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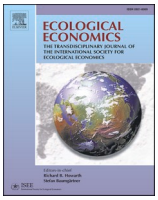

Analysis



Re-building historical commons: How formal institutions affect participation in community forests in Galicia, Spain

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ABSTRACT

There has been considerable research studying how the formal institutionalisation of community forests affects participation of local communities. This paper studies a historical commons in Galicia in order to provide insight into how formal institutions are enmeshed with a forestry logic and how this shapes community participation in historical commons in Europe. More specifically, we offer an alternative explanation for low levels of participation, which goes beyond the usual argument of the abandonment of traditional activities. We use an institutional bricolage framework to understand the causal mechanisms by which formal institutions shape participation patterns (both exclusion-inclusion dynamics and the type of participation, namely strategic or affective). Our results show that, during the first period of implementation, most powerful commoners aggregated exclusionary institutions to capture forestry benefits. Formal institutions incentivised the strategic engagement of commoners in exchange for a forestry 'share'. Later, educated commoners accessed the governing board and *aggregated* more inclusive institutions that allowed affective engagement and higher levels of participation in the commons. This created new affective relations while creating new exclusions. We conclude by highlighting the responsibility of the State and regional government in installing a forestry profit-seeking and extractive mentality among commoners, which is problematic for an active participation.

1. Introduction

Since the 1990's, there has been considerable research studying participation dynamics in different forms of community forests- i.e. historical/indigenous/traditional commons or those emerging from new decentralised/participatory approaches to forest governance (Agarwal, 1997; Agrawal and Gupta, 2005; Basnyat et al., 2019; García-López, 2019; Lise, 2000; Lund, 2015; Nightingale, 2005; Ribot et al., 2006). Some of this research highlights how new 'logics' emerge when institutions for community forests are formally codified and locally implemented (i.e. Lund, 2015; Nightingale, 2005). Logics are socially constructed historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices – including assumptions, values, and beliefs (Thornton et al., 2012: p. 2); they shape actors' frames, identities, and actions and explain people's behaviour in a particular social field (Ansari et al., 2013). Logics affect the type of participation supported as well as inclusion and exclusion dynamics.

Formal institutions can change local logics by introducing management objectives, uses and decision-making processes. Formal commons' institutions can be incompatible with and exclude local livelihoods, values and forms of organisation (Peluso and Vandergeest, 2001; Ramprasad et al., 2020; Serra and Allegretti, 2020; Skulska et al., 2020); favour elite-capture (Basnyat et al., 2019; García-López, 2019; Ribot et al., 2006); and further strengthen internal community inequalities based on gender, class, caste or ethnicity (Agarwal, 1997; Ingram et al., 2015; Nightingale, 2019). Formal institutions can also install 'passive entitlements' (Thompson, 2015): rights linked to specific membership criteria that disregard commoners' engagement in labour, exclude marginalised social groups such as women (Agarwal, 2001), and frame the participation of members as 'passive shareholders' (Sandström et al., 2016).

In the so called developing countries, research has highlighted how formal institutions regulating community-forests are imbued within a 'techno-bureaucratic' forestry logic (García-López, 2019; Lund, 2015).

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This logic is based on a 'forestry science' that emphasizes bureaucratic management procedures and standardised inventories aiming at a sustained yield of timber or other products. Yet, while forestry logics have reached most European historical commons (Lawrence et al., 2021; Skulska et al., 2020), their effect on the type of participation, exclusion and inclusion dynamics has not yet been explored.

Following the onset of enclosures during the 19th and 20th centuries, many historical commons in Europe have been devolved to communities and codified through diverse legislative mechanisms (Bravo and De Moor, 2008; Lawrence et al., 2021). This has allowed for the self-organisation of communities and the revitalisation of some commons socialites (Sandström et al., 2017). Yet, previous research highlights the low involvement or passive participation in many historical commons in Europe (e.g. Brown, 2006; Gatto and Bogataj, 2015; Marey-Pérez et al., 2014; Marey-Pérez et al., 2010; Premrl et al., 2015; Serra et al., 2017). Some explanatory factors are the steep decline of the traditional economic functions and the failure of policies to incorporate new potential functions and values (e.g. recreation, emotional belonging and cultural heritage) (Brown, 2006; Short, 2008). Nonetheless, the mechanisms by which participation is influenced by formal institutions are complex and need further empirical inquiry.

This paper investigates a case of historical commons in Galicia (Spain), a region with large areas of historical commons (25%) that were devolved to communities and formally legislated during the 1970s after a massive state-led reforestation program (1941–1971) (Rico Boquete, 1995). We selected the 'O Carballo' commonland in Galicia as a case study as an innovative example of autonomous community governance. Since 2007, this community has successfully taken charge of all management responsibilities; it has implemented a multifunctional use of the commonland incorporating a wide range of productive and social activities in forests to sustain materially and immaterially the community. Yet, at the time of our fieldwork, the initiative experienced a lack of participation that endangered its continuation and survival.

In this research, we study how formal institutionalisation processes affect participation by looking at the practices of "institutional bricolage" (Cleaver, 2012) used by commoners to adapt the new formal institutions to local conditions and needs. Forest commons research has usually studied the exclusionary effects of formal institutions (Agarwal, 2001; Nightingale, 2019), or the manner in which formal institutionalisation catalyses new avenues of collective action and power resistance (Nightingale, 2005; Tyagi and Das, 2020). Yet, most research has not investigated the ways in which new formal institutions are combined with community logics, and how the resulting hybrid logics produce new participation dynamics, inclusions and exclusions. Understanding commoners as bricoleurs allows for analysing institutional change and participation in a way that is sensitive to power inequalities within a community.

This paper addresses the following questions. First, how do commoners 'bricolage' legal institutional arrangements? Second, which hybrid institutional logics emerge from bricolage processes, and how do these explain participation patterns? The first question addresses issues of agency and power within the community: the different strategies of institutional bricolage used, depending on the participants' capacities and demands. The second question explores the logics resulting from the bricolage processes and their effect on the type of participation promoted and on the exclusion/inclusion dynamics (hereafter called participation patterns).

In the following section, we unpack the logics underlying participation by defining three types of participation practices (*in*, *for* and *of* the commons) often found in governing the commons, as well as two ways of participating in them (strategically or affectively). We then explain how institutional bricolage helps to explain how formal institutions affect participation. While acknowledging the importance of commoners' divergent capacity to participate, our results reveal how the codification of commons into formal institutions risks undermining the original logics of a commons. Our discussion problematises formal forestry commons institutions linking our findings with current debates on common's participation and governance. We conclude by highlighting the responsibility of the State and regional government in installing a profit-seeking and extractive mentality among commoners, which is problematic for their active participation in the historical commons. We also call for more gendered sensitive research to understand how women are hindered in participating in the historical commons in contexts where they are not resource-dependent.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The Logics Of Participation

Research claims that commons-based policy reforms need to be understood in the context of an increasing neoliberal logic of environmental governance (Nightingale, 2005). Neoliberal logics are sustained by rational-based theories on human behaviour that have built up the idea of self-contained individuals; and on visions of nature as 'resources' (e.g. timber) that can be extracted and alienated from their constitutive social and ecological relations (e.g. the forest) (Tsing, 2015). As a consequence, participation in a commons has been understood as 'strategic' where autonomous and equal individuals rationally and instrumentally relate to each other through a reciprocal exchange to pursue their own interests and life plans (García-Barrios et al., 2013; Serra and Allegretti, 2020). Supported by a compelling body of literature inspired by affect theory (Singh, 2018; Wright, 2015), and nature-society studies (Haraway, 2010; Ingold, 2000; Plumwood, 2009), we rethink participation in a commons as affective.

Unlike rational-based theories, affect theory claims that there are never self-contained individuals, but all bodies suffer 'contamination' throughout their encounters with others (Tsing, 2015: p. 59). This means that interests and also body skills and capacities are constituted and change through encounter—e.g. a nose becomes a *nose* that distinguishes and enjoys certain smells when it interacts with particular entanglements of chemical volatile substances (Latour, 2004); a person becomes a *surfer* if it accepts to encounter the wave and learn to respond and act with it (Ruddick, 2010). In the context of forest commons, people become *commoners*—people that care for the commons—when they acquire the knowledge, skills and social relations necessary to use and take care of the forest as a community (Singh, 2018).

Research on commons and environmental care is increasingly acknowledging the affective (and emotional) dimension of participation in the commons and for nature conservation (Ingold, 2000; Milton, 2002; Nightingale, 2011; Singh, 2013). Contrary to the mainstream rational-based approach to understanding motivation, Singh (2013) claims that participation in a commons may be initially motivated by the satisfaction of material needs, but that this alone falls short in explaining participation in the historical commons. Participation in community forest conservation can only be explained by the affective relations that people have developed over the years with forests through their embodied practices of care (Singh, 2013).

The above has three implications. First, that motivation to participate emerges in the 'in between' of people interacting with each other and with their environment, in the process of 'learning to be affected' by other humans and more-than-humans (Latour, 2004 in Gibson-Graham and Roelvink, 2010). Second, that motivation grows in and throughout the act of participating: by participating, people acquire response-ability, meaning the ability to respond (Haraway, 2010). In other words, participation nurtures the capacities needed to engage more and better in environmental governance (see e.g. Fleischman and Solorzano, 2018). Third, that participation is not a burden: it is generally accompanied by a feeling of joy that emerges from the enhanced capacity to act with others (see e.g. Dennis and James, 2016; Sandström et al., 2017). Thus, affective participation is recognizable when practices are valued per se, such that people's constitutive socio-nature relations are nurtured.

This paper seeks to understand if and how formal institutional logics affect how commoners participate in historical commons. We use Table 1 as an analytical frame to identify logics as composed by different types of practices (*in*, *for* and *of* the commons) and types of participation (strategic and affective). The types of practices are taken from Fournier (2013), who characterises three dimensions of commoning practices: (1) sharing resources *in* common, (2) using resources *for* the common, and (3) (re)producing resources *of* the common (Table 1). A commons is understood as a self-organised social and production system centred on the satisfaction of community needs and care of the commons (both community and resource system) (Euler, 2018; Gibson-Graham et al., 2016). A commons is built by the affective engagement of commoners (Singh, 2013). Yet, a pure 'commons logic' cannot be fully achieved in our current socio-political system (Euler, 2018). Thus, in a historical commons a 'commons logic' co-exists with other logics, and therefore with other types of practices and forms of participation.

2.2. The Role of (Hybrid) Logics and Bricolage Practices

We use an institutional bricolage framework to identify the mechanisms—i.e. causal processes linking causes to outcomes (Beach and Beach, 2017)—by which formal institutions affect participation patterns. Commoners can be understood as 'bricoleurs' (Nieto-Romero et al., 2019a): they combine various institutional arrangements (legal, socially-embedded, etc.) to adapt to changing circumstances (such as changes in commons' legislation; new commoning practices or environmental changes). They neglect some formal arrangements while mobilizing others. This process occurs consciously or unconsciously; in formal decision-making arenas or during their everyday practices. The result is a patchwork of institutions, a novel 'texture' of hybrid logics that serves their situation best.

The power commoners have to combine different institutional arrangements depends on their embodied agency giving them different capacities to participate (Cleaver and De Koning, 2015). Commoners will employ different strategies matching the 'accepted ways of doing things' in accordance to their own social category and they will have different capacities linked to bodily characteristics and associated recognised authority (Cleaver and De Koning, 2015). For example, status and power may be associated with particular forms of dress, demeanour and behaviour, and on the ability to be present (which may be hampered by social roles such as caring work in motherhood). Thus, while bricolage processes produce innovation and change, they also reproduce prevailing discourses, ideologies and power relations. This means that hybrid logics will suit some commoners better than others, shaping participation, exclusions and inclusions.

We use the three processes of bricolage defined in de Koning and Cleaver (2012)—aggregation, alteration and articulation—to identify institutional bricolage processes. *Aggregation* relates to the creative recombination of different institutional elements to satisfy diverse needs. These elements include: culture, routines, traditions, social norms, and expectancies or experience, by which the institutional arrangement itself serves multiple purposes. For example, de Koning and Cleaver (2012) describe an instance where a community in Bolivia, by aggregating new elements, used a formal management forest plan as a land property title.

Alteration refers to the tweaking and tinkering of formal institutions to make them fit better within livelihood priorities or identities, which often involves changes or reinventions of local practices and traditions. While *agregation* strategies are more likely to be used by community leaders in a strategic way, *alteration* is usually used by individuals with a certain standing (having authority and access to resources) through practical improvisation. Finally, when local identities and traditions are strongly theathened by external logics, then *articulation* becomes more visible than *alteration*. It involves calmly but firmly distancing themselves from formal institutional arrangements, or actively revolting against them. This often results in a selective adherence to formal institutions and a resignification of culture and tradition (*bounce off* effect). Together, these three processes result in institutional arrangements that are messy, multipurpose and even contradictctory.

Table 1
Analytical frame to identify institutional logics as composed by different practices done in common and types of participation.

Forms of commoning by Fournier (2013)	Type of practice done in common (form of participation)	Type of participation (reason of participating)
Organising *in* common	*How much can be used and by whom? Delineation of legitimate users and the amount of resources they can use* Collective allocation of common resources and users' responsibilities	Affective vs. strategic participation
Organising *for* the common	*What can it be used for? Definition of appropriate use* Collective use and consumption of common resources.	
Producing resources *of* the common	Collective production and reproduction of common resources (community or/and resource system)	

3. Methodology

3.1. The Research Case

Galicia, a region in Northwestern Spain, has 25% of its territory under a type of property called *Montes Veciñais en Man Comun* [Neighbourhood Lands in Common Hands]. The Montes Veciñais en Man Comun, traditionally called *baldios* [waste lands], have been embedded in the social structure of rural Galicia from time immemorial. Before a state-led reforestation program (1941–1971), the *monte* [bush], was traditionally covered by gorse shrubs (*Ulex europaeus*), a nitrogen-fixing legume used in manure production for the crop fields (i.e. the gorse was used for the beds of animals, turning into manure when mixed with the faeces). Some areas were assigned to families and others remained 'common' for residents of the settlement.

Current national and regional legislations recognise commonlands as a private collective property of Germanic nature, without individual allotments. They are subject to conditions of indivisibility (ownership cannot be distributed among neighbours); inalienability (land cannot be traded or sold); imprescriptibility (land historically used as commonland will always be considered as such) and immunity from seizure. The formal codification of Galician commonlands introduced many institutional changes, such as forestry plans for reforested land, governance structures, the formal demarcation by parishes, and passive entitlements over commons' resources. Legislation also regulated that formal community assemblies had to be attended by one representative per household (hereon referred to as commoner representatives) and allowed communities to manage commons autonomously or in co-management with regional forest services. Under the co-management option, the regional government returns 70% of the logging revenues to the communities (see Caballero, 2015 and Copena Rodríguez, 2018 for greater detail on the institutional legal framework).

Our study investigates how the formal codification of *Montes Veciñais* have affected the practices in O Carballo. In 2016, O Carballo had 145 inhabitants (77 men and 68 women). The 2001 census registered that 42,6% of total population were above 65 years old. Agriculture is the most important economic activity in the parish with 47,6% of the total population employed in this sector, followed by the services sectors (31,7% of the total population). The parish is composed of 12 settlements divided into two distinctive areas separated by a patch of forest (see Fig. 1). Colloquially, people living in these areas are referred to as 'those from above' (left side) or 'those from below' (right side). While

most of the area was reforested (444 ha), non-forested areas are mostly 'above' and used for pastures (250 ha).

3.2. Research Methods

Field work took place from Feb. 2017 to August 2018 and included interviews and participant observation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 households (including 10 women and 18 men). Commoner representatives were interviewed, as well as other household members if present. In selecting the households, we first asked the governing board to identify the commoner representatives who were volunteering in community labour, and to group them into participative or non-participative commoners. We then applied a stratified random selection of commoners, including equivalent ratios of participative/non-participative commoners and residents of different settlements within a parish.

Interview protocols explored commoners' current and past practices, opinions on recent commoning activities, reasons to (not) engage in activities as well as views and desires related to the historical commonland. Interviews were one to two hours long, and conducted until data saturation. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and qualitatively coded using NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd., 1999–2009). We then undertook an inductive qualitative content analysis (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008) focusing on periods corresponding to two major institutional changes: (1) the period 1976–2007 corresponding to the implementation of the formal institutions devolving them rights over commonlands, and (2) the period 2007–2018 corresponding to the start of commoning.

4. Results

4.1. Background: O Carballo Practices Before Formal Institutionalisation

Before state reforestation, protocols for using the gorse common areas were imbricated within community sociality of each settlement. An area was assigned to each settlement. There were no formal decision-making arenas, but following the traditional rule, each family took what they needed from the commonland. Some areas were assigned to families and others remained 'common'. In the common areas, cattle, goats and sheep grazed freely, and any person could take the necessary firewood for cooking and heating their houses as well as any other complementary resources. Family plots were cultivated mainly with cereals.

People benefited as far as they worked (active entitlement). Yet, they had different means (tools and animals) to satisfy their needs, so inequalities within communities were perpetrated; all and all, however, the community was in equilibrium. Ploughing, planting, harvesting and shepherding were done communally and *affectively*: commoners did not calculate strategically how much they contributed to others' plots, but community work nurtured their livelihoods, their sociality and culture. Proof of this is that community labour was linked to socio-cultural events and festivities. The different households in a settlement were like 'one house' with shared practices, as stated in by the following interviewee:

> *It was as if it was one unique property. We were more families than today, but it was as if we were only one, as if our properties were the same. Each family had theirs and we worked each other's plots, and grazed freely. We shared without asking for permission.* (Commoner, female, > 80 years old).

In sum, practices in the three dimensions of family allocation, production and reproduction of the community's sociality and resource system were all interlinked.

With the start of the state-led reforestation program in 1941, native gorse areas and agricultural land for family use were replaced by industrial tree plantations of maritime pine and a state forestry logic was installed. Communities were forbidden to take their animals to pasture on the reforested areas. Dispossession was justified for enhancing 'productivity' of rural areas and gorse common areas were claimed as abandoned and inefficient. The commonlands became municipal property and only wood collecting was allowed with a permit. Foresters hired locals for plantation work. Residents living 'above' could survive as some unforested patches remained untouched. On the other hand, the reforestation process dispossessed nearly all the inhabitants 'from below' of most of their means of subsistence and many commoners had to emigrate.

4.2. The Implementation of Formal Commons' Institutions (1976–2007)

4.2.1. Bricolage and Participation in Forested Areas

The transition towards democracy was followed by a social movement, concentrated in the urban centres of Galicia, which claimed back communities' rights over the 'monte'. A first national commonland law came into force in 1968 (Ley 52/1968) and was later updated in 1980 (Ley 55/1980). Later, the decentralization of political power in Spain implied that forests started to be governed by the regional authorities of Galicia, and a Galician commonland law passed in 1989 (Ley 13/1989). Legislation defined a formal governance structure with a governing board composed of a president, secretary and treasurer. The governing board had to convene at least one annual assembly attended by representatives from each household, which in turn had to establish the community bylaws. Furthermore, representatives had to elect a new governing board every four years.

Far from urban areas where conflicts with municipalities delayed registration processes, O Carballo registered their commonland quite early (in 1976) as a top-down legal obligation.

> *Well, obviously at that time, people could hardly go to school, those were other times*, 1976*, we were still very poor […] It was almost forced on them like: 'You have to organise yourself like this with the new bylaw and so on. Sign here and go'. It was imposed on us…* (Commoner, male, 30–40 years old).

They formed a governing board and approved a community by-law that was *"a generic model for all Galicia and adopted everywhere. It was not something that was specifically tailored for us.*".

In practice, a variation of the state forestry logic remained, giving rise to a forestry-shareholder logic by which commoners became shareholders of forestry earnings (Table 2). The Forest Law of Galicia obliged communities to have a 'planning project' based on a forest inventory that assured that the forest mass could sustain profits over time. This bureaucratic and technical process could not be done by communities and so, in most commonlands, the forest services continued to manage the forest areas of commonlands for decades. The governmental forest services commissioned the design of technical forestry planning projects to foresters. These had to then be approved at community general assemblies, although this was largely a bureaucratic procedure. Communities did not have the power to question the project's aims, practices and underlying values and vision. The written aim of the O Carballo planning project was to 'ensure the maintenance and stability of the afforested system', to ensure a 'sustained performance' and 'optimal utility'.[1]

Participation in assemblies became the means to access forestry resources and as such, participation became strategic and exclusionary. Assemblies were convened annually with the sole aim of dividing the forestry income received by the forest services. The community now received 70% of the logging earnings, which were divided equally among commoner representatives. With the passive entitlements of

[1] Modificación del proyecto de ordenación M.V.M.C "de Carballo"- Parroquia de Carballo (Friol, Lugo) (2012). CERNA.

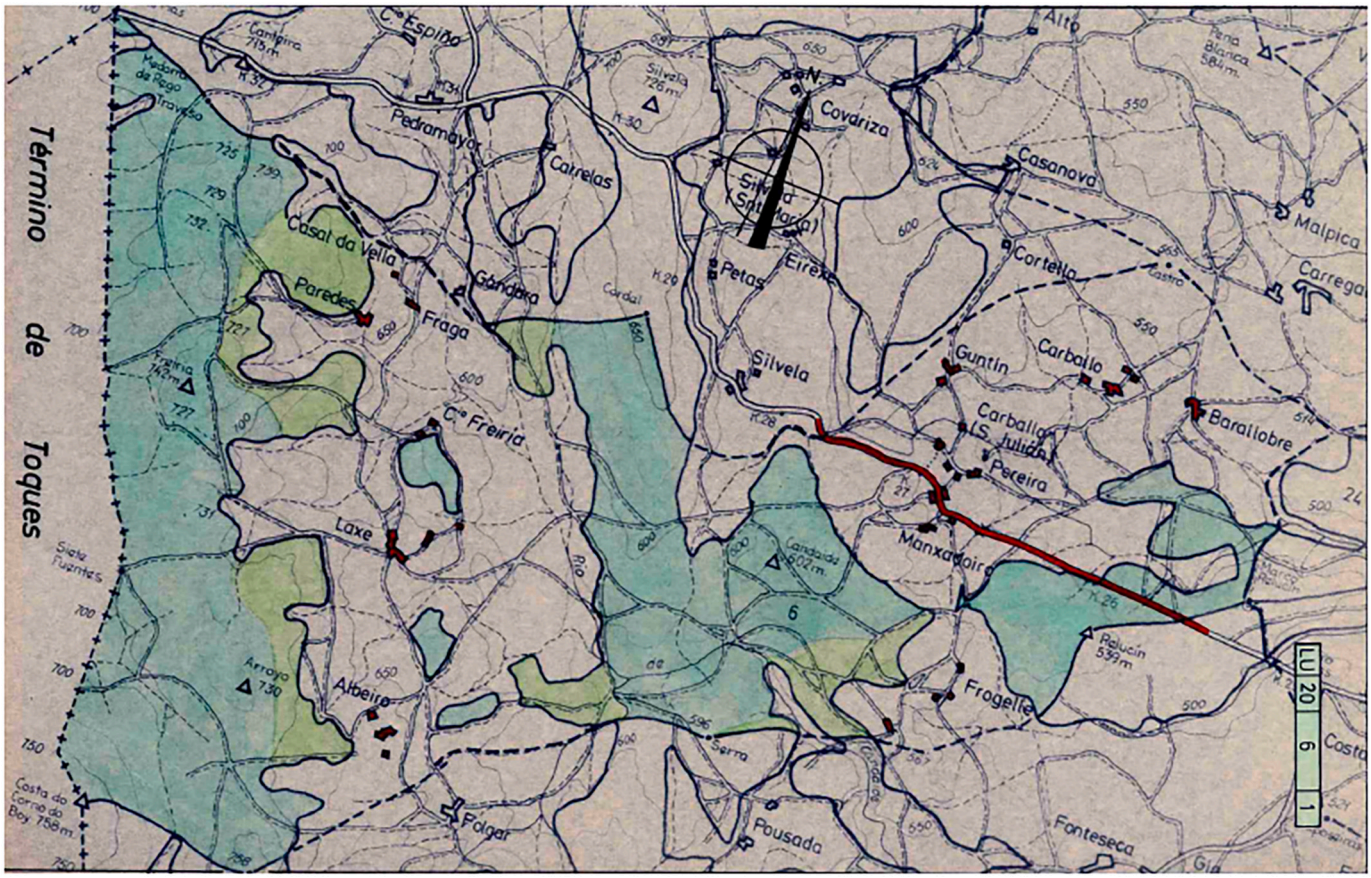

Fig. 1. Borders of O Carballo commonland as specified by its classification resolution issued in 1976. Source: Jurado Provincial de Montes Vcinales en Mano Comun de Lu (1976). Dark green corresponds to reforested areas, while light green is pastureland.

forestry revenues, commoner representatives became shareholders of material benefits, disregarding the different needs or their active engagement. Passive entitlements were used to exclude others from community forestry earnings: the assembly decided that when building a new house, residents had to wait five years before officially becoming commoners and accessing the assembly. This caused various judicial complaints between residents. Additionally, women were excluded. The law specified that only one commoner from each household was able to assist assemblies. Yet, following the patriarchal family order, commoner representatives were always the eldest males of the family, which excluded women. By *aggregating* new rules, the formal representational system in assemblies allowed for further exclusions.

In the oldest pine forest, villagers 'from above' could continue their traditional activities. Residents 'freely' raised their cattle and worked sometimes together as in old times. Family flocks of sheep, goats and cattle grazed in humid pastures growing between pines from May to September. Finally, the unexpected growth of mushroom in state pine plantations brought a new activity to the community: mushroom picking. According to our interviewees, this was started by women in the 1970′:

> *We saw some women there on the banks of the rivers and wondered… what are they looking for? And nobody knew what they were looking for … Then we realise that they were picking mushrooms, and, at first, we looked for them only around here, at private properties because we thought there were none in the pine forests. Until later, some of us went up to the pine forests* …(Commoner, female, 50–60 years old).

Excluded from the formal representational system, women reinvented traditions by picking new beings growing in the reforested commons. They built a new *articulation* of tradition while silently distancing themselves from formal forestry logics.

4.2.2. *Bricolage and Participation in the Unforested Areas*

For the male residents 'above', the governmental forest management was viewed as an easy way to earn money while continuing some of their traditional subsistence activities without much interference. Following 'use and custom', the law allowed the leasing of non-forested patches to households. Male residents convened assemblies in a settlement to divide pasture areas instead of using the parish-based formal assemblies. Tradition was reinvented: they used the idea of 'equal shares' of the law to start dividing the plots into equal parts per household. These commoners *altered* the (parish-based) formal governance structure mixing it up with elements of the traditional logic (i.e. settlement-based). As happened with formal general assemblies, only men were invited to this informal division: "*the women never got to know these things"* (Commoner, female, 50–60 years old).

The traditional logic intermingled with new logics of market production that came with adhesion to the EU in 1986. Tractors allowed families to plough and maintain larger areas without the need for collective labour. Farmers started to adapt and respond to the demands of markets by raising cattle for meat and milk. Family plots grew and cereal subsistence crops were replaced with artificially planted grasslands. Families fenced in their plots and even passed them as informal inheritance. As land became a marketable resource, conflict started to emerge. First, commoners started trespassing the traditional rule of using the common areas within their own settlement, provoking tensions and conflicts between households:

> *Because there [in a neighbouring settlement] was a plot where I had a grassland and when I took it, some people didn't want me to take it. Some*

Table 2
Logics within the community.

Type of practice	Traditional-community logic	Forestry-shareholder logic	Parish-community logic
Sharing resources *in* common	• Commoners are inhabitants of the settlement (with potentially inclusive, but inequal capacities to satisfy needs[1]) • No formal governance or decision making: norms are socially and culturally embedded. • Active entitlement: benefit 'earned' through labour. • Appropriation is need-seeking, by families	• Commoners representatives are shareholders of resources (potentially exclusive) • Formal decision-making to divide shares: participation is strategic. • Passive entitlement: all residents have equal rights disregarding their needs & labour. • Appropriation is profit-seeking, by regional government or the community's governing board.	• Commoners are inhabitants of the parish (potentially inclusive). • Active entitlement: all residents have to contribute to the community. • Appropriation is need-seeking, by the parish community.
Using resources *for* the common	• Appropriate use linked to subsistence needs. • Community is settlement-based • Direct consumption: resources for community subsistence. • Social gatherings and festivities linked to productive activities	• Appropriate use defined by planning project. • Community is parish-based. • No direct consumption: resources sold to the market; surplus divided by households.	• Formal decision-making to define appropriate use by the parish as a whole. • Community is parish-based. • Reinvestments for the common: resources sold to the market for reinvestment in forest, other public spaces and community activities. • Social gatherings and festivities linked to productive activities.
Producing resources *of* the commons	• Families help each other in community labour • Community labour maintains community sociality and culture: participation is affective.	• No volunteer labour; hired external employees.	• Community activities to maintain community sociality and culture: participation is affective.

residents came to protest because I was using it […] Well, if somebody needs it, then they can also take it. (Commoner, male, 50–60 years old).

To adapt to the new market demands, this particular commoner *altered* the traditional rules of 'taking land following needs' in a completely different context and expanded it to the whole parish. By calling upon tradition, this interviewee (maybe strategically, maybe unconsciously) justified the fact that he took land of the commonland without negotiating its possession with other residents at assemblies. In other words, he *altered* the traditional rule of taking land within his settlement, combining with elements of formal institutions (i.e. the parish perimeter), while rejecting others (i.e. the general assembly).

Soon, because of new European sanitary compliance standards, cattle herds raised freely in pine forests disappeared.

4.3. The Start of Commoning (2007–2019)

4.3.1. Nurturing a Parish-commoning Logic

In 2007, a new governing board motivated commoners to break the co-management agreement with the government and take full responsibility of the commonlands. The new governing board, composed of residents 'from below', wanted to go beyond the forestry use of land. They were 'commoning' because productive activities were the means to nurture the commons: by promoting a multifunctional use, they sought to nurture community sociality, culture and knowledge, as the following interviewee explains:

We understood that the community had to be alive […], so we decided to start projects that assisted the recovery of customs, such as the use of cattle […]. From there, we started social initiatives related to livestock activities […]. The idea was to create gathering spaces with all these initiatives, where community members and other people get together, talk […]. We call them parties, but they are associated with a more didactic component. (Commoner, male, 30–40 years old).

This shows how commoning was about creating spaces of socialisation and learning, and how productive activities took the normative scope of nurturing a culture linked to the commonland.

These commoning practices were allowed and influenced by formal regulations. Through the formal governing structure, the leaders of the commoning activities could access the governing board and take a more influential position within the community. This was possible because the president was a young male forest engineer perceived as 'knowledgeable' by other commoner representatives. Also, new activities could be introduced in the formally demarcated commons area. Following the formal parish-based perimeter, the governing board promoted the implementation of pig and horse raising within the forest, honey and resin production, as well as socio-cultural activities such as the 'commoners' day', a traditional carnival, training courses on forest related topics (such as on wolves or forest thinning). Observing these dynamics, we have called this a parish-commoning logic (Table 2).

As in old times, decision-making and productive activities started to become intermingled with community sociality. For example, commoners implemented a silvopastoral system with native horses that would graze freely within the pines. This was to prevent fires by reducing the available biomass, while salvaging a native breed and an old custom. The horses later led to the organisation of a community festivity for the annual veterinary check-up ('*rapa das bestas*'). The focus of all activities was to be 'educational' and 'bonding'—e.g. to produce knowledge on costumes and on the commonland's organisation and use, as well as nurturing bonds between residents. As a result, the social function of the commonland increased. The annual commoners' day was the most popular and widely accepted activity in the commonland; it nurtured community relations and culture (with traditional games, food and dance). Reinvestments of forest earnings into festivities, but also for improving public spaces (including forests) contributed to rebuilding the affective links to the commonland, which had been lost after reforestation, as shown here:

We go for a walk in the commonland. Simply because of those paths, which are now prepared. We know that there are pigs, those horses, and I like to go there and see, 'Fuck, look at that horse, look at that pig', you know? Now we have a reason to go there, and before we couldn't even access the paths. Anyway, what were you going to do there? If all the bush was abandoned then…there was nothing! (Commoner, male, 40–50 years old).

The above shows how commoners 'from below' used to perceive the commonland as abandoned, since all their traditional activities were interrupted with reforestation. Commoning started revitalising their lost affective links. As such, community work was affectively motivated. By participating in community work, commoners became part of the community, as shown below:

While you're here, as a commoner, we have to help. This makes you a real commoner and part of this community […] And as a commoner, I would like to live from the commonland, and if we can all live well, great. (Commoner, male, 40–50 years old).

Furthermore, beyond creating social affective bonds, this commoner had the desire to 'live from the commonland' by raising family cattle together as in old times. We found this to be true only for poorer commoners with cattle and with a little private land. Only 11 (male) commoners out of 50 households volunteered to help the governing board one morning a month; most legal commoners benefited from community social activities, while not contributing to labour. Although women did not feel invited to these formal volunteer sessions, they did participate informally in community labour through kinship relationships: women 'helped' family men in harvesting, grazing and mainly with food in social events.

4.3.2. Bricolage and Participation

Since 2007, the aforementioned parish-commoning logic mixed up with elements from the forestry-shareholder logic. A 'planning project' was updated to mix forestry with other activities that had a social and cultural meaning (*aggregation*), e.g. livestock of local breeds. While doing so, the underlying technocratic aims and values around efficiency and technical knowledge of the planning project remained: the commonland produced 'goods' to be sold commercially to assure profitability. Yet the idea was to build a community 'enterprise' that could hire locals to improve community life conditions.

While appropriation and (re)investments was done by the parish as a whole, many spoke about commoning activities in the third person (*'they'*), as if these activities belonged to the governing board. This suggests that parish-based appropriation was considered illegitimate. For the first time, the forest area 'above' was fenced to keep the horses safe and one commoner had to stop bringing his cattle to the spring meadow. The forest areas 'below' were also fenced temporarily with a mobile fence system for pig raising. Likewise, the board started regulating access for mushrooming, asking external users and those commoners selling them commercially to purchase a license. While new inclusions and affective relations were created 'below', the (grazing and mushrooming) activities that were done by commoners 'from above' were affected and, in some cases, excluded.

This traditional family appropriation was mixed with elements from the forestry-shareholder and explains why most commoner representatives did not want to give up of their monetary shares. Commoners 'from above' called upon tradition to argue that the commonland had to contribute to their family economies, even when tradition was *altered* including profit-seeking and strategic aims:

> *How could this improve? We are taxed too much. In the end, we are losing almost everything to taxes… the taxes when we distribute are high, we can only but reinvest, and well… to feel motivated we have to make some profit, because if not … people are not motivated so much. If people see a yearly benefit for the commonland, then this helps motivate them.* (Commoner, male, 40–50 years).

This *alteration* allowed them to claim the legitimacy of dividing income from logging activities to support family economies. This strategic motivation around forestry activities contrasted with the affective engagement in their other family activities—shepherding, hunting or horse raising—suggesting that commoners internalised a forestry-shareholder logic only in reforested areas managed in common, even if contradicting their means of livelihoods as shepherds.

The shepherdess interviewed was the only commoner who complained about the loggings done in the forest. She complained that the logging and clearing of the area had changed the landscape she had known and valued:

> *For me, the pine forest is important. I go mushrooming there, and I am calm, I know it and I am well there, but if they [the governing board] cut it … […] Look, only the clearing they [the governing board] do deconcentrates me, because I perceive it as another pine forest. Even worse if they cut everything … How many years will it take to grow back the pines as they are now? I do not support it [the logging], because one can live equally fine without the 200 euros or 300 that we get annually, but at least we have the pines there!* – Commoner, female, 50–60 years old. (Commoner, female, 50–60 years old).

The fact that she was excluded in the past (when commoners received the biggest shares in cash) could explain why she maintained an affective link to the forest. Her reaction was to take a distanced position from community activities while continuing her 'traditional' shepherding and mushrooming activities (*articulation* practices).

The result of the internalisation of a forestry-shareholder logic is that commoners voted negatively to the proposition of using the total surplus to hire locals as permanent personnel even when their shares were dwindling progressively. A new Forest Law (Ley 7/2012) required that at least 40% of the revenues of productive (forestry) activities should be reinvested. Together with a tax system that assigned higher taxation over households' sharing, the shares did not signify much for a family economy (200 euros/household/year in 2017). Only two or three commoners could be occasionally hired for maintenance work. Beyond this, most of the management work was outsourced to companies while the daily work was done by the governing board and their families (including women). The governing board became increasingly overloaded with the daily work. This triggered the resignation of one of the community leaders in 2019.

Over the years, the governing board started to separate the sociocultural activities not directly linked to the productive activities from the formal organisation of the commonland. The association had the aim of producing, valorising and sharing widely local rural culture. Instead of *aggregating* non-productive aims to the formal commonland organisation, they started distancing commoning activities from the commonland (*articulation*). This allowed them to reduce tensions, access non-profit public subsidies and invite people from outside the parish. Non-residents became members, participating in workshops and sociocultural events. Women were more involved in the association, even in directive positions.

4.3.3. Participation in General Assemblies

The new governing board tried to turn general assemblies into the main arena for decision making and conflict resolution. Assemblies allowed more transparency, and equal division of land. The new governing board inventoried divided common land and invested in transforming the remaining common gorse areas into artificial pasture, improving land access. This entailed many conflicts as some areas were illegally privatised and passed on as inheritance. Residents 'from below' and the only shepherdess, who barely had access to unforested common areas in the past, progressively acquired access to common pasture areas.

The governing board started to convene the assembly at least three (most commonly four) times a year; notwithstanding, these assemblies never became totally functional and inclusive. Most commoner representatives were men (71%), and commoners rarely brought ideas to the assembly. New activities for the commonland were most often proposed by the governing board. The board generally conducted a 'feasibility study', exploring how the activity could be implemented. If the study produced good results, then it was brought to the assembly for voting. Before voting, the board sometimes organised a meeting with appointed members in charge of communicating to the residents the forthcoming matters of the assembly.

Voting was done by a show of hands, so some claimed that the majority voted by following the crowd, while others justified their passive role saying the majority was the only thing that mattered. When speaking about the governing board, many interviewed commoners said "they [members of the governing board] know better than me" and "we need to just wait for another governing board." Commoners thus assumed a passive role, explaining how this new governing board managed to obtain absolute majority in most activities proposed during that period. Despite this, some interviewees stated that they wanted

more opportunities to discuss activities, which suggests they did not find assemblies suitable loci for doing so.

Formal institutions were pivotal in shaping participation patterns. On the one hand, commoners with different capacities engaged in different bricolage practices. Those having less power took a distant position while continuing their livelihood practices (*articulation* practices), whereas those in more powerful positions shaped dominant institutions governing the commonland through *aggregations* or *alteration*. The result of these practices was the practice of hybrid institutional logics, messy and contradictory, that provoked both inclusions and exclusions. The following section discusses further our results in light of participation literature.

5. Problematising Formal Forestry-based Commons' Institutions

5.1. First Period of Implementation: Exclusions and Displacement of Logics

Our study suggests that the formal devolution of O Carballo commonland to communities was a top-down process enmeshed in the forestry policy of the regional government. In O Carballo, devolution was perceived as 'an obligation' and led to local elite capture. Despite the fact that formal institutions gave rights to all inhabitants, during the first period of implementation, male commoner representatives took revenues from the governmental forestry activities *aggregating* exclusionary rules that reduced the number of commoners and thus shares. They also *aggregated* the patriarchal family order to the formal community organisation excluding women. Unlike in Nightingale (2005) and Tyagi and Das (2020), we did not find any resistance from women. Instead, women distanced themselves from the commonlands' formal structures.

The devolution under the terms of the Government has installed a problematic forestry-shareholder logic that shifted the logic of participation from affective to strategic. In the past, participation in community labour was affective. This is in line with other studies portraying participation in a commons as self-fulfilling and valued per se, in its ability to maintain participant's affective relationships to human and non-humans (e.g. Dennis and James, 2016; Sandström et al., 2017; Singh, 2018; Singh, 2013). Instead, the introduction of 'forestry shares' motivated a strategic participation only for allocating resources shared *in* common (Fournier, 2013). Commoners participated strategically in general assemblies in exchange of a share, while community labour was still very low and community conflicts increased.

Although there are some studies identifying a positive relation between activities' economic returns and participation (e.g. Marey-Pérez et al., 2015; Schlueter, 2008), our results are aligned with other contributions showing how monetary-based incentives can 'crowd-out' intrinsic local motivations to collaborate (Chervier et al., 2019; Rode et al., 2015). As found in Serra and Allegretti (2020) on historical commonlands in Portugal, the State forestry extractive practices have been internalised by communities to satisfy their short-term needs, displacing the constitutive affective links between commoners and their commonland. Later, this extractive mentality clashed with the commoning logic of the new governing board, breeding internal community conflict. This conflict can be interpreted as a clash of rationalities (see Dekker et al., 2020) on what the forestry resources should be used for. Rather than an isolated event, Marey-Pérez et al. (2010) showed how conflicts are a norm and not an exception in Galician communities.

5.2. Second Period of Implementation: Commoning as a Contingent Process of Bricolage

Our results show how commoning is contingent on available resources, power and social relations; as such, it can be understood as a process of 'bricolage' in which commoners mix ethically-driven expectations and values with formal and informal institutions that build the 'frame' of plausible actions. Our case can be considered an example of commoning because the initiative was based on the principle of self-organisation whilst intending to satisfy community needs (Euler, 2018)—in terms of building social relations and culture and supporting livelihoods. Yet, institutional bricolage illustrates the complexities and contradictions of commoning. Some of the affective relations motivating volunteer participation were rebuilt while some family practices were affected (i.e. mushrooming), or even excluded (i.e. grazing).

While improving the functionality and inclusiveness of the commonland, we found that the *aggregation* of forestry logics influenced decisions towards technical criteria and commoners' avoidance of conflict hindered the collective negotiation of community needs. A key principle of a commons is the negotiation of which and whose needs are to be satisfied (Euler, 2018). Overall, the start of commoning brought more transparency and balanced the extractive forestry aims that dominated during the first period of implementation. Yet, commoners preferred 'waiting for another governing board' rather than raising their needs and demands in general assemblies, and decisions were taken based on technical feasibility studies. This attitude can be attributed to a learned cultural attitude of survival originating from the dictatorship period where commoners had to accept the hierarchical power of State guards while *articulating* their traditional subsistence activities, risking being caught and punished. Commoners accepted the authority of the governing board, perceived as knowledgeable as it was composed of the most educated community members.

Moreover, despite the increased involvement of women in social community activities and events, formal general assemblies and community labour were still dominated by men. As found by Arora-Jonsson (2009) who investigated women's participation in a Swedish community forest as compared to an Indian one, women in our study did not see gender as 'an issue'. This can explain why their non-involvement in commonland' affairs were interpreted as a question of personal preference: women participated more in socio-cultural activities (e.g. in the association). While the re-entangling of both social and production activities could be more inviting for women, there is a need to question the idea of individual preferences as an explanatory factor for participation, as it obscures structural barriers to women's participation (Arora-Jonsson, 2009). Our participant observation did acknowledge that women had a bigger role in unpaid housework and were those cooking and serving food in social community events.

Rather than accusing commoning of being exclusionary or biased towards technical forestry logics, our study supports the idea that commoning is always a contingent achievement (Nightingale, 2019). Commoning is a process of acquiring response-ability (Haraway, 2010); it requires having particular capacities (Fleischman and Solorzano, 2018), such as community relations or negotiation skills, and affective relations (Singh, 2018). As these may have been eroded during state expropriation (see Serra and Allegretti, 2020), the biggest role of commoning historical commons is to rebuild a participatory culture and the affective links between communities and their commonland (Nieto-Romero et al., 2019a, 2019b). Although the role of historical commons in creating meaning in people's lives has been acknowledged (Lawrence et al., 2021; Sandström et al., 2017), we have shown here how legal instruments are prioritising the productive component of forests, rather than the immaterial ones such as community building.

In this regard, it is important to question the current hierarchical governance structure based on centralised governing boards, which, in our view, do not allow the nurturing of existing and new affective relations. These structures are usually based on professionalised knowledge (Nightingale, 2005; Stavrides, 2015), furthering the influence of the wealthy and educated, and effectively excluding the poorer and less influential groups—such as women—from positions of power (Agarwal, 2001; Lane and Corbett, 2005; Saunders, 2014). It appears that in many parts of Europe, the governance models of historical commons were inspired by representative democracy, presumably influenced by post-war/post-dictatorship democratic reforms (e.g. Soto Fernández, 2016). Less hierarchical models, organised in a dialectic between centralised and dispersed boards and initiatives, together with a voting system based on consensus rather than majority, are potentially more inclusive although not without risks (see Esteves, 2017). They could help achieve autonomy and keep alive the affective relations of different groups (Zibechi, R. as cited in Stavrides, 2015).

6. Conclusion

This paper analysed how formal institutionalisation has impacted commoners' participation in a historical commons in Galicia by looking at the institutional bricolage practices commoners use to adapt institutions to local needs and contexts, and by studying how the resulting hybrid institutional logics has impacted patterns of participation (both exclusion- inclusion dynamics and types of participation). Our analysis allowed to identify the causal mechanisms by which formal institutionalisation affected participation. In the first period of implementation, formal institutions were *altered* by male commoners to benefit more from community resources, producing elite capture. During this period, most commoner representatives internalised a forestry-shareholder logic, by which participation for the common was strategically motivated to get a 'forestry share'. Later, the existence of a formal governance structure allowed educated commoners to take an influential position in the governing board and to *aggregate* practices based on a commoning logic. They were more inclusive and built new affective relations, while excluding some affective family practices. Yet, some elements from the state forestry logic were also *aggregated*: communities become managers of forestry incomes, while most work was outsourced to companies. Most commoners internalised a forestry-shareholder logic motivated by extractive and profit-seeking aims over forests. Ultimately, this was at odds with commoning and volunteer participation, hampering the full achievement of a commoning logic.

Our study provides an alternative explanation to the low levels of participation in historical commons in Europe. Rather than portraying commoners as rational and self-interested, our study shows how the implementation of formal institutions has changed dominant participation from being affective to strategic. Our results highlight the responsibility of forestry policies in community conflicts and in low levels of participation. State expropriation and reforestation of commonlands over the last century was followed by intense conflicts between communities and the regional government (Bauer, 2005; Seijo, 2005) and culminated in a strong social movement in urban provinces for the legal recognition of commonlands (Soto Fernández, 2016). Yet, the Regional government used the formal institutionalisation of historical commons to perpetrate land control over forestry resources in remote rural areas (Soto Fernández, 2016). In line with Peluso and Vandergeest (2001), this study suggests that formal institutionalisation (through instruments such as 'forestry shares' and 'planning projects') has supported the naturalisation of forests (as forestry) in the minds of people. Once a forestry logic is naturalised, communities can be blamed for sub-optimal forestry management, low participation and even of being conflictual and self-interested (García-López, 2019). Instead, we argue that formal institutions have installed forestry shares that have contributed to the crowding-out of volunteer participation, and a management requiring considerable technical knowledge and navigation through multiple levels of bureaucracy. Finally, while gendered exclusions have been largely investigated in developing countries, more gender sensitive research is needed to understand how women are hindered to participate in contexts where they are not resource-dependent, and in cultures considered more egalitarian such as the European context.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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