A Theory of Cooperation - Competition and Beyond

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Abstract

This chapter is concerned with my interrelated theoretical work in the areas of cooperation – competition, conflict resolution, social justice, and social relations. The theory of cooperation – competition is a component of the other theories. Thus, the theory of conflict resolution is based on this theory and my Crude Law of Social Relations. My work in social justice is also based on this theory, the Crude Law, and on my theoretical work dealing with social relations. The work in social relations sketches a more generalized approach to the understanding of the bidirectional interaction between social relations and psychological orientations.

In a prelude to my theoretical discussion, I consider the personal, social, and professional influences that shaped my work. In the last part, I describe some of the important social effects of this work.
In this chapter, I shall present my interrelated theoretical work on cooperation - competition, conflict resolution, social justice, and social relations. I shall omit a presentation of relevant research since this has been presented elsewhere. Thus, Johnson and Johnson (2005) in their excellent monograph, *New Developments in Social Interdependence Theory*, present an extensive summary of relevant research and social practice that relate to this theory. In books related to conflict resolution (Deutsch, 1973; Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus 2006) there is considerable discussion of research. Similarly, in Deutsch (1985) and Social Justice Research (Vol. 19, #1, March 2006) there is presentation of research related to social justice.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first is concerned with the personal, social, and theoretical influences affecting the development of my theoretical and research work. The second presents my basic theoretical ideas and the third discusses the social effects of my work.

Part I: Influences on My Work: Personal, Social, and Theoretical

The choice of areas for social psychological work is affected not only by professional and scientific contacts and readings, but also by personal and familial experiences as well as by broader social and cultural influences. In my case, being Jewish and the youngest child in my family, in my school, and in my neighborhood group, exposed me to considerable prejudice and put-downs. These experiences sensitized me to prejudice and led to an identification with underdogs.

At age 15, I entered the City College of New York (CCNY) in 1935 as a pre-med major with the idea of becoming a psychiatrist, having been intrigued by the writings of Sigmund Freud, some of which I read before college. I was drawn to psychoanalysis
undoubtedly because it appeared to be so relevant to personal issues with which I was struggling, and also because it was so radical (it seemed to be so in the early and mid-1930s). During my adolescence, I was also politically radical and somewhat rebellious toward authority, helping to organize a student strike against terrible food in the Townsend Harris High School lunchroom, and later, a strike against the summer resort owners who were exploiting the college student waiters and bus boys at Camp Copake, of whom I was one.

The 1930s were a turbulent period, internationally as well as domestically. The economic depression; labor unrest; the rise of Nazism and other forms of totalitarianism; the Spanish civil war; the ideas of Marx, Freud, and Einstein; as well as the impending Second World War were shaping the intellectual atmosphere that affected psychology. Several members of the psychology faculty at CCNY were active in creating the Psychologist League, the precursor to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Thus, when I became disenchanted with the idea of being a pre-med student, after dissecting a pig in a biology lab, I was happy to switch to a psychology major: it was a simpatico faculty. Psychology was a part of the Department of Philosophy at CCNY when I started my major in it. Morris Raphael Cohen, the distinguished philosopher of science, was the leading intellectual figure at CCNY, and his influence permeated the atmosphere. I note that in the lunchroom alcoves at CCNY, I became well versed in Marxist theology and disputation. Students adhering to the First, Second, Third, and Fourth International congregated in different corners of the lunchroom.

My first exposure to Lewin’s writings was in two undergraduate courses, taken simultaneously: social psychology and personality and motivation. In these courses, I
read Lewin’s *Dynamic Theory of Personality* (1935), *Principles of Topological Psychology* (1936), and *The Conceptual Representation and Measurement of Psychological Forces* (1938). I and others experienced great intellectual excitement on reading these books more than sixty years ago. These books are permeated by a view of the nature of psychological science different from the traditional. The new view was characterized by Lewin as the *Galilean mode of thought*, which was contrasted with the classical *Aristotelian mode*. In my writings on field theory (Deutsch, 1954), I have characterized in some detail Lewin’s approach to psychological theorizing, his metatheory.

Although I was impressed by Lewin’s writing, my career aspirations were still focused on becoming a psychoanalytic psychologist as I decided to do graduate work. My undergraduate experiences, in as well as outside the classroom, led me to believe that an integration of psychoanalysis, Marxism, and scientific method, as exemplified by Lewin’s work, could be achieved. In the 1930s such influential figures as Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Else Frenkel-Brunswik were trying to develop an integration of psychoanalysis and Marxism. Also at this time, some psychoanalytic theorists such as David Rappaport were intrigued by the idea that the research conducted by Lewin and his students on tension systems could be viewed as a form of experimental psychoanalysis.

After obtaining my M.A. in 1940 in clinical psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, I started a rotating clinical internship at three New York State institutions; one was for the feebleminded (Letchworth Village), another for delinquent boys (Warwick), and a third for psychotic children as well as adults (Rockland State Hospital).
When Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7, 1941, I was still in my psychology internship. Shortly thereafter, I joined the Air Force. I flew in thirty bombing missions against Germany. During combat, I saw many of our planes as well as German planes shot down, and I also saw massive damage inflicted by our bombs and those of the Royal Air Force on occupied Europe and Germany. Moreover, being stationed in England, I saw the great destruction wreaked by the German air raids and felt common apprehensions while sitting in air-raid shelters during German bombings. Although I had no doubt of the justness of the war against the Nazis, I was appalled by its destructiveness.

After my demobilization, I decided to apply for admission to the doctoral programs at the University of Chicago (where Carl Rogers and L.L. Thurstone were the leading lights), at Yale University (where Donald Marquis was chairman and where Clark Hull was the major attraction), and at MIT (where Kurt Lewin had established a new graduate program and the Research Center for Group Dynamics). As one of the first of the returning soldiers, I had no trouble getting interviews or admissions to all three schools. I was most impressed by Kurt Lewin and his vision of his newly established Research Center and so decided to take my Ph.D. at MIT. I date the start of my career as a social psychologist to my first meeting with Lewin, in which I was enthralled by him and committed myself to studying at his Research Center for Group Dynamics (RCGD).

Lewin assembled a remarkable group of faculty and students to compose the RCGD at MIT. For the faculty, he initially recruited Dorwin Cartwright, Leon Festinger, Ronald Lippitt, and Marian Radke (later Radke-Yarrow). Jack French and Alvin Zander were to join subsequently. The small group of students included Kurt Back, Alex
Bavelas, David Emery, Gordon Hearn, Murray Horowitz, David Jenkins, Harold Kelley, Albert Pepitone, Stanley Schachter, Richard Snyder, John Thibaut, Ben Willerman, and myself. These faculty members and students were extraordinarily productive, and they played a pivotal role in developing modern social psychology in its applied as well as its basic aspects.

My career in social psychology has been greatly affected by Kurt Lewin and my experiences at the RCGD. The intellectual atmosphere created by Lewin strongly shaped my dissertation and my value orientation as a social psychologist. Lewin was not only an original, tough-minded theorist and researcher with a profound interest in the philosophy and methodology of science, he was also a tenderhearted psychologist who was deeply involved with developing psychological knowledge that would be relevant to important human concerns (Deutsch, 1992). He provided a scientific role model that I have tried to emulate. Like Lewin, I have wanted my theory and research to be relevant to important social issues, but I also wanted my work to be scientifically rigorous and tough-minded. As a student, I was drawn to both the tough-mindedness of Festinger’s work and to the direct social relevance of Lippitt’s approach and did not feel the need to identify with one and derogate the other.

My dissertation started off with an interest in issues of war and peace (atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki shortly before I resumed my graduate studies) and with an image of the possible ways that the nations composing the newly formed United Nations Security Council would interact. The atmosphere at the Center, still persisting after Lewin’s premature death, led me to turn this social concern about the risk of nuclear war into a theoretically oriented, experimental investigation of
the effects of cooperative and competitive processes. The specific problem that I was first interested in took on a more generalized form. It had been transformed into an attempt to understand the fundamental features of cooperative and competitive relations and the consequences of these different types of interdependencies in a way that would be generally applicable to the relations among individuals, groups, or nations. The problem had become a theoretical one, with the broad scientific goal of attempting to develop insight into a variety of phenomena through several fundamental concepts and basic propositions. The intellectual atmosphere at the Center pushed its students to theory building.

As I reflect back on the intellectual roots of my dissertation, I see it was influenced not only by Lewin’s theoretical interest in social interdependence but also by Marxist concerns with two different systems of distributive justice: a cooperative-egalitarian and a competitive-meritocratic one. In addition, the writing of George Herbert Mead (1934) affected my way of thinking about cooperation and its importance to human development. Also, my discussion of the relation between objective social interdependence and perceived social interdependence was much influenced by Koffka’s (1935) answer to the question “Why do things look as they do?” Further, my reading of the existing literature on cooperation – competition (Barnard, 1938, Lewin, 1944, Maller, 1929; May and Doob, 1937; G.H Mead 1937; M. Mead, 1937) indirectly influenced my work.

Part II : Theory

This part is concerned with my interrelated theoretical work in the areas of cooperation – competition, conflict resolution, social justice, and social relations. The
theory of cooperation – competition is a component of the other theories. Thus, the
theory of conflict resolution is based on this theory and my Crude Law of Social
Relations. My work in social justice is also based on this theory, the Crude Law, and on
my theoretical work dealing with social relations. The work in social relations sketches a
more generalized approach to the understanding of the bidirectional interaction between
social relations and psychological orientations. Social relations are characterized not
only by the dimension of cooperation-competition but also by such other dimensions as:
equality-inequality; task-oriented versus social-emotional oriented (gemeinschaft vs.
gesellschaft); formal versus informal; and degree of importance. Psychological
orientations include the following components: cognitive, motivational, moral, and action
orientations.

Before discussing this work, let me note that I recognize that my theories in social
psychology have considerable ambiguity inherent in them and lack the precision of the
theories in the natural sciences. For example, in my theoretical and experimental work
on cooperation – competition, I discussed the problem of the relation between the
“objective” and “perceived” reality of social interdependence; a similar problem
confronts all experimental social psychologists.

A Theory of Cooperation and Competition

In my 1949 presentation of my theory of cooperation and competition, I employed
the Lewinian terminology related to locomotion in the life space and developed the
hypotheses of the theory in a formal, hypothetico-deductive manner. I think the ideas
were fine but the presentation was awkward and the language too idiosyncratic. In more
recent presentations, including this one, I have presented the theory in a more accessible, informal manner.

The theory has two basic ideas. One relates to the type of interdependence among goals of the people involved in a given situation. The other pertains to the type of action taken by the people involved. I identify two basic types of goal interdependence: positive (where the goals are linked in such a way that the amount or probability of a person’s goal attainment is positively correlated with the amount or probability of another obtaining his goal) and negative (where the goals are linked in such a way that the amount or probability of goal attainment is negatively correlated with the amount or probability of the other’s goal attainment). To put it colloquially, if you’re positively linked with another, then you sink and swim together; with negative linkage, if the other sinks, you swim, and if the other swims, you sink.

It is well to realize that few situations are “purely” positive or negative. In most situations, people have a mixture of goals so that it is common for some of their goals initially to be positive and some negatively interdependent. In this section, for analytical purposes, I discuss pure situations. In conflict and other mixed situations, the relative strength of the two types of goal interdependence, as well as the parties’ general orientation to one another, largely determine the nature of their interaction.

I also characterize two basic types of action by an individual: “effective actions,” which improve the actor’s chances of obtaining a goal, and “bungling actions,” which worsen the actor’s chances of obtaining the goal. (For the purpose of simplicity, I use dichotomies for my basic concepts; the dichotomous types of interdependence and the dichotomous types of actions are, I assume, polar ends of continua.) I then combine
types of interdependence and types of action to posit how they jointly affect three basic social psychological processes that are discussed later: *substitutability*, *cathexis*, and *inducibility*.

People’s goals may be linked for various reasons. Thus, positive interdependence can result from people liking one another; being rewarded in terms of their joint achievement, needing to share a resource or overcome an obstacle together, holding common membership or identification with a group whose fate is important to them, being unable to achieve their task goals unless they divide up the work, being influenced by personality and cultural orientation, being bound together because they are treated this way by a common enemy or an authority, and so on. Similarly, with regard to negative interdependence, it can result from people disliking one another or from their being rewarded in such a way that the more the other gets of the reward, the less one gets, and so on.

In addition to positive and negative interdependence, it is well to recognize that there can be lack of interdependence, or *independence*, such that the activities and fate of the people involved do not affect one another, directly or indirectly. If they are completely independent of one another, no conflict arises; the existence of a conflict implies some form of interdependence.

One further point: asymmetries may exist with regard to the degree of interdependence in a relationship; suppose that what you do or what happens to you may have a considerable effect on me, but what I do or what happens to me may have little impact on you. I am more dependent on you than you are on me. In the extreme case, you may be completely independent of me and I may be highly dependent on you. As a
consequence of this asymmetry, you have greater power and influence in the relationship than I. This power may be general if the asymmetry exists in many situations, or it may be situation-specific if the asymmetry occurs only in a particular situation. A master has general power over a slave, while an auto mechanic repairing my car’s electrical system has situation-specific power.

The three concepts mentioned previously – *substitutability*, *cathexis*, and *inducibility* – are vital to understanding the social psychological processes involved in creating the major effects of cooperation and competition. *Substitutability* (how a person’s actions can satisfy another person’s intentions) is central to the functioning of all social institutions (the family, industry, schools), to the division of labor, and to role specialization. Unless the activities of other people can substitute for yours, you are like a person stranded on a desert island alone: you have to build your own house, find or produce your own food, protect yourself from harmful animals, treat your ailments and illnesses, educate yourself about the nature of your new environment and about how to do all these tasks, and so on, without the help of others. Being alone, you can neither create children nor have a family. *Substitutability* permits you to accept the activities of others in fulfilling your needs. *Negative Substitutability* involves active rejection and effort to counteract the effects of another’s activities.

*Cathexis* refer to the predisposition to respond evaluatively, favorably or unfavorably to aspects of one’s environment or self. Through natural selection, evolution has ensured that all living creatures have the capacity to respond positively to stimuli that are beneficial to them and negatively to those that are harmful. They are attracted to, approach, receive, ingest, like, enhance, and otherwise act positively toward beneficial
objects, events, or other creatures; in contrast, they are repelled by harmful objects and circumstances and avoid, eject, attack, dislike, negate, and otherwise act negatively toward them. This inborn tendency to act positively toward the beneficial and negatively toward the harmful is the foundation on which the human potentials for cooperation and love as well as for competition and hate develop. The basic psychological orientation of cooperation implies the positive attitude that “we are for each other,” “we benefit one another”; competition, by contrast, implies the negative attitude that “we are against one another” and, in its extreme form, “you are out to harm me.”

Inducibility refers to the readiness to accept another’s influence to do what he or she wants; negative inducibility refers to the readiness to reject or obstruct fulfillment of what the other wants. The complement of substitutability is inducibility. You are willing to be helpful to another whose actions are helpful to you, but not to someone whose actions are harmful. In fact, you reject any request to help the other engage in harmful actions and, if possible, obstruct or interfere with these actions.

The Effects of Cooperation and Competition. Thus, the theory predicts that if you are in a positive interdependent relationship with someone who bungles, the bungling is not a substitute for effective actions you intended; thus, the bungling is viewed negatively. In fact, when your net-playing tennis partner in a doubles game allows an easy shot to get past him you have to extend yourself to prevent being harmed by the error. On the other hand, if your relationship is one of negative interdependence, and the other person bungles (as when your tennis opponent double-faults), your opponent’s bungle substitutes for an effective action on your part, and it is regarded positively or valued. The reverse is true for effective actions. An opponent’s effective actions are not
substitutable for yours and are negatively valued; a teammate can induce you to help him or her make an effective action, but you are likely to try to prevent or obstruct a bungling action by your teammate. By contrast, you are willing to help an opponent bungle, but your opponent is not likely to induce you to help him or her make an effective action (which, in effect, harms your chances of obtaining your goal).

The theory of cooperation and competition, then, goes on to make further predictions about different aspects of intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup processes from the predictions about substitutability, cathexis, and inducibility. Thus, assuming that the individual actions in a group are more frequently effective than bungling, among the predictions that follow from the theory are that cooperative relations (those in which the goals of the parties involved are predominately positive interdependence), as compared with competitive ones, show more of these positive characteristics:

1. **Effective communication is exhibited.** Ideas are verbalized, and group members are attentive to one another, accepting of the ideas of other members, and influenced by them. They have fewer difficulties in communicating with or understanding others.

2. **Friendliness, helpfulness, and lessened obstructiveness** are expressed in the discussions. Members also are more satisfied with the group and its solutions and favorably impressed by the contributions of the other group members. In addition, members of the cooperative groups rate themselves high in desire to win the respect of their colleagues.
3. The members of each group expect to be treated fairly and feel obliged to treat the others fairly.

4. Attempts to influence one another rely on persuasion and positive inducements.

5. Coordination of effort, division of labor, orientation to task achievement, orderliness in discussion, and high productivity are manifested in the cooperative groups (if the group task requires effective communication, coordination of effort, division of labor, or sharing of resources).

6. Feeling of agreement with the ideas of others and a sense of basic similarity in beliefs and values, as well as confidence in one’s own ideas and in the value that other members attach to those ideas, are obtained in the cooperative groups.

7. Recognizing and respecting the other by being responsive to the other’s needs.

8. Willingness to enhance the other’s power (for example, the knowledge, skills, resources, and so on) to accomplish the other’s goals increases. As the other’s capabilities are strengthened, you are strengthened; they are of value to you as well as to the other. Similarly, the other is enhanced from your enhancement and benefits from your growing capabilities and power.

9. Defining conflicting interests as a mutual problem to be solved by collaborative effort facilitates recognizing the legitimacy of each other’s interests and the necessity to search for a solution responsive to the needs of all. It tends to limit rather than expand the scope of conflicting interests.

In contrast, a competitive process has the opposite effects:
1. Communication is impaired as the conflicting parties seek to gain advantage by misleading the other through use of false promises, ingratiation tactics, and disinformation. It is reduced and seen as futile as they recognize that they cannot trust one another’s communications to be honest or informative.

2. Obstructiveness and lack of helpfulness lead to mutual negative attitudes and suspicion of one another’s intentions. One’s perceptions of the other tend to focus on the person’s negative qualities and ignore the positive.

3. Fairness to the other is not valued. Each tries to exploit or harm the other to advantage themselves.

4. Attempts to influence the other often involve threat, coercion, or false promises.

5. The parties to the process are unable to divide their work, duplicating one another’s efforts such that they become mirror images; if they do divide the work, they feel the need to check what the other is doing continuously.

6. The repeated experience of disagreement and critical rejection of ideas reduces confidence in oneself as well as the other.

7. The conflicting parties seek to enhance their own power and to reduce the power of the other. Any increase in the power of the other is seen as threatening to oneself.

8. The competitive process stimulates the view that the solution of a conflict can be imposed only by one side on the other, which in turn leads to using coercive tactics such as psychological as well as physical threats and violence. It tends to expand the scope of the issues in conflict as each side seeks
superiority in power and legitimacy. The conflict becomes a power struggle or a matter of moral principle and is no longer confined to a specific issue at a given time and place. Escalating the conflict increases its motivational significance to the participants and may make a limited defeat less acceptable and more humiliating than a mutual disaster.

**Constructive Competition.** Competition can vary from destructive to constructive; unfair, unregulated competition at the destructive end; fair, regulated competition in between; and constructive competition at the positive end. In constructive competition, the losers as well as the winners gain. Thus, in a tennis match that takes the form of constructive competition, the winner suggests how the loser can improve, offers an opportunity for the loser to learn and practice skills, and makes the match an enjoyable or worthwhile experience for the loser. In constructive competition, winners see to it that losers are better off, or at least not worse off than they were before the competition.

The major difference, for example, between constructive controversy and competitive debate is that in the former, people discuss their differences with the objective of clarifying them and attempting to find a solution that integrates the best thoughts that emerge during the discussion, no matter who articulates them (see Johnson, Johnson, and Tjosvold, 2006 for a fuller discussion). There is no winner and no loser; both win if during the controversy each party comes to deeper insights and enriched view of the matter that is initially in controversy. Constructive controversy is a process for constructively coping with the inevitable differences that people bring to cooperative interaction because it uses differences in understanding, perspective, knowledge, and world view as valued resources. By contrast, in competitive contests or debates there is
usually a winner and a loser. The party judged to have “the best” – ideas, skills, knowledge, and so on- typically wins, while the other, who is judged to be less good typically loses. Competition evaluates and ranks people based on their capacity for a particular task, rather than integrating various contributions.

I do not mean to suggest that competition produces no benefits. Competition is part of everyday life. Acquiring the skills necessary to compete effectively can be of considerable value. Moreover, competition in a cooperative, playful context can be fun. It enables one to enact and experience, in a nonserious setting, symbolic emotional dramas relating to victory and defeat, life and death, power and helplessness, dominance and submission; these dramas have deep personal and cultural roots. In addition, competition is a useful social mechanism for selecting those who are more able to perform the activities involved in the competition. Further, when no objective, criterion-referenced basis for measurement of performance exists, the relative performance of students affords a crude yardstick. Nevertheless, serious problems are associated with competition when it does not occur in a cooperative context and if it is not effectively regulated by fair rules. (See Deutsch, 1973, pp. 377-388, for a discussion of regulating competition.)

*Self-Destructive Tendencies Inherent in Cooperation.* As I have indicated in my writings on cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1973, 1985), there is a natural tendency for cooperation to break down as a result of the very social psychological processes – *substitutability, cathexis,* and *inducibility* – that are central to cooperation. Thus, *substitutability,* which enables the work of one cooperator to replace the work of another so that they don’t have to duplicate one another’s efforts, leads to specialization
of function. Specialization of function, in turn, gives rise to specialized interest and to specialized terminology and language; the likely consequence is a deterioration of group unity as those with special interest compete for scarce resources and communicate in a language that is not fully shared. Similarly, *cathexis* of other group members (the development of personal favorable attitudes and bonds between members) can lead to in-group favoritism, clique formation, nepotism, and so on. Here, the consequences are apt to be a weakening of overall group cohesion as cliques develop, a deterioration of cooperation with other groups as in-group favoritism grows, and a lessening of group effectiveness as a result of nepotism. *Inducibility*, the readiness to be influenced positively by other group members, can lead to excessive conformity with the view of others so that one no longer makes one’s own independent, unique contribution to the group; the cooperative process, as a result, may be deprived of the creative contribution that can be made by each of its members, and also, those who suppress their individuality may feel inwardly alienated from themselves and their group despite their outer conformity. In addition, social loafing may occur in which some members shirk their responsibilities to the group and seek to obtain the benefits of group membership without offering the contributions they are able to make to it.

*The Limitations of the Theory of Cooperation – Competition.* My theory deals with pure simple situations of cooperation and competition, in which the interdependent parties each have only one goal and are equally interdependent. Of course, in real life this is rarely the case. In addition, the theory has not the precision and quantitative rigor and strong logical deductibility that ideally a theory should have. There are implicit “common sense” perceptual, cognitive, learning, and cultural assumptions within it that
are necessary for its deductions. Like most theories in social psychology, it is not
independent of other work on individual and social processes. In addition, my theory
only considers the cooperation – competition dimension of social relations. As I have
indicated elsewhere (Deutsch 1982, 1985, and in the final section, Social Relations, of
this Part), social relations differ not only in the cooperation – competition dimension but
also in such other dimensions as: equality of power; task orientation – social emotional
orientation; intimate vs. formal; and importance of the relationship. The psychological
orientation to a given social relation will be determined by the combined dimensions.

Despite the limitations of my theory, I consider it to be an important one because
the dimension of cooperation – competition is one of the central variables of all social
relationships whether at the individual, groups, or international level. (For a further
discussion of the limitations and strengths of the theory see Johnson and Johnson, 2005
pp. 326-342).

* A Theory of Conflict Resolution

After obtaining my Ph.D. in the summer of 1948, I accepted a position at the
Research Center for Human Relations (then at the New School) headed by Stuart Cook,
that involved developing a comparative study of integrated and segregated interracial
housing (Deutsch & Collins 1951). In 1949, the Center moved to New York University
where I initiated a program of research to develop insight into the conditions which
affected the choice to cooperate or to compete. At NYU, I met Howard Raiffa, a scholar
very interested in game theory and decision – making (Luce and Raiffa, 1957), who
introduced me to the Prisoners’ Dilemma Game when I indicated my research interests.
This led me to initiate research on the Prisoners’ Dilemma and then on other mixed
motive situations such as bargaining, negotiation, and conflict where there are typically a mixture of motivations to cooperate and to compete. As a result of doing research with such situations, we reformulated our questions from “What determines the choice to cooperate or compete?” to the conceptually similar but “sexier” “What determines whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course?” Our earlier research on the effects of cooperation and competition had indicated that a cooperative process was more likely to lead to constructive conflict resolution and a competitive process to a destructive resolution.

We did much research (Deutsch, 1973) in an attempt to find the answer. The results fell into a pattern I slowly began to grasp. They seemed explainable by an assumption I have immodestly labeled *Deutsch’s Crude Law of Social Relations*:

The characteristic processes and effects elicited by a given type of social relationship also tend to elicit that type of social relationship; and a typical effect tends to induce the other typical effects of the relationship.

Thus, cooperation induces and is induced by perceived similarity in beliefs and attitudes; readiness to be helpful; openness in communication; trusting and friendly attitudes; fair treatment; sensitivity to common interests and de-emphasis of opposed interests; orientation toward enhancing mutual power rather than power differences, and so on. Similarly, competition induces and is induced by use of the tactics of coercion, threat, or deception; attempts to enhance the power differences between oneself and the other; poor communication; minimization of the awareness of similarities in values and increased sensitivity to opposed interests; suspicious and hostile attitudes; unfair treatment; and so on.
In other words, if one has systematic knowledge of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes, one has systematic knowledge of the conditions that typically give rise to such processes and, by extension, to the conditions that affect whether a conflict takes a constructive or destructive course. My early theory of cooperation and competition is a theory of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes. Hence, from the *Crude Law of Social Relations*, it follows that this theory brings insight into the conditions that give rise to cooperative and competitive processes.

This law is certainly crude. It expresses surface similarities between effects and causes; the basic relationships are genotypical rather than phenotypical. The surface effects of cooperation and competition are due to the underlying type of interdependence (positive or negative) and type of action (effective or bungling), the basic social psychological processes involved in the theory (substitutability, cathexis, and inducibility), and the cultural or social medium and situational context in which these processes are expressed. Thus, how a positive attitude is expressed in an effective, positively interdependent relationship depends on what is appropriate to the cultural or social medium and situational context; presumably one would not seek to express it in a way that is humiliating or embarrassing or likely to be experienced negatively by one’s partner.

Similarly, the effectiveness of any typical effect of cooperation of competition as an initiating or inducing condition of a cooperative or competitive process is not due to its phenotype but rather to the inferred genotype of the type of interdependence and types of action. Thus, in most social media and social contexts, perceived similarity in basic values is highly suggestive of the possibility of a positive linkage between oneself and the
other. However, we are likely to see ourselves as negatively linked in a context that leads each of us to recognize that similarities in values impel seeking something that is in scarce supply and available for only one of us. Also, it is evident that although threats are mostly perceived in a way that suggests a negative linkage, any threat perceived as intended to compel you to do something that is good for you or that you feel you should do is apt to be suggestive of a positive linkage.

Although the law is crude, my impression is that it is reasonably accurate; phenotypes often indicate the underlying genotypes. Moreover, it is a synthesizing principle, which integrates and summarizes a wide range of social psychological phenomena. One can integrate much of the literature on the determinants of positive and negative attitudes in terms of the other associated effects of cooperation and competition. Thus, positive attitudes result from perceptions of similarity, open communication, and so on. Similarly, many of the determinants of effective communication can be linked to the other typical effects of cooperation or competition, such as positive attitude and power sharing.

In brief, the theory of conflict resolution equates a constructive process of conflict resolution with an effective cooperative problem-solving process in which the conflict is the mutual problem to be resolved cooperatively. It also equates a destructive process of conflict resolution with a competitive process in which the conflicting parties are involved in a competition or struggle to determine who wins and who loses; often, the outcome of the struggle is a loss for both parties. The theory further indicates that a cooperative–constructive process of conflict resolution is fostered by the typical effects of cooperation and a competitive-destructive process by the typical effects of
competition. The theory of cooperation and competition outlined in the beginning of this part is a well-verified theory of the effects of cooperation and competition and thus allows insight into what can give rise to a constructive or destructive process.

**Limitations and Strengths of the Theory of Conflict Resolution.** As indicated above, the theory is based upon two key elements: the theory of the effects of cooperation and competition processes and the *Crude Law of Social Relations*. The limitation and strengths of these two elements lead to the limitations and strengths of the theory of conflict resolution. The main difference between the strengths of the two elements is that the theory of cooperation – competition has generated much supportive research; apart from the research reported in Deutsch (1973, 1985), little research on the Crude Law has yet been done. Both theoretical elements deal with processes central to social psychology and social life.

Recently, two papers have been prepared which present formal models concerned with conflict: “Dynamics of Two-Actor Cooperation – Conflict Models” (Liebovtich, et al, 2008) and “From Crude Law to Precise Formalism: Identifying the Essence of Conflict Intractability” (Nowak, et al, 2008). They are respectively relevant to the two elements of the theory of conflict resolution.

**Distributive Justice**

My theorizing and research in this area has mainly focused on two central questions: What are the effects of different principles of distributive justice? And what leads to preference for one principle or another? My book, *Distributive Justice* (Deutsch, 1985) presents much of the relevant work by my students and myself.
My work on the social psychology of justice was initiated by an invitation from Melvin Lerner, a social psychologist who has made many important contributions to this area. Early in 1972, he invited me to write a paper for a Conference on Injustice in North America (Deutsch, 1974, 1985). In preparation for the 1972 conference, I read widely – delving into the literature of the moral and legal philosophers, sociologists, and political scientists, and the relevant work of social psychologists. The more I read the more dissatisfied I became with the existing literature in social psychology; it seemed too narrowly focused, too parochial, and too unwittingly reflective of the dominant, Western ideology. The focus was limited mainly to how subjects in laboratory experiments attempted to restore their psychological equilibrium after experiencing or observing an inequity. There was little research on such topics as the conditions necessary for awakening the sense of injustice, procedural justice, retributive justice, and so on. The emphasis of equity theorists on “proportionality” as the sole canon of distributive justice suggested that they were neglecting other distributive principles, such as “equal share to all” or “to each according to his need,” which have been rallying slogans for different political ideologies (Deutsch, 1975). Beyond this, the economic and market orientation of equity theory appeared to reflect, unwittingly, the implicit assumption in much of current Western ideology that economic “rationality” and economic values should pervade all social life and are appropriate in non-economic social relations (for example, between lovers, between parent and child).

I note that as I became more involved in this area and started to think about my research – past and present – in the context of “justice” I found myself in the position of the bourgeois gentleman of Moliere’s play who was delighted to learn that he had been
speaking prose all the time. I was delighted to recognize that my research under other labels could be labeled as “justice” research quite properly. Thus, my early study of the effects of cooperation and competition upon group processes (Deutsch, 1949b) could be considered a study of the consequences of two contrasting distributive values (“rewarding group members equally” or “rewarding them in terms of their relative rank in their contributions to group performance”). Similarly, our many studies of conflict and bargaining (Deutsch, 1973) are centrally related to the social psychology of justice. They were focused on the important questions: Under what conditions are people with conflicting interests able to workout an agreement (that is, a system of justice defining what each shall give and receive in the transaction between them) that is stable and mutually satisfying?

In Distributive Justice, I concentrated on four distributive principles: winner-takes-all, equity (proportionality), equality, and need. I was interested in what effects these principles would have in tasks where interdependent work was neither required nor possible, and in tasks where interdependent work was necessary.

The principles were described as follows:

*Winner takes all*: Under this system, whoever performs the task best in the group wins all the money the group is paid.

*Proportionality*: Under this system, each person is rewarded in proportion to his or her contribution to the group score. In other words, the person who contributes 50 percent of the group’s total output will get 50 percent of the money to be distributed within the group; a person who contributes 10 percent would get 10 percent, and so on.
Equality: Under this system, each person in the group will get an equal share of the money to be distributed within the group.

Need: Under the need distribution system, each group member will be rewarded according to the need expressed on a biographical data sheet. In other words, the person who needs the money most will get proportionately more money; the person who needs the money least will get the least amount of money.

The Theory of Cooperation and Competition and the Crude Law were employed to develop hypotheses about both the effects and the choice of the different principles. With the assumption that our college student subjects were not alienated (from themselves, work, or the experiment) and would work as well as they could, we predicted that there would be no significant differences in the productivity of the subjects when no interdependent work was required or possible. However, we also predicted that the different principles would elicit different attitudes toward the other group members; the more cooperative principles (equality and need) would elicit more favorable attitudes than the more competitive principles (winner take all and equity).

In the tasks where interdependent work was necessary we predicted that the results would be similar to that obtained in the earlier research on cooperation–competition; higher productivity and more favorable attitudes when cooperative rather than competitive distributive principles were employed. The results of our various experimental studies (see Deutsch, 1985) were supportive of our hypotheses.

With regard to the choice among the different principles, we employed The Crude Law to make predictions. In my paper, “Interdependence and Psychological Orientation” (Deutsch 1982, 1985), I developed the idea that different social relations require different
psychological orientations (See next section, Social Relations, for further elaboration).

Based upon prior research on the effects of cooperation and competition as well as research on the effects of the different distributive justice principles we characterized two psychological orientations: solidarity and economic. The solidarity orientation is congruent with a relationship that is cooperative, equal, social-emotional, and informal; while the economic fits a relationship that is competitive, equal, task-oriented and formal.

A solidarity orientation is defined by a sense of positive bonding and positive feelings toward and from the others; more reliance on empathy and intuition in understanding the others; and an awareness of a mutual obligation to be helpful to one another. An economic orientation is characterized by detachment, an objective – analytical perspective, a utilitarian self-interest and expectation that the others have a similar interest.

In Chapter Eleven of Distributive Justice, some research bearing upon these ideas is presented. The research is supportive but only a few studies were conducted. I do not consider that the evidence is strong but I believe that the underlying ideas are. Below, I elaborate on some of these ideas.

Social Relations and Psychological Orientation

A number of years ago, I was doing a study of marital couples and I wanted to develop a way of characterizing the nature of the couple relationship. With the help of Myron Wish (Wish, Deutsch, & Kaplan, 1976), we developed a method of doing so. In the course of doing so, we identified what we considered to be several of the basic dimensions of social relations: cooperation-competition; power distribution; task-
orientated versus social-emotional; formal versus informal; degree of importance. Some of these are similar to those described by other investigators.

In terms of these dimensions, “friends” would be generally considered to be cooperative, of equal power, in a social-emotional, and informal relationship of considerable importance. In contrast, the relationship between a police officer and a thief might be viewed as competitive, unequal power, task-oriented, formal and of moderate importance.

My next thought was that to act appropriately in a given type of social relation one must have an appropriate psychological orientation to that relationship: one’s psychological orientation must “fit” the social relation. For example, my psychological orientation when I am negotiating the price of a car with a used-car salesman will be rather different than when I am playing with my six-year-old grandson. Different types of social relations will induce different types of psychological orientations; and, according to my “Crude Law,” different types of psychological orientations will induce different types of social relations.

The nature of psychological orientations. In my current view, a psychological orientation consists of four highly interdependent elements: a cognitive orientation, a motivational orientation, a moral orientation, and an action orientation. In my prior publications (Deutsch 1982, 1985), action orientation was not included.

Cognitive orientations. In recent years, scholars in a number of different disciplines – cognitive psychology, social psychology, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, and artificial intelligence – have utilized such terms as *schema*, *script*, and *frame* to refer to the *structures of expectations* that help orient the individual cognitively.
to the situation confronting her. I employ the term cognitive orientation as being essentially the same. In the view being presented here, the person’s cognitive orientation to his situation is only one aspect of his psychological orientation to a social relationship.

Underlying the concepts of schema, script, and frame is the shared view that people approach their social world actively, with structured expectations about themselves and their social environments that reflect their organized beliefs about different social situations and different people. Our structured expectations make it possible for us to interpret and respond quickly to what is going on in specific situations. If our expectations lead us to inappropriate interpretations and responses, then they are likely to be revised on the basis of our experiences in the situation. Or if the circumstance confronting us is sufficiently malleable, our interpretations and responses to it may help to shape its form.

It is important for the participants in a particular social relationship to know “what’s going on here” – to know the actors, the roles they are to perform, the relations among the different roles, the props and settings, the scenes, and the themes of the social interaction. However, everyday social relations are rarely as completely specified by well-articulated scripts as are the social interaction in a play in the traditional theatre; ordinary social interactions have more the qualities of improvisational theatre in which only the nature of the characters involved in the situation is well-specified and the characters are largely free to develop the detail of the skeletonized script as they interact with one another.

The improvisational nature of most social relations – the fact that given types of social relations occur in widely different contexts and with many different kinds of actors
makes it likely that relatively abstract or generalized cognitive orientations will develop from the different types of social relations. I assume that people are implicit social psychological theorists and, as a result of their experience, have developed cognitive schemas of the different types of social relations, though usually not articulated, are similar to those articulated by theorists in social psychology and the other social sciences. Undoubtedly, at this early stage of the development of social science theory, the unarticulated conceptions of the average person are apt to be more sophisticated than the articulated ones of the social scientists.

Motivational orientations. Just as different cognitive orientations are associated with the different types of social relations, so also are different motivational orientations. A motivational orientation toward a given social relationship orients one to the possibilities of gratification or frustration of certain types of needs in the given relationship. To the cognitive characterization of the relationship, the motivational orientation adds the personal, subjective features arising from one’s situationally relevant motives or need-dispositions.

The motivational orientation gives rise to the cathexis of certain regions of the cognitive landscape, making them positively or negatively valent, and highlights the pathways to and from valent regions. It gives the cognitive map a dynamic character. It predisposes one to certain kinds of fantasies (or nightmares) and to certain kinds of emotions. It orients one to such questions as “What is to be valued in this relationship?” and “What do I want here and how do I get it?”

Moral orientations. A moral orientation toward a given social relationship orients one to the mutual obligations, rights, and entitlements of the people involved in
the given relationship. It adds an ‘ought’, ‘should’, or obligatory quality to a psychological orientation. The moral orientation implies that one experiences one’s relationship not only from a personal perspective but also from a social perspective that includes the perspective of the others in the relationship. A moral orientation makes the experience of injustice more than a frustrating, personal experience (Deutsch et al. 1978). Not only is one personally affected; so are the other participants in the relationship, because its value underpinnings are being undermined. The various participants in a relationship have the mutual obligation to respect and protect the framework of social norms that define what is to be considered as fair or unfair in the interactions and outcomes of the participants. One can expect that the moral orientation, and hence what is considered fair, will differ in the different types of social relations.

**Action orientation.** Action orientations refer to the kinds of behavior which are viewed as appropriate in a given type of social relationship. Different cultures often have different views as to what is appropriate behavior in a given social relationship. Thus, if I felt very pleased with the outcome of my negotiations with the used-car salesman (I got a very good price), it would be inappropriate behavior to express my pleasure by kissing him.

I suggest that the moral orientation, what is perceived to be just or unjust, will vary in different types of social relations. Let me illustrate the moral component of several different types of social relationships.

**Equality-Inequality.** There are a number of different moral orientations connected with equality and inequality: Other features of the relationship, in addition to the distribution of power within it, will determine the nature of the moral orientation that will
be elicited. Thus, in a cooperative, equal relationship one would expect an egalitarian relationship. In a cooperative, unequal relationship, the moral orientation obligates the more powerful person to employ his power in such a way as to benefit the less powerful one, not merely himself. In such a relationship, the less powerful one has the obligation to show appreciation, to defer to, and honor the more powerful person. These obligations may be rather specific and limited if the relationship is task-oriented or they may be diffuse and general if the relationship is a social-emotional one.

In an equal, competitive relationship, one’s moral orientation is toward the value of initial equality among the competitors and the subsequent striving to achieve superiority over the others. This orientation favors equal opportunity but not equal outcomes: the competitors start the contest with equal chances to win, but some win and some lose. In an unequal, competitive relationship the moral orientations of the strong and the weak support an exploitative relationship. The strong are likely to adopt the view that the rich and powerful are biologically and, hence, morally superior; they have achieved their superior positions as a result of natural selection; it would be against nature to interfere with the inequality and suffering of the poor and weak; and it is the manifest destiny of superior people to lead inferior people. In an unequal, competitive relationship, the weak are apt to identify with the aggressor (A. Freud, 1937) and adopt the moral orientation of the more powerful and to feel that their inferior outcomes are deserved. Or, they may feel victimized. If so, they may either develop a revolutionary moral orientation directed toward changing the nature of the existing relationship or they may develop the moral orientation of being a victim. The latter orientation seeks to
obtain secondary gratification from being morally superior to the victimizer. “It’s better to be sinned against than to sin”; “the meek shall inherit the earth.”

Task versus social-emotional relations. The moral orientation in a task-oriented relationship is that of utilitarianism. Its root value is maximization: People should try to get the most out of a situation. Good is viewed as essentially quantitative, as something that can be increased or decreased without limit (Diesing, 1962, p.35). A second element in this moral orientation is the means-end schema, in which efficient allocation of means to achieve alternative ends becomes a salient value. A third element is impartiality in the comparison of means, so that means can be compared on the basis of their merit in achieving given ends rather than on the basis of considerations irrelevant to the means-end relationship. In Parsonian terms, the moral-orientation in task-oriented relations is characterized by the values of universalism, affective neutrality, and achievement. In contrast, the moral orientation of social-emotional relations are characterized by the values of particularism, affectivity, and ascription (Diesing, 1962, p.90). Obligations to other people in a social-emotional relationship are based on their particular relationship to oneself rather than on general principles: They are strongest when relations are close and weakest when relations are distant. In a task-oriented relation, one strives to detach oneself from the objects of one’s actions, to treat them all as equal, separate, interchangeable entities; in a social-emotional relationship, one is the focal point of myriad relationships that one strives to maintain and extend, since action takes place only within relationships (Diesing, 1969, p.91); Ascription is the opposite of the achievement value: it means that one’s action and obligations toward people spring solely from their relationship to oneself rather than as a response to something they have done.
Some potential research. From the “Crude Law,” it follows that the causal arrow connecting psychological orientations and types of social relations is bidirectional: A psychological orientation can induce or be induced by a given type of social relation. Here, I would go further and indicate that the cognitive, motivational, and moral components of a psychological orientation can each induce one another – hence, they are likely to be found together – and each of the components can induce or be induced by a given type of social relation. The foregoing assumptions proliferate into a great number of testable, specific hypotheses that would predict a two-way causal arrow between specific modes of thought and specific types of social relations. Thus, a bureaucratic social situation will tend to induce obsessive-compulsive modes of thought and obsessive-compulsive modes of thought will tend to “bureaucratize” a social relationship. They would also predict that a competitive social relationship will tend to increase the psychological weight or importance of the difference in values between oneself and one’s competitors, whereas a cooperative relationship will tend to increase the psychological importance of the similarities in values between oneself and one’s fellow cooperators. We would also hypothesize that a tendency to accentuate the difference in values between oneself and others is apt to induce a competitive relationship, whereas a tendency to accentuate the similarities is likely to induce a cooperative relationship. Further, it can be predicted that different principles of distributive justice will be associated with different types of social relations: A fraternal relationship will be connected with the principle of equality; a caring relationship with the principle of need; a hierarchical organization with the principle of equity; a power struggle with the principle of winner takes all.
Limitations of Social Relations and Psychological Orientations. This work, more fully presented in Deutsch (1982, 1985), is a sketch of some important theoretical ideas. It needs much more theoretical development and much more research.

Part III: Social Implications of My Work

I have always considered my contributions to psychology as being theoretical and myself as someone who developed theoretical ideas and did research related to theory. However, my mentor, Kurt Lewin taught his students that “there is nothing as practical as a good theory.” While I did not anticipate the practical applications of my work, I believe that it has had some important ones. I list a few.

1. My dissertation study, a theoretical and experimental study of the effects of cooperation and competition upon group process (Deutsch, 1949a; 1949b) was done in the context of small experimental classes in an undergraduate psychology course I was teaching at M.I.T. Although the guiding image underlying my study related to issues of war and peace, to whether the then-recently created UN Security Council would function cooperatively or competitively, my experiment involved the creation of cooperative and competitive small classrooms of five students. I published a paper in an education journal on the educational implications of my theory and research. However, it was David W. Johnson – a former doctoral student of mine – who systematically developed these ideas into a pedagogy of cooperative learning and helped many teachers and school systems through the world to adopt this approach to education. It has also been widely applied in industry (see Johnson & Johnson, 2005).

2. I directed a study on interracial housing (Deutsch & Collins, 1951) which compared the behavioral and attitudinal effects of living in public housing where the white and
black residents were integrated (living in the same building) or segregated (living in separate buildings) within the housing project. The integrated housing was in New York City; the segregated housing in Newark. The results of this study played a role in changing the Newark Public Housing from a policy of segregating to integrating the races in their housing projects. I quote from a statement made by the Director of the Newark Housing Projects (from back cover of *Interracial Housing*):

A new policy… provides that henceforth all apartments are to be allocated on a basis of need, regardless of race, religion, and color… In large measure, this change in fundamental policy reflects the impact of the study reported in this book…

The study not only affected policy in Newark, it played a role in changing policies of the US Public Housing Authority which provided some of the financing for local housing authorities. Additionally, it was a small part of the material that a SPSSI Committee (which included Kenneth Clark, Isadore Chein, and me) prepared for the lawyers who successfully petitioned the US Supreme Court in *Brown vs. Board of Education* to end racial segregation in publicly supported schools.

(3) My work on conflict resolution, with the help of many former students and many other scholars, helped to stimulate the development of the field of conflict resolution studies. The basic query underlying our theoretical and research work on conflict (“What determines whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course?”) has direct relevance to conflicts in the real world. I and many of my former students have applied our theoretical work on conflict to such diverse conflicts as marital conflict, intergroup and ethnic conflict, industrial conflict, educational conflict, international conflict, reconciliation after destructive conflict, and so on. The applications have taken various forms; analytical writing, education, workshops with practitioners, mediation, and
consultation to the conflicting parties. Such students as Jeffrey Rubin, Roy Lewicki, David Johnson, Michelle Fine, Harvey Hornstein, Madelaine Heilman, Barbara Bunker, Kenneth Kressel, Susan Opotow, Janice Steil, Peter Coleman, Eric Marcus, Ken Sole, Adrienne Asch, and many others have made important, original contributions to the development of practice as well as theory in this area. In addition, the Center that I founded at Teachers College, the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (ICCCR), has helped to stimulate the development of conflict resolution and mediation programs in many schools.

For me, one of the applications of my work is an unusually important one. It occurred in Poland where two outstanding psychologists, Janusz Reykowski and Janusz Grzelak, applied some of my ideas during the negotiations between the Communist Government and Solidarity which lead to a peaceful transfer of governmental power from the Communist Party to Solidarity in 1989. Reykowski was a leading figure in the Communist Party and Grzelak was a very important influence in the Solidarity movement. Each has indicated that my work influenced him considerably in their approach to the negotiations which facilitated a constructive resolution of the negotiations. In footnote #3, I quote from some remarks made by Professor Reykowski at a Conference in Intractable Conflict held in Poland in the fall of 2006. In footnote #4 I quote from statements made by Professor Grzelak about his role in the negotiations and about my influence in an email sent to Lan Bui-Wrzosinska, and forwarded to me.

The social effects of my work in the areas of cooperation-competition, interracial housing, and conflict resolution have been notable. I do not yet have a clear picture of the direct social impact of my work in the area of social justice. Three papers of mine
appear to have had a considerable impact on the social psychological study of justice and to have been widely used in classrooms: “Equity, equality, and need” (Deutsch, 1973), “Awakening the sense of injustice” (Deutsch, 1974, 1985), and “A framework for thinking about oppression and its change” (Deutsch, 2006).

Let me conclude this Part by stating: I did not foresee many of the applications of my theoretical and empirical work. Like throwing a pebble into water, the ripples of one’s theoretical work are hard to predict in advance.

Concluding Statement

When I taught a course on theories in social psychology, I suggested to students that there were two types of theorists: grandiose and picayune. The grandiose theorists generalize their ideas widely and freely, the picayune keep their generalizations very close to their data. I consider myself to fall into the grandiose category. I have generalized my ideas so that they are relevant not only to the individual as the social interactor but also to the other types such as groups and nations. I have done this because I think my ideas deal with basic social processes. Clearly, my ideas are not fully baked and they need many more and different ingredients to deal with the different types of social actors. It is my hope that others will finish the baking of these ideas.
References


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There was much open anti-semitism in the United States during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, and I experienced some of it directly during this period.

In my view, social psychologists have unduly neglected the moral aspect of every social relation. In my study of conflict, I was alerted to how issues of justice-injustice often played a central role in conflict. This led me to reflect on the difference between the experiences of injustice and frustration (Deutsch, Steil, and Tuckman, 1978) which, in turn, led me to think about the moral norms in different social relations. Also, during the 1960s at Columbia, some students flouted the moral or social norms in the attempt to bring about social change - e.g., by appearing naked in a classroom. Additionally, the work of Goffman (1959) was suggestive. By the “moral aspect of every situation,” I refer to the social norms which define appropriate and inappropriate behavior and the mutual obligations which enable the social relation to exist.

Professor Reykowski’s remarks at the Conference on Intractable Conflict in Poland, 2006. …Most of the great ideas produced by psychologists are appreciated for their intellectual value rather than for their consequences for practical life. There are, however, some exceptions. For me one such exception is Morton Deutsch because there are good reasons to claim that his theories went beyond academia and have had an impact on some large scale social processes – that took place a thousand miles from Morton’s home place.

In fact, they took place in Poland in the middle of the eighties. It was a period of time when Poland … was in the state of deep crisis. “Solidarity” – the massive democratic movement had been crushed during Martial Law (introduced in Poland in December 1981) and the country was overwhelmed by a major political and social conflict… As a psychologist, I was especially interested in analyzing the psychological factors that contributed to the development of the conflict situation and in possible psychological remedies. That was why I focused on Morton Deutsch’s The Resolution of Conflict (Yale University, 1973) that I received from him some time ago. And now it seemed to offer the insight that I needed. The major theses of the book… provided excellent conceptual instruments for description of the Polish situation and were a very good source of ideas for developing proposals how to deal with it. I wrote an article in the major, very influential, Polish weekly magazine (Polityka) – widely read by intelligentsia and members of the establishment – presenting Morton’s theory and indicating how it could be applied to the Polish context. The approach met with an attack from both sides…

Unlike earlier time, the attack in the official party newspaper was not a political death sentence for its author. To the contrary, I was allowed to respond to the criticism in the same newspaper and attacking my opponents I could further describe the concepts of destructive [and constructive] conflict and their importance for understanding the Polish situation.

I have some reasons to believe that this exchange and my further activities along this line had some impact on members of the ruling elite in Poland. A few years later, when the ruling party came to the conclusion that the policy of accommodation with Solidarity is a necessary step for solving the Polish conflict, I was called upon to help in execution of this policy. The most important first step of this new policy was the Round Table negotiations between Government and Solidarity. As a result of these negotiations the partially free election took place in Poland and following that the new government held by Tadeusz Mazowiecki a leading Solidarity figure was introduced. In other words, the starting point for a series of events that led to dissolution of the so called Soviet Bloc…

The most important… [Round Table] was the political table because there was a place where the main political changes were formulated and negotiated. I was a co-chair of the political table…

It is not a place for detailed description of the negotiation. I would like to conclude that Morton Deutsch’s theory of destructive conflict had not only an important place in psychological science but also has some place in the history of social change in Europe.

Quotation from an E-mail by Professor Grzelak. “…I was one of the two vice-chairmen of one of the Round Table workgroups (the chairman was Prof. Henryk Samsonowicz) – concerning education and
I was also asked, as an expert, to participate in the informal, although not secret, talks in smaller groups. Several of them prepared the most important decisions. I took part in probably all of them, mostly as the main negotiator… Due to the personal interests in psychology and thanks to 2.5 years spent in the United States, I did know a number of works concerning conflict of interest. Among them most important were those by Kelley, Rapaport and Deutsch. I mentioned the Author whom I owe especially, last. His theoretical (On cooperation and competition, 1949; On the resolution of conflict, 1973; and many more) and empirical works… helped understand the role of trust, the role of orientation in an interaction, the power of power and the weakness of power, when it is used in conflict management. Theory is the most important but equally important is the “spirit” of the theory. What Morton said and says is filled with respect for people, for their subjectivity, it’s a constant search for resolutions both just and satisfying… My fascination in conflict resolution began with reading Deutsch’s works long before the downfall of communism and stayed alive long after the downfall of communism.