




# Stag Hunt

Story: Villagers go on a hunt. If they cooperate and hunt the stag (deer) the potential reward is greater than if they hunt on their own and only capture a rabbit. They need to be patient and work together for the stag or they can go out on their own and kill the rabbit which would be easier but would also jeopardize the chances for the other hunters.

		COOPERATE	DEFECT
COOPERATE			
DEFECT			

1. What does this story tell us about social cooperation?
2. Why might some people refer to this game as the trust game?
3. Although hunting the Stag may result in the greatest reward, why does it also have the highest risk?
4. Should a hunter be forced to share in the risks? Why or why not?
5. If you believed that the other hunter was going to hunt the Stag what should you do? Why?
6. If you believed that the other hunter was going to hunt the rabbit what should you do? Why?
7. If nobody in the village trusted each other what is the equilibrium point?
8. If there was trust in the village what is the equilibrium point?

9. What would be some methods to better ensure that each hunter would hunt the Stag? Consider methods using the power of the government and methods that don't use government power.
10. To what extent is hunter's sense of the impartial spectator motivation enough to cooperate?
11. Do you feel that the village has the right to tell a specific hunter that they cannot hunt for rabbit if they feel that it will prevent the village from eating a Stag? Explain your logic.
12. Assume the hunters individual cost is the same regardless of what he hunts. What if the hunter's shared portion of the Stag meat (shared portion of the marginal social benefit) amounts to less meat than if he had hunted a rabbit on his own (marginal private benefit). Should he be forced to hunt the stag? Explain your logic.

Hunting the rabbit

Marginal Cost= Marginal Benefit

Hunting the Stag

Marginal Private Cost > Portion of the share social Marginal Benefit

13. Relate this story to the individual rights, the original dilemma, reputation, law, and contracts.

14. What do you think Rousseau would consider the “general will” of the story? How would he answer question 10? Explain your logic

15. What if any are the potential negatives of forced cooperation?

16. Using the basic model of “Stag Hunts” found below, brainstorm real situations (current and/or in history) that can relate to this story.

		Player 2	
		Defect	Cooperate
Player 1	Defect	OK, OK	OK, Bad
	Cooperate	Bad, OK	Best for all

**What would Rousseau predict is going to happen?**

**What would Hobbes predict is going to happen?**

**What would John Locke say? Consider the social contract and the original dilemma.**

**What would Smith predict is going to happen? Consider the impartial spectator.**

Is our society “reasoned and planned” or has it evolved?