

The slide features several yellow stick figures scattered across the background. Some are grouped together, while others are isolated. They are positioned around the central text, with some appearing to be in the foreground and others in the background.

Lecture 17

Social Dilemmas:

Cooperation
versus Conflict

Outline

Defining Social Dilemmas

Goals Underlying Global Social
Dilemmas

Gaining Immediate Satisfaction

Defending Ourselves and Valued
Others

Defining Social Dilemmas

Social Dilemma –

a situation in which an individual profits from selfishness unless everyone chooses the selfish alternative, in which case the whole group loses

Defining Social Dilemmas

A simple two-person prototype of a social dilemma is the prisoner's dilemma:

Imagine you're a thief, and you and a partner in crime have just been arrested;

You're being held for trespassing and suspicion of a string of burglaries.

You face the choice of confessing or keeping mum.



Prisoner B
faces the
same choice

Your options:

Don't confess

Confess

	Don't confess	Confess
Don't confess		
Confess		

Don't
confess

Prisoner
B's
options

Confess

The best choice for each of you depends on what the other does

Your options:

Don't confess

Confess

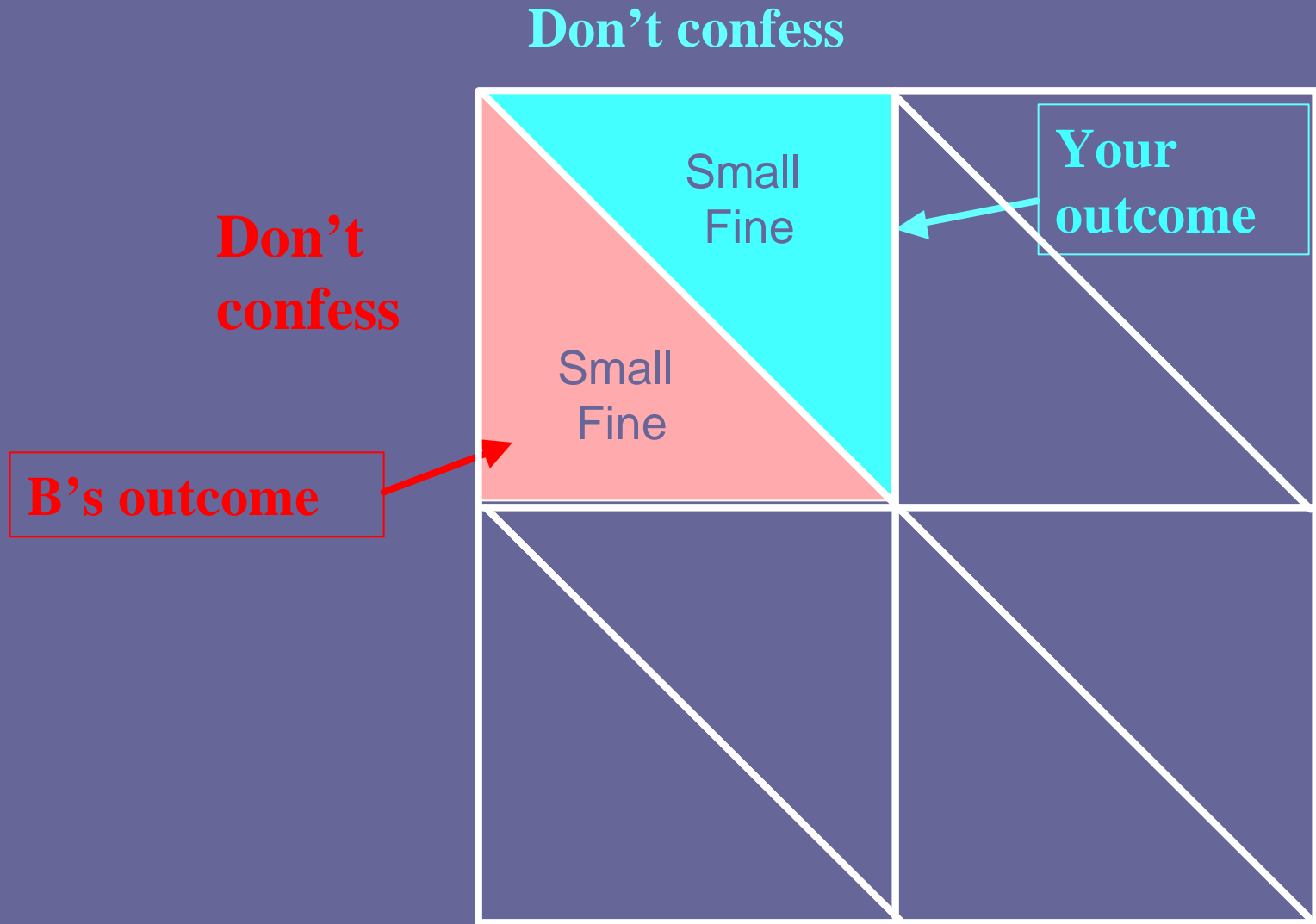
	Don't confess	Confess
Don't confess		
Confess		

**Prisoner
B's
options**

**Don't
confess**

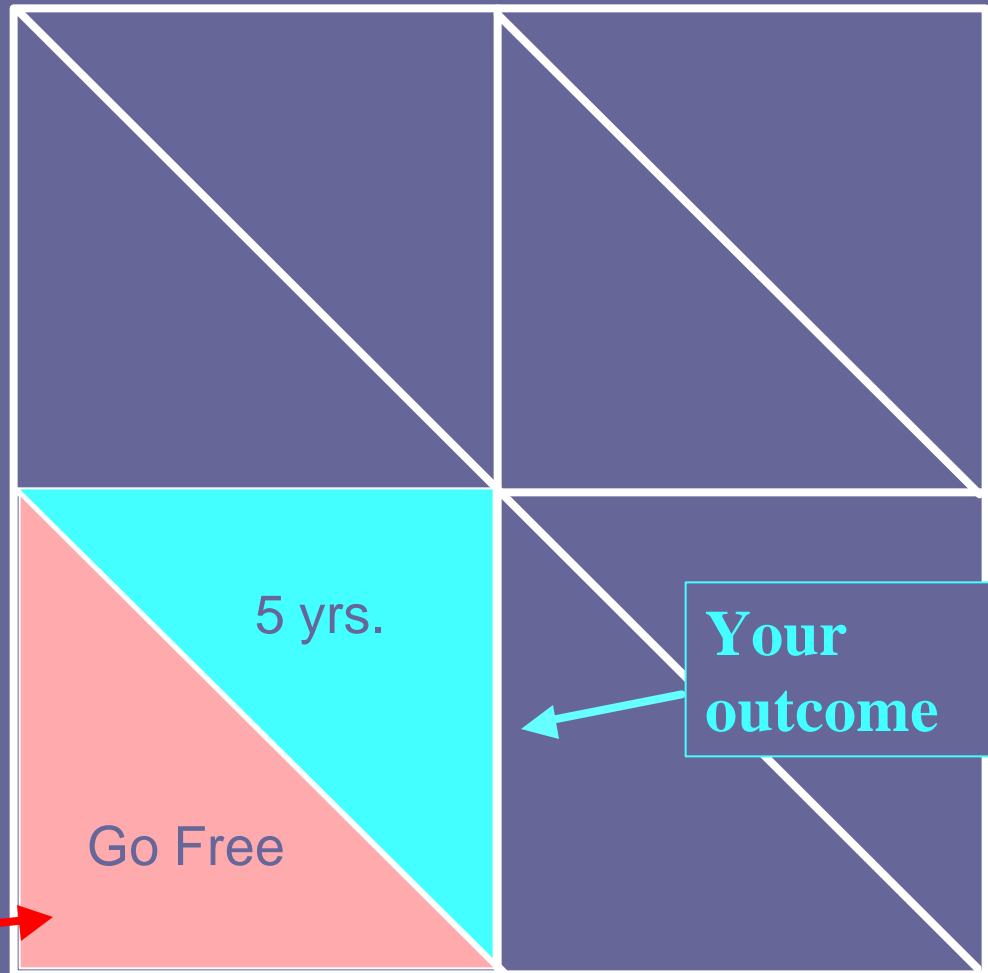
Confess

If you can count on one another not to confess, you'll both get off with a small penalty.



But if B confesses, and you don't, the police will throw the book at you, and B will get off scott free.

Don't confess

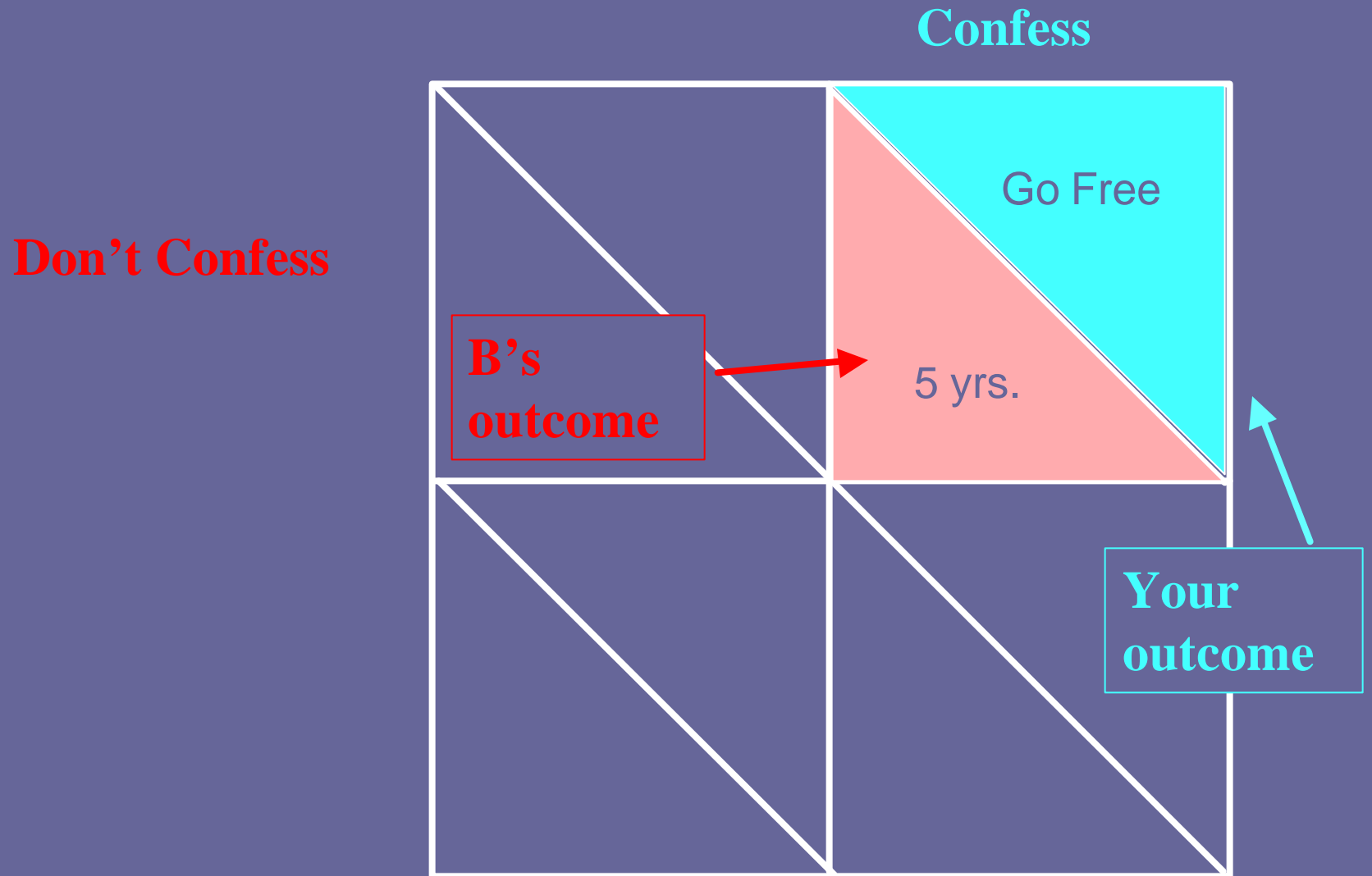


Confess

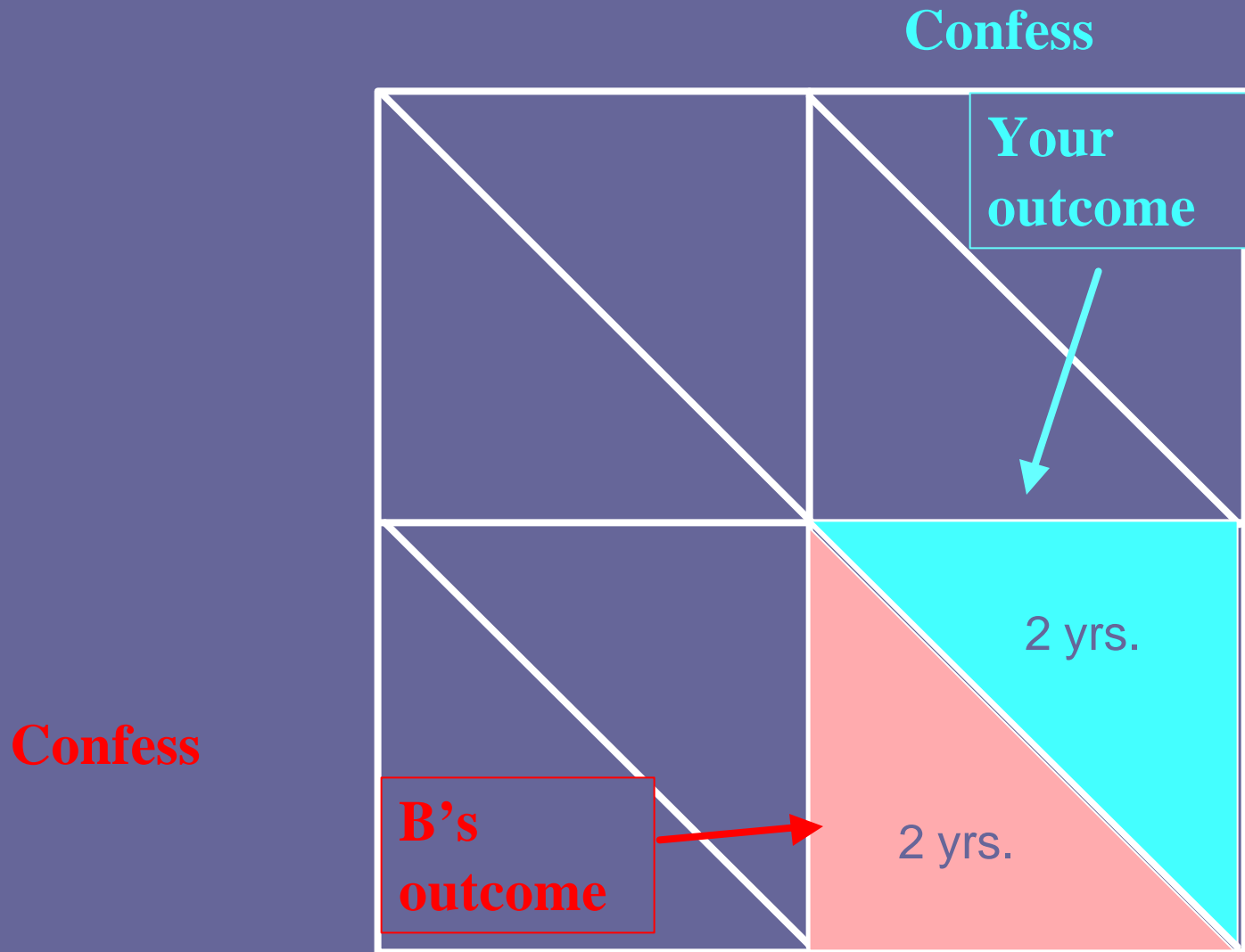
**Your
outcome**

B's outcome

Of course B knows that the D.A. has offered you the same deal.



If you both confess, as the D.A. hopes, you'll both get a moderate sentence.



Defining Social Dilemmas

There is no perfect choice.

The best group outcome occurs if both individuals stay mum.

But the best individual outcome for each one comes from confessing.

Many social dilemmas pit individual against group interest.

Focus on Social Dysfunction: The tragedy of the commons

Replenishing resource management dilemma –

situation in which group members share a renewable resource that will:

Continue to produce benefits if group members do not overharvest, but

Each individual profits from harvesting as much as possible

Focus on Social Dysfunction: The tragedy of the commons

The situation confronting Alaska king crab fishermen is a good example of a replenishing resource management dilemma:

Crabs replenish if fishermen do not overfish, but

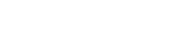
Each individual fisherman profits from harvesting as much as possible.



**If crab
fishermen
harvest only a
small
percentage of
the total crab
population...**

**...there will be
enough crabs
remaining to
fully replenish
the population
for next year's
harvest.**





But if each individual fishermen uses the best technology to take as many as possible...

...there will be too few crabs remaining to fully replenish the population for next year's harvest.

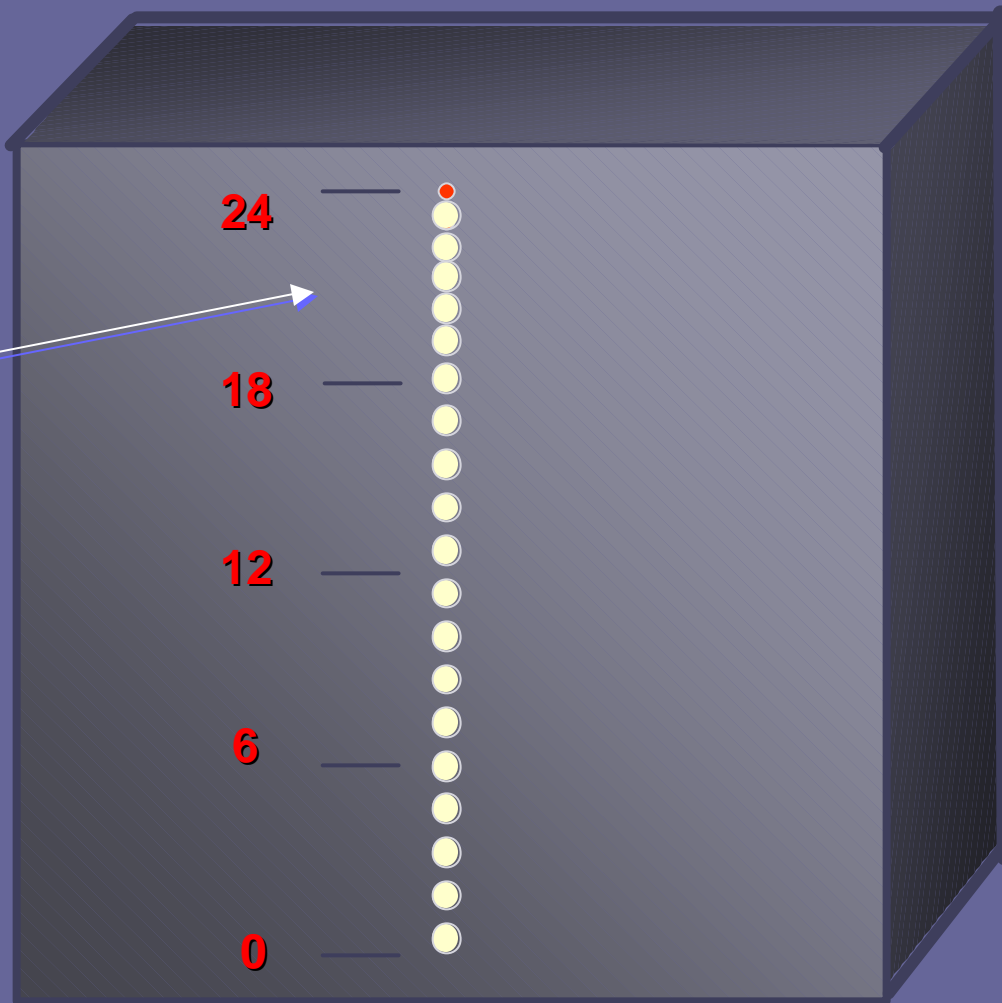
Focus on Social Dysfunction: The tragedy of the commons

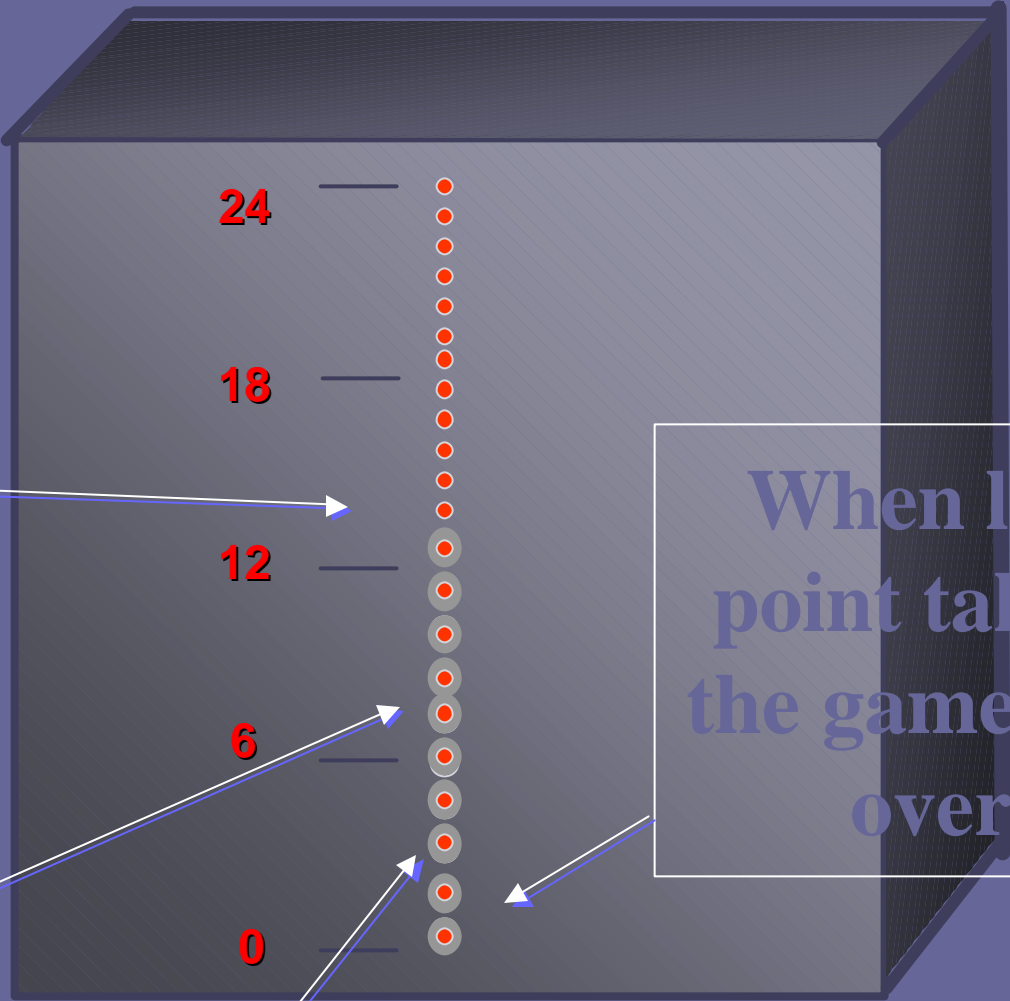
Social psychologist Kevin Brechner (1977) simulated the replenishing resource management dilemma in the laboratory:

Students were offered the chance to earn a semester's experimental credit.

To do so, they would need to harvest 150 points from a replenishing pool.







When I point to the game over



18



Students participated in groups of 3.

Half of them were allowed to communicate, and half were not.

Only 8% of the groups were able to restrain themselves to win the game.

Without communication, most individuals just raced one another and depleted the pool before it could replenish even once.

Gaining Immediate Satisfaction

Social Traps

Social trap –

a situation in which individuals or groups are drawn toward immediate rewards that later prove to have unpleasant or lethal characteristics

Social Traps

We repeat behaviors that lead to immediate reinforcement.

But sometimes those behaviors can have hidden costs.

Those costs can be hidden for several reasons.



Roots of Social Traps

Examples

Differences between short-term and long-term consequences

Ignorance of long-term consequences

Sliding Reinforcers

Roots of Social Traps

Examples

Differences between short-term and long-term consequences

Driving to work alone or turning on air conditioner feels good now

Costs of shrinking energy supplies come after many years

Ignorance of long-term consequences

Sliding Reinforcers

Roots of Social Traps

Differences between short-term and long-term consequences

Ignorance of long-term consequences

Sliding Reinforcers

Examples

Original designers of autos had no idea they would lead to emissions that contribute to smog, lung disease, and hypertension.

Roots of Social Traps

Differences between short-term and long-term consequences

Ignorance of long-term consequences

Sliding Reinforcers

Examples

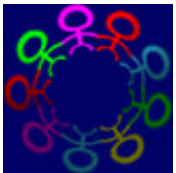
The first few automobiles increased mobility without significant air pollution

Each additional million autos worsens traffic jams and pollution

Gaining Immediate Satisfaction



Egoistic vs. Prosocial Orientation



Changing the Consequences of
Short-sighted selfishness



Egoistic vs. Prosocial Orientation

Imagine you're playing a game in which you and the other players can earn real money.

Which of the following outcomes do you prefer?



Egoistic vs. Prosocial Orientation

1. You sacrifice your own rewards, allowing others to earn much more money.



Egoistic vs. Prosocial Orientation

2. You work with the others so that, although none of you gets the maximum, you all do slightly better than you'd have done alone.



Egoistic vs. Prosocial Orientation

3. You cooperate with the group if it is in your personal interest but compete if you see a way to make more personal profits.



Egoistic vs. Prosocial Orientation

4. You compete to win, sacrificing some of your own winnings if it helps beat the other players.

General Orientation

Prosocial

Altruist

Cooperator

Egoistic

Individualist

Competitor

Value Orientation

Altruist

Cooperator

Individualist

Competitor

Definition

Value Orientation

Definition

Altruist

Someone oriented toward bringing the group benefits, even if it means personal sacrifice

Cooperator

Individualist

Competitor

Value Orientation

Definition

Altruist

Cooperator

Individualist

Competitor

**Someone oriented toward
working together to
maximize the joint benefits
to the self and the group**

Value Orientation

Definition

Altruist

Cooperator

Individualist

Competitor

Someone oriented toward maximizing personal gains, without regard to the rest of the group

Value Orientation

Definition

Altruist

Cooperator

Individualist

Competitor

Someone oriented to come out relatively better than others, regardless of whether personal winnings are high or low in an absolute sense



Development of Prosocial and Egoistic Orientations

A study of 631 Dutch women and men found that prosocial individuals (altruists and cooperators):

Had more older siblings than egoists

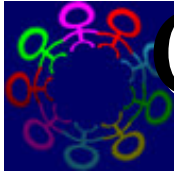
Had more sisters than egoists

Had a more secure attachment style in their romantic relationships (Van Lange, 2000)



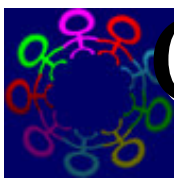
Development of Prosocial and Egoistic Orientations

One key to cooperation in laboratory dilemmas is a willingness to trust other group members (Parks et al., 1996; Yamagishi, 1988)



Changing the Consequences of Short-sighted Selfishness

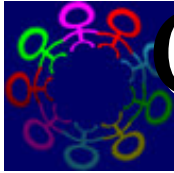
John Platt's analysis of social traps suggests several ways to use timing of rewards and punishments to escape social traps.



Changing the Consequences of Short-sighted Selfishness

1. Using alternative technologies to change long-term negative consequences

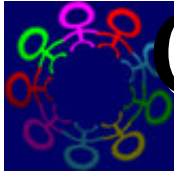
Examples: Installing solar technology, buying energy-saving automobiles.



Changing the Consequences of Short-sighted Selfishness

2. Moving future negative consequences into the present.

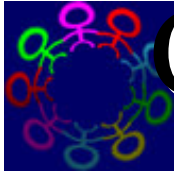
Example: Placing digital meter showing energy costs in a visible place inside the house.



Changing the Consequences of Short-sighted Selfishness

3. Adding immediate punishments for undesirable behavior.

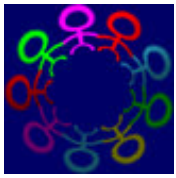
Example: Fining corporations that pollute the air and water.



Changing the Consequences of Short-sighted Selfishness

4. Reinforcing more desirable environmental alternatives.

Example: In some communities, large corporations pay costs of employees who use mass transit.

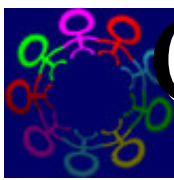


Activating Social Norms

Descriptive norms - “Everybody’s doing it”

In social dilemmas, we cooperate more if we observe other group members cooperating (Komorita, et al., 1992)

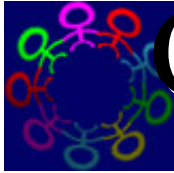
Economists learn norm of self-interest; fare poorly in social dilemmas (Miller, 1999)



Changing the Consequences of Short-sighted Selfishness

Injunctive norms - “Doing the right thing”

Public commitment increases cooperativeness in dilemmas (Neidert & Linder, 1990).



Changing the Consequences of Short-sighted Selfishness

People from collectivist cultures are more cooperative in dilemmas (Parks & Vu, 1994).

Culture and Prosocial Behavior

How do people divide (share) large sums of real money with another anonymous person?

Example from cross-cultural experimental economics

The Ultimatum Game

Two anonymous players divide a sum of *real* money. (**e.g., one day's way**)

First player (the “Proposer”) proposes a division.

If the offer is accepted by the “Responder,” players get proposed shares.

If offer rejected, both get nothing.

Cash splits offered by players in ultimatum games



Predictions from Exchange Theory (Rational Choice)

Player 2 (respondent) should accept **any** offer since something is better than nothing.

So, player 1 will make smallest possible offer.

Never happens, anywhere.

Robust results from Western university students (e.g., U.S., Japan, Europe)

Mean offer = 40% – 50%

Offers < 20% usually rejected

Large stakes (e.g., 1000\$) \Rightarrow 50:50 offers

What happens in other societies with different cultural rules?

Cross-cultural Project

Ultimatum Game

12 Researchers

1039 subjects in 12 countries

7 local or regional comparisons

3 hunter-gatherers, 6 horticulturalists, 4
transhumant/nomadic herders, 4
small-scale, sedentary farmers

Cross-Cultural Experimental Economics Project



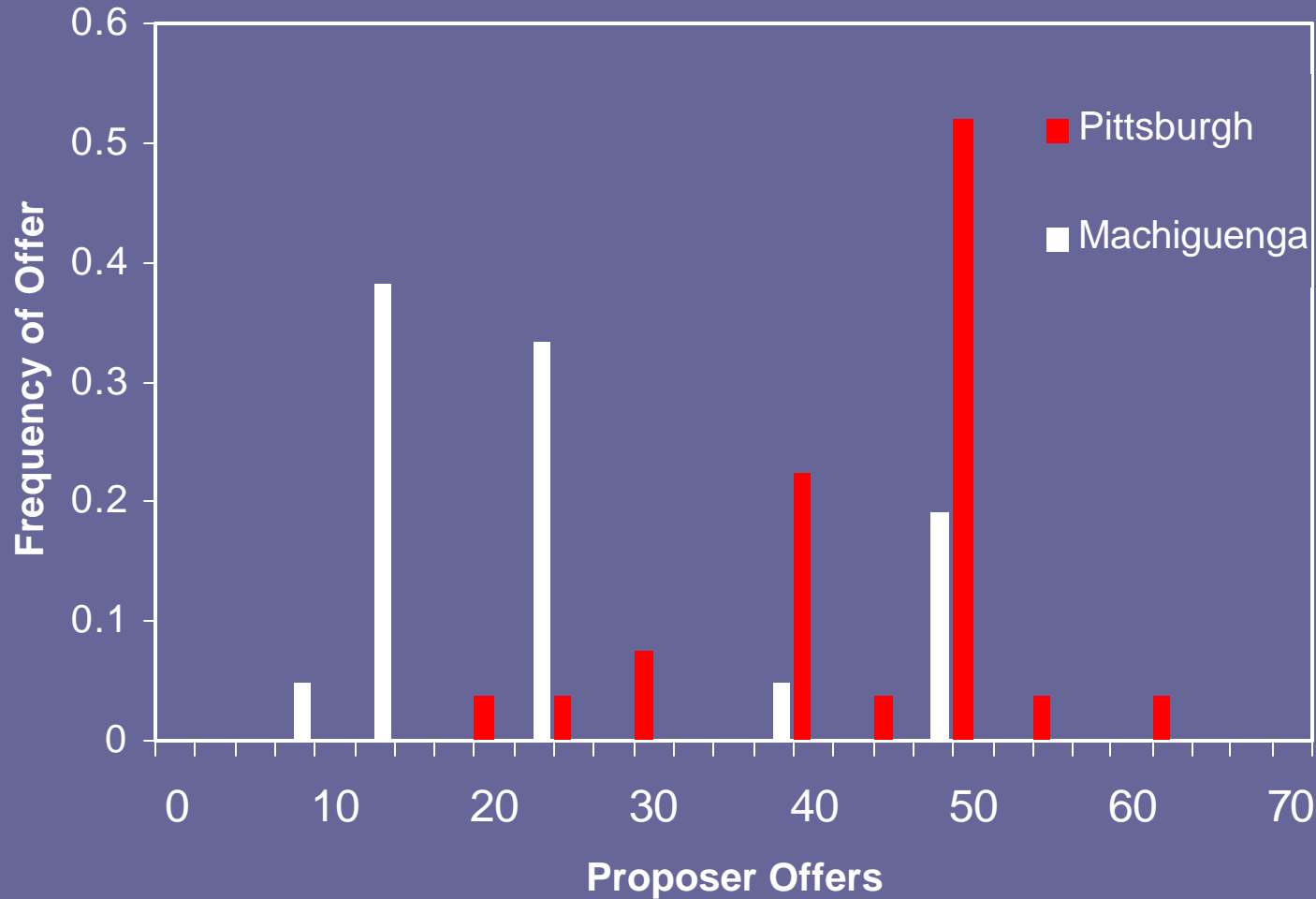


Machigueng a of Peru

independent
families
cash cropping
slash & burn
foraging



Machiguenga Ultimatum Game Results



1 rejection among Machiguenga

Hadza

Hunter-gatherers

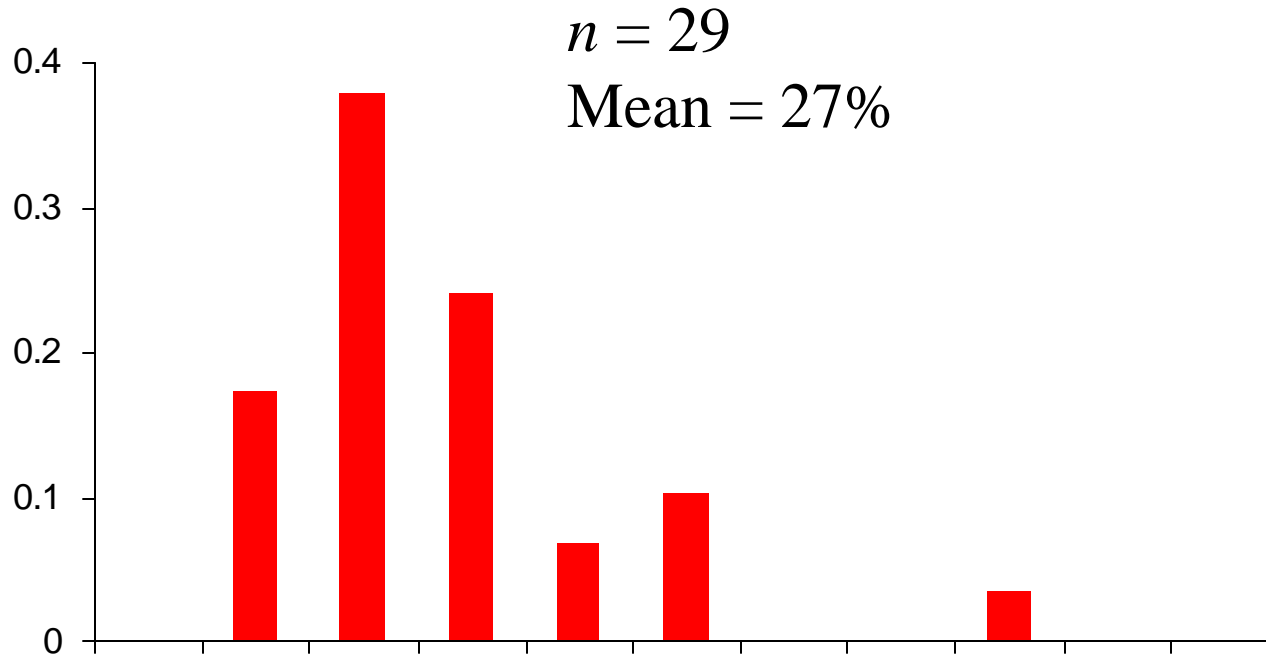
Egalitarian

No central
political
system

Bands: 20–30
people

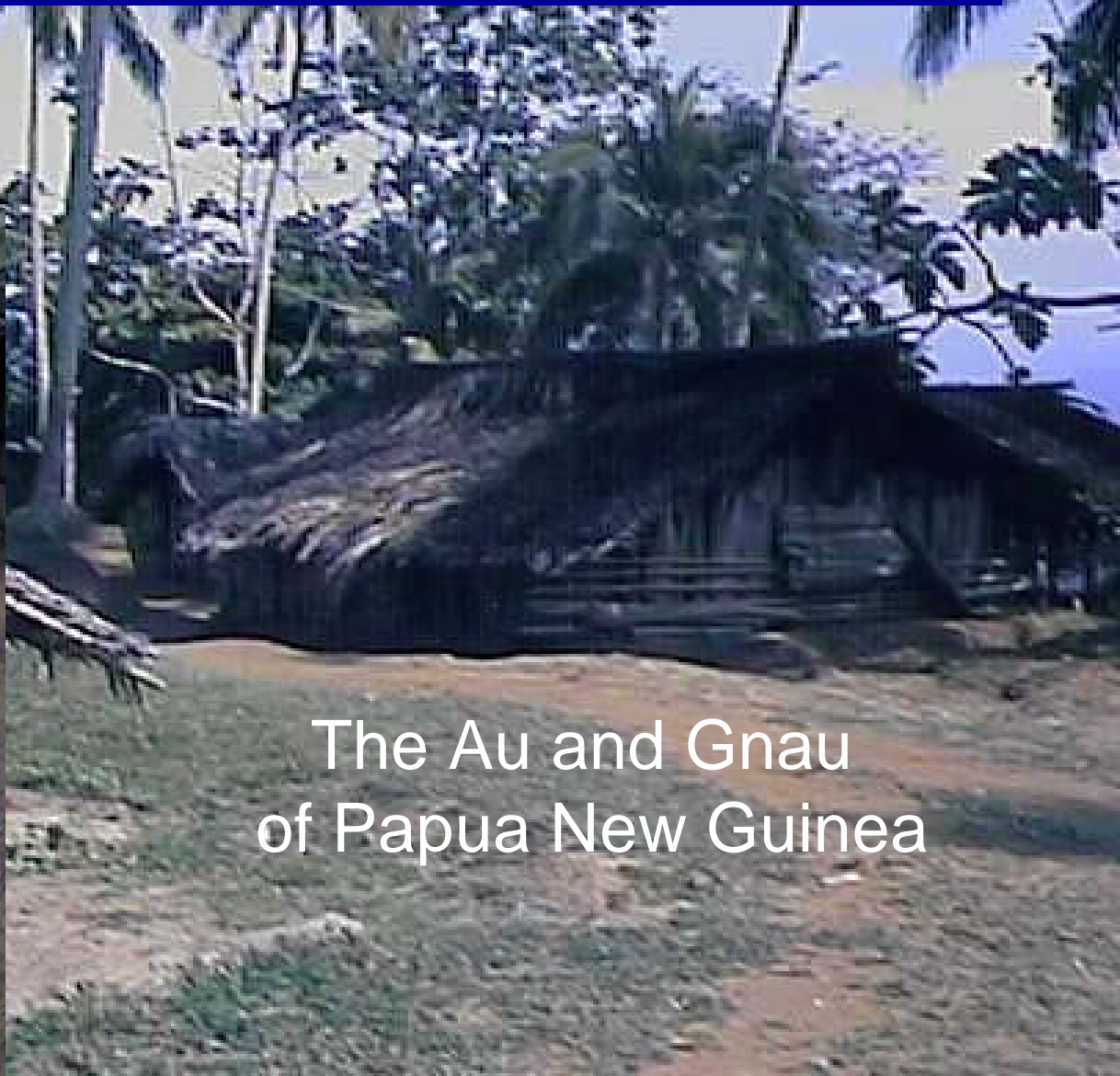


Hadza Ultimatum Game offers



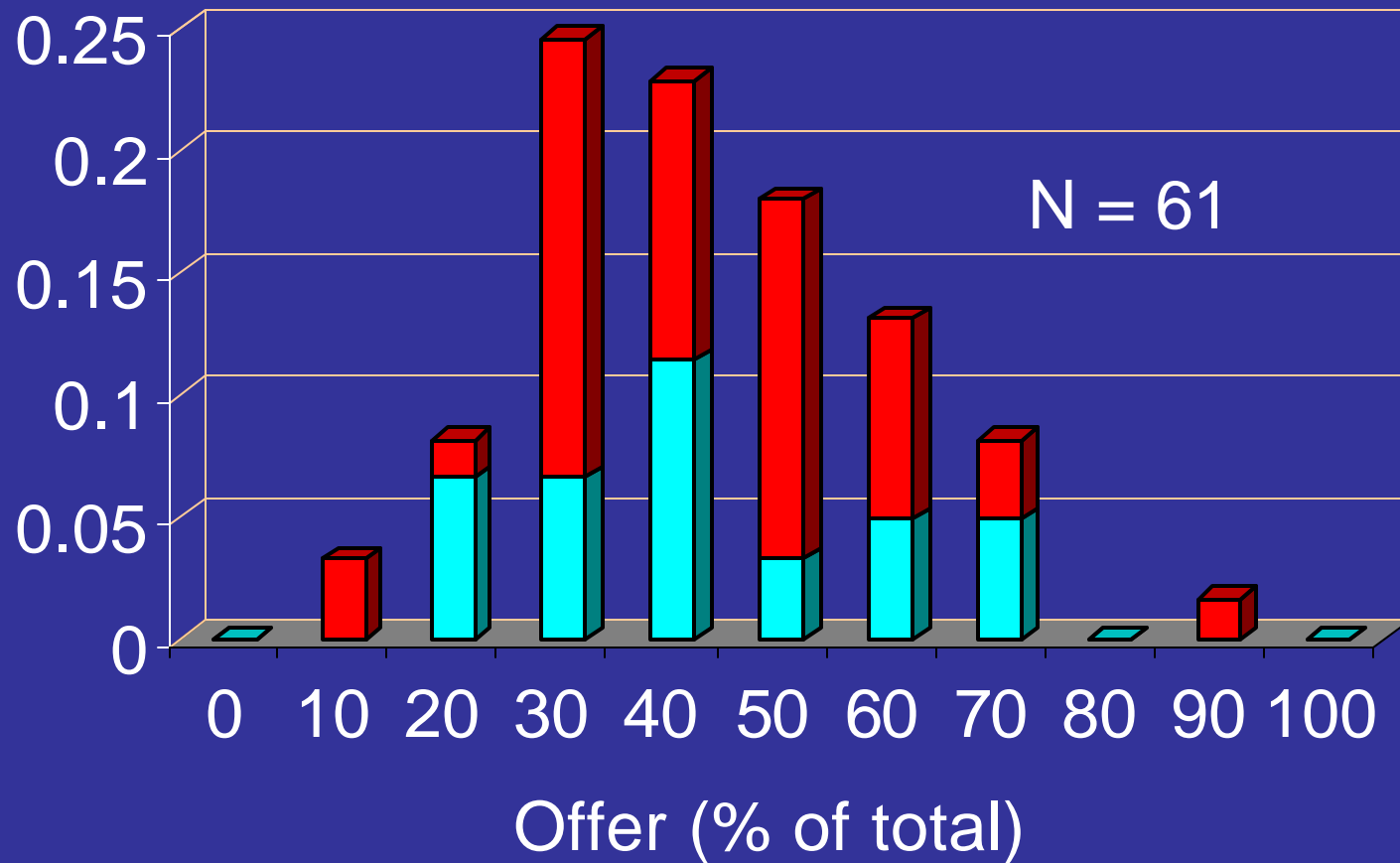
Like the Machiguenga

- Forager-horticulturalists: sago palms, manioc & pigs
- Culture of gift-giving and obligation



The Au and Gnau
of Papua New Guinea

Au and Gnau UG Offers and Rejections (PNG)



Hyper-fair offers make PNG unique. Makes sense if you 'know' New Guinea

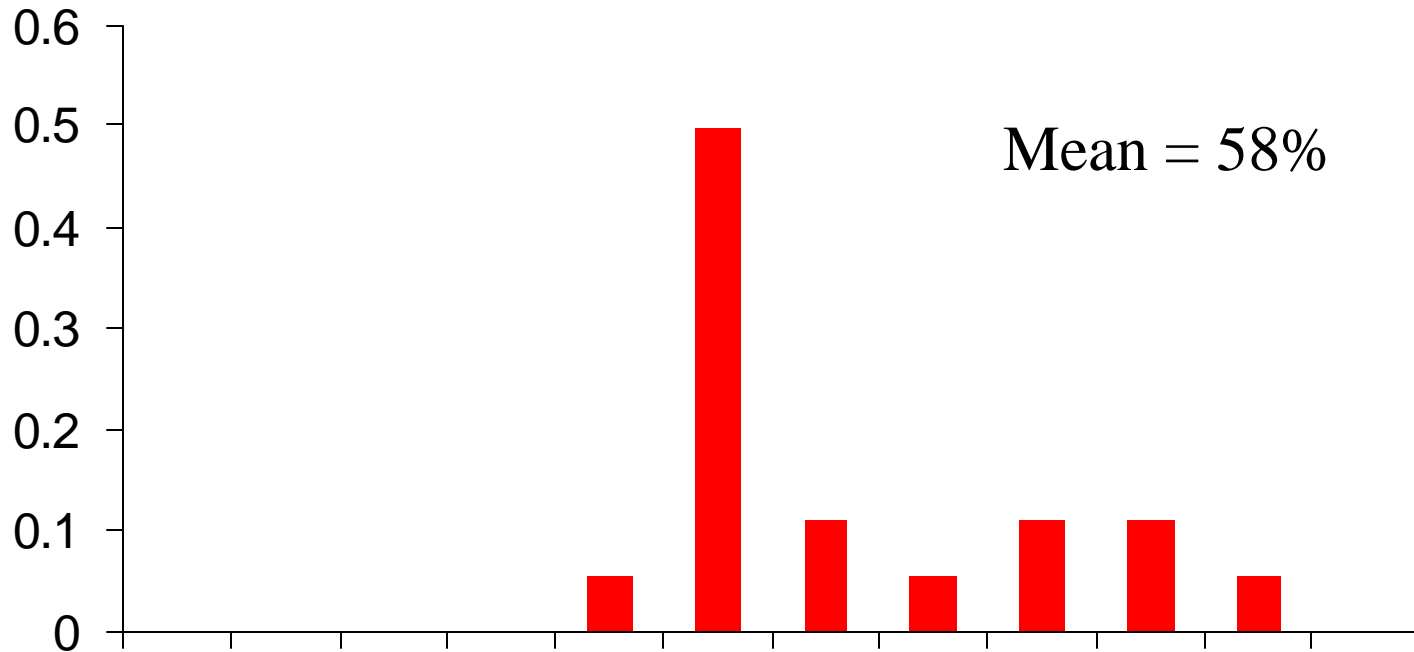
Lamalera



Cooperative
whale hunters

Trade for
agricultural
goods

Lamalera UG results



Cross-Cultural Ultimatum Games

Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.	Rejections
Machiguenga	21	0.26	0.15/0.25	0.14	0.048
Hadza	55/29	0.33/0.27	0.20/0.50	0.17/0.15	0.24
Tsimane	70	0.37	0.5/0.3/0.25	0.19	0
Quichua	13	0.27	0.25	0.16	0.13 (2/15)
Torguud	10	0.35/0.42	0.25	0.089	0.05 (1/20)
Khazax	10	0.36/.43	0.38	0.087	0.10 (2/20)
Mapuche	30	0.34	0.50/0.33	0.18	0.065
Au	30	0.43	0.30	0.14	0.27
Gnau	25	0.38	0.40	0.19	0.4
Sangu (farmers)	20	0.41	0.50	0.12	0.25
Zimbabwe (unresettled)	31	0.41	0.50	0.1388	0.1
Achuar	16	0.42	0.50	0.2	0/14
Sangu (herders)	20	0.42	0.50	0.09	0.05
Orma	56	0.44	0.50	0.092	0.04
Pittsburgh	27	0.45	0.50	0.096	0.22
Zimbabwe (resettled)	86	0.45	0.50	0.1014	0.07
Ache	51	0.5	0.50/0.40	0.15	0
Lamalara	19	0.58	0.50	0.14	0.2*

Do individual-level Variables Explain the Variation?

**Age, Sex and Relative Wealth do
not explain any of the variation
in proposers or responder
behavior (few exceptions).**

Summary

More cooperation & punishment than predicted by social exchange theory.

High degree of variation across social groups. UG Mode 15% to 50%. Hyper-fair offers and rejections of hyper-fair.

Within and between group variation not explained by sex, age, wealth, wage labor, etc.