The Psychological Consequences of Different Forms of Societal Organization

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Throughout recorded history, political philosophers have discussed the merits of different forms of societal organization in terms of their psychological consequences. In this paper, using social psychological theory and research, I seek to shed some light on some of the psychological consequences of different forms of societal organization. My focus is on the psychological orientations associated with several of the basic dimensions of society.

The paper is divided into four parts. In the first part, I characterize the nature of psychological orientations; in the second, I delineate some of the psychological dimensions of social organizations; and, third, I describe what psychological orientations are associated with the different dimensions of society. Finally, I examine some research on different miniature social organizations to see whether the theoretical analysis of the preceding actions is consistent with the available research evidence.

**Psychological Orientations**

A psychological orientation orients an individual to the situation confronting her. It is composed of three interrelated components: a cognitive, motivational, and moral orientation.

**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 him. I employ the term "cognitive orientation" as being essentially the same as these terms.

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 they lead us to inappropriate responses, then they are likely to be revised on the basis of our experiences; if the situation confronting us is sufficiently malleable, our responses to it may help to shape its form.

Schemas, scripts, or frames may be very concrete and specific—for example, how to work together with a particular person on a given task—or they may be rather abstract and general—for example, what is involved in a competitive as compared to a cooperative relation. In any society that provides a variety of situations in which different areas in the multidimensional space of social relations are well-represented, it is likely that rather abstract schemas or scripts will develop to characterize the various types of relations. Such scripts, or cognitive orientations, are a central component of what I am here terming psychological orientations.

Motivational Orientations

A motivational orientation toward a given social reality orients one to the possibilities of gratification or frustration of certain types of needs in the given situation. To the cognitive characterization, the motivational orientation
adds the personal, subjective features arising from one's situational relevant motives or need-dispositions. It 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 situation?" and "What do I want here and how do I get it?".

**Moral Orientation**

A moral orientation toward a given social reality orients one to the mutual obligations, rights, and entitlements of the people involved in the given situation. It adds an "ought to," "should," or obligatory quality to a psychological orientation. The moral orientation implies that one experiences one's situation not only from a personal perspective but also from a social perspective that includes the perspective of the others in the relationship. Experience of injustice becomes more than a personal experience. 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 organizations.
The Psychological Dimensions of Social Organizations

Four fundamental dimensions of interpersonal relations (Deutsch, 1985)--"cooperation-competition," "power distribution," "task-oriented versus socially-emotional," and "formal versus informal"--have their social system analogs and can be used to depict societies. They are not sufficient to describe the internal characteristics of larger social units but, I suggest that they provide a useful framework for thinking about the psychologically relevant properties of different forms of social organization. Other dimensions such as size, complexity, stability, openness, and affluence are undoubtedly of considerable psychological relevance also. Here, I discuss only the four dimensions mentioned above.

1. Cooperation-competition. This dimension is referred to variously in the social psychological literature. I have characterized it as promotive versus contrient interdependence (Deutsch, 1949a) or as a pro-con dimension (Deutsch, 1962). Triandis (1972) referred to it as association-disassociation; Kelley and Thibaut (1978) used the term correspondence-noncorrespondence and it has been labeled love-hate, evaluative, positive-negative interpersonal disposition, friendly-hostile, etc. by others. Such interpersonal relations as "close friends," "teammates," and "coworkers" are at the cooperative end of the dimension, whereas "political opponents," "personal enemies," "divorced couple," and "guard and prisoner" are toward the competitive end.

At the organizational and societal level, cooperative systems are ones in which the individuals (or units) composing them have positively interdependent goals, shared communitarian values, an emphasis on positive interrelatedness among its members, a sense of accountability to the group, and a shared
responsibility for one another and for maintenance of the cooperative system. In competitive systems, the individuals (or units) composing them have negatively linked goals, a common scale on which each individual's success is compared in relation to one another, an emphasis on individuals struggling against one another to determine who will be winners and losers, and a responsibility for and accountability only to oneself. Worker-owned cooperatives, the Kibbutzim, "cooperative learning" classrooms, Zuni society, are examples of systems with a cooperative emphasis. Examples of systems with a competitive emphasis are to be found in many traditionally organized classrooms in the United States, among firms competing for a share of the market, among employees within traditional firms who are competing for status, and in the Kwakiutl society.

2. Power distribution ("equal versus "unequal"). This dimension has been given various labels: Triandis (1972) characterized it as superordination-subordination, Kelley (1979) described it in terms of mutuality of interdependence, and others have used such terms as dominance-submission, potency, and autonomy-control. "Business partners," "close friends," and "business rivals" are at the "equal" end; "master and servant," "parent and child," and "guard and prisoner" are at the "unequal" end.

At the organizational and societal level, the distinction is between systems which are "egalitarian" or "hierarchical" in their power structure. In an "ideal" egalitarian system, power is equally shared among the individuals (or units) composing it; each person has equal access to relevant education and information; each has equal opportunity to influence decisions; each has equal rights and an equal vote; each has equal access to economic resources and consumer goods. In contrast, in a hierarchical system, power is distributed
unequally, with greater power going to those who are higher in the hierarchy. There is a correlation, far from perfect, between the cooperative-competitive and the power dimensions: cooperative systems tend to be egalitarian, competitive ones hierarchical in power structure. Also, as the size of the system increases, it is more likely to have a hierarchical structure.

3. **Task-oriented versus social-emotional.** This dimension has been labeled *intimacy* by Triandis (1972) and Marwell and Hage (1970) and *personal* by Kelley (1979). Others have identified it as *personal-impersonal*, *subjective versus objective*, *particularistic versus universalistic*, or *emotionally involved versus emotionally detached*. Such interpersonal relations as "close friends," "husband and wife," "siblings" are at the social-emotional end of the dimension; "interviewer and job applicant," "supervisors and employees," and "business rivals" are at the task-oriented end. Bales's (1958) distinction between social-emotional and task-oriented leaders of groups is relevant; the former focuses on the solidarity relations among group members, and the latter focuses on the external task and problem-solving activities of the group. Earlier, I made a similar distinction between *task functions* and *group maintenance functions* (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b). The distinction between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* groups also reflects this basic dimension of social relations. Production-oriented, economic-oriented organizations are primarily task-oriented; families, friendship groups, fraternal organizations are mainly social-emotional in their orientation.

4. **Formal versus informal.** Wish and Kaplan (1977) have shown that this dimension can be separated from the preceding one. It appears to be the same as the dimension of regulation identified by Marwell and Hage (1970). In an informal relationship the definition of the activities, times, and locations involved in
the relationship are left largely to the participants; in a formal or regulated relationship, social rules and norms largely determine the interactions among those involved. Relations within a bureaucracy tend to be formal (Weber, 1957; Merton, 1957), whereas relations within a social club tend to be informal; also, relations between equals are more likely to be informal than relations between unequals.

Research by Wish and Kaplan (1977) suggests that the four dimensions described above are correlated. Competition, hierarchy, formality, and task orientation tend to be clustered together while cooperation, equality, informality, and social-emotional orientation are apt to be clustered. Thus, it is likely that were we able to plot naturally-recurring groups, social organizations, or societies in the four-dimensional space composed by the dimensions we have selected for emphasis, that certain regions of the space would be more heavily populated than other regions.

The Psychological Orientations Associated With
the Different Psychological Dimensions of Society

In this section, I shall characterize the psychological orientations that are associated with the dimensions of cooperation-competition, power, task-oriented versus social-emotional, and formal versus informal. For each of the four dimensions I shall describe the cognitive, motivational, and moral orientations that typify the dimension. In my discussion, I make the assumption that societies which differ on where they are located on the dimensions will differ in a similar way in the nature of the social relations to be found among the members within each of differing societies. That is, a truly cooperative-egalitarian society typically will be characterized by cooperative-egalitarian
relations among its members while the members of a competitive-hierarchical society will have competitive-hierarchical relations. The description is of "ideal types." In reality, the psychological orientation associated with any given societal dimension is inevitably colored by the current societal context in which that dimension is embedded as well as by its prior historical context.

Cooperation-Competition

Cognitive Orientation

The cooperative-competitive dimension seems so fundamental to social life that one would assume a well-developed innate predisposition to develop abstract cognitive orientations to help an individual define quickly whether "what's going on here?" is "good" or "bad" for him. With additional experience and further psychological differentiation and integration, the basic cognitive schema of cooperation-competition should emerge: We are "for" or "against" one another; we are linked together so that we both gain or lose together or so that if one gains, the other loses. This basic schema (see Deutsch 1949a, 1973, for an elaboration) leads an individual holding it to expect, in a cooperative relation, that the other will be pleased by the individual's effective actions and ready to help him or her achieve success; the individual will expect the opposite to be true in a competitive relationship.

Motivational Orientation

In a cooperative relation, one is predisposed to cathect the other positively; to have a trusting and benevolent attitude; to be psychologically open; to be giving as well as receptive; to have a sense of responsibility toward the other and toward the mutual process of cooperation; to see the other as similar to
oneself; etc. One is also predisposed to expect the other to have a similar orientation toward oneself. Murray's (1938) description of the need for affiliation captures much of the essence of this motivational orientation. It is clear that the specific quality of this orientation will be much influenced by whether the cooperative relation is social-emotional or task-oriented, equal or unequal, formal or informal, intense or superficial.

In a competitive relation, one is predisposed to cathect the other negatively; to have a suspicious and hostile, exploitative attitude; to be psychologically closed; to be aggressive and defensive; to seek advantage and superiority for the self and disadvantage and inferiority for the other; to see the other as opposed to oneself and basically different; etc. One is also predisposed to expect the other to have the same orientation. Murray's (1938) description of the needs for aggression, defendance, infavoidance, and counteraction seem to characterize many of the basic features of this motivational orientation. Once again, the specific quality of this motivational orientation will be determined by the type of competitive situation: task-oriented or social-emotional, etc. Also, it will be colored by one's conception of one's chances of winning or losing.

Moral Orientation

Although the specific character of the moral orientations associated with cooperation and competition will depend on other features of the social relationship, cooperation and competition elicit different types of moral orientations. The moral orientation linked with cooperation is a tendency toward egalitarianism. This tendency underlies a general conception of justice that Rawls (1972) has expressed as follows: "All social values—liberty and
opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone’s advantage” (p. 62).

In contrast, the moral orientation linked with competition sanctions inequality and legitimates a win-lose struggle to determine who will have superior and who will have inferior outcomes in a competitive relationship. Depending on other features of the relationship, the struggle may be regulated so that the competition takes place under fair rules (as in a duel of honor) and one’s moral orientation will include an obligation to obey the rules, or the struggle may be a "no-holds barred" one in which any means to defeat the other can be employed. An active state of competition implies that the competitors do not mutually perceive and accept a superior-inferior relationship between them: If they do, and they continue to wage competition, then they are violating the moral imperatives of competitive justice.

**Power ("Equality" versus "Inequality")**

Cognitive Orientation

The basic schema of "relationship power" (Deutsch, 1973) has to do with the relative power of the participants in a relationship to benefit or harm or persuade one another and, hence, their relative power to influence one another. In a relationship of unequal power, it is expected that the more powerful member will be advantaged whenever their interests are opposed. The competitive branch of the unequal power schema highlights the roles of "victor" and "vanquished"; the equal power schema orients more to continuing struggle. In both competitive branches, the use of tactics of coercion, intimidation, and power bluffs are made salient. Even in a situation where the more and less powerful members have
congruent interests, the less powerful member is expected to be more dependent on the other and, hence, more likely to engage in ingratiating behavior. The cooperative branch of the unequal power schema emphasizes the orientation toward responsibility in the high power position and of respectful compliance from the low power position; the equal power schema orients more toward mutual responsibility and respect. Both cooperative branches make salient the use of the more positive forms of power: persuasion rather than coercion, benefits rather than harms, legitimate rather than illegitimate power, etc.

Motivational Orientation

In an equality relation, one is predisposed to consider that the other is entitled to the same esteem and respect as oneself. The equality of power is likely to signify that the different participants in a relationship have the same value. Respect and esteem are more valuable if they are received from those whom one respects; equal status relations represent the optimum distribution for the mutual support of self-esteem. The need-dispositions related to self-esteem and self-respect seem to underlie this motivational orientation. The need for self-esteem involves the need to have a sense of the worthiness of one's goals and a sense of confidence in one's ability to fulfill one's intentions; the need for self-respect involves the need to have a sense of one's moral worth, of one's equal right to justice and fair treatment. It undermines one's sense of belonging to a moral community to be treated more fairly or less fairly than others and this, in turn, weakens the foundations of self-respect. Hence, one's self-respect is more firmly grounded in relationships where one can feel the others are also entitled to respect. Similarly, the confidence in oneself that is connected with a secure self-esteem is fostered
by association and comparison with people who are similar in status rather than with those who are higher or lower.

In an unequal relationship, one is predisposed either to take a more dominant or a more subordinate role or to resist the inequality. Murray (1938) has characterized the different aspects of the need for dominance. In a competitive situation, it will be fused with the need for aggression and will lead to attempts to coerce and force the other to comply with one's desires. In a cooperative situation, it will be fused with the need for nurturance and will lead to a protective, guiding, and caring orientation toward the other. Similarly, different needs are associated with the subordinate role, and the need for submission, depending on whether the context is cooperative or competitive.

In a cooperative situation, Murray's (1938) description of the need for deference seems apropos. It involves a readiness to follow, to comply, to emulate, to conform, to obey, to defer, to admire, to revere, to be suggestible, to heed advice, and otherwise to accept the superior authority of the other. In a competitive relationship, the need for abasement is associated with the acceptance of the inferior role (Murray, 1938). It is reflected in the tendency to submit passively, to accept blame, to surrender, to seek punishment or pain, to be servile, to be resigned, to acquiesce, to be timorous, to give in, and to allow oneself to be bullied. It is evident that the subordinate role in an unequal relationship may be difficult to accept and may be resisted. The resistance to an equal relationship will be evidenced in aspects of what Murray has termed the need for autonomy and the need for rejection. The former is characterized by the tendency to resist coercion and restraint, to be defiant and rebellious in relation to arbitrary authority, to be independent of social ties, and to be a nonconformist. The latter is reflected in the tendency to separate oneself
from a negatively cathected other; to reject a disliked superior other; to
out-snub a snob; to exclude, abandon, expel or remain indifferent to an inferior
other.

Moral Orientation

As the preceding discussion would suggest, 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 the kind of egalitarian relationship described
in the section on the moral orientation associated with cooperation-competition.
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": 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 peoples. 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-Oriented versus Social-Emotional**

**Cognitive Orientation**

The basic schema here has to do with the focus of involvement. In a task-oriented relationship, one expects the attention and the activities of the participants to be directed toward something external to their relationship, whereas in a social-emotional relationship one expects much of the involvement to be centered on the relationship and the specific persons in the relationship. This difference leads one to expect a relationship that is primarily task-oriented to be impersonal and universalistic in the sense that the actual accomplishment of the task is more important than the identity of the persons involved in accomplishing it or the nature of their personal relationship. In a task-oriented relationship, people who can perform equally well on the task are substitutable for one another. The personal identity and the unique individuality of the performer have little significance in such a relationship.

In contrast, a social-emotional relationship is particularistic: the personal qualities and identity of the individuals involved are of paramount
importance. People are not readily substitutable for one another. In a task-oriented relation, people are oriented toward one another as complexes of performances—that is, in terms of what each does; in a social-emotional relationship, people are oriented to each other as complexes of qualities—that is, in terms of who each is.

In a task-oriented relationship one is oriented to making decisions about which means are most efficient in achieving given ends. This requires an abstract, analytic, quantifying, calculating, comparative mode of thought in which one is able to adopt an affectively neutral, external attitude toward different means in order to be able to make a precise appraisal of their comparative merit in achieving one's ends. One views other people as instruments or means and evaluates them in comparison or competition with other means. In contrast, in a social-emotional relationship one is oriented to the attitudes, feelings, and psychological states of the other as ends. This requires a more holistic, concrete, intuitive, qualitative, appreciative-aesthetic mode of thought in which one's own affective reactions help one to apprehend the other from the "inside." Other people are viewed as unique persons rather than as instruments, in which aspects of the person are useful for particular purposes.

Motivational Orientation

A task-oriented relationship tends to evoke achievement-oriented motivations. Achievement motivation has been discussed extensively in the psychological literature. Here I wish to stress that it consists not only of the egoistic motivations to achieve success and to avoid failure; motivations related to using one's capabilities in worthwhile activities may also be involved. Additionally, since achievement behavior is often oriented to serve an adaptive
function in relation to an environment characterized by a scarcity of resources, it usually contains an element of motivation that is directed toward rational, efficient accomplishment of the task. Further, since task-oriented relationships are instrumental rather than consummatory in character, they require a motivational orientation that accepts delay-in-gratification and that obtains satisfaction from disciplined activity aimed at future gratification.

A number of different motivational orientations are likely to be elicited in social-emotional relationships: affiliation, affection, esteem, play, sentence, eroticism, and nurturance-succorance. The primary feature of these different need-dispositions is that they are focused on the nature of the person-to-person (or person-to-group) relationship: They are oriented toward giving and receiving cathexes; toward the attitudes and emotions of the people involved in the relationship; toward the pleasures and frustrations arising from the interaction with the particular others in the given relationship.

Moral Orientation

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 situations. Good is viewed as essentially quantitative, as something that can be increased or decreased without limit (Dissing, 1962, p. 35). A related feature is the means-end schema, in which efficient allocation of means to achieve alternative ends becomes a salient value. Also involved 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 are 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 (Biesing, 1962, p. 90). Obligations to other people in a social-emotional relationship are based on their particular affective relationship to oneself rather than on general principles: They are strongest when relations are close and weakest when relations are distant.

**Formal versus Informal**

**Cognitive Orientation**

The basic schema here has to do with whether one expects the people involved in the social situation to let their activities, forms of relationship, demeanor, and the like be determined and regulated largely by societal rules and conventions or whether one expects such people to have the freedom to make and break their own rules as suit their individual and collective inclinations. In a formal relationship, the latitude for deviation from conventional forms of behavior is small and that when one violates the rules, others will react negatively and one will be embarrassed (if the violation is unwitting). Since the rules are usually well-known and well-articulated in a formal relationship, it is apt to be characterized by more predictability and less surprise than an informal one. Hostile rather than friendly relations, unequal rather than equal ones, and impersonal rather than formal ones are more likely to be regulated than informal.

**Motivational Orientation**

Formal social relations appear to be related to a cluster of psychological tendencies. Murray has described various elements of this cluster: the need for order, subsuming conjunctivity, sameness, deliberateness, and placidity. Although Murray's...
emphasis is on the enduring character of these psychological predispositions, it seems likely that the psychological tendencies underlying the bureaucratic personality (Merton, 1957) can be elicited by bureaucratic structures. These tendencies have been well described by Merton and are amply characterized in the literature on the obsessive-compulsive personality.

Informal relations tend to be more open, more particularistic, more frank, more flexible, more emotional, and more personal than formal ones. They have a more relaxed, improvisational character in which quickly formed, intuitive, and impressionistic reactions to the specific other in the particular situation largely determine one's behavior. In an informal relation, one's motivational orientation is more directed toward persons, whereas in a formal relation it is more directed toward rules and authority. Emotion and conflict are more apt to be openly expressed in informal relations and avoided in formal ones. The more enduring psychological predispositions that are characteristic of the so-called hysterical personality and the field dependent person, resemble the situationally induced motivational orientations to be found in informal relations.

Moral Orientation

In many respects, the moral orientations to task-oriented and formal relations are similar; this is also the case for social-emotional and informal relations. Formal relations go beyond the values of universalism and affective neutrality or impartially to include moral orientation to the rules and conventions that guide social relations. One has an obligation to respect them and to conform to them. One's obligation is to the form of the relationship rather than to its spirit. In contrast, in an informal relationship one is morally oriented to the spirit rather than to the form of the relationship. It is the relationship to which one is obligated rather than to the rules that are supposed to regulate it.
Relevant Research

The existing research which bears upon the theoretical ideas presented in the preceding sections has been done in experimental laboratories, school classrooms, work settings, and communities. Unfortunately, the most careful, systematic research has been done in the laboratories and classrooms. Fortunately, however, the research in other settings is largely supportive of the findings in these miniature social systems.

Research on the Psychological Consequences of Cooperation and Competition

*Experimental Research.* David W. Johnson and his co-workers at the Center for Cooperative Learning of the University of Minnesota have been systematically collecting and summarizing all of the experimental research conducted in laboratories or school classrooms on the psychological effects of groups that were organized so as to have cooperative, competitive, or individualistic goal structures. They (Johnson & Johnson, 1983) summarize the results of these studies as follows:

1. **Helping.** There is more frequent cross-ethnic and cross-handicap helping and tutoring, and generally more facilitative and encouraging interaction, among students in cooperative than in competitive or individualistic learning situations.

2. **Peer support and acceptance.** Similarly, cooperative experiences result in stronger beliefs that one is personally liked, supported, and accepted by other students and that the others are caring and helpful.

3. **Perspective-taking.** The ability to understand how a situation appears to another and how the other is reacting cognitively and emotionally can be contrasted with a more self-centered orientation where one's own viewpoint so dominates one's perceptions that it is difficult to take the perspective of others. Cooperative experiences have been found to promote greater cognitive and affective perspective-taking than competitive or individualistic ones.

4. **Self-esteem.** Cooperative, as contrasted with competitive or individualistic, experiences promote higher levels of self-esteem. Cooperativeness is positively related to numerous indices of psychological health, whereas competitiveness is positively related to only a few; individualistic attitudes are related to numerous indices of pathology, such as social maladjustment, alienation, and self-rejection.
5. Expectations toward future interaction. Cooperative, as contrasted to competitive or individualistic, experiences promote greater feelings that past interactions with others have been rewarding and enjoyable and that future interactions will be too.

They (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981) also conclude that cooperation is superior to competition or individualistic efforts in promoting achievement and productivity.

It is evident that experimental research provides strong support for assuming that cooperatively structured systems as compared to competitive ones will be more productive, will lead to friendlier interpersonal relations, will promote more self-esteem and better mental health, and will evoke more positive attitudes toward one's group as well as toward the activities in which the group is engaged.

What about the research in work settings, in collectives, in the kibbutzim: is it consistent with the results of small-scale experimental studies?

Research in Field Settings. Elsewhere (Deutsch, 1985), I have reviewed the diverse scholarly literature dealing with forms of worker compensation, ownership, participation, and control as well as the literature on worker cooperatives and the kibbutzim. This review was oriented toward answering the question: Is there, inevitably, the trade-off between efficiency and equality that is so commonly assumed? The existing research is meager and not of high quality but its findings are concordant with the more carefully controlled experimental studies summarized above. The available research suggests that, when efficient work requires efficient cooperation, almost any movement toward a democratic, egalitarian, cooperative system and away from the more traditional, authoritarian, hierarchical, adversarial system of work improves productivity and lessens worker alienation. This is so whether the movement is from individual to group performance-based pay, or from nonparticipation to worker participation in
decision-making and profit sharing, or from outside ownership to worker ownership, or from authoritarian control to democratic control of the workplace.

Margaret Mead (1937), in *Cooperation and Competition Among Primitive Peoples*, analyzed thirteen societies: three were classified as competitive, four as individualistic, and five as cooperative in their major emphases. She states (p. 480):

It is possible to summarize the main structural difference between the competitive and cooperative cultures. In the cooperative cultures, there are real closed groups within which the individual's status is defined, and within which he is given security in relation to his fellows; the society depends upon the structure for its perpetuation, not upon the initiative and ambition of individuals. In the competitive culture there is no closed society; fighting exists within the group of loosely integrated lineages; no individual is secure in relation to his fellows because success is defined as the maintenance of a status which can be lost or as the attainment of higher relative status and the culture is organized around the initiative of individuals.

In summarizing the situation with regard to psychological security, she indicates (p. 489) that in the six cooperative societies:

...the warm ties to the own kin group are extended to include many persons; one relative can easily be substituted for another within a classificatory system, and the satisfaction of ego demands is closely tied up with the preservation of extended kinship ties. The individual is not encouraged to turn in upon himself nor pin his sense of security to isolated performance. His sense of security and the ego demands of both self-preservation and self-maximization are centered in the wide kin group, and in the village or tribe or state which may be variously held as extensions of this kin group.

In the competitive societies, the ties to the own kin group are complicated by the way in which the individual's kin are involved in his self-examination. Where self-maximization is defined in terms of one individual over against another, the dependence upon the same persons to give one security and to advance one's isolated achievements sets up a situation which is not conducive to security.

To sum up, the research on the psychological consequences of cooperation-competition is consistent with the theoretical analysis presented in an earlier section: the experimental research in the laboratory and in the school classroom
are strongly supportive; the research on worker cooperatives and the kibbutzim are consistent with the laboratory research as is the research on primitive societies. The research in industrial settings, however, suggests that an important moderating variable is whether or not the industrial organization is characterized by a traditional hierarchical structure of authority and control. Below, we turn to a discussion of some of the research related to the comparison of hierarchical and egalitarian systems.

Research on Hierarchical as Compared to Egalitarian Systems

**Laboratory Research.** Recently in my laboratory, Rony Rinat (1985, 1987) has conducted two studies on the effects of hierarchical versus egalitarian orientations in organizations on the responses to an economic "crunch."

The results of the two studies were very much the same and were statistically significant.

1. With regard to their response to the economic crunch, collective sharing of the loss was preferred in the egalitarian condition as opposed to a tendency to sacrifice others in the hierarchical condition. In the hierarchical as compared to the egalitarian condition, the manager was much more likely to make the decision by himself. Worker agreement with the decision made by the managers was higher in the egalitarian condition.

2. The attitudinal measures indicated significantly higher ratings in the egalitarian condition on such items as "desire to help the group work effectively," "satisfaction with the job assignment in the group," and the "extent of responsibility toward the group." In addition, subjects in the egalitarian condition rated themselves as being more "equal," "motivated," "powerful," "cooperative," "similar," and "trusting" than did the subjects in the hierarchical condition. They also had more favorable views of their managers.
Field Research. Tannenbaum, Kavcic, Rosner, Vianello, and Wieser (1974) have conducted a study, *Hierarchy in Organizations*, in five different nations: the United States, Yugoslavia, Austria, Italy, and Israel (the kibbutzim). This study, which is the most comprehensive and systematic study of hierarchy in organizations, is too extensive to summarize in detail. I shall select from their work the results and conclusions which are most relevant to this paper.

From their research, it is apparent that the industrial organizations in the different nations can be ranked as follows in terms of their egalitarianism, from most to least: the Israeli kibbutzim, the American, the Austrian, and the Italian. The Yugoslavian factory is, in its formal structure, more egalitarian than the American, but less so in actual practice. Informal, egalitarian interpersonal relations are more characteristic between superordinate and subordinate in the American factories, while formal, hierarchical, authoritarian relations are more characteristic in the Yugoslavian factory.

Several findings stand out:

1. In the kibbutzim, the source of the superior's power—unlike the other organizations—does not rest on the superior's power to administer rewards and penalties. It rests solely on the superior's legitimated authority and competence.

2. The desire to move up in the hierarchy is greater in the formal hierarchical systems—the Italian, Austrian, and American. The actual chances of doing so are greatest in the most egalitarian system—the kibbutzim.

3. The least differences between the highest and lowest positions in the factory in salary, education, age, perceived authority—influence, perceived job opportunities, and perceived job qualities occur in the kibbutzim, while the greatest differences occur in Italy and Austria.
4. "Persons at upper levels, compared to those below, are predictably more satisfied with their jobs and their salaries; they are more favorably disposed toward their company and feel more responsible and motivated in their work; they are in a number of ways 'better adjusted'; and they see the organization in ways that conform in some degree to a more positive stereotype.... 'Positive' reaction to and support for the system increase with hierarchical ascent" (Tannenbaum et al., p. 179).

The relatively "poor" adjustment of workers in the Italian plants and the relatively positive adjustment of the kibbutz members are congruent with the notion that egalitarian structures are more conducive to positive adjustment than hierarchical ones. However, it should be noted that the adjustment of American workers was also quite positive. This may reflect their relatively high standard of living, their optimism with regard to the possibility of advancement, and/or the egalitarian style of superior-subordinate relations in American factories. The authors of *Hierarchy in Organizations* seem split about whether the American adjustment represents a "false consciousness" regarding their true situation or whether it reflects factors which mitigate the adverse effects of hierarchy. They identify three such factors: (1) opportunity for upward mobility; (2) the character of the informal, interpersonal relations between superior and subordinate; and (3) the absolute level as opposed to the relative distribution of reward. In a system where the absolute level is high, a differential will make less difference to the members than when it is low.

To sum up, the relevant research comparing egalitarian and hierarchical structures is congruent with the theoretical analysis presented in an earlier section. However, it is important to recognize that not every organization which is formally egalitarian is, in fact, egalitarian in practice. And the
converse is also true. Thus, the Yugoslav factories are less egalitarian and the American factories are more egalitarian than their formal structures might indicate.

In Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed that different forms of social organization give rise to profoundly different psychological consequences. While the research bearing upon this proposition is not substantial, it is quite consistent in supporting it. There are striking differences in the psychological consequences of being involved in a cooperative-egalitarian system in comparison with that of a competitive-hierarchical system. The cooperative-egalitarian system leads to a greater sense of personal security and self-esteem, friendlier interpersonal relations, a greater sense of responsibility toward the group and other group members, and higher group productivity.

Elsewhere (Deutsch, 1985), I have written about the problems of cooperative-egalitarian systems. I am convinced that paradise is not to be found on this earth. I am further persuaded that even the nearest thing to common visions of an earthly utopia—a small, well-functioning, worldly, cooperative-egalitarian community—has to work hard and thoughtfully on a continuing basis to preserve its democracy, cooperativeness, and egalitarianism as well as to survive. The inherent tendency of such communities is to break down. It takes active, intensive effort to prevent this from happening.
References


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