

Mindset

Authored by
mohammad looti

June 12, 2026

RECOMMENDED CITATION

mohammad looti (2026). *Mindset*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=38384>

In decision theory and general systems theory, a mindset is a set of assumptions, methods or notations held by one or more people or groups of people which is so established that it creates a powerful incentive within these people or groups to continue to adopt or accept prior behaviors, choices, or tools. This phenomenon of cognitive bias is also sometimes described as mental inertia, "groupthink", or a "paradigm", and it is often difficult to counteract its effects upon analysis and decision making processes.

On the positive side a mindset can also be seen as incident of a person's Weltanschauung or philosophy of life. For example there has been quite some interest in the typical mindset of an entrepreneur.

Mindsets in politics

A well-known example is the Cold War mindset" prevalent in both the U.S. and USSR, which included absolute trust in two-player game theory, in the integrity of command chain, in control of nuclear materials, and in the mutual assured destruction of both in the case of war. Although most consider that this mindset usefully served to prevent an attack by either country, the assumptions underlying deterrence theory have made assessments of the efficacy of the Cold War mindset a matter of some controversy.

Most theorists consider that the key responsibility of an embedded power group is to challenge the assumptions which comprise the group's own mindset. According to these commentators, power groups which fail to review or revise their mindsets with sufficient regularity cannot hold power indefinitely, as a single mindset is unlikely to possess the flexibility and adaptability needed to address all future events. For example, the variations in mindset between Democratic Party and Republican Party Presidents in the U.S. may have made that country more able to challenge assumptions than the Kremlin with its more static bureaucracy.

Modern military theory attempts to challenge entrenched mindsets in dealing with asymmetric warfare, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In combination, these threats represent "a revolution in military affairs" and require very rapid adaptation to new threats and circumstances. In this context, the cost of not implementing adaptive mindsets cannot be afforded.

Collective mindsets

Naturally, the question regarding the embodiment of a collective mindset comes to mind. Erikson's (1974) analysis of group-identities and what he calls a life-plan seems relevant here. He recounts the example of American Indians, who were meant to undergo a reeducation process meant to imbue a modern "life-plan" which aimed for a house and a richness expressed by filled bank

account. Erikson writes that the Indians' collective historic identity as buffalo hunters was oriented around such fundamentally different reasons/goals that even communication about the divergent "life plans" was itself difficult.

There is a double relation between the institution embodying for example an entrepreneurial mindset and its entrepreneurial performance. Firstly, an institution with an entrepreneurial philosophy will set entrepreneurial goals and strategies as a whole, but maybe even more importantly, it will foster an entrepreneurial milieu, allowing each entity to pursue emergent opportunities. In short, philosophical stance codified in the mind hence as mindset lead to a climate which in turn causes values which lead to practice.

Collective mindsets in this sense are described in such works as Hutchin's *Cognition in the wild* (1995), who analyzes a whole team of naval navigators as the cognitive unit or as computational system, or Senges' *Knowledge entrepreneurship in universities* (2007). There are also parallels to the emerging field of "collective intelligence" (e.g. (Zara, 2004)) and exploiting the *Wisdom of the crowds* (Surowiecki, 2005) of stakeholders. Zara notes that since collective reflection is more explicit, discursive and conversational it therefore needs a good *gestell*--especially when it comes to information and communication technology.