

**Pyokyeong Son**

**Submitted 31 Oct. 2022**

**Are Hampton's modeling of how collective goods can be provided by rational individuals compatible with Ostrom's theory of how such goods are provided by them?**

While Hampton focusses on the mechanism from which pure rational egoists (REs) can produce collective goods, Ostrom starts from different assumptions: evolutionary pressures led to a mix of rational egoists and norm-users—conditional cooperators (CCs) and willing punishers—existing in human society, ultimately leading to the formation of self-sustaining resource regimes.

The two theories are not entirely incompatible, as Hampton's explains how REs by themselves may produce collective goods, while Ostrom suggests a different mechanism where a mix of REs and CCs will produce collective goods. However Ostrom's description of the emergence of larger-scale cooperation in the form of resource regimes, and the extensive evidence through laboratory and real-world studies gives her paper more empirical credit than Hampton's—the latter may be regarded more as a proof-of-concept, of how from a world of pure REs cooperation can emerge, rather than how it may have actually emerged in society. Ostrom's mechanism, on the other hand, involves evolutionary (biological and cultural) pressures which select (or modify behaviors of egoists) for a certain level of CCs, depending on the noisiness of trustworthiness information (i.e. the ratio of CCs to REs).

It may be that, in the beginnings of civilization where transaction costs were high (little technology, no enforcement, etc.) Hampton's mechanism may have produced a certain small amount of common goods—these common goods, whose high cooperation payoffs were then able to cause cultural or biological evolutionary pressures that produce conditional cooperators, and further sustain them to organize into larger collective good-producing institutions.

*(250 words)*