

10 things to know about Elinor Ostrom



1. Elinor Ostrom was awarded the 2009 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, which she shared with Oliver E. Williamson, for "her analysis of economic governance, especially the commons". She is the first woman to win the prize in this category.

2. Elinor's research relates to how common-pool resources (CPR), which include forests, fisheries, oil fields, grazing lands, and irrigation systems, should be managed by communities.

3. Her observations contradict claims that CPR should be privatised as they will face destruction in the long run due to the overuse of the core resource.

4. Elinor's work considers how societies have developed diverse institutional arrangements for managing natural resources and avoiding ecosystem collapse in many cases, even though some arrangements have failed to prevent resource exhaustion.

5. She is considered one of the leading scholars in the study of common pool resources. In particular, Elinor's work emphasises how humans interact with ecosystems to maintain long-term sustainable resource yields.

6. Elinor graduated from Beverly Hills High School in 1951 and then received a B.A. (with honours) in political science at UCLA in 1954. She was awarded an M.A. in 1962 and a Ph.D. in 1965, both from UCLA in political science.

7. Elinor is on the faculty of both Indiana University and Arizona State University. She is the Arthur F. Bentley Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University in Bloomington. She is also Research Professor and the Founding Director of the Centre for the Study of Institutional Diversity at Arizona State University in Tempe.

8. In 1973, she co-founded a "Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis" at Indiana University with her husband, Vincent Ostrom.

9. Elinor is a member of the United States National Academy of Sciences and past president of the American Political Science Association. In 1999 she became the first woman to receive the prestigious Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science and in 2005 received the James Madison Award by the American Political Science Association. In 2008, she received the William H. Riker Prize in political science, and became the first woman to do so. In 2009, she received the Tisch Civic Engagement Research Prize from the Jonathan M. Tisch College of citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University.

10. In 2000, Elinor was quoted from *The Future of Democracy* "The sustenance of a democratic system is similar to the sustenance of an initially successful family firm. The first generation works very hard to build it up. The second generation has usually witnessed some of the struggles of the first generation and usually is able to continue the effort started by the first generation. But when the firm is turned over to the third, fourth, or fifth generation, problems can occur. Children are born already rich and without a deep understanding of the struggle that it took to build the enterprise in the first place. What took many years to build can be dissipated within a short time."