

OSTROM WORKSHOP COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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“Property Rights and Domestication”

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12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park



This paper combines the property rights approach of Barzel with notions from renewable resources and evolutionary economics to examine the domestication of wild animals. Wild animals are governed by weak property rights to stocks and individuals, while domesticated animals are governed by private ownership of stocks and individuals. The complex evolutionary process of domestication can be viewed as a conversion of wild populations into private property as well as a transition from natural selection to economic selection controlled by owners of populations and individuals. In our framework, domestication is not the explicit goal of any economic agent, but it rather emerges as the long-run outcome of an innovation in hunting strategies in a hunter-gatherer society. Our formal model also suggests that the domestication process moves slowly at first but then proceeds rapidly, aligned with the archeological evidence on domestication events.



[Gustavo Torrens's](#) research centers on understanding how institutions influence economic outcomes, the determinants of institutions, and institutional change. He has published in the *Journal of International Economics*, *Games and Economic Behavior*, and *Public Choice* and received the 2016 Award of the National Academy of Sciences of Argentina. Gustavo received his PhD in Economics from Washington University in St. Louis and he is currently assistant professor in the Department of Economics at IU and Ostrom Workshop Affiliate.

Presentations are open to the public and are live streamed (see our website for URL and papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855-3151).