



Learning from the Vincent and Elinor Ostrom Workshop at Indiana University

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Indiana University

Berlin Workshop in Institutional Analysis of Social-Ecological Systems

June 14-16, 2014



The Challenge

- A brief history of the Ostrom Workshop
- Reflections from Ostrom Workshop scholars
- Thoughts for moving forward



Before the Ostrom Workshop

- Both Lin and Vincent worked on governance of water resources
- Groundwork for future work on CPRs, SES...
- Lin's dissertation was a product of a seminar she took as a graduate student when Vincent was faculty at UCLA
- Vincent's early work (1961) on polycentric systems



Date	Event
1965	Arrival at Indiana University
1968	Hardin...
1973	Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis created within Dept. of Political Science
1973	First major empirical project, provision of government policing services
1981-2	Bielefeld U.
1983*	Moved to current location, dedicated space separate from Department of PS
1990	Governing the Commons



Date	Event
1991-1992	IAD, IFRI
1994	First Workshop on the Workshop
2001	AAAS...
2007	Humboldt Honorary Doctorate!!
2007-2009	SES Framework
2009	World turned upside down
2009	Jimmy Walker (Economist) and Mike McGinnis (Political Scientist) become co-directors





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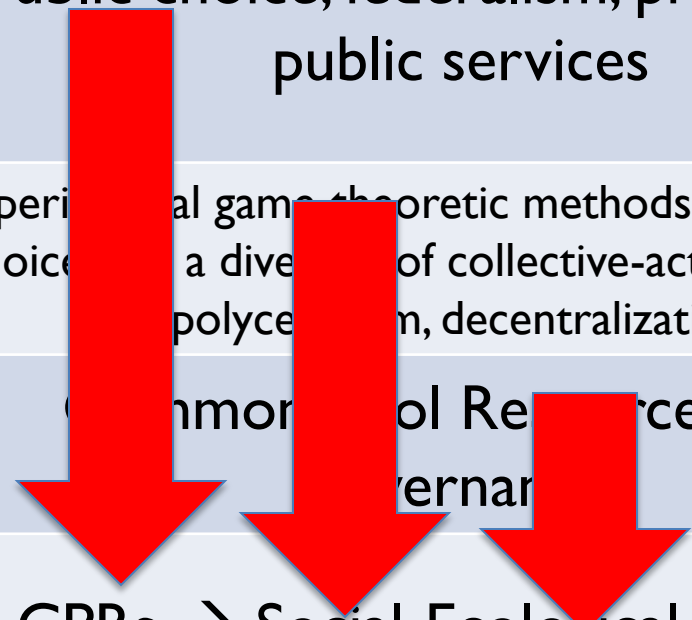


Date	Event
2011	A geographer and a former state forester??
2012	Lin and Vincent pass away
2013	IU scrutiny of the Workshop
2014	Workshop on the Workshop 5 External search for Director



Monday Colloquium Series

	Emphasis*
1970's	Public choice, federalism, provision of public services
1980's	Experimental game-theoretic methods, constitutional choice, a diversity of collective-action dilemmas, polycentricity, decentralization
1990's	Common-pool Resources, self-governance
2000's-2010's	CPRs → Social-Ecological Systems





Reflections

- What characteristics/events/structures are responsible for the Ostrom Workshop attaining the success it has?
- Asked 12 former Workshoppers





Reflections

1) **Be accepting**, more than just tolerant, of **different viewpoints, ideas, related areas of research**, etc. Lin was exceptional at this and it served the Workshop very well.

“**Cultivating a sense that student opinions are valued**, that there isn't a very tiered system where students should only dutifully listen and learn and not present their own thoughts or opinions. Lin was actually good at making people feel important in this way, even if others were not, and the celebrity surrounding Lin didn't always encourage this sense either.”





Reflections

2) Weekly colloquium

Graduate students ask first question

1.5 hours in duration

Commitment of 5-6 faculty to attend

3) Self organized working groups

Catalysts for new projects

Lin's SES Framework paper, comments...





Reflections

4) Core grounding course (IAD)

Opportunity to students, visiting scholars to share their work in a rich way

Is this a risk??

5) Mini-conference (end of semester 2 day student work presentation) + book parties





Reflections

6) Extremely reliable staff in two key positions –
budget and editorial support

7) Visiting Scholars program, many participating
in core grounding course

Cross-fertilization of ideas





Reflections

7) Take time to get a common understanding of concepts

8) Strong positive relationships between graduate students

Clear rules and expectations to eliminate risk of cross-student competition

9) Space matters!

Place where people can work together, informal exchanges...





A note about International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI)

- Was a product of request by FAO to develop a program on forest governance analysis
 - Overt intention to connect to practitioners
 - Importance of policy analysis
- “without a sincere engagement with ongoing policy processes (*i.e. on the ground practitioners*), the political theory research will lose out”



IF YOU ONLY HAVE A HAMMER

YOU TEND TO SEE EVERY PROBLEM AS A NAIL

ABRAHAM MASLOW



*Give a small boy a hammer, and he
will find that everything he encounters
needs pounding.*

– Abraham Kaplan

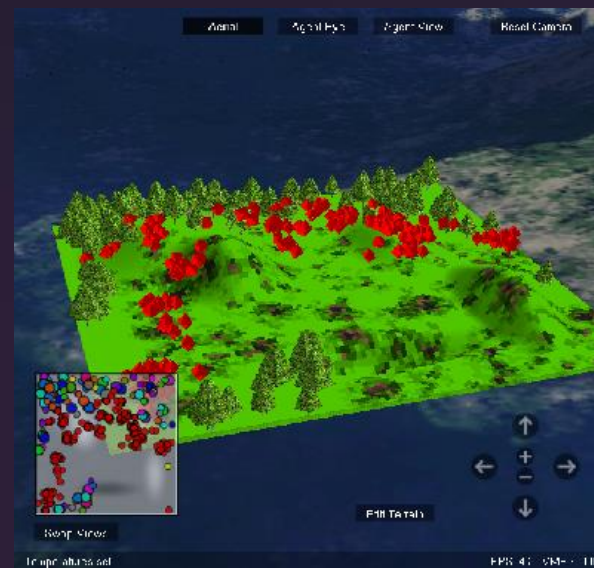
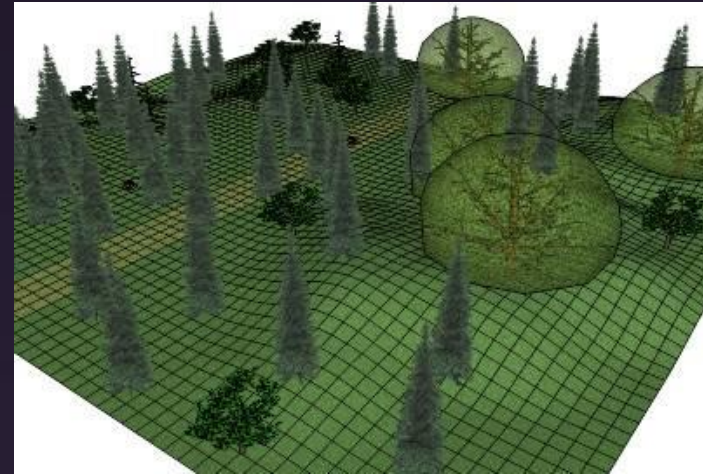
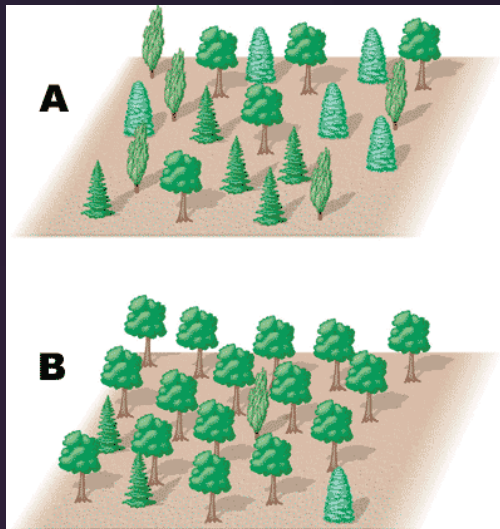


Give a ~~summary~~ **Workshop researcher et al.** **IAD**
and they will find that every ~~SES~~ *encountered*
~~needs pounding~~ becomes an action situation...

—A reformed former Ostrom Workshop co-director



Interdisciplinarity





Observations

- Opportunity for serious engagement with physical scientists to integrate *ecological dynamics*
 - *Ostrom Workshop never had this*
- Opportunity to engage researchers trained in working with practitioners
 - *Ostrom Workshop never had this (students/visiting scholars yes, but faculty not really)*



Observations

- Lin's gift for writing (editorial help + peer review)
- Interdisciplinary creep...
 - *Initially grounded in political science*
 - + *economics... sociology, public affairs, anthropology, geography, informatics*
- Methodological and theoretical opportunistic co-opter – checking your baggage at the door...
 - ABM, QCA, social network analysis...
 - Rational choice...



Observations

- Opportunities for engagement with informatics/computational sciences
 - Problems of meta-analysis
 - Problems of data harmonization
 - Problems of data archiving, preservation



Observations

- Challenges of incentives...
 - “Money talks...”
 - Administrative challenge of recruiting junior faculty
- Graduate students as life blood



Observations

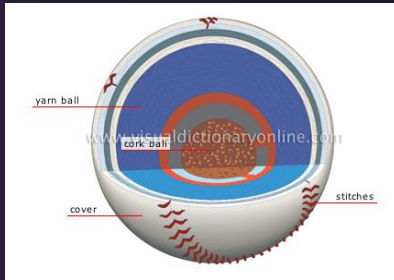
- One last (tortured) sports metaphor...



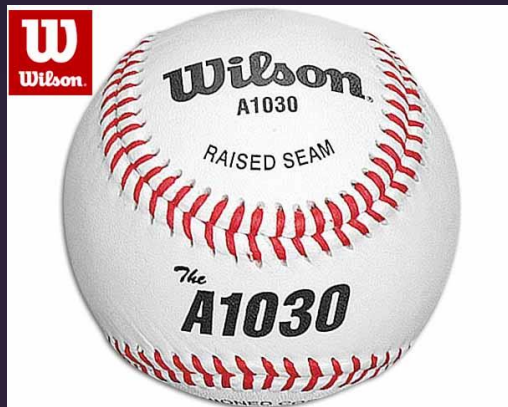
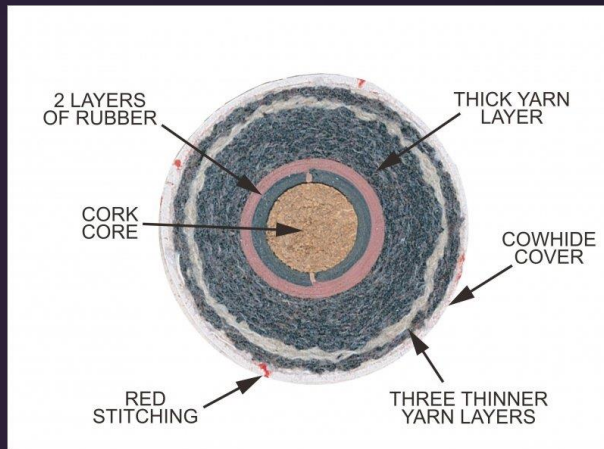
Baseball



Playing Together



- Resilient but deformable inner core
 - Engaged faculty
- Encompassing twine/string
 - Graduate students, post-docs, visiting scholars
- Resilient outer cover, with branding
 - Identity





Observations

- Importance of enjoying what you do...



Acknowledgements

Krister Andersson – Univ. Colorado - Boulder

Xavier Basurto – Duke U.

Esther Blanco – U. Innsbruck

Michael Cox – Dartmouth College

Burney Fischer – Indiana U.

Forrest Fleischman – Texas A&M

Marco Janssen – Arizona State U.

Mike McGinnis – Indiana U.

Catherine Tucker – Indiana U.

Sergio Villamayor – Humboldt U.

Jimmy Walker – Indiana U.

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