

COMMUNAL ORIENTATION SCALE (COS)

Reference:

Clark, M., Ouellette, R., Powell, M., & Milberg, S. (1987). Recipient's mood, relationship type, and helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 94–103.

Description of Measure:

A 14-item scale that measures how much an individual believes that others' needs and feelings are important in social relationships, as well as how much one believes that people should help others and care for one another's welfare.

Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic of me) to 7 (extremely characteristic of me).

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Thompson, L. & DeHarpport, T. (1998). Relationships, goal incompatibility, and communal orientations in negotiations. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 20, 33-44.

We examined how relationships' perceived goal incompatibility and communal orientation affected the expectations people bring to negotiation, their actual performance, and retrospective judgments of the situation. Pairs of friends who perceived the task as a problem-solving situation and who were similar in communal orientation were most likely to capitalize on joint interests; however, when friends were dissimilar in communal orientation, their ability to identify compatible issues declined precipitously. Friends who were high in communal orientation were more likely to allocate resources equally among each other than were friends low in communal orientation. When friends negotiated car deals, they judged themselves to be less cooperative and as making fewer concessions when they were high in communal orientation than when they were low in communal orientation. We conclude that the impact of relationships on negotiation performance and judgment depends upon perceived goal incompatibility as well as participants' chronic attitudes toward relationships.

Fiske, A. P. (1992). The four elementary forms of sociality: Framework for a unified theory of social relations. *Psychological Review*, 99, 689-723.

The motivation, planning, production, comprehension, coordination, and evaluation of human social life may be based largely on combinations of 4 psychological models. In communal sharing, people treat all members of a category as equivalent. In authority ranking, people attend to their positions in a linear ordering. In equality matching, people keep track of the imbalances among them. In market pricing, people orient to ratio values. Cultures use different rules to implement the 4 models. In addition to an array of inductive evidence from many cultures and approaches, the theory has been supported by ethnographic field work and 19 experimental studies using 7 different methods testing 6 different cognitive predictions on a wide range of Ss from 5 cultures.



Chen, S., Lee-Chai, A., & Bargh, J. A. (2001). Relationship orientation as a moderator of the effects of social power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 173-187.

This research examined the hypothesis that the concept of power is mentally associated with different goals for individuals with a communal versus an exchange relationship orientation (M. S. Clark & J. Mills, 1979). It was predicted that communals associate power with social-responsibility goals, whereas exchangers link power with self-interest goals. Thus, when power is activated, distinct goals should be ignited for communals and exchangers. Power was primed unobtrusively using semantic cues in Study 1 and using naturally occurring, environmental cues in Studies 2 and 3. Across studies, power-primed communals responded in socially responsible ways, whereas power-primed exchangers acted more in line with their self-interests. These power-goal effects occurred nonconsciously. Overall, the data support taking a Situation approach--one that allows for moderators such as relationship \times Person orientation--to understand power's positive and negative effects.

Scale:

Statement	(1) Extremely Uncharacteristic of Me ... (7) Extremely Characteristic of Me						
1. It bothers me when other people neglect my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. When making a decision, I take other people's needs and feelings into account.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I'm not especially sensitive to other people's feelings.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I don't consider myself to be a particularly helpful person.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I believe people should go out of their way to be helpful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I don't especially enjoy giving others aid.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I expect people I know to be responsive to my needs and feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I often go out of my way to help another person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I believe it's best not to get involved in taking care of other people's personal needs.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I'm not the sort of person who often comes to the aid of others.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. When I have a need, I turn to others I know for help.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. When people get emotionally upset, I tend to avoid them.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. People should keep their troubles to themselves.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. When I have a need that others ignore, I'm hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scoring:

Items with an asterisk are reverse scored. Keep scoring on a continuous basis