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**COMMONING PRACTICES AND COMMON RESOURCE USE. ENTANGLED
SPATIAL STRUCTURES OF RESOURCE ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT IN
RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE ARGENTINE CHACO**

Lorenzo Langbehn (lorenzo.langbehn@gmail.com)

Abstract

Objective: In this contribution I reflect on the spatial structures of commons-based access to resources in a semi-arid environment, showcasing the difficulties in defining clear-cut boundaries of common-pool-resources (CPRs) in this context.

Method: My reflection is part of an effort to generalize and build a set of theoretical tools based on extensive fieldwork conducted by myself in 2019, and more recently by two doctoral students, on the common use of resources in the center and north of the province of Santiago del Estero, in the Argentine Chaco region. Our fieldwork, comprising 8 case studies in different villages (parajes), has involved ethnographic and geographic methods, emphasizing spatial

relations and commoning practices. I refer mainly to results published in Spanish and French, using complementary unpublished data.

Conclusions: Commoning practices in our area of study include both activities involving natural resource use and management (livestock husbandry, extraction of timber and non-timber forest products, hunting) and other activities such as road maintenance, organization of religious festivals, sports events, education-related activities, family and neighborly mutual aid, and participation in peasant associations or indigenous communities. This dense layering of practices provides the strong bonds of a “moral community” which underpins the enforcement of informal norms regulating the access to resources and their management (as well as other social norms); indeed, in all cases studies access is purely based on customary norms, with no state recognition of current usage patterns. While difficult to grasp analytically (and challenging for management proposals following Ostromian guidelines, as we have shown elsewhere), the complex patterns of resource access seem functionally adapted to the ecological constraints under which these practices operate.

Palavras-chave: common-pool-resources; customary tenure; commoning; resource access; semi-arid environment.