

## **FIVE REASONABLE PEOPLE**

### **THE UNDERLYING STRUCTURE OF MORALITY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Why do people disagree with each other? You're a reasonable person—why doesn't everyone agree with you? The underlying reason, when it concerns social matters, is because there are five reasonable positions on how people should interact and how society should work, and the five are highly incompatible.

Way of life theory (WOLT) is an objective theory of subjective beliefs; it shows there are four other perspectives as valid as yours—just as logical, just as coherent and (as perhaps you may come to agree) just as moral. The golden rule says, “Do as you would be done by,” and WOLT shows there are five honest, and very different, ways of realising it. In short, the underlying cause of disagreement is because people adhere to five different *ways of life* which structure their values and their relationships to others. There are five types of people with their five moralities and five corresponding types of social interaction.

This book explains how and why our social preferences come in five general types, how the five clash and where they agree. It is about the big social issues, such as freedom, justice and power, as well as about everyday things such as blame, faith, honesty, family, and human nature. It shows how preferences fit together and how they show up in fiction and politics and how power is held by social institutions such as tribes, nations, armies, bureaucracies, markets, associations, clubs, religions and political parties via norms and rules and leaders and followers.

The following is an overview of Way of life theory. It is brief and mostly abstract; Chapters 1 and 2 explain how WOLT is actually put together.

## Five types

- Type 1. Individualist, *doer* (e.g. Napoleon, Edison, Elon Musk, Dirty Harry)
- Type 2. Hierarch, *ruler* (e.g. Confucius, Bismarck, British Raj, Sir Humphrey)
- Type 3. Egalitarian, *carer/critic* (e.g. Christianity, Gandhi, Orwell, Nader, Lisa Simpson)
- Type 4. Fatalist, *battler* (e.g. Schwejk, Chaplin's Tramp, Homer Simpson)
- Type 5. Hermit, *loner* (e.g. Diogenes, Nietzsche, Thoreau, Garbo, Spock)

Do not read too much into the labels. They seem to be the best available but they are not definitions. This whole volume is an attempt to define the five types. WOLT is unique in being able to give illustrative examples; the psychology, sociology and political science literatures contain many typologies and categories but never give examples of actual people.

The four social types apply also to organisations and in modern political terms they are 1: the free-market right, 2: the traditionalist right, 3: the left, and 4: populism.

Each of the five WOLT types has three aspects:

- a *worldview* (mindset, morality, orientation, attitude, preference set, belief system, ideology...) being a coherent set of subjective values which creates the standard for proper behaviour;
- a corresponding *social structure*, partly subjective, partly objective, which shapes interpersonal and inter-organisational relations of obligation, allegiance, and authority;
- a corresponding *lifestyle* consisting of objective, visible things such as décor, grooming, literature, recreation, profession, etc.

For a list of type examples and characteristics see the Ways of life table at Appendix 3.

### Three axes

WOLT is a genuine *theory*; that is, it is more than a list of categories; a theory expresses a *relationship* between categories. Meaning of categories is given by context and in a scientific theory, context is a strict, particular, specified relationship between specified concepts, and it is the relationship which determines the meaning of the concepts. The WOLT types are interrelated by three “dimensions” or “axes,” which are made of *relational issues*. Relational issues are the matters each human society has to negotiate in order for people to get along with each other.

The three axes and three exemplary relational issues are:

X axis. e.g., cooperation.

Y axis. e.g., competition.

Z axis. e.g., coercion.

Again, the words are not definitive. They can be misleading for cooperation is a nice word yet here it includes collusion, connivance and conspiracy. Coercion is not nice yet it is essential to discipline, is one way we socialise children, and is the main tool of the law. Cooperation, competition and coercion suggest the meaning of the X, Y, Z axes but they only suggest; there are countless other relational issues which give meaning to the three axes.

### Countless relational issues

For example: activism, apathy, authority, blame, boredom, bride price, caste, categorisation, charity, coercion, competition, cooperation, crime, curiosity, disgust, dowry, economics, embarrassment, envy, equality, family, fate, forgiveness, freedom, games, guilt, heroism, hierarchy, history, honesty, human nature, humility, justice, law, leadership, luck, manners, mercy, mother nature, need, optimism, pessimism, philanthropy, power, price, pride, prudery, punishment, rank, recreation, religion, repentance, resource management, responsibility, rights, risk,

ritual, scarcity, self-identity, sex, shame, sin, sport, status, suffering, surprise, time, trust, truth, value, vengeance.

Relational issues are the rational concerns (values, preferences, beliefs, attitudes...) we must take into account to live together; they are the terms with which we justify ourselves and by which we hold others to account. They make up the social, ethical, and political drama of our lives and each finds its place on the axes. If an issue were found which does not fit on the three dimensions, WOLT would be falsified. Lists of axial issues can be found in Appendix 2; these provide lots of suggestions for the would-be falsifier.

### **Deduced relationships**

The WOLT *types*, *axes*, and *relational issues* do not come from reality; they are *deduced* theoretically. That is, they are derived by deducing the consequences of *hypothetical* relationship between *hypothetical* concepts. This “hypothetico-deductive” method is the usual, probably universal, way theories are constructed in the natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, meteorology, etc. Such theoretical deduction is rare in social science. The only social field to routinely use it is economics which is also the only social science to have developed a body of theory and to have become central to human decision making.

It is this hypothetico-deductive process which delivers the WOLT *types* and the three *axes* which interrelate the types. The theoretical deduction is set out in Chapters 1 and 2. The *relational issues* which go on the axes are derived or discovered throughout, as are the manifold characteristics of the types.

It is possible to appreciate the five types and their manifestations without grasping the technical 3D structure. However, it is the 3D interrelationship which provides theoretical falsifiability, provides the predictions for falsifiability in reality, and allows the

properties of the types to be elaborated, interrelated, and extended.

### **WOLT's scope**

Society is made of thoughts and WOLT is a theory of the way people think society works. Or, perhaps, it is a theory of the way people think society into existence. It is a theory of morality, or rather, of five moralities. When I was assessing members of the public to test the theory, I would say I was testing their political personality but it would be more accurate to call WOLT a theory of social or ethical personality.

WOLT, like economics, assumes people are perfectly rational but where economics assumes rationality and the individual, WOLT assumes rationality and society. Economics premises perfect competition but not perfect cooperation or perfect coercion and thus finds only the Type 1 individualist—and that only as modern “homo economicus.” Where economics assumes individuals act in their self-interest, WOLT just assumes that individuals interact socially.

Being premised on rationality and sociality, WOLT has no place for the emotional or the purely personal. Emotion is socially important and we can be emotional about our rational beliefs but WOLT itself is strictly rational. It reveals which beliefs belong together and how different beliefs, and sets of beliefs, are interrelated. As such, it shows the relationship of every rational, social thing to every other rational, social thing.□