Taboo Trade-offs: Reactions to Transactions That Transgress the Spheres of Justice

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Taboo trade-offs violate deeply held normative intuitions about the integrity, even sanctity, of certain relationships and the moral-political values underlying those relationships. For instance, if asked to estimate the monetary worth of one's children, of one's loyalty to one's country, or of acts of friendship, people find the questions more than merely confusing or cognitively intractable: they find such questions themselves morally offensive. This article draws on Fiske's relational theory and Tetlock's value pluralism model: (a) to identify the conditions under which people are likely to treat trade-offs as taboo; (b) to describe how people collectively deal with trade-offs that become problematic; (c) to specify the conceptual components of moral outrage and the factors that affect the intensity of reactions to various explicit trade-offs; (d) to explore the various strategies that decision-makers—required by resource scarcity and institutional roles to confront taboo trade-offs—use to deflect the wrath of censorious observers; (e) to offer a method of dispute resolution based on pluralism.

From a microeconomic perspective, all values can ultimately be reduced to a single utility metric. We live in a world of scarce resources. Rational decision-makers appreciate that they must make painful trade-offs, even if doing so requires attaching monetary values to things that we prefer to think of as priceless, such as children, body organs, endangered species, and basic rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship (Keeney & Raiffa, 1976). In this spirit, many behavioral

theories of decision-making assume that there are compensatory relationships among values, and that trade-offs among values can be captured through mathematical formalisms such as indifference curves and trade-off functions (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1992).

However, converging observations from political philosophy, social psychology, and cultural anthropology suggest that people are extremely resistant to certain types of value trade-offs. This resistance is rooted, in part, in the familiar problem of cognitive incommensurability. People reject certain trade-offs because the requisite mental operations (interdimensional comparisons) are unfamiliar or difficult. It is hard to judge how much of value *x* one is willing to sacrifice to achieve a given increment in value *y* if one has neither personal experience nor cultural standards to draw upon in making such judgments. But the resistance also runs deeper: there are *moral* limits to fungibility. People reject certain comparisons because they feel that seriously considering the relevant trade-offs would undercut their self-images and social identities as moral beings. Here it is useful to invoke the less familiar concept of constitutive incommensurability—a notion that plays an important role in both modern moral philosophy (Lukes, 1991; Raz, 1982) and in classic sociological theory (Durkheim, 1925/1973). Two values are constitutively incommensurable whenever people believe that entering one value into a trade-off calculus with the other subverts or undermines that value. This means that our relationships with each other preclude certain comparisons among values. In Joseph Raz's (1992, p. 22) words: "It is impoverishing to compare the value of a marriage with an increase in salary. Likewise, it diminishes one's potentiality as a human being to put a value on one's friendship in terms of improved living conditions." To transgress this normative boundary, to attach a monetary value to one's friendships or one's children or one's loyalty to one's country, is to disqualify oneself from certain social roles. People feel that making such an evaluation demonstrates that one is not a true friend, or parent, or citizen. In brief, to compare is to destroy. Merely making explicit the possibility of certain trade-offs weakens, corrupts, and degrades one's moral standing.

This article develops an explanatory framework for taboo trade-offs. By a taboo trade-off, we mean any explicit mental comparison or social transaction that violates deeply-held normative intuitions about the integrity, even sanctity, of certain forms of relationship and of the moral-political values that derive from those relationships. We draw on two theoretical traditions—Fiske's relational theory and Tetlock's value pluralism model—to answer three categories of questions:

1. *When do people treat trade-offs as taboo?* Here we find it useful to go beyond Durkheim's classic distinction between the secular and sacred realms and to propose a more conceptually differentiated taxonomy. Relational theory identifies four elementary forms for organizing, interpreting, coordinating, and evaluating social life. *We suggest that people view trade-offs as impermissible and respond with varying degrees of indignation whenever the trade-offs require assessing the*

value of something governed by the socially meaningful relations and operations of one relational model in the terms of a disparate relational model. Trade-offs between distinct relational modes are more than simply bizarre, illegitimate, and reprehensible: they threaten the fundamental organization of social relationships and society.

In each culture there are a myriad distinctive prototypes and precedents that determine which mode of relationship governs which entities. *Hence a trade-off between two entities that both belong to the same relational domain in one culture may be commonplace and unremarkable; in another culture where the same two entities properly belong to two disparate relational domains, such a trade-off may be taboo.*

2. *How do observers respond to violations of taboo trade-offs?* Drawing on various pilot data, we suggest that *violations of taboo trade-offs are not just cognitively confusing; they trigger negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions. The intensity of the outrage response is related to the "distance" and "direction" between the elementary relational models whose boundaries have been transgressed, as well as to the direction of the trade-off.* For example, people usually react most negatively to the application of Market Pricing procedures to relationships governed by Communal norms; people are less disturbed by applications of Communal norms to relations that they assume should be governed by prices (such an act may even seem "nice").

3. Decision-makers are nevertheless required by resource scarcity and/or their social roles to make trade-offs that cross relational boundaries. How do decision-makers avoid social censure? Here we find it useful to draw on the value-pluralism model to identify a variety of psychological and institutional *tactics that policy-makers adopt in order to deflect blame*. These tactics include following common-sense practices that *compartmentalize social life, explicitly invoking distinctions among spheres of justice* (e.g., family versus work), *obfuscating the trade-offs*, and adopting decision-avoidance tactics such as *buckpassing and procrastination*. From the standpoint of political expediency or even social peace, honest, integratively complex reasoning that renders the trade-offs transparent is likely to be the least effective strategy.

4. *How should policy-makers approach taboo trade-offs?* The two dominant answers in the literature—via democratic mechanisms of electoral accountability and via technocratic mechanisms of cost-benefit analysis—have been much discussed. Both fail, however, to come to grips with the qualitative complexity of social life and the irreducible pluralism of our moral intuitions. We sketch a third procedural answer—a pluralizing approach that may preempt needlessly bitter and polarizing debates by encouraging *self-reflective thought on the cultural implementation rules and boundary conditions for competing/complementary relational models*.

We focus more on political issues than on trade-offs within organizations, relationships, or individuals, but we draw examples from each level of analysis.

We believe that our framework applies to a wide range of choices, public and private, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

I. RELATIONAL THEORY

Relational theory posits four elementary models that generate and give motivational and normative force to social relationships (Fiske 1991, 1992). *Within the cultural domains in which each of the four respective models operate, people can usually make trade-offs without great difficulty; between the domains of disparate models, comparisons are problematic and ambiguous.* Let us begin by characterizing the four fundamental models.

Communal Sharing divides the world into distinct equivalence classes, permitting differentiation or contrast, but no numerical comparison. For example, everyone in a community may share in certain benefits (national defense, police protection) or resources (national parks, clean air) without differentiation, while noncitizens may be excluded entirely.

Authority Ranking constructs an ordinal ranking among persons or social goods, thus permitting lexical decision rules. For example, veterans or minorities may be given priority in access to government jobs, or United States federal law may have precedence over state and local laws.

Equality Matching is a relational structure that defines socially meaningful intervals that can be added or subtracted to make valid choices. For example, the U.S. can decide to bomb a Libyan army barracks in tit-for-tat retaliation for Libya's sponsorship of the bombing of a U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon: $1 - 1 = 0$, which "evens the score."

Market Pricing is a social structure that makes ratios meaningful, so that it is possible to make decisions that combine quantities and values of diverse entities. Thus we can draw up a federal budget that explicitly weighs competing priorities against each other or select an investment portfolio designed to maximize risk-adjusted return. In these types of decisions, the criterion is some kind of ratio: e.g., budget deficit as percentage of GDP, or price/earnings comparisons.

Relational theory thus describes the basic structures and operations that are socially meaningful. It distinguishes four principal schemas for organizing, coordinating, evaluating, and contesting all aspects of relationships, including group decision-making, ideology, and moral judgments. Relational theory posits that these four models are discrete structures: there are no intermediate forms. People think about their social lives in terms of these four models (for an overview and references to the evidence, see Fiske & Haslam, 1996). As social values, they are fundamental (irreducible, basic), and they are also incommensurable, in the sense that there is no general, systematic, higher-level schema that mediates among them.

Relational theory also posits that these four models are open, abstract, or indeterminate: they cannot be used to guide behavior or evaluation without the use

of implementation rules that specify when they apply, to what and to whom, and how. Cultures provide most of the broad implementation rules, but these implementation rules change, and they are often ambiguous at the margins or in novel circumstances. Within a culture, there may be vigorous debate about some aspects of some implementation rules, while others are so taken for granted that they seem unchallengeably natural. For example, in the United States most people take for granted the Communal Sharing precept that we have some obligation to be compassionate to our fellow beings and preserve them from harm, but there is agonizing debate over whether an owl or a two month-old fetus should count as a fellow being.

Implementation rules specify when and where to apply each model, with respect to what aspects of which entities. For example, any of the models can be used to organize a group decision: according to the collective consensus of the whole body (Communal Sharing); according to the will of the leaders and the powers that they delegate (Authority Ranking); according to a fair election based on one-person, one-vote suffrage (Equality Matching); or according to cost-benefit analyses and the resultant equilibrium between supply and demand (Market Pricing). Furthermore, the use of the models may be nested or recursive. For example, each model can be used ideologically to justify the selection of any of the four models as a mechanism for making social decisions. But in the final analysis, there is nothing in each model that tells us when, where, and how it should be applied. The models have no inherent content and no intrinsic referents.

This brings us to the question of grounds (or justifications) for implementation rules. The four relational models respectively define four ultimate grounds for value and moral judgment. But they do not provide foundations for making judgments about their own implementations. The moral precept of Authority Ranking is, "Do as you are commanded by your superiors," or "Respect and defer to your betters." But Authority Ranking is neutral with respect to criteria for determining rank. If people are choosing between hierarchies based on age and hierarchies based on performance, Authority Ranking provides no guidance for the decision. Authority Ranking does not answer the question of whether obedience, deference, and respect should be accorded to people as a function of age and gender and race, as a function of achievement or office, or on any other basis.[1]

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[1] Any of the four models can be applied reflexively to such questions, however. For example, people could argue in an Authority Ranking mode that God ordained that we should obey and honor our elders. The problem is that people can also argue that God (the same God, or some other) established that we should rank people according to their performance, their contribution to society, or whatever. None of the models can ultimately arbitrate among such claims. Furthermore, people can use any of the other models to legitimate an implementation of Authority Ranking. For example, you could make the Equality Matching argument that everyone has an equal chance to become an elder, so that the most equitable norm is deference to elders. However, someone else can always use the Market Pricing argument that the ratio of benefits to costs is greatest in hierarchies based on performance, since they put the most effective people in charge. Then someone may counter with the Communal Sharing argument that authority should be based on descent and purity of lineage, with high offices going only to those who carry the blood of the founding ancestors.

Relational theory also emphasizes the important links among social relationships. Every relationship has implications for other relationships; transgressions, in particular, have ramifications that extend far into the web of social relationships. Furthermore, most dyadic interactions and groups are built out of a combination of the four basic models, implemented in diverse ways in each social dimension. All societies and institutions, and most complex and extended interactions, comprise relational components drawn from more than one model (often all four models).

However, there is no metarelational schema that encompasses the four elementary models (see Fiske, 1990, 1991). Various contingencies link specific implementations of the four models. Innumerable schemas, roles, and institutions consist of coordinated combinations of the models. But there is no comprehensive, overarching metamodel that governs the choices or conflicts among models. They do not form a logically integrated, coherently regulated social *system*.

This means that there is no simple, determinate, conclusive resolution of choices among the four respective models. *When they conflict, when it is necessary to compare and weigh alternatives, there is no ultimate criterion for making the necessary trade-offs.* This fundamental indeterminacy is one source of individual anxiety and collective anomie whenever routine, taken-for-granted implementations become problematic. As we shall see in the second section of this paper, people regard such trade-offs between models as illegitimate, and may censure those who explicitly discuss or make trade-offs among distinct models. Consequently, decision-makers will attempt to avoid taking identifiable public positions regarding such trade-offs: they will delay trade-offs, pass the buck to others, or obfuscate and conceal any trade-offs they cannot avoid.

Relational theory thus suggests some hypotheses about policy debate and trade-offs. First, we offer hypotheses about how people implement the relational models: we characterize political ideology in relational terms, describe how people deal with novel issues, and consider the ways in which decision-making schemas and types of accountability affect distributive allocations and other substantive decisions. Second, we develop an account of taboo trade-offs that makes predictions concerning (1) when people treat trade-offs as both meaningful and legitimate; (2) the limits on commensurability within each respective relational model; (3) the tendency of people to "compartmentalize" relational models into segregated spheres of activity; and (4) the outrage people express when confronted by unthinkable trade-offs across relational models.

A. HOW PEOPLE SELECT THE RELATIONAL MODEL TO USE

A culture is a more or less shared system of models and meanings. People within a culture tend to share an implicit consensus about where and how to implement each of the relational models. This is what makes coherent social

relations possible. But complete consensus is an ideal case; consensus is never complete because the implementation rules are not explicit, because they are always more or less in flux, and because there is always ambiguity about how to apply the rules to concrete cases. Consequently, it is common for there to be conflict or confusion about how to apply a model or about which model to apply (cf. Whitehead, 1993). This section considers three principles concerning how people deal with problematic implementations and the trade-offs that become apparent when people have to reflect on how to implement their relational models. First, when implementation principles are problematic, thought and debate about the actually unlimited range of possibilities tends to crystallize into a few ideological alternatives. Second, people tend to approach novel issues by seeking analogies with familiar practices. Third, policy-makers tend to make substantive decisions that are congruent with the relational model that they use to make the decision and congruent with the relational model that others will use to hold them accountable.

A(i). Political Ideologies

Hypothesis 1: Political ideologies can be modeled as preferences for particular relational models and/or preferences for particular implementation rules concerning how, when, and with regard to whom each of the models should apply in salient problematic domains. Ideologies may also specify precepts about how to combine the models.

Cultures contain congeries of prototypes and precedents that guide people in constituting and organizing their ongoing social interactions. A considerable degree of implicit consensus is necessary for meaningful, predictable, coordinated social relations. But the consensus tends to be shifting and cannot be fully determinate. Most implementations are unreflective and seem completely natural, but issues sometimes arise and become contentious. When people disagree on the collective implementation of relational models, the issues tend to be formulated in terms of linked sets of implementations espoused by competing political movements or parties. These linked sets of implementations are ideologies. Political debate tends to be framed in terms of these ideologically formulated alternatives, ignoring other logically possible trade-offs. Ideologies represent frameworks for resolving implementation debates with reference to ontologies and norms. Thus ideologies both highlight problematic trade-offs and specify solutions for trade-offs (albeit scripted ones).

To a first order of approximation, political ideologies represent predilections for particular models. (See Douglas, 1978, for a similar theory based on the analytic dimensions of grid and group.) Thus, fascism and feudalism would be roughly characterized as predilections to apply Authority Ranking very broadly (in different ways). Green Party adherents apply Communal Sharing beyond the range of old-fashioned socialism, encompassing many non-human beings. Applying Market

Pricing to a broad array of domains represents a kind of libertarianism, while the use of Equality Matching as a generic political model produces a certain flavor of populist liberalism. These parallels are striking and by no means accidental. The relational theory was originally derived, in part, from Weber's distinctions among forms of ideological legitimation of political systems: Charismatic legitimation, which is a kind of Authority Ranking based on awe of the personality of one individual; Traditional legitimation, which is an ideology that connects the Communal Sharing identity of a collectivity and its ancestors to the Authority Ranking of the trustees who represent the continuity of the collectivity over time; and the Rational-Legal legitimation typical of bureaucracies, an ideology based on a Market Pricing calculus of utilitarian efficiency, linked to an Authority Ranking hierarchy of control and accountability.

A more sophisticated analysis of ideologies takes into account predilections for implementing each model in certain domains. Thus Marxism in its original form described Communal Sharing as the inevitable culmination of history and as the ideal fulfillment of human potential. (In practice, though, communist political systems were rather extreme forms of Authority Ranking.) The Marxist implementation of Communal Sharing applied it to the relations among workers resulting from their shared relation to the means of production, and hence their common plight and common interests. Communal Sharing looks quite different when the emphasis is placed on the shared responsibilities of all humans for the habitat that we share with future generations, and with other species. Applied in one way, the slogan of Communal Sharing is "Workers of the world, unite!" Applied in another way, the maxim is, "Love your mother [Earth]."

Still more subtle analyses take into account the distinctions among ideologies with respect to the manner in which they implement each model. Thus within the scope of Equality Matching, there is ample room for debating what constitutes equality. Opponents of affirmative action, for instance, often invoke equality with as much vehemence as do proponents.

Ideologies can mix models, but it is interesting to observe that most ideologies emphasize a single predominant model. As a result, ideological activists may be more monistic than ordinary citizens—who rarely subscribe to a unitary point of view and display little cross-issue consistency in their policy preferences. It would be misleading, however, to imply that all political ideologies are equally monistic. Content-analytic studies of political elites—U.S. senators and British and Italian parliamentarians—have shown that advocates of moderate left and centrist causes are more likely than extreme leftists or conservatives to engage in explicit integratively complex weighing of values linked to different relational models (such as "equality," in the Communal Sharing sense of undifferentiated equivalence or sameness, versus "equality," in the Equality Matching sense of separate-but-evenly-balanced, versus economic liberty—a core value of Market Pricing; and order—a core value of Authority Ranking). Content-analytic studies also find that people rarely make explicit integrative efforts to bridge competing relational values

(in these studies, average complexity scores rarely reach scale levels indicative of integrative trade-off reasoning). But explicit integrative efforts are significantly more common among policy elites who are accountable for allocating scarce resources than among policy elites whose primary role is to obstruct, oppose, and criticize those in charge (Tetlock, 1981, 1984; Tetlock, Hannum, & Micheletti, 1984; Tetlock, Bernzweig, & Gallant, 1985).

A(ii). Precedent and Prototypes

Hypothesis 2: When people face novel situations that raise the possibility of alternative implementation rules, debate will revolve around analogies to more familiar situations that people use as prototype implementations of the competing relational models.

The cultural implementation "rules" are usually not propositional statements; they are more like traditions in which each implementation is a prototype (or occasionally a counterpoint or even a negative contrast) for further implementations. But prototypes and precedents and rules are merely guides for making choices; the complexity and variability of the world require people to use these guides intelligently and creatively. This means that there is always ambiguity about which model(s) apply and how to apply them—leaving more or less space for interpretation, and hence for contention.

As the study of law clearly demonstrates, people can reasonably or unreasonably invoke innumerable precedents for any given case. Then people can argue analogically that, for all intents and purposes, the current case is "just like" the prototypes and precedents to which they wish to make reference. Or they may argue that the current case differs in crucial respects from any given prototype that they oppose. Since any entity has innumerable features and contextual properties, innumerable analogies can be generated, assimilative or contrastive. However, some features are more salient than others, given the properties of the real world, in conjunction with the perceptual, cognitive, somatic, and cultural apparatus that humans use to assimilate the world. Hence some analogies are more compelling than others. For example, if in some new domain of social life we have to decide whether to relate to male humans in the same manner we relate, on the one hand, to female humans or, on the other, in the way we relate to male gorillas, one choice seems more apt than the other.

Cognitive and normative pressures to generate integrative metarelational analyses should be most intense when a problem primes two or more contradictory precedents that suggest the appropriateness of fundamentally different relational schemas. For instance, a political leader who values the traditional Authority Ranking prerogatives of national sovereignty and also values the efficiency of free trade (Market Pricing) may experience acute dissonance when confronted by trade pacts such as NAFTA and GATT that enhance the latter value at some cost to the

former. Or a politician who believes that there is a shared humanitarian responsibility to alleviate intense suffering (CS) but respects the need to preserve traditional prerogatives of national sovereignty (AR) may be deeply divided over the wisdom of intervening in the internal affairs of nations where there are human rights abuses, murder, or starvation. On the one hand, we don't want to be idle while another holocaust unfolds; on the other hand, we don't want to create Munich-like precedents that permit larger neighbors to invade smaller neighbors with impunity (Tanzania - Uganda, Vietnam - Kampuchea). Cases like this highlight tensions between relational models and illustrate the need to articulate new boundary conditions for the implementation of these models in the international arena (cf. Tetlock's [1986] value pluralism model).

A(iii). Decision-Making Schema and Accountability

Hypothesis 3a: Each of the four relational models can be used as a schema for making group decisions. Although it is possible to use any model to make a decision to implement any other model, *decision-makers will tend to implement the model that corresponds to the relational structure in which they make the decision*. Thus a monarch will tend to decree Authority Ranking policies, a legislature will tend to ratify Equality Matching policies, and a Quaker meeting will tend to adopt Communal Sharing policies. A cost-benefit analysis of alternatives or a decision based on the supply and demand of the market will tend to result in selection of the Market Pricing alternative. For example, if a group that makes decisions by voting is charged with writing a constitution or setting up an organization, they will tend to create egalitarian government and institutions. Note that this is not logically necessary: some legislatures have established monarchies, while some monarchies have established legislatures.

Hypothesis 3b: Decision-makers may be accountable under social and ideological systems based on any of the models. Although it is possible to use any model to legitimize the use of any other model, *decision-makers will tend to make a substantive choice favoring the model that corresponds to the model under which they are accountable*. Hence if people must legitimate a distributive decision with reference to Authority Ranking norms, they will tend to choose a hierarchically differentiated distribution. Likewise, the expectation of having to justify a decision in terms of Market Pricing values will favor implementation of a Market Pricing choice. So, for example, a corporate board with active stockholders will be more likely to buy components on the open market, while the owner of a privately held, single-owner company will be more likely to opt for the hierarchical mode of making components within the company. (Readers who consider this prediction too obvious should compare it to the predictions that flow from Williamson's [1985] influential approach to institutional economics that depicts subcontracting decisions as attempts to maximize long-term profitability by minimizing transac-

tion-costs.) A religious order whose members regard themselves as accountable to an authoritarian God is more likely to establish a hierarchical church structure than a religious order with a theology focused on brotherhood and sisterhood. If the justice principle that people use to judge distribution is equity, then decision-makers will naturally choose to allocate most resources in proportion to contributions. In short, the prevailing relational model will constrain the range of acceptable justifications (vocabularies of motives) which, in turn, will constrain the range of positions that decision-makers regard as politically viable. In a sense, this hypothesis is a variant of the acceptability heuristic (see Tetlock, 1992).

B. THINKABLE AND UNTHINKABLE TRADE-OFFS

The previous section briefly considered the ways in which ideology, tradition, and political systems affect the implementation of relational models within a culture when these implementations become publicly problematic. This sets the stage for addressing the central question of what kinds of comparisons and transactions people take for granted, and what kinds of explicit trade-offs people regard as unthinkable.

B(i). Trade-Offs Within the Domain of One Mode

Hypothesis 4: When there is a consensus about cultural implementation rules that place two entities within the domain of the same relational model, trade-offs will be comparatively clear—albeit not necessarily painless—to the extent that the entities are readily commensurable with reference to the relational terms of the culturally applicable model.

Exchange and reciprocity occur within each model, although the respective models define different kinds of meaningful relations and operations. In Communal Sharing, for example, the unit of ownership, use, and consumption is the dyad or collectivity, not the individual. Hence people do not keep track of who gives what to whom, there is no bookkeeping of obligations, and no debts are incurred. "What's mine is yours." Close kinship tends to be organized in this mode, and when it is, people often are willing to make enormous sacrifices for each other without expecting anything particular in return (Fiske, 1991; Fortes, 1970, 1983). Trade-offs within a Communal unit seem natural, and people's obligations to each other are, in principle, unlimited.

Nevertheless, complications arise because people always participate in more than one distinct Communal Sharing relationship, in multiple Authority Ranking relationships, and in Equality Matching and Market Pricing relationships with multiple partners. This means, first, that we often have to make trade-offs among relationships of the same type. When offered a new job, you have to consider the

cost of the move, the cost of housing and schools in the old and new locations, and such factors as the time and energy involved in commuting at each location. This is a simple example of a trade-off within the domain of a single model: Market Pricing. There may be a lot of work to do to make a decision; the costs and the benefits incurred may be high, the uncertainty may be great, and you may have major regrets if it turns out that you have made the wrong choice. But the choice is clearly defined: it makes sense. If your platoon leader tells you to do something, and the general countermands his orders, it's not difficult to make a decision. If two buyers make distinctive cash bids on your commodity, you can easily decide between the offers.

These conflicts between two relationships of the same type may be horribly agonizing when both ties are strong and partially or completely irreconcilable. But trade-offs between two relationships of the same type are comprehensible and potentially resolvable, however painful the consequences. In principle, it is possible to assess the relative motivational and normative strength of the two ties and make a choice. Ambivalence may remain, and people may experience great regret about the relationship they have given up, but the bonds are comparable. When motivations collide with norms, so that "want" is at odds with "ought," the case is more difficult, and sometimes tragic. But such trade-offs are perfectly meaningful and intelligible.

However, each of the models constitutes a distinct set of socially meaningful relations and operations. That is why comparisons that are clear within one model may be ambiguous and disturbing within another. Market Pricing provides the most complex medium for trade-offs using ratios; Equality Matching enables interval comparisons using addition and subtraction; Authority Ranking makes rank-ordering feasible; Communal Sharing provides only categorical distinctions. The implications of these differences are spelled out in Hypothesis 5, below.

B(ii). Limits to Meaningful Trade-offs

Hypothesis 5: People will regard trade-offs as natural and intelligible only up to the limit of the socially meaningful relations and operations defined under the relevant relational structure.

Communal Sharing resembles a categorical or nominal system of relations in which the only socially meaningful distinctions are class membership. Authority Ranking resembles an ordinal scale in which asymmetrical differences are socially significant, but other kinds of quantitative comparisons are unintelligible. When people are using Equality Matching, they can make interval comparisons, as well as adding and subtracting intervals to calculate what is required to balance an interaction. However, within the framework of Equality Matching, ratios have no social significance, and there is no social mechanism for combining mixed baskets of entities of different kinds (since there is no distributive law for combining

addition and multiplication). The relational structure of Market Pricing gives meaning and social value to proportions such as prices, wages, rents, taxes, tithes, and interest rates. (For a precise axiomatic development of these relational structures, see Chapter 9 in Fiske, 1991.)

If two entities both fall within the cultural domain of Market Pricing, ratio comparisons between them will make good sense. But if they both fall within the domain that is culturally defined as structured by Authority Ranking, only ordinal comparisons will seem valid, comprehensible, and determinate. If circumstances push people to make choices that require interval or ratio comparisons among entities that the culture defines as normally falling within the domain of Communal Sharing or Authority Ranking, decision-makers will be perplexed or confused: the problem is unintelligible within the relevant relational structure. Similarly, people will not know how to respond if they are framing their social relations in Equality Matching terms and they are faced with strange demands for analyses using ratios and comparisons of mixed baskets of unlike entities (requiring the distributive law).

a. Communal Sharing. Imagine your lover saying to you, "I want more kisses; I'll hug you twice as much if you'll kiss me twice as much." Or your lover offers, "I'll smile at you five times if you'll hold my hand twice." How would you react? Kisses, hugs, smiles, and hand-holding are normally expressive of love, and performatively constitutive of it—until you start to make trade-offs among them. To exchange them contingently and proportionately destroys their constitutive meaning. Contemplate falling in love with someone; he takes you out to a small restaurant, and after the meal he leans over the table and says, "Wasn't that a great meal! I figure you owe me three copulations." How romantic! The constitutive rules of Western love have been violated in a manner suggesting that the man perceives your interaction as essentially a market pricing relationship between prostitute and client.

Making trade-off contingencies explicit jeopardizes Communal Sharing relationships. Moreover, when either party merely starts to keep track of how much they give and how much they get, a Communal Sharing relationship is in trouble. The very act of keeping accounts (whether in ordinal, interval, or ratio terms) seriously undermines the relationship, which is constituted by categorical equivalence. Even to remind the other of asymmetries is unkind and distancing: how do you react if your significant other tells you "I do more housework than you?" or "I earn more money than you"? If your spouse says, "I earn all of the money, so you should do all of the housework," you might wonder whether your marriage is based on love or pragmatic convenience. Of course, in many cultures (and in the West for many centuries) solid marriages are based on mutually shared models of Authority Ranking, Equality Matching, or even Market Pricing. But how would you have felt as a child if your mother had offered to take care of you when you were sick, provided that you signed a contract to pay her $30 per hour for her nursing care (plus time-and-a-half for overtime) when you reached age 21—with interest compounded daily? In contemporary Western cultures, such a proposition is cruelly

bizarre: if meant seriously, it is a repudiation of maternal love. In a Communal Sharing relationship, caring for the other person when they need care is not contingent on anything they give in return.

b. Equality Matching. Trade-offs within the sphere of Equality Matching only make sense when the comparisons are among entities that are socially equated; "favors," "turns," and "tits for tats" can then be added and subtracted to determine the balance or imbalance in a relationship. Suppose you belong to a car pool in which you and three other people take turns driving each other to work. Because of car troubles and other commitments, at a certain point you have driven three times, and the other members have each driven five times. It is clear that you need to drive two more times to make up the difference and restore the balance in the relationship. That calculation requires only addition and subtraction of turns. Now suppose that a fifth person wants to join the car pool. She points out that she has a Mercedes, much quieter and more comfortable than any of your cars. So she proposes, rather than driving every fifth day, that she drive only every eighth time. How would you feel about her proposal? It would probably seem inappropriate and make you feel uncomfortable. Besides being gauche and selfish, her proposal is difficult to assess: should you all calculate that rides in her car are worth 8/5 of a ride in any of the other four cars? Is the time and trouble she saves herself by driving 5/8 as often as you do worth the benefits of the more comfortable car she supplies when she does drive? These are ratio questions, and ratios are not meaningful in the Equality Matching context of a car pool. Consequently, the trade-off she offers seems peculiar, inappropriate, and somewhat offensive. Her offer is incompatible with the constitutive rules of a car pool, and by having made the proposal she has raised doubts about the prospects for establishing a valid Equality Matching relationship with her. Note that it is not the intellectual problem that leads to these reactions: people make equivalent implicit trade-offs when they decide what car to *buy*. But purchases are organized in Market Pricing terms, while car pools are not.

Similar issues arise if people face trade-offs between two or more distinct spheres of Equality Matching. For example, suppose a neighbor belongs to your car pool and to your baby-sitting coop as well. You owe her three rides to work, and she owes you two evenings of baby-sitting; on the other hand, you have had her to dinner twice, and she has only had you over once. You are moving out of the neighborhood tomorrow; how can you balance your social obligations with respect to Equality Matching? Would a big bouquet of flowers meet the outstanding social obligations? From you to her, or from her to you? This question has no normative answer, since there is no socially appropriate, culturally meaningful way of making trade-offs among baby-sitting, car-pool rides, dinner invitations, and bouquets. Each is a separate sphere of Equality Matching, and there is no medium for comparing and equating them: they operate independently, without any common currency. As Walzer (1983) argues with regard to matters of social justice, each of these spheres of equality has to be balanced separately. Lacking ratios and the

distributive law, disparate spheres of exchange cannot be combined into a single metric of social valuation.

c. Authority Ranking. Consider making trade-offs within the framework of Authority Ranking relationships. Imagine the reaction in boot camp when a recruit suggests to the drill sergeant, "Sergeant, if you'll stop yelling at me, I'll salute, but you'll have to promise to stop calling me names." Or suppose that the recruit explains to the drill sergeant, "At the recruiting station, they said I would be assigned to computer maintenance, so I don't really need to do all these push-ups." Quid-pro-quo based on bargaining between members and leaders or special treatment based on implicit prior contracts may be easy to arrange at Club Med, but not in boot camp.

Authority Ranking entails meaningful social ordering but leaves intervals and ratios undefined. Intervals and ratios lack consensual social significance in the context of Authority Ranking. Hence in Authority Ranking relationships, trade-offs that require interval or ratio comparisons are likely to be ambiguous, perplexing, and inconsistent; also, participants are likely to have difficulty agreeing on the appropriate terms for interval or ratio exchanges, and may find it awkward to legitimate such trade-offs. Enemies exchanging prisoners of war, for example, might trade person for person, officer for officer, or general for general, but (supposing that prisoner exchanges tend to be governed by Equality Matching) we hypothesize that they would find it more difficult to evaluate and reach agreement on how many lieutenants to exchange for two generals or how many sergeants to trade for five lieutenants. This can be done, but the negotiations will be more contentious. By the same token, suppose that when you were promoted from assistant professor to associate professor, you received a 12% raise. What raise should you receive when promoted to full professor? The ordinal relations of Authority Ranking cannot provide a definite answer to that question. Or imagine that a faculty committee is consulting with an architect designing a new psychology building. You have a fixed amount of space to divide: How many square feet of office space should full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and graduate students receive, respectively? If Authority Ranking guides the division of space, it implies an ordinal ranking of office sizes: but any appreciable differences are equally consonant with the model. This means that the architectural committee is not going to be able to find a determinate resolution of their problem by direct recourse to Authority Ranking principles alone. (The same sort of space allocation is easy, of course, if the cultural precedents indicate that office space should be distributed by a Market Pricing procedure of accepting sealed bids.)

d. Limited Commensurability. Because each model provides a different relational structure analogous to a type of measurement scale, trade-offs that would be straightforward and clear-cut within one model may be intractable or simply indefinable in another. Market Pricing facilitates the comparison of alternative baskets composed of dissimilar amounts of diverse commodities, but the other models do not. Communal Sharing provides only categories, without any opera-

tions for comparing sets of categorical ties. So if two antagonistic factions arise among your network of close friends, there is no simple algorithm by which you can make a choice among the five friendships with these people and the three friendships with those people. Authority Ranking provides ordinal precedence but no additive operations. So suppose that all of the senior military officers attempt a coup against the commander-in-chief: how can a soldier add up his duty to two field marshals, six generals, and three admirals, and then compare this total with his loyalty to the commander-in-chief? The ordinal social scale of Authority Ranking provides no defined answer to such a question.

Within any one Communal Sharing relationship, trade-offs are exchanges in only the minimal sense. No amount of giving or taking, however unilateral, undermines the relationship, provided that the participants regard the resources as a commons in the first place: indeed, CS transactions do not involve giving and taking in an individualistic sense. In this respect, Communal Sharing is the simplest relationship, since there is no comparison of what you give and what you get: within a relationship, people do not explicitly keep explicit track, so there are no "trade-offs" in the usual sense.[2]

However, conflicts between Communal Sharing with different persons pose the opposite problem. Because there is no metric for comparing Communal Sharing relationships, there is no definite mechanism for making choices. It may be highly destructive to face a trade-off between two intense Communal Sharing relationships, since each is a categorical commitment. *Romeo and Juliet* illustrates the tragedy of a conflict between the solidarity within each of two extended families and the romantic love that Romeo and Juliet have for each other. There is no ultimate resolution of the choice other than death. Even without such a feud, the communal solidarity with a person's natal family may conflict with one's communal solidarity with that person's marital family. At a minimum, the natural tendency of people in a Communal Sharing relationship to reside together cannot readily be realized by both husband and wife: if the couple is to live together although their families live in different places, at least one of the spouses must move away from his or her natal family. Indeed, the manner in which this is resolved (patrilocal versus matrilocal residence) is a crucial determinant of social structure. As this example suggests, there are often clear cultural rules or, more often, customary practices without formally articulated rules for dealing with such conflicts among competing relationships of the same type. These routinized practices resolve the otherwise irreconcilable dilemmas so long as the resolutions are taken for granted, so that people do not experience their practices as acts of choosing.

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[2] While people in a Communal Sharing relationship should not keep track of exchange ratios or worry about whether turns and shares are evenly balanced, they do pay close attention to whether the other person is generous, caring, and kind. It is possible to violate any relationship, but the criteria for judging deviations depend on the kind of 'measurement' that structures the relationship.

There is a crucial distinction to note here between the anguish about losing or destroying the sacrificed relationship and the agony of *choosing* between two important relationships. Part of the pain that people feel when they have made a decision in such situations is a function of the motivational and normative importance of the relationship that is ultimately sacrificed. However, the *choice* is often more horrible and more destructive of the person than the resultant loss itself. In the novel *Sophie's Choice*, the decision the protagonist must make between her two children is a poignant dramatization of the agony resulting from such a choice. A sadistic concentration camp guard compels Sophie to choose between her loving responsibilities to her two children. Communal Sharing bonds of this sort are categorical: incalculable, unconditional, and inviolable. Neither can be breached, and the two cannot be weighed against each other. To complicate matters further, Sophie also has a secondary but important Equality Matching obligation to care for each child without favoritism. As an extreme and limiting case, this illustrates the destructive agony of choosing when there is no relational metric for comparison.

It is interesting in this regard to note that in some West African and other cultures, there are proverbial dilemmas of just this sort that people like to pose and discuss primarily because there is no satisfactory ultimate answer (for a compilation, see Bascom, 1975). For example, suppose you are traveling in a canoe with your mother, your wife, and your daughter; the canoe tips over and you can only rescue one person. Whom do you save?

There are major consequences of the cultural differences in the specific domains in which each model operates and in the variety of domains in which people use any one model—its cultural prevalence. In particular, this theory predicts that in the domains in which people use Market Pricing, they will readily make trade-offs that involve comparisons of mixed baskets of "goods." The more prevalent Market Pricing is in any culture, the more diverse and extensive the trade-offs they will be prepared to make. In cultures in which Market Pricing operates in only a few, limited domains, many more trade-offs will be taboo.

B(iii). Trade-offs Across the Compartmentalized Domains of Disparate Models

Hypothesis 6: The implementation rules of a given culture may apply a given relational model globally to certain entities, regardless of the context. However, *implementation rules commonly operate with reference to context (in various senses), so that different models may govern the same entity under different circumstances*. In this case, the <u>contexts will tend to be isolated, so that people do not have to make explicit intermodal comparisons</u>. *If faced with explicit intermodal choices regarding some entity, people will tend to redefine the situation or otherwise avoid reconciling incommensurables.*

Consider how your mother would feel if she fed you Thanksgiving dinner and then you asked for the check; she'd think it was an offensive joke. If you insisted, it would be bewildering and hurtful. What you should do, of course, is accept the Communal nature of the meal, recognizing it as an expression and enactment of love. No specific quid pro quo would be expected; it would be most appropriate to give her an affectionate hug and a kiss of appreciation. On the other hand, if you left *without* paying the bill at a restaurant, the management would take action against you. (A hug and a kiss wouldn't resolve the matter.) In contrast, if a colleague and friend invited you over for dinner, would you ask for the bill? Would you simply appreciate the kindness, and leave it at that? Either would be a *faux pas*: you should reciprocate in kind, with a corresponding meal. Now suppose that, in recognition of your intellectual contributions, the president of the United States invited you to a state dinner. It would not be appropriate to ask for the bill, or to offer a reciprocal invitation; nor should you give the president a hug and a warm kiss. The invitation to dinner might possibly strengthen your loyalty or respect for the president, however, and you might feel indefinitely beholden to him.

The same entity, a meal in this case, can be an element in any kind of relationship. Within each type of relationship, a distinct kind of trade-off is appropriate. (And other responses beyond trade-offs will be appropriate in regard to other dimensions of the meal, such as its erotic, aggressive, demeaning, or polluting features.) Attempting an inappropriate trade-off could be interpreted as a joke, an insult, a cultural misunderstanding, or a sign of insanity. Essentially, initiating each particular kind of trade-off implies a different perception of what the relationship is; proposing a culturally inappropriate trade-off threatens to constitute the relationship as something other than what it appeared to be.

The relational models are more than simply mutually exclusive, alternative modes of constructing events, however; they may also be complementary yet compartmentalized frameworks for the same event. The same entity often enters into more than one relationship, either sequentially or simultaneously. For example, imagine an ambassador's being invited to a diplomatic reception by another ambassador. The ambassador will feel obligated to reciprocate the invitation at a later date (Equality Matching). She will be seated at the dinnertable in a place that, according to strict protocol, may reflect the order of seniority by date of appointment to the post; she should also make sure to arrive before the president of the host nation and must not leave before the president leaves (Authority Ranking). The meal she eats will have been purchased in local markets, prepared and served by paid staff (Market Pricing). The actual consumption of the food and drink will be Communal, guests helping themselves to as much as they like, and no one worrying about how much each person consumes. (Further, the ambassador's husband may eat his meal in a way that conveys erotic intentions to her; the host may make an insulting toast to get even for a perceived offense against his honor or serve some food such as pork that is polluting for some of the guests whom he regards as totally outside his Communal ingroup.)

The important point about the multiplicity of the simultaneous relational dimensions of this meal is that ordinarily they are cognitively and relationally segregated. Even when one entity, the meal, simultaneously plays a role in multiple modes of relating, these relational modes remain discrete. It is gauche, embarrassing, or offensive to make explicit trade-offs among the concurrently operative relational modes. Consider attempting to legitimate your failure to offer a reciprocal invitation by offering the excuse that you only ate crackers and drank water—nothing expensive. No one is pricing what you ate: you owe an invitation for an invitation, even if you ate next to nothing or you were ill and unable to attend. In short, people often use several relational models simultaneously with respect to different aspects of the same entity, yet the relational models are compartmentalized by routine practices and cultural models of events in such a way that people are not aware of any problematic trade-offs.

Among the inescapable trade-offs that people make is the implicit but incessant choice of how to allocate time and attention, including spatial or communicative co-presence. Every action has shadow prices or opportunity costs with regard to alternative actions it precludes. We make such choices constantly, but making such a choice *explicit* may jeopardize the relationships that have to be compared. Selection implies a preference that it may be unacceptable to express in either direction. Suppose that it's your anniversary, your wife's birthday was last week, and you are taking her out to dinner tonight to celebrate both dates. She just bought a new dress for the occasion and had her hair done. You are about to be considered for partnership in your law firm, and at 5:00 p.m. one of the senior partners tells you that she needs your help and you'll have to stay and work with her past midnight. This dilemma makes salient the fact that, in practice, at every moment of your life you must ceaselessly choose whether to devote yourself to your wife, to your bosses, or to something else. This may create some tension, but as long as a routine organizes these choices so that no one need consciously confront them, they tend to be more or less manageable. But to make an explicit trade-off such as this may provoke a crisis that threatens one relationship (or both of them).

B(iv). Trade-Offs Between Relational Modes

This brings us to the central issue of trade-offs among the four relational models. Although the distinctions are merely heuristic, for rhetorical purposes we can classify such trade-offs according to whether the incommensurability primarily concerns entities (things and actions), values, or the relationships themselves.

Hypothesis 7a: People will be offended when asked to make trade-offs between <u>entities</u> belonging to the domains of disparate relational models.

If and only if two or more entities fall within the same relational domain, they are readily comparable. This means that it can be anathema in one culture to overtly compare two entities that are routinely transacted in another culture. In 19th-century

West Africa, it was perfectly appropriate, respectable, and commonplace to con-
sider how many brass rods to exchange for a slave or a wife. It was also quite
comprehensible and conceivable, but very demeaning and humiliating, to offer to
sell one's child into slavery in return for food. Conversely it was—and in many
rural areas still is—bizarre or ridiculous to ask how many francs a person would
accept for a millet field. In traditional West Africa, people treat rights in persons
as properly transferable in exchange for other prestige goods, while agricultural
land is a commons; West Africans can no more rent or sell the right to plant it than
Americans can rent or sell the right to swim in the ocean. In much of rural Burkina
Faso, friends and neighbors will happily come to cultivate one's fields, thresh grain,
or build a house for free; in the framework of Equality Matching, one should
provide beer or food and come help them when invited to help them. (Such events
more or less resemble an American husking bee or Amish barn-raising.) But if one
offered to pay people to do the same work, they would be insulted—village labor
does not belong in the domain of Market Pricing (although the same people work
for wages as labor migrants elsewhere).

In contacts between cultures, people often encounter others who apply a
different model to a familiar domain, or apply a familiar model differently. These
differences make such people seem strange, distant, and savage. For example, when
the French colonized the Moose (MOH-say) in what is now Burkina Faso, Moose
were shocked by the extent to which the colonizers used Market Pricing in such
domains as work and the distribution of food. Moose developed a myth that French
parents kept books and, when their children reached maturity, presented them with
an itemized bill for rearing them. Conversely, the Europeans who colonized Africa
were bewildered and exasperated at most Africans' lack of interest in salaried work,
cash crops, or efficient pastoral production for the market. The results of this
encounter were quite asymmetrical. Many colonial governments imposed per
capita flat taxes to force Africans into Market Pricing relations to earn the money
to pay these taxes. Colonial governments also mandated that villagers grow cash
crops to sell to government monopolies and in many instances conscripted Africans
for forced labor on plantations or public works. But the colonized people were
unable to induce their colonizers to increase their use of Communal Sharing and
Equality Matching.

People take their shared implementation paradigms for granted as right and
natural, without realizing their cultural relativity. Think of how Americans would
react to a proposal to replace the two-senators-per-state provision in the Constitu-
tion with representation in proportion to federal income taxes paid by each state.
Democracy is predicated on Equality Matching (by person or by state) as the basis
of political legitimation, while we take for granted that taxation of income is a
proportional mechanism in the realm of Market Pricing. American political repre-
sentation is proportional to people or states, but not to incomes. Every state has
equal representation (and why not every city?). We are shocked at the idea of
income or metropolis replacing population or state as the basis for political

representation. Many are also outraged, especially those on the left, at the idea of flat-rate taxes in which every one pays the same percentage of income, or poll taxes in which everyone pays the same amount of money (the issue that brought down Thatcher's government). Those who want taxation to serve a redistributive function tenaciously resist efforts to introduce Equality Matching principles into tax codes.

Of course, few (if any) entities consistently and invariably belong to just one relational model: as indicated above, most things can enter into any of the four types of relationship. But some things are prototypical indices of particular relational models, albeit with subtle limits. Cemetery plots are bought and sold. However, imagine an entrepreneur offering $3,000,000 to purchase a beautiful old cemetery complete with gravestones and corpses in order to turn it into a horror amusement park attached to a kinky brothel. Is the price a problem? Suppose the buyer ups her offer to $5,000,000, provided she gets the right to exhume bodies for use in the park? Graves don't seem fit commodities for such purposes.

Even when there is consensus among people in a social system about the rules, paradigms, or prototypes for implementing the models, that consensus may be partial. Often there is consensus at the most abstract level, but fierce dispute about the specifics. We may all agree with the political principle that the decision about who wields political power should be based on Equality Matching, and that EM should be implemented as one person, one vote; not one household, one vote. Furthermore, we may all agree that people should generally be free to allocate their personal resources under Market Pricing without Authority Ranking interference from the government. But this does not settle the question of whether it is legitimate for the wealthy to exert influence on votes by contributing large sums to candidates and political action committees. Should government Authority Ranking mechanisms limit the scope of Market Pricing personal spending on political matters in order to preserve electoral Equality Matching?

Many cultures make distinctions among disparate spheres of exchange; within the sphere of each respective type of relationship, transactions are legitimate, although transactions between separate spheres are impermissible or demeaning (see Bohannan, 1955; Douglas, 1963; Firth, 1965, pp. 340–344; Fiske, 1991; Meillassoux, 1981). For example, certain prestige items may be restricted to Authority Ranking relations: they can be given to chiefs and used by them but not bought and sold or used for other purposes. Or there may be items such as traditional hoes or spears which are only used as place-keeping tokens in Equality Matching exchanges for brides; a group receives such items in return for bestowing a bride and later gives them to a third kin group in return for a bride whom they will marry. Yet the bride-wealth is rarely if ever bought or sold as a Market Pricing commodity. Furthermore, in some bride-wealth systems, the amount that is given is fixed, or if it varies, the variation is unrelated to the qualities of the bride: the bride-price is not a price proportionate to some ratio standard of value, and brides are not "bought" or "sold." In many pastoral societies, people use cattle as bride wealth, give cattle in compensation for homicide (both EM relationships), and sacrifice

cattle to ancestors and deities (a conjunction of AR with CS; for the classic example, see Evans-Pritchard, 1967). But they are reluctant to treat cattle as an MP commodity, any more than you would sell your pet cat to a cannery—even if she's fat enough to fetch a good price. Even market-oriented Americans compartmentalize money itself according to its purposes and the social relationships in which it is embedded (Zelizer, 1994).

Hypothesis 7b: People will be anxious and have difficulty taking action when faced with decisions that require explicit choices among <u>values</u> derived from distinct models.

The incommensurability of Communal Sharing and Market Pricing values illustrates this point. Both types of relationships are meaningful and important, but it is awkward and inappropriate to compare the two. How much should you spend on your daughter's wedding? It would be gauche to put a monetary value on your love for her. That is why we remove price tags from gifts: *I don't want to think about* how much money you spent on me, and you don't want your gift valued in terms of its market cost. Love and friendship are demeaned when they are commoditized. There are many cognitive complexities in weighing two business opportunities against each other, but at least there is a common currency: expected profit in conjunction with risk. In contrast, how do you reach a decision when you have an opportunity to take a job with a big raise, if it means that you, your spouse, and your children have to move far from family and friends? Or if you would have to live apart from your family?

One of the most interesting dilemmas in American life concerns the irreconcilability of Equality Matching and Authority Ranking. We can't resolve the fact that everyone is equal, yet some are clearly superior in status, rank, and authority. Consequently, we feel ambivalent about the trappings of high office. Should we call the man, "Bill" or "Mr. President"? Should students call you "Mary" or "Dr. Smith"? Should the general eat at the muddy field kitchen with the troops—would such familiarity undermine his authority? Or would it undermine his authority to be served fine food and wine while his troops eat canned meatloaf? Should the president of a university or a major corporation have a limousine and chauffeur—or would we admire her for riding her bicycle to work? These are the delicate dilemmas of democratic leadership, since the norms of equality and authority are strong and irreducibly disparate.

Another American political and ideological quandary results from the juxtaposition of two kinds of "fairness" or "equality," or of "equality" and individual "freedom." This impasse usually results from the discrepancy between the norms of Equality Matching and the norms of Market Pricing: Shall we distribute resources so that each person gets the same thing, or give people equal chances to earn rewards in proportion to their performance? Alternatively, shall we allocate resources in proportion to need, and if so, to need in terms of current deprivation, or to the capacity to benefit from the resource? For example, should all students in a school have equal access to computers? Should we give priority to the slowest

learners who have the greatest deficiencies to make up in order to function effectively as adults? Should we give priority to the slow learners who profit most from individually paced instruction? Or should we give priority to those gifted students who will be able to use the computers to develop sophisticated programming skills? Should everyone in the department get an equal raise this year? Or the same *percentage* increase? Or raises proportional to their productivity? How shall we distribute the salary reductions required when the legislature reduces the university's appropriation?

Hypothesis 7c: People will be particularly torn when faced with incompatibilities among social <u>relationships</u> *of different types. When people are forced to choose between relationships so that they must violate one or the other of two irreconcilable relational obligations, people will experience great difficulty, discomfort, and ambivalence.*

In an important sense, all of the trade-offs we have been discussing are choices among relationships, in the sense of models for meaningful, coordinated social action and evaluation. However, many of the most tragic choices occur when people have long-term commitments to close relationships that involve frequent interaction in many important domains. Needless to say, sometimes such relationships are incompatible with each other, and there is no good choice:

Should you go visit your dying mother if the trip would require you to desert your wartime post and dishonor your military unit?

Should you report your mother's treason to the authorities if you discover that she is spying for the enemy in wartime?

Should you commit a mortal sin to protect your best friend, who once did the same for you?

Do people react differently when confronted by two irreconcilable Communal Sharing relationships than they do when confronted by a Communal Sharing relationship that cannot be reconciled with an Authority Ranking relationship? Is the agony of the choice different when deciding between relationships of the same basic type and relationships of different types? We suggest that people are most confused, anxious, and attempt most strenuously to avoid confronting the choice when they are faced with incompatibility between relationships of different basic types. This hypothesis is based on the supposition that when people have to compare two mutually exclusive Equality Matching relationships with each other, for example, or when they must select between two opposed Authority Ranking relationships, people can fairly readily assess the relative "strength" or "value" of the two relationships. Even two Communal Sharing relationships are important in the same way, resonating with the same relational motivation; that may make it possible to make a "gut" choice between them, albeit one that perhaps cannot be reflectively analyzed and adequately articulated. But it is difficult to weigh Communal Sharing against, say, Market Pricing: the disparate qualities of the motives make them impossible to compare directly or consistently. They do not meet the same needs or derive from

the same motives, do not share a common affective tone, do not have corresponding moral foundations, and do not operate within a common metric.

Consider the romance of Lancelot and Guinevere, who are torn between their direct, personal fealty to King Arthur and their love for each other. The appeal of the tale is a consequence of the fact that these Authority Ranking and Communal Sharing relationships are intense, inviolable, incomparable, and incompatible. In real life, when people find that they cannot avoid neglecting—or actually violating—one of two mutually incompatible close relationships, the tension can lead to anxiety, depression, or even suicide.

Hypothesis 7d: When people face explicit trade-offs among distinct relational models, the intensity of the resulting distress, outrage, and confusion depends on the distance and direction of the move between the two models in the trade-off. This is a result of the unequal moral significance, social value, and motivational strength of the four relational models. To a considerable degree, the moral significance, valuation, and motivational strength of the four respective relational models vary according to the person, context, content, and culture. But there may be, nonetheless, a discernible tendency in most cultures for people's normative ranking of the four models to correspond with the relational complexity, ontogenetic emergence, and phylogenetic depth of the four respective models: $CS > AR > EM > MP$ (on these three orderings, see Fiske, 1991; Haslam, in press).[3] We should stress that this moral and motivational ordering of the models is a general tendency, but by no means an invariant lexical rule.

In contemporary U.S. culture and many others, at least, the normative differentiation among the models emerges as a strong taboo against using Market Pricing with regard to entities that people regard as intrinsically belonging to the domain of Communal Sharing. Americans take for granted, as a matter of the essential nature of persons, that human beings—especially with regard to their bodies, their sexuality, and their most basic needs—ultimately must relate to each other in terms of Communal Sharing. It seems basically wrong to offer to buy someone's kidney (much less her heart), or to let market forces take their course if it means starvation for the unemployable. Even some libertarians would deny the validity of voluntarily contracted enslavement between consenting adults, regardless of the price. Take another example: How would you feel about someone who offered you $1,000 if you would have sex with your brother? Or what about life itself: How would you feel about someone who offered to pay $200,000 to the beneficiary of your choice, if you would merely kill yourself? To make, propose, or even seriously consider such trade-offs is a sign of depravity.

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[3] This may be related to the temporal tendency in personal relationships to move from MP to EM to CS. When a relationship begins to break down, it moves in the opposite direction. Despite these normative preferences, however, over the last three centuries throughout the world there has been a rapidly accelerating tendency of social systems as a whole to move from CS to AR to EM to MP.

Now consider someone who proposed exchanging his eye for your kidney, or an offer to do you a professional favor in return for sex. These Equality Matching transactions seem clearly wrong to Americans and Europeans, since bodies, basic needs, and sex should be given in a Communal Sharing mode. Suppose you are backing a candidate and his opponent offers you a bribe to endorse and support him? Or consider a soldier who stops obeying his commander because he feels he is underpaid. Authority Ranking relationships should not be transformed into Market Pricing transactions. As these strange examples suggest, most Americans would regard it as wrong and often grotesque to go two "steps" from CS to EM, or from AR to MP. But these trade-offs seem appreciably less abhorrent than the "three-step" trade-offs from CS to MP.

Going to an adjacent model is often viewed as peculiar and sometimes as reprehensible, but it rarely seems evil. Consider allocating CS entities in an AR mode. It is not unusual for organ allocation committees to take status and rank into account in prioritizing transplant recipients, although they cannot publicly acknowledge doing so. Sexual relations tied to Authority Ranking relationships are now expressly prohibited in many institutions, but they seem less blatantly immoral than prostitution. Similarly, substituting EM for AR is inappropriate, but not necessarily deranged. Suppose you are an associate in a New York law firm, and you tell a senior partner that you cannot stay late to finish the task she assigned you because it's your turn to drive the car pool and to cook dinner at home tonight. The senior partner might laugh, and she would not believe you were serious; even if you left, she would think it foolish and strange to trade-off AR for EM, but it would not seem depraved. The same applies to using MP where EM is expected. In the American Civil War, military conscription was an equal obligation for able-bodied men, but wealthy men could pay others to serve in their place. Today this seems wrong, but it is not incomprehensible, and it does not seem inhuman.

Why is it that you can buy a birthday present to give to someone, but you can't sell a present you receive? And why is it perfectly permissible to decide how much is a reasonable amount to spend on a present that you are giving, while it is crassly offensive to be overtly concerned about the price of a present you receive? (This contrast provides a possible alternative interpretation of the well-replicated endowment effect in which people display a reluctance to trade goods recently bestowed upon them by the experimenter; Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1991.) More generally, consider the fact that, as the Beatles sang, "Money can't buy me love," but love can buy me money. You are not obligated to love someone who pays you, but you *are* obligated to support monetarily those you love, and the termination of such a relationship can result in legitimate claims for a share of property, as well as alimony or palimony. Thus, while it is appropriate to say, "I loved you so you owe me," it is an oxymoron to say, "You owe me love because I paid you." (Dowry, bride-wealth, and prenuptial agreements are important to the economic relations among families, but they are not thought of as purchasing affection.)

By the same token, it is more tolerable to transform EM into AR than to transform AR into EM. Your co-workers in the car pool and the roommate with whom you take turns cooking might be annoyed if you missed your turn because the boss asked you to complete a project, but they probably would not be surprised or shocked. We see the same asymmetry between Authority Ranking and Market Pricing: many people rail against government interference in market transactions, but it is far worse for governments to be bought and sold.

Asymmetries of this sort occur in every culture. The Moose have no birthdays, but mortuary ceremonies are elaborate and important. People closely connected to the deceased bring sheep or goats which are presented as offerings to the dead person. This offering is an Authority Ranking act of obeisance to the deceased, with a dimension of Communal Sharing communion. If the donors don't already have an appropriate animal, they quickly purchase one to bring; that is entirely commendable. The new ancestor accepts the spirit of the gift, so to speak, but the officiants (vaguely analogous to funeral directors or undertakers) get to keep the live animals. The officiants may eat the animals or keep them to breed. But they must not *sell* them. In one remembered instance, an officiant needed cash and broke this taboo by selling some animals. Everyone feared that he would suffer immanent punishment, possibly death (field notes). Like an American birthday present, a Moose funerary offering can be bought to give, but cannot be received to be sold.

This moral asymmetry of transactions across domains has been described in many other cultures. In a classic article, Bohannan (1955) describes the moral significance of these conversions across distinct spheres of exchange among the Tiv of northern Nigeria. Food and other subsistence goods should be communally shared among kin. But men also seek to convert subsistence goods into prestige goods (brass rods, certain cloths, cattle, and slaves), and ultimately attempt to convert prestige goods into dependents (wives and children). Such upward conversions are respected, although they should not be done to the detriment of Communal Sharing of food among kin. However, Tiv are scornful of "downward" conversions, which are morally bad. Prestige goods such as cattle should not be converted into subsistence goods such as food. Dependents should not be converted into prestige goods such as brass rods. Such downward conversions are acts of desperation, which Tiv resort to only when they cannot feed starving dependents.[4]

The overall moral, evaluative, and motivational ordering of the four models seems to differ in certain cultures, however. In Melanesia, as well as in some hunting and gathering societies and certain traditional Native American societies, Equality Matching predominates over Authority Ranking (at least normatively), and appears at times to be valued more than Communal Sharing (see Fiske, 1991).

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[4] This example suggests a complementary explanation for certain kinds of trade-off aversion. People may place a blanket prohibition on market pricing of certain goods and services to prevent the poor from entering into, and the rich from exploiting, deals of desperation (Lerner, Newman, & Tetlock, 1995).

In some Asian cultures, Authority Ranking may be more important than Communal Sharing. In some sectors of contemporary American culture, many people apparently put Market Pricing ahead of Equality Matching and Authority Ranking. Indeed, in American culture, many manifestations of Authority Ranking are valued less than Equality Matching or Market Pricing, and AR may be depreciated altogether (consider icons ranging from the Declaration of Independence to the bumper sticker "Question Authority"). It remains to be determined whether these cultural differences in the priority of the models correspond to differences in the evaluation of transactions across domains. But whether they are invariant or culturally modifiable, there are socially consequential "distances" among the models, along with directional asymmetries that affect response to trade-offs among them.[5]

Beyond this global preferential ordering of the models as relational forms, other factors affect trade-offs among the models. Specific relationships vary in intensity and importance. People are simply less engaged in some interactions than others, and some relationships are more morally compelling than others. Hence transformations and alternatives to some relationships are far more threatening than others. It is conceivable to forgive someone who moves away to accept a new job with twice the salary, abandoning a close friendship; but would it be forgivable for her to abandon her baby to take the job? How do you feel if your friend decided she couldn't afford to take time from her consulting business to see you? Now what if your *mother* decides *she* can't afford to take time from her consulting business to see you? Which is worse?

In sum, each model is distinct and its operations are compartmentalized. People are uncomfortable or outraged at explicit trade-offs between models. People are more offended at trade-offs that move in the CS→ AR→ EM→ MP direction than by transformations in the opposite direction. Trade-offs that move more than one "step" tend to be especially taboo, and three-step CS→MP trade-offs are the worst.

B(v). Culture, Ideology, and Contention

Some readers may also have wondered whether people actually keep their Communal Sharing, Authority Ranking, Equality Matching, and Market Pricing relationships as neatly compartmentalized and distinct as the previous discussion suggests. In fact, people both compartmentalize and combine the four elementary models, in accord with practices that depend on their cultures.

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[5] It remains for empirical research to determine whether these motivational, evaluative, and moral distinctions among the models can be characterized by an ordinal, interval, discrete interval, or ratio metric.

The central point of this paper is an account of the kinds of trade-offs that people find confusing, unpleasant, and difficult to make explicitly. However, the observation that people avoid making these trade-offs explicitly does not imply that they do not make them implicitly. Furthermore, while the four relational models are disparate and discrete, people constantly link and combine them. For example, in many traditional social systems, primary groups based on kinship embody Communal Sharing relations, yet for other purposes, in other respects, the people in these groups are internally differentiated according to Authority Ranking (often by age and gender). As the diplomatic reception example illustrated, people use all four of the models in their relational repertoire every day, with regard to different domains. At different times, or with regard to different dimensions of the social situation, they interact with the same person according to Communal Sharing or with reference to Authority Ranking.

This means that, for example, in any given allocation of resources people in a Moose kin group make an implicit choice about whether to treat the resource as a shared commons or to prioritize the distribution hierarchically. Yet people hardly ever confront these two modes as explicit alternatives. Nor do they integrate them into a single compromise relation, since there is no intermediate modality. Instead, it is a matter of common sense, for example, that Authority Ranking governs the decision about when to plant and when to harvest and which field to cultivate each day, while Communal Sharing organizes the responsibility for the actual labor itself. There is no reflective choice about this, so people rarely perceive a conflict or a trade-off. Yet the two relational models are closely linked and integrated to structure the total activity of farming.

One clear conclusion from this analysis is that it is fallacious to suppose, as some economists have, that because people allocate limited resources (make implicit choices with "shadow prices"), they necessarily are maximizing utility across alternatives. People typically segregate relationships in a certain sense: they avoid making explicit trade-offs among relational modes. In practice, even money is often segregated into different types, linked to different relationships and uses, without being integrated into a common, psychologically convertible currency (Zelizer, 1994). Although relationships are linked in various ways and often highly interdependent, this interdependence does not take the form of rational or quasirational utility comparisons. Indeed, people tend to deny the necessity for many trade-offs, and are often distressed, angry, or confused when faced with the kinds of explicit trade-offs we have been discussing. People commonly censure those who make such trade-offs explicit because they regard such trade-offs as transgressions indicative of aberrant, antisocial motives that threaten the social order.

People use complex combinations of the four respective models to generate dyadic relationships, groups, institutions, and practices. Yet each aspect of each activity may be governed by different models without people ever perceiving any choice or trade-off. Within a relatively stable social system, it is a matter of common

sense to use each of the models according to the prevailing cultural prototypes, paradigms, and practices. In another culture, or at another time or place, common sense may presume different models, but it is only at the interfaces and contact points where transitions occur that people recognize that every act is necessarily a choice that implicates a trade-off among opportunity costs.

When such choices do become salient and persistent, people develop shared, reflective, more or less elaborated principles for resolving problematic issues. That is, people generate ideologies. These ideologies formulate preferences in relation to theories and values about society. Ideologies are often rather monistic, based primarily on a single relational model, but they can be more pluralistic. However, even an ideology generated from a single relational model must specify *how* to implement that model in the contexts at issue. Advocates of two ideologies based on the same model may disagree on how to implement it—and the disagreement may be so heated that proponents fail to recognize or care that they are implementing the same underlying model.

For generations, Authority Ranking and Communal Sharing relationships organized most European and American families, with Market Pricing relationships governing the bulk of the subsistence relations between the family unit and the outside world. In general, it rarely occurred to people that relationships between the husband-father and other family members might be other than Authority Ranking and Communal Sharing. A common pattern, for example, was that the husband-father made major policy decisions (e.g., concerning residence) and decided such matters as the marriage of his daughters. The income he generated, however, might be pooled under the trusteeship of the wife-mother. The traditional presupposition was that women would devote themselves to caring for their husbands and children in a Communal manner, without regard for what they received in return other than the protection and direction of their husbands and masters. In this century, and particularly within the last generation, these assumptions have become problematic. Many middle-class people who grew up in the 60s eschew Authority Ranking relationships between parents and even the youngest children. To them, it is wrong to control or dictate to *anyone* how to behave. For many people, the ideal or mandatory relationship between spouses is now Equality Matching. There have lately even been some advocates of Market Pricing between spouses: Calculate your costs and benefits and make the relationship contingent on getting a better rate of return than you can get elsewhere. Moreover, people now see Market Pricing work outside the home as an alternative to women's childcare, cooking, and housework. This has become an explicit, reflective choice, requiring a difficult trade-off between family and income/career.

Furthermore, even if everyone concerned agrees that marriage (and/or parent-child relations) should be organized according to Equality Matching, the implementation of the model is ambiguous. We lack customary routines to provide common sense implementations; few of us grew up in families that provide prototypes for instantiating this ideological choice. So how do we realize Equality

Matching in practice? Do we take turns cooking, shopping, and driving the kids to music lessons? (If one of us makes peanut butter sandwiches every time, is that a fair turn?) What count as equal contributions to housework? What is the mechanism for two people making a decision without innumerable tie votes? For generations, people enacted certain models in certain ways, precluding other implementations and other models: but only recently has the organization of the family come to be a reflective, and hence often contentious, choice. At this point, people perceive the selection among these relationships as a decision, and recognize more than ever that their implementation is problematic. Because there are no consensual, commonsense cultural guidelines, people must face painful and confusing trade-offs. Ideologies offer available scripts for alternative lifestyles.

It is an objective fact that, as economists insist, individuals and societies continuously make de facto trade-offs and must do so. However, very few of these are made reflectively, and fewer still are made public and explicit. Nor do people inherently make such choices according to the Market Pricing metric of costs/benefits. At most points in history in most societies, most people undertake most of their interactions without consciously choosing among all possible alternatives. Implementation rules become problematic and people confront problematic trade-offs among compartmentalized models only when people cease to take for granted the cultural practices that are normally common sense. This problematization tends to occur particularly when:

1. People from different cultures encounter each other in circumstances that require them to establish mechanisms for relating to each other (and neither side can unilaterally impose implementation rules on the other);

2. The invention or diffusion of new institutions motivates people to face issues concerning how to implement the new institutions and integrate them with old ones;

3. Changes of social scale or network complexity render old implementations unworkable or make new ones feasible;

4. Technological or environmental changes render old implementation rules obsolete and confront people with new relational issues and possibilities;

5 New ideologies become salient that challenge existing implementations and offer alternatives;

6. People compare implementations regarding different entities or different domains, and then develop analogies among them. This mutual adjustment among implementation rules, paradigms, and prototypes may happen either gradually or abruptly, explicitly or implicitly. It is an incessant sociocognitive process that involves a perpetually moving equilibrium resulting from reconciliation, rationalization, schematic systematization, and simplification of implementation rules. (It is somewhat analogous to the linguistic flux gener-

ated by continuous reciprocal adjustments within and among phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and acquisition systems.)

Cultures are meaningful, self-reproducing practices that organize the application of disparate relational models. When a culture is comparatively isolated and stable, people confront relatively few unthinkable trade-offs. When cultures mix and transform, people more frequently face confusing, anxiety-provoking, or taboo trade-offs.

II. RESPONSES TO TABOO TRADE-OFFS

Up to this juncture, we have been primarily concerned in this paper with identifying the conditions under which people recognize their actions as trade-offs, and when they regard such trade-offs as permissible or as impermissible. We now shift attention to two functionally interrelated issues:

1. Why are people so intensely indignant about taboo trade-offs? What are the conceptual components of moral outrage? And what individual difference and situational factors moderate the intensity of moral outrage that people report in response to various trade-offs?

2. How do decision-makers—compelled by resource scarcity and their institutional roles to make certain trade-offs—cope with the perilous social predicament of attempting taboo trade-offs? How do they avoid becoming victims of the righteous indignation of observers who learn that sacrosanct normative boundaries have been transgressed?

A. Observers' Responses: Moral Outrage

Using as a heuristic the traditional tripartite division of attitudes, we can analyze the moral outrage about taboo trade-offs into cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The cognitive component consists of trait attributions to anyone (including the interviewer) who seems seriously prepared to consider proposals that breach the boundaries of the four relational models: What kind of person would place a dollar value on human life or the right to vote? People perceive the relational models and their implementation rules as deeply normative; it is generally inconceivable that a reasonable person could encode the social world differently. Hence we should expect, following the attributional logic of Kelley (1967, 1971), that people would perceive violators of these normative conventions as at best mildly offensive and at worst bizarre, insane, or evil.

The emotional component of the response to taboo trade-offs follows quite directly from the cognitive appraisal of norm violators as threats to the social order (cf. Lazarus, 1993). A breach of the boundaries among basic relational models is a

threat to the social order because it throws into doubt the taken-for-granted assumptions that are constitutive of that order. Taboo trade-offs break down the distinctions between, say, authority and tit-for-tat equality, or between communal solidarity and the market. Hence they throw into doubt our fundamental assumptions about what each relationship *is*. Without reliance on these assumptions, how can we sustain any meaningful interaction? The response should range from anxiety and confusion to primitive, punitive rage.

Finally, the behavioral component follows quite directly from the cognitive and emotional components. People should want to punish those who breach normative boundaries—punish them for purposes of both retribution and specific and general deterrence. Transgression threatens or actually destroys a relationship; punishment restores that relationship. To pick up on a Durkheimian idea, only reassurance that the wrong-doer has indeed been punished by the collective (whose norms have been violated) should be sufficient to restore the moral *status quo ante* and to reduce whatever cognitive and emotional unease was produced in individual observers by the original trade-off transgression. Indeed, punishments are forceful impositions of the relational models themselves, reestablishing their validity and hegemony. Thus, for example, corporal punishment reasserts the authoritative power of the punitive agent and the subordination of the criminal. When deviance disrupts the integrity of a communal group, ostracism—with or without subsequent rites of reintegration—reestablishes it. In each case, a definition of social reality is effectively imposed on the transgressor: his subjugation in the one case and his dependence on the group in the other.

These cognitive, affective, and behavioral components are intimately intertwined. Pilot research reported by Tetlock, Peterson, and Lerner (1996) is consistent with the idea that there is a unitary outrage response to taboo trade-offs. The results indicate moderately high intercorrelations among trait attributions, emotional reactions, and social distancing. Observers contemplated a variety of both normatively acceptable trade-offs (applying MP rules to housing and hiring workers or buying books and magazines) and taboo trade-offs (applying MP rules to body organs, adoption opportunities, and basic rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship). Trait attributions of immorality and irrationality to decision-makers responsible for taboo trade-offs covary strongly with emotional reactions of anger and disgust. In turn, these trait attributions and emotional reactions jointly predict social distancing in the form of wanting to dissociate from the person responsible for the transgression as quickly as possible. These results confirm that punitive attributions, aversive emotional reactions, and social ostracism all rise together in response to trade-offs that violate relational boundaries.

From this standpoint, moral outrage is not a dichotomous variable that is switched off or on as a function of whether a taboo trade-off has been observed. Outrage is a matter of degree and subject to a host of potential individual difference and situational moderators. Specifically, we advance the following hypotheses:

1. Domain moderators. Cross-domain trade-offs elicit greater outrage the greater the psychometric distance between domains. For instance, we should expect greatest outrage, on average, to proposals to apply MP implementation rules to CS relationships (truly bizarre and often despicable) but somewhat attenuated outrage to applications of MP rules to AR relationships (corrupt) and still further attenuation of outrage to application of MP rules to EM relationships (gauche). Taboo trade-offs implicating CS relationships may evoke the greatest outrage because, it seems, CS relationships can tap the deepest, strongest, and most tenacious motives.

Generally, people will regard any attempt to apply MP principles to AR relationships as a corrupt betrayal. However, in the United States this response sometimes may be attenuated for two reasons: we often view AR as more or less illegitimate, supposing it to be based on coercive and exploitive power; and we increasingly regard MP as the valid expression of our true nature.

2. Ideological moderators. Certain ideological groups (subcultures) are more likely to view taboo trade-offs as outrageous than are other groups. Pilot research of Tetlock et al. (1996) reveals that libertarians (who have an expansive view of the appropriateness of MP implementation rules) are less offended by proposals to buy and sell votes and body organs than are conservative Republicans, liberal Democrats, and radical socialists. By contrast, radical socialists (with a very restrictive view of the appropriateness of MP rules) are much more offended by routine market transactions—which radical socialists may regard as inherently exploitive—than are liberal democrats, conservative Republicans, and libertarians (see Tetlock et al., 1996).

3. Contextual moderators. It may be possible to amplify or attenuate outrage via experimental manipulations of the degree to which the taboo trade-off threatens a core political value. For instance, Lerner, Newman, and Tetlock (1995) hypothesized that liberals object to MP rules for body organs and baby adoptions in part because of their fear that the poor will be coerced into deals of desperation. Although the effects were not large, it was possible to reduce outrage when people were reassured that all participants to the exchange were reasonably well-off. Lerner et al. also hypothesized that another reason why people objected to extending MP rules into "new" domains such as body organs was fear of setting precedents that would destabilize the social order as they knew it. Lerner et al. also found some support for this hypothesis.

This work raises the possibility that some ideological groups in late-20th-century America view CS relationships as a moral bulwark against the encroachments of market capitalism, protecting otherwise vulnerable populations. The research also raises intriguing causal questions about how political values are linked to when, where, and why people draw boundaries between spheres of exchange. For example, if people perceive that allowing MP implementation rules to operate unchecked produces abhorrent consequences (e.g., child labor, organ and baby markets), then they may often resort to AR solutions of governmental regulation and/or CS solutions of pooling resources and rationing by queues. But there is

nothing inevitable here. In the dynamic ebb and flow of political debate, proponents of the MP model may sometimes succeed in convincing skeptics that there are ways of attenuating the "nasty" side-effects of MP implementation rules while simultaneously gaining the efficiency benefits (e.g., school vouchers that target difficult-to-educate children for especially large transfer payments).

B. Decision-Makers' Response: Deflecting the Wrath of Observers

Observers often react fiercely to taboo trade-offs. So it should not be surprising if decision-makers, compelled by realities of resource scarcity to make such trade-offs, should feel that their social identities as moral and rational beings are in jeopardy. The revised value pluralism model (Tetlock et al, 1996) identifies a set of individual and institutional coping strategies designed to defuse potential outrage, including concealment, obfuscation, decision-avoidance, and demagoguery.

1. Concealment and obfuscation. The most viable defense is to minimize public awareness of cross-domain trade-offs by maximizing the opacity of the decision-making process. Secrecy, or at least a low public profile, is one key ingredient (Calabresi, 1978). Committees charged with sensitive trade-offs are typically unknown to the vast majority of the population. (Who is responsible for determining who should receive scarce resources such as body organs and admission to professional schools? Who decides how much we should spend on making car or air travel or the workplace safer?) Moreover, the actual criteria used to weigh conflicting values can rarely be inferred easily from the cryptic public statements issued by these decision-making committees and regulatory agencies.

Rhetorical obfuscation also promotes ignorance of taboo trade-offs (Elster, 1993). To obscure the actual trade-offs being made, decision-makers will often resort to smokescreens such as vague appeals to shared values: "the Federal Reserve seeks to maximize long-term prosperity," "OSHA would never put a price tag on life," or "the admissions committee believes that diversity is excellence." These rhetorical obfuscations disguise the politically unpalatable fact that decision-makers are indeed prepared to trade off current jobs to contain future inflation, the loss of lives in workplace accidents to reduce regulatory burdens on business, and the imposition of higher college admissions standards on some racial groups to compensate for past and perhaps current discrimination. Our point is not, of course, that these decision-makers are doing something immoral. The political merits of each policy can be debated endlessly. Our point is that decision-makers do not like to acknowledge in private and especially in public that they are making taboo trade-offs. In many cases, to discuss the trade-off openly and honestly is to commit political suicide.

2. Decision avoidance. In democratic societies, it is often difficult to keep taboo trade-offs a secret for long. Invariably, some faction will conclude that its

constituencies have been shortchanged in the trade-off equation and will call the once-anonymous decision-makers to account. Medical organ-transplant committees will stand accused of using inappropriate or illegitimate criteria (race, sex, social class, and perhaps even age); the Open Market Committee of the Federal Reserve Board will stand accused of insensitivity to the unemployed or to the danger of inflation; university admissions committees will find themselves in the docket for either reverse discrimination or institutional racism; regulatory agencies such as OSHA or the FDA will be denounced as either tools of business interests or oppressive bureaucracies that squelch entrepreneurship and innovation.

Consequently, once a taboo or suspect trade-off is in the public spotlight, decision-makers often resort to the decision-avoidance tactics of buck-passing and procrastination. A recent laboratory simulation captured the political psychological dynamics of the process (Tetlock & Boettger, 1994). The study simulated Food and Drug Administration decisions to admit prohibited drugs onto, or keep approved drugs on, the U. S. pharmaceuticals market. Researchers told subjects that the FDA had the power both to prevent the adoption of drugs currently off the market and to remove drugs currently in use. Subjects played the role of FDA regulators whose task was to determine whether a particular anticlotting drug ("Carozile") should either be allowed onto the market (change the status quo) or be allowed to remain on the market (retain the status quo). The experimenter also told subjects about the likely risks and benefits of the drug: either no one, 100 people, or 300 people would be killed by side-effects, and either 300, 600, or 900 people would be saved. In all cases, subjects were told that there was no way to determine, *ex ante*, who would live or die. Subjects were then asked to judge the permissibility of the drug under either total anonymity or public accountability. The researchers assessed the degree of risk from the drug that subjects were willing to tolerate, the tendency to avoid blame by procrastinating or buck-passing, and the degree of conflict or ambivalence that people experienced in decision-making through both rating-scale and thought-protocol data.

The results revealed that value conflict can be highly aversive when one is publicly accountable for a decision that requires imposing a loss on one group in order to confer a greater benefit on another. There was a surge of interest in delaying the decision for a year (the maximum allowed) whenever subjects were publicly accountable for deciding whether to allow a currently banned drug that would save 300, 600, or 900 lives at the cost of either 100 or 300 lives. Subjects did not want to take responsibility for making a decision either resulting in side-effect casualties or denying society the benefit of a drug that would save hundreds of lives. Caught in what they perceived to be a no-win political conflict, decision-makers tried to delay the day of reckoning, even though they had been told that the likelihood of finding a breakthrough drug without side-effects in the permissible delayed-action period was virtually zero.

Tetlock and Boettger (1994) also assessed the dependent variable of buck-passing. When people believed they had the option of referring the decision to

someone else (in this case, a fictitious government agency known as the Agency for Cost Benefit Analysis), they seized the opportunity with alacrity. Again, we saw a surge of decision referrals among publicly accountable subjects who contemplated admitting a drug that will kill some people but save even more. Subjects (especially integratively complex thinkers) were uncomfortable with both of the options confronting them: taking the responsibility for approving a drug that would kill some people or taking responsibility for approving a drug that would have a positive benefit to society as a whole. They sought to escape this discomfort by both procrastinating and buck-passing.

Dilemmas of this sort are by no means unusual; rather, they are the essence of political struggles over resources and entitlements. Given the well-established tendency for losses to loom larger than gains in value trade-offs (by a ratio of 2:1 in prospect theory, according to Kahneman and Tversky, 1979) it seems reasonable to hypothesize a strong motive among politicians to delay or redirect responsibility whenever decisions require imposing losses on well-defined constituencies (see also Beattie, Baron, & Spranca, 1994). In this political calculus, the friends one gains will be more than offset by the enemies one makes. Therefore it should not be surprising that both legislators and regulatory agencies often cope with trade-offs in general and taboo trade-offs in particular by passing the buck and procrastinating (cf. Wilson, 1989).

3. Demagoguery. Trade-offs, even of the legitimate within-domain sort, are politically problematic. Acknowledging that one is prepared to give up this amount of value *x* to acquire that amount of value *y* usually has the net effect of putting one on the public relations defensive. The complaints of the losers generally drown out the applause of the winners (at least so long as the losers know who they are and suffer a loss of sufficient magnitude to justify the effort of complaining).

Taboo trade-offs can be politically lethal. Acknowledging that one is prepared to cross boundaries between relational models implies a lack of respect for foundational values of the social order. Love, life and loyalty are generally held to be priceless. When decision-makers nonetheless put prices on them, their constituents are likely to accuse them of gross insensitivity to the prevailing qualitative distinctions among spheres of justice, and to decide that they cannot be trusted with public authority (cf. Walzer, 1983). If they are caught affixing dollar values to entities governed by CS, AR, or EM implementation rules, politicians should expect brief careers.

But taboo trade-offs are unavoidable. Although we do not want to face the issue, most of us are not willing to spend everything we own to maximize the health, happiness, and education of our children, and are even less disposed to do so for the children of others. In practice, there is a limit to the dollars we will spend to enhance our own personal safety at the workplace or in cars or airplanes, and we will certainly spend less for the safety of others. In our behavioral choices, we implicitly reveal the boundaries and qualifications to our commitments to love, life,

and loyalty. In principle, our CS obligations are limitless, but in practice our time, energy, and resources are limited.

This analysis highlights a recurring source of political opportunity in democracies for politicians who are in opposition to the governing party. Unconstrained by the responsibilities of making the actual decisions that allocate scarce resources, they are free to find fault. The opposition can make explicit and draw attention to the taboo trade-offs that political leaders must make. Leaders obviously do not want to be held accountable for taboo trade-offs that trigger moral outrage in substantial segments of the electorate. It is equally obvious that opposition politicians want to hold leaders accountable for these trade-offs, eagerly portraying them as callous and cruel. Opposition politicians are disposed to caricature the governing politicians as a gang of cads who trade blood for oil, lives for money, and basic democratic rights for administrative convenience. Not surprisingly, opposition rhetoric tends to be shrill, self-righteous, accusatory, and integratively simple (Tetlock, 1981). In short, the opposition "gives them hell." Indeed, the major reality constraint on opposition rhetoric derives from the opposition's own past conduct when they were in power. Opposition parties that have recently held power and hope to hold it again soon may well choose to forego immediate political advantage and temper criticism of decision-making procedures that they either recently employed themselves or might want to employ in the foreseeable future. Demagoguery, however, looks like the rational response for those who do not expect to wield power but do want to wield influence—or for those who believe that the electorate has a short memory.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: HOW TO PLURALIZE

At this juncture, the reader might well wonder, is it politically impossible to be honest about taboo trade-offs? Cynics would answer, "yes." They would portray public opinion as moody, volatile, ideologically incoherent and cognitively superficial (for contrasting portraits see Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991; and Zaller, 1991). They argue that the electorate is virtually incapable of long-term learning.

The analytical framework advanced here suggests that the problem runs even deeper. Education and political sophistication are no solution. Even if people were well-informed and thoughtful on issues of the day, they would still find certain types of trade-offs outrageous. Our analysis seems to suggest that governments inevitably must conceal, obfuscate, and dodge responsibility until, eventually, the opposition fastens onto a damaging taboo trade-off that outrages public opinion and sweeps them back into office—at which time, the cycle repeats itself, with ideological roles reversed.

However, there is another mechanism that multiparty systems with fairly regular rotation of power sometimes use. Politicians who expect to alternate between opposition and government may reach tacit transideological agreements

to bury taboo trade-offs in bureaucratic, regulatory, and judicial enclaves where the light of public scrutiny rarely extends (Wilson, 1980). When it is in opposition, neither party has strong incentives to generate intense anger about trade-offs if it, too, will shortly be required to make those same trade-offs. Accordingly, both parties may agree on mechanisms for "de-politicizing" the issue. In late-20th-century America, judges and bureaucrats are empowered to make a vast area of discretionary trade-offs that affect the safety of transportation and the workplace, the quality of the environment, and the procedures used to hire workers and to admit students to college programs. The creation by Congress of a specialized base-closing commission illustrates that democratic leaders are acutely aware that it is very difficult for elected representatives to impose large losses on concentrated constituencies, even though the nation as a whole manifestly benefits. (Cf. Buchanan & Tullock, 1982.)[6] These bureaucracies, commissions, and judicial bodies are sanctuaries from direct and immediate political accountability.

What strategies should decision-makers in such sanctuaries use to make taboo trade-offs? The dominant microeconomic answer is to squeeze everything into a monistic cost-benefit framework that translates all considerations into a common utility metric. This prescription assimilates all social issues to the calculative rationality of Market Pricing. In contrast, our pluralist approach treats moral values and social ends as irreducible to any single standard of comparison. This casts doubt on the feasibility of standard democratic and technocratic solutions to taboo trade-offs. People probably cannot make reliable, meaningful comparisons across relational models, and they experience deep unease when asked to do so. This is all very well, but can we go beyond the pluralist critique and come up with practical solutions? Does a pluralist account offer any positive prescriptions for making decisions?

There are, indeed, effective cognitive and institutional strategies for coping with taboo trade-offs. But whereas monists aspire to solutions that maximize or minimize some monetary or utility metric, pluralists set their sights lower. They aspire to comprehend and to deal with various choice dilemmas, philosophically recognizing that acrimony, controversy, and indeterminacy are sometimes inevitable (Berlin, 1990). In this spirit, we propose some procedural prerequisites for decision-making that respect the qualitative complexity of social life.

(1) Acknowledge the legitimacy of the confusion, anger, and anxiety that people naturally, sensibly experience first-order reactions to taboo trade-offs. These reactions should not be dismissed or confused with cognitive bias, motivational resistance, parochial self-interest, or cultural-historical rigidity.

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[6] The political game of avoiding and affixing responsibility for taboo trade-offs is, of course, endless. In game-theoretic parlance, there is no stable equilibrium solution. Old understandings will inevitably be disturbed by new technologies and economic realities that either create new scarcities or alleviate old ones. Economic and technological changes (e.g., recessions, the invention of kidney dialysis) can create new grievances and senses of entitlement. Ambitious political elites can transform these new grievances into popular causes.

(2) Encourage the deliberative body to define itself as a collectivity whose members are committed to crafting common solutions to shared problems. This Communal Sharing framework is more conducive to collective consensus than the framework of a legislative body whose members see their job as promoting preformulated partisan agendas. Although it is unrealistic to suppose that ideological cleavages within society at large will not surface within the group, it is possible to highlight members' commitment to a common culture and purpose, albeit pluralistic and internally contradictory. To induce this pluralistic mind-set (to "*pluralize*"), we suggest that decision-makers begin by (re)familiarizing themselves with the relational models and how these models are implemented in various spheres of life. It would also be helpful for each group member to generate examples of how he or she uses each model in personal and political decision-making, thereby conferring presumptive legitimacy on each model.

(3) Encourage each group member to devise, elaborate, and defend at least one plausible implementation of each of the four models that would deal with the societal problem at hand. For instance, the group might explore Communal Sharing solutions to shortages of body organs for transplantation (rhetorical appeals that stress our common humanity and the enormous good will generated by gifts of life); Authority Ranking solutions (changing the law to require organ donation and perhaps to stipulate priority rules for access to available organs); Equality Matching solutions (barring people who are not willing to donate organs from becoming recipients); and Market Pricing solutions (allowing people to buy and sell body organs in competitive markets).

This generates a range of solutions, and identifies each participant with multiple alternatives. It thereby develops collective and individual commitments to the validity of each fundamental type of solution and to the multiplicity of reasonable options.

(4) Encourage critical reflection on why reasonable people might assimilate a given problem to a particular relational model or combination of models. Here it would be helpful if each member could publicly affirm the validity of at least one implementation of each model that is more or less analogous to one of the policy solutions under consideration. This step commits everyone to the legitimacy, in principle, of practices similar to each proposed solution. (It also prepares all participants to subsequently explain and justify to their public constituents whatever solutions they collectively devise.) Group members should also, of course, present the difficulties of implementing each solution (preferably framed as questions on which they need the group's help rather than as decisive refutations). The ultimate goal is to identify policy solutions that are effective but do not violate deeply felt moral intuitions about personhood and basic relations to the polity.

We can easily imagine decision-making groups of this sort oscillating back and forth among competing considerations, in search of some kind of shared reflective equilibrium (Rawls, 1971). For instance, the group might opt to permit buying and selling of certain body organs but only if there are (a) adequate safeguards to prevent deals of desperation that exploit the poor, (b) adequate transfer payments to ensure that the poor can participate as buyers as well as sellers, (c) adequate incentives for participating and disincentives for not participating, and (d) special concessions to those whose ethical or religious sensitivities have still been offended. Or the group might go in the opposite direction and ban body-organ markets but permit financial incentives configured as honorary awards for community spirit or as compensations for sacrifice. Two aspects of this example deserve emphasis: first, there is no determinate solution, and second, symbolism matters—the same material transaction can take on extraordinarily different meanings within different relational frames.

Complex, important trade-offs will usually require combinations of nested and linked relational solutions. For example, a commission making policy for organ transplants might recommend a CS advertising campaign to encourage donations, motivating people to see organs as life-giving gifts that join the donor with the recipient. At the same time, the commission might opt to assess need according to an MP cost/benefit threshold criterion, with an EM lottery to select recipients from this eligible pool. They might further recommend an AR policy of special priority for recipients in the families and communities of donors—an EM in-kind return of the gift to those in CS relationships with the donors. The commission could recommend an AR mechanism to enforce this policy, suggesting a national chain of command from the surgeon general on down to subordinates in each hospital. Most functional institutions are congeries of this kind, which should encourage us to seek solutions that combine the merits of multiple relational models.

Skeptics might argue that pluralizing is a cumbersome procedure, that it will result in solutions that are less optimal than multiattribute utility maximization, or that the end result will not differ from the open give and take of democratic politics. We suspect that the critics are wrong. The democratic process often allows demagoguery to prevail for extended periods during which risk-averse politicians simply refuse to challenge the trade-off taboos. Cost-benefit analysis ignores and usually does violence to normative distinctions that people value as ends in themselves. Furthermore, pluralizing creates a framework for the types of thoughtful public engagement in politics that fosters deliberative democracies (Fishkin, 1991). Pluralizing the decision process affirms, in a symbolically and procedurally significant way, the importance of seeking policy solutions that respect the qualitative complexity of social life.

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