

International and Cultural Psychology

Carl Ratner

Cooperation, Community, and Co-Ops in a Global Era

Human history is largely the story of communities, punctuated by examples of cooperatives—in fact, our level of cooperative behavior is one of the attributes that makes us most human. In recent years, however, concepts such as rugged individualism and social Darwinism have competed against cooperative ideas for supremacy, and today's climate of global economic crisis has found these “me-first” concepts wanting.

Now, an important new book posits that current political solutions to acute world problems are inadequate, and that modern society needs to look to its communal roots for recovery—and perhaps survival. *Cooperation, Community, and Co-ops in a Global Era* argues for a societal paradigm shift and details how such a transformation might be accomplished. Taking the evolutionary long view, its author demonstrates how cooperative principles can make a social system not just more efficient and less wasteful of time and resources, but also more democratic, empowering, and fulfilling for everyone involved. In making this compelling case, he:

- Explains how humans are hard-wired for cooperation, and identifies its psychological competencies.
- Contrasts aspects of cooperative enterprises before and after the Industrial Revolution.
- Provides illustrative examples from European cooperative institutions.
- Analyzes modern social paradoxes such as cooperative individuality.
- Examines the strengths and shortcomings of the modern international cooperative movement.
- Explicates a cooperative social philosophy: its structures, behaviors, and values.

Social and cultural psychologists as well as sociologists will find *Cooperation, Community, and Co-ops in a Global Era* worth reading, discussing, and debating.

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