



# INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON OSTROM WORKSHOP

## COLLOQUIUM SERIES

### Insa Theesfeld

*Agricultural, Environmental, and Food Policy, Martin Luther University, Halle (Saale) Germany*

Monday, October 19, 2020: 12:00 – 1:00 pm EST

Virtual via Zoom: [Click here for link to Zoom meeting](#)



## Explaining the Existence of Pseudo-Commons in Post-Communist Countries

Considerable work from collective action scholars in the last 50 years have documented ample cases, derived concepts and formulated principles that reflect that shared natural resources can be sustainably managed through commons governance approaches. Yet, there are common-property regimes that only exist on paper, or are set up intentionally to profit individuals. To explain these pseudo-commons in post-communist societies, we studied their political and social background in the irrigation and forestry sector. We illustrate pseudo-water user associations and pseudo-joint forestry management systems that do not show many key features of a true common-property governance regime. The socialist legacy of striving for economic and political benefit by elites, the prevailing Soviet mentality of preferring higher level authorities as decision-makers and the overstressing of cooperation foster pseudo-commons, with the tragic result of destroying trust in a kind of governance proven to be successful otherwise.

**[Insa Theesfeld Ph.D.](#)** is professor in Agricultural, Environmental and Food Policy & Resource Governance at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (Germany). She is an agricultural and institutional economist. A significant strand of her work explores governance of shared natural resources and the interdependencies between property rights. Her geographical focus is on post-socialist countries. As a commons scholar, she is leading the European chapter of the International Association for the Study of the Commons.

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*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Ostrom workshop presentations will be virtual until further notice. Join instantly using the link above. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon ([sturgeon@iu.edu](mailto:sturgeon@iu.edu))*