

## **Conference of the German Association of Social and Cultural Anthropology**

Call for Workshops for the GASCA Conference at the University  
of Cologne, 29 September - 2 October 2025

### **Un/Commoning Anthropology: Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie und die Frage, was – wem – gemein sein soll**

In the face of polycrisis and endangered livelihoods, 'commoning' has come into increasing focus in recent anthropological debates. While earlier research on commons focused on communally managed resources, these renewed discussions about different practices and forms of commoning broaden our view to include emerging, decentralised practices of self-determination that resist various manifestations of power and capitalism. Commoning is often located in a tradition of utopian social projects. At the centre of commoning is the attempt to make resources administered by the state, or marketed by the private sector, the basis for new communities of solidarity of varying scales and scopes. In view of the Anthropocene as a 'contaminated epoch', commoning relies on establishing forms of transboundary solidarity, neighbourly responsibility, and mutual care to solve planetary challenges. Air, water, soil, and biodiversity, cultural heritage and different knowledge formations, are thus withdrawn as commons from extractivist exploitation and state appropriation, to be managed and preserved in solidarity as a common basis of life for future generations. Among other things, this means discussing health not primarily as a property of individual bodies, but as a question of relational and collective forms of wellbeing, even across species boundaries.

In all areas of social life, people who had been denied political and cultural participation in colonial and post-colonial contexts often remain excluded, while new forms of marginalization continue to emerge today. Claims by these diverse groups to the commoning of resources, archives, and social futures challenge prevailing forms of classification and claims to ownership. New forms of co-operation and knowledge production aim at a radical redefinition of social relations and are meant to be translated into practical collaborations. This requires questioning assumptions and bodies of knowledge that are normatively set as "common sense", while always giving rise to new forms of inclusion and exclusion.

At the same time, states, corporations, and other supranational organisations are increasingly co-opting and institutionalising claims to commoning in the

entrenched relationships of international (knowledge) orders. To resist this logic of co-optation and maintain claims to difference, uncommoning is increasingly being brought to bear as a practice of resistance. Some social spaces, ecosystems, non-Western ontologies, and forms of more-than-human coexistence are involved in struggles to withdraw from hegemonic social formations, co-optation by state authorities, and the pervasive logic of the market. The digital commons, in particular, is caught in a field of tension in which people can benefit from enhanced participation, on the one hand, while technologies and media content, on the other, are increasingly being exploited, manipulated, and domesticated by transnational corporations and for political projects.

In response to crises of the post-colonial world order and the effects of an increasingly destructive capitalism, utopias of solidarity-based community, defiant differentiation, as well as authoritarian identity politics come into conflict, translate into one another, and produce different kinds of inclusions and exclusions.

The 2025 biennial conference of the German Association of Social and Cultural Anthropology invites you to critically examine the possibilities and politics of un/commoning in the face of multiple crises, as they are currently being discussed for the sustainable and just treatment of our planet and each other. In light of current ethnographic research, the conference calls for new discussions about questions of what can be common – and to whom – as part of local, situated struggles that may also have global implications. At a minimum, this includes critical reflections on whether, how, and by whom anthropological knowledges, methods, and theories can or should be used to solve boundary-crossing challenges.

We hereby cordially invite all members of the GASCA as well as the working and regional groups to submit proposals, thematic ideas and overarching questions for the three main discussion formats of the GASCA conference in Cologne (by 15.9.2024).

- A. Thematic workshops with a maximum of 2 time windows of 90 minutes each (4 speakers per time window; maximum 8 speakers, 3 moderators)
- B. Roundtables on controversial questions and debates – with a maximum of 1 time slot of 90 minutes each, and a maximum of 7 (international) guest speakers and 3 moderators.
- C. Labs in which experimental discussion formats are to be tested. This includes thematically innovative 'lateral thinking' as well as projects that break new ground methodologically and didactically. As for workshops, 1 or a maximum of 2 time slots of 90 minutes each will be available, offered by a maximum of 3 moderators or organizers.

All proposals should be outlined in a description of max. 250 words and a short abstract of 300 characters. When requesting a roundtable, please explain why the

topic or discussion goal is specifically suited to this format. In the case of lab proposals, the application also needs to include a description of time-planning, as well as the overall participatory or collaborative design.

The deadline for submitting workshop, roundtable and lab proposals is 15.9.2024. Please use the NomadIT platform for handing in your proposal:

<https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/dgska2025/panel-form>

To ensure that all workshop sessions, labs and roundtables can be attended by a sufficient number of participants, the conference organizers reserve the right to limit the total number of workshops, labs and roundtables. In addition, the 'two-role rule' applies with regard to lectures, workshop, lab and round-table organization, and the capacity of panelist / speaker: Each conference participant can only take on tasks in a maximum of two separate categories (i.e. lecture, speaker, workshop, lab or round-table organization, discussant and as a moderator). Dual functions in the same category are excluded. When participating in a lab the 'two-role rule' does not apply.