THE
ECOSPRINTER

THE
COMMONS
ISSUE

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THE ECOSPRINTER   FEDERATION OF YOUNG EUROPEAN GREENS

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

I am extremely proud to present to you this printed edition on Commons. The articles of this edition are the result of an incredible year of work with Young Greens all across Europe, through the different activities organized by FYEG and supported by its partners. Our common intellectual (and exciting) journey began in Poland with the "Back to the Future" seminar on social commons, followed by the "Fighting for Our Common Planet" summer camp in Croatia on natural commons, to end in Hungary with the "Common Digital (R)evolution" training on digital commons.

This publication is the combination of various perspectives of young European Greens on the topic of commons, which is one of the most important topics of political ecology. Moreover, while we tend to think only about natural commons, our writers have sought to give us a complete overview of each type of commons and their importance, according to their subject. This edition shows that all of these commons are necessary to build an open and greener society and that without thinking about and recognizing the commons, there is no future for us, young generations. #NoCommonsNoFuture

Commons are defined by the classical theory of commons as a **social practice** of **governing** a **shared resource** not by a state or market, but by a **community of users** that self-governs the resources through the **institutions** it creates in a **sustainable manner**. The so-called "tragedy of the commons" states that if many people have access to the same resource, everyone will try to optimise their individual gain at the price of communal loss. Yet, it is scientifically proven that we are actually able to govern commonly a resource, with a proper regulation.

The necessity to think about and recognize commons comes from our strong will to develop a society with more solidarity and cooperation – un convivir, un vivre-ensemble, zajednica, zusammenleben etc. Commons are the response to the more individualized societies we live in. They are the solution to develop new relationships with nature and the people in our community, in order to build a peaceful society without any type of boundaries. Commons present a response to neoliberalism and its always increasing profit maximisation and private ownership.

The Ecosprinter supports initiatives that follow principles of openness and participative work. Inclusion is key in each of our publications, as it is in all FYEG's events and structures. In that sense, I want to thank all our wonderful writers. It was a pleasure to work with so many thoughtful activists. I hope that this edition will empower you as well, dear readers, to think about this issue and take action in your community for the sake of our common planet.

I also want to thank all the people who allowed this printed edition to take shape – particularly my dear colleague at EEB, Jelena Aleksic for her incredible work and dedication, FYEG office and Executive Committee for their support and coordination and the European Youth Foundation of Council of Europe for their support.

I hope, dear readers, that you will find the strength to fight or to pursue your fight for our greener and more peaceful common planet.

Sincerely,
Alexia Delfosse
Ecosprinter Editor-in-chief, 2018-2019

"It takes a village to raise a child":

EDUCATION FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Isaura Calsyn

A public school in the South Bronx, New York. Stephen Ritz is a passionate teacher who decided to build a vertical edible garden in his classroom one day. His students became so motivated by the idea of sustainable food management that they started a project with their teacher. Their project recently grew into a true community enterprise where those same kids are working to create a more healthy school environment and are even earning some money from it. This exciting example shows how only one teacher can create a difference. He chose to think outside the box and showed his students that their efforts are indispensable to create a better future.

While I was writing this article on the train, I was reflecting about the time I spent in Warsaw a few weeks ago which was in mid-March, 2018. There, I joined the FYEG seminar on Social Commons. For me, as a historian and teacher in training, education is one of the grand pillars for a more just and inclusive society. Schools have to be more productive than manufactories that create zombie-workforces for the labor market. They have to be social commons where we could encourage future generations to think about how the world functions today, and how to make it better.

Current problems with our scholar system

The biggest problem with educational systems in Europe is that it's bathed in a competitive environment that doesn't allow students to think critically. In the UK for example, they test children's knowledge starting from age six. In Belgium, we see that the PISA results are the main quality indicator for the government. This quality of the educational system depends on the percentage of students that pass tests for math, reading abilities and so forth. Is this really the way we should prepare young people for their lives in an adult society? Can't computers already make calculations or detect and correct spelling mistakes? In a time where technology has been progressing, it's hard to think of a human ability which computers can't easily take over. Education, how it exists now, does not prepare them for the problems we are facing today, like climate change, lack of social justice and worldwide conflict. It only asks from students is that "work hard and don't ask questions." The question that comes to my mind then, is: how young people will ever be able to change the world and come up with solutions if our educational system just reproduces society as it already exists?

Reforming our educational system for the sake of Commons

If we want to reform our education system in the spirit of social commons I think we have to include two possible solutions. First, we have to make sure that curricula in Europe focus on the knowledge and skills that are necessary not only for the 21st century, but also for future generations to come. This contains skills to manage social commons like health care, public space and the environment in a sustainable manner, but also democratic or civic education with an emphasis on historical and critical thinking. Second, the schools have to be perceived as social commons themselves. This means that in their organization and management they have to be inherently democratic. Many European countries already have a tradition of student councils, parent councils and other forms of participation, but to make this educational community stronger there also have to be more informal democratic participation. Only then, villages or communities will have enough tools to raise the children of tomorrow and to form inclusive societies. Or, as John Dewey puts it: **"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself".**
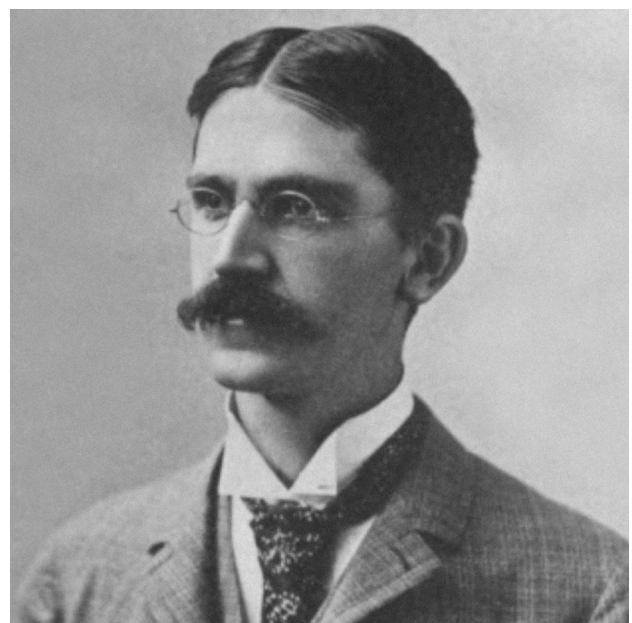
COMMONS: A TOOL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Riccardo Súarez García , Sophie-Marie Hohenwarter

Discourses about environmental justice first arose during the 1980s associated with the United States civil rights movement, and later reached Great Britain as well as other European countries. Although the specific problems concerning environmental justice in the various countries may be different, the entrance into establishing movements of resistance is not: Environmental justice movements were founded bottom-up, so that's the first link we can find between this concept and Communitarian Management Institutions. They also work from the bottom and can be a tool to achieve a sustainable gesture of resources. Environmental Justice is also connected with capitalistic activities, such as forced evictions to profit from a certain resource. For these reasons, Commons could play a big role as "the rescue" for capitalism, empowering people to make decisions by themselves and liberating this kind of institutional structures from dependence of external entities such as big multinational corporations.

Commons consist of three elements; the resource (material or immaterial), the people (commoners) who use that resource, and the process in which it is negotiated on how it should be used. Commons thus arise from a social practice. In the opinion of Martin Beckenkamp, Commons are both opportunity and danger at the same time. He states that they are characterized by the fact of creating win-win situations on the one hand, but are unstable and vulnerable constellations on the other hand, because they presuppose the "common will to cooperate". On the other side, authors such as Julian Agyeman define the common environment as "everything, where we live, eat, play, work, everything, the physical and cultural world". Despite that, the concept of Commons has been further developed to acquire more complex meanings. Commons' theory could be integrated in the governance of very different kinds of resources and there are plenty of examples all over the world and all over the centuries about natural resources that have been managed in a communitarian way by those who were dependent of them. Communitarian management of resources doesn't mean (necessarily) sustainable, equalitar-ian or democratic management; it just means that there is a resource or a system of resources that is managed by a clearly defined group of people who have an agreement (implicit or explicit) on a set of rules (written or not) to structure the way the resource(s) is/are exploited.

There is an intense debate between those scholars of the 'classical theory of Commons' that believe in Commons within a diversity of different institutional forms and those of the 'critical theory of Commons' that argue about Commons as an opposition to free market and State, as a tool to overcome the capitalistic way of structure the economy. But even if someone advocates for one view or the other, when it comes to communitarian management as a tool for environmental justice, there is a consensus between all that scholars, endorsed by many historical and current examples. As we entered the age of information technology and global real-time communication, the rules governing the use and distribution of information became increasingly important. The development of intellectual Commons is a relatively modern one correlating with the rising im-

portance of telecommunications in nowadays society and the development of rules regarding this topic. Before 1995, only a few people saw a link between information and Commons. According to Charlotte Hess and Elinor Ostrom people began to raise awareness towards the fact that information on the Internet can be considered a shared resource. The patterns of behaviour that were perceived on the World Wide Web (conflicts, overuse and "pollution") were the same characteristics as of natural Commons.

Both natural and intellectual resources can be managed by the community that uses them in order to provoke a more democratic decision making and a more egalitarian result of the management. Community management allows for free participation in decision-making and allows community objectives to be achieved by considering a greater diversity of opinions.

In the case of Galicia (Spain), one can observe how in many of its localities institutional structures have persisted based on the communal administration of forest resources through their adaptation to the external and internal situation. These institutions are named 'neighbourhood forest in common hands' (NFCH). Despite intense external institutional constraints and major changes in modern economy these have managed to survive and have even been legally recognized. NFCHs have a centurial history as an essential part of the agrarian-livestock system, providing the family farms with land for animals and the source of material for the fertilization of their plantations. After the Spanish Civil War, Franco's regime and its power of coercion, in its eagerness to repopulate the common forest with fast-grown species, led to a profound crisis, which meant a loss of the natural environment and the way of life of the peasant-commune. Resistance to this process was strong in rural areas and various strategies were followed to deal with this crisis. The state's intention to end the conflict was translated into a law regulating NFCHs in 1968. The loss of importance of the traditional system of balance between the neighbouring mountains and individual plots has also led to a loss of relevance of social relations and greater individualism, this case is seen in households where agriculture persists and no longer have any kind of productive relationship with the rural area besides residing in it.

However, it is fair to point out that, at least for a significant number of communities of NFCHs, the existence of a new reconceptualization of the use of the mountains is allowing the survival of such institutions under new parameters.

The industrialization of the Galician countryside and the disconnection between agriculture and livestock were the main conditioning factors at the time of return. Hence, the new communities have had to adapt to the new conditions. It also implied that a rupture at the economic and biophysical level, as well as at the institutional and identity level, which leads to great differences in the old and the new community. While in the old communities there was a direct and unequal use and imbalance of power in decision making. However, in the new communities, spaces have become owned, managed and taken advantage collectively where decisions are taken democratically through assemblies where all community members can give their opinion. The democratization of these wilderness areas combined with a greater environmental awareness of the people has led to more and more experiences of sustainable forest management. The fight against fires attempts to conserve and recover native species and biodiversity of species and the emergence of new economic activities respectful to the environment also led to the generation of jobs, better enjoyment of the vicinity of natural areas and a greater balance of the material/economic distribution.

In terms of intellectual commons, the environmental and climate justice movement 'System Change Not Climate Change' (SCNCC) can be looked at in the context of their use of intellectual resources as commons. For instance, the Austrian part of the movement deals with environmental and climate justice issues in general. One focal point for the local group of the city of Graz is the maintenance and improvement of air quality in the city, which based on its geographical location, climate change and modern urban lifestyle, is vulnerable to high particulate matter pollution. For this purpose, actions, interventions, information sessions and networking meetings are realized to mobilize, if possible, a broad critical mass of people to sustain a healthy environment for the urban population. Instruments of planning and execution of the above-mentioned events are

based partly on intellectual resources, such as digital knowledge. The knowledge of the individual movement members derives from individual research, from relevant training and further education, from personal concern and the exchange with other affected people. The transfer and production of knowledge and information takes place either face to face or via the digital path, through E-Mails, Open-Sources- and Social-Media-Websites- and -Tools. To connect with one another and to reach more people the main tools used are digital commons such as creative commons, open-source-software and platforms. That provides at least an approach towards equality in the context of the global north. The basic rights of freedom of speech as well as the freedom of media are a tremendous part of democratic governance, in which SCNCC Graz is embedded in. Therefore, the second sphere, knowledge, could be seen as an aim to maintain these rights. Therefore, the second sphere, knowledge, could be seen as an aim to maintain these rights, which has encroached upon in a subtle and elliptical way in the

recent past – at the beginning of 2018 the Cambridge-Analytica-Data-Scandal demonstrated the flipside of Digital Commons through the misuse of personal data: Cambridge-Analytica harvested private information of up to 87 million Facebook users, without their consent, which furthermore were used in political affairs, such as the Trump Campaign 2015 and 2016 and the Brexit vote in 2016 to create strategies to influence the public opinion.

The parameter of efficiency is at a high level in this example, because technological advances make it possible to efficiently optimize the use of these tools as well as to perfect the production of information and knowledge. Just by the fact that several people can accept and create a content. At the same time, this possibility also entails risks, since falsehoods can occur as well. That leads to other questions, such as how to govern digital commons and who are the ones to do so.

The first example of NFCH in Galicia shows how

to face environmental problems and share benefits and burdens of managing a resource, a natural common, considering various interests, trying to reach consensus and voting the final decisions. For its part, the second example of SCNCC in Graz, demonstrates how a movement with clear objectives can resort to virtual resources that turn communication and communication channels into a community good, an intellectual resource, improving the efficiency of the group to share ideas, set objectives and work as a team to achieve them.

Therefore, in our opinion, community management of resources must be empowered so that there is greater participation of people in those decisions that concern them and affect them. Through this type of management our societies will be able to achieve greater awareness of environmental injustices and how they affect people, communities or the natural environment directly, as well as greater equality on how to face these problems and how to use the potential benefits

of the resources. Taking for granted the idea that the function of a state, or at least one of its most important functions, is to provide solutions in an efficient and sensible manner to the problems of citizens; it does not seem outlandish for it to support, either by allowing the communities to do so or by means of relative and cordial advice, decision-making processes within these communities to resolve their problems and disputes without the need to resort to coercion as the first option. The concept of Commons can be useful, given that internal and external conditions allow it, for the purpose of managing natural and intellectual resources in a sustainable and fair way. The different levels of administration should empower Commons' institutions by giving them the legal frameworks and the tools to be self-suffiency on their decisions, but also ensuring that their gesture follows the path of providing people with a more environmentally fair management of the different kind of resources.

Charlotte Hess

Charlotte Hess is Associate Dean for Research, Collections and Scholarly Communication at Syracuse University Library where she is an advocate and spokesperson for the knowledge commons, open access and the mindful collection, organization, distribution and preservation of the cultural and scholarly record.

Elinor Östrom

Ostrom received the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (as the first woman in this field) for her groundbreaking research demonstrating that ordinary people are capable of creating rules and institutions that allow for the sustainable and equitable management of shared resources.

Christian Laval

(born in 1953) is a French investigator of the history of the philosophy and of the sociology in the University Paris Nanterre. His works are centred in three great subjects: the history of the utilitarianism, the history of the classic sociology and the evolution of the systems of teaching. At present, it has if dedicated, together with the philosopher Pierre Dardot, writing on the political strategy of the Neoliberalism and what seriates his reverse proposition: the Common.

Julian Agyeman

Ph.D. Julian Agyeman is a Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, USA. He is the originator of the concept of 'just sustainabilities,' the intentional integration of social justice and sustainability, defined as 'the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, whilst living within the limits of supporting ecosystems.'

Paul Mohai

Professor Mohai's teaching and research interests are focused on environmental justice, public opinion and the environment, and influences on environmental policy making. He is a founder of the Environmental Justice Program at the University of Michigan and a major contributor to the growing body of quantitative research examining disproportionate environmental burdens and their impacts on low income and people of color communities.

MAKING COMMONS WORK

The power of responsibility

Hanna Pishchyk

An often-repeated saying goes that if one cannot define a concept, then one does not really know much about it. Regardless if this axiom is true or not, it is highly relevant to discussions about the commons. Commons can be understood in different ways. Some narrowly define them as the cultural and/or natural resources accessible to all members of a community or society at large, while others define commons as a social practice of managing a resource by a community of users that self-governs the institutions they create. There are also different types of commons that range from social commons to natural and even digital commons.

Yet, no matter how you define commons, there is a key value that is inextricably linked to them: self-responsibility. What does this encompass? First and foremost, it is about being responsible members of the communities that rely on commons. When we have access to resources, it is our duty to use them responsibly. It also means committing ourselves to solve the myriad challenges facing our communities and contribute to their development. This is precisely where many of us might think, "I'd like to contribute to my community, but I don't have enough time, I don't have the right skills, and I don't have any power." The perceived inability to contribute is based on flawed logic, however, when it comes to commons, every little contribution matters and every small action

contributes to a larger goal, especially if we talk about digital commons. This is exemplified with one of the best-known and widely used forms of digital commons: Wikipedia.

What would you do if, for instance, while reading a Wikipedia article, you notice a mistake or outdated information? Will you skip over it and let others to be misled, or will you try to correct it? In this case, the central issue involves taking responsibility to make a small but meaningful contribution to a resource used by millions. However, taking responsibility also requires certain knowledge and at least basic digital media skills. Specifically, you need to know how to edit a Wiki-

> "If one cannot define a concept, then one does not really know much about it. Regardless if this axiom is true or not, it is highly relevant to discussions about the commons."

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

pedia page, how to navigate the website, and what information to include when editing an article. This demonstrates yet another necessity to fully participate in the commons: Literacy. And in the case mentioned above, it takes the form of digital media literacy – the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication.

But herein lies a dilemma: who should be responsible for developing digital media literacy education? Should it be schools, colleges, and universities, or should it be an individual's responsibility to self-educate? Interestingly, despite the fact that many educational institutions have already recognized the importance of developing digital media literacy skills among students, few have made it a permanent part of the curricula. Some can claim that digital media education is too expensive to be a part of general or even higher education. Yet, this assertion defies even basic rationality. Is it cheaper for millions of young people to

lack critical knowledge of how to engage with and manage an increasing amount of digital information, for instance? Will it be beneficial for us as individuals and for society in general to neglect teaching critical information skills universally while living in the digital age? The answer is a resounding no.

It is also important to mention that one reason why digital media literacy is still not considered a compulsory subject is that it is often conflated with critical thinking, which some argue youth naturally develop throughout the educational process. Moreover, given the fact that most young people today are "digital natives" with access to unprecedented amounts of resources and information, it is common to dismiss the need for digital media literacy since youth can easily educate themselves. Yet, this logic is flawed for two key reasons. First, it is wrong to reduce digital media literacy only to critical thinking. While critical thinking is a core component of digital media lit-

eracy education, so is the ability to sort and analyze the digital information available. Thus, the second reason why this logic fails is that it assumes access to knowledge is all that is required to facilitate learning. Not all information is of the same value, however, and understanding how to evaluate sources, identify misinformation, and realize bias are all critical components of digital media literacy that ultimately affect how well someone can take advantage of information online.

Indeed, digital media literacy must be understood as a two-way process. We cannot only consume information, but must also critique and respond to it. In fact, the more advanced our information analysis skills are, the more relevant information we can produce online. And this is directly linked to the digital commons since it is the responsibility of anyone involved to improve and safeguard such resources. Furthermore, there is another distinct feature of responsibility in the linkage between digital commons and digital media literacy. Specifically, when it comes to digital commons, the concept of being a responsible member of a community also applies to improving yourself. Thus, contributing to your personal development and enhancing your knowledge and skills, you make a valuable contribution to the development of the digital community.

Ultimately, issues related to commons are multifaceted but also interrelated, regardless of the type of commons in question. And while considering the ways we can strengthen the commons and make them beneficial to all, we try to find practical solutions that can be successfully applied on both the individual and societal levels. Yet, the future of the commons begins with our responsibility and our readiness to share this responsibility with our communities with the ultimate goal of improving society as a whole.

Hiding in plane site: the impact of aviation on our common land

Kelsey DePorte

"The world is your oyster" is a phrase I grew up hearing repeatedly. You can do anything, go anywhere, be anyone. I grew up jumping from one jet into another starting from before I was even born. Flying from The Netherlands to the United States once a year was standard, not to mention all of the other side trips we made. The world was a playground: without borders, and I, was blissfully naive. Travel was embedded into my identity of how I experienced the world. So, much so, that I was blissfully unaware of the impact of my actions.

Why travel in the first place? Traveling can only mean to get from a point A to a point B, but we also travel for business, to visit friends and family, and gain new experiences. If we take a step back, then, it sounds more like: travel is a way to satisfy a need for connection and communication with the world around us. So, if we were to turn that around then it isn't "where do we travel to and how" but "why do we need communication and how can we communicate"? Then, we'll start seeing new opportunities and rethink the current systems that are in place. There is a generation of young greens that is doing just that. Rethinking our needs, what we want in the world and how to make that a just system that functions without harming the environment where everyone can participate. The way we travel is just a small chapter in the bookwork of changes that need to be made.

Over the last few decades, tourism has become a defining characteristic of modern industrial nations. Since the post-war period, economic growth and technological progress contributed to a high level of competition of new travel destinations and new modes of transport. Rising affluence, urbanisation, an increase in leisure time, and a shortening of working hours made way for a boom in the global tourist market. The result: mass tourism has become normalized in the world we live in today. But, it wasn't until recently, that we started to question if this lifestyle is sustainable. Even meat consumption is an easier subject to discuss on Facebook than air travel.

Today, we are flying more than ever. According to Transport & Environment[*], aviation is one of the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is responsible for an estimated 4.9% of man-made global warming. Global CO_2 emissions from air traffic are expected to rise up to 22% of total CO_2 emissions by 2050. In the next two decades that means a doubling of air passengers and about 1200 airport infrastructure projects planned. All while, according to the new IPCC report, by 2050 the EU should not only be carbon neutral, but carbon negative. This means that the EU should emit less greenhouse gases than what our environment can naturally absorb. Which means that in order to limit global warming to 1.5 ° C, and avoid climate catastrophe, we need to leave fossil fuels in the ground. The airline industry is dependent on fossil fuels. You do the math: something isn't adding up here. Though, we don't want to talk about it.

Is the logical choice then: don't fly at all, ever? Unfortunately, this is unattainable. We are eco-

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* https://www.transportenvironment.org/what-we-do/aviation/aviation-ets

nomically pushed not to do so due to externalized costs which keep plane tickets low. We're not paying the true price of the toll that it is taking on the environment. Another option is to look into alternatives. The problem is that we are lacking good alternatives that are accessible to everyone. Public transportation, in some places, is still unexisting. In areas where it is, it is either lacking good connections, slow, difficult to book tickets, or too expensive. This keeps us locked into a system that incentivises the most polluting option. To put it into perspective, if you were to take an average domestic flight rather than a high-speed electric train, you'd be personally responsible for at least 20 times as much carbon dioxide.

Despite this outlook, aviation is stimulated with subsidies and tax exemptions and continues to grow at a fast pace. If affordable sustainable travel isn't available or accessible, people will continue to turn to cheaper and polluting alternatives. And there is a better alternative: with the right policies in place, most European flights could be replaced by a sustainable, high-speed European railway network. It's time to end the privileged position of aviation in the transport market and create a level playing field in which sustainable innovation is rewarded.

Climate change demands an unprecedented collective public response. To continue large scale projects, such as building more airlines, is a misuse of common land. To still allow the airline industry to grow unprecedentedly is polluting the air, which we all need to

survive. This generation is the first to deal with the impact and consequences of climate inaction. This alone gives us, young people, the right to be actively involved in finding solutions to the problems that we face in this day an age. We deserve a seat at the table. Not only is it our right, but it is our duty to use our voices and be heard, to mobilise and to work towards solutions for a just and greener Europe. Which is why we, as a group of 34 young Dutch organizers, we will travel to the COP24 in Poland to demand that European leaders manage commons properly.

While a revision of the Paris Agreement is needed (aviation is currently not included), the EU also needs to ensure that any legislation it puts into place now, at the very least does not undermine the targets which are currently on the table.

More info: www.copop.eu

Large-scale commercial data collection is a **threat** to democracy

Igor Skórzybót

When making various decisions – from buying the right brand of yogurt, to voting in elections – people are susceptible to numerous cognitive biases. While this relatively self-evident truth may seem benign, corporations, special interests, and platforms with access to enormous amounts of data can easily use cognitive biases to influence our decisions.

Ever since Tim Berners-Lee opened up the World Wide Web in 1991, the Internet as a form of commons has become vital for real democracy in the modern world. Yet, what do we do if all of our data becomes commodified? If a corporation gets its hands on the right amount of data about, say, voters, it can easily conduct a behavioral analysis of a segment that supports a particular politician. In our contemporary digital era, Facebook algorithms, for instance, can now build a massive target group of similar people to which it will direct special ads – as the Cambridge Analytica scandal demonstrated (this political data firm built personality profiles based on data from 50 million Facebook users, and then sold these data to US politicians without the consent of users*).

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*   https://www.facebook.com/business/help/164749007013531
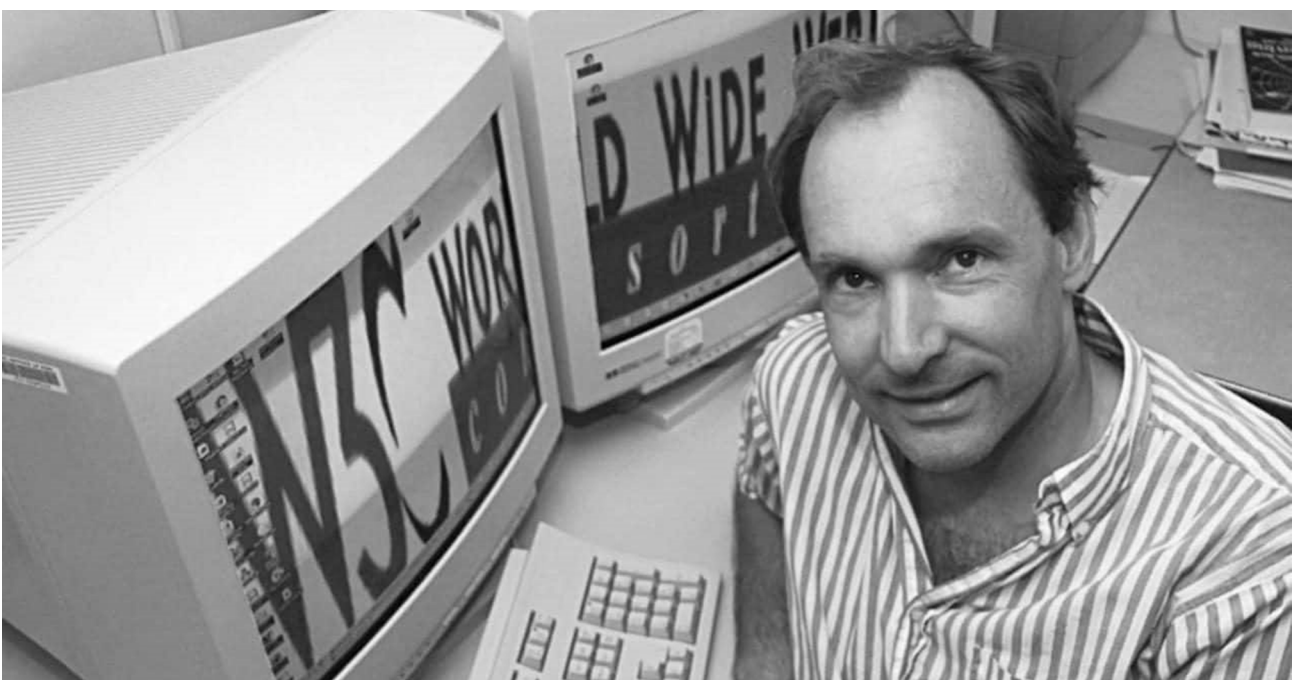
In this article, I will present a few simple techniques that corporations use to influence human choices, which in turn impacts the kind of data users produce. In psychology, heuristics are **"mental shortcuts"** – simple but efficient rules that people often use to form judgments and make decisions. They usually work well, but sometimes can lead to systematic errors – commonly referred to as cognitive biases – which can affect people's choices. Owners of huge data sets can easily use heuristics, and it is scientifically proven that we are all influenced by them*. This is true even if we think that we are acting rationally, guided by the calculation of potential profits and losses resulting from a given choice (this assumption is a de facto characteristic of neoliberal ideology). Even if only a few percent of people fall victim to cognitive biases, it can still determine the outcome of an election.

Regarding decision-making, the most important

by a hated person? So, without proper targeting, it could work the other way around since people who like 'A' are generally more inclined to vote for them. This can have a significant impact on the outcome of a public consultation or referendum. Just consider this: would anyone vote for 'C' even if it is beneficial to the citizenry if the only information we have about this topic or candidate would be that it is supported by someone condemned by society?

An even simpler technique that can be used to to manipulate the behavior of voters is **approval rating heuristic**. Advertisers can draw on polls measuring the approval rating of a specific politician. When it is high, people are more likely to vote for them. It is easy to target potential voters with such polls. Similar is the ideology heuristic. People tend to vote for politicians who are ideologically close to them. Even if a voter agrees with a given politician on the vast majority of is-

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cognitive bias to consider is the **likability heuristic**. It reflects the fact that people simply do not vote for politicians they do not like. A simple use of this technique is to direct political advertisements highlighting a politician's faults or even ridiculing them to a group of voters. This can convince people who, for whatever reasons or biases held, cannot be fooled by advertising that promotes the advantages of another candidate. A less well-known but extremely powerful application of this method is to direct advertisements informing that person 'A' has a 'B' opinion on issue 'C' to people who do not like this person. Let's think: would any of us vote for 'C', even if it would be beneficial for us, if the only information we have about this topic would be that it is supported

sues, targeted advertisements can turn said voter against the politician by highlighting a disagreement over an important issue (e.g., the so-called "abortion compromise" in Poland, which was one of the few countries in the world to outlaw abortion in the 90's after decades of liberal legislation, and some people do not support legalisation of abortion even if they agree with other Green policies**). As a result, it can potentially change their opinion about the candidate, and encourage them to vote for a candidate with less similar views in general but who holds an opinion that is aligned with the voter's on that singular issue.

Targeted ads do not have to be directly related to politics. Research on **anchoring** – a cognitive bias

*   Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases", Science, New Series, Vol. 185, No. 4157. (Sep. 27, 1974), pp. 1124-1131, http://psiexp.ss.uci. edu/research/teaching/Tversky_Kahneman_1974.pdf

**   https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge-base/113-a-dangerous-compromise-the-battle-of-reproductive-rights-in-poland

that refers to an individual relying too heavily on an initial piece of information offered (known as the "anchor") when making decisions – indicates that, for example, the placement of polling stations in school buildings significantly impacts the results of the vote on increasing funding for schools. Imagine now that a few months before the elections, a large group of voters see advertising related to the "postulate characteristic" – for example, when a political candidate constantly focuses on a particular issue throughout their campaign – for one of the political parties taking part in this election (e.g., education). This may affect the outcome of the election, and it is difficult to prove that the sponsor of these ads had a special political aim.

Thus, this is why we as young Greens should stand up for issues like privacy laws and net neutrality regulation. Doing so does not merely protect our own environment, but it also safeguards us against platforms, Internet service providers (ISPs), media companies, and others from further commodifying our data and using it against us. Of course, this is already happening, but this truth only serves to amplify the need to have robust digital agendas and include digital issues in our campaigning and advocacy. Ultimately, we have to advocate for the Internet to remain a common good, and understanding how our own minds – and, thus, our data – are used against us is a good first step.

> **"...We as young Greens should stand up for issues like privacy laws and net neutrality regulation. Doing so does not merely protect our own environment, but it also safeguards us against platforms, Internet service providers (ISPs), media companies, and others from further commodifying our data and using it against us."**

ONE LAND, TWO WORLDS

Jelena Aleksić, Kay Aaron Klowkow

Europe is divided in 50 countries. Differences exist, especially between countries of the East and South Europe and West and North Europe. Even though we live in a modern age, system in countries of East and South Europe is still steps behind from what people would call "good life standard". Present problems are in the form of weak organization of social commons, restricted rights of free expression and speech, low salaries and corruption. However, is the situation of countries which are part of European Union better and how? On this and other questions we decided to talk with Sabina (23) from Azerbaijan and Asger (20) from Denmark who explained us how system of the countries they currently live in works, where are the differences visible and what is their perspective of European Union.

What is your idea of the EU and what comes in your mind when you think about it? Are you familiar with the advantages of the EU?

Sabina
The first thing that comes to my mind is the idea of better life standards. When I was traveling to Poland I witnessed an accident. Cars were not moving

and it was quite crowded. Ambulance came 5-6 minutes later, which is really fast. In my country it would take much longer time for an ambulance to come. What fascinated me is how peo-

ple generally care about each other and how they are working together for a better progress. I can see that people who live in EU are always smiling, so for me the EU is definitely a positive thing. For many years, Azerbaijan has been trying to be a member of the EU but we still have to negotiate with European Parliament. If we would be part of the EU, it would be much easier to travel to other countries in Europe, we would have more chances to study abroad which many people would most likely do.

Asger

Denmark is in a situation where we have four restrictions, only three of them are practically working and that is that we are not in the defense alliance (e.g. Frontex), not in the monetary union, so apart from discussions and

meetings on financial and economical subjects and then we are also outside the jurisdiction, meaning that we can't be drag to the European court and also we don't participate fully in for example Europol.

Denmark has traditionally been a very hesitant pro-EU-country, we have always had the idea of saying: EU yes, but we have some restrictions that we want to hold and, personally, I am pro-EU. I think that in our present world, we have many important problems and i think the only way to solve them is standing together with as many countries as possible. For example, the refugee crisis that the EU handled very badly, or climate change: all of these are important problems that can't be solved by anyone on their

own.

Then of course there is also the aspect of free trade, that can be beneficial and problematic. It can support economy but it is not always sustainable. However, the EU has proven that sometimes it can be sustainable thanks to the markings of products by making sure that some rights have been upheld for workers and for specific requirements for different processes. I think the EU can function as a tool to make more production in different countries sustainable.

I definitely see some problems with the EU but I do find that the benefits are bigger than the problems.

BAKI

Can you describe life-standard in your country and especially concerning education, health care, social security?

KØBENHAVN
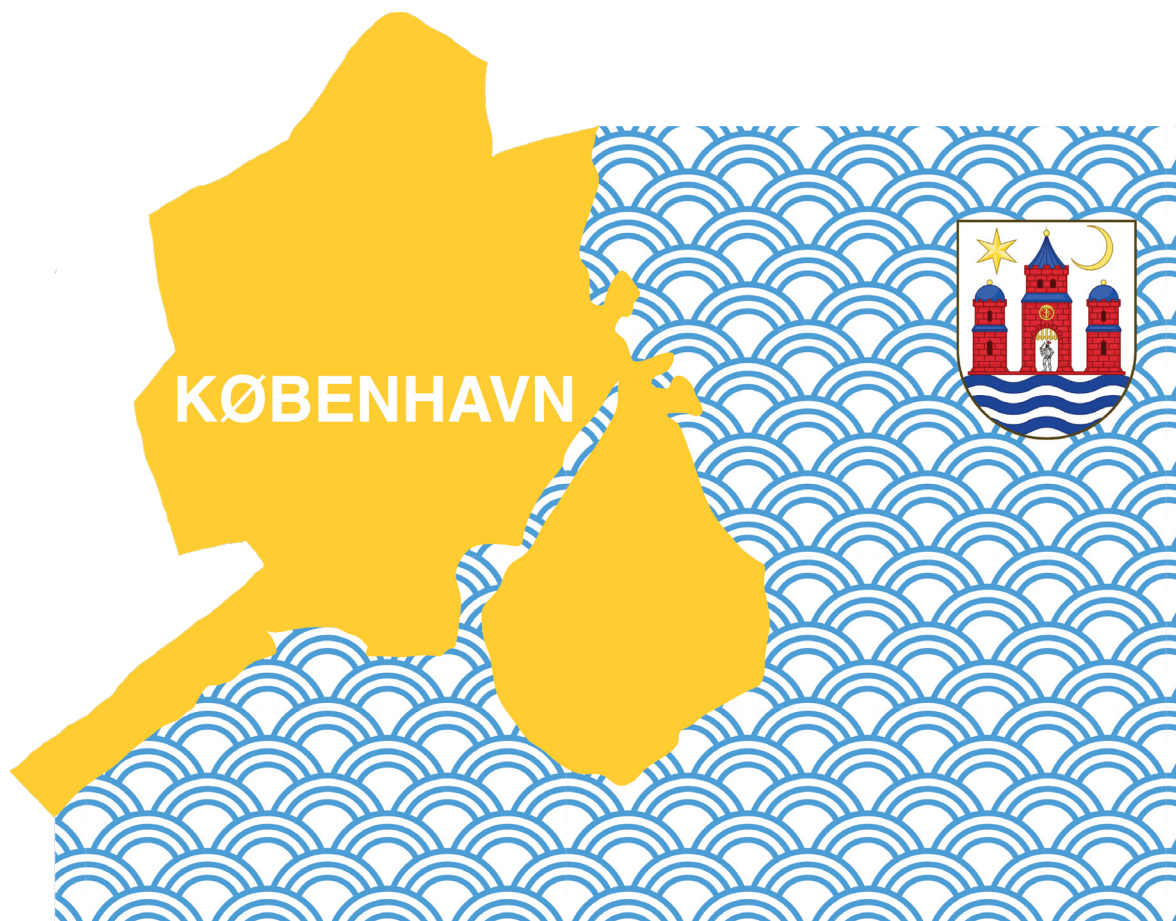
Sabina

Healthcare system is a "double edged sword". Hospitals are free, but doctors expect a bribe after every visit. If you don't give them extra money they write your name down and do not accept your appointment next time. It's the same with ambulances, if you don't give them a bribe , they write down your address and phone number on their "blacklist" and next time when you call they come one or two hours later. Because of that, people prefer to call private hospitals and ambulances where you have to pay, like it or not.

Educational system is still under Soviet influence. Schools are free. Our professors are really old, 60-65 years old and they don't have any experience with studying abroad, new technologies, science or any kind of informal education. Salary of teachers is very low, so it's not strange if a teacher asks a pupil to stay after school for some extra classes which, of course, includes extra money. We still use old edition books which are written on Cyrillic alphabet, and we don't have any new edition books.

Social security is horrible. People from my country doesn't know anything about security numbers or insurance. If you get ill, you have to continue working or you might lose your job. No one guarantees anything for you. If you get injured or robbed, you have to pay for your own treatments and damages. Also we have to pay everything with cash.

Asger

The life standard is very high in Denmark. Education, from primary school, kindergarten, college, university, practical school, everything is free. When you are above 18 and still studying you get paid from the government to go to school, to make sure that you don't have to neglect school, that nobody has to stop going to school for financial reasons. The state is really promoting education, making sure that as many people as possible have equal opportunities for education. There is free universal healthcare. Dentist is free only until you are 18, but mental health is not covered completely, only 50%.

All clinics and hospitals are completely financially covered, some medicines are also fully covered, others are on private budget.

The public sector in Denmark is very large, which also comes with very high taxes, for some people over 50%. I think that it works quite well in Denmark

and it does establish a pretty good polity for most people. It fits together with the high wages of Denmark, but I don't think that is a perfect model for any country to put the taxes that high. People who are unemployed have a tough time because we have very complex laws about that.

Do you think your country has a room to improve?

Sabina
Improvement is urgent. For improvement to happen, Azerbaijan needs to change its government. Even though democracy is the system of our regime, I feel like we are stuck in the middle age. Since 1995, one family is "on the throne" and the same president of Azerbaijan has been elected since 2003! He will again be elected on the next elections. Nothing has changed for us in these past 23 years. Until there is no change of our government, we won't have chance to improve in any aspect. Azerbaijan Young Greens are trying to train students and young people on how to fight for themselves and to explain to them that it's alright to think and to do other things from what our government is telling us. I am afraid that it would take a lot of time for this change to happen. It's really hard to connect all these smart young people willing for a change, because of the huge influence of the system.

Asger
Of course, until something is perfect you can always improve it and Denmark is definitely not perfect. There are so many ways that Denmark could be more equal. I think currently we have a government trying to pick up a lot of the welfare to make some tax and regulation-breaks. That is quite problematic and it is not what Denmark needs right now. We don't need tax-breaks because we are very rich, we have growth, we don't need more money. I think Denmark should focus on less ranges of bureaucracy, especially on the topic of unemployed people. Thousands of pages of legislation are written about this, yet nobody knows all the laws about this topic. Less bureaucracy and trying to make everything inside the public sector easier for everybody to understand, that is the next step in establishing a more democratic system.

There are a lot of things that Denmark should also do . We have most things covered, so I think that Denmark should be the front-runner in, for example, trying a universal basic income, trying some of these social experiments, because we have the ability to do that and then see if it works.

Do you feel comfortable about your rights of free speech, protesting or any kind of free expression in your country?

Sabina
No, we don't have any chance to protest or any kind of free expression. If police officers see more then five people in a group in the city center, they immediately approach, asking questions such as "what are you doing, what are you talking about, why are you here", in a very rude way. For couples, it is also very difficult to express feelings in public, for example if they wanted to hug each other, the policeman would come and take them to police station and call their parents, age doesn't matter. Also, in these situations, there is a lot of corruption. Three months ago, I was smoking on the street and a police officer approached me and asked me "Does your parents know you are smoking?". I answered him politely that I was 22 years old and I was allowed to smoke, but he became very rude, took my ID and asked for money, threatening me to call my parents and tell them anyway. Parties and fun events are also forbidden.

Asger
Yes, I feel so. The free speech in Denmark is comprehensible and covers quite everybody. There isn't actually a big threat, but the police is very aware when we have protests of Neonazis or Pegida and anti-Pegida-movements. It's quite funny they have spies in Pegida to find out when they are protesting and where they are meeting.

We have had the discussion also about political correctness but it is kind of not on the same level as, for example, in France or in America. There is almost a consensus that political correctness is necessary. There is no reason to go against it, so in the debate, we passed it somehow and that's very beneficial for the discourse.

EDITORS

Alexia Delfosse likes to learn new things, to fight for what she believes in, and to spread positivity. She has a passion for everything that has to do with Hispanic cultures. She also loves to talk about the Buen Vivir, a theory that she is currently studying at La Sorbonne in Paris which forms the link between her Green activism and her social science master's degree specialised in Latin America. During her spare time, she likes to do yoga, dance, run, read and do art related activities.

Jelena Aleksić is 22 years old and she is in the Editorial Board of Ecosprinter. She is studying Ecology at University of Belgrade and her interests are activism, Green politics, climate change research and environmental science. She is in the Board of Serbian Green Youth. She loves cooking, and her big love is grilled tofu.

MEET THE WRITERS

Isaura Calsyn is a deputy mayor in Eeklo, a local town situated between Ghent and Bruges in Belgium. As a Green activist, she tries to implement the ecological way of thinking in fields such as education, culture and youth. Forming communities within those fields will be one of her main goals concerning local policy.

Riccardo Súarez García's took a degree in Sociology at the University of A Coruña, where he specialized in subjects such as analysis of public policies or collective action. During this period he also completed an academic year at Warsaw University. He then completed a Master's Degree in International Relations at the International University of Andalusia, focusing her final thesis on cooperation between municipalities and between municipalities and the European Union in the implementation of European environmental strategies. He is currently a researcher at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide in the Ph.D. program of Environment and Society in the specialty of Environmental History. The theme of his research is the communal goods, currently focusing on the productive changes in the Neighbourhood Mountains in Common Hand during the latter.

Sophie-Marie Hohenwarter was born in Graz (Austria) in 1990. She studied a Bachelor in Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology. It was her first contact with Social Justice. Then, she focused on food-sovereignty and she is currently studying Social Ecology and Global studies in Austria. She is a food-sovereignty activist, permaculturist and social ecologist.

Hanna Pishchek is from Belarus. She studies Intercultural Communication at Minsk State Linguistic University. In July 2018, she completed a 2-month training and mentorship on "Youth participation in Internet Governance" under an international youth initiative Digital Grassroots. In August 2018, she became a Digital Grassroots Ambassador. She's currently working on the module on Internet related issues for adolescents, which she is going to conduct as a part of a local educational project for youth. She is also a Young European Ambassador for 2018-2019. She was also a high-level athlete in tennis from 2005 to 2016.

Kelsey DePorte is a former executive board member and campaigner for Jonge Klimaatbeweging residing in The Netherlands. She is fluent in Dutch, English and Sarcasm. Kelsey studied Sociology and Environmental Studies at the College of Charleston in the United States. Besides environmental justice work, Kelsey is also interested in all things D.I.Y., making music, being outdoors, and going to concerts.

Igor Skórzybót, 20 years old, is the Polish Young Greens Media Officer. He studies cognitive science at University of Warsaw, where he is secretary at Students' Research Circle on the Language. His main political interests are education, transport and language used in politics.

Kay Aaron Klowkow is 21 years old, member of German Young Greens and he is currently studying law in Munster since April 2018.He is a big fan of sport especially of football and sailing. His interests are politics, but also being in nature, watching birds. He loves animals.

THE COMMONS ISSUE