Attribution of Friendship: The Influence of the Nature and Comparability of Resources Given and Received

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Clark and Mills (1979) proposed that observers are likely to infer an exchange relationship between two persons when they give each other comparable (similar) benefits, while the presentation of noncomparable ones would indicate a communal relationship (e.g., friendship). From the perspective of Foa and Foa's (1974) resource categorization, Clark's (1981) results were misinterpreted as consistent with those predictions, due to the use of comparable resources in conditions of noncomparability. Based on hypotheses derived from resource theory, the present study examines more rigorously the influence of comparability/non-comparability and of the nature of the resources involved in friendship attribution. Our findings suggest that comparability of resources is a less important cue than the nature of those resources. In addition, our results strongly indicate that resource comparability is inadequate for the purpose of distinguishing between communal and exchange relationships in terms of the perceived existence of friendship.

INTRODUCTION

Recent work by Clark and Mills (1979; Clark, 1981; Mills and Clark, 1982; Clark, in press) has given emphasis to a distinction between communal and exchange relationships. The former type refers to relationships in which members are concerned with each other's welfare (e.g., friends, lovers, family members). Thus, the intention behind giving a particular benefit is to please the recipient or to fulfill his or her needs. Expectations for returns are inappropriate to the spirit of the relationship, and the acceptance of benefits does not incur specific debts or obligations on the part of the recipient. It should be noted that communal relationships do not include "dependent" relationships in which "...one person receives benefits from another but does not give benefits to the other" (Clark and Mills, 1979:12). Because the needs of any two parties to a communal relationship are likely to differ, the nature of the benefits given and received will typically not be exactly comparable. Giving benefits comparable to received ones may appear to be a response to prior benefits, likely to be interpreted as a preference for a different type of relationship, and should therefore be avoided. On the other hand, in exchange relationships (such as between businessmen and customers, employers and employees, doctors and patients, etc.) the receipt of benefits does create debts and obligations to return a benefit of comparable value. Instrumental rather than consummatory motives constitute the basis of such relationships. Similar attempts to describe two major kinds of relationships in terms of their solidary characteristics have a long tradition in classical as well as in modern sociological thought (e.g., Tönnies, [1887] 1957; Durkheim, [1893] 1968; Sumner, 1906; Cooley, 1909; MacIver, 1936; Sorokin, 1947; Davis, 1948; Parsons and Shils, 1951; Lerner, 1975).

Clark and Mills seem to assume that norms specifying whether or not benefits given and received should be comparable underlie (at least in part) the distinction between communal and exchange relationships. Further, behaviors that are or are not consistent with these norms are assumed to constitute cues which are recognized by outside observers (Clark, 1981; Mills and Clark, 1982). On the basis of these cues observers would make inferences concerning the type of relationship which they believe exists between the people in question:

If one person gives a benefit to another and soon afterwards the second person gives the first a comparable benefit, an observer is likely to infer that the second benefit is a repayment for the first, and that the two people have an exchange relationship. In contrast, if the two people give and receive
noncomparable benefits, the observer is likely to assume that the benefits were given to fulfill needs or to please the recipient and that the two people have a communal relationship. (Mills and Clark, 1982:139)

Although the notion of "comparability" of benefits has not been defined in the works of Clark and Mills, their discussions strongly indicate that they intended it to refer to comparability (or similarity) in kind. However, comparability may have at least two additional meanings. First, as comparability of absolute value, as when two or more resources of the same kind, or of different kinds, are worth about the same as assessed in terms of an objective standard, such as dollars or any other currency. Second, as comparability of relative value, as when resources of the same or of different kind(s) are worth about the same to two or more persons. (The same amount of, say, praise may not necessarily be worth the same to a low-status and to a high-status person.) Thus, it is entirely possible for two resources to be comparable in kind but noncomparable in absolute and/or relative value. In the present paper we prefer to define and operationalize the term comparability as similarity in all three of the above-mentioned respects, while noncomparability refers to resources of different kinds, but of about equal absolute and relative value.

In our opinion, a distinction between communal and exchange relationships on the basis of comparability of absolute value rather than comparability in kind appears more meaningful. Granted that certain resources, as such, may be more congenial and, in a way, more appropriate to partners of a communal relationship (as we shall see), it is nevertheless true that the transfer of resources among participants is not restricted to those resources alone. It is rather their symbolic meaning which is of primary significance. This is usually not the case with regard to exchange relationships, in which, in addition, noncomparability in kind seems more common and typical. Whether or not the resources individuals present to each other are comparable or noncomparable in kind, their absolute (and, perhaps, relative) value is of greater importance in exchange than in communal relationships.

There are certain indications, throughout their writings, that Clark and Mills make an unfortunate confusion between comparability in kind and comparability of value. For example, Clark (1981:376) states that it is important for members of exchange relationships to "... keep track of how much they receive in return..." (emphasis added); in another paper (in press;5) she states that "... members of exchange relationships may tend to give and receive comparable benefits" (see also, e.g., Clark and Mills, 1979:12; and Mills and Clark, 1982:123, 138). When discussing communal relationships, however, the authors seem to refer only to comparability in kind. This confusion is also evident in Clark's (1981:376) statements about predictions regarding comparability/noncomparability on the basis of equity theory.

Clark (1981) designed two similar questionnaire studies to test the hypothesis that non-comparability (in kind) between benefits given and received is considered a sign of friendship (i.e., a communal relationship). Two benefits, a "ride home" and a "lunch treat," were used in the first study. In the "comparable-benefit conditions" the same kind of benefit was given and received, while in the "noncomparable-benefit conditions" one kind was given and another received. The benefits utilized for the second study were two pens, two pads of paper, a small jar of coffee, and candy. Apart from the different types of benefit used, the two studies differed in two other ways. First, the written descriptions of the situations in which benefits were changing hands between two persons (and to which subjects responded by assigning friendship ratings on a five-point scale, ranging from "not friends" to "close friends") involved different settings: an office in Study 1; a dormitory in Study 2. Secondly, the giving and receiving took place along different "modes": giving-giving (i.e., P gives a benefit to O, O then gives a benefit to P) in the first study and requesting-giving (P asks O for a benefit, O gives it to P, P then gives a benefit to O) in the second.

The results showed that subjects assigned higher friendship scores to situations described in noncomparable-benefit conditions as compared to comparable-benefit conditions. (A third study, in which recipients reciprocated with comparable benefits, indicated that subjects were more likely to interpret that act as a repayment.) It should be noted, however, that both the comparable and noncomparable conditions elicited positive friendship ratings by the subjects. The mean scores for the comparable and the noncomparable conditions in Study 1 were 2.0 and 2.6, respectively, and 2.3 and 2.6 in Study 2 (on a scale from 0-4). Thus, the magnitude of perceived friendship between the two persons in the two conditions differed by a mere half of a scale unit.

Further qualifications, in addition to those already mentioned, appear necessary with regard to Clark's umbrella proposition and conclusion that noncomparability (but not comparability) between benefits given and received serves as an indicator of friendship (i.e., a
communal relationship). First, if benefits are classified according to Foa’s (1971) resource typology, Clark failed to test her hypothesis because she employed comparable rather than noncomparable benefits. This may explain the positive friendship ratings in both conditions and the small differences between them. Secondly, resource theory (Foa and Foa, 1974) has generated propositions some of which are contradictory to Clark’s (1981) hypothesis. Indeed, it is not difficult to think of occasions when comparability, rather than noncomparability, between benefits given and received would be a sign of friendship. As an illustration the above quotation from Mills and Clark (1982) could be construed in a way opposite to what was intended by the authors: It is unlikely that one would not infer a communal relationship if a woman immediately returns a kiss just received from a man (i.e., comparable benefits). It is equally unlikely that observers would infer a communal relationship if a person stepping out of a car gives the driver money (i.e., noncomparable benefits). Noncomparability is, indeed, the rule rather than an exception in one of the most common types of exchange relationships, that between employers and employees. What is given and received is usually noncomparable in terms of both quality and quantity (kind and value). It seems important, then, to acknowledge the possible impact of additional factors, such as differences in power, status, sex, age, etc., among the participants in a given relationship.

The models under consideration (i.e., those by Clark and Mills, and by Foa and Foa) seem to have predictive value in that comparability as well as noncomparability appear likely to act as signs of both communal and exchange relationships. This paper juxtaposes the two models to analyze the conditions under which comparability and noncomparability may each be a stronger sign of friendship than the other. Hypotheses are derived and examined empirically.

We now turn to a consideration of those aspects of resource theory which are relevant in this context.

**Particularism, Resource Profile, and Comparability: Propositions**

Foa and Foa’s resource theory (Foa, 1971; Foa and Foa, 1974, 1976) is organized around a classification of resources into the six categories of love, status, information, money, goods, and services. These were arranged in a circumplex model on the basis of two dimensions: concreteness-symbolism and particularism-universalism. Data from studies on the structure of this model (see Foa and Foa, 1974, for a review) have supported the proposition that identical resources (i.e., comparable in kind) and, although to a lesser extent, neighboring ones (love and status, services and goods, information and status, for example) are seen as more appropriately and efficiently given and returned for one another than distant and, especially, opposite resources (i.e., maximally noncomparable: love and money, status and goods, or information and services).

A study by Turner et al. (1971), for example, was designed to explore what resources subjects preferred in return for the one provided by them. The data were collected using an instrument called the Social Interaction Inventory, which deals with “exchange” among friends or acquaintances. In general, the highest preferences were assigned to resources identical (i.e., comparable) to the one previously given and the lowest to opposite ones (i.e., noncomparable resources).

Fitting the benefits used by Clark (1981) into the corresponding classes of the Foa’s resource model reveals that Clark’s resources belong to identical classes rather than to different ones. In her first study “ride” and “lunch” were used, both of which are services: “Goods for consumption, like food, are difficult to differentiate from services because they are presented as service and are used only once” (Foa and Foa, 1976:104). The benefits in Clark’s second study were all goods. Thus, the concept of “noncomparability,” in Clark’s usage, merely referred to different resources from the

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1 "Love" is an expression of affectionate regard, warmth, or comfort. "Status" indicates an evaluative judgment that conveys prestige, regard, or esteem.

2 "The notion of particularism . . . . indicates the extent to which the value of a given resource is influenced by the particular persons involved in exchanging it and by their relationship." " . . . concreteness . . . suggests the form or type of expression characteristic of the various resources." "Love, the most particularistic resource is at one extreme of this coordinate [particularism-universalism]. Money, the least particularistic resource, is situated at the other extreme." "Services and status are less particularistic than love, but more particularistic than goods and information, which are more universalistic" (Foa and Foa, 1976:102).
same resource class rather than to resources from different classes. A more powerful and appropriate test of Clark’s hypothesis would have to involve resources from opposite classes. From this point of view, Clark unintentionally obtained empirical support for a contradictory hypothesis derivable from resource theory, namely that comparability (rather than noncomparability) of resources given and received is a sign of friendship!

The study by Turner et al. (1971) showed, for any resource subjects gave, that they most preferred to receive love (while money was least preferred). This would, of course, be less likely for relationships different from friendship (communal): paying for a washing machine with affection would seldom be satisfactory to the average storeowner. In addition, results suggested that the preference for an identical resource was strongest for love, while it decreased with decreasing particularism of the resource—i.e., the extent to which the value of a given resource is influenced by the particular persons involved in exchanging it and by their relationship (Foa and Foa, 1976:80). As money is the most universalistic (least particularistic) resource and the opposite (maximally dissimilar) to love, then the preference for receiving a resource comparable to the one given would be the lowest for money. Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that comparability of particularistic resources given and received (i.e., love, status, and services) should be a stronger sign of friendship than is comparability of universalistic resources (i.e., money, goods, and information):

Hypothesis 1: When two persons, P and O, give each other resources from the same particularistic class of resources, outside observers will attribute a higher degree of friendship than when P and O give each other resources from the same universalistic class of resources.

I.e., (Love-Love) (Status-Status) > (Information-Information) (Goods-Goods) (Money-Money)

It is important to bear in mind that a person’s preference for a given resource depends not only upon the resource previously provided and whether or not the resources are comparable. Perhaps more important is whether or not the nature of the resources given or received is conducive to the development or maintenance of the relationship within which the giving and receiving takes place. Not all resources (and combinations among them) are acceptable and appropriate in all settings. “A categorization of resources must . . . be married to a categorization of relationships” (Hinde, 1981:18). At least to some extent, different institutional contexts may be described by their characteristic resource profiles, i.e., the nature of resources typically given and received. In communal relationships, such as friendship, the most appropriate resources are the particularistic ones—love, status, services, and perhaps information (see Carson, 1979:252; van Kreveld and van Beemen, 1978:392). If “. . . self and other are less differentiated for love [a particularistic resource] than for money . . .” (Foa and Foa, 1976:106), and if “. . . particularism implies that the uniqueness of the exchange partner as an individual is important . . .” (Foa and Foa, 1976:110), it would be reasonable to expect friends to give each other particularistic resources. This is not to say that giving and receiving other resources would be rare in friendship. However, the presentation of nonparticularistic resources to a friend usually constitutes a symbolic expression of love (and perhaps status), i.e., more than one resource is conveyed simultaneously.

It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that observers would tend to attribute friendship not only on the basis of the comparability of resources given and received, but also, and perhaps more importantly so, on the basis of their recognition of the resource profile most typical for friendship relations, i.e., on the basis of the particularistic nature of the resources involved. (In this context it would not be farfetched to suspect that subjects might have inferred friendship, in Clark’s first study, on the basis of the particularistic resources involved, i.e., services, which are typical for this type of relationship.)

We previously indicated that it seems less appropriate (according to Foa and Foa’s resource theory) to give and receive resources from different, and especially opposite, resource classes than from the same. Thus, for example, the receipt of ten dollars after rendering a friend a favor would be somewhat out of line as compared to the receipt of another favor. In other words, comparability of resources would be preferred to noncomparability. However, for most people in communal relationships this would only hold true when the comparable resources are particularistic in nature. A situation in which both persons receive particularistic resources from each other will usually contribute more to the intrinsic character of a communal relationship than when a particularistic resource is given only to one of the two persons. Thus:

Hypothesis 2: When two persons, P and O, give each other resources from the same particularistic class of resources, outside observers will attribute a higher degree of friendship
than when P and O give each other resources from opposite or maximally different resource classes.

I.e., (Love-Love) > [(Love-Money) and (Money-Love)],
(Status-Status) > [(Status-Goods) and (Goods-Status)],
and (Service-Service) > [(Service-Information) and (Information-Service)].

On the other hand, a situation in which only one person receives a particularistic resource is not entirely without affective sentiments, as it would be if neither one of the participants gave or received such a resource. Thus, when the comparable resources are universalistic in nature noncomparability of resources would be preferred to comparability, at least by one of the participants. (The provision is that the universalistic resources are not given as expressions of affection.) Our main point is that outside observers would, in this case, be most likely to infer the highest degree of friendship to the situation of noncomparable resources, regardless of what feelings the participants may experience. In other words:

Hypothesis 3: When two persons, P and O, give each other resources from the same universalistic class of resources, outside observers will attribute a lower degree of friendship than when P and O give each other resources from opposite or maximally different resource classes.

I.e., [(Money-Love) and (Love-Money)] > (Money-Money),
[(Goods-Status) and (Status-Goods)] > (Goods-Goods),
and [(Information-Service) and (Service-Information)] > (Information-Information).

One would also expect, when maximally distant (i.e., opposite or noncomparable) resources are given and received, that a situation in which a particularistic resource is given and a universalistic one is received is indicative of a lower degree of friendship than when the order between resources is the reverse. As previously indicated, the range of resources with which it can be exchanged appears more narrow for a particularistic than for a universalistic resource: "... the more particularistic a resource is, the higher the probability that it will be exchanged for the same resource, while nonparticularistic resources will tend to be exchanged for different ones" (Foia and Foia, 1976:109). An observer would, then, most likely attribute a lesser degree of friendship between two persons when one of them expresses affection for the other, who, in turn, gives money to the first, as compared to when one of them gives money to the other, who, in turn, expresses affection for the first person. More generally, then, we propose that outside observers will attribute a higher degree of friendship among people who give universalistic and receive particularistic resources than when the opposite order occurs. (A provision would be that the act of giving a universalistic resource first is not interpreted as a prepayment. This would most likely be indicative of less friendship.) Thus:

Hypothesis 4: When two persons, P and O, give each other resources from opposite or maximally different resource classes, outside observers will attribute a higher degree of friendship when P gives O a universalistic and O then gives P a particularistic resource than when P gives O a particularistic and O then gives P a universalistic resource.

I.e., (Goods-Status) > (Status-Goods)
(Money-Love) > (Love-Money)
(Information-Service) > (Service-Information).

Taken together, Hypotheses 1 through 4 thus assume that comparability of particularistic resources is a stronger sign of friendship than noncomparability when a universalistic resource is given and a particularistic one received, which is a stronger sign of friendship than noncomparability when a particularistic resource is given and a universalistic one received, which, in turn, is a stronger sign of friendship than comparability of universalistic resources:

(Love-Love) > (Money-Love) > (Love-Money) > (Money-Money),
(Status-Status) > (Goods-Status) > (Status-Goods) > (Goods-Goods), and
(Service-Service) > (Information-Service) > (Service-Information) > (Information-Information).

Finally, if resource type, per se, may characterize (and to outside observers be indicative of) a given type of relationship, and if the giving and receiving of particularistic resources are typically emphasized in friendship (communal) relations, then there should be a positive relationship between the degree of particularism of the resources given and received and the degree of friendship between the participants as attributed by outside observers. According to Foia's (1971) circular ordering of the six resource classes, we would predict the highest friendship scores when love is given and received. Situations involving service and status would elicit higher ratings than those involving goods and information, while the transaction of money should be least indicative.
of friendship (see also Carson, 1979). Therefore:

**Hypothesis 5:** When two persons, P and O, give each other love, outside observers will attribute a higher degree of friendship between them than when P and O give each other status or when they do each other a service, and more so than when P and O give each other information or goods, and still more so than when they give each other money.


**METHOD**

**Subjects**

Fifty-three Swedish female students at a nursing school (X age = 20.8) participated voluntarily in a study during regular class sessions. All subjects responded to the same questionnaire and no one left before the purpose of the study had been explained to them.

**Questionnaire**

On each of the six pages of the questionnaire descriptions of three situations were presented. These vignettes involved two male persons, identified by their full names. The only additional information given about their identities was that they lived in the same neighborhood. The three situations described on a given page of the questionnaire involved the same persons. However, different persons appeared on each of the other five pages.

The first of the three vignettes on each page described the two persons giving each other resources of the same resource class. In the other two vignettes one resource was the same as in the first situation, while the other was of the opposite resource class. The order between the resources given and received in the second vignette was the opposite of that in the third one. The resources given and received, as described on the respective pages, were the following: **Page 1:** status-status, status-goods, goods-status; **Page 2:** money-money, money-love, love-money; **Page 3:** goods-goods, goods-status, status-goods; **Page 4:** information-information, information-service, service-information; **Page 5:** love-love, love-money, money-love; **Page 6:** service-service, service-information, information-service. The order among the situations on each page varied. The concrete resource items exemplifying each resource class were as follows: **Status** — expression of admiration for the person's knowledge and energy, expression of admiration for the person's skills; **Money** — 50 Swedish crowns, a bond; **Goods** — a car tire, a sack of grass seed; **Information** — instructions on how to change a gear wire in a car, instructions on how to cure a parasite-afflicted apple tree; **Love** — conveying appreciation of being together, keeping a bed-ridden person company; and **Service** — changing a gear wire, mowing a lawn.

In order to eliminate as many factors as possible that might confound the effect of resource comparability/noncomparability, the vignettes were constructed with the following criteria: (a) They should reflect familiar real-life situations. (b) Full names of the participants were given, as the use of first names only might imply a certain degree of friendship. (c) The setting was as neutral as possible (a college dormitory, for example, might indicate to observers a high probability of friendship relations due to the spatial proximity of the occupants' rooms). (d) They contained no cues implying that a resource was necessarily given in response to the recipient's needs; responsiveness, in itself, might constitute a cue implying that a communal relationship prevails. (e) There were no status differences between the two participants. (f) The wording of the vignettes was as "neutral" as possible to avoid implications that a certain kind of relationship existed between the participants. (g) No information was available with regard to how the resources involved were acquired or evaluated by the giver (as giving away something one does not want or received for free carries different connotations than giving away a favorite possession for which one has worked hard to acquire). (h) Possible effects of the order in which the resources are given and received were indicated. (i) The manner, or mode, of giving and receiving was kept constant ("Giving-Giving" was used in this study).

Page 2 (involving money and love) may serve as an example illustrating the design of the questionnaire:

JOHAN OLSSON AND PER PERSSON LIVE IN THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD.

A) One day Johan gives one of his bonds to Per. Some time thereafter Per gives a fifty-crown bill to Johan.

B) One Sunday when Johan and Per go for a walk together Johan tells Per that he appreciates being together with him. Some time thereafter Per gives a fifty-crown bill to Johan.

C) One day Johan gives a fifty-crown bill to Per. Some time thereafter, when Johan and Per go for a walk together, Per tells Johan that he appreciates being together with him.
The subjects were instructed to read through all three episodes on any given page, and to pay careful attention to the differences among them, before answering the accompanying question and proceeding to the next page. The question required them to rate the degree of friendship they believed existed between the two persons in each of the three situations:

“If you did not know anything else about these two persons than what you have just read about them, how good friends would you guess that they are?”

The friendship ratings were done along a five-point scale (identical to the one used by Clark, 1981), ranging from a neutral point (0) “They are not friends” to (4) “They are close friends.”

Analyses of variance reveal that comparability explained 10.9% of the observed variability among friendship ratings ($R^2 = .1051$; $F(1, 104) = 12.21; p < .0007$), and resource type 17.6% ($R^2 = .1763$; $F(5, 312) = 13.55; p < .0001$).

Consistent with resource theory and Clark’s (1981) study our data also seem to suggest that comparability of resources given and received may be a sign of friendship. The relevant means (most of them in excess of 3) are shown in Table 1 on the diagonal running from the upper left to the lower right corner. Although all means differ significantly ($p < .0001$) from zero (i.e., no friendship) this may, however, merely reflect response biases causing subjects not to give scores of zero. The highest friendship scores were assigned to the two episodes in which both persons expressed love ($\bar{X} = 3.81$) and performed services for each other ($\bar{X} = 3.62$).

The remaining means given in Table 1 stand for noncomparability, which included two conditions: (1) a particularistic resource is given and a universalistic one received ($P_1 - U_1$); and (2) a universalistic resource is given and a particularistic one received ($U_1 - P_1$). However, $P_1$ and $U_1$ are paired, not twice, but four times: twice on a questionnaire page where resources of a particularistic class were paired ($P_1 - P_2$) and twice on another page where resources from its opposite universalistic class were paired ($U_1 - U_2$). Thus, each order between any two noncomparable (or opposite) resources given and received appeared twice. Like the means for comparability, those for noncomparability also seem to suggest friendship attributions, although to lower degrees in most cases.

The above mentioned features of our design also allowed us to examine whether preceding evaluations of a particularistic ($P_1 - P_2$) and of a universalistic ($U_1 - U_2$) resource pairing, respectively, affected differentially (if at all) the friendship ratings of subsequent situations in which noncomparable resources were given and received (in either order). In four of six cases subjects assigned higher friendship scores to the two situations of opposite resource pairing (i.e., noncomparability) when they had first rated a situation of universalistic resource pairing (comparability) than when they had first rated a situation of particularistic resource pairing (comparability). The situation involving the giving of status and the reception of goods (noncomparability) received a higher rating when preceded by a situation in which status was given and received (particularistic comparability) than when preceded by a situation in which goods were given and received (universalistic comparability). There was no difference for the situation in which the order between status and goods was reversed. A difference-between-means test showed, however, that significance was attained in only two of the six cases (see Table 2).

We predicted, in Hypothesis 1, that observers would attribute a higher degree of friendship between P and O when they give each other comparable particularistic resources than when they give each other comparable universalistic ones. As indicated by the subscripts for the means in the diagonal of Table 1, all differences were significant ($p < .05$), six out of nine in the predicted direction. Apparently status is an exception to the other two particularistic resources (love and service). Our results indicate that comparability of status will elicit a significantly lower degree of friendship attribution by observers than will comparability of universalistic resources (money, goods, information).

The results of the analyses pertaining to the next two hypotheses are given in Table 3. The upper half of the table shows the data relevant to Hypothesis 2 and the lower to Hypothesis 3. The former hypothesis, stating that subjects would attribute a higher degree of friendship between P and O in a situation with comparability of particularistic resources than in a situation in which resources are noncomparable, received full support for comparability of love and service, respectively. In the case of status, comparability was a weaker sign of friendship than noncomparability (in three of four cases). The prediction made in Hypothesis 3 was not supported at all. The data mainly indicate a
Table 1. Mean Friendship Ratings of Situations in which Comparable and Noncomparable Resources are Given and Received

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<td>Love</td>
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<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.94</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>Service</td>
<td>3.62&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>2.91&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goods</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.23&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>2.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Info.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.81</td>
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Notes: p < .0001 for all means. Means with a subscript in common are not significantly different (p > .05 based on related sample t-test, df = 52). Each pair of noncomparable resources occurs twice in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Differences between Mean Friendship Ratings of Noncomparability when Preceded by Comparability of Particularistic vs. Comparability of Universalistic Resources

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love-Money</td>
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<td>-.28</td>
<td>.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money-Money</td>
<td>-.456&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Service-Info.</td>
<td>-.148</td>
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<td>Noncomparability</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Money-Love</td>
<td>-1.38</td>
<td>Info.-Service</td>
<td>-.19&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
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<sup>1</sup> Difference between means.  
<sup>2</sup> t-value.  
<sup>a</sup> p < .0001.  
<sup>b</sup> p < .0002.  
<sup>c</sup> p < .06.

Table 3. Differences between Mean Friendship Ratings of Comparability vs. Noncomparability of Resources Given and Received

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<tr>
<td>Status-Status</td>
<td>-1.06&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.36</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Love-Love</td>
<td>-5.06&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-1.43</td>
<td>-2.09&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-2.11&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service-Service</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>9.65&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.94&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money-Money</td>
<td>9.61&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.74&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goods-Goods</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Money-Money</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.98&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.89&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.87&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Info.-Info</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>4.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.42&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.07&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.55</td>
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<sup>1</sup> Difference between means.  
<sup>2</sup> t-value.  
<sup>a</sup> p < .0001.  
<sup>b</sup> p < .008.  
<sup>c</sup> p < .04.  
<sup>d</sup> p < .06.  
<sup>e</sup> p < .07.

contrary tendency, particularly for comparability of money, and, to a lesser extent, goods. Apparently, giving and receiving comparable universalistic resources, rather than noncomparable ones, constitutes the strongest sign of friendship. This does not seem to be true, however, for the universalistic resource of information, in which case comparability and noncomparability are equally strong signs of friendship.
Hypothesis 4 predicted that subjects would attribute a higher degree of friendship for non-comparability when a universalistic resource was given first and a particularistic one second than for noncomparability when the order between the resources was reversed. Although the numerical values of the differences between the relevant means were consistent with this conjecture in four out of six cases, statistical significance was obtained in only two of those cases: (Status-Goods) > (Goods-Status), \( t = 2.16, p < .04 \), and (Love-Money) > (Money-Love), \( t = 2.82, p < .007 \). A more detailed examination of the properties of each resource class, and the implications of various ways of pairing them, seems necessary in order to explain why our predictions were only partially supported. As previously indicated, the notion of "prepayment" may have to be considered.

We may recall that the results from the test of Hypothesis 1 showed that subjects assigned higher friendship scores to situations in which P and O gave each other comparable particularistic resources than when they gave each other comparable universalistic ones (with the exception of the situation in which status was involved). We also proposed that resource particularism and degree of attributed friendship are likely to covary positively. Accordingly, a partial rank ordering of the situations in which P and O gave each other comparable resources was proposed in Hypothesis 5. Table 1 shows that the directional trend conforms to the predictions, except again for the situation involving status. The latter situation ended up with the lowest friendship scores. The differences between situations involving comparability of love and service, respectively, and goods and money, respectively, were not significant. Thus, it appears that the order predicted by Hypothesis 5 has to be somewhat modified as follows: [(Love-Love) = (Service-Service)] + [(Goods-Goods) = (Info.-Info.) = (Money-Money)] > (Status-Status). The means for each situation were 3.8, 3.6, 3.2, 3.1, 2.9 and 2.2. Thus, some types of comparability are, indeed, stronger signs of friendship than others.

**DISCUSSION**

The results from this study indicate that the nature of resources, as well as the comparability of resources given and received, is likely to affect the attributions of outside observers concerning the degree of friendship between two (or more) individuals. Whether or not our subjects viewed the relationship between the persons described in our vignettes as friendship within a communal or within an exchange relationship was not the subject of our study. We would like to point out, however, that friendship is, of course, not an exclusive property of a communal relationship (as Clark, 1981, seems to assume); exchange partners may also be friends (although the depth as well as the scope of friendship are probably greater in communal relationships).

Provided that we correctly interpreted Clark's (1981) theoretical arguments to mean that an outside observer's assignment of friendship scores is indicative of his/her recognition of a communal relationship, and that therefore attribution of a lack of friendship indicates an exchange relationship, the results of her study did not confirm these conjectures (as both comparability and noncomparability elicited positive friendship ratings in her study, as well as in the present one). Thus, at least for outside observers, comparability/noncomparability of resources given and received does not seem to constitute a factor of sufficient significance for the distinction between communal and exchange relationships in terms of presence vs. absence of friendship.

The hypotheses stated in the present paper specified when comparability and when noncomparability (and different instances of these) would constitute a stronger sign of friendship than the other. More specifically, we predicted when one type of comparability will be a stronger sign of friendship than another type of comparability (Hypothesis 1), when comparability will be a stronger sign of friendship than noncomparability (Hypothesis 2), when noncomparability will be a stronger sign than comparability (Hypothesis 3), when one type of noncomparability will be a stronger sign of friendship than another type of noncomparability (Hypothesis 4), and which resources offered by participants in a relationship will be stronger signs of friendships than others (Hypothesis 5).

Hypothesis 1 stated that comparability of particularistic resources would be a stronger sign of friendship than comparability of universalistic resources. Support was obtained except in the case of status. Status is responsible for less than full confirmation of two additional hypotheses (2 and 5). Apparently status may not be perceived as a particularistic resource to the same degree, or of the same kind, as love and service. In fact, status received the lowest friendship scores of all resources in the comparability conditions. Other studies where predictions for status were made on the basis of its particularism have also obtained unexpected results (e.g., Kayser et al., 1982; Schwinger and Nährer, in prep.; Törnblom and Foa, 1983). Thus, the peculiar pattern of reactions to status may be more than a coincidence.
Perhaps status conveys a more impersonal flavor than the other particularistic resources.

We also suggested that sometimes comparability, and at other times noncomparability, of resources would constitute the strongest sign of friendship. As we had expected (see Hypothesis 2), comparability of particularistic resources was a stronger sign of friendship than noncomparability (except in the case when noncomparability was represented by status and goods and was compared to status in the comparability condition). However, and contrary to the predictions made in Hypothesis 3, noncomparability was not a stronger sign of friendship than comparability of universalistic resources. Thus, the only time noncomparability was a stronger sign of friendship than comparability was in the case of comparability with regard to status. There was no difference in the case of comparability of information. For the remaining four resources, comparability resulted in higher friendship scores than noncomparability. Again, these findings were at odds with Clark's (1981) proposition. A full comparison with Clark's data is not possible, however, as resources from the same class were used to represent the noncomparability conditions.

Unfortunately, other reasons as well prevent a comparison of our own findings with those generated by Clark's (1981) two studies of similar design. In addition to the absence of information about the sex (and age) of her subjects, a mode ("Requesting-Giving") different from ours ("Giving-Giving") was used in her second study. Another study (Fredholm and Törmblom, in prep.) showed that degree of attributed friendship varied with mode of giving and receiving. Four modes were compared, and "Giving-Giving" resulted in higher friendship scores than "Requesting-Giving" (and higher than "Giving-Requesting" and "Requesting-Requesting").

The results of our study show that comparability as well as noncomparability of resources given and received are factors on the basis of which conclusions about the existence and degree of friendship between individuals are made. Curiously, these results do not agree with Clark's (1981) theoretical arguments, but they are consistent with her findings (with respect to services and goods). It is not possible, on the basis of our data, to determine whether noncomparability, per se, or whether the mere presence of a particularistic resource (or both) were responsible for the subjects' attribution of friendship. To answer this question, one would have to include a condition of noncomparability between universalistic resources, i.e., a condition in which the resources given and received are of two different universalistic classes. This remark also concerns Hypothesis 4, which suggested (similar to what was predicted by Hypothesis 1 and confirmed for comparability) that one type of noncomparability would result in higher friendship ratings than another type. In this context it is appropriate to note that Clark (1981) found no differences when the order between the resources was reversed. This may have been due to her use of resources from the same class (as previously mentioned). In the present study, however, the directional trend was largely consistent with predictions in Hypothesis 4 (although significance was obtained in only two of the six cases). Again, a more complete picture would have resulted had noncomparability of universalistic (as well as particularistic) resources also been included.

Inasmuch as the present study has shown that variations in the comparability as well as in the nature of resources that two persons give to each other will elicit variations in the degree of friendship that outside observers attribute to the two persons, we know very little about the significance of those two factors in a real-life situation. It is quite possible that their importance is negligible in comparison to a number of other more revealing cues. In the context of the present study, in which a bare minimum of information about the two participants and their behaviors was provided, the two factors barely explained a third of the variation in observer attribution. Even such a restricted context as the present one may contain factors which might be equally, if not more, powerful indicators of friendship than comparability and nature of transacted resources. The very fact that our subjects assigned positive friendship scores in response to all vignettes would seem to warrant further analysis and investigation.

Two additional factors appear particularly conspicuous. One is the setting in which the giving and receiving took place. Even though a "neighborhood" may be a more neutral setting than those used by Clark (1981) (i.e., a floor in a college dorm and a place of work), subjects' ratings might still have been colored by norms appropriate to that setting, e.g., politeness, consideration, and solidarity. The second factor is the very act of mutual giving (regardless of what was given) that both persons described in the vignettes exhibited. It seems entirely reasonable to assume that observers would be very unlikely to infer a lack of friendship (and, especially, the presence of animosity or "enemyship") when witnessing two persons voluntarily presenting gifts to each other.

Further research into the phenomenology of subjects' attributions is necessary as well, especially with regard to the tacit awareness of
subjects and how they perceive the friendship in terms of its stage along a temporal dimension. As far as tacit awareness is concerned, we have more or less assumed that observers react to the episodes described by the vignettes as a Gestalt, i.e., not taking the point of view of only one of the two persons involved, but rather judging the situation as a whole. By stage of friendship we simply mean the history of the relationship, whether the two persons are perceived to be new or old friends (to be distinguished from the degree of their friendship). As Hinde (1981:12, 17) has pointed out, "... what is important may change with the stage of the relationship..." and "... the same words will change in value with the stage in the relationship." Thus, what may be appropriate and conducive to a deepening of friendship for old friends might be inappropriate and counterproductive in the context of a new friendship. As expected, studies by Törnblom et al. (in prep.) did show that subjects differentially evaluated the effects of various modes of giving and receiving, and of comparability/noncomparability between resources given and received, on the solidification of friendship between new and old friends. Thus, the results of the present study would have been more unequivocal knowing the subjects' perceptions of the temporal dimensions ascribed to the relationship subject to evaluation.

Finally, it would be desirable to compare the attributions made by male and female observers to actors in dyads (or larger groups) of identical, opposite, as well as mixed gender. In the present study female subjects evaluated the degree of friendship between two male actors. It would not be farfetched to expect differences between male and female observers when rating the degree of friendship in groups of different sex compositions.

In sum, and contrary to Clark's (1981) hypothesis, we have on the whole shown that comparability of resources given and received was a stronger sign of friendship than was non-comparability. We have also shown that the nature of resources involved was a stronger sign of friendship than their comparability/noncomparability. This, again, appears contradictory to Clark and Mills's conjectures, at least as far as outside observers are concerned: "The rules concerning the giving and receiving of benefits [specifying the appropriateness of comparable and noncomparable benefits] are what distinguish communal and exchange relationships, rather than the specific benefits which are given and received" (Mills and Clark, 1982:123, emphasis added; see also Clark and Mills, 1979:13). A more direct test of their propositions might utilize a design in which communal and exchange relationships are described, and subjects would indicate (under various conditions of differences in participants' statuses, stages of their relationship, resource types, etc.) how appropriate they think comparability and noncomparability are (in terms of kind, and absolute as well as relative value). However, it is doubtful whether such a simple test (involving the extraction of a simple feature from the complexities of multifaceted relationships) would be particularly meaningful.

REFERENCES


A Critical Examination of the Causal Structure of the Fishbein/Ajzen Attitude-Behavior Model

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Since the “discovery” of attitude-behavior inconsistency in the 1930s by LaPiere and others, the study of the relationship between attitudes and behavior has come a long way. During the 1960s and early 1970s researchers systematically examined the problem of attitude-behavior inconsistency, showing that the attitude-behavior relationship depends on ‘other’ variables. In the middle and late 1970s much of this research was integrated and synthesized in various general models of behavior, the most significant of which is the Fishbein/Ajzen model. This paper critically examines the causal structure of that model. Specifically, it examines the theoretical problems and issues generated by the parsimonious causal structure of the model, that is, the structure underlying the traditional attitude concept and the relationships between other variables and the model concepts.

Attitude-behavior consistency remains a perennial problem in the social sciences. Since the middle 1960s studies have examined “other” variables which affect attitude-behavior consistency. Some are methodological, such as the validity of attitude and behavior measures; some refer to attitudinal characteristics, such as clarity, certainty, and internal consistency; some refer to psychological conditions, such as self-monitoring and the intellectual abilities necessary to perform attitude-consistent behavior; some refer to characteristics of behavior, such as social visibility and specificity; and some refer to social and situational conditions, such as the pressure of social others. Extensive reviews of this literature are available (Liska, 1974a; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977, 1980; Schuman and Johnson, 1976; Zanna et al., 1982). By the late 1960s, the bivariate anomaly had been transformed

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