



Elinor Ostrom and the Bloomington School of Political Economy: Polycentricity in Public Administration and Political Science (Volume 1)

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
Elinor (Lin) Ostrom was awarded the 2009 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for her pathbreaking research on "economic governance, especially the commons"; but she also made important contributions to several other fields of political economy and public policy. The range of topics she covered and the multiple methods she used might convey the mistaken impression that her body of work is disjointed and incoherent.

This four-volume compendium of papers written by Lin, alone or with various coauthors (most notably including her husband and partner, Vincent), supplemented by others expanding on their work, brings together the common strands of research that serve to tie her impressive *oeuvre* together. That *oeuvre*, together with Vincent's own impressive body of work, has come to define a distinctive school of political-economic thought, the "Bloomington School."

Each of the four volumes is organized around a central theme of Lin's work. Volume 1 explores the roles played by the concept *polycentricity* in the disciplines of public administration, political science, and other forms of political economy. Polycentricity denotes a complex system of governance in which public authorities, citizens, and private organizations work together to establish and enforce the rules that guide their behavior. It encapsulates an approach toward policy analysis that blurs standard disciplinary boundaries between the social sciences.

Throughout their long and remarkably productive careers, Elinor and Vincent Ostrom never tired of reminding us of the capacity of ordinary humans to transcend their own limitations by engaging with others in the myriad forms of collective action required to build and sustain a self-governing society. Their careers stand as exemplars of the proper relationship between rigorous scholarship and responsible citizenship.

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