# Open Government and Appropriation of Public Policies in Indigenous Communities in San Luis (Argentina)

Graciela Beatriz Rodríguez Murano[1]

**gi**gapp

Grupo de Investigación en
Gobierno, Administración
y Políticas Públicas

Open
Government
Partnership

**Abstract**

This study analyzes the policies implemented by the Government of San Luis (Argentina) in the period 2006-2013, as regards the Huarpe Guanacache San Luis and Ranquel People indigenous communities, from the theoretical perspective of open government and describes the appropriation of such policies, through the appraisal of the members of the communities involved. It is a descriptive study, done from a qualitative perspective, which develops a study case with two indigenous communities. Twenty semi-structured interviews with the members of the communities were analyzed, as well as three interviews with key informers from the Government: Governor Dr. Alberto Rodríguez Saá (2003-2008 / 2008-2011 / 2015-2019); Chief of the Originary Cultures Program, Mrs. Pascuala Carrizo Guakinchay and veterinary of Ranquel People, Mr. Fernando Ariel Pérez. The indigenous interviewees describe the impacts of these policies in different dimensions of their quality of life.
**Key words: Open government. Participation. Indigenous communities.**

## INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the policies implemented by the Government of San Luis (Argentina) between 2006 and 2013 for Huarpe Guanacache San Luis and Ranquel[2] indigenous communities, from an open government perspective. By analyzing the opinions of the community members themselves, the study describes their personal ownership of such policies.

We believe that our results, which build on the opinions of two separate communities, can contribute to the implementation of public policies surrounding indigenous communities.

The report The Road Ahead: Indigenous Peoples and the Agenda 2030 (ONU, 2013) underscores the poor condition that surrounds indigenous communities and links this context to the Agenda 2030 (ONU, 2015), which aims at reducing inequality.

ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989) regulates the participation of indigenous groups in processes designed to improve their living conditions, work situation, health and education (Art 7.2). The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ONU, 2007) establishes their right to self-determination in various dimensions (Art.3) and reaffirms the enforcement of human right treaties.

Argentina, through its Constitutional Reform of 1994, acknowledges the ethnic and cultural precedence of indigenous groups and secures their rights (Art. 75 inc. 17 C.N.)[3]. Among other

---

[1] Attorney by UBA and Master by Universidad de Palermo on Management Rights and Cultural Policies – Mercosur.

[2] The author would like to thank her anonymous interviewees, *Cacique* Miguel Calderon from the Huarpe community of Guanacache San Luis, *Lonco* Carlos Escudero and Organizing Delegate Reinaldo Benitez of the Ranquel Community, who authorized her to work in their communities.

[3] Art 75, inc 17 CN: Acknowledge the ethnical and cultural precedence of Argentina's indigenous peoples. Guarantee the respect to their identity, right to a bilingual and intercultural education, recognize their legal status and community ownership of their traditional lands, and devolution of their lands and additional lands to support their development. These rights are not alienable, transferable, or subject to

rights, this reform regulates individual and community land ownership rights and mandates the devolution of their traditional land, as well as other territories to support their development.

At the subnational level, the Province of San Luis acknowledges the ethnical and cultural precedence of the indigenous peoples that inhabit San Luis in Act N°V-0600-2007. This regulation mandates the devolution of the land that historically belonged to them, as long as the lands are controlled by the Provincial Government. On November 2011, the Constitution of San Luis[4] was reformed to include this provision. A key milestone for public policies on indigenous communities is the signing of two letters of intent signed by the Government of San Luis – with the Huarpe Guanacahe community (10/26/2006) and Ranquel community and the Center for Ranquel Studies of Villa Mercedes (11/9/2006).

We analyzed policies that address the situation of a community that kept their traditional lands (Huarpe Guanacache San Luis Community), and that of a group of people that, being aware of their indigenous identity, and that their ancestors had been displaced by the government on the nineteenth century, were given new land to develop (Ranquel People).

This study builds on previous work on the Huarpe and Ranquel ethnic groups and other communities, namely: Amaya (1979-1982); Aruani (2007); Barbieri (2009); Calderon Archina (2015); Canhue (2010); Chocobare (2012, 2013); Curtoni, Lazzari A. & Lazzai M. (2003); Curtoni (2007); Escolar (2007); Espinosa Molina (2013); Garcia (2002, 2004); Giacomasso (2016); Gordillo & Hirsch (2010); Lázzari (2003); Mansilla (1969); Michieli (1983, 1988); Morán de Valcheff (2011); Moyano (2010); Ossola (2009); Pastor, Torres, montaña & Abraham (2006); Poduje (2000); Segura (2011); Tapia (2005).

The paper is structured as follows: ethnic and geographic context for the policies, approach overview, methodology, data analysis and results, discussion and conclusion.

## 1. ETHNIC AND GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT FOR THE POLICIES

### 1.1 Huarpe Guanacache San Luis Community

The Huarpes inhabited a large portion of what currently constitutes the Provinces of San Juan and part of Mendoza and San Luis (Excolar, 2007). Although various authors considered them to be extinct (Michieli, 1983,1988; García, 2002, 2004), more recent studies support the Huarpe continuity and explain their emergence in the Cuyo area.

Huarpe Guanacache San Luis community, located 250 miles from the City of San Luis at La Represita bordering Mendoza and San Juan, covers 6,800 hectares, which they have occupied

---

taxation or seizure. Secure their participation in the management of their natural resources and other processes that might affect them. Provinces might exercise these attributes concurrently.

[4] Art 11 Bis: This Constitution recognizes all the rights mandated by the National Constitution, which is considered the minimum and on which the Constitution of the Province of San Luis builds to establish additional rights. All inhabitants of the Province have the right to social inclusion and digital inclusion, as innovative basic human rights. The Province of San Luis recognizes the ethnical and cultural precedence of indigenous peoples, acknowledging their customary rights as determined by the National Constitution, ILO 69 Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, and the Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Rights of the UN of September 13, 2007.

since ancient times. 74000 hectares, including Las Quijadas National Park, were handed back to them. However, to this day, the community does not have access to this land, as it is being disputed. This area, known as Lagunas de Guanacache, is experiencing a desertification process.

The Government of San Luis built 30 houses, which used conventional materials and included a kitchen, shelves and Canadian stoves.

The government also built a digital school, a hospital, a water treatment facility and a cultural center. Communities were provided with infrastructure for electricity, gas, Wi-Fi and home reservoirs for water provision, while hydric works were underway. They received tools and livestock for community projects (llamas and rheas) and a radio.

In the 21st Century, this community lacked the most basic services. Their livelihoods were based on raising goats and weaving crafts, like their ancestors.

## 1.2. Ranquel People

Several researchers have studied the origin of the Ranqueles. Casamiquela (1995) describes them as a group of hunter-gatherers that originated in the Atuel and Salado river deltas, while Fernandez Garay (1991) believes they are part of the Mapuches. In turn, Hernandez (2006) suggests that the Ranqueles are the people who inhabited the sierras of Cordoba, south of San Luis and Mendoza, north of Neuquen, west of Buenos Aires, and a large portion of Buenos Aires itself.

The Ranquel village is located 350 miles south of the City of San Luis. It was established through Act Nº V-0677-2009 as the Municipality of the Ranquel community (Art. 3), covering 66,413 hectares (Art. 5). This represents a land devolution process of the territory that belonged to the Ranqueles prior to the military campaigns in Argentina in the nineteenth century. Two communities relocated to this region: Lonco Guayki Gner, which is largely rural, and Manuel Baigorria, which is largely urban.

Infrastructure built by the Government of San Luis includes 24 fully equipped ethnic houses, a digital school, a hospital, a water treatment plant and a floating stage. In 2013, there was a refrigerator and a tannery facility. They were provided with water, electricity, gas, and Wi-Fi, a radio, an ambulance, tools and livestock (bovine and pedigree horses) for community projects.

## 2. APPROACH OVERVIEW

### 2. 1 Open government (OG).

The concept of open government was first used by Parks (1957) in reference to the link between citizen's access to information and government accountability. Today, the concept is defined in the Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government (Obama, 2009), which lays the foundation for open government in the USA. According to this Memorandum, there are three pillars of open government: transparency, participation and collaboration. The later entails collaboration among government agencies, but also with civil society organizations, the private sector and the citizens. This document describes Federal Government information as a national

asset that must be made available to the citizenry. It also acknowledges the societal expertise and recognizes the need to incorporate such knowledge through citizen participation.

Several authors have pointed to the fact that the concept of open government has become ambiguous or has undergone a metamorphosis (Yu & Robinson, 2012, Oszlak, 2017). Criado, Ruvalcaba & Valenzuela Mendez (2016) suggest it is an emergent concept with several meanings. They explain it is a theoretical proposal that aims to spur a permanent dialogue with the citizenry and tends to create synergies between government agencies and citizen participation in a collaborative and transparent manner (p. 11).

Lopez (2014) defines open government as "one that practices and promotes transparency, access to information, citizen participation, and collaboration among multiple stakeholders, both in terms of public policy design and service delivery" (p.2).

This leads us to believe that open government is a complex and multidimensional construct that has been studied by various fields. Cruz Rubio (2015) notes that the paradigm is still under construction and puts forward a comprehensive definition that regards open government as a new paradigm (what), as well as a new strategy (how)[5].

The majority of the definitions of open government include a mention of transparency, participation and collaboration, as mentioned by Obama (2009). However, the Open Government Partnership (OGP)[6] establishes four principles: transparency, citizen participation, accountability, and innovation and technology. The Ibero American Open Government Charter (2016) identifies the same principles and defines open government as

> a set of principles and strategies that contribute to good governance and government, based on transparency, citizen participation, accountability, collaboration and innovation, putting the citizens at the center of the decision-making process and the design and implementation of public policies in order to strengthen democracy, public action and the public interest (p.5).

Progress has also been made toward defining the concept of open states, which integrates the new paradigm into the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of the government, as well as subnational and local governments (Barcena, 2015). As stated by Oszlak (2017), the idea of open states refers to a common phenomenon:

> governments, parliaments, justice courts and other government institutions formally expressing the will to open up their data, give access to their citizens, engage citizens in

---

[5] Defines open government as a political-administrative philosophy, a new socio-political interaction paradigm or model based on transparency, participatory democracy, citizen empowerment, accountability, open data and the use of new technology and on the establishment of government as platforms to promote collaboration and interaction. The concept represents a strategy for the design, implementation, control and evaluation of citizen-centered public policies and modernization processes as an alternative to public administration.

[6] Global effort to improve government performance that started in 2011 as a result of endorsing the Open Government Declaration, drafted by 8 founding members: United States, Brazil, the Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, the UK and South Africa. To date, the initiative has gathered 75 countries and 15 local governments.

*the different phases of public policy design, be accountable and, overall, allow for a public administration by the citizenry (p. 23).*

## 2.2 Participation. Public policy ownership

Here, we address citizen participation in terms of public policy ownership. Taking ownership means to "make their own"[7], and this concept is important for public policy effectiveness, especially in a context of cultural diversity.

Sirvent (1999) differentiates real participation from symbolic participation. The former influences institutional processes, decision-making, goal-setting and implementation strategies, while the later refers to actions that have little to no influence on policy and institutional management. True participation entails a change in the power structure, whereas symbolic participation creates the illusion of an inexistent power (p. 129).

The Ibero American Open Government Charter (2015) defines citizen participation: "*as the process of building social public policies that, in the public interest, channels, responds and broadens fundamental rights and strengthens the active role of the citizenry in public management*" (3).

With regards to indigenous communities, the Ibero American Charter for Citizen Participation in Public Administration (2009) promotes the acknowledgement of their autonomous participation, norms, practices, procedures, administration, and values in accordance with their world view and respecting community values and nature (19).

Prieto Martin and Ramirez Alujas (2014) recommend analyzing citizen participation in open government through five dimensions: What – participation intensity, when – moments and phases, where – level of institutionalization, how – transparency and deliberative intensity, and who – participating stakeholders.

## 2.3. Indigenous/Indians/native people. Indigenous communities.

This study uses the terms indigenous[8], Indians and native people as synonyms, although most of the San Luis[9] documents use the term native people. Although the term Indians is a result of the original confusion of the colonizing groups as they thought they were in the West Indies, the *indigenista* movements of the XX century chose to use this term, assign a new meaning and express a political attitude that grants them an identity beyond their specific ethnicities. This position is defined in the Barbados Declarations I (1971) and II (1977) and is adopted by the Ranqueles, as expressed by Canhue (2010): "For the Rankulche, the term *Indian* is adopted, while acknowledging that it was originally flawed, but with a new meaning as part of their thinking: "we were discovered as Indians, we were conquered as Indians, we will be freed as Indians" (p.10).

---

[7] Real Academia Española. 1984. P.114.
[8] From Latin *inde:* there and *genos:* born. (Fernandez Chitti, 2010).
[9] The documental analysis can be read at Rodriguez Murano (2014).

Bonfil (1995) describes the term Indian as a relational analytical category that accounts for the colonial process and allows us to understand the position occupied by the designated sector within the system to which it belongs (p.122).

From a collective point of view, the UN Rapporteur, Martinez Cobo (1986) states:

> *Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those that, having historic continuity with societies that existed prior to the invasion and colonization processes, consider themselves distinct from other social groups that currently inhabit their lands. Currently, they constitute non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and inherit their lands and ethnic identity to future generations, as a basis for their future existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural, institutional social, and legal values* (p.54).

## 2.4. Culture and identity

The term culture refers to a polysemic concept. Gimenez (2005) defines it as: "the social organization of significations that are internalized in a relatively stable way in the form of shared representations and in the context of specific historic and social contests" (p.16). Establishing a relationship between culture and identity, it refers to a distinct ownership of specific cultural repertoires of our cultural context, recognizing a barrier between *us* and *them* (p.5.)

Dube (1999) states that culture is an essential element for production and reproduction of the social daily life, expressed in symbolic and structured attitudes, norms and practices. Through these, social relationships are perceived and experimented with. He explains that culture is defined by the power relationships between dominant and dominated groups.

Grimson (2012) further examines the relationship between culture and identity. He notes that culture refers to deeply rooted practices, beliefs and meanings, while identity refers to the feeling of belonging to a group with shared interests (p. 138). Within a social group where every member feels like they belong, there is not necessarily cultural homogeneity. Thus, he proposes the idea of cultural configuration that seeks to link these schemes with signification frontiers, within which there are inequities, power and history (p.139).

In turn, UNESCO places value on cultural diversity and defines culture as a set of distinct spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits that are characteristic to a specific social group, including their livelihoods, arts and humanities, forms of coexistence, traditions, values and beliefs (UNESCO 2001:4).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study looks at the policies that the Government of San Luis (Argentina) implemented between 2006 and 2013 for Huarpe Guanacache San Luis and Pueblo Ranquel indigenous communities, from an open government perspective. It also describes the opinions of community members about ownership of such policies.

The policies were implemented starting in 2006, before the signing of the Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government (Obama, 2009) and prior to the launch of the Open

Government Partnership (OGP) in 2011. However, these policies can be analyzed in terms of the open government theory, given that they are based on the dialogue that the Government of San Luis fostered with indigenous communities, promoting their participation in the land devolution, sustainable development and digital inclusion processes.

This descriptive, qualitative study builds on case studies of two indigenous communities: Huarpe Guanacache San Luis and Ranquel (Yin, 2003 y Barkley, 2006). The study looks at the two communities but does not represent a comparative study between them. Qualitative studies aim to understand how societies are produced, experienced and interpreted by social actors (Masseroni, 2007) and they focus on understanding individual and group discourses in spontaneous contexts that allow us to understand the symbolic contexts behind social conduct (Serbia, 2007).

Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyze the policies implemented by the Government of San Luis (Argentina) between 2006 and 2013 with Huarpe Guanacache San Luis and Ranquel indigenous communities with an open government lens and through the opinions of members of the two communities.

We analyzed 20 semi structured interviews with women and men adult members of the communities between 26 and 67 years of age. Their names will remain anonymous. We also conducted interviews with key government informants Governor Alberto Rodriguez Saa (2003-2008/2008-2011/2015-2019); Indigenous Cultures Program Chief Mrs. Pascuala Carrizo Guakinchay and Veterianarian of the Pueblo Ranquel Mr. Fernando Ariel Perez.

In keeping with the guidelines proposed by Tonon (2009), we recorded the interviews as to allow for reconstruction of communication. We then analyzed the emerging themes (Boyatzis, 1998), as described by Braun and Clarke (2006).


## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
### 4.1 Policies by Government of San Luis with indigenous communities.
### 4.1.1. Origins of the policies

Our analysis identifies the origins of the policies implemented by San Luis for indigenous peoples in a water conference that took place in 2006. When Mrs. Pascuala Carrizo Guakinchay of the Pueblo Huarpe identified the issue of desertification that affected her people, then Governor Alberto Rodriguez Saa (2003-2008/2008-2011/2015-2019) invited her to help identify the community needs. The dialogue was then opened up to additional groups. As a result, two letters of intent were signed, one with the Huarpe Guanachache San Luis community on 10/26/2006, and one with Ranquel community and the Centro de Estudios Ranquelinos de Villa Mercedes on 11/9/2006. Through these documents, San Luis acknowledged the "inextricable connections of indigenous peoples with their land, adopting the resurfacing of indigenous identities". They lay out the implementation of measures designed to secure human rights, development and participation of indigenous communities. In turn, communities committed to preserve their characteristic cultural elements and to strengthen their institutions.

Through Act N° V-0600-2007, San Luis acknowledges the ethnic and cultural precedence of the indigenous communities that occupy the land. It also lays out the devolution of their historic

lands[10], as long as they are under control of the provincial government. The land should be fit for integrated sustainable development. This regulation recognizes the right to self-determination, participation in relevant policies and access to capital to achieve economic and financial autonomy[11].

This acknowledgement was not the result of a bold mobilization of an indigenous collective, but of the dialogue between two people who embraced their indigenous identity: Mrs. Pascuala Carrizo Guakinchay of the Pueblo Huarpe and Mr. Governor Alberto Rodriguez Saa. The later referred to his Ranquel identity, but not as a detriment to his huinca education:

> *My blood is partly Ranquel, which is why I have always identified as Ranquel. Thus, it is not surprising that I echoed their words or that I represented a way to fulfill their dreams... When I became governor, I became responsible. Then, when the issue became part of the agenda, I just took it. Later on, I fought very hard and I now fear that the issue is not addressed. I want that the Ranquel and Huarpe communities will recover, restore, revive and return to their culture with all they have suffered and endured in these times, the Internet era... first, economic viability, strength, work, their industries.*

The Indigenous Cultures Office was integrated into the government structure by Decree N° 2002-MI and DH-2008, whose attributions have been revised with the enactment of different norms. From the beginning, the position was occupied by Mrs. Pascuala Carrizo Guakinchay of the Pueblo Huarpe, and she was the link between the Huarpe and Ranquel communities and the Government of San Luis. The office was formed by another Huarpe person and non-indigenous staff. In 2013, no Ranqueles participated in this distribution.

Decree N° 2455-MI and DH-2008 defined the relieving of indigenous peoples of San Luis and the creation of a registry of individuals that identify as descendants of indigenous groups. However, we could not locate the registry, and the data on descendants and their ethnicities were not available[12].

From the start, the policies were defined as state policies and advanced by Governor Claudio Poggi (2011-2015). During his administration, a call for proposals was launched to hire community advisors. The local veterinarian of the Ranquel community, Mr. Fernando Ariel Pérez, recounted how he submitted his resume, attended the interviews and was hired because of his willingness to move to the community. He also described:

> *when I was hired at the Government of San Luis, I was told that it was a project launched by the former Governor and that it had to keep moving forward, so they needed qualified people...people need to be trained in order to make progress and continue the work.*

---

[10] Land is not alienable or transferable, and cannot be leased or embargoed.
[11] See Note 10.
[12] These data were requested multiple times to the Program of Indigenous Cultures, the latest of which was submitted on 11/7/13 to the Government of San Luis (EXD N° 20707015/14). The data was not delivered, despite the fact that the Governor and Ministry of Tourism and Cultures gave the instruction to do so.

Mrs. Pascuala Carrizo Guakinchay, with regards to policy ownership, says:

> We must always accompany the people... it is a unique process that needs to be safeguarded. The children, the new generations, will take full ownership of this work and they will be key to ensure that it advances; I am sure they have embraced their identity we were forced to hide. We were taught to live differently but I know we can bring this back and bring about change for this group, which will be an example for other groups.

## 4.2 Interviewees' description and assessment of the policies
## 4.2.1.Huarpe Guanacache San Luis Community
## 4.2.1.1. Participation and ownership of public policies

Policies designed for Huarpe Guanacache San Luis build on the acknowledgment of their ancestral settlement. Our analysis revealed a milestone in the community's process, with their decision to solve the highly severe issue of lack of water in the Huanacache Lagoons:

> The books ignore our existence. That can be a problem for us because we currently do not exist, so you cannot work with what does not exist. From our perspective, however, we still exist because we are not in the books. This means that the policies or decisions of our ancestors were the right ones because they successfully saved their families. We are now becoming a little more visible, as times have changed for us now.

Interviews reveal that the Government of San Luis conducted a community consultation process prior to construction:

> With regards to housing construction, it was very good because we were included... even though the architects had their blueprints, we added our own contributions and we said: look, we live here, so we know where the wind blows from, rain, everything else.

Also, the families' decision to maintain their old houses was also respected, even though they lived in the new ones, which had all the necessary utilities. Old houses are spaces for memories and communities still use them: "I like to have it, I need it, I have many things there... it has all the memories my parents left, so I don't want them to tear it down."

The interviews show a true sense of solidarity within the community. They decided the location of the hospital, the school, the roads in everyone's interest: "we all are human beings and we need everyone's attention."

Internally, interviewees described that the community elects, by direct and secret voting, the *cacique*, deputy chief and council members. The *cacique* represents the community and implements assembly decisions.

The interviews described that they are partners and that the community decides on the funds. Also, they value their relationship with the Government of San Luis:
"they acknowledge our existence, unlike other provinces or countries"; "they listen to us, they help us in many ways, so we feel stronger. When we are listened to, we feel the change." The

interviews describe community participation, through the Indigenous Culture Programs, in the Master Plan for Cultures 2013-2023, which includes their projects[13].

Our thematic analysis identified criticisms of the National Park Administration[14], specifically at Las Quijadas National Park, which Huarpes consider to be part of their ancestry lands. They described how Huarpes have been compulsively displaced, how they cannot have free access, and how they are not allowed to commercialize their crafts in this location. They also detail that ancient names of specific locations have been replaced with new names that have no meaning to them. Finally, they point out that poachers are not under control. This gap is even wider for people who were born in this location, given that Huarpes consider themselves part of the land and part of a cycle between people and the environment: "I was raised in the field... and because the National Park was created, I was told: you have to leave, you do not belong here"; "I feel something was taken away from me because I was born there, I even have the document to prove it".

### 4.2.1.2. Access to infrastructure, services and productive projects

Interviews reflect positive impacts on the quality of life of interviewees, who for the first time had access to electricity, gas and water: "*we used to dig a well in order to get water, and we know have running water*"; "*my grandmother never thought we would have electricity... we used to light fire with grease... we had to fetch wood to light a fire*".

Policies slowed down migration and some people have migrated back to this land: "*with all the work they have been done, some people are coming back. In previous years, we had to send off our children to seek for work, health and education*".

In the community, there is a Digital Public School (EPD in Spanish) Xumuc Pe and Public School for Adults (EPDA in Spanish), which are linked to the Universidad de la Punta. They are both digital schools and have a personalized pedagogic model where students can make progress according to their own processes.

In 2013, one teacher taught all the classes. The teacher was a community member who specialized in special education, Mrs. Lucia del Carmen Calderon. Interviews yielded a positive assessment about her work and how important it is that she is a member of the community, as she can better understand the children and she never misses work.

Children participated in tournaments and competitions of different kinds: history, chess, road safety, theater, natural science, and environment. Digital school includes education on information technology, chess, and test skills. Wi-Fi has been critical for adults: "*With Wi-Fi, we can learn when a person dies, we can learn about everything*"; "*My niece lives in San Luis and we use the internet to communicate with her... we never had that before*".

In 2013, they had built the hospital, but they had not opened it yet. Interviewees needed access to complex health services because serious accidents tend to occur on the roads. They

---

[13] For more information, see Rodriguez Murano (2014: 2016).
[14] Decentralized agency of the Executive Branch.

expressed their willingness to collaborate and offered their traditional knowledge, such as Huarpe plant therapies and humanized births[15].

The ownership of the implemented policies shows an integrated development for the community:

> *with health, education, housing and a healthy economy, communities we can survive on our own, so we can be autonomous. I don't want to be given things, I want us to make it on our own, because we are empowered to decide the direction of our community and we can secure the wellbeing of our family.*

### 4.2.2. Ranquel Community
### 4.2.2.1. Participation and appropriation of public policies

Interviewees described that the Government of San Luis invited descendants of Ranqueles that were interested in forming a community and settling. The Ranquel community is one integrated by two communities: Lonco Guayki Gner in the South, which was mainly rural, and Maniel Baigorria in the north, which is mainly urban.

This contrast between communities generates gaps in the appropriation of public policies. Our analysis reveals that, at the start of the project, three individuals from Lonco Guayki Gner community: Mr. Moyetta, Mr. Escudero and Mr. Benitez traveled through the fields and fixed the engine of an old mill. They waited there for housing to be built.

The interviews reflect that consultations only covered the location of the houses. Due to a lack of knowledge about the land, community Manuel Baigorria was built in the lowlands, and in 2009 was affected by an extreme precipitation event that took place. Meanwhile, Lonco Guayki Gner community, which is more attached to the land and to rural work, was built in a more adequate location: "*we took into account what Moyetta said, he wanted the islet at the south to be covered with trees in order to protect it from the wind, and so our animals are under the shade*".

Our analysis yielded a lack of consultation about the location of the hospital and the school, which has hindered their ability to maintain the facilities. These facilities were built close to the road, similar to what the Huarpes decided.

Interviews also showed satisfaction about land devolution and solidarity with other indigenous groups:

> *I want to thank the Governor for remembering us, he gave us this land... I would like for all indigenous peoples to be given the opportunity that we were given, because they have been displaced, they have taken everything away from them.*

Internally, they elected a Lonco and a "mayor"[16] with a deliberative system, which was not elected by secret voting and did not specify a limited term. Decisions were made in assembly

---

[15] See Rodriguez Murano (2014).
[16] Formally, the position was Organizing Delegate.

with the two communities: Lonco Guaki Gner and Manuel Baigorria. However, when we assessed the interviews in November 2013, we identified setbacks in community participation, and the need to implement secret voting. The community went from being coordinated by two rural individuals: Lonco Escudero and Organizing Delegate Benitez, with participation of the two Ranquel communities, to being directed by a northern urban community chief[17].

Interviews reflect uncertainty about the existence of the community system, given that they did not have access to information, and all decisions were centralized.

Our analysis identified relevant indicators for the appropriation of public policies during the community administration[18] of Escudero-Benitez from July 2011 to March 2013. Interviews show progress that allowed for their self-subsistence with their livestock productivity, which included payments for maintenance, labor, and social security. During this time, the community identified several ideas for better managing the community, but these were difficult to implement due to a lack of funding, as they stopped being partners in March 2012. The Master Plan for Cultures 2013-2023 does not include these projects and interviews did not know the plan existed. This document describes that Ranqueles voluntarily gave up partnership due to their economic growth (p.44), which does not align with our analysis.

### 4.2.2.2. Access to infrastructure, service delivery, and productive projects.

At the time of conducting the interviews (2013), the Digital School Feliciana Saa was directed by two women teachers who were in charge of elementary and secondary schools. Universidad de la Punta provided guidance on agriculture, as requested by local veterinarian and teacher Mr. Fernando Ariel Perez.

Interviewees were satisfied with the teachers' work and described that they contributed to improving education and did not miss work. Some interviewees pointed to the fact that the teachers are not originally from the community, and therefore had less familiarity with the children.

Our analysis reflects the university plans of Ranqueles children and identifies veterinarian Fernando Ariel Perez as their mentor.

The hospital of the Ranquel community lacked permanent staff, but the health service was well organized. Once a week a medical doctor and a nurse attended the hospital. Sanitary agents[19], one per *aduar*, that were in charge of assisting families (e.g. with vaccination) and supported the doctor. The community had an ambulance that was used for emergencies, and it had a designated community driver.

Our analysis identified a differentiated degree of appropriation of public policies as a result of perceptions about the landscape and rural work. While some consider rural work as inferior, others are proud of being field workers:

---

[17] The impacts on the administration are beyond the scope of this study.
[18] See Rodriguez Murano (2014).
[19] Two women from the community who had been trained.

> *To me, being here is the best, in this field, it is an honor to be here and have my family here and work the land, because the government assigned us the land... I want it to get better, so that everyone can have equal access to opportunities.*

Interviews also revealed a difference in expectations about community land ownership: "*they thought the Governor would donate them a piece of land for them to distribute or sell. No, this is a community*".

The community had ongoing production, tourism and health projects. However, the refrigerator issue reflects an interest in the source of employment and difficulty in terms of appropriation in administration, due to the "management of documents and numbers". Also, due to a lack of awareness, they lost registration of several pedigree horses. As advised by veterinarian Fernando Ariel Perez, they were in the process of registering them as Creole horses and become breeders.

Interviews reflect progress made in terms of material wellbeing and relationships. The former includes: access to housing and services, digital and rural productivity education, employment, wages and social Security, purchase of vehicles (motorcycles and cars). The later refers to the wellbeing resulting from not being forced to hide their identities: "*my old man was Indian but they never told us about their history..., we never learned, the kids... they have that possibility because they identify as Ranqueles, because that's what they were taught*". There are positive expectations that the project will help support if "*they study*".

## 5. DISCUSSION

Our results allow us to identify a comparison between the public policies[20] implemented in San Luis (Argentina) and some of the open government principles. Communities were invited to establish a dialogue and this change in power structures affected the social structures of community members (Edelman, n.d). For the Huarpe Guanacache San Luis community, which is considered extinct by several authors (Michieli 1983, 1988; Garcia, 2002), we were able to verify their visibility and emergence[21].

Considering that material and symbolic dimensions come together in the land (Diez, Garriga & Rodriguez, 2009), participation by Huarpes enabled the conservation of the cultural landscape, which was built with respect and correspondence with both Mother Earth and their ancestors (Curtoni, 200; Lucero, 2007).

We found attempts to collaborate and build citizen innovation in the Huarpe hospital projects (plant therapy and humanized birth), as well as the contributions to the Master Plan for the Cultures (2013-2023). In addition, the participation of children in tournaments shows an effective appropriation of educational public policies, including digital education.

---

[20] Goals, decisions and actions taken by the government to solve issues that, at a given time, citizens and the government thought were appropriate (Saez, 1997).
[21] Dynamic that enabled certain groups to lead a quick process of ethnic self-consciousness that differentiates them from society (Escolar, 2007:28).

Access to services such as electricity, gas, water, and Wi-Fi, as well as productive projects brought about positive impacts in their quality of life, acknowledging that this concept is a result of individual perceptions of well-being (Kreiter & Nive, en Tonon, 2010). From an open government perspective (CEPAL, 2017), interviews reveal a positive relationship between the Government of San Luis, Huarpe citizens, and the Universidad de la Punta-Public Digital School. The National Park Administration is not a part of this relationship, as they failed to include the community in their decisions. Interviews referred to conflict in the use of land (Oslender, 2002). Las Quijadas National Park has undertaken questionable legal and political practices described as Boyle (2004) as old-school.

Interviews from the Huarpe community did not show a significant displacement between culture and identity (Dube, 1999; Gimenez, 2005; UNESCO, 2001), which affect the level of appropriation of policies. Participation within the community was described as equal.

At the Ranquel community, policies constituted a process of land reconfiguration through the resettlement of two communities: Lonco Guayki Nger in the South, which was mainly rural, and Maniel Baigorria in the north, which is mainly urban. Ranqueles territorialize the space, projecting a set of intentions (Pastor, 2006). Their diversity of origins leads to differentiated opinions about the landscape and its ability to fulfill their needs (Corraliza, 1993), rural work and community land ownership. There is a gap between culture and identity that reflects the complexity of the process, and misalignments in the appropriation of the implemented policies.

Progress made during the community administration of two rural individuals Escudero-Benitez (July 2011-March 2013) allowed for their subsistence without partnership. However, the reason why Ranqueles stopped being partners in March of 2002 remains unclear, even though it is determined by DNU N° 2884-MGJ and C-09 determined by Act N°V-0677-2009.

We identified disparities between participation by Ranqueles and Huarpes. Ranqueles noted that, in terms of land use, they were only consulted about the location of the housing. In 2013, the Program for Indigenous Communities did not have any Ranqueles staff, and they were not aware of the Master Plan for Cultures 2013-2023, and they did not participate in its creation, despite their ongoing projects on productivity, tourism, and health. The future of the refrigerator has ownership issues due to the complexity in administrative processes.

Internally, interviews reflect that the two groups that constitute the community participated in decision making through March 2013, when there was a setback, which is also described by Giacomasso (2016).

Despite the complexity of the Ranquel process, some public benefits were achieved, as communities were given access to decent housing, utilities – electricity, gas, water, Wi-Fi, public works, health and digital education. Adults expect children to continue working on the project and believe they will have access to better education.

The registry laid out by Decree N° 2455-MI and DH-2008 is opaque and it has been difficult to access to information surrounding it, as described by authors (Chocobare, 2012; 2013; Espinosa Molina, 2013). In terms of accountability, communities have a horizontal assembly system.

Community participation was institutionalized (Prieto Martín & Ramirez Alujas, 2014) in various norms and through the establishment of a structure that supports native cultures.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the analysis show that policies implemented in San Luis (Argentina) for Huarpe Guanacache San Luis and Ranquel communities have made progress regarding the principles of open government: participation, collaboration and innovation. These policies have made progress in terms of the ultimate goal of open government: the advancement of public interest. Community wellbeing is represented by the acknowledgement of their ethnic and cultural precedence, right to sustainable development, devolution of lands, employment and productivity, and access to decent housing and to services – electricity, water, gas, Wi-Fi, health and digital education.

Note that these policies have been implemented since 2006, prior to the identification of the three principles defined by the Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government (Obama, 2009) and the four principles of the Ibero American Open Government Charter (2016).

Independently from the disparities described above, the participating collectives have taken ownership of the policies. In both processes, participation has reached a collaboration status and contributed to building capacities, as illustrated by the collaboration innovation shown by Huarpes and Ranqules. Interviews describe an improvement in their quality of life as compared to their cultural context and given time (Rodriguez de la Vega, 2015, p.48).

We believe that the results presented show the perspective of the subjects involved, have empirical relevance and can be a resource for the development of indigenous people-related public policies.

## REFERENCES

Amaya, L. (1979-1982). Aculturación en torno a los indios ranqueles. Buenos Aires: Instituto Nacional de Antropología.

Aruani, Susana M. -comp.-(2007). *Identidad, conciencia histórica y su relación con el patrimonio cultural.* Mendoza: Editorial de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad Nacional de Cuyo. Colección Jarilla.

Barbieri, A. -coordinador- (2009).*SAN LUIS. Los dueños de la Tierra.* Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida.

Barkley, D. L. (2006).  The value of case study research. on rural entrepreneurship: useful method? Ponencia presentada en la Conferencia conjunta ERS-RUPRI. Exploring Rural Entrepreneurship: Imperatives and Opportunities for Research, Washington, DC, October, 26- 27. www.clemson.edu/uced/...small.../Value_of_**Case_Study**_Research.doc

Bonfil Batalla, G. (1995). El concepto de indio en América Latina: una categoría de la situación colonial. *Anales de Antropología*, 105-124.

Boyle, S. (2004). La interpretación y la conservación: claves para un cambio de mentalidad. En: *Museum internacional 223* (p.p.84-91). Recuperado de http://portalunesco.org/cuture/es/files/23939/109901.

Calderón Archina, A. (2016). "Reparación histórica" y "municipalización": el caso de la  comunidad Huarpe de Guanacache, San Luis  Argentina. *Estudios en Antropología Social  Nueva Serie* 1(2): 3957, julio  diciembre 2016.

Canhue,G. -comp.- (2010).*Los Rankülche sobre la huella de Mansilla*. San Luis: San Luis    Libro.

Casamiquela, R. (1969). *Un nuevo panorama etnológico del área pampeana y patagónica adyacente. Pruebas etnohistóricas de la filiación tehuelche septentrional de los guaraníes.* Santiago de Chile: Ediciones del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural.

Chocobare, M. (2012). Descendientes ranqueles a vivir al sur: La construcción de una "comunidad" ranquel en
San Luis a comienzos del siglo XXI (Tesis de grado inédita, proporcionada por la autora). Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

---------------   (2013). "Ranqueles a vivir al sur": Acciones gubernamentales en el proceso de conformación de una "Comunidad Ranquel" en San Luis a comienzos del siglo XXI. Revista TEFROS – Vol. 11 Nº 1-2 – 2013.

Corraliza, J. (1993). Reacciones psicológicas  a la estimulación escénica. *Revista ecosistemas* N° 6, p.p.46-49.

Criado, J.;  Ruvalcaba, E. & Valenzuela Mendoza, R. (2016). ¿Cómo y dónde se analiza el    open government? Un meta-análisis del fenómeno desde la literatura internacional .XXI   Congreso Internacional del CLAD sobre la Reforma del Estado y de la Administración Pública, Santiago, Chile, 8 - 11 nov. 2016. Recuperado de http://www.gobiernolocal.gob.ar/sites/default/files/criadoji.pdf

Cruz-Rubio, C. N. (2015), "Qué es (y qué no es) gobierno abierto. Una discusión conceptual", *Eunomía. Revista en Cultura de la Legalidad*. N° 8, marzo-agosto.

Curtoni, R. (2000). La percepción del paisaje y la reproducción de la identidad social en la región pampeana occidental (Argentina). En Gianotti García C.-coord.-*Paisajes Culturales Sudamericanos. De las prácticas sociales a las Representaciones, (p.p.115-125)*.Santiago de Compostela: Laboratorio de Arqueología e formas culturais. Recuperado de http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/5991/1/tapa19.

Curtoni, R., Lázzari, A.& Lázzari M. (2003). Middle of nowhere: a place of war memories, commemoration and aboriginal re-emergence (La Pampa, Argentina). *World Archaeology, (35)*.Recuperado: http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/356021?uic.

Escolar, D. (2007). *Los dones étnicos de la Nación.* Buenos Aires: Prometeo.

Espinosa Molina, E. (2013). El Estado y la (re)producción étnica en San Luis: "La agenda de las culturas originarias" y la Comunalización del "Pueblo Nación Ranquel". En X Reunión de Antropología del Mercosur, Grupo 50. Córdoba: Argentina.

Fernandez Chitti, J. (2010). Pueblos originarios, indios, indígenas o aborígenes. Recuperado de: www.condorhuasi.com/docs/pueblos_originarios_indios_indigenas_o_aborigenes.pdf.

García, A. (2002). Una mirada a los reclamos modernos de identidad huarpe. Scripta Nova, Revista de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales, VI (109). Recuperado de http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-109.htm.

------------ (2004). *Tras las huellas de la identidad huarpe: un aporte desde la arqueología, la antropología y la historia.* Mendoza: Universidad Nacional de Cuyo.

Giacomasso, M. (2016). *Patrimonio, discursividades y políticas culturales indígenas: un análisis en Pueblo Ranquel, San Luis, Argentina.* Quilmes: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes. Recuperado de: http://ridaa.unq.edu.ar/handle/20.500.11807/216.

Giménez, G.  (2005). La concepción simbólica de la cultura. En, Giménez, G .*Estudios sobre la cultura y las identidades sociales en Seminario Permanente de Cultura y Representaciones Sociales.* Recuperado de
http://www.paginasprodigy.com/peimber/BIBLIO.HTML

Gordillo G. & Hirsch S. (2010) -comp- *Movilizaciones indígenas e identidades en disputa en la Argentina.* Buenos Aires: La crujía.

 Grimson, A. (2012). *Los límites de la cultura.* Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

Hernández, G. (2006). En tiempos del malón. Testimonios indígenas sobre la conquista del desierto. *Memoria Americana N°14.* Recuperado de http://www.scielo.org.ar/scielo.php?pid=51851-375.

Lazzari, A. (2003). Aboriginal Recognition, Freedom and Phantoms: the vanishing of the Ranquel and the
Return of the Rankülche in La Pampa. *The journal of Latin American Anthropology,* 8 (3): 59-83.

López, J.F. (2014) ¿Pueden los estados seguir gobernando nuevas ciudadanías bajo viejos paradigmas?: Los desafíos políticos del Gobierno Abierto en América Latina y el Caribe. Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)

Lucero, R. (2007). La identidad y el espacio geográfico. Identidad y memoria. En Aruani, S.-comp.- *Identidad, conciencia histórica y su relación con el patrimonio cultural*. Mendoza: Editorial de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad nacional de Cuyo. Colección Jarilla.

Mansilla, L. (1969). *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles.*  Buenos Aires: Cultural Argentina.

Martinez Cobo, J. (1986). Estudio del problema de la discriminación con las poblaciones indígenas. ONU, doc. núm E/CN4.2, 1986/8.

Michieli, C. (1983). Los huarpes protohistóricos. *Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Museo UNSJ.*

--------------- (1988). La disolución de la categoría jurídica de "indio" en el siglo XVIII: el caso San Juan (región de Cuyo). *Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Museo UNSJ.Publicaciones* (16): p.p.41-55.

Morán de Valcheff, T. (2011). *El Caballo del Indio.* Villa Mercedes: Editorial El Tabaquillo.

Moyano, M. (2010). *Ranqueles, del silencio a la palabra...* San Luis: San Luis Libro.


Obama, B. (2009). Transparency and open government. Memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies. Federal Register, 74(15), 4685–4686.

Oslak, O (2017). La noción de Estado abierto en el contexto de América Latina y el Caribe. En Naser, A.; Ramírez-Alujas, A & Rosales, D (Eds).*Desde el gobierno abierto al Estado abierto en América Latina y el Caribe (pp.213-216).Santiago: CEPAL*

Oslender, U. (2002).  Espacio, lugar y movimientos sociales: hacia una 'espacialidad de resistencia. *Scripta   Nova. Revista electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales,* VI, 115.

Ossola, H. (2009). El Bramido del Puma. Una historia del Pueblo Ranquel.Villa  Mercedes: Editorial El

Tabaquillo.

Parks, W.   (1957) The open government principle: applying the right to know under the Constitution. *The George Washington Law Review, 26* (1)

Pastor, G; torres, L; Montaña, E. & Abraham, E. (2006). Artesanías y desierto: una aproximación a los fenómenos de desterritorialización del patrimonio cultural huarpe. R*evista Theomai, 13.*

Poduje, M. (2000). *Viviendas tradicionales en la provincia de La Pampa.* Santa Rosa-La Pampa: Departamento de Investigaciones Culturales de la Subsecretaría de la provincia de La Pampa.

Prieto Martín, P. & Ramirez Alujas, A. (2014). Caracterizando la participación ciudadana en el marco del Gobierno Abierto. Revista del CLAD Reforma y Democracia, núm. 58, febrero, 2014, pp. 61-100.

Ramírez-Alujas, Álvaro V. (2011), "Gobierno abierto y modernización de la gestión pública: tendencias actuales y el (inevitable) camino que viene", en Revista Enfoques ,Vol. 9 N° 15, pp. 99-125.

Real Academia Española (1984).Diccionario de la Lengua Española T°I, p.114. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe S.A.

Rodríguez de la Vega, L. (2015). The Role of Contex and Culture in Quality of Life Studies*.* En Tonon, G.    (Ed.)  *Qualitative Studies in Quality of  Life. Methodology and Practice*. Switzerland: Springer.

Rodríguez Murano, G. (2014).*La Gestión Cultural con las Comunidades Huarpe Huanacache y Pueblo Nación RanküL, en la Provincia de San Luis*. (Tesis de Maestría). Universidad de  Palermo. Argentina.

_____ (2016). Comunidades indígenas. La gestión cultural y la articulación de políticas públicas, en contextos de diversidad cultural. Testimonios de huarpes y ranqueles en San Luis. En Tonon, G. –comp. *La Investigación en Ciencias Sociales en el Siglo XXI.* (pp. 79-120). Buenos Aires: Universidad de Palermo.

Saez, T. (1997). El análisis de las Políticas Públicas. En: Banón, R. & Carrillo, E. -comp.- *La Nueva Administración Pública.* Madrid: Alianza Universitaria p.p.1-22.

Sagués, N. (2000). *Constitución de la Nación Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Astrea.

Segura, V. (2011). Ser Huarpes en el siglo XXI: La Comunidad Sawa y la construcción de su territorialidad. Ponencia presentada VI Jornadas de jóvenes investigadores. Instituto Gino Germani.                                  Recuperado                                  de webigg.sociales.uba.ar/iigg/jóvenes_investigadores/eje1_rosegurapdf.

Serbia, J. M. (2007). Diseño, Muestreo y Análisis en la investigación cualitativa. *HOLOGRAMÁTICA,* IV, 7, 123-146. Recuperado de www.unlz.edu.ar/sociales/hologramatica

Sirvent, M. (1999).*Cultura popular y participación social: una investigación en el barrio de Mataderos (buenos Aires)*. Colección: Ideas en debate. Buenos Aires: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires- Miño y Dábila.

Stake, R. (1994).   Case studies. En Denzin, N. & Lincoln (Edds).*Handbook of cualitative research.*California: Sage publications.

Tonon, G. (2009). *La entrevista semi-estructurada como técnica de investigación.* En Tonon, G. –comp.- *Reflexiones Latinoamericanas sobre investigación cualitativa* (pp. 56-75)*.* San Justo: Prometeo Libros-UNLAM.

_____ (2010)  La utilización de indicadores de calidad de vida para la decisión de     políticas públicas. http://polis.revues.org/820

Yu, H. & Robinson, D., (2012). The New Ambiguity of 'Open Government'. Princeton CITP/Yale ISP Working Paper.

**DOCUMENTS.**

Acta Compromiso entre el Gobierno de la Provincia de San Luis y la Comunidad Huarpe Guanacache San Luis del 26 -10- 2006, proporcionada por Programa Culturas Originarias.

Carta Iberoamericana de Gobierno Abierto (2016). Recuperado: https://www.clad.org/images/declaraciones/CIGA-Octubre-2016.pdf

Carta Iberoamericana de Participación Ciudadana en la Gestión Pública (2009). Recuperado de:     http://old.clad.org/documentos/declaraciones/carta-iberoamericana-de-participacion-ciudadana/view.

Constitución de la Provincia de San Luis. Recuperada:ministerios.sanluis.gov.ar/res/5088/media/pdf/19589.pdf

Convenio sobre pueblos indígenas y tribales, 1989. Recuperado: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_345065.pdf

Declaración de Barbados I (1971). Recuperado de: www.servindi.org

Declaración de Barbados II (1977). Recuperado de: www.servindi.org

Declaración de Gobierno abierto.  Recuperado: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/declaraci-n-de-gobierno-abierto

Declaración Universal sobre la diversidad Cultural (UNESCO 2001). Recuperado: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127162s.pdf

Declaración de las Naciones Unidas sobre los derechos de los pueblos indígenas (2007). Recuperado: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_es.pdf

Informe de la Reunión de Expertos sobre los Pueblos Indígenas y la Agenda 2030. Recuperado: http://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2017/10998