

Norms Against Voting for Coerced Reform

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Some reforms, such as the passing of a prohibitive law or a binding agreement to solve a social dilemma, involve coercion. In hypothetical cases, Ss sometimes said they would not support coerced reforms even though they acknowledged that the reforms would improve matters. Ss justified such resistance by noting that the reform would harm some group (despite helping many others), that a choice would be taken away that people ought to be able to make (i.e., that a right would be violated), or that the reform would produce an unfair distribution of costs or benefits. These results were found when Ss indicated whether each justification was true or false (and their responses were correlated with their voting), when they chose justifications from a list, or when they provided open-ended responses. Ss also exhibited a status quo effect: They were more likely to vote against a reform than to vote to repeal the same reform once it was passed.

Reforms are social rules that improve matters on the whole. Examples of past reforms are the institution of motor-vehicle laws, the regulation of drugs, the granting of rights to women and repressed minorities, the recent deregulation of markets in Communist countries, and, on a smaller scale, countless minor changes in rules and traditions within smaller institutions such as schools and businesses. Some reforms require little coercion: Those reforms that involve coordination (Luce & Raiffa, 1957; Ullmann-Margalit, 1977) require only that the change be made salient. For example, no law or coercion is required to ensure that telephone books and dictionaries put their entries in alphabetical order. In coordination, it is to the advantage of all to follow the rule. Other reforms that require little coercion are those that increase the options available to each person, as in the market reforms in the Communist world.

Other reforms require some coercion. The classic cases are those that involve social dilemmas (Dawes, 1980; Schelling, 1978; also known as commons dilemmas [Hardin, 1968] or *n*-person prisoner's dilemmas [Luce & Raiffa, 1957]). In these cases, as we define them, each person is faced with a conflict between options: one that is better for the individual and one that is better for all of the members of the group in question. Examples of unsolved social dilemmas are those that result from excessive childbearing in some countries, cutting of trees for fuel, and production of gases that cause global warming. Many social dilemmas have been solved (sometimes only partially) by rules or laws that effectively make the selfish response

unrewarding. Examples include laws against tax evasion, treaties concerning the use of fisheries, rules that ensure that employees do their jobs (instead of shirking), laws regulating medical drugs (and thus removing the defections that used to occur in the form of "snake oil"), and compulsory vaccination laws.

Social dilemmas are not the only cases in which coercion may be required. Often, standard bargaining situations (Nash, 1950; Raiffa, 1982) lead to breakdowns of cooperation (Elster, 1989). In these situations, each of several agreements (rules or allocations) would be better than the status quo for all parties, but the parties involved cannot agree on which to choose. Thus, state coercion is sometimes required to resolve strikes, even though resolution would be best for all. In still other cases, coercion is required to bring about an improvement for many at the expense of a few, as when taxes are raised for the wealthy.

A characteristic of many of these reforms requiring coercion is that it is in the interest of most people to support the reform, even if it is not in their interest to cooperate in the absence of coercion (Yamagishi, 1986, 1988). We can think of the individual's utility for supporting a reform as a function of the payoffs for cooperation or defection with and without the reform and the effort involved in supporting the reform. Supporting the reform is often worthwhile because the reform can increase the number of other cooperators, which, in turn, increases the payoff for cooperation (and possibly even the payoff for defection, despite the increased cost of defection relative to cooperation). The gain to the individual from this increase is often greater than the loss from the cost of supporting the reform plus the loss from the individual's switch from defecting to cooperating (if this switch is made) or the loss from the penalty for defection (if the individual defects regardless of the reform). For example, alcohol drinkers might benefit from supporting an increased tax on alcohol because of the reduction in drunk driving (by others), improved government services, and so forth, regardless of whether they continued to drink and pay the new tax. The cost of support is often very small (Petit, 1990), involving only the expression of approval or disapproval. In sum, self-interested individuals often have good reason to support compulsory reforms even when they do not have sufficient

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This work was supported by grants from the National Science Foundation (SES-8809299 and SES-9109763). We thank Judy Schlossberg for assistance in scoring and Colin Camerer, John C. Hershey, Eric Johnson, Howard Kunreuther, Nicholas Maxwell, John Orbell, Joanne Schwartz, Mark Sprance, and (especially) Paul Allison for comments, ideas, and discussion.

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reason to cooperate spontaneously. When enough individuals act according to this reason, a reform can be initiated and maintained.

So far, we have limited the discussion to self-interested reasons. Clearly, some moral norms will strengthen the side of cooperation. The cost of supporting a reform might, for example, be seen as no cost at all to a person motivated by a desire to promote the general good. People motivated in this way would support reforms even when the support is costly. Those who initiate reforms are often in this category, as considerable effort is required to bring a reform to the point at which it may be instituted with only small amounts of effort on the part of most people (Elster, 1989).

Elster (1989) has also argued that social norms, including what we are calling moral norms, can have detrimental effects. For example, a norm of retribution or revenge can lead to escalating conflict (as argued as well by Frank, 1988). Such norms can be seen as crude rules that are usually beneficial but are misapplied (or that have outlived their usefulness) because they are not understood (Baron, in press-b). In this article, we ask about the existence of norms that are recognized by their supporters to have such detrimental effects on the initiation of reforms.

One such set of norms concerns fairness in the distribution of the benefits or costs of reform. People may reject a generally beneficial reform on the grounds that it helps some more than others, or hurts some to help others, in a way that is unfair (Elster, 1989). Sometimes this problem can be remedied by modifying the proposed reform so that it is generally seen as fair, for example, by compensating workers displaced by a tariff reduction. Sometimes, however, the "losers" are difficult to identify. More often, different standards are available for fairness (Baron, in press-a), and each group tends to apply a standard that provides its members with a better outcome (Cook & Yamagishi, 1983; Elster, 1989; van Avermaet, 1974, cited in Messick, 1985). For example, in deciding how to allocate the right to produce carbon dioxide in an international treaty on global warming, the United States is likely to favor a formula based on past behavior, whereas China is likely to favor a formula based on population. In such cases, a majority may oppose the reform even when all could benefit.

Some people hold a strong norm prohibiting helping one person through harming another (Baron, in press-b; Ritov & Baron, 1990; Spranca, Minsk, & Baron, 1991, Experiment 3), even if the benefit outweighs the harm and even if unfairness is not at issue (e.g., when those to be harmed are determined randomly). The difference between this harm norm and the fairness norm may be in the choice of reference point. Those who oppose reforms on grounds of fairness may see people as being harmed relative to a reference point defined by the ideally fair result. Those who oppose reform on simple grounds of harm use the status quo as a reference point.

Related to the norm against harm is a norm favoring rights. In this context, a right is the option to defect. The removal of this right might be seen as a harm, even if, on other grounds, the person in question is clearly better off when the option to defect is removed (because it is also removed for everyone else).

All of these norms—fairness, harm, and rights—can involve a kind of framing in which the status quo is given priority. One

trouble with most reforms is that they help some people and hurt others. For example, an increased tax on gasoline in the United States may help the whole world by reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and it will help most Americans by reducing the budget deficit. But it will hurt those few Americans who are highly dependent on gasoline, even when we take the other benefits into account. Congress might try to craft some sort of compensation for these people, but it is difficult to target them accurately.

If the reform were already in effect and the question were whether to undo it, the same considerations could favor keeping the reform. Repeal would hurt some people while helping others. Thus, as we discuss later, the norms in question could constitute the psychological basis for a status quo effect for institutional changes, analogous to the effect found for individual decisions (Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988; Ritov & Baron, 1992).

In this article, we report three initial studies of the opposition to reform. We use questionnaires about hypothetical situations, some based on real situations. We seek cases in which subjects agree that a reform will improve the situation but still oppose the reform. We question subjects about reasons that could underlie these discrepancies, seeking evidence for norms of fairness, harm, and rights.

Experiment 1

Method

Fifty-one subjects, paid \$5 per hour for completing this questionnaire, and others were solicited by a sign on a prominent walkway of the University of Pennsylvania. Almost all subjects were college students.

Each of the six cases in the questionnaire (available from Jonathan Baron) described a proposal for coerced reform, along with the rationale for the reform:

1. *TV ads.* A law "would make it illegal for politicians to use television commercials for campaign purposes." This would save money and fundraising time. The subject was asked to take the position of a member of Congress.

2. *Vaccine.* A law would require vaccination of the entire U.S. population against an epidemic flu. Vaccination would reduce the incidence of flu from 20% (caused by wild virus) to 10% (caused by the vaccine). Vaccinated individuals could not transmit flu to others, although nonvaccinated individuals could do so even if they do not display symptoms.

3. *Mouthwash.* An epidemic of a flu-like bacterial disease hits a college campus. Transmission of the disease is prevented by "gargling with a very unpleasant-tasting mouthwash five times a day" before symptoms start. A rule would require every student to have a blood test for infection, with those infected required to use the mouthwash.

4. *Auto.* A no-fault automobile insurance law would eliminate the right to sue, reduce insurance rates, and increase the reliability of damage settlements (while limiting their amount). The subject was asked to take the role of a driver.

5. *Doctors.* A law would make it impossible to sue an obstetrician. Obstetricians would still be subject to disciplinary procedures. The law would reduce medical costs, increase the number of obstetricians, and have no effect (according to experts) on the quality of care. The subject was asked to take the role of a prospective parent.

6. *Gasoline.* To combat global warming, a gasoline tax would double the price of gasoline. There is no alternative: It is this tax or no tax.

After each case, the following questions were asked (using Case 1 as an example):

- A. Would you vote for the proposed law?
- B. If no, would you vote to repeal the law if it were already in effect?
- C. Do you think that the law violates anyone's rights? If so, what rights?
- D. Do you believe that congresspeople would be better off with the law?
- E. Without the law, would you be better off by refusing to advertise on TV?
- F. Do you think that the law would make some people worse off as soon as the law went into effect? If so, whom?
- G. Is the law fair? If not, why not?

These questions were suitably modified for each case (e.g., using the term *rule* instead of *law*) as necessary. Question D determined whether subjects accepted our (implicit) assumption that the law would improve the situation. Note that subjects could answer this question negatively simply because the law violated someone's rights, because it harmed someone, or because it was unfair, even if they thought that the law would increase overall welfare or utility. By using this question to select subjects who vote against the law despite their thinking that it improves the situation, we provide a conservative measure of the number of such subjects.

Question B looked for an explicit status quo effect, in which the subject would admittedly favor the status quo whether the rule was in effect or not. (Previous studies of the status quo effect have used designs in which different conditions were either given to different subjects or presented to the same subjects with many intervening items, so we would not necessarily expect a status quo effect here.) Question E determined whether subjects saw the case as a true social dilemma. Questions C, F, and G posed the basic questions at issue: rights, harm, and fairness, respectively.

Results

Table 1 shows the percentage of affirmative answers to each question. In general, subjects were moderately in favor of the proposals (Question A), but a substantial number voted negatively. For all six cases, more subjects thought that the proposals would improve the situation (Question D) than would vote for the proposals. The differences between the percentages of subjects answering affirmatively to Questions A and D ranged from 5% for Case 5 to 22% for Case 3. (The number of cases is too small to carry out meaningful analyses of the determinants

of these differences among cases.) In 13.6% of all cases, D was answered yes and A was answered no, and, in 2.7%, D was answered no and A was answered yes. Although the difference between these proportions was significant only for Cases 2 and 3, 56.9% of the subjects gave more yes answers to D than to A (across the six cases), and 9.8% did the reverse. This difference was significant ($p = .000$, sign test), and it remained significant (37.3% vs. 9.8%, $p = .007$) when only those items for which Question E (spontaneous cooperation) was answered negatively were counted. Thus, the difference cannot be accounted for by the belief that rules are unnecessary because people will cooperate spontaneously.

As shown in Table 1, some people who voted against the law or rule would not vote to repeal it if it were already enacted, suggesting a possible status quo effect. This issue, among others, is addressed further in Experiments 2 and 3.

Table 2 shows phi coefficients for various predictors of the answer to Question A (vote) in subjects who answered yes to Question D (better). Yes answers are coded as 1, no answers as 0, so the hypothesized coefficients are negative for all predictors except G (fair), for which the subject was asked whether the proposal was fair rather than unfair. We included the variable *T* to permit an overall test of the role of harm, rights, and fairness; *T* is the sum of the yes answers to Questions C (rights) and F (harm) and the no answers to G (fair). (A subject who answered yes to C and F but no to G would get the maximum score of 3 on this variable.) Significance levels are from Fisher's exact test (except for *T*, for which they are from one-tailed Mann-Whitney *U* tests comparing those who answered yes and no to A).

The summary variable *T* was a significant predictor for all but Case 5. Belief in spontaneous cooperation (E) generally showed nonsignificant positive correlations, except for Case 5. In general, harm (F) did not play a significant role, but rights (C) and fairness (G) often did. The role of rights in Cases 1 and 3 did not seem to depend on the correlation between rights and fairness (Case 1, $\phi = -.53$; Case 3, $\phi = -.51$): Subjects who thought the proposal was better (D) and fair (G) almost always voted for it, but among subjects who judged the proposal better but not fair, the correlation between C (rights) and A (vote) was no less than that shown in Table 2 (Case 1, $\phi = -.64$, *ns*; Case 3, $\phi = -.83$, $p = .011$). The correlations taken together support the hypothesis that subjects sometimes vote against proposals they

Table 1
Percentage of Subjects Answering Each Question Affirmatively ($N = 51$)

Case	Question						
	A (vote)	B (repeal)	C (rights)	D (better)	E (cooperation)	F (harm)	G (fair)
TV ads	53	83	67	59	8	78	57
Vaccine	69	72	61	80	91	75	67
Mouthwash	66	60	49	88	73	41	65
Auto	66	65	45	74	12	80	61
Doctors	49	83	65	54	12	69	50
Gasoline	47	63	35	58	64	88	51

Note. Question B is based only on subjects who would vote against the law or rule in Question A.

Table 2
Phi Coefficients and Significance Levels for the Association Between Question A and Each of Questions C, F, G, and E and Derived Score T for the Six Cases

Case	Question				
	C (rights)	F (harm)	G (fair)	E (cooperation)	T (C, F, and G)
TV ads	-.45**	-.27	.81****	.09	-.89****
Vaccine	-.25	.01	.67****	.15	-.62***
Mouthwash	-.57****	-.08	.68****	.21	-.69****
Auto	-.20	.05	.53***	-.16	-.51*
Doctors	.19	-.13	.34	-.53***	-.18
Gasoline	-.37*	-.23	.32	.16	-.54**

Note. All data are from subjects who answered yes to Question D. Fisher's exact test was used for Questions C, F, G, and E; a one-tailed Mann-Whitney *U* test was used for Question T.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .025$. *** $p < .01$. **** $p < .001$.

perceive as beneficial because the proposals are unfair or violate rights (depending on the case). The role of harm is unclear.

Answers to Question D (better) were highly correlated with answers to Question A (vote) within each case (even when answers to Question G [fair] were held constant: 10 of the 12 phi coefficients were significantly positive). Answers to Question D were themselves predicted significantly by the fairness question (G) for all cases except Case 3, the rights question for Case 1 and Case 5, and the harm question for Case 2. (The cooperation question, E, did not predict D except for Case 5, where the correlation was positive). Question D might not have been answered in strictly utilitarian terms; rather, it might have been affected by the same judgments that determined voting. Our results might have been stronger if judgments of benefit were made in terms of total or average utility alone.

These results are consistent with subjects' written answers in this experiment and in a pilot study with somewhat different scenarios. For example: "I would not support this law because it would give up my right to sue. I would hate to think that I could be seriously injured and not be recompensed suitably." "I would not support a law that would take away my right to sue an obstetrician who was proven to be negligent no matter how much bad publicity or discipline that doctor received." [From a scenario concerning Chinese-style family limits in Kenya], "It is my right as a human being to have as many children as I please without being ostracized for doing so."

Experiment 2

In Experiment 2, we presented modified forms of the same cases. Some modifications were designed to emphasize that the reforms in question were improvements. Also, instead of asking subjects to answer various questions and then correlating the answers with their support of the proposal, we asked subjects directly about their reasons for opposing the proposal, when they did oppose it. And we reworded the questions for clarity. The item concerning whether the subject would be "better off" cooperating was changed to emphasize the fact that some people might cooperate spontaneously, and expect others to do so, even if they do not see themselves as better off (Yama-

gishi, 1986); this new item asked simply whether the law was needed to induce people to change their behavior.

We ran three other conditions to test two additional hypotheses. First, we wanted to determine whether resistance to coerced reform had the property of a status quo effect. In a *vote-after* condition, subjects were asked to imagine that the reforms had already been enacted, and subjects were asked whether they would vote to repeal the reforms. We hypothesized that subjects would vote to repeal the reforms less often than subjects would oppose the reforms in the original *vote-before* condition (taking into account their judgments of whether the reforms were improvements).

The basis for this hypothesis was that norms used as arguments against coerced reform could be construed as biased toward the status quo. These norms would dictate opposition to the reform, but, if the reform were already instituted, they might not dictate support for its repeal. In the case of the norm against harm, someone will be harmed by the reform, but, if the reform were already in effect, others would be harmed by its repeal. (This must be true if the reform is beneficial overall.) In the case of the fairness norm, some subjects might think of the changes as unfair rather than the resulting distribution of goods. Indeed, the question was worded with this in mind: "unfairly distribute the costs of change." In such cases, reversing the change, if the proposal were already in effect, might be seen as equally unfair. Rights, too, could conceivably argue for the status quo if subjects thought that whether a given choice was one "that people ought to be able to make" depended on people's expectations about what choices they were allowed to make.

The second additional hypothesis was that the tendency to vote against reforms seen as beneficial would also be found when the judgments of overall benefit were made by subjects other than those who voted. We therefore asked two other groups of subjects, the *judge-before* and *judge-after* groups, respectively, to indicate only whether the reforms did more harm than good. No voting was involved. The *judge-before* group assumed that the reforms had not been enacted (as did the *vote-before* group), and the *judge-after* group assumed that the reforms had been enacted (as did the *vote-after* group). This comparison provided an additional test of the basic hypothesis

that people will vote against proposals that they themselves see as beneficial.

Method

Forty-five subjects were first solicited as in Experiment 1 for the vote-before questionnaire alone. Then an additional 101 subjects were solicited for the four conditions. Subjects were assigned to conditions in approximate rotation as the subjects arrived (depending on the availability of the different conditions). Of these additional subjects, 24 were in the vote-before condition, 26 were in the vote-after condition, 23 were in the judge-before condition, and 28 were in the judge-after condition. The original 45 subjects in the vote-before condition did not differ significantly on any measures from the new group of 24, so these two groups were combined for analysis, yielding 69 subjects in the vote-before condition.

The cases were similar to those used in Experiment 1. As noted, they emphasized the benefits of the proposals. After each case, subjects were asked the following questions (using Case 1 as an example):

Would you vote for this law?

If you would not vote for the law, indicate why not. Write the letters of all the reasons that apply.

- A. The law would do no more good than harm.
- B. The law is not needed. Once people understand the situation, they will change their behavior without a law.
- C. The law would make some groups worse off than they were before the law.
- D. The law would take away a choice that people ought to be able to make.
- E. The law would unfairly distribute the costs of the change. That is, some people would suffer more than they should, relative to other people.
- F. Any other reason not listed (explain).

Most cases in which the subject gave an additional reason (F) were recoded so that they accorded with other responses, according to their spirit. In many cases, subjects apparently desired simply to say things in their own words. Responses indicating that the reform might make the situation worse were coded as yes responses to A (e.g., "There may be a decrease [in quality of care] with no liability"), and responses indicating that someone would be unfairly rewarded were coded as E (e.g., "Drunk drivers would clearly be at fault and should be responsible for damages incurred due to their recklessness"). The few cases that could not be recoded were comments that did not bear on the reasons for the subject's response (e.g., "The current situation [concerning TV advertising] is only generating economic activity in the advertising industry") or (in 5 cases) denials of the assumption ("Pennsylvania, like California, can finally stand up to insurance companies and impose ceilings on rates," which denies that the proposal given is the only chance for change). Over both the vote-before and vote-after conditions, 33 answers to F were recoded as A responses (a conservative coding, given our hypothesis). The remaining were B, 2; C, 6; D, 11; and E, 17. (Coding was done by Jonathan Baron, whose reliability on such coding will be reported in Experiment 3.)

The vote-after condition was modified so that the law or rule had already been put into effect, and the question was whether to repeal it. The descriptions and questions, including the questions about reasons, were modified accordingly. For example, the first item read, in part:

It is 1995. Until 1992, every election year, candidates for congress spent most of their campaign money on television advertising. . . .

A law was passed in 1992 that made it illegal for politicians to use television commercials for campaign purposes. If this law is repealed, the situation would go back to the way it was before 1992, and no other change will be made in the foreseeable future.

You are a candidate for congress.

A. Would you vote to repeal the law?

B. If you would vote to repeal the law, indicate why. Write the letters of all the reasons that apply.

- a. The law did no more good than harm.
- b. . . .

The two judgment conditions, judge-before and judge-after, used the same wording as the respective voting conditions, but the subjects were asked only whether the law or rule "will improve matters overall" (in the judge-before condition) or whether it "improved matters overall" (in the judge-after condition).

Results

Table 3 shows the frequencies of each kind of response, in percentages. The first data column shows the percentage of subjects who would vote for the proposal. The second data column shows the percentage of opponents who thought that the proposal would not improve matters. The columns labeled *B* through *E* show the proportion of subjects giving each reason as a percentage of opponents who thought that it would improve matters (as indicated by negative answers to Question A). The number of these subjects is shown in the rightmost column (*N*).

The A answers come nowhere close to 100%. Subjects often oppose proposals despite the belief that they would improve matters. Forty-five of 60 subjects in the vote-before condition would not vote for at least one proposal that they considered beneficial. All three hypothesized explanations of this opposition—rights (D), unfairness (E), and harm (C) (in contrast to Experiment 1)—were chosen as justifications for opposition to a reform. The belief that coercion is not needed (item B) also plays some role. (Items should not be compared directly with those in Experiment 1, because their wording was changed.)

To test for a status quo effect, we examined the effect of status quo (vote-before vs. vote-after) on the proportion of supporting votes, with subject as the unit of analysis, partialing out the proportion of cases in which the proposal was judged better (assuming that subjects would judge the proposal better if they voted for it—recall that they were not asked for judgments in this case). The effect of status quo was significant, $t(93) = 2.11$, $p = .038$; adjusted mean proportions of votes for the proposal: .576, $SE = .022$, in vote-before, .667, $SE = .037$, in vote-after, although the effect was small (see Table 4).

The hypothesis of a group difference between willingness to vote and judgment of a proposal's value was also supported. In particular, the proportion of votes for proposals in the vote-before condition was less than the proportion of judgments that the proposal would help in the judge-before condition ($t = 3.38$ across subjects, $p < .001$). The judge-before and judge-after conditions did not differ (see Table 5). The vote-after condition did not differ from either judge-before or judge-after; although this result suggests that the reluctance to support coercion is limited to putting proposals into effect, the failure to find an effect here could be due to the insensitivity of between-subjects comparison. Experiment 3 will address this issue again.

It seems that the status quo effect concerns voting rather than judgment. Judgment is, it seems, more driven by comparison of outcomes, as opposed to the means by which outcomes were achieved (action vs. inaction). Judgment and choice may differ

Table 3
*Percentage of Subjects Answering Each Question Affirmatively
 in Experiment 2: Vote-Before Condition*

Case	Question						N
	Enact	A (bad)	B (cooperation)	C (harm)	D (rights)	E (fair)	
TV ads	67	39	21	57	64	57	14
Vaccine	42	25	33	27	90	30	30
Mouthwash	70	48	54	27	82	36	11
Auto	58	39	6	59	71	59	17
Doctors	58	52	15	53	69	46	13
Gasoline	39	52	30	75	35	85	20

Note. For Question A, the reference sample is the number who would oppose the law. For Questions B–E, the reference sample is the number who would not vote for the law and who answered Question A negatively. The column labeled *N* lists the number of subjects in the smaller reference sample.

in matters of public policy as they do matters of individual decision making. In fact, some of the examples used by Tversky, Sattath, and Slovic (1988) to demonstrate the inconsistency between judgment and choice concern public policy, although we doubt that the present results can be explained in terms of a prominence effect (in which choice, but not judgment, is largely determined by the most “prominent” dimension).

Experiment 3

The categories used for multiple-choice responses up to now were based on pilot studies and on our own analysis. In Experiment 3, we asked subjects directly for their reasons for discrepancies between voting and value judgments, without prompting them with reasons that they might not have given (or thought of) on their own. In addition, we counterbalanced the order of these two questions and reexamined the status quo effect (vote-before vs. vote-after). The status quo effect in Experiment 2 could result from the subjects’ being influenced by the fact that the proposal had already been approved by others in the vote-after condition (although clearly it was still controversial enough that a repeal was being considered). Social comparison theory, for example, would suggest that people use the

opinions of others as cues to their own opinion (Festinger, 1954). To reduce such influence, we stated in the vote-after condition that the vote had been close the first time and that the proposal had not gone into effect yet. Both conditions stated that the upcoming vote (to pass or repeal the proposal) was expected to be close.

Method

The cases were the same as in Experiment 2, except that dates were specified to indicate that the proposal never took effect in the vote-after condition, and the descriptions specified that all votes were “close.” For example, the vote-after form of the first case read, “It is 1993. . . . A law was passed in 1992, by a very close vote, that made it illegal for politicians to use television commercials for campaign purposes. The law is scheduled to take effect in 1994. Opponents of the law now want to repeal it, and a second vote has been scheduled. It is clear that the vote will be close again. If this law is repealed, no other change will be made in the foreseeable future.” The corresponding description for the vote-before condition read: “It is 1993. . . . A law is proposed that makes it illegal for politicians to use television commercials for campaign purposes. The law is scheduled to take effect in 1994. It is clear that the vote will be very close. If this law is not passed, no other change will be made in the foreseeable future.”

Table 4
*Percentage of Subjects Answering Each Question Affirmatively
 in Experiment 2: Vote-After Condition*

Case	Question						N
	Not repeal	A (bad)	B (cooperation)	C (harm)	D (rights)	E (fair)	
TV ads	80	40	33	0	100	67	3
Vaccine	65	22	57	57	86	43	7
Mouthwash	81	20	50	0	50	75	4
Auto	58	27	37	62	75	37	8
Doctors	64	56	0	25	75	0	4
Gasoline	74	33	0	75	0	100	4

Note. For Question A, the reference sample is the number who would oppose the law. For Questions B–E, the reference sample is the number who would not vote for the law and who answered Question A negatively. The column labeled *N* lists the number of subjects in the smaller reference sample.

Table 5
Percentage of Subjects Answering Good for the Judge-Before and Judge-After Conditions: Experiment 2

Case	Condition	
	Judge before	Judge after
TV ads	78	79
Vaccine	96	86
Mouthwash	87	82
Auto	68	72
Doctors	83	61
Gasoline	24	46

In the first of four conditions, subjects were asked "A. Would you vote for the law?"; "B. Would letting such a law take effect do more good than harm on the whole?"; and "C. If you gave different answers to A and B, please explain your answers." The four conditions differed in the order of Questions A and B and (orthogonally) in whether Question A was a vote to initiate (vote-before) or repeal (vote-after) the law or rule.

Subjects were solicited as in Experiment 2, except that they were paid \$6 per hour. The number of subjects in each of the four conditions was 62 vote-before, vote first; 62 vote-after, vote first; 63 vote-before, judge first; 62 vote-after, judge first (total = 249). Thirteen additional subjects were omitted for failure to follow instructions or apparent misunderstanding.

Results

Table 6 shows the percentage of all subjects who supported each proposal, either voting in favor of it or not voting to repeal it, and the percentage who thought it was better on the whole. There were more cases in which a subject supported a proposal but voted against it (10.0% overall) than the reverse (2.2%; $p = .01$ or better for each of the six cases by a sign test, $p = .000$ overall by sign test across subjects). The order of asking the questions did not affect this difference, $t(247) = .69$, across subjects. The general finding of reluctance to vote for proposals judged beneficial is therefore supported.

To test for a status quo effect, we examined the effect of status quo (vote-before vs. vote-after) on the proportion of supporting votes, partialing out the proportion of cases in which

the proposal was judged better. The effect of status quo was again significant, although the effect was small, $t(246) = 2.14$, $p = .033$; adjusted mean proportions of votes for the proposal = .629, $SE = .014$, in vote-before and .672, $SE = .014$, in vote-after. The reluctance to vote for proposals judged beneficial was still highly significant, $p = .000$, sign test comparing voting and judgment, in the vote-after condition, so this reluctance does not appear to be limited to bringing proposals into effect.

To examine subjects' spontaneous justifications, Jonathan Baron read the answers, devised additional scoring categories as needed, and assigned each answer to a category. To check reliability, a second scorer was asked to categorize all responses. The definition of each category is followed here by an example (not given to the scorer). Each justification was assigned to only a single category, representing the dominant justification, although a few responses might have included more than one response category.

Harm. The reason against the law is that it causes harm to someone. Explicit mention of the fact that the benefit to some does not justify the harm to others is acceptable but not required for this category. Example—"Though it has overall good effects, this law would leave many people helplessly stranded if suddenly they could not afford to buy gas, or buses were forced to stop running because of this new tax."

Rights. The law would take away someone's right. Or the authority in question does not *have* the right to impose such a law. . . . A violation of rights is not seen simply as harm but rather as taking away a choice that someone should be able to make. . . . References to freedom and conflict with religion go here. Example—"Those who are deserving of a larger settlement would

Table 6
Percentage of All Subjects Supporting Each Item Through Voting and Judging It Better and Percentage (of Those Who Oppose a Proposal That They Judge Better) Who Give Each Justification for Voting Against It: Experiment 3

Case	Support	Better	Justifications for opposing a proposal judged as better					
			Harm	Rights	Fair	Self	Deny	Unclear
TV ads	66	72	4	20	0	36	4	36
Vaccine	77	82	0	38	6	13	6	38
Mouthwash	75	82	0	57	5	0	5	33
Auto	54	61	8	69	8	0	0	15
Doctors	59	69	7	44	7	7	4	30
Gasoline	60	69	19	0	22	9	16	34

not even have the opportunity to get it. We can't compromise the rights of the minority."

Fairness. The distribution of costs and benefits is unfair. It is not just that some are being harmed but also that the harm is unfairly distributed. References to justice and deservingness are included here. Example—"I wouldn't vote for it because it favors the affluent, who would not mind the tax increase as much as the penurious."

Self-interest. The subject votes on the basis of self-interest, which is perceived as being different from the interest of others. This is not the same as someone who puts themselves in the position of someone who might be harmed. Example—"I would vote no because I would want to be able to advertise my campaign."

Denial. The subject denies the assumption that the law in question is the only choice. Example—"Rather than banning ads altogether, . . . I would impose a maximum air-time for each candidate."

Unclear. Subject does not answer question, or gives an answer on the other side (e.g., justifying the law when the subject voted against it) or says that the law would not really do more good after all. Example—"I tend not to think of the long range effects of something. I would probably only see the immediate inconvenience."

The reliability of scoring, estimated by Cohen's kappa, was .70 overall. Reliability for the individual categories was harm, .45; rights, .83; fairness, .61; self-interest, .84; denial, .53; and unclear, .67. The only systematic discrepancy between scorers was that five cases classified by Jonathan Baron as harm were classified by the second scorer as fairness. Examination of these cases suggested that the distinction is truly difficult to make, because it requires deciding whether a harm is bad for its own sake or because of the way in which harms are distributed, for example, "Sure [a fuel tax] would encourage development of something else, but what would middle-class people do until then?" The second scorer's ratings were used because they were all made after the categories were defined.

Table 6 shows the number of subjects giving each justification. The results are in general agreement with Experiment 2: Rights predominated for all cases except for the gasoline case, where harm and fairness predominated (putting aside the last three response categories). No subject spontaneously said that people had a right to burn fossil fuels, but some subjects thought that the fuel tax would be harmful or unfair to some people. The larger number of self-interest responses to the TV-ad item reflected subjects' belief that they would use TV better than their opponent. The larger number of denial responses to gasoline may reflect the ease of imagining alternative solutions to the problem. Note that responses that referred to spontaneous cooperation were simply not found: No subject said that the proposal was unnecessary because people would cooperate spontaneously.

Conclusion

We have found a partial dissociation between willingness to vote for a proposed reform and judgment of whether the reform is truly for the better. In declining to vote for a reform that they judged to be beneficial, subjects appealed to moral norms of fairness, harm avoidance, and the individual's right to choose. By the subjects' own judgment of the public good, these norms stand in the way of maximizing that good. Our findings are therefore consistent with recent theorizing on the possible detri-

mental effects of norms (Elster, 1989). The effects we found are small, but we might have underestimated them (as noted earlier) if judgments of benefit were also affected by the same norms. Moreover, even small effects could affect support for public policies.

The norms in question are associated more strongly with action than with inaction, although they act to encourage repeal of proposals as well as to discourage their passage. We suggest three explanations of this kind of omission bias: First, some people may think of the norms in question as *prima facie* prohibitions against bringing about harm, unfairness, or rights violations through action, and not so much as an injunction to eliminate unfairness or harm or to promote rights. Second, the status quo (here, the result of inaction) could affect the way in which harm and unfairness are evaluated: A loss could be considered more harmful than a foregone gain, and inequities could be seen in changes from the status quo rather than in ultimate levels (Baron, in press-b). Third, people may think of unfairness not as a consequence of action (or inaction) but rather as a kind of action, as in the view of justice as "procedural" (Tyler, 1988).

A simple account of our results would suggest that people are utilitarians when they judge whether one social situation is better than another, but they are deontologists when it comes to their own decisions to vote. This is surely too simple. Voting and judgments often agree. People may base their voting on their judgment of the total good, and their judgment of the total good need not be based entirely on their judgment of total utility: They may well take fairness, rights, and changes of state into account as well. Nonetheless, the simple account appears to explain the difference between voting and judgment that we have found. Of course, the differences would be reduced if people voted according to the same standard.

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Received June 11, 1991

Revision received August 3, 1992

Accepted September 10, 1992 ■



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