



INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON
OSTROM WORKSHOP
COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Bryan Bruns

Independent Researcher and Consultant

Monday, February 15: 12:00 – 1:00 pm EST

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



Diagnosing Social Dilemmas

This presentation discusses work in progress on distinguishing different types of collective action problems and solutions. Prisoner's Dilemma is only one of several possible social dilemmas where individual incentives can lead away from cooperation that would make everyone better off. Games with two people and two choices (2x2) provide elementary models of interdependence in strategic situations. These games and the stories associated with them have played a central role in thinking about problems of collective action. Diagnosing which type of collective action problem may be present is important since different incentive structures pose different challenges and may require different solutions. This paper uses the Robinson-Goforth topology of payoff swaps in 2x2 games to map and analyze the diversity of collective action problems; identify key questions that can distinguish between different types of problems even in the presence of limited information about outcomes; and discuss implications for diagnosis and potential solutions.

Bryan Bruns is an independent researcher and consultant with a particular interest in water governance, cooperation, and transforming social situations. His consulting practice specializes in improving participation in irrigation and water governance. He co-edited books on Negotiating Water Rights and Water Rights Reform: Lessons for Institutional Design. His articles and conference papers concern topics including participatory irrigation management, water user associations, water rights, cooperation, and polycentric governance. More information at <https://bryanbruns.com>

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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)