

## Chapter 5

# Implications of Relationship Type for Understanding Compatibility

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Compatibility involves getting along with another in a congenial, harmonious fashion, and it is easy to predict how certain behaviors will affect compatibility. For example, being attentive to what another person says should increase or at least maintain compatibility. In contrast, insulting another should decrease compatibility or keep it at a low level. It is difficult, however, to predict how certain other behaviors will influence compatibility. For example, imagine someone giving you an expensive birthday gift, perfectly suited to your needs. Would it make you feel closer to the giver and solidify the relationship, thereby enhancing compatibility? Or would it seem inappropriate, make you feel awkward and uncomfortable, and therefore decrease compatibility? Alternatively, imagine how you would react if someone whom you just helped immediately paid you for that help. Would it be annoying and decrease feelings of compatibility? Or would it seem entirely appropriate?

In the latter examples you can probably imagine having either reaction—depending upon *who* the other person was. If your spouse gave you the perfect gift, it would probably make you happy. If a mere acquaintance did so, it would probably evoke awkward feelings. If your best friend was the one to pay you back for help, the response might be annoying. If it were a client with whom you regularly did business, repayment would seem desirable.

Although I doubt that many people would argue with these examples, to date social psychologists have almost entirely neglected the variable of relationship type in their research on compatibility. Nonetheless, a small amount of work on this issue recently has been done and it will be reviewed in this chapter. My goal is to convince the reader that if we wish to understand compatibility in relationships, we cannot neglect the variable of relationship type. Specifically, a distinction between two types of relationships, communal and exchange, and the norms that govern when benefits should be given in each, will be described. These different norms suggest that many behaviors ought to have differential effects on compatibility in communal versus exchange relationships. Research supporting the distinction and its implications for compatibility will be reviewed and discussed.

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## Two Types of Relationships: Communal and Exchange

In earlier papers, Judson Mills and I (Clark & Mills, 1979; Mills & Clark, 1982) have drawn a distinction between two types of relationships based on the rules governing the giving of benefits in those relationships.<sup>1</sup> Some relationships are characterized by members' obligations and, usually, by their desire to be especially responsive to each other's needs. These *communal relationships* are often exemplified by relationships with kin, romantic partners, and friends. In other relationships people do not feel this special responsibility for the other's needs. Although they feel some low level of communal orientation to most people, and will respond to each other's needs in emergencies or when they can give a benefit to the other at little cost to themselves (Mills & Clark, 1982), they do not feel a special responsibility for each other's needs. Rather, they give benefits with the expectation of receiving comparable benefits in return, and when they receive a benefit they feel an obligation to return a comparable benefit.<sup>2</sup> These *exchange relationships* are often exemplified by relationships with strangers, acquaintances, and people with whom we do business.

### What Determines Type of Relationship With Another?

The type of relationship we have with another person may be culturally dictated or freely chosen. The culture dictates, for instance, that communal norms are to be followed with family members. Regardless of whether we like or dislike our relatives, we are *supposed* to care about their welfare. The culture also dictates that exchange norms should be followed with people with whom we do business.

There are, in addition, times when we must *decide* what norms to follow in relationships with others. Some determinants of one's desire for a communal relationship include the attractiveness of the other, the availability of the other

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<sup>1</sup>I assume, as have several others (e.g., Deutsch, 1975; Lerner, Miller & Holmes, 1976; Leventhal, 1980; Mikula, 1981; Reis, 1982), that many different rules for giving and receiving benefits exist. For instance, benefits can be distributed in relationships according to (1) each person's inputs, (2) the equality principle, (3) needs, (4) ability, (5) the effect they will have, and so on (Deutsch, 1975). In addition, I assume that the rule chosen for use at any given time is dependent upon individual differences, situational variables, and the type of relationship one has or expects to have with the person with whom one is interacting. Only relationship type is considered in this chapter, however.

<sup>2</sup>Throughout the chapter the term benefit is used. A benefit is defined as something of value that one person intentionally gives to another (Mills & Clark, 1982). Note that this definition excludes many things of value that a person may derive from a relationship that the other does not *intend* to give to the person. For instance, just by being in a relationship, a person may gain status in outsiders' eyes (Sigall & Landy, 1973) but the status gained would not be considered a benefit.

for a communal relationship, and one's *own* availability for a communal relationship.

Consider one's own availability for a communal relationship first. The more communal relationships one has, the *less* likely one should be to desire additional ones. Having at least some communal relationships with others is valuable for a number of reasons. For instance, having someone else responsible for one's needs should provide a sense of security. On the other hand, participation in such relationships requires that one be responsive to the other's needs as well. As a person has more and more communal relationships, the benefits derived from adding an additional one should diminish while, at the same time, the person's responsibility for others' needs increases. Moreover, as more communal relationships are added, conflicts regarding whose needs one should respond to in the event that different people's needs arise at the same time may increase as well. For these reasons, the more communal relationships a person already has, the *less* likely that person should be to form a communal relationship with a new person.

Everything just said about a person's *own* availability for a communal relationship also applies to the other's availability. Consequently, the more communal relationships the other is perceived to have, the less likely a person may be to desire or anticipate being able to form a new communal relationship with that other.

Finally, the other's attractiveness should influence choosing to form a communal relationship. In communal relationships, members have an implicit agreement to be concerned for each other. This implicit agreement requires some expectation that the relationship will be a long-term one. It requires that one be willing to let the other respond to one's needs as they arise and that one be willing to respond to the other's needs as they arise. In addition, given such a commitment to each other, members of such relationships are often perceived as a "unit" by outsiders, and attributes of one person reflect upon the other (cf. Sigall & Landy, 1973). Consequently, it is understandable why members should be most likely to desire communal relationships with people who are attractive in terms of physical appearance, personality, and/or intelligence. However, this desire may be tempered by the realization that one may not be able to form a relationship with very attractive others if one's own attributes are not terribly attractive (Berscheid, Dion, Walster & Walster, 1971).

Exchange relationships, on the other hand, do not involve special responsibilities for one another's needs and they may be very short term (e.g., one's relationship with a taxi driver) *or* they can be long term. But even long-term exchange relationships may be fairly easily ended at any time simply by "evening" the score and then leaving the relationship. Thus, one tends not to be as closely identified with an exchange partner as with a communal one. Because exchange relationships are less intimate and can be ended relatively easily, attractiveness should be less important (although not entirely unimportant) to forming exchange relationships than to forming communal ones. Exchange relationships should most likely occur when one person needs or desires a benefit from the other and can benefit the other in repayment.

### Variation in Certainty About and Strength of Relationships

Both communal and exchange relationships can vary in terms of the participants' feelings of *certainty* that that kind of relationship actually exists (Mills & Clark, 1982). For example, a college freshman assigned to share a dorm room with another person may, on the first day, find the other to be quite friendly and expect a communal relationship. However, the freshman may be uncertain as to whether such a relationship actually does or will exist. Later, after the roommates have actually followed communal norms for awhile, their certainty will be greater. Similarly, exchange relationships can vary in certainty. For example, a store manager may grant credit to a new customer, expecting that that customer will pay the bill. However, the manager may be unsure that the customer will pay. Later, assuming that the customer *has* paid his or her bills, the owner will be more certain of the relationship.

In addition to varying in certainty, communal but not exchange relationships vary in strength (Mills & Clark, 1982). This means that communal relationships can be ordered in terms of the degree of responsibility assumed by one person for the other's needs. A parent, for instance, may feel a greater responsibility for his or her child's needs than for his or her friend's needs. The relationship with the child is stronger than the relationship with the friend. These differences in strength may prevent conflict when a person is responsible for the needs of more than one other at a given time. For example, a person who needs to get to the airport might be upset if her friend turns down her request for a ride. However, if the friend explains that she must stay home to take care of her sick child, the person will probably understand.

Table 5-1. Some Characteristics of Communal and Exchange Relationships

Communal Relationships	Exchange Relationships
1. Characterized by a special responsibility for the other beyond that level of responsibility felt for any other person.	1. <i>No</i> special responsibility for the welfare of the other beyond that felt for any other person.
2. Most benefits are given in response to needs or to demonstrate a general concern for the other. Benefits are not given with the expectation of receiving specific repayments nor as repayments for specific benefits received in the past.	2. Most benefits are given with the expectation of receiving specific repayments or <i>as</i> repayments for specific benefits received in the past.
3. Certainty about, desire for and strength of these relationships vary.	3. Certainty about and desire for these relationships vary. Strength of these relationships is not assumed to vary.

### Variation in Desire for Existing Relationships

Usually people who have communal or exchange relationships with another also *desire* those relationships. However, that may not always be the case. For example, when a person marries, the person may inherit a new set of culturally dictated communal relations known as in-laws. The person may feel compelled to follow communal norms with these people, but may not be very happy about it. Similarly, although people ordinarily freely choose to participate in exchange relationships, they may at times find themselves in an undesired exchange relationship. For example, a person in need of a plumber's assistance may not wish to enter into an exchange relationship with a certain plumber, but if that plumber is the only one available, the person may still do so.

The attributes of communal and exchange relationships just discussed are summarized in Table 5-1. I turn now to a discussion of the importance of these attributes for understanding compatibility.

### Implications of the Communal/Exchange Distinction for Compatibility

There are specific classes of behaviors which the communal/exchange distinction implies should have differential impact on compatibility depending upon relationship type. Not every such behavior can be discussed. Only those behaviors are included for which there is research evidence indicating that the behavior really is considered to be more appropriate, desirable, or expected in one type of relationship than in the other. For some of these behaviors, direct evidence will be presented that they do indeed differentially affect indices of compatibility such as attraction or resentment. For other behaviors, the fact that they occur with differential frequency in these two types of relationships will be used to infer that they may differentially affect compatibility within those relationships.

For discussion purposes I have organized these behaviors into two groups: (1) behaviors that follow from exchange norms and (2) behaviors that follow from communal norms. "Exchange behaviors" are discussed first.

#### Behaviors That Follow From Exchange Norms

Any behavior that allows one to keep track of and to accurately balance what is given and received in a relationship ought to maintain or promote compatibility in exchange relationships. On the other hand, such behaviors may actually be detrimental to compatibility in communal relationships since they may imply that one person does not desire a communal relationship with the other. Several such exchange behaviors are discussed here, including: (1) prompt repayment for benefits received, (2) giving and receiving comparable rather than non-comparable benefits, (3) requesting repayments from others, and (4) keeping track of the individual inputs into joint tasks or activities.

*Promptly repaying others for specific benefits received.* In exchange relationships, the rule for distributing benefits is that they are given to repay specific past debts or with the expectation of receiving a comparable benefit in return. Therefore, promptly repaying others for benefits received is an appropriate behavior in these relationships, and should promote compatibility. However, prompt repayment should not be important to maintaining compatibility in communal relationships. Indeed, to the extent that this behavior indicates preference for an exchange rather than a communal relationship, it may actually decrease compatibility. Very few studies have examined the impact of repayment for specific benefits in both communal and exchange relationships. Nonetheless, those that have done so support the predictions just described.

In one study (Clark & Mills, 1979, Study 1), undergraduate men were recruited to participate in an experiment with an attractive, friendly, female confederate. Both participants worked simultaneously on individual tasks for which each could win points toward extra credit that would help them complete a course requirement. In all cases the man was induced to help the attractive woman complete her task. Then she either thanked him *or* thanked him *and* repaid him with one of her extra-credit points. At this point the experimenter casually manipulated the type of relationship desired. While the woman was in a different room, the experimenter remarked that she was anxious to go on to the second part of the study, either: (1) because she was new at the university, did not know many people, and had signed up for the study as a good way to meet people (communal conditions) or (2) because she had signed up for the experiment because it would end at a time convenient for her husband to pick her up and go to their home, which was some distance from the campus (exchange conditions).<sup>3</sup>

Finally, supposedly in preparation for a second task, the subject filled out an impressions form describing the woman. From responses on this form, a measure of attraction was derived. The results were clear. Subjects led to desire an exchange relationship liked the woman significantly more if she repaid him than if she did not. In contrast, subjects led to desire a communal relationship liked the woman significantly better if she did *not* repay him than if she did. Thus, the impact of repayment for a specific benefit on compatibility does appear to depend upon relationship type.

A second study (Clark & Vanderlipp, in press) also supports the idea that repayments for specific benefits are important for maintaining compatibility in

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<sup>3</sup>Note that this manipulation relies on the ideas expressed earlier regarding when a communal relationship will be desired. Specifically, the other person was always attractive and we assumed (1) that most male freshmen would be available for a communal relationship and (2) that if the other was new at the university and consequently also available, a communal relationship would be desired. On the other hand, we assumed (3) that if the other was married and consequently unavailable, an exchange relationship would be preferred. Clear evidence for the effectiveness of these manipulations in producing desires for communal and exchange relationships has been collected and is described in a manuscript available from the author (Clark, 1984b).

exchange but not in communal relationships. In each session of this study, a female subject participated with a female confederate. Shortly after the subject's arrival, the other person was either described as new at the university and as wanting to meet people (communal conditions) or as being in a hurry since her husband would be picking her up (exchange conditions). Furthermore, communal subjects were led to believe that they would have a discussion of common interests with the other, whereas exchange subjects were led to expect a discussion of differences in interests. The experiment supposedly dealt with how people got to know one another and it began with subjects filling out some pretests. During a break in the pretesting, the confederate asked the subject to take and fill out a lengthy questionnaire for a class project. All subjects agreed. Then the other person either paid the subject \$4 from "class funds" or offered no repayment, explaining that class funds had run out. Subsequently, the experimenter returned and asked both participants to fill out one more pretest. On this form, subjects rated how exploitative they perceived the confederate to be and answered other questions designed to tap liking.

In the exchange conditions, the results paralleled those of the Clark and Mills (1979) study just described. Subjects who were not repaid felt more exploited by the other and liked the other less than those who were repaid. In contrast, failure to repay had no impact on feelings of exploitation or attraction in communal relationships. Thus, once again evidence was obtained that specific repayments are essential to maintaining compatibility in exchange but not in communal relationships.

The results of the Clark & Vanderlipp (in press) study differed from those of the Clark and Mills (1979) study in that repayment had no negative effects on general attraction in communal relationships. Perhaps this was because in this study, unlike that of Clark and Mills (1979), repayment came from a third source (class funds) and not from the confederate herself. Therefore, it may not have been taken as an indication of the confederate's attitude toward the subject. This, of course, suggests that repayment need not *always* reduce compatibility in a communal relationship. If the other is offering repayment for reasons clearly independent of the relationship, it may not have this effect.

*Giving and receiving comparable benefits.* The evidence that repayment for specific benefits is appropriate in exchange but not communal relationships suggests that factors that would cause a benefit given to *look* like a repayment for a benefit previously received would be reacted to positively in exchange but not in communal relationships. One such factor is the *comparability* of benefits given to those previously received (Mills & Clark, 1982).

In an exchange relationship, giving a benefit comparable to one previously received should be more desirable than giving a noncomparable benefit. A comparable benefit clearly indicates that the debt incurred by receiving the prior benefit has been eliminated. In contrast, in communal relationships, giving and receiving noncomparable benefits should be preferred. Noncomparable benefits are less likely to be viewed as repayments. They should be more likely to be perceived as having been given out of concern for the recipient's welfare.

A series of three studies (Clark, 1981) supports these ideas. In two of these studies, subjects were presented with descriptions of one person giving something to another, then of that other person giving something to the first. Half the time the two benefits were the same; for example, two lunches (comparable conditions). Half the time they were different; for example, a lunch and a ride home (noncomparable conditions). After reading these descriptions, all subjects rated the degree of friendship they believed existed between the two people. In both studies, perceived friendship was significantly lower when comparable rather than noncomparable benefits were given. The third study revealed that, as expected, comparable benefits were more likely than noncomparable benefits to be seen as repayments. In contrast, noncomparable benefits were more likely than comparable benefits to be perceived as having been given for such communal reasons as "to start a friendship" or "out of appreciation."

*Requesting repayments from others.* Requesting a repayment is still another behavior that should seem appropriate and desirable in exchange but not in communal relationships, and a second study reported by Clark and Mills (1979) supports this prediction. In this study, female subjects anticipated participating, along with an attractive female confederate, in a task involving forming words with letter tiles. Type of relationship was varied at the start of the study in much the same manner as in the Clark and Mills (1979) and Clark and Vanderlipp (in press) studies described above. As in the first Clark and Mills (1979) study, the participants worked independently on tasks for which they could earn points toward extra credit. This time, however, the confederate finished first, and in the four conditions relevant to the discussion here, the confederate helped the subject.<sup>4</sup> Later in the session the confederate either requested a repayment or explicitly indicated that she wanted no repayment. Finally, the subject's liking for the confederate was assessed.

As predicted, subjects in the exchange condition liked the other significantly more when she requested a repayment than when she did not. In contrast, communal subjects liked the other significantly more when she did *not* request a repayment than when she did. Thus, in exchange relationships, requesting a repayment seems to increase compatibility relative to explicitly indicating that one does not desire such a repayment. On the other hand, the reverse strategy appears to be the best for promoting compatibility in a communal relationship.

*Keeping track of inputs into joint tasks.* The final behavior to be discussed is keeping track of individual inputs into joint tasks for which there will be a reward. According to exchange norms, people should receive benefits in

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<sup>4</sup>In half of the conditions, aid was *not* sent. However, these conditions are not described here as they are not relevant to reactions to requesting repayment. They are described later in this chapter.

proportion to their inputs into a task. This calls for keeping track of inputs. In contrast, according to communal norms, benefits should be divided according to needs. The needier person should receive more benefits, or if needs are equal, benefits should be divided equally. It is not necessary to keep track of individual inputs in order to follow this rule.

Three studies provide evidence that members of exchange relationships are more likely than members of communal relationships to keep track of inputs into joint tasks (Clark, 1984a). In all three, subjects were recruited to participate in an experiment in which they would work on a joint task with another person. They were to search a matrix of numbers and circle specified sequences. The task instructions emphasized that the *pair* would receive a reward for each sequence circled.

In the first study, male subjects were recruited to participate along with a female confederate. They were led to expect a communal or an exchange relationship with her in much the same way as used in the studies already discussed. The subject and the confederate were instructed to take turns searching for sequences. The confederate always went first and circled sequences in red or black pen. Then the subject, who had access to both a red and black pen, took a turn circling numbers. If a different color pen was chosen by significantly more than half the subjects in a condition, that was taken as evidence that subjects were making an effort to keep track of inputs. If a different color pen was chosen by significantly *less* than 50% of the subjects, that was taken as an indication that subjects were *avoiding* keeping track of inputs. In the first study, as predicted, subjects expecting exchange relationships seemed to keep track of inputs; 88.2% of them selected a different color pen—significantly more than expected by chance. By contrast, subjects expecting communal relationships seemed to *avoid* keeping track of benefits; only 12.5% selected a different color pen—significantly *fewer* than expected by chance.

Two additional studies reported by Clark (1984a) also support the idea that keeping track of individual inputs into joint tasks is important in exchange but not in communal relationships. These studies further suggest that once a communal relationship is *established*, it may no longer be important to go out of one's way to *avoid* any appearance of following exchange norms. Simply following communal norms may be sufficient. In these two studies, *pairs* of existing friends signed up together. Then they were scheduled to participate in the task just described, paired either with their friend as a partner or with a stranger from a different set of friends. In both studies, when paired with a stranger, subjects showed a significant tendency to pick a different color pen, whereas when paired with a friend they did not. However, in neither of these studies did subjects paired with a friend show any evidence of intentionally *avoiding* picking a different color pen.

From these studies we may infer that keeping track of inputs into joint tasks is important for maintaining compatibility in exchange but not communal relationships. Furthermore, actually *avoiding* keeping track of inputs may be called for in communal relationships prior to the time that those relationships are firmly established.

### Cautionary Notes Regarding the Impact of Exchange Behaviors

Several exchange behaviors have now been identified that ought to differentially influence compatibility in exchange and in communal relationships. These are summarized in the top half of Table 5-2. At this point, however, the reader should be cautioned regarding some boundary conditions on these effects.

*Compelling needs.* First, there are instances in which receiving a benefit, even a comparable benefit, immediately after having given one should *not* appear to be a repayment and consequently should not impede compatibility in communal relationships. Specifically, the benefit should not impede compatibility if the recipient has a compelling *need* for it. Similarly, receiving a request for a benefit after having been given one should not impede compatibility in communal relationships *if* the person requesting the benefit has a compelling *need* for the benefit (Mills & Clark, 1982). In such cases, where the needs of the recipient are very salient, the benefits received or requested are not likely to be thought of as repayments, but rather as responses to needs.

*Turn-taking.* A second cautionary note has to do with turn-taking, which gives some appearance of involving exchange norms but in fact is not incompatible with communal norms. Turn-taking is appropriate in communal relationships when needs are equal, when there is no clear evidence regarding needs, *or* when there are no clear compelling needs. For instance, a husband and wife who are both busy and who would both like to avoid doing the dishes, might take turns performing this chore.

Table 5-2. Some Behaviors That Should Differentially Affect Compatibility in Exchange and Communal Relationships

Behavior	Type of Relationship	
	Exchange	Communal
1. Prompt repayment for specific benefits	+	-
2. Giving and receiving comparable benefits	+	s
3. Requesting repayment	+	-
4. Keeping track of individual inputs into joint tasks	+	-
5. Helping	s	+
6. Accepting/seeking help	s	+
7. Distributing rewards according to needs	s	+
8. Use of consensus rather than majority rule as a decision strategy	s	+
9. Responsiveness to emotions	s	+
10. Taking the other's perspective	s	+

*Note.* + indicates that the behavior promotes or maintains compatibility  
 - indicates that the behavior detracts from compatibility or keeps compatibility low  
 s indicates that the impact of the behavior on compatibility depends upon the situation

*Transactions involving money.* Finally, it should be noted that one type of benefit—i.e., money—seems to be appropriately given and received according to the exchange rules in *both* communal and exchange relationships (except perhaps in the very strongest of communal relationships).

*Certainty.* As noted previously, both communal and exchange relationships vary in certainty, and this factor may influence the extent to which exchange behaviors will have the effects on compatibility discussed thus far. First, when one desires but is uncertain about having an *exchange* relationship with another, “exchange behaviors” may be especially welcome because they indicate that the desired relationship actually exists. Second, certainty about *communal* relations may also affect the impact of exchange behaviors in those relationships, albeit in more complex ways. In these relationships, the effect of certainty probably depends upon how easily the exchange behavior may be explained away in communal terms. If an exchange behavior cannot be “explained away” in communal terms, (e.g., a cash repayment for a favor just done), it may be *most* distressing in relations about which one *had* felt certain. People may be quite invested in such relationships, so their possible loss should be especially distressing. If, however, the exchange behavior *can* be “explained away” in communal terms (e.g., an offer of help after one has given the other help), people should be more likely to “explain it away” in communal relationships about which they are certain than in ones about which they are uncertain. Consequently, such behaviors may be *less* detrimental to compatibility in communal relationships about which one feels certain than in those about which one is uncertain.

*Strength.* Not only do communal relationships vary in certainty, they may also vary in strength, and this too may influence the impact of “exchange” behaviors on compatibility in communal and exchange relationships. For instance, strength may have an impact when it comes to giving and receiving money. As already noted, except in the very strongest communal relationship, money is treated in exchange terms. Thus, repaying money may not produce awkward feelings in communal relationships and indeed should *prevent* such feelings. An exception to this rule, however, may occur in very strong communal relations such as those between spouses and between many parents and children. In such relationships, explicit repayment of money may reduce compatibility.

The strength of communal relations may also have an impact on how people react to the inappropriate presence of exchange behaviors in these relationships. It is likely that the stronger a communal relationship, the more important it is to the participants. Thus, people may be especially distressed when someone with whom they believed they had a strong communal relationship begins displaying exchange behaviors.

*Variation in desire for a communal or an exchange relationship.* To this point in my discussion of the impact of exchange behaviors in communal and exchange relations the implicit assumption has been made that people *desire*

these respective types of relationships. However, as noted earlier, levels of desire can vary. It is probably the case that the greater a person's desire for a communal or exchange relationship, the more distressing violations of the norms appropriate to that relationship will seem.

### Behaviors That Follow From Communal Norms

So far this chapter has focused on "exchange" behaviors. The distinction between communal and exchange relationships also implies the existence of "communal behaviors" which ought to have differential effects on compatibility in exchange and communal relationships. These are behaviors that indicate that one feels a special obligation to be responsive to the other's needs and expects the other to be responsive to one's own needs as well. They include: helping, accepting help without attempting repayment, taking needs into account when distributing jointly earned rewards, using decision-making rules that take everyone's needs into account, being responsive to the other's emotional state, and taking the other's perspective when something positive or negative happens to the other. I turn now to evidence for the differential importance of these behaviors in communal and exchange relationships.

*Helping.* In communal relationships, helping should occur more often and should be more important to maintaining compatibility than in exchange relationships. Evidence for this proposition comes from five studies (Bar-Tal, Bar-Zohar, Greenberg & Herman, 1977; Clark & Mills, 1979, Study 2; Clark & Ouellette, 1983; Daniels & Berkowitz, 1963; Waddell & Clark, 1982).

In the Bar-Tal et al. (1977) study, subjects were asked to imagine themselves as a member of an athletic team who had missed a bus to a very important tournament. The person did not have a car, and knowing that dismissal from the team would result if he or she did not arrive on time, phoned someone to request a ride. The type of relationship with the person called was systematically varied. In three conditions, subjects imagined that the other was either a parent, a sibling, or a close friend. (As noted earlier, these relationships often exemplify communal relationships.) In the remaining two conditions, subjects imagined that they attempted to call their friend, but that the friend was not in. Instead, they reached either an acquaintance or a stranger. (As noted earlier, these relationships often exemplify exchange relationships.) Regardless of the relationship condition, the student always asked the person called for help. At this point, half the subjects imagined that the other gave help whereas half imagined a refusal. Finally, each subject rated how obligated he or she believed the other was to help as well as how grateful or resentful the subject would feel as a result of the other's response.

The results revealed that subjects perceived parents, siblings, and friends to be more obligated to help them than acquaintances or strangers. In addition, if help was given, subjects said that they would feel the most gratitude toward a stranger, acquaintance, and close friend, less toward the sibling, and least toward the parent. On the other hand, in the help-refused situation, the results

indicated that subjects would feel more resentment toward parents, siblings, and close friends than toward acquaintances and strangers. These results support the idea that expectations of receiving help are greater in a communal than in an exchange relationship. Furthermore, they indicate that although one may not gain much in terms of gratitude by helping in communal relationships, it is important to help in these relationships in order to *prevent* feelings of resentment.

Next consider a similar study by Waddell and Clark (1982), which also supports the idea that helping is more important to maintaining compatibility in communal than in exchange relationships. In a portion of this study, subjects were asked to imagine themselves in situations in which they had a need (e.g., their car was out of gas). Then they imagined (1) a parent and (2) a romantic partner (communal relationships), as well as (3) a coworker/fellow student they did not know well and (4) a landlord (exchange conditions) helping them *or* failing to help them in each situation. Finally, they indicated what their feelings would be in each situation.

The results fit well with the results of the Bar-Tal et al. study. Helping was perceived to be more likely and appropriate in communal than in exchange relationships. Furthermore, subjects reported that they would feel more hurt and exploited as a result of a communal relation failing to fulfill their need than as a result of an exchange relation failing to fulfill their need. Thus, once again helping seems to be more important for maintaining compatibility in communal than in exchange relationships. If it is not offered, it may result in more resentment (Bar-Tal et al., 1977) and hurt feelings in communal than in exchange relationships.

In these particular studies, there was no evidence of helping actually proving to be detrimental in exchange relationships. Indeed, helping in exchange relationships led to greater reports of gratitude than it did in communal relationships. This is not surprising. Helping is not necessarily inappropriate in exchange relationships. As noted earlier, people seem to feel a low level of communal obligation to almost any other human. Thus, low-cost help or help in an emergency is acceptable in such relationships. Furthermore higher-cost help is also perfectly acceptable *when the recipient can repay the other*. Repayment was not ruled out in the Bar-Tal et al. or in the Clark and Waddell scenarios.

There should be some cases, however, in which helping in an exchange relationship would cause negative reactions. Specifically, when there is no emergency, helping surpasses some minimal level, and the ability for the recipient to pay back is explicitly ruled out or would be aversive to the person who must pay it back, reactions to receiving help should be negative. Research on reactions to receiving such help from a stranger supports the hypothesized role of these boundary conditions (e.g., Gergen, Ellsworth, Maslach, & Seipel, 1975). Moreover, if the other offers help in such a way as to imply a desire for a communal relationship which the recipient does not desire, reactions may be negative. For instance, imagine someone whom you do not particularly want as a friend unexpectedly arriving on your doorstep to help you move into your new

apartment. Contrast that with your reactions in the same situation if the person were a friend.

Next, consider two experimental studies by Clark and Ouellette (1983) and Daniels and Berkowitz (1963) in which actual helping was measured in relationships that subjects should have expected to be communal or exchange. These two studies clearly show that helping is greater in communal than exchange relationships. The primary purpose of the Clark and Ouellette (1983) study was to test the idea that the mood of a potential recipient of help would have a greater impact on helping in communal than in exchange relationships, and the results relevant to that hypothesis will be discussed shortly. What is important here is that a manipulation of expectation of a communal or an exchange relationship very similar to that used in the Clark and Mills (1979, Study 1) study produced large differences in the amount of help given within a relationship. Specifically, in this study, subjects were led to expect a communal or an exchange relationship with an attractive other of the opposite gender. Later on, the other person needed help blowing up some balloons, and the subject could help her. As predicted, subjects in the communal conditions spent significantly more time helping the other than did subjects in the exchange conditions, and they blew up significantly more balloons.

Similar results were obtained in the study by Daniels and Berkowitz (1963). Although these authors did not set out to study the impact of relationship type on helping, they included a "liking" manipulation in their study that probably manipulated expected relationship type and they also measured helping. Specifically, they recruited pairs of male subjects, half of whom were told that they had been paired with each other in such a way "that they would probably like their partners and that they were especially well matched" (communal) and half of whom were apologetically told "that conflicting time schedules sometimes prevented the assembly of congenial pairs" (p. 43) (exchange). All subjects were then led to believe that they would be working under the other's supervision. However, half of them were told that their performance would be important in determining an evaluation of their supervisor and consequently his chance at winning a prize (chance to help available), whereas the other half were told that their performance would be unimportant in determining their supervisor's evaluation (no chance of helping). When their performance would not affect their supervisor's outcome, relationship type did not influence how hard the subjects worked. In contrast, when their performance could help their supervisor, subjects worked significantly harder in the "communal" condition than in the "exchange" condition.

Finally, consider one last result from the Clark and Mills (1979, Study 2) experiment described earlier for other purposes. This study included conditions in which subjects who were led to desire a communal or an exchange relationship with another received help from that other. When the helper could not be repaid, receipt of such help increased liking in communal relationships, but actually decreased liking in exchange relationships.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that helping (with no expectation of repayment) is more *expected* in communal than in exchange relationships

(Bar-Tal et al., 1977; Waddell & Clark, 1982), that it will increase liking in beginning communal relations (Clark & Mills, 1979), and that it is important to maintaining compatibility in established communal relations (Bar-Tal et al., 1977; Waddell & Clark, 1982). It is also a more *common* behavior in communal than in exchange relationships (Clark & Ouellette, 1983; Daniels & Berkowitz, 1963).<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, these studies show that everyday helping is *not* expected in exchange relationships and that while helping in an emergency and/or when an opportunity to repay is available may increase liking in exchange relationships (Bar-Tal et al., 1977; Waddell & Clark, 1982), in nonemergency situations in which repayment is ruled out it may actually decrease liking (Clark & Mills, 1979; Gergen et al., 1975). From this evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that helping is more important to maintaining compatibility in communal than in exchange relationships.

*Accepting help without repayment.* Following communal norms, of course, implies not only that one ought to *give* help without expecting repayment, but also that one ought to *accept* help graciously without attempting repayment. Evidence for this hypothesis comes from a study described earlier. In this study (Clark & Mills, 1979, Study 1), the reader will recall, subjects were led to expect a communal or an exchange relationship with an attractive other, and all subjects were then induced to aid the other. Subsequently, the other simply thanked or thanked and repaid the subject. What is now worth emphasizing about this study is that *communal* subjects liked the other who accepted their aid without attempting repayment better than those who repaid, whereas just the opposite was true in the exchange conditions. In other words, graciously accepting help without repayment is important to maintaining compatibility in communal but not exchange relations. A somewhat different finding that nonetheless fits nicely with this one is reported by Shapiro (1980). He observed that whereas people will seek low-cost help from either friends *or* nonfriends, they will seek more help from friends than from nonfriends when the help becomes costly.

*Taking needs into account in distributing jointly earned rewards.* When one thinks of helping, what usually comes to mind is a situation in which one person has a need and another chooses to draw upon his or her own resources in order to respond to that need. However, another way to help a needy other is to allocate rewards from a jointly performed task according to needs rather than according to an equality or a contribution principle. Thus, people in communal relationships ought to show a greater tendency than people in exchange relationships to distribute jointly earned rewards according to needs (cf. Deutsch, 1975).

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<sup>5</sup>If one assumes that another's attractiveness creates a desire for a communal relationship, then studies showing that people help attractive others more than less attractive others (Benson, Karabenick, & Lerner, 1976; Kelley & Byrne, 1976; West & Brown, 1975) lend further support to the ideas expressed here.

Few data are available on this point, but what are available support the hypothesis. Lamm and Schwinger (1980) examined how the potential recipients' interpersonal relationships would influence whether allocators would take needs into consideration when distributing between them the proceeds of their joint work. In this study, subjects were asked to read a story about two people who jointly wrote an essay, putting an equal amount of effort into it. Subsequently the essay was sold for 300 German marks. Both people needed to buy books to prepare for some upcoming exams and neither had a source of money. Person A, the needy person, needed 200 marks to buy the books, whereas Person B, the less needy person, needed only 50 marks. Persons A and B were described as being mere acquaintances or as being close friends. The subjects' job was to indicate how he or she would allocate the 300 marks between A and B. The allocations were to be final and no loans were possible. Lamm and Schwinger (1980) found that the needier essay writer was awarded a significantly greater proportion of the marks when the recipients were portrayed as friends than when they were portrayed as casually acquainted. Consistent results were also reported in a follow-up study by Lamm and Schwinger (1983).

*Dividing rewards or costs equally in the absence of information about needs.* If there is no evidence of differential needs in a communal relationship, then the best way to demonstrate concern for everyone's needs is to divide rewards or costs equally. However, although an equal division of rewards or costs generally should promote compatibility in communal relationships, it may seem inappropriate and detract from compatibility in exchange relationships if inputs have been unequal.

A number of studies support this reasoning. For instance, Austin (1980) had pairs of female friends and pairs of female strangers work together on a puzzle. When they finished, the results were quickly "analyzed" and bogus feedback was prepared showing that one member had done more work than the other. Then the feedback was given to one member of the pair along with \$5 and the following instructions from the experimenter: "The guidelines I give decision makers is to divide the money on the basis of the task scores, but the decision maker has discretion to take other factors into account and to make whatever decision she feels is most appropriate" (p. 405). Subjects who worked with a friend, whether they performed better or worse than their partner, tended to divide rewards equally. In contrast, strangers behaved more selfishly. They divided rewards equally if they themselves had performed poorly but according to input if they themselves had excelled. Studies with children also indicate that friends are more likely than strangers to divide rewards equally (Benton, 1971; Lerner, 1974). Finally, Greenberg (1983) found that if two people divide a restaurant check equally, observers are more likely to perceive them as friends than if they divide it according to what each person had ordered.

All of these studies are consistent with the idea that when there is no clear evidence for differential needs, dividing rewards equally will contribute to

compatibility in communal relationships but not in exchange relationships, although the impact of allocation procedures in different types of relationships on measures of compatibility per se has yet to be specifically examined.

*Choice of decision-making rules in a group.* Given the norm to be responsive to needs, members of communal relationships ought to prefer a decision-making rule that takes everyone's needs into account (e.g., consensus) to one that may result in one or more members' needs being neglected (e.g., majority rule). In contrast, members of exchange relationships ought to consider majority rule and consensus to be equally appropriate and desirable. Members of exchange relationships have no special obligation to be responsive to one another's needs, yet it is not clear that they should avoid taking others' needs into account either.

Evidence for these predictions is provided by a recent laboratory experiment (Sholar & Clark, 1982). In this study, subjects were recruited for a study of group problem solving. Upon arrival, they were told they had been assigned to groups on the basis of pretests they had completed at the beginning of the semester. These tests had supposedly indicated that they were likely to become friends with the other members of their group (communal conditions) *or* that they were unlikely to have met the other members of their group before (exchange conditions). Then, five tasks were described. The group was asked to select one of these tasks, and group members were assigned to use either majority rule or consensus to make their choice. Finally, as part of a "premeasure," each subject rated how appropriate he or she perceived the assigned decision-making rule to be.

The results were as expected. Communal subjects rated consensus as being significantly more appropriate than majority rule. Exchange subjects rated these decision procedures as equally appropriate. Furthermore, exchange subjects rated both rules as more appropriate than majority rule was rated as being by communal subjects. This makes sense from our theoretical perspective in that *only* the communal subjects in the majority-rule condition were assigned to use a rule that might lead them to violate communal group norms (by neglecting the needs or ignoring the preferences of some group members). This suggests that the use of group decision rules that take everyone's needs into account is another behavior important to maintaining compatibility in communal, but not exchange, relationships.

*Responsiveness to the other's emotional state.* One more class of behaviors that ought to be more important to maintaining compatibility in communal than in exchange relationships includes those behaviors indicating responsiveness to the other's emotional state. The norm to be responsive to another's needs in communal relationships clearly implies that one should pay attention to cues indicating another *has* a need, and primary among such possible cues is the other's emotional state.

Are people actually more responsive to the other's emotional state in

communal than in exchange relationships? A recent study by Clark and Ouellette (1983) suggests that they are. In this study, described previously in the section on helping, subjects participated in a creativity study with a person with whom they were led to expect either a communal or an exchange relationship. Subjects were given a chance to help the other by blowing up balloons, and it has already been pointed out that they helped more in the communal than in the exchange conditions. What is relevant here is that the mood state the other projected was *also* varied so as to be either sad or neutral. The sad state should have indicated greater need on the other's part, and, as expected, in the communal conditions subjects gave more help when the other was sad than when the other was not. On the other hand, the other's sadness had no impact on subjects' helping in the exchange conditions.

*Taking the other's perspective.* Finally, consider the implications of the communal norm of responsiveness to others' needs for whether one should take the other's perspective when something positive or negative befalls the other. In communal relationships, this norm implies that members ought to take each other's perspective. Thus, in communal relationships, one should become happier when the other is happy and sadder when the other is sad. In other words, subjects in communal relationships should maintain "equality of affect" (Mills & Clark, 1982). Furthermore, as a result of taking the other's perspective, one should be more likely to attribute the other's success to personal dispositions and to attribute the other's failure to situational factors since this is the tendency people show when making judgments about themselves (Zuckerman, 1979). All of this should not apply to the same extent in exchange relationships.

A study that provides a test of some of these ideas is reported by Finney and Helm (1982). These researchers had subjects watch another person play a Prisoner's Dilemma Game. The other person was either a friend of the subject or a stranger to the subject. During the time the subject was watching, the other person either lost or won the game. After watching the other, the subjects completed some scales which asked them to rate the degree to which the player's outcome was due to the situation and the degree to which it was due to personal factors. It also asked subjects to rate their own emotional reaction to what happened to the player. As predicted, when the players succeeded, observers who were friends of the players attributed significantly more personal responsibility for the players' success and reported feeling significantly better about that outcome than did observers who were not friends of the players. Also as predicted, when the players failed, observers who were friends of the players attributed significantly less personal responsibility for the players' failure and reported feeling significantly worse about the outcome than did observers who were strangers to the players. These results suggest that taking the other's perspective may be called for and may contribute to maintaining compatibility in communal relationships, but is not necessary for maintaining compatibility in exchange relationships.

### Cautionary Notes Regarding the Impact of Behaviors Called for in Communal Relationships

Behaviors called for by communal norms which may differentially influence compatibility in exchange and communal relationships have now been identified. They are summarized in the bottom half of Table 5-2. At this point, as with our discussion of exchange behaviors, the reader should be cautioned about boundary conditions regarding reactions to these behaviors.

*Impact of these behaviors in exchange relationships depends upon situational factors.* Whereas behaviors called for by exchange norms are typically inappropriate in communal relationships, behaviors called for by communal norms are *not* always inappropriate in exchange relationships (see Table 5-2). Rather, their appropriateness appears to depend upon situational factors. For instance, because most people probably feel weak communal obligations with just about anyone else (Mills & Clark, 1982), if behaving in any of the communal ways discussed (e.g., helping, accepting help, taking another's perspective, or whatever) is very low in cost or is required by an emergency, such behaviors are likely to be appropriate in relationships that would otherwise be exchange in nature. Furthermore, even as the costs of the behaviors called for by communal norms rise in nonemergency situations, many of them (e.g., helping, accepting help) are acceptable if mutually agreed-upon arrangements for repayments are made. What is clear, however, is that except in extreme emergency situations in which the subject is the only one available to help, communal behaviors are not *required* in exchange relationships as they are in communal relationships and that some communal behaviors, such as refusing to let another repay, may reduce compatibility in exchange relationships (Clark & Mills, 1979; Gergen et al., 1975).

*Certainty.* Just as certainty about the existence of a relationship may influence reactions to exchange behaviors, so too may it influence reactions to communal behaviors. First, if one desires but is unsure of having a communal relationship with another, having one's needs taken into account in any of the ways just discussed may be especially welcomed.

Second, uncertainty about *exchange* relationships may also influence reactions to communal behavior. As with the effect of exchange behaviors in communal relations, these effects may depend upon how easy it is to "explain away" the communal behaviors. If such behaviors are easy to "explain away," one may be more likely to discount them in an exchange relationship about which one is certain as opposed to uncertain. In contrast, if the behavior cannot be easily explained away in exchange terms, communal behaviors may be more disruptive in exchange relationships about which one *had* felt certain than in other exchange relationships.

*Strength.* Variations in the strength of communal relations may be very important in determining just how people in communal relationships will react to adherence to the various communal behaviors discussed thus far. First, such variations have clear implications for understanding when people in communal relations will react negatively to the absence of behaviors such as those described above. For instance, when the reason for the absence is that the other had to meet a conflicting obligation of at least equal magnitude in a stronger communal relationship, then the absence of helping, emotional responsiveness, or whatever should not reduce compatibility. By implication, the absence of communal behaviors in strong communal relations may generally produce more distress than their absence in weaker relations.

*Desire.* Finally, the less the desire for a communal relationship, the less negative should be reactions to the absence of these behaviors in communal relationships. Similarly, the less the desire for an exchange relationship, the less negative may be any reactions to the inappropriate presence of communal behaviors in those relationships.

## Conclusion

Considerable evidence has now been reviewed indicating that to understand the impact of many behaviors on compatibility, one must take relationship type into account. The work reviewed here, however, represents just the beginning of possible research on this topic. Further studies likely will reveal many additional behaviors whose impact on compatibility depends upon relationship type. Indeed, further research will probably reveal other relationship types (and subtypes) with their own implications for understanding compatibility.

I believe that research on compatibility which takes relationship type into account will be important not only because it will reveal new findings about compatibility, but also because it will provide a useful framework within which past research on interpersonal relationships can be reviewed. As Berscheid (1982) has pointed out, in the past social psychologists' laboratory studies of attraction have tended to focus on relationships between strangers who have never seen each other before and who never expect to see each other in the future. My guess is that such relationships are almost always viewed in exchange terms and that many findings from such studies will not generalize to communal relationships. As an example, consider a study by Gergen et al. (1975) in which a person who received help from a stranger tended to like that stranger better if the stranger repaid him than if he specifically said he did not want repayment. The study by Clark and Mills (1979) described earlier shows that this finding can be replicated when participants in a study expect an exchange relationship, but that just the opposite effect is obtained when participants expect a communal relationship.

More recently, social psychologists have increasingly focused their attention

on actual friendships, romantic relationships, and family relationships. Many have pointed out that these are the relationships that are most important to us and that it is more important to study these relationships than the “artificial” ones that exist in laboratory studies. I agree. However, again, I believe we must be cautious in interpreting the results of such studies. These are probably communal relationships and their results may not generalize to either short-term or long-term exchange relationships.

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