

FIVE REASONABLE PEOPLE

THE UNDERLYING STRUCTURE OF MORALITY

CHAPTER 1. DEDUCING FIVE WAYS OF LIFE

This chapter employs the scientific method to start building *Way of life theory* by deducing the five WOLT types and thus beginning to show how individual mindset fits with social structure.

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Y AND X DIMENSIONS

The usual science procedure is to *hypothesise* a relationship between two or more theoretical concepts and *deduce* its consequences. Reality can then be examined to see if the consequences are confirmed or refuted. For example, Newton's gravity theory interrelates two masses and their distance apart ($F=m_1.m_2/d/d$). From it, orbit positions can be deduced which can be compared with actual orbits of heavenly bodies.

To apply this "hypothetico-deductive" approach to society, let us hypothesise a relationship between *competition* and *cooperation*. These two concepts seem to exist and seem important. As we will later see, choice of concepts is not critical. If they exist, they would have consequences: a society where people were very competitive and cooperation was minimal would be different from a society where cooperation was widespread and there was little competition.

In order to hypothesise a relationship we need to know what amount of competition relates to what amount of cooperation. If we had measurement units we could measure them and graph the relationship. We'd plot the kilos of competition on the Y axis against the litres of cooperation on the X axis. We have, of course, no such measurement units. A further awkwardness is that different observers have different notions of just what constitutes competition and cooperation.

Measurement units are man-made and must be agreed upon and for social matters there are none. The only prospect of agreement is on presence and absence. That is, competition is there or it is not there; cooperation is present or it is absent. Crude perhaps, but the lack of units leaves us no other option.

There is a benefit from such a stark dichotomisation in that everything is included and nothing is included twice. A world divided between competition and not-competition includes everyone and everything and excludes no one and nothing. The same goes for cooperation and not-cooperation: everyone and everything is included as either one or the other.

Four types

Making the two concepts theoretical extremes reduces the measure on the Y and X axes to *yes* and *no* with the result that instead of a graph we end up with four possible extreme positions as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Views of competition and cooperation YX

		Y		
	Yes		1	2
Comp-	No		4	3
etition				
			No	Yes
			Cooperation	
			X	

Since we cannot definitively say what competition and cooperation are, and since the only place they exist in any real, detectable sense is as thoughts, as patterns of

neurons firing in brains,¹ let us allow people their own conceptions. For example, the theoretical person called Type 1 believes competition to be necessary and desirable and rejects cooperation as undesirable. Is that realistic? This is theory, not reality; we will consider reality later.

So we have four theoretical people taking four extreme positions. Spelling them out, the four positions shown in Table 1.1 are:

1. accept competition and reject cooperation (Y not X)
2. accept both competition and cooperation (Y and X)
3. accept cooperation and reject competition (X not Y)
4. reject both competition and coop. (not Y not X).

Those are the four possible relationships between the two dichotomised concepts.² What are the consequences of these four hypothesised positions? How would theoretical persons who take these four extreme positions, consider society should work? If they think rationally (logically, consistently), and if they want society to function well, what principles would they stand for?³

¹ According Decety et al (2004), competition and cooperation have been located with fMRI in specific parts of the brain. (Jean Decety, Philip L Jackson, Jessica A Sommerville, Thierry Chaminade, and Andrew N Meltzoff, "The neural bases of cooperation and competition: an fMRI investigation," *NeuroImage* 23: 744-751, 2004.)

² Setting out four positions from two dichotomised concepts is actually a fairly well known technique. In philosophical logic the four positions given by two propositions are called the four "truth values." Here the truth values are: 1: competition not cooperation, 2: comp and coop, 3: coop not comp, 4: not comp not coop.

³ Economic theory also assumes that people think rationally but here we are also assuming *sociality*, not individual *utility* as economics does. Utility is the assumption that each individual is out to maximise his or her self-interest. WOLT merely assumes that individuals expect to interact with other people socially.

TYPES OF PERSONS AND SOCIETY

The **Type 1**, a person who **wants people to compete but not cooperate**, must fear cooperation will undermine or interfere with competition. Cooperation must be some sort of crafty coercion such as favouritism or collusion for competitive advantage. Human nature is, then, not to be trusted. One must make alliances to compete effectively so a good reputation will be important and individuals will interact warily, negotiating one-on-one, specifying their social relationships carefully.

The **Type 2**, who **accepts both competition and cooperation**, has to reconcile significant contradictions. This will require rules setting out when to compete and when to cooperate. Rules must be enforced so a command structure is needed. So society needs to be hierarchical, where people compete with their peers of the same rank, cooperate with their superior and coerce their subordinates. This requires that human nature be trainable and a person's rank will reflect their training and qualifications.

The **Type 3** who **wants cooperation and rejects competition** must fear the latter will undermine the former, must be objecting to struggle and to the inequality which competition generates, worried it would give rise to a coercive, dog-eat-dog society. 3s must want everyone equal, harmoniously cooperating with each other. For this to be possible human nature must be good.

The **Type 4** who **rejects both competition and cooperation** must see them as pointless or dangerous. This would restrict social relations to the random or the coercive. Human nature must be unpredictable and interpersonal relationships must be erratic. The Type 4 must feel delivered up to a capricious world where the best chance of staying safe is by keeping a low profile. It is a fatalist outlook.

Finally there is a possible **Type 5** who **has no view of competition or cooperation**. The above four types

include everyone with a view so we need to provide for a possible theoretical person without one. A person with no opinion on competition or cooperation cannot be living with, or dependent upon, other people. This Type 5 would be a hermit or recluse.

* * *

The above deductions are, as in the natural sciences,⁴ pure theory; reality plays no role. The five WOLT types are the logical consequences of hypothesised extreme views of the four possible extreme relationships between competition and cooperation, along with the Type 5 who has no view. Everyone is included and no one is counted twice.

This approach of positing theoretical relationships between theoretical concepts and deducing their consequences is standard science theorising. Science is able to measure things in measurement units which makes for flexibility; for social theorising, it may well be that the *only* theoretical relationship available is that of the four “truth values” from a pair of concepts expressed as extremes.

The process seems to be productive for it has revealed further related preferences. We began by declaring that Types 1 and 2 accept competition while the 3s and 4s reject it, and that Types 2 and 3 accept cooperation while 1s and 4s reject it. Based on that, we deduced each type’s opinion of human nature and also found that Types 1 and 3 reject coercion while the 2s and 4s accept coercion.

Many more personal preferences can be deduced from *competition* and *cooperation* but, as far as I can tell, nothing which contradicts the above. That is, the deductions of the five types are unambiguous; they are

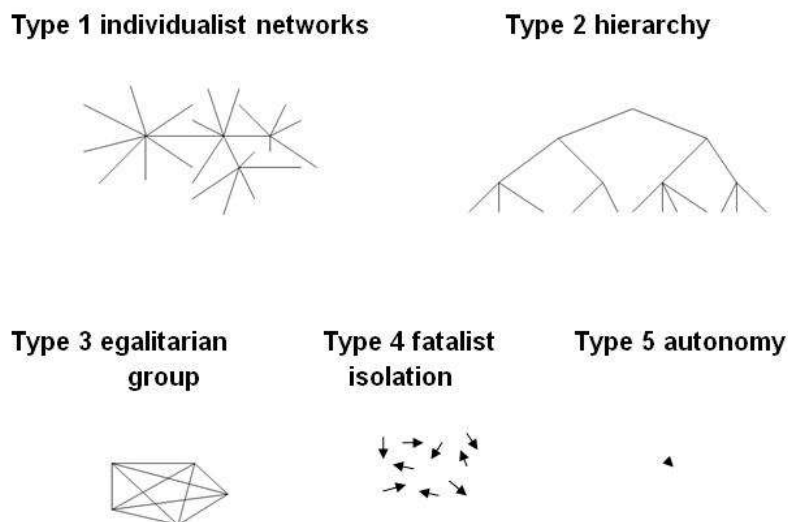
⁴ Economic theory also proceeds analytically from extreme theoretical hypotheses. Where economic theory’s assumption of individual “utility” leads to a single type, homo economicus (who is a modern Type 1), WOLT’s assumption of sociality finds five types.

not possibilities and not probabilities but theoretical inevitabilities—if competition and cooperation exist.

Four social structures

The theoretical deduction not only produced further individual preferences but it produced social relationships, showing what social structure suits each mentality. These theoretical social structures are illustrated in Figure 1.1. The **go-getter 1s** interrelate one-on-one; the **order-loving 2s** are comfortable in a hierarchical pyramid of authorised interactions; the **harmony-seeking 3s** relate as equals with everyone interacting with everyone else; the **delivered-up 4s** have random, unpredictable relations; and the **detached Type 5** stays aloof from society.

Figure 1.1



To understand the connection between mentality and society is an old goal of sociology and here the basic scientific method is revealing it. If competition and cooperation exist then these five theoretical kinds of social relations must exist.

If we regard the connecting lines in the diagrams as indicating reciprocal commitment, then the 1s show one-on-one individual commitment where people appear equal except in their number of contacts; the 3s observe all-to-all communal commitment and people

are equal. The 2s achieve a sort of compromise of the individual and the communal whereby the connections are ordered vertically and higher ranks are more important. The 4s have no commitment and the Type 5 is not within society.

Those patterns of social structure⁵ suggest variable robustness and various degrees of social power. In a **1-ist network** if an individual is perturbed, immediate contacts are impacted and the extent of the disturbance will reflect the number and strength of the individual's connections. In a **2-ist hierarchy**, perturbation of the most senior person affects the whole structure and might shatter it; the disturbance of a person of the lowest rank will be of no wider effect. In a **3-ist group**, disturbance of one person affects everyone and must be resolved. Harmony will be restored through solidarity to counter the threat or, if the person caused the disturbance, by either repentance or ostracism. The **isolated 4s** have no power and no structure to disturb. They may find some sociality at the bottom of a 2-ist hierarchy. The **autonomous 5s** may be respected for having escaped the rat race; then if (by exception) they speak, they will be listened to.

IDEALISED EXTREMES

The hypothetico-deductive process seems quite fruitful. It depends on the two concepts, competition and cooperation, being contrasting. Had we used two concepts which did not contrast with each other, unambiguous deduction would have been difficult. It also depends on their being “idealised” as extremes of yes or no, presence or absence. Without that, clear deduction would be impossible because we would have to wrestle with the meaning of quantities of competition and cooperation.

⁵ It is hard to imagine what further basic social arrangement there could be. The diagrams of Figure 1.1 are reminiscent of an academic field called “network theory” but there does not seem to be any correspondence.

Values and preferences are very subjective and hypothesising extreme contrasting concepts in extreme relationships precludes nuance and obviates definitions. This is normal in science theory, where the interrelated terms do not depend on definitions and are not subtle and nor is the relationship subtle but is spelt out explicitly. WOLT conforms to this pattern and so it does not matter how you or I might define competition and cooperation, and it does not matter how our five theoretical persons would define them. Variations in our conceptions won't affect the deductions of the five types. Thus the natural science approach has provided an objective theory of subjective beliefs. This has never been done before.

It may be that the *only* rigorous way to create a scientific theory of social interaction is to take two contrasting concepts, assume they are extreme, and form their four truth values. Appendix 4 discusses eight theorists from various fields who took this approach. They use a wide variety of concept pairs and apart from a couple of mistakes, they agree with the WOLT four. Except for Mary Douglas's grid-group theory, their ideas were not further pursued. Economics also assumes all-or-nothing extremes, such as perfect competition, perfect information, and market clearing, and economics has built a body of influential theory.

REAL EXAMPLES

How do the five theoretical types compare with reality? First let us note that science theory typically differs markedly from reality. Galileo theorised gravity by hypothesising a perfect sphere rolling on a perfect plane whereas reality gives us landslides. Yet Galileo's theory is necessary to understand landslides.⁶

⁶ Idealising is not simple: it took ten thousand years of civilisation before Galileo came along. Before him, objects possessed a "downwards tendency" (flame had an upwards tendency) which is quite useless: a science theory

If concerns for *competition* and *cooperation* exist and must be dealt with in order to live socially then, to the extent real people think in extremes, the five types must exist: mistrustful, **individualist 1s** who want to negotiate with each other, competing to win; measured, **hierarchist 2s** who value propriety and require a rule-bound command structure; trusting, **egalitarian 3s** who seek harmonious interaction among equals; spontaneous, **fatalist 4s** interacting without pattern in a world governed by luck and compulsion; and the **autonomous Type 5**, detached from society.

Those descriptions seem lifelike and, indeed, approximate examples are plentiful. **Type 1:** Alexander the Great, Machiavelli, Locke, Dale Carnegie, Ayn Rand, Donald Trump, Richard Branson, Elon Musk, Adam Smith, Milton Friedman, Dirty Harry, Bart Simpson; **Type 2:** Confucius, Plato, Catholic church, Edmund Burke, Bismarck, Lee Kuan Yew, Kissinger, William F Buckley Jr, Sir Humphrey Appleby, Judge Dredd, Marge Simpson; **Type 3:** Jesus, Gandhi's salt march, the civil rights marches, feminism, Marxism, most political cartoonists, St Francis, Rousseau, Veblen, Chomsky, Keynes, Krugman, Atticus Finch, Lisa Simpson; **Type 4:** Lumpenproletariat, Chaplin's Tramp, Steptoe and Son, Jerry Springer's guests, Li'l Abner, Homer Simpson; **Type 5:** Taoism, some Buddhism, Diogenes, Lao-Tzi, Thoreau, Garbo, Howard Hughes, Whitman, Steppenwolf, Ignatius J Reilly.

Although the WOLT types are purely hypothetical real illustrative examples are readily given and more names and characteristics are set out in the *Ways of life table* at Appendix 3. Such naming of real people and organisations is not done in social science scholarship. Psychology, sociology, etc have many schemes setting out types of people (Appendix 5),

expresses a *relationship*. Both Galileo and Newton were very aware they were idealising and wrote about how their theories departed from reality.

however none give real examples in illustration. They can't because their categories are not distinct and the reason for that, ironically, is because they are inferred from reality and depend on definitions.

The WOLT types are also recognisable at the social level, especially their difficulties with disruptions by unruly, illogical human beings. For example, the competitive **Type 1** way of life fights a never-ending battle with the menace of cooperation. Laws against it are passed, large firms are broken up and fined for price fixing, and personnel are arraigned for nepotism and bribery. **Type 2** discipline, honour, and information restriction, indispensable for armies and bureaucracy, struggles with gossip, intrigue, turf wars and mutiny, while its attempts to regulate sex generate prudery and bizarre practices.

The **Type 3** requirement for harmony, and the impossibility of disciplinary action among equals, can lead to public confession of sin, charismatic leadership, cultism, and schism. The **Type 4** may find relief from uncertainty and short-termism at the bottom of a 2-ist hierarchy. Lashing out when blows outweigh windfalls will be ineffective and often self-destructive. Though true hermits are rare nowadays, an approximate **Type 5** occurs in our society in the form of the disillusioned, older man who has become detached from the socialising influences of women, work and war. Self-sufficient and reclusive, he might study or go fishing. See Chapter 12 for an extended discussion of the 5-ism.

Values are not just individual: a chamber of commerce would have a Type 1 outlook, a Freemasons lodge would be 2-ist, a greens party 3-ist, and a rioting mob 4-ist. Such groups should be more true to the theoretical type than individuals since the common cause would smooth out the idiosyncrasies of their individual members.

Finally, in terms of political right and left in the world's democracies, the right consists of free-market

1-ism and traditionalist 2-ism, usually in an uneasy alliance, while 3-ism forms the left. The 4s are where others put them: right if populist, left if unionised.

Is it somehow demeaning to categorise all humans into five types? Actually, five is the finest division there is; no respectable academic typology has more and most have only two or three. See Appendix 5 for about four dozen schemes. The only widely known categorisation is political right and left. WOLT is not logically restricted to humans; it must apply to space aliens as long as they discuss how they should live together.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Scholars of society have always distinguished between the individual and the group (the “collective”) but the nature of the connection—how social relations emerge from individual preferences—has been a mystery.

By applying the ordinary, hypothetico-deductive method of the hard sciences, this chapter has developed an objective theory of morality. It is objective in that no authority was called upon and no opinion shaped it. Its most obvious revelation is that there is no single morally correct position. There are five moral positions, five *ways of life* which are very different from each other. Each type claims the truth; all are equally logical so all are equally principled.⁷

Morality is not the blooming, buzzing confusion most seem to think. On the contrary, it is highly ordered, with just five coherent worldviews (ideologies, mindsets, value-sets, principles, beliefs, attitudes, orientations...) and social arrangements (moralities, ideologies). The *Ways of life table* at Appendix 3 gives an overview of the five types' positions.

⁷ If you feel one of the types is somehow less moral, you would need to show it through logical argument. If you can't, your feeling must be because you do not empathise with that type.

WOLT cannot predict what proportions of a population adhere to the various ways of life but if more than one way is present in a society (as would normally be the case), social life will necessarily be something of a rough-and-tumble. As long as people are not constrained in what they may say and think—as long as one type does not dominate by force—the different value preferences will mean that the society's norms and laws can never satisfy everyone.

WOLT's scope—the extent of its application—appears to be those matters human beings must negotiate in order to live together, i.e., that which is necessarily social. Because WOLT is social and relational, purely personal attributes (extraversion, cleverness, shyness, etc) find no place and because it depends on people being logical, the emotions (love, hate, bliss, grief, etc) are also excluded.

So far, Way of life theory depends on two social concepts, *competition* and *cooperation*. What if we choose a different pair of contrasting concepts? We get the same result. Many pairs will do and to prove the point Appendix 1 deduces the five types from freedom, justice, human nature, Mother Nature, risk, and identity. In each case a pair of contrasting concepts pertaining to the topic are set on the Y and X axes in place of competition and cooperation, and the five types are then straightforwardly deduced. Usually the two concepts are quite plain and some of them are long established in the relevant academic literatures.

Why is it so consistent? A WOLT premise is that our theoretical people are perfectly logical; a logical person cannot have a different worldview or want a different society for every different pair of social concepts. So, no matter what pair we choose we should always deduce the same five types.

As long as the two items are contrasting enough to render the imprecision in their meanings immaterial, and hence make the deduction unambiguous, the only types that can be deduced are the WOLT five. If you

can find any relevant pair of concepts which unambiguously delivers one or more types different from the WOLT five, you will falsify the theory. Relevant are any matters which we must take into account to live socially. There has never before been a social theory that made, or could make, such an offer.

Eight social theorists (Appendix 4) independently deduced the same types and no one, apparently, has found any others, so the chances of successfully falsifying WOLT appear to be negligible, yet the falsifiability of the theory—the opportunity for falsification⁸—is plain.

Why didn't those eight theorists go on to discover WOLT? One thing that stopped them was that they each relied on two dimensions whereas social issues actually occupy three. Between them they used all three but, dispersed in time and specialisation, their ideas did not interact.

You can check the constancy of the five types by looking at the deductions of Appendix 1 but it might be better to move straight on to the next chapter which introduces the Z axis. That should make Appendix 1 more informative. □

⁸ Falsifiability is essential in science but in the social sciences, theorists almost never offer falsification criteria. This means the theorist is seeking to convince you but is not allowing you any way to convince him or her. Claims that can't be falsified can't be improved and, indeed, none of the social sciences except economics has managed to produce an accepted body of theory.