasing. Conservation and the shift to more sustainable practices have proven successful at the small scale, but we are still losing ground at the planetary level. So it is urgent that we bring about transformations in our key economic systems, political leadership, knowledge and information systems, and coalitions for change and innovation.

Objectives of the Conference and its structure

The overall contours of our discussions, deliberations and imaginations

This three-day international conference will explore the social, economic, political, legal and cultural underpinnings and implications of global commons and its sustainable development. It also will review how the concept of the commons has evolved in theory and practice and how the different principles derived from it are implemented in different parts of the world. Through a critical examination of the concepts and its methods, this conference will aim to imagine a way forward for our common futures and suggest concrete proposals which are effective in addressing the issues at hand.

The conference topics will be divided into *five* distinct categories dealing with different parts of the problem.

The first session titled "*The Commons: Theory, Principles, Analytics and Data*" aims to problematize the concept of the commons, attempts to define it, and identify and describe its theoretical fundamentals. This session also aims to recognize and acknowledge the critical gaps in these theoretical formulations and seeks to address them.

The second session titled "*The Commons: Poverty, Alienation and Social Exclusion*" aims to historicize the problem. The particular objective of this session will be to understand the privileges and historical responsibilities of the principal agents of this phase of history. This session would also attempt to identify and map out the 'global outsiders' whose livelihoods are critically dependent on our commons but who powerlessly occupy the margins of its boundaries.

The third session of the conference is titled "*National Governance and Global Mediation*". This session tries to understand the role of global institutions of mediation like the Nation-State or other institutions of the International Political Economy in constantly redefining the boundaries of these commons, while reconstructing, displacing and dispossessing the 'global outsiders'.

Then, we aim to proceed to the fourth session titled "*Local Resistances and Networks of Solidarity*", through which we attempt to map out the connections between culture, identity, livelihood and the survival of the commons, trace local-level institutional innovations to build resistance and resilience against the challenges of serious human-environmental disruptions. We would also try and map out networks of solidarities with the potential to reproduce progressive practices of trusteeship, regulation and governance of the commons.

The final fifth session is intended to be forward-looking and imaginative. Titled "*The Future of the Commons*", in this session, we propose to discuss climate change and its relationship with the commons, exchange ideas on the newer frontiers of global commons, and engage in a creative exercise of imagining the future human-environmental relationships.

Since we trace an exercise of identifying, problematizing, understanding, discussing, deliberating, and imagining, we welcome abstracts and papers from a wide range of disciplines of the social sciences.

Themes

The dividing lines

The Commons: Theory, Principles, Analytics and Data

- Theoretical Fundamentals of the Commons
- Problematizing the Commons
- Critical Gaps

The Commons: Poverty, Alienation and Social Exclusion

- Understanding Privilege and Historic Responsibilities
- Global Outsiders: Who are they and how have they suffered?
- Disaster, Conflict, Uncertainty and Displacement

National Governance and Global Mediation

- The State and the Commons
- The Commons in the International Political Economy

Local Resistance and Networks of Solidarity

- Culture, Identity, livelihood and survival of the Commons
- Local Institutional Innovations
- Local-Global Networks of Solidarity

Future of the Commons

- Climate Change and the Commons
- New Frontiers
- The Future – A Utopia or a Dystopia

Registration Form

International Conference on Global Commons

Department of Politics and International Studies,

School of Social Sciences and International Studies, Pondicherry University

Name (in block letters) :

Designation :

Institution :

Address for Correspondence :

Phone :

Mobile Number :

Fax :

E-Mail :

I will participate : () without presenting a paper
(Tick appropriate option) () for presenting a paper

Title :

Author(s) :

Mode of Arrival : () By Air () By Train

Arrival : Date: Time:

Departure : Date: Time:

Delegate Fee : ₹/\$/€ (per person)

Bank :

DD/ Cheque No. : Date:

Amount :

Place : Signature:

Date :

Faculty Members/ Research Scholars (International) : ₹5000 /-

Faculty Members (National and SAARC countries) / International Students : ₹2500 /-

Research Scholars, Local Participants & Students (National and SAARC countries): ₹500 /-

The participation fees will cover lunch and conference kit only.

DD should be drawn in favour of Finance Officer, Pondicherry University, payable at Puducherry and the same should be sent to the Director and Convener of the Conference, Prof. Mohanan B. Pillai.

Online payments for the registration can be made to the Bank Account given below:

Name of the Bank: Indian Bank, Pondicherry University Branch

S/B Account Number: 724095480

IFSC Code: IDIB000P152

We request you to make your own travel and accommodation arrangements. Please refer to a list of Hotels and Guest Houses given below, to help you make an informed choice.

List of Hotels and Guest Houses

Please find a list of hotels and guest houses that we think are close to the conference venue. For the convenience of the delegates, we have sorted them into three categories:

Category A: Luxury

1. Hotel Anandha Inn
2. Hotel Mass
3. Hotel Atithi
4. Lotus Comfort Hotel
5. Hotel Ashoka

Category B: Moderate

1. Hotel Surguru
2. Hotel Jayaram
3. Hotel Ram International
4. St. James Court
5. Soorya International Hotel

Category C: Budget

1. Park Guest House
2. New Guest House
3. Orissa Guest House
4. Tourist Home
5. Garden Guest House

Approximate cost in Indian Rupees

Category A : ₹ 3000- 7000 /-

Category B: ₹ 3000 /- and below

Category C : less than ₹1000 /-

Visit to India

Visa to India can be obtained at Indian Embassy / High Commission functioning in the respective country based on our invitation letter with other relevant documents prescribed in the application form. Invitation letter will be sent on the receipt and selection of the abstract.

Paper Submission

Participants willing to present papers are requested to follow the schedule and guidelines given below:

- Abstract (not exceeding 300 words) should be submitted on or before August 7, 2018. Abstracts should include the name of the author(s), their affiliation and address (postal and e-mail)
- Abstracts must be submitted to icgcpu2018@gmail.com
- Paper must not be previously published or currently under review for publication elsewhere
- Acceptance of the Abstract will be intimated by August 15, 2018
- Full papers should be sent on or before October 31, 2018

The following style sheet may kindly be used

- The paper may be composed in MS-Word format, Times New Roman font with heading in Font Size 14 and the remaining text in the font size 12 with 1.5 spacing
- Papers should be formatted according to APA Style, 6th Edition

Organizing Committee

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Prof. Gurmeet Singh
(Vice Chancellor, Pondicherry University)

Vice Patron

Prof. Venkata Raghotham
(Dean, School of Social Sciences & International Studies)

Conference Director & Convener

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