# Welcome to the recap on the Commons


*Based on material prepared by:*

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LE:NOTRE *Institute*
*Linking Landscape Education, Research and Innovative Practice*


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Add as many as come to your mind:

# What are 'commons' in a landscape?

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# Which of the following best fits the definition of commons used in this course?



5 A resource that is publicly owned and managed by the state, with general public access

4 Any place that people happen to use together, formally or informally

7 A shared resource governed by a defined community through agreed rules for access, use, care and benefit

0 A co-operative business (for example a social enterprise) created for the common good

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# What are the Commons?

*The Commons – shared resources for collective well-being*

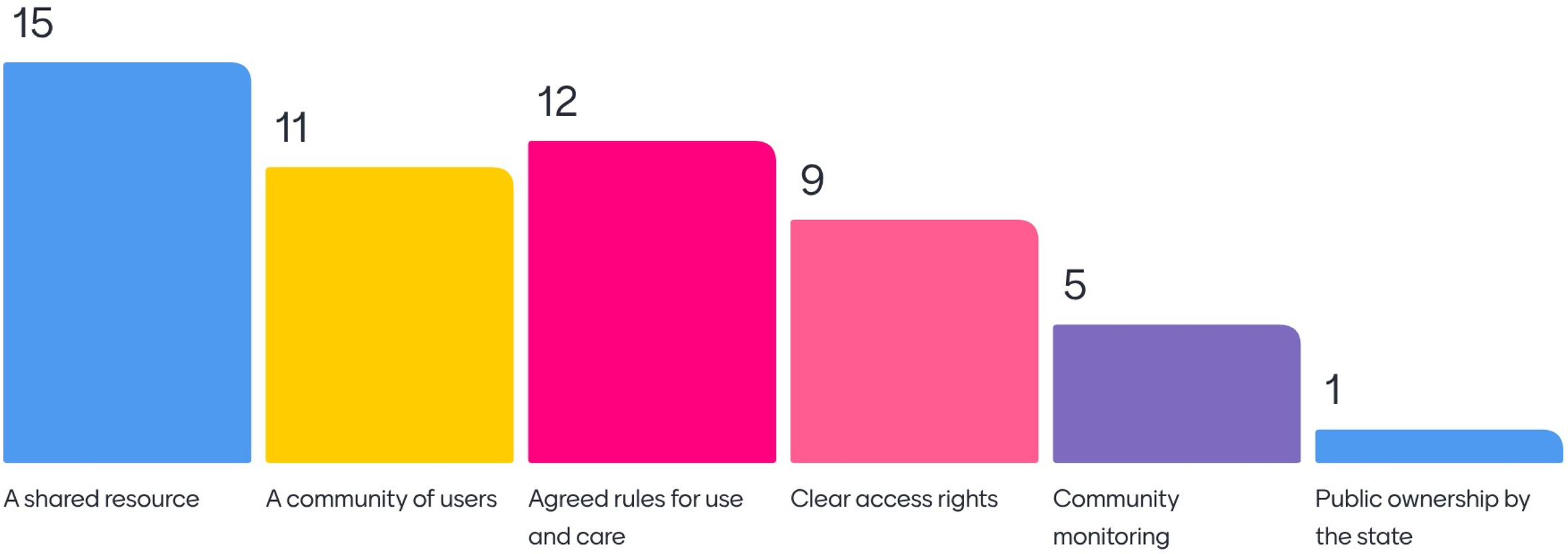
- Commons = resources collectively used, cared for and governed by a community.
- Types: natural (water, soil, air, forests), cultural (heritage, knowledge), social (urban gardens, libraries), digital (open data).
- Commons = relationships between **resources, commoners and rules**.

  *(Ref.: Ostrom 1990; Urban Commons Research Collective 2022)*

Important is that the commoners also have a **responsibility** and that there is a **defined group of commoners**

Tick any that you think is correct:

# Which dimensions are important in defining a commons system?

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# Please describe a concrete example of a 'common' in your landscape:

Shared boreholes
Streets

A concrete example of a common in the Butembo landscape is a shared water source, which is collectively cared for by the local community according to informal rules to ensure access for all.

some shared and managed space in neighbourhoods

That meadow isn't just "public land"; it behaves like a commons. Ecologically, it slows floodwaters and filters runoff. Socially, it hosts little rituals of daily life. Governance-wise, it's stewarded

Community/social halls

A community garden that is co-designed, cultivated, and maintained by local residents

An Allmend referring to land that is used collectively by a community. It is a historical term for areas like meadows, pastures, and woods that were communally owned and used, and the term is still us

water for iirigation in Valencia/ Community of farmers with their own rules; rights and responsibilities/

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Bazaar (community market)- informal, owned by the people, managed by the locals, accessible to all.

peat land

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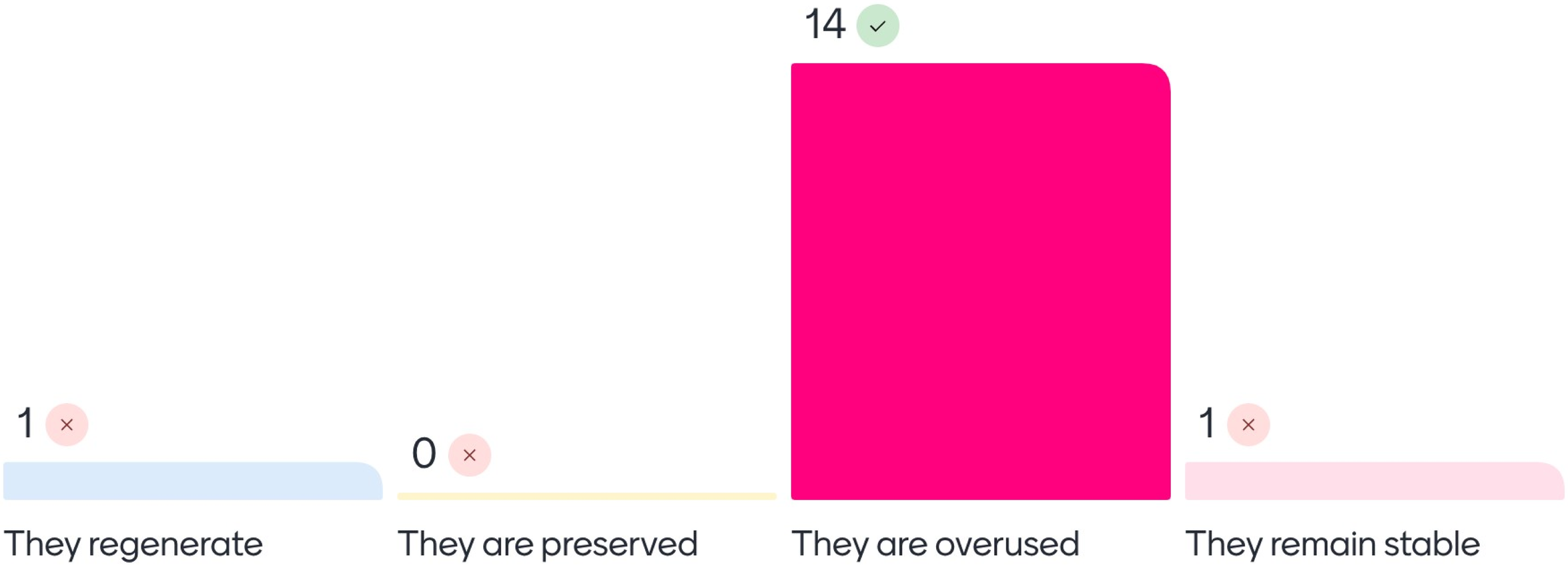
According to “Tragedy of the Commons”, what happens when shared resources are not managed?

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# From “Tragedy” to “Governance”

- **Garrett Hardin’s “Tragedy of the Commons” (1968):**
  Claimed that individuals, acting in their self-interest, inevitably overexploit shared resources. This pessimistic view suggested that common goods are doomed to degradation unless privatized or regulated by external authority.
- **Elinor Ostrom’s response (Nobel Prize in Economics, 2009):**
  Through extensive fieldwork, Ostrom demonstrated that communities are capable of governing shared resources effectively — without either markets or states — by creating **local rules, trust networks, and collective monitoring systems**.

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# From “Tragedy” to “Governance”

- **Eight principles for sustainable commons governance:**
  - Clearly defined boundaries
  - Rules adapted to local conditions
  - Inclusive decision-making by users
  - Respect from higher authorities for local rules
  - Monitoring of resource use by the community
  - Graduated sanctions for violators
  - Low-cost conflict resolution mechanisms
  - Nested tiers of governance for complex systems

# Write one word that captures the ***right to landscape***

public participation

accessibility

social justice

access

territory

openess

identity

acsses

assessment

usability

free access to land

is stewardship

wellbeing

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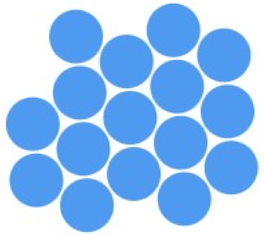
Select any that apply:

# Which of the following are ***rights in the landscape***?

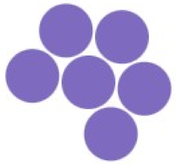


16 Right of way (i.e. public foodpath)

6 Grazing rights on mountain commons

4 Community allotment licences

6 Protection of panoramic views



6 Limits to light pollution

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# Landscape as a Common

*Landscape = material + immaterial commons*

- The landscape combines **resources**, **services**, and **values** shared by its inhabitants.
- Rights: *right to landscape*, *right in landscape* (Menatti 2017).
- Commons link environmental, social & cultural dimensions:
  - access and care for space;
  - community participation;
  - recognition of shared heritage.

# Commons and the Economy

*From ownership to stewardship*

- Balance between **private – public – common** goods.
- Commons sustain the **social economy**: cooperatives, community enterprises, local stewardship.
- Value creation = shared benefits → equity + resilience + innovation.
- Indicators (KPIs): spatial %, legal recognition, economic activity, social participation, environmental impact.

For each of the following, choose whether it is mainly a private good, a public good or a common good

1. Urban community garden run by a neighbourhood association
2. Gated riverside area owned by a private developer with no public access
3. Public footpath managed and maintained by the municipality
4. Pastoral grazing land used under customary rules by local herders
5. Municipial library

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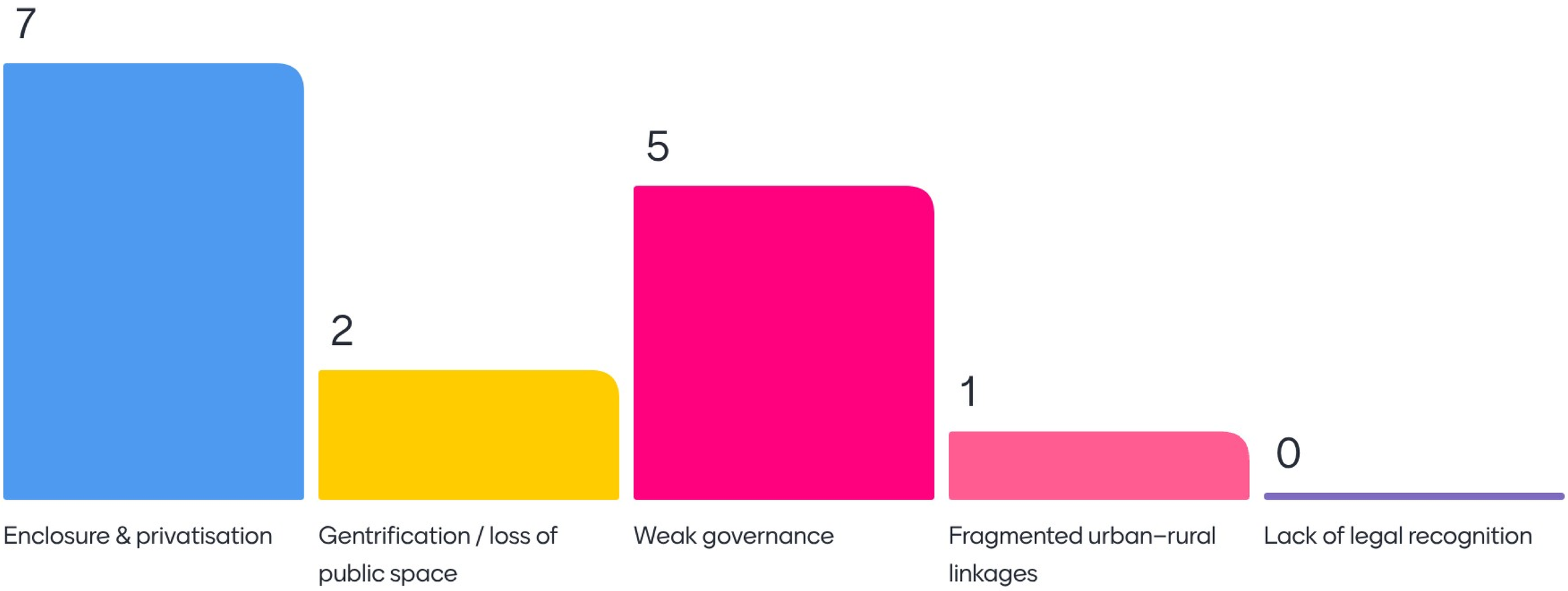
# Which challenge to the commons is most acute in your context?

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## Q9. Which systemic relationships are most visible in your commons example? (Select all that apply)

– Resource ↔ Users

– Users ↔ Rules

– Users ↔ Non-human entities (ecology)

– Community ↔ External institutions (authorities)

– Public sector ↔ Commons

– Market sector ↔ Commons

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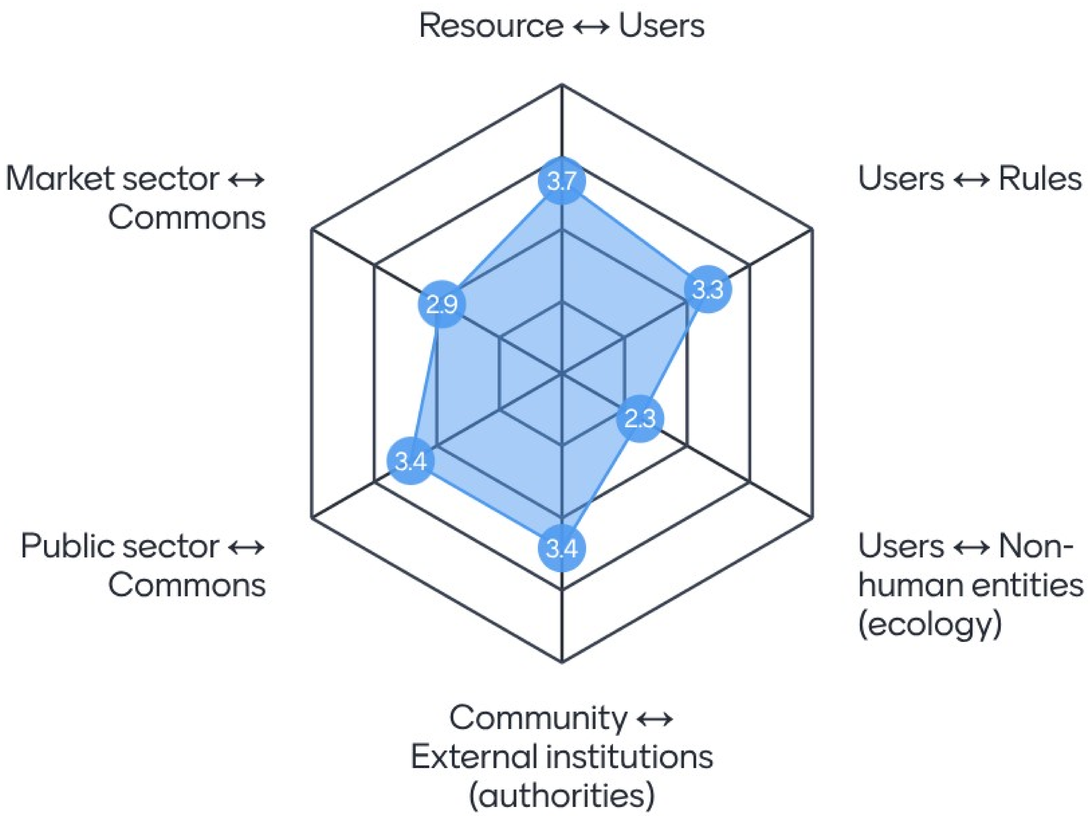


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# What is your position or potential role in applying commons principles in your study area or professional practice?

My position or potential role in applying commons principles in my study area or future professional practice is to act as a facilitator and designer who promotes inclusive, sustainable, and commu

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# REFERENCES


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