

Sanction Incidence in Asymmetric Relational Structures: A Preliminary Generative Relational Account of Burden Propagation and Power Reproduction

Wanhong HUANG

Abstract

This article examines how sanctions directed at formally accountable actors generate heterogeneous burdens within historically constituted relations. Research on collateral consequences and symbiotic harms documents burdens borne beyond nominal sanction targets; scholarship on power-dependence, epistemic injustice, and institutional oversight addresses complementary mechanisms. Building on these literatures, the article asks when actors possess feasible decision rights over sanction implementation, how alternative choices could alter burden incidence, and whether later relations become more or less contestable. The analysis separates authorization, execution, experienced incidence, potential pathway steering, exercised control, and changes in effective opportunities for independent review. A preliminary generative relational representation specifies typed sanction episodes, heterogeneous burden domains, conditional propagation, and admissible histories. Constructed countermodels show that formal sanction records and observations of immediate burdens may underdetermine causal conclusions within the stipulated model classes. Comparisons across households, workplaces, public authority, and assistance settings preserve differences in legal competence, institutional purposes, and remedial duties. A proposed research protocol specifies evidential requirements, rival explanations, and safeguards for participants. The formal results are conditional; the manuscript reports no original fieldwork or findings about identifiable persons. Its proposed contribution is a testable integration of burden incidence, decision rights, and historical feedback, subject to comparison with simpler explanatory approaches.

Keywords: sanction incidence; asymmetric power; responsibility; burden propagation; generative relational theory

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Discussion Paper Note

This discussion paper examines the practical distribution of sanction-associated burdens through asymmetric relational structures when responsibility may already be correctly assigned. It distinguishes responsibility attribution, sanction authorization and execution, downstream incidence, and historically conditioned changes in feasible action. Family relations serve as a fully constructed analytical configuration alongside organizational and institutional comparisons. The proposed generative relational (GR) contribution concerns control over burden pathways and possible feedback into subsequent dependence, authority, and contestability; its comparative explanatory value remains a research question.

Sections 1–13 and Appendices A–C present an integrated theoretical argument, a preliminary formal representation, bounded propositions, constructed countermodels, and an empirical research protocol. The arguments are conditional formal results and conceptual proposals, not empirical causal estimates or proof of wrongdoing. Appendix C proposes a future research protocol; no human-participant study or research ethics approval is claimed. Sources were checked at the distinct access levels recorded in the accompanying verification ledger. Restricted full-text materials have not all undergone passage-by-passage review. This paper contains no original field research, no identified family or institution, and no disguised private case history. The three GR reality levels serve as analytical registers and are not presented as an empirically established partition of reality.

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Research ethics and interpretation. All case examples are deliberately invented and schematic; they contain no identifiable personal circumstances, confidential communications, or disguised personal histories. They are analytic instruments and should not be read as allegations about identifiable persons or as evidence of intentional mistreatment. Disputes about responsibility, coercion, family care, and institutional authority require independent factual investigation and appropriate protections for vulnerable participants.

Neutral description and competing accounts. Labels such as *accountable actor*, *externalization*, and *appropriation of repair* designate stipulated roles or candidate mechanisms within an analytical configuration. They are not diagnoses, accusations, or factual conclusions about a real individual. Each application requires independent consideration of justified authority, legitimate cooperation, scarcity, misattribution, error, and intentional wrongdoing as distinct explanations.

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Statement on the use of language models. ChatGPT substantially assisted with the outline, initial drafting and line editing of Sections 1–13 and Appendices A–C, adaptation of the Paper IX LaTeX architecture, literature discovery and accessible-source checks, constructed-model calculations, internal scientific and mathematical review, neutrality and privacy-oriented screening, and document compilation and inspection. The human author identified the central research question and theoretical direction and remains responsible for scholarly attribution, factual accuracy, ethical and licensing decisions, scientific conclusions, and public dissemination. The assistance was not independent peer review or validation.

Independence and case material. The manuscript reports no original human-participant research and makes no findings about identifiable families, organizations, or individuals. All analytical examples are synthetic; no personal communications, private testimony, or identifying case details were used. The scholarly byline identifies the author; no personal contact address is supplied. Named bibliographic authors are cited for intellectual provenance and are not represented as collaborators or endorsers.

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1 Sanction Incidence as a Problem of Relational Accountability

This section establishes the analytical object of the paper: the distribution of burdens following a sanction in a historically constituted system of relations. Its immediate objective is to distinguish the attribution of responsibility and the formal direction of a sanction from the burden experienced by subjects connected to the sanctioned actor. The argument introduces the incidence problem, examines a constructed configuration with undisputed attribution, and states the proposed mechanism and its limits. The method is conceptual and comparative. Related empirical research motivates the problem; the proposed generative relational (GR) mechanisms require separate causal assessment.

1.1 Sanction Burdens and the Object of Inquiry

A sanction is provisionally understood here as an adverse or restrictive consequence imposed, authorized, or maintained in response to conduct attributed to a subject under some operative rule, expectation, or asserted authority. The definition covers legally specified penalties and institutionally administered disciplinary measures, while also accommodating informal responses in families and associations when a norm, a decision-maker, and an enforcement practice can be identified. Inclusion within this descriptive category establishes neither the legitimacy of the asserted authority nor the proportionality of the response. A retaliatory deprivation may be experienced as a sanction without meeting the conditions of a legitimate penalty. The distinction between formal sanction and informal adverse response is retained throughout the paper.

Sanction incidence concerns the location, composition, and temporal development of the burdens causally associated with a sanction. The nominal subject against whom a sanction is directed may experience a monetary loss, diminished opportunities, confinement, reputational injury, or restrictions on participation. Connected subjects may bear changes in household consumption, unpaid labor, caregiving demands, insecurity, or foregone opportunities. Incidence therefore names a distributional research object rather than a rule assigning moral blame. A description of who bore costs remains analytically separate from a judgment about who ought to bear them.

The expression *sanction-associated burden* is deliberately broader than punishment in the juridical sense. A child's interrupted education caused by reduced household spending, for example, may be a downstream effect of a penalty imposed on a parent; it is not thereby established that the child has been punished in the same legal or normative sense as the parent. Whether the downstream change is attributable to the sanction, to a discretionary family decision, to pre-existing scarcity, or to several interacting conditions is a causal question. The present framework also leaves open whether a given change counts as harm, an accepted shared cost, a lawful duty, or an unjust burden in its particular normative setting.

Research on punishment already gives reason to locate such consequences beyond the nominal target. Condry and Minson conceptualize *symbiotic harms* of imprisonment as negative effects moving in multiple directions through intimate associations, emphasizing their relational, mutual, nonlinear, agentic, and heterogeneous character [9]. Boches and colleagues, examining monetary sanctions in two United States states, report interview evidence that family members may pay relatives' fines and fees and experience financial strain, emotional distress, and conflict [5]. These studies establish an important conceptual and qualitative evidential basis for examining burdens beyond the individually sanctioned party, without determining their prevalence in every sanction regime. The present inquiry inherits that problem setting and asks a further question about the allocation of *control* over burden pathways, with an additional interest in the relations that remain after a sanction has been carried out.

A relational description should preserve heterogeneity. Financial expense, time, credibility, bodily security, family stability, and the ability to refuse a demand are not necessarily measurable in a common unit. Even where a comparable monetary amount is available, equivalence in currency may conceal divergent effects on people with different incomes or capacities. Bing, Pettit, and Slavinski document disparities in the time and money burdens associated with legal fines and fees among differently situated defendants in their Texas study [4]. The example concerns differences among sanctioned people; it sup-

Table 1: Analytical positions in a sanction episode and their corresponding research questions

Position	Analytical question
Conduct and responsibility	Which conduct occurred, and which agents bear specified causal, moral, legal, or institutional responsibility?
Authorization	Which person or body may legitimately select a response, and under what rules?
Imposition and execution	Which response is actually directed at the nominal target, implemented, and enforced?
Burden incidence	Which persons or groups experience which changes, through which causal pathways and over what period?
Subsequent relational effects	How do the consequences alter dependence, contestability, resources, and capacities for future action?

ports attention to heterogeneous burdens without itself demonstrating that a powerful actor deliberately transfers costs to another person. The latter proposition has a different evidential burden.

1.2 Correct Attribution and Divergent Burden Incidence

The motivating case for this paper holds responsibility attribution constant. Consider a subject A whose conduct is reliably established, whose responsibility under a relevant rule is accepted, and against whom a sanction is formally directed. The relevant decision might be a monetary penalty, a restriction of institutional privileges, a required restitution payment, or an adverse organizational measure. Correct attribution supplies one condition for accountability, yet further processes determine how an authorized response is executed and whose feasible activities it alters.

The following distinctions identify five analytical positions in a sanction episode. They concern different questions and should not be collapsed into a single observation.

Table 1 distinguishes the practical incidence of a sanction from its formal destination. Suppose that A pays a valid fine from an account whose depletion is offset by reducing support for B and C . The sanction can remain legally imposed on A even where additional losses are borne by B and C . If A has sufficient discretionary resources to absorb more of the cost but selects an alternative allocation, the pattern raises a question concerning control over incidence. That question remains even when B and C have complete and accurate knowledge of the original conduct. Blame-shifting or an epistemically distorted record is therefore an optional accompanying mechanism rather than a necessary premise of burden externalization.

The analysis further distinguishes the *incidence of an imposed penalty* from an actor's overall loss or gain. A powerful actor might bear a substantial penalty and nevertheless preserve decision rights that allow some of its secondary costs to reach others. Alternatively, the actor might incur no effective restriction because execution is blocked before it begins. These possibilities differ causally and institutionally. A categorical description of the actor as having "escaped punishment" would be premature without a reference standard for the expected burden, an account of the implemented sanction, and an assessment of counterfactual distributions. The more precise research question concerns whether the actor's power makes the distribution of actual burdens diverge from the distribution that would obtain under an appropriate comparison configuration.

The comparison configuration requires normative and causal care. A distribution predicted under a household's ordinary spending rules is an empirical counterfactual. A distribution judged fair under a theory of responsibility is a normative benchmark. A legally required allocation is a jurisdiction-specific institutional requirement. Each can serve a different analytical purpose. Their divergence is informative; none should be silently substituted for the others. Moreover, sanction-associated hardships may reach uninvolved people even under transparent and nondiscretionary procedures. The possibility of an external burden does not by itself show an abuse of power, an intention to harm, or defective institutional design.

1.3 Family Relations as an Analytical Starting Point

Family relations provide a productive starting configuration because obligations, resources, emotional ties, role expectations, and long-term dependence may operate simultaneously. The family is used as an analytical setting, not as a homogeneous institution or as evidence that asymmetry is inherently wrongful. Age-related authority, agreed sharing, caregiving responsibility, and financial interdependence may be ethically justified or practically necessary. The inquiry concerns the conditions under which an actor can use a position within those relations to choose who experiences sanction-associated losses and to constrain those persons' responses.

Consider a constructed household with three members, *A*, *B*, and *C*. The hypothetical *A* controls the principal bank account and decides much of the household's discretionary spending. Within this invented configuration, a body stipulated to have valid authority determines that *A* breached a specified rule and imposes a financial sanction on *A*. The stipulated finding is accepted by the modeled household members. An initial implementation transfers the required sum out of the account. Subsequently, *A* preserves personal consumption and discretionary commitments by reducing expenses used primarily by *B* and *C*, while declining other available budget adjustments. If *B* and *C* depend on the same account and lack credible opportunities to contest allocations, they may bear lasting reductions in schooling, care, mobility, or savings capacity. The original responsibility assignment was accurate. The location of burdens may nevertheless differ from the nominal direction of the sanction.

Three mechanisms should be separately investigated in this constructed episode. First, the payment may draw on already pooled resources, independently of any new decision by *A*. Second, *A* may exercise discretion over which activities are cut after payment. Third, past control over income, records, and family decision procedures may make *B* and *C* less able to propose or enforce alternatives. The first concerns interdependence, the second possible direction of burdens, and the third the history that makes certain allocations practically available. Evidence of the third mechanism would require reconstructing relevant decisions and feasible options rather than merely labeling *A* the household head.

A comparison household reveals why the distinction matters. Another family may jointly decide, through fair and contestable procedures, to preserve necessary care while all capable members bear a temporary reduction. A guardian facing genuine scarcity may have few other feasible allocations. A person formally fined may also suffer independently through lost employment, stigma, or restricted mobility. These possibilities can produce severe third-party effects without unilateral manipulation. A theory that classifies each burden on relatives as strategic externalization would obscure solidarity, necessity, and the agency of affected family members. The proposed framework therefore treats consent, alternatives, constrained choice, and the temporal effects of decisions as matters for investigation.

A further configuration concerns repair after a sanction. Suppose *A* later restores a portion of the resources lost by *B* and asks to be publicly recognized as the source of relief. Such assistance may be genuine; it may also operate under conditions that discourage renewed complaint or independent review. The key question concerns how control over remedial resources intersects with prior conduct, independently identifiable obligations, and subsequent dependence. The appearance of beneficence is a distinct manifestation from the historical distribution of resources and harms. The paper will analyze this configuration separately from the original sanction, because a later act of assistance does not establish either prior responsibility or a manipulative purpose on its own.

The household illustration is entirely constructed, independent of private communications or personal experience, and represents no identifiable person or observed family. Its function is to make candidate mechanisms explicit and to expose rival causal interpretations that an eventual empirical investigation would need to distinguish. Additional institutional settings, including workplaces, educational organizations, governing bodies, and aid relationships, may exhibit analogous patterns. Their sanctioning rules, degrees of voluntary participation, enforcement capacities, and independent oversight differ substantially; transfer of the household analysis to those settings will require domain-specific justification.

1.4 Research Questions and the Proposed Explanatory Contribution

The paper develops four connected lines of inquiry. The *descriptive* task is to identify the nominal target of a sanction, the experienced burdens of connected subjects, and the relevant duration and domains of those burdens. The *causal* task is to determine which resources, decision rights, institutional rules, and historically formed dependencies make some distributions possible and others difficult. The *historical and generative* task is to examine whether the incidence of a sanction changes the future capacity of affected people to act, contest, cooperate, exit, or form alternative relationships. The *normative* task is to assess the relevant distribution against justified accounts of responsibility, legitimate sanctioning, proportionality, rights, and repair. These tasks interact, yet the conclusions of one do not settle the others.

A central distinction concerns *power over incidence*. In the preliminary sense used here, an agent has power over a burden pathway when, under identifiable institutional and relational conditions, feasible actions available to that agent can meaningfully alter the distribution or persistence of sanction-associated burdens. Possessing wealth or occupying an organizational office may facilitate such control, but positional status alone does not establish its exercise. Evidence of control would require observing the choices available, the actor's decision or omission, the consequent pathway of burdens, and the relevant alternatives. The term may apply to authorized and constrained discretion as well as to abusive control. A separate normative judgment assesses whether the exercise was legitimate or unjust.

The proposed generative component concerns what follows a particular distribution. A decision that reduces *B*'s present resources may also diminish *B*'s future capacity to change a resource-dependent arrangement, seek third-party review, or contribute to an independent association. Conversely, protective rules and independent support may prevent this feedback or improve future autonomy. A historical relation can therefore condition both the immediate incidence of a sanction and the space of feasible arrangements in later periods. This study uses *generativity* to name these historically conditioned changes in capacities and possibilities, with their evaluative valence left open. A new dependency can sustain essential care, amplify domination, or combine enabling and constraining effects. Specific mechanisms, counterfactual comparisons, and normative standards are needed to distinguish them.

Prior work establishes relational punishment harms, heterogeneous sanction severity, epistemic inequalities, and the difference between domination and its exercise [9, 5, 17, 30]. The proposed increment is a case-specific reconstruction of *who can alter sanction-burden pathways*, combined with a longitudinal account of changes in the affected participants' feasible options. Section 2 situates this conjunction within the literature, while Section 13 specifies comparisons against simpler explanations. Its independent explanatory value remains a question for assessment.

The paper examines a provisional mechanism: under specified conditions of concentrated decision rights, limited contestation, and persistent interdependence, an accountable actor's feasible allocation choices may shift some sanction-related burdens to connected participants. Changes in resources or access to review may subsequently alter the distribution of practical authority. The hypothesis also admits neutral or contrary continuations, including independently administered enforcement, voluntary cost sharing, secure alternative provision, and strengthened capacity to contest. These cases are essential to evaluating the mechanism.

1.5 Methodological Scope and Limits

The paper is a preliminary theoretical discussion combining concept clarification, literature-guided comparison, constructed cases, and a limited formal representation. Its purpose is to specify objects and claims well enough to expose differences among mechanisms, identify evidential needs, and support criticism. It does not report an original survey, administrative dataset, ethnography, controlled experiment, or legal analysis of any particular jurisdiction. Published studies are used within the bounds of their stated populations and methods. In particular, empirical findings about criminal fines or imprisonment do not directly establish the same causal process in household discipline, corporate sanctions, or political governance.

Three evidential levels are important. First, there may be evidence that a formal sanction occurred

and that identifiable burdens subsequently appeared. Second, there may be process evidence linking burdens to resource pathways, decisions, and dependencies. Third, there may be stronger counterfactual evidence that an agent's exercise of control altered the distribution relative to plausible alternatives. The distance between these levels is consequential. Temporal succession does not alone establish a mechanism; unequal incidence does not establish direction by an accountable actor; and observed control does not establish malevolent intention. Where several mechanisms coexist, the inquiry should preserve the uncertainty rather than select a preferred interpretation for narrative convenience.

An additional distinction separates descriptive and normative conclusions. The empirical location of a loss cannot determine whether it is permissible, compulsory, voluntary, excessive, or unjust. Normative evaluation must attend to the applicable kind of responsibility, the competence of the sanctioning authority, procedural fairness, vulnerability, the protection of uninvolved parties, and feasible remedial arrangements. Particular rights and legal duties depend on an identified legal order and require independent support. Family disputes also raise ethical obligations of confidentiality and non-exploitation: the paper uses fictional analytical configurations and will not infer a person's culpability, psychological condition, or intentions from an unverified private account.

The proposed GR interpretation distinguishes three analytical levels. *Ontological reality* remains subject to suspension concerning the ultimate status of persons, institutions, sanctions, and relational entities. *Relational reality* concerns historically constituted configurations whose operations have sufficiently identifiable causal and generative consequences. *Manifestation reality* concerns the recorded or experienced forms through which acts, sanctions, assistance, and claims to authority become accessible and interpreted. These levels are not stages through which a single event mechanically passes. Their distinction limits unsupported inference from a convincing performance of accountability to an actually fair distribution of burdens, while leaving open how evidence about manifestations can justify claims about relational mechanisms. Section 10 develops the theoretical interface.

The inquiry develops in three connected movements. Sections 2–5 establish the inherited concepts, decision stages, sources of pathway control, and heterogeneous burden channels. Sections 6–8 examine interpretation, repair, and feedback into relational opportunities. Sections 9–13 and the appendices specify a conditional formal architecture, cross-domain comparisons, safeguards, and requirements for empirical investigation. The resulting proposal is an incidence-sensitive research programme whose claims depend on the evidence available for each link in this sequence.

2 Scholarly Foundations of Sanction Burden Distribution

The scholarly foundations of sanction incidence span criminology, political philosophy, social epistemology, and theories of moral repair. This section establishes the intellectual provenance of the present account and specifies the explanatory tasks that these traditions already accomplish. It first examines harms that extend beyond a formally sanctioned person and variation in the burdens experienced by nominal targets. It then considers relational dependence and domination, epistemic authority in the assessment of wrongdoing, and the conditions of credible repair. The concluding comparison specifies what the proposed generative relational (GR) reconstruction would have to explain beyond these established approaches. The method is selective conceptual reconstruction supported by directly verified publication records and, where accessible, article text or chapter extracts. Such sources justify particular claims; their presence in a bibliography does not establish the proposed mechanism of strategic burden redirection.

2.1 Sanction Incidence and Collateral Consequences

The analytical point of departure is a distinction between the *object of a sanctioning decision* and the *distribution of burdens associated with its consequences*. A penalty can identify a responsible person with considerable procedural precision while changing the circumstances of people who were neither parties to the original action nor liable for the corresponding wrong. Those changes can be financially

measurable, such as a reduction in available household income, or incommensurable without further evaluative decisions, such as the loss of caregiving time, educational opportunity, or reliable companionship. Describing these effects as an incidence pattern does not settle whether they are intended, foreseen, avoidable, disproportionate, or legally attributable to the sanctioning authority.

Condry and Minson's formulation of *symbiotic harms* provides a particularly important foundation [9]. Addressing the effects of imprisonment on families, they criticize the limits of treating connected persons' experiences only as collateral consequences or secondary punishment. Their account emphasizes harms flowing through the interdependencies of intimate relations, including their mutual, nonlinear, agentic, and heterogeneous character. The terminology matters. An expression such as *collateral consequence* may appropriately mark that a consequence falls outside the penalty's formal target, yet it can obscure the extent to which that consequence is central to the lives of other affected persons. Conversely, describing all suffering by relatives as *secondary punishment* can suggest a juridical status that those relatives have not acquired through conviction or sentence. The idea of symbiotic harms illuminates relationally mediated effects without requiring that terminological conflation.

This literature already rejects a picture of punishment as a self-contained event located wholly within the sanctioned individual. The present paper therefore does not claim to discover that sanctions have social consequences, that intimate networks transmit hardship, or that heterogeneous subjects respond differently. Its narrower question concerns a distinguishable causal relation: under what conditions may an actor who is formally sanctioned also retain sufficient control over the pathways of propagation to influence which connected persons bear particular costs? The property to investigate is the *feasible power to steer incidence*, rather than relational spillover alone. A family's reduced income following imprisonment may have strong downstream effects even when the incarcerated person could not meaningfully redirect those effects. A person who controls joint assets, discretionary transfers, or household labor assignments may possess more capacity to affect the distribution. Both are relational incidence configurations, but they support different inferences about power and control.

The empirical literature on monetary sanctions provides a more specific starting point. In a study based on semi-structured interviews with 140 persons with legal debt and 96 court actors across Georgia and Missouri, Boches and colleagues report interview evidence of relatives contributing to legal financial obligations, in some accounts under coercive pressure, alongside financial strain, emotional distress, and conflict associated with fines and fees [5]. Their account also examines how court actors can draw upon defendants' social networks in the collection process. The finding is relevant to the present paper because the channels mediating payments and family obligations can matter as much to lived burdens as the identity of the person to whom a monetary amount was formally assessed. The study does not establish that defendants in general deliberately manipulate family members, and it would be inappropriate to infer the incidence distribution of other sanction types or jurisdictions directly from its interview sample.

The *severity* of a nominally comparable sanction is also sensitive to the recipient's resources and the procedures required to resolve it. Bing, Pettit, and Slavinski combine Texas court records with interviews to study inequalities in the time and money spent resolving fines and fees [4]. Their findings document disproportionate burdens among socially or economically disadvantaged defendants within the studied setting. This evidence concerns differences in what nominal targets themselves experience; it is analytically adjacent to, though distinct from, cost propagation to third parties. The two patterns can co-occur: a person may bear greater personal hardship because of scarcity and may seek assistance from relatives who then acquire further burdens. An adequate incidence account must distinguish the target's experienced severity, the externally distributed burden, and any subsequent decisions affecting both.

The resulting typology should remain open to normative and causal differentiation. *Direct effects* fall on a sanctioned actor; *connected-person effects* fall on other subjects through a causal pathway linked to the sanction; *institutionally imposed third-party burdens* arise where rules or enforcement practices themselves involve others; and *actor-influenced externalization* requires additional evidence that a particular actor could and did affect an available distribution. These are proposed analytical categories, not mutually exclusive natural kinds. The final category demands more than a visible disparity: one must identify the controllable decision, an appropriate counterfactual path, and the actual consequences.

Where these elements are missing, a study may properly report incidence without attributing strategic redistribution.

2.2 Power, Domination, and Relational Dependence

The second foundation concerns the relational conditions under which an agent can shape other people's feasible choices. A sanction may be imposed by an institution external to the household, while authority over funds, housing, employment, care, or access to information remains concentrated within a household or organization. The sanctioning body and the actor who controls downstream resources need not be the same person. Accordingly, investigation of incidence must specify *which actor controls which decision at which stage* rather than speaking of an undifferentiated power held by "the family," "the institution," or the sanctioned person.

Pettit's account of liberty as non-domination provides one way to distinguish actual interference from the standing capacity to interfere on an arbitrary basis [30]. In that framework, an actor's unexercised capacity to alter another's choices may itself matter to freedom. Its relevance here lies in a counterfactual question: could the accountable actor, within the decision rules and resource dependencies that actually obtain, change the location or persistence of sanction-associated burdens in ways that the affected subjects cannot effectively contest? An affirmative answer would identify a potential structural influence over incidence, although Pettit's normative conception should not be reduced to a measurement of money or sanctions. Arbitrary interference, authorized discretion, and justified responsibilities require independent criteria.

Relational dependence adds the question of how exit, disagreement, and alternative provision are made feasible. In intimate contexts, housing security, medical care, emotional attachments, and long-established obligations can limit an individual's ability to refuse a request even when the request is formally optional. Stark's analysis of coercive control is relevant because it examines how restrictions on autonomy can arise from an interconnected pattern of isolation, intimidation, and control, including circumstances without overt physical attack [37]. The significance for the present paper is conceptual rather than diagnostic. A case of coercive control requires contextual evidence of a pattern and its effects; unequal household roles or disagreement over finances cannot be classified as coercive control merely because an allocation seems unfavorable. Likewise, the present account must not extend conclusions derived from a specifically studied population to other configurations without argument.

Iris Marion Young's social connection model of responsibility introduces a distinct, necessary complication [49]. Young addresses participation in structural processes that generate injustice and develops primarily forward-looking political responsibility for remedying those processes. That account should not be assimilated to backward-looking fault or the penalty attached to a determinate wrong. It nonetheless reminds incidence research that an unequal consequence can be sustained by many contributors, some of whom have limited individual control over it. A model that names only an individually accountable agent and a passive population of victims would miss the roles of administrators, property rules, market institutions, other household members, and external support structures. Recognition of these additional participants, however, does not automatically make them culpable for the original act.

A practical research design should therefore distinguish at least four relational capacities. *Allocative capacity* concerns the ability to decide how resources, work, and exposure are assigned. *Procedural capacity* concerns influence over whether and how a sanction is carried out. *Contestatory capacity* concerns the ability of an affected person to challenge a decision through credible and accessible channels. *Adaptive capacity* concerns the ability to restore independent options after burdens have appeared. These are analytic dimensions proposed here; they are not asserted to be categories originating in Pettit's, Stark's, or Young's works. They can vary independently. An actor may control discretionary spending yet lack influence over the authority that imposes a fine; a dependent person may have no decision right within a household yet possess legally protected external recourse; a manager may possess legitimate procedural discretion constrained by transparent oversight.

Power in the present inquiry is consequently historical and conditional. Decision rights arise from

rules, trust, conventions, resources, and prior exchanges that can change over time. Some dependencies sustain care, cooperation, and mutual survival. Their existence by itself does not entail domination, exploitation, or intent to redirect penalties. The empirical task is to identify the specific paths through which discretion and asymmetry affect realized burdens, and to establish which countervailing possibilities actually exist. The normative task is to determine whether those paths meet independently justified standards of responsibility, non-domination, procedural fairness, and protection of others.

2.3 Epistemic Injustice and Narrative Control

A third foundation concerns the social authority to describe wrongdoing, validate evidence, and interpret experienced consequences. Fricker's account of epistemic injustice distinguishes *testimonial injustice*, in which prejudice unfairly diminishes a speaker's credibility, and *hermeneutical injustice*, in which structural defects in shared interpretive resources place a subject at a disadvantage in making sense of a significant experience [17]. Those concepts identify forms of wrong directed at persons in their capacities as knowers. They are especially relevant where recognition of a harmed person's experience is affected by hierarchical status, stereotypes, or exclusion from accepted interpretive practices.

The comparative task requires three analytically distinct phenomena, each compatible with more than one causal or normative interpretation. First, *responsibility misattribution* occurs when the wrongdoer, causal contributor, or normatively responsible party is incorrectly identified. Second, *interpretive restriction* occurs when some subjects face obstacles to presenting or contesting accounts of a sanction and its aftermath. Third, *material incidence divergence* occurs when the experienced burden is distributed differently from the nominal assignment, whether or not the factual account is accurate. The categories may interact, but none logically entails the others. A household can agree about who committed an error and still assign the financial or labor costs of the resulting sanction in an unequal manner. A powerful narrator can deny that a dependent person sacrificed anything meaningful, while the diversion of household resources proceeds even if this denial convinces nobody. Conversely, misinformation about responsibility can exist without producing a significant material burden on uninvolved subjects.

It is important to distinguish *narrative closure* from Fricker's particular account of hermeneutical injustice. In the present manuscript, narrative closure is a provisional term for a pattern in which an agent or institution effectively narrows the legitimate venues, admissible evidence, or publicly recognized accounts of a dispute. A family member may know perfectly well what happened and have the vocabulary to describe it, yet lack access to a hearing or be threatened for dissent. Such a case may involve silencing or contested credibility; it need not involve a gap in the collective conceptual resources in Fricker's precise sense. The paper will therefore identify the operation of each process before applying an established philosophical label.

The distinction also bears on the interpretation of consent. A relative who transfers money to discharge another's fine can describe that transfer as voluntary help. Whether the transfer expresses genuine consent depends on available alternatives and pressures, including the possibility of retaliation, withdrawal of essential support, or loss of participation. The existence of such pressures requires investigation, and a relationship's inequality cannot alone decide the question. Interpretive authority may matter in a further way when a transfer is publicly recorded as an act of loyalty or generosity rather than as a response to constrained options. The same observed payment may thus be accompanied by different accounts of agency and obligation; adjudication between them requires evidence beyond the observer's preferred narrative.

Epistemic and material dimensions also possess different temporal profiles. Misrepresentation may precede a sanction and help determine its imposition. A later narrative may retrospectively recast another person's losses as a routine household contribution. Still later, accepted histories of who helped, who failed, and who owes gratitude may condition future decisions. An explanatory framework should preserve the order and causal independence of these operations. Accurate responsibility attribution can coexist with a severely constrained ability to contest incidence; conversely, open deliberation can coexist with material scarcity that no participant can readily remove. Separating these possibilities keeps the

paper's central contribution from collapsing back into an exclusively epistemological theory of blame transfer.

2.4 Repair, Recognition, and Moral Authority

Responses to wrongdoing are not exhausted by penalty and cost allocation. A sanction may accompany compensation, apology, restitution, institutional correction, or efforts to restore damaged relationships. These activities differ in their purposes and normative justifications. An institution may impose a penalty to express condemnation or deter future violations; an accountable person may owe restitution to a harmed party; an uninvolved relative may provide voluntary assistance. How a relationship interprets these acts matters, but their normative identities cannot be inferred from their outward resemblance.

Walker's treatment of moral repair provides a central point of reference [46]. Her account addresses how wrongdoing damages relationships structured by trust, expectations, acknowledgment, and practices of making amends. In the publisher-accessible discussion of making amends, acceptance of responsibility is treated as integral to distinguishing amends from charitable or compassionate assistance. This distinction helps prevent a conceptual substitution that is salient for sanction incidence: the person who possesses the means to relieve a burden is not thereby shown to have fulfilled a reparative obligation, and the provision of relief does not by itself cancel the question of who caused or owes redress for the wrong.

The role of social recognition in a response to wrongdoing has also been discussed in criminology. Braithwaite's theory of reintegrative shaming distinguishes shaming embedded in practices of respect and reintegration from forms capable of aggravating exclusion [6]. The value of this source for the present argument is its differentiation among social responses to wrongdoing, rather than any proposition that visible acceptance of an apology resolves the fair distribution of costs. Likewise, published evaluations of restorative justice examine actual programmes and their variable effects; the comparative work of Shapland, Robinson, and Sorsby concerns specified programmes in England and Wales [34]. A design that extends restorative language to asymmetric domestic relationships must address voluntariness, procedural competence, safety, and ongoing vulnerability rather than presuming that participation yields a fair outcome. The second edition of the UNODC restorative justice handbook offers programme-level guidance across different legal and social settings; it is a guidance source rather than a universal enactment of enforceable legal duties [44].

Against these foundations, the present research proposes to examine a bounded configuration termed *appropriation of repair*. The term denotes a candidate pattern in which an actor with significant control over remedial resources gains social credit or renewed authority from a relief process while the relevant allocation of responsibility, uncompensated losses, or dependence remains materially unresolved. Its presence cannot be identified solely from a public expression of gratitude, an apology, or a transfer of resources. Investigators would need to establish whose resources were used, who bore the prior losses, which obligations applied, what alternatives the affected persons possessed, and how recognition or authority subsequently changed. Apparent repair might reflect sincere amends, institutional duty, strategic self-presentation, or mixed motives. These interpretations require differentiated evidence.

Consider two constructed variations. In the first, an accountable household member reimburses lost funds from independently controlled resources, accepts responsibility for the wrong, and supports an affected relative's freedom to contest the account or reject reconciliation. That pattern is consistent with responsible repair, even if status or gratitude also changes. In the second, an accountable member reduces another person's access to resources after receiving a sanction, later restores some of those resources, and presents the restoration as an exceptional personal gift. When the same actor can condition future support on gratitude or silence, the claimed generosity may coexist with continuing material dependence. The contrast isolates the relevant causal and normative questions; it is not evidence of the second pattern's prevalence or of the intentions of any actual person.

Repair can accordingly interrupt, preserve, or amplify asymmetric dependence. Independent support, restitution that does not depend on submission, and credible oversight may reduce the need for reliance

Table 2: Selected scholarly inheritances and the proposed questions of sanction incidence. Each extension is a research task, not an established gap in the cited tradition.

Literature	Established analytical contribution	Question pursued here
Symbiotic harms	Relational, nonlinear and heterogeneous consequences of punishment	Conditions under which an accountable actor can affect burden pathways
Monetary sanctions	Unequal severity and family contributions to financial penalties	Separation of target severity, third-party incidence and actor influence
Non-domination and structural responsibility	Power over choices; forward-looking obligations in structural injustice	Allocation of decision capacity and independent contestation across stages
Epistemic injustice	Credibility and interpretive disadvantages	Relation between explanation control and materially divergent incidence
Moral and restorative repair	Acknowledgment, trust, amends and reparative practices	Resource control, credit attribution and historically persistent dependence

on the accountable actor. Conditional relief can create a different trajectory. Neither possibility should be elevated into a universal theory of apology, forgiveness, or aid. Later analysis must evaluate the terms of the remedial action and the capacities it changes, rather than equating the surface visibility of assistance with either authentic justice or manipulation.

Priority and overlap stress test. A particularly demanding baseline is the account of symbiotic harms, which already describes punishment-related effects as relational, mutual, nonlinear, agentic, and heterogeneous [9, 5]. Those characteristics cannot be reserved as novel contributions of the present framework. Equally, Emerson’s power-dependence account already treats power as a feature of a relation rather than as a personal attribute [15]. A combination of these literatures with causal-interference methods may reproduce much of the proposed analysis without adopting GR terminology. The strongest comparator is therefore their competent combination, including a longitudinal account of feasible choice and procedural rights, rather than any single literature portrayed in isolation. Where that comparator tracks third-party burdens, identifies who can actually change the relevant pathway, and explains later contestation as reliably and parsimoniously as GR, the distinctiveness claim fails for that application. Conversely, improvement must be demonstrated through reproducible classifications, better-identified causal questions, or practically consequential detection of missing evidence, with the extra representational cost included in the comparison.

2.5 Conceptual Inheritance and the Proposed GR Extension

The preceding scholarship supplies distinct explanatory baselines. Criminological work describes connected-person harms and the experiences of sanctioned subjects; economic incidence approaches can trace monetary transfers; power-dependence theory identifies capacities arising from asymmetric alternatives; epistemic-injustice research addresses unequal recognition of testimony; and institutional analysis reconstructs legal authority and enforcement. A useful GR account must clarify which additional questions require joint treatment and why existing combinations of these methods would be insufficient. Its proposed object is an historically indexed linkage among sanction execution, heterogeneous burdens, controllable pathways, and changes in feasible contestation.

The proposed GR extension has a precise object: a *historically evolving configuration* in which sanction decisions, practical control over material and procedural pathways, experienced burdens, and subsequent capacities can condition one another. Historical formation matters because the same sanction can propagate differently through two nominally similar households or institutions whose ownership, care obligations, trust, and external safeguards were constituted through different trajectories. Relationality matters because burdens may affect several agents at once and may return through feedback to the actor formally sanctioned. Generativity matters because the consequences of incidence can change the feasible future activities of those agents, including the ability to contest, exit, cooperate, or create alterna-

tive arrangements. The term therefore refers to possible changes in future conditions of action, without treating increased dependence as inherently valuable or destructive in every setting.

The explanatory comparison must use strong established alternatives. A household-budget or monetary-incidence model may trace transfers effectively; power-dependence analysis may explain the relevant decision rights; and process tracing may identify rival mechanisms. A fuller typed-history representation earns its additional complexity only if it produces reproducible distinctions or better-supported explanations that those baselines omit. The present article proposes this evaluation; it does not report a comparative performance result.

Three rival pathways clarify the evidential burden. *Collective scarcity* arises when a loss is unavoidably shared under transparent arrangements and no participant could feasibly choose a materially different distribution. *Institutionally induced pass-through* arises when collection rules or enforcement incentives pressure third parties regardless of a targeted actor's preferences. *Actor-directed externalization* arises when the accountable actor exercises identifiable influence over resources or obligations to place burdens elsewhere. All three can yield an observed decline in third parties' welfare. They differ in available choices, responsible mechanisms, and implications for institutional reform. Cases may also combine them, in which case competing causal contributions should be represented rather than collapsed into a single motive.

The three GR reality levels provide an additional discipline rather than an empirical shortcut. The inquiry suspends claims about *ontological reality* at the level of ultimate being; it investigates *relational reality* through historically constituted patterns capable of generating identifiable consequences; and it examines *manifestation reality* through formal penalty records, reported burdens, narratives, payments, institutional responses, and appearances of repair. A documented transfer of money is a manifestation relevant to relational mechanisms, yet it may fit different causal histories. A declaration of responsibility is likewise observable without proving that its author bore a proportionate share of the costs. The intended analytic achievement is a method for organizing these distinctions without confusing evidence, interpretation, and normative obligation.

The literature establishes the existence of collateral and relational harms, offers accounts of dependence and domination, and supplies distinct analyses of credibility and repair. The proposed extension must therefore earn its place at the intersections: which actors had feasible alternatives at implementation, how those alternatives would have changed heterogeneous burdens, and what consequences followed for independent contestation. Models that can represent unavoidable spillovers, legitimate support, and diminished domination alongside deliberate externalization provide more informative tests than accounts designed around a single anticipated outcome.

3 Responsibility Attribution and the Architecture of Sanctions

For analytical purposes, the architecture of a sanction comprises several distinguishable relations: the occurrence of conduct and its consequences, the attribution of responsibility, the authorization of an institutional or interpersonal response, the execution of that response, and the distribution of experienced burdens. This section develops the conceptual distinctions needed to investigate those relations without presuming that an actor named in a sanction decision is necessarily its principal material bearer. The analysis first separates causal, normative, and legal predicates; next distinguishes successive decisions and implementation stages; then identifies targets, bearers, and possible beneficiaries; and finally examines different types of sanctions and the conditions under which correct responsibility attribution coexists with unequal burden incidence. Its method is conceptual reconstruction, informed by punishment theory and relational-harms scholarship and tested against explicitly constructed cases. The cases establish possible distinctions, without estimating the frequency of intentional externalization.

There is an important limit to the term *sanction*. Criminal punishment, an administrative penalty, a professional disciplinary measure, a household reprimand, an order to compensate, and a preventive restriction differ in purpose, authorization, procedure, and justification. This paper uses *sanction process* as an umbrella term for the analytically relevant decision-and-response sequence, while identifying

the specific normative kind whenever an inference turns on it. The familiar philosophy of legal punishment, developed primarily for state-imposed criminal punishment, already distinguishes a practice's general justification, the proper allocation of punishment, and decisions about severity and mode; Hart's distinctions have become foundational to subsequent work [20, 24]. A relational incidence study adds a separate empirical question concerning the distribution of burdens produced during and after implementation. That question may alter an evaluation of the response, yet it cannot by itself decide whether punishment is justified or how liability should be assigned.

3.1 Conduct, Causation, Responsibility, and Liability

A single adverse event may implicate several forms of responsibility whose identifying conditions differ. *Causal contribution* concerns whether an act, omission, practice, or background condition participates in producing the event of interest. A causal relation calls for an explicit contrast class and mechanism: the relevant question is what would have differed under a specified alternative history or intervention. Causal contribution can be distributed across participants and conditions, and its existence does not itself determine who acted wrongly. In a household, for instance, a loss of savings may result jointly from an individual's unauthorized transaction, a shared bank account, and pre-existing financial vulnerability. The transaction can be central to the explanation of the loss without making every background contributor blameworthy.

Agential and moral responsibility introduce further questions about a person's reasons, capacities, knowledge, duties, available alternatives, and relationship to the affected parties. The standards vary between traditions and cases. An actor's causal involvement, foreseeability of outcomes, a breach of an obligation, and moral blame are therefore separate predicates rather than successive labels for an identical fact. *Legal liability* is another distinct category: legal systems specify the persons, acts, procedures, standards of proof, defenses, and remedies through which liability arises. The present paper neither supplies a universal doctrine of fault nor transfers criteria for criminal guilt into a family or organizational setting. Hart's treatment of legal responsibility and excuses is relevant precisely because punishment's attribution to persons has normative conditions that require independent argument [20].

Accountability identifies a relationship of answerability: an actor may be required to provide reasons, confront evidence, respond to a finding, and accept an authorized consequence. Who can legitimately call another to account, and what procedures are adequate, remain context-sensitive questions. Criminal courts claim powers different from those of a household council, professional association, employer, or voluntary organization. The communicative interpretation of criminal punishment developed by Duff supplies one influential account of the meaning and justification of a public penal response; that theory does not automatically authorize punitive practices in interpersonal relationships [13]. To avoid silently adopting one such normative theory, this analysis will record an accountability relation while treating its legitimacy as an issue requiring separate evidence and evaluation.

A final distinction concerns *forward-looking responsibility for remedy*. Persons who did not commit a particular wrong may nevertheless possess duties or capacities to assist those harmed, maintain a shared institution, or prevent recurrence. Young's social-connection account addresses forward-looking responsibility arising through structural processes; it should not be converted into a rule that persons who share remedial tasks thereby become guilty of another person's conduct [49]. Conversely, the fact that several people reasonably cooperate in repair does not release the original wrongdoer from a duty to make amends where such a duty exists. Distribution of preventive or remedial work and allocation of retrospective blame therefore require distinct records.

These distinctions yield a basic analytical discipline: a study must state whether a particular claim concerns *what caused the event*, *who violated a norm*, *who owes an answer*, *who may be held liable*, or *who bears the response's costs*. The propositions have different evidential demands and may have different truth values. A record that correctly identifies the wrongdoer can coexist with an inaccurate statement about the causes of a loss, an invalid sanction, or a response that materially burdens someone else. The core research case does not require such a mistake in identification. It begins after appropri-

Table 3: Stages in the analytic architecture of sanctioning. The stages specify research questions; their legal and interpersonal forms remain context dependent.

Stage	Principal question	Illustrative observations
Attribution	Whose conduct and responsibility are identified?	Reasons, findings, contested facts, standards used
Authorization	Who may impose which response, on what grounds?	Mandate, decision rights, procedural requirements
Specification	What is the nominal target and the authorized burden?	Order, condition, amount, duration, scope
Execution	How is the specified response carried out?	Payments, restrictions, compliance acts, discretion
Incidence	Which persons actually experience which consequences?	Income, time, care, mobility, losses and relief
Review and repair	Who can contest, correct, mitigate or remedy effects?	Appeals, independent relief, reimbursement, access

ate evidence has established the accountable actor and asks what the implementation of an authorized response actually does to the wider relational configuration.

3.2 Sanction Authorization, Imposition, and Execution

Sanctioning has a temporally ordered and institutionally distributed architecture. Its stages may be analytically separated even where a particular practice merges several of them. The proposed decomposition is an *investigative protocol*, not a claim that every normative order follows the same procedure. Table 3 records the primary questions and observables for each stage. It helps identify the difference between power over the decision to sanction and power over how an already decided sanction affects others.

Authorization concerns the claimed and justified competence of a person or institution to initiate a response. A rule or judgment may authorize a fine, restriction, restitution order, or disciplinary measure, but the existence of a stated rule does not settle whether the rule is valid, procedurally fair, or morally defensible. The present inquiry keeps the descriptive fact that a decision maker *claims* authority separate from its normative validity. This caution is especially important where family power is informal and where the same individual may allege wrongdoing, determine the terms of the response, and control compliance.

Specification or imposition identifies what the response formally requires and from whom. A fine addressed to an individual, an employment suspension imposed on an employee, and the temporary withdrawal of organizational authority can all name a determinate target. Yet their design may leave crucial implementation questions open: which account supplies payment; who covers work previously assigned to the target; whose income or care arrangements are interrupted; who has discretion to reschedule obligations; and who can request review. In a formal legal proceeding, some of these choices are constrained by established rules. In informal settings, they may be negotiated or imposed by members of the very relationship affected by the sanction.

Execution denotes actions through which the decision becomes operative. Payment, payroll withholding, asset collection, removal of privileges, schedule changes, public notification, or assignment of work may be undertaken by different actors. Execution can fail, be delayed, be incomplete, or be carried out in a manner that exceeds what was authorized. Conversely, an actor may comply formally while using control of other resources to compensate for the loss by reducing another person's access. Whether that response is itself wrongful is a further normative question, requiring facts about ownership, entitlements, duties, consent, and alternatives. The point at this stage is to keep formal compliance and burden absorption analytically distinct.

Incidence concerns the experienced incremental consequences associated with the sanction process. It is a distribution over persons, burdens, and time rather than the name printed on the order. The distribution may reflect mechanisms outside the sanctioned actor's control, deliberate decisions by that actor,

institutional collection practices, mutual household commitments, or several such pathways together. *Review and repair* comprise later possibilities for correcting a decision, mitigating third-party losses, making restitution, and contesting the burdens attributed to particular persons. The temporal ordering is sometimes recursive: new evidence may alter responsibility findings after a response has begun, and protective intervention may transform enforcement while it is taking place.

The stages are helpful because control can be distributed unevenly across them. An independent institution could authoritatively identify misconduct and specify a penalty while leaving household budgeting in the hands of the sanctioned person. The person would then have little control over the initial finding yet potentially substantial discretion over subsequent pass-through. Alternatively, a sanctioned individual might control neither the institutional decision nor the downstream effects. Another case may involve a decision maker who controls the initial interpretation and the final distribution, combining epistemic and material asymmetries. These are analytically different configurations. Collapsing them into a single assertion that someone *has power* loses the relevant causal location and the safeguards capable of addressing it.

3.3 Nominal Targets, Burden Bearers, and Beneficiaries

A relational account must identify participants by their operative roles in a particular sanction event. The *nominal target* is the person or entity whose conduct or position is addressed by the formal response. The *immediate payer or performer* supplies money, labor, time, or compliance acts at the point of execution. An *ultimate burden bearer* experiences the relevant deprivation or opportunity cost once shared resources, substitutions, reimbursements, insurance, and other adjustments are considered. An *intermediary* connects stages by collecting funds, assigning work, withholding access, or distributing resources. An *affected third party* bears a consequence while not being the nominal target. A *beneficiary* may receive compensation, restored access, protection, a reputational gain, or another advantage from the outcome. These role categories may overlap in a single agent and may change over time.

Roles are indexed to an event rather than treated as fixed moral identities. A person who pays a fine for a relative may be an immediate payer, an ultimate bearer, a partial bearer later reimbursed, or a voluntary contributor who retains control over the resources donated. The same observed transfer can fit all these histories. Conversely, a sanctioned person who transfers money from a shared account may appear in an administrative record as the payer, while the corresponding deprivation falls on a dependent whose basic expenditures are reduced. The administrative trace identifies an execution act; it cannot, by itself, identify final welfare incidence. The survey of monetary sanctions by Boches and colleagues demonstrates why family contributions and emotional as well as financial burdens deserve explicit attention, though their interview sample does not establish the frequency of strategic pass-through in other settings [5].

Three different kinds of distribution should be retained. *Resource incidence* concerns alterations to claims on money, goods, labor, housing, or organizational capacity. *Capability incidence* concerns changes in an individual's feasible options, including education, work, physical mobility, voice, independent review, and ability to refuse demands. *Recognition incidence* concerns the distribution of credibility, blame, gratitude, status, or presumed moral standing. A transfer may improve resource incidence for a recipient while reducing independence if it creates conditions of dependence. A public acknowledgment may improve recognition while failing to compensate material loss. These observations motivate multi-dimensional records rather than a presumption that every effect admits conversion into a single scalar of suffering.

Incidence evaluation also requires a carefully specified comparison. Calling a loss *sanction-associated* means there is a relevant causal claim about differences between an actual history and an admissible alternative. That alternative should state what is held constant: the underlying wrongdoing, the sanction's absence or different implementation, pre-existing scarcity, and feasible third-party responses. An observed decrease in consumption following a penalty need not equal the penalty's causal effect if the household was already losing income for unrelated reasons. Likewise, replacing

one transfer with another may create apparent losses and gains that cancel at a household aggregate while remaining distributively consequential for individual members. Without an explicit baseline and disaggregated accounting, the observed totals are liable to confuse background deprivation with incremental sanction-related effects.

The *beneficiary* category introduces a further problem for assessment. A harmed person may benefit from reparation; a wider community may benefit from a justified protective restriction; a sanctioned actor may indirectly benefit from others' absorption of the penalty; and a decision maker may gain legitimacy through an apparently fair procedure. Such benefits are of different normative kinds. The presence of a benefit to the sanctioned actor does not establish an intention to obtain it. Nor should a legitimate restoration to a victim be treated as equivalent to an unjustified reputational gain by a controller of remedial resources. Research should record who receives what, through which mechanism, and under which independently established entitlement or obligation. The proposed analysis of repair appropriation in Section 7 rests on these distinctions.

3.4 Sanction Types, Remedial Obligations, and Collateral Effects

Different institutional responses produce different burden pathways and raise different questions of legitimacy. *Punitive responses* typically aim to express censure and impose burdens on an accountable person, although their purposes and justifications remain contested. The philosophy of legal punishment discusses retributive, consequentialist, communicative, mixed, and abolitionist perspectives; the present research does not resolve those debates [24, 13]. *Compensatory and restitutive responses* primarily address an injured party's loss or entitlement. *Restorative responses* concern procedures for acknowledgment, repair, and relationships, with particular obligations to procedural fairness and voluntariness. *Preventive or protective restrictions* seek to reduce specified risks and need not be expressions of culpability. *Administrative and organizational measures* may serve compliance or governance aims that must be assessed on their own terms. Grouping these measures within one incidence framework permits comparisons of who bears their costs; it does not erase their differences.

The distinction between punishment and remedy matters particularly for the household examples motivating this paper. If an accountable person is ordered to restore money wrongfully taken, payment to the injured person is a candidate fulfillment of a remedial obligation. If that person funds the payment by depriving a dependent of unrelated resources, the injured person's entitlement may be met while a different person bears the cost of fulfillment. The resulting burden should be evaluated without assuming that the original remedy was therefore invalid. If an accountable person is punished through a lawful restriction, relatives who lose assistance or shared income may bear serious collateral harms even though they have not been ordered to undergo punishment. These relations may create obligations of mitigation or institutional design, but such obligations depend on normative reasons that cannot be extracted directly from the descriptive fact of spillover.

Collateral effect, *secondary punishment*, and *symbiotic harm* can illuminate different aspects of these histories. Condry and Minson question the adequacy of models that treat family effects as merely incidental, emphasizing the relational, heterogeneous, and mutually conditioning consequences associated with imprisonment [9]. The language of *incidence* in this manuscript is intended as a complementary analytic perspective. It asks how a specified response modifies burdens across roles and how those modifications are generated. It does not presume that all consequential losses share a single causal mechanism, that every burden counts as punishment in the legally relevant sense, or that families can always separate individual resources cleanly.

A comprehensive burden account also faces the risks of *double counting* and *normative overreach*. A parent's lost working hours and the accompanying reduction in income may be two observations of one economic loss; recording both is useful, but summing them without adjustment can exaggerate the aggregate. A child's reduced educational opportunity might be a distinct long-term effect whose monetary value cannot responsibly be inferred from the immediate budget change alone. Emotional distress, reputational injury, and lost opportunities may overlap yet remain meaningfully distinguishable. Shared

household sacrifice may be mutually chosen, tacitly expected, institutionally required, or imposed by threat. Observational similarity supplies no shortcut to classifying consent or wrongful externalization. Study designs need provenance of transfers, time ordering, available alternatives, and rights-sensitive assessments of the affected participants.

This typology establishes a further restriction on cross-context comparison. A criminal fine imposed by a public body, a corporate compliance penalty, and an informal sanction within a family can each have a formally identified target and non-target burdens. Nonetheless, their authorizing powers, protected interests, procedures, standards of review, and potentially legitimate responses differ. General relational analysis can compare the structure of incidence and control across these domains while leaving binding jurisdiction-specific law to dedicated assessment. A cross-domain resemblance in burden propagation does not establish legal equivalence or identical prescriptions for reform.

3.5 Incidence Divergence under Correct Responsibility Attribution

The central explanatory case can now be stated with its necessary restrictions. Suppose an actor's responsibility for a specified wrong has been established under an appropriate evidential and normative standard, and an authorized response designates that actor as its target. *Incidence divergence* occurs when the observed distribution of sanction-associated burdens differs materially from the distribution anticipated by the response's authorized specification or justified purpose. This is a comparative analytical classification. Establishing divergence requires a defensible baseline, specified burden dimensions, an observation window, and evidence about actual payments, substitutions, lost capacities, or other consequences. It does not establish that third-party costs were intended, that the response was unjust, or that the accountable actor escaped every burden.

Consider a constructed case with four household members. Member A is found responsible for misappropriating a sum from a jointly administered fund and is required to repay it from resources under A's personal control. The original fact finding is accurate, and neither family members nor an external reviewer contests A's responsibility. A executes the repayment through an account under A's control. There are, however, two possible implementations. Under *history H1*, A reduces discretionary personal spending or draws on a personal asset; other members retain their prior entitlements and feasible activities, subject to ordinary shared effects. Under *history H2*, A reduces expenditures previously allocated to B's education and C's necessary care, although personal resources or less burdensome alternatives would have been available. A's formal payment is identical in the two histories, yet its incremental distribution of burdens differs. Whether A was entitled to redirect those funds, whether affected members meaningfully agreed, and how feasible the alternatives were remain facts to establish. The constructed contrast shows how correctly identified responsibility and identical nominal compliance can coexist with distinct incidence profiles; it makes no factual accusation about an actual household.

History H2 could take several further forms. A may have been bound by genuinely shared scarcity and lacked practical discretion to protect B and C. A may have chosen among limited options in good faith. A may have anticipated the effects while prioritizing personal welfare, or exercised control specifically to place the loss elsewhere. The eventual pattern of B's or C's deprivation cannot discriminate among these accounts without evidence of alternatives, information, preferences, constraints, and interventions. It is therefore useful to distinguish three inquiry stages: *describing* divergent incidence; *explaining* the mechanism that produced it; and *evaluating* what, if anything, was wrongful or unjustifiable about the conduct or institutional design. The third stage may criticize a response that creates predictable burdens for dependents without presuming that every actor involved acted with malicious intent.

Two counterexamples discipline the inference. First, a sanction may inevitably disrupt household income even though the accountable actor neither controls enforcement nor possesses a feasible way to prevent the shared loss. This can yield serious and possibly unjust third-party harm, yet it does not demonstrate actor-directed externalization. Second, an accountable actor may bear most of the direct cost, while others offer voluntary assistance under conditions of credible refusal and subsequent autonomy. The resulting multi-person payment record is compatible with solidaristic support. These counterexamples belong

inside the same analytic framework; a proposal that classifies each observed third-party contribution as exploitation would conflate incidence with coercion and thereby fail its central research task.

To establish *power-conditioned externalization* more specifically, the analysis will ask whether the accountable actor possessed a feasible range of implementations, had practical control over relevant resources or duties, selected or sustained a particular distribution, and could reasonably foresee the differentiated burdens. Intentional strategic steering requires additional evidence about purpose, which might come from contemporaneous statements, documented sequences, repeated choices despite viable alternatives, or corroborated accounts. A repeated pattern by itself may justify investigation yet remains compatible with other causal explanations. Independent authority, procedural checks, enforceable entitlements, and material exit options may narrow the actor's capacity to steer burdens. Section 4 examines that capacity as a historically constituted feature of asymmetric power rather than inferring it from family status alone.

The framework consequently separates two distinct failures of accountability. An *attribution failure* arises when an inaccurate or unjustified judgment identifies the wrong person or suppresses relevant evidence. An *incidence failure* may arise when a response formally directed at a correctly identified actor imposes burdens on persons whose exposure is unjustified under the relevant normative standards or undermines the response's purpose. Their coincidence is possible, and epistemic control may enable material externalization, but either can occur without the other. The actor may even gain recognition for later alleviating hardship that the implementation of the sanction helped create. Such possibilities motivate the subsequent analyses of interpretation, repair, and historical feedback; they remain hypotheses about mechanisms, not findings concerning individual motives.

The architecture yields an operational sequence: identify the conduct and applicable standards; reconstruct responsibility and authorized response; document implementation; and trace experienced burdens by participant and dimension. Each stage has distinct evidence and potentially distinct decision makers. An incidence inquiry begins where formal records cease to determine the practical distribution of consequences. Section 4 examines who can alter that distribution, while Section 5 describes the channels along which consequences propagate.

4 Asymmetric Relational Power and Control over Sanction Processes

The incidence of a sanction depends partly on relations established before a particular breach, judgment, or enforcement decision. A person may be the acknowledged bearer of responsibility while retaining influence over the resources, obligations, and decisions through which the effects of an authorized sanction are transmitted. This section examines that form of influence as a historically constituted relational capacity. Its objective is to distinguish the possession of power from its exercise in a sanction process, identify the channels through which actors can steer incidence, and specify what would count as evidence of such steering. It proceeds from historically formed dependence to implementation discretion, feasible alternatives, counterweights, and evidence for causal control. It is a conceptual and comparative analysis; the cases are constructed examples, and the proposed distinctions are research hypotheses rather than findings about particular families or organizations.

The perspective taken here builds on established accounts of power and dependence. Emerson's relational account associates power with dependence within an exchange relation and attends to processes through which a relation becomes balanced or reconfigured [15]. Pettit's account of non-domination distinguishes the capacity for arbitrary interference from its visible exercise [30]. Hirschman's framework of exit and voice provides a vocabulary for how available alternatives affect a member's capacity to respond to deterioration in a relationship [22]. None of these accounts, as cited here, establishes the particular sanction-incidence mechanism proposed in this article. Their relevance lies in identifying variables that the analysis of sanction distribution should not leave implicit.

4.1 Historically Constituted Dependencies

Relational asymmetry cannot generally be recovered from a list of current formal entitlements alone. The same two agents may stand in unequal relations of financial provision, care, access to accommodation, organizational rank, social recognition, informational access, and practical freedom to withdraw. Each relation has a history. A household member's reliance on another's income can result from a previous division of labor, interrupted employment, disability-related access needs, caregiving responsibilities, migration, or mutually agreed specialization. An employee's dependence on a supervisor may reflect formal reporting arrangements together with historically accumulated access to references, training, scarce equipment, or future assignments. A description of dependence therefore requires both the current resources at issue and the historical conditions that generated control over them.

Emerson's power-dependence approach is useful because its unit of analysis is a relation rather than a presumed permanent property of one actor [15]. A person with authority in one transaction may rely on another person for indispensable labor, expertise, affection, or legitimacy in a different transaction. Moreover, dependence is sensitive to alternative sources of valued resources and to the cost of accessing them. In a sanction process, those alternatives affect the practical possibility of refusing an imposed redistribution. The existence of an alternative in an abstract sense is insufficient if pursuing it entails a prohibitive loss of housing, employment, essential support, or safe access to care.

For the present analysis, *historically constituted dependence* denotes a relation in which an actor's feasible actions at a given time are materially conditioned by access, permissions, resources, roles, or expectations formed through earlier interactions. The term is descriptive. Dependence can support cooperation, care, learning, and mutual security; it becomes relevant to domination or sanction externalization only when additional conditions concerning control, vulnerability, or interference are established. The same relationship can also embody reciprocal dependencies that restrain unilateral conduct. There is consequently no presumption that a resource-providing parent, caregiver, senior scholar, or institutional officer is exercising illegitimate power merely by occupying that role.

History also matters because relationships preserve memories and expectations about earlier conflicts. Previous episodes of acquiescence, sanction, gratitude, resistance, and successful contestation can condition what participants anticipate when a new penalty is imposed. An actor may refrain from objecting to a burden shift because earlier protests resulted in lost opportunities; another may contest effectively because an earlier review established a credible independent channel. These are candidate mechanisms to be documented, rather than motives inferred from silence. A participant's limited protest could also reflect agreement with a shared-cost arrangement, uncertainty about the facts, or the absence of an objectionable redistribution. Interviews, contemporaneous records, and variation in feasible options would be needed to distinguish the histories.

This historical analysis carries a specifically generative question. Dependence at time t may affect which response to a sanction becomes possible at time $t + 1$, while the selected response can reshape the terms of later dependence. A dependent member who is required to absorb extra work may lose the time needed to obtain independent income; equally, a response may mobilize wider support or prompt a new division of responsibilities that reduces dependence. The direction is conditional. The generative claim concerns changing *conditions for subsequent action*, including capacities for refusal, care, collaboration, and the emergence of new arrangements. More explicit dynamics are reserved for Sections 8 and 9.

4.2 Power over Implementation and Burden Pathways

A sanction can involve different decision-makers at the stages of authorization, specification, collection, enforcement, accommodation, and review. The person held accountable may control some of these stages even when an independent authority determines that the person has committed a wrong. In ordinary legal settings, a fine might be assessed by an external institution, while the penalized person's control over a shared account, the distribution of working hours, or discretionary transfers influences how the household responds. In an organization, a supervisor may personally receive a disciplinary finding yet retain authority over staffing and project budgets. The authorized response and its practical effects therefore

move through different decision structures.

Three kinds of influence should be distinguished. *Procedural influence* concerns access to decisions about whether, when, or how a sanction is enforced, including legitimate appeal, accommodation, and review. *Pathway influence* concerns the resources and duties through which implementation has consequences for others, even where the nominal penalty is fixed. *Interpretive influence* concerns the descriptions through which those consequences are understood, defended, or challenged. The third kind can reinforce the first two, but a burden may be redirected without a false account of the original wrong. Section 6 examines interpretive control separately; the present section concentrates on the first two kinds of influence.

Consider a stipulated household with an adult *A*, another adult *B*, and a dependent *C*. An independent authority imposes a monetary penalty on *A* for conduct correctly attributed to *A*. The adults have agreed on ordinary cost-sharing before the event, but *A* alone can alter the allocation of money held in an account from which rent, food, and transport are paid. After the penalty, *A* may pay directly from personal discretionary savings, revise their own consumption, seek a lawful payment schedule, or reduce a household contribution while preserving personal expenditures. In the final option, the adjustment may place new obligations on *B* and diminish available support for *C*. The nominal sanction continues to name *A*; the practical burden differs according to the route by which compliance is financed. This is a constructed illustration, not an allegation about a particular household or an empirical estimate of behavioral prevalence.

Two further distinctions are crucial. First, a cost borne by a third party need not be the product of an actor's strategic direction. A household may experience hardship following the loss of a wage earner's income despite conscientious efforts by that person to protect dependents. Second, an accountable actor may possess some capacity to influence a path without full authority over the final outcome. Banks, courts, creditors, household agreements, welfare systems, collective bargaining, and decisions of other household members can constrain or redirect the resulting incidence. The correct research object is therefore a set of *conditional capacities over identifiable pathways*, rather than an undifferentiated power to make others pay.

Pettit's distinction between interference and the standing capacity for interference highlights why observed restraint does not exhaust a power relation [30]. A dependent party may anticipate possible changes to support even where the accountable actor does not exercise that option. Such anticipation can influence negotiation or voice. Yet non-domination is a political and normative framework with requirements of its own. The present article draws an analogy to a measurable capacity to change a sanction pathway; it does not infer that every asymmetric capacity meets Pettit's criteria for domination, nor that every distributional inequality constitutes arbitrary interference.

4.3 Control of Resources, Obligations, and Available Alternatives

The practical control of sanction burden pathways can be disaggregated by the object being controlled. Economic control concerns income streams, savings, budgets, credit access, shared assets, and discretion over expenditure. Control of labor and care concerns the assignment of unpaid work, paid shifts, accompaniment, child care, elder care, and administrative obligations. Temporal control concerns who can defer obligations, choose the timing of transfers, or require others to meet short-notice demands. Control of access concerns housing, mobility, documentation, educational opportunities, organizational systems, and social participation. These channels frequently interact: a reduced household contribution can cause an additional work shift, which reduces time available for study or independent job search.

The interactions require a distinction between a *burden* and the financial or administrative transaction through which it appears. Paying a fine and absorbing a loss of discretionary income are not identical experiences. A caregiver who makes up for a reduced budget by increasing unpaid labor may bear time and health-related burdens that are absent from the formal payment record. A dependent person may face increased risk of exclusion despite paying no money. Conversely, an actor may transfer cash to a shared account while absorbing substantial opportunity costs personally. Incidence thus requires

Table 4: Objects of relational control and evidence relevant to sanction burden pathways. Each row describes candidate observations rather than a sufficient condition for strategic externalization.

Control object	Candidate change after a sanction	Evidence and comparison required
Financial resources	Changes in shared contributions, protected spending, or debt servicing	Account authorization, transaction history, prior budget rules, feasible alternatives
Care and labor	New unpaid work, additional shifts, reduced access to support	Work and care records, prior duties, decision rights, impacts on time
Timing and access	Deferred obligations, restricted transport, altered schedules	Notice and timing, control over scheduling, realistic substitutes
Voice and review	Changed permissions to object or appeal, constrained access to records	Procedural rules, use of independent channels, documented responses

heterogeneous dimensions that should not be collapsed into monetary equivalents without a defended valuation procedure. Section 5 develops the channels of propagation in detail.

Control over *obligations* differs from control over existing resources. Some actors can assign new work, redefine expectations, demand availability, or condition continuing support on specified conduct. Authority to allocate work may be authorized by an institution or voluntarily accepted within a family. What matters for a possible sanction externalization mechanism is the connection between a particular sanction event and a subsequent change in obligations: which duties changed, who could make the change, what alternatives were available, and how the experienced costs compare with a plausible baseline. Without such a comparison, the ordinary burdens of communal life can easily be mistaken for penal costs.

For example, suppose a group of adults has long agreed to pool household resources, including the costs of unanticipated individual setbacks. A contribution from a shared account toward *A*'s penalty could be the foreseeable consequence of an arrangement that participants freely endorse and can renegotiate. A superficially identical transfer could also follow *A*'s unilateral threat to withdraw essential support from *B* unless *B* accepts the expense. The observed accounting entry does not identify the causal or normative character of either history. Consent, credible alternatives, the surrounding history, and the possibility of objection help differentiate them. The latter history presents stronger evidence of directed redistribution if an intervention on *A*'s threatened withdrawal would plausibly have changed *B*'s payment decision.

Hirschman's distinction between exit and voice clarifies one part of the alternatives problem [22]. A person who cannot credibly leave a relationship or change suppliers of a needed resource may have a restricted position from which to contest its terms. Exit, however, is neither costless nor invariably appropriate: members may value the relationship, owe legitimate care, or face obligations that make a sudden departure undesirable. Effective voice may also be available through a mediator, representative, supervisor, tribunal, or third-party support. Existing literature applies the framework to family power and bargaining under changes in individual income, while identifying multiple mechanisms rather than a uniform response [22]. Our use is narrower: feasible voice and exit conditions help explain variation in the ability to decline or renegotiate a sanction-related redistribution.

A useful boundary is supplied by coercive-control scholarship. Stark's account describes patterns of control that can restrict liberty and autonomy through cumulative practices, including practices that do not involve physical assault [37]. That scholarship cannot simply be equated with sanction burden incidence: an imposed cost may occur without a coercive-control pattern, and a coercive-control pattern may operate without any formal sanction event. The intersection becomes analytically significant where controls over access, mobility, income, or household arrangements are mobilized in response to a sanction, and where the controlled parties' available alternatives can be documented. The proposed mechanism requires this linkage, rather than a generalized inference from the presence of unequal power.

Table 4 organizes the observations needed to evaluate several kinds of power without treating them

as interchangeable. It also illustrates an identification problem: a change after a sanction may have been caused by the sanction, by another contemporaneous shock, by an earlier agreement, or by an actor's independent choice. The temporal sequence supplies a research lead; the causal interpretation requires further process evidence and appropriate comparison.

4.4 Counterweights, Third-Party Oversight, and Contestability

Counterweights matter because the effects of relational power depend on the wider network in which a decision is taken. Joint control of accounts, independent earnings, social insurance, access to professional advice, collective organization, transparent records, and external review can alter the feasibility of unilateral burden reallocation. Such arrangements vary widely in purpose and desirability. Some prevent exploitation, some facilitate mutual insurance, and some may themselves create costs, secrecy, or unequal access. A study of sanction incidence must examine how each counterweight operates in context rather than rank institutions solely by their formal existence.

One design question concerns the separation of powers at different stages of sanctioning. If the accountable actor is also the exclusive implementer of the response, then a formal judgment may remain sensitive to that person's discretion over payment schedules, staffing, or shared resources. Independent authorization of a penalty helps clarify fault but does not by itself settle downstream incidence. Effective oversight can extend to the paths through which implementation draws upon others' resources. Where independent auditing is unavailable, documentary transparency or a credible opportunity for the affected parties to contest an allocation may serve some of the same functions. The degree to which such measures are legitimate, legally available, or practically effective remains domain specific.

Republican accounts of non-domination have particular relevance to the distinction between benevolent discretion and secured freedom. Pettit argues that the mere possibility of arbitrary interference can matter even without an observed act of interference; constraints and checks are therefore central to the ideal [30]. For sanction incidence, the parallel is that a formally punished actor's willingness to spare dependents may leave them vulnerable if the capacity to redirect costs remains unilateral and unconstrained. That possibility supplies a reason to examine formal entitlements, independent alternatives, and contestability alongside the immediate generosity or restraint of a decision-maker. It is not a claim that every instance of discretionary aid or budget management is dominating.

Contestability should be assessed in both informational and material terms. Someone may nominally possess a right to complain yet lack information about the relevant accounts, time to prepare an objection, transport to a review forum, or protection from retaliation. Conversely, a participant who has access to documents, representation, and effective safeguards may challenge an unfair transfer even within a strongly hierarchical organization. The question is whether a credible objection can change the course of a decision under the observed conditions. This requires attention to the costs of voice as well as the procedural availability of a hearing.

Third parties can also complicate rather than simply remedy the mechanism. A mediator may depend on the accountable actor for referrals; a supervisor's manager may prioritize institutional reputation; family members may disagree in good faith about fair sharing of costs. Networks can redistribute power in competing directions. Accordingly, independent review should not be assumed from an organizational label. Relevant questions include who appoints the reviewer, who controls access to evidence, whether the reviewer can revise an allocation, whether an affected party can refuse participation, and whether a decision is enforceable. These questions are exploratory design criteria, not a universal regulatory prescription.

The contrast between two constructed implementation histories can illustrate the point. In one history, *A* can change household contributions unilaterally, while *B* lacks access to the accounts and cannot challenge the decision without losing essential accommodation. In another, the same penalty and income distribution coexist with agreed expense rules, shared records, protected necessities, and a mediation route usable by *B*. The second system may still impose substantial unavoidable hardship on *B* and *C*, since safeguards cannot eliminate scarcity. It nevertheless changes the available mechanisms for

deliberate externalization and correction. A comparison should therefore consider both realized burdens and the structure of possible responses.

4.5 Distinguishing Discretion, Power, and Causal Control

Discretion is an actor's permitted range of choice within a role or relationship. *Relational power* concerns the ability to condition another actor's feasible choices, including through reliance on resources or the credible threat of withdrawing them. *Causal control over incidence* is the narrower capacity for a specified action or intervention to make a difference to the distribution of sanction-related burdens under a stated comparison. An actor can possess discretion with little effective power because other parties hold vetoes. An actor can exert power through informal expectations without any formal authorization. An actor can affect burden incidence by accident despite lacking either institutional discretion or an intention to externalize costs. These distinctions prevent the inference that holding a senior position suffices to establish a mechanism of sanction avoidance.

Definition 4.1 (Sanction-pathway steering capacity). Within an identified sanction process and an explicitly bounded set of feasible alternatives, an actor has *sanction-pathway steering capacity* when an intervention available to that actor could change the allocation, timing, or composition of sanction-related burdens among affected parties, other relevant conditions being held fixed as far as the case permits. The definition concerns a capacity; its exercise, awareness, intention, permissibility, and normative consequences require separate evidence.

Definition 4.1 intentionally leaves the burden dimensions heterogeneous and does not assert that a unique scalar quantity of power exists. Its counterfactual requirement should be interpreted locally. The relevant alternatives may be limited by financial necessity, prior agreements, law, institutional mandates, safety, or obligations to third parties. An intervention that appears available to an outsider may be infeasible in the actual case. Likewise, two feasible choices may both transmit harm but differ in whom they affect or in their longer-term consequences. The analytical object is the specific, evidenced difference between these paths.

At least four possible causal histories should be differentiated before characterizing a change in incidence. A *background-spillover history* features a loss whose distribution follows pre-existing dependencies without relevant steering by the accountable actor. An *accommodative history* features a negotiated reallocation, possibly for reasons of care, that affected parties understand and accept under sufficiently meaningful conditions. A *directed-externalization history* features an actor choosing or enforcing a pathway that places additional burdens on others despite feasible less-externalizing alternatives; whether this is blameworthy requires further normative assessment. An *institutionally compelled history* features obligations imposed by a third-party rule or external scarcity, leaving the nominally accountable actor limited control. These histories may yield similar observed payments and should not be merged merely because the final distribution is unequal.

Evidence of steering may include the timing of a decision relative to the sanction, an actor's authority over the particular resources moved, contemporaneous communications, alternative allocations that were available, and the response when another party objected. Evidence of intentional avoidance demands more: reasons expressed by the actor, credible patterns across episodes, or other observations capable of distinguishing strategic choice from necessity, confusion, shared commitments, or legitimate prioritization. A causal finding may therefore support the assertion that an actor's decision increased another person's burden without supporting the stronger assertion that the actor sought to evade responsibility. The difference should remain visible throughout the manuscript.

Feasible choice and effective intervention. For an operational steering claim, the relevant question is whether a particular intervention can be brought about by the candidate actor under the constraints that actually govern the episode. The scope of such an intervention must be recorded: the actor's legal or delegated decision rights, access to money or work assignments, the ability of others to veto or refuse, the

enforcement mechanism, and the credible consequences of resistance. An unexercised right to propose a budget is weaker evidence than a demonstrated capacity to change a withdrawal rule; an apparent unilateral choice may in fact be jointly determined by a dependent's consent, institutional procedures, or a creditor. Available choices also have relevant versions, such as reallocating payments immediately, delaying payments while protecting essential spending, or obtaining independent financial relief. These versions need not yield the same incidence. The analyst should therefore specify an *action-to-regime link*, stating what the actor can actually choose, what responses are assumed from others, and which complete allocation regime would result. Where multiple responses remain plausible, the analyst should preserve that multiplicity instead of treating an actor's preferred arrangement as a guaranteed outcome.

Adversarial identification check. The strongest objection to treating a changed allocation as evidence of actor-level steering is that choice may be joint, anticipated, or institutionally fixed. A recorded request by actor *a* can precede an outcome that depended on another actor's independent veto; observing the request and outcome does not imply that *a* could have produced the same result unilaterally. A defensible case record should distinguish the actor's authorized action, the response policy of others, and the induced implementation regime, allowing an explicitly set-valued result where responses are uncertain. The claim should be weakened to influence conditional on other actors' cooperation when unilateral feasibility is unestablished. Conversely, the absence of a documented request should not be interpreted as the absence of latent capacity. Independent authority records, refusals that were honored or overridden, and variation in actual control rights can provide evidence without inferring it solely from status or observed hardship.

A formal authorization and effective steering capacity can accordingly diverge in both directions. Someone may be formally authorized but practically constrained by a third party's veto, while someone without office may influence costs through credible control of housing, information, or informal care. Demonstrating effective steering requires an evidentially grounded intervention contrast, not a generic ranking of social status. The corresponding counterfactual burdens remain unobserved in ordinary cases, so even a documented choice generally establishes the chosen regime more securely than it establishes the size of the effect that a different choice would have caused. Section 9 represents this problem explicitly.

There is also a selection problem. Households and institutions with strong dependency relations may experience more severe collateral burdens even when accountable actors lack any special incentive to redirect sanctions. Financial fragility, unequal access to assets, disability-related care needs, and pre-existing divisions of labor can jointly affect exposure and response. A comparison of burden incidence between powerful and less powerful actors, without adjustment for relevant differences or attention to temporal mechanisms, would not identify steering capacity. Nor would a correlation between a person's financial control and others' hardship establish intentional externalization. The later research design must attend to baseline inequalities, third-party decisions, and plausible alternative histories.

A further caution concerns the word *escape*. A person may formally incur a fine, reputational loss, restriction, or deprivation even while some costs pass to others. Such a case may involve partial attenuation of the person's burden, rather than complete avoidance. The material incidence of a sanction can be non-zero for several parties at once, and increases in one person's burdens need not equal decreases in another's burdens. Some pathways create additional losses, such as disrupted care or reduced future opportunities, instead of merely transferring a fixed quantity. Claims of sanction avoidance should therefore specify the dimension of burden, the temporal window, the counterfactual alternative, and whether the accountable party's own burden was meaningfully reduced.

The resulting concept of sanction-pathway steering capacity concerns feasible, causally relevant interventions available to an actor under a specified relational history. Formal office, dependency, and observed burdens are indicators to investigate, each insufficient on its own to establish exercised steering. Section 5 traces the corresponding material and nonmaterial channels; the historical analysis in Section 8 asks whether specific interventions changed later opportunities for independent action and contestation.

5 Channels and Temporal Patterns of Sanction Burden Propagation

The distribution of sanction-related burdens can be examined as a process unfolding through several kinds of relations, alongside the formal assignment of a loss to a designated person. A formal decision may specify the actor against whom a penalty is directed while leaving the practical allocation of financial costs, care obligations, time, participation, and opportunities to be determined by surrounding arrangements. The analytical task of this section is to describe the channels through which a sanction and the responses it occasions can alter the circumstances of other people, to identify the timing and interaction of those changes, and to distinguish their occurrence from an actor's deliberate redirection of costs. The inquiry is conceptual and comparative. Evidence from studies of punishment and families grounds selected examples of propagation, whereas extensions to households, organizations, and other relational settings are stated as hypotheses or constructed cases.

The discussion develops five related objects: material transfers; care, labor, and foregone opportunities; reputational, emotional, and participatory changes; multistep and intergenerational histories; and the evidence needed to discriminate incidental spillovers from directed externalization. *Propagation* here refers to a sequence in which a sanction-related event contributes, through identifiable relational mechanisms, to a later burden or change in feasible action for one or more actors. It does not presume that the original sanction was justified, that all later losses are morally attributable to its nominal target, or that every effect is a deliberate strategy. Condry and Minson's account of *symbiotic harms* is a particularly relevant intellectual predecessor: it emphasizes the relational and heterogeneous character of harms associated with imprisonment and family life [9]. The proposed generative-relational extension asks how these pathways are affected by historically constituted capacities to influence their course, and how propagation may subsequently alter those capacities.

5.1 Monetary and Material Resource Channels

Monetary penalties provide a tractable starting point because their nominal amount can be recorded independently of the identity and circumstances of the person who supplies the money. A fine addressed to one adult may be paid from that adult's separate assets, from pooled household income, with help from a relative, through borrowing, or through the liquidation of shared resources. These arrangements can lead to different actual distributions even when the sanctioning institution records the same payment by the same formal debtor. The distinction between a payment record and a burden history is therefore indispensable: the payer named in a transaction, the provider of the resources, and the person who forgoes an alternative use of those resources need not coincide.

Research on monetary sanctions documents this discrepancy in a bounded empirical setting. Boches and colleagues describe financial strain, emotional distress, and interpersonal conflict among relatives of people with legal debts, including instances in which family members contribute to payments [5]. Horowitz and colleagues, drawing on seventy semistructured interviews with people owing court-imposed monetary sanctions in Minnesota, analyze transfers across generations, including assistance from parents and difficult trade-offs reported by debtors supporting children [23]. These studies establish that the family consequences of financial penalties merit direct examination. Their findings neither establish that most debtors purposefully externalize sanctions nor justify a universal inference about the behavior of economically or socially powerful households. The empirical settings, samples, and reported experiences must remain specified when these sources are used.

For analytical purposes, monetary propagation should be recorded along at least four distinct dimensions. The first is the *source of funds*: personal assets, joint assets, income of another person, credit, or support supplied by a public or private institution. The second is the *foregone use*: consumption, housing security, education, care, savings, debt reduction, or productive investment. The third is the *decision authority*: who controlled the relevant funds, could authorize a transfer, or could decline an expenditure. The fourth is the *distribution of residual risk*: who bears subsequent debt service, liquidity shortages, or exposure to another shock. A record that contains only the amount transferred is insufficient for identifying incidence across these dimensions.

Material burdens need not equal the face value of the sanction. A payment of a given amount may carry an additional transaction cost or opportunity cost; a sudden obligation can also lead to losses that unfold after the original payment. Conversely, a transfer may be accompanied by insurance, reimbursement, external assistance, or support that mitigates the experienced loss. This variation is consistent with the analysis by Bing, Pettit, and Slavinski of how fines and fees can create incomparable burdens under economic inequality [4]. The explanatory problem is not solved by assigning every monetary unit to a single person. Joint consumption, shared liabilities, and different preferences can make incidence partly collective, and the evidence may support only a bounded range of plausible allocations.

A constructed household comparison illustrates the importance of control. Suppose an authorized monetary penalty is imposed on a resource-controlling adult, *A*. Under one feasible arrangement, *A* pays from funds under their discretionary control while preserving another member's access to necessary expenses. Under a second arrangement, *A* uses an established decision power to reduce that member's essential budget while protecting *A*'s own discretionary expenditures. Both scenarios may generate the same proof of institutional payment. The second contains a candidate *steering event*: an observable choice among feasible allocations that differentially shifts burdens. Whether the choice was coercive, justified by genuine inability to pay, or motivated by strategic evasion requires further evidence about alternatives, prior agreements, foreseeable effects, and the participants' ability to contest the decision.

Resource propagation also includes transfers whose immediate purpose is protective. A relative may freely pay a penalty to prevent a debtor's eviction, preserve employment, or reduce an anticipated escalation. Such assistance can be an exercise of care without exploitation. Nevertheless, a protective transfer can leave the helper with reduced reserves and new dependence. The eventual incidence may therefore be harmful without rendering the helper's initial decision irrational or the debtor's acceptance culpable. Studying these cases requires the analyst to record both the enabling function of assistance and the losses it may generate, with room for mixed effects within the same relationship.

5.2 Care, Labour, and Opportunity-Cost Channels

Sanction-related burdens can propagate through activities that are rarely recorded as payments. When an accountable person's available time, income, mobility, reputation, or institutional permissions change, others may assume domestic work, caregiving, transportation, scheduling, administrative tasks, or employment-related obligations. Their contribution can maintain a household or organization while imposing costs in fatigue, lost earnings, reduced study time, curtailed social participation, or delayed plans. These are incidence questions even when no exchange of money occurs and no new formal duty is recognized.

A care relationship has a double character that matters for causal explanation. It can buffer the direct target against a penalty's consequences, and it can expose a caregiver to indirect burdens. Condry and Minson's treatment of connected and mutually shaped harms provides a conceptual basis for preserving this duality [9]. Comfort's ethnographic account of women whose intimate relations brought them into sustained contact with prison institutions offers a more situated example: institutional procedures and intimate obligations may enter into each other, affecting the partners who remain outside the prison [8]. Neither source licenses the inference that every form of unpaid care constitutes sanction transfer. The specific causal pathway and whether any allocation was voluntary remain independent questions.

Consider a constructed organization in which a disciplinary measure temporarily removes a manager from certain responsibilities. A team member may undertake additional supervisory labor to keep a service available. If the workload is distributed through an independently authorized plan with protected compensation and time limits, the additional labor may be a justified response to operational necessity. If the sanctioned manager retains control over assignment decisions and uses that power to allocate unpaid or career-damaging work to a dependent subordinate, the same formal disciplinary measure creates a different incidence history. The institutional decision, the operational adjustment, and the subordinate's burden are separate events; the evidence of intentional steering, if any, lies in the actor's control over the adjustment and in available alternatives.

Time should be treated as a scarce and differently situated resource. A required appointment, repeated administrative visit, or reallocation of care may occupy a fixed number of hours while imposing markedly unequal practical losses. Someone with flexible paid leave may absorb the demand with limited disruption; another person may miss hourly wages or incur substitute-care expenses. The analyst should therefore distinguish time expended from opportunities displaced, as well as the actor who initiated the schedule from the actor who had to adapt. That distinction prevents a misleading conversion of every burden into an undifferentiated count of hours.

Some labor effects are induced through anticipation rather than an explicit command. A household member may undertake additional work because they expect that a sanction will reduce shared resources. Such anticipatory adjustment could be reasonable planning, a response to prior coercion, or a decision shaped by misinformation. A record of extra work does not, by itself, identify the initiating mechanism. Evidence should include the sequence of communications, prior resource arrangements, feasible alternatives, and the meaning attributed to those alternatives by the participant at the relevant time.

Care and labor channels also interact with the next period's resource channel. Lost earning time can reduce savings; diminished reserves can narrow exit opportunities; narrowed alternatives can increase dependence on the person who continues to control the household budget. This possible sequence is central to the paper's generative-relational research question. At this stage, however, it remains a *candidate feedback pathway*. Its actual direction depends on such features as public support, outside employment, reciprocal care, independent decision-making, and recovery over time. Section 8 develops the conditions under which these changes may reproduce or counteract power asymmetry.

5.3 Reputational, Emotional, and Participation Channels

Sanctions can alter how people are regarded, the information shared about them, and their practical ability to take part in relationships or institutions. These channels require analysis distinct from financial and labor transfers because their effects often depend on interpretation, visibility, and access to social settings. A family member may experience scrutiny because of a relative's sanction; a colleague may lose access to a project after a manager's suspension; a dependent person may withdraw from discussion because participation appears likely to trigger further conflict. The immediate event may be identifiable, while the mechanism producing the resulting reputational or participatory burden remains contested.

The study of prison-related family experiences has long recognized that institutional punishment can reach people outside the formal target. Comfort describes how the procedures and institutional setting of imprisonment became part of the lives and identities of women visiting incarcerated partners [8]. Horowitz and colleagues report anger, strain, and other emotional difficulties in accounts of intergenerational financial support for legal debts [23]. These findings support investigating nonmonetary dimensions of incidence, while leaving open the extent to which the experiences derive from the sanction itself, earlier inequality, responses by third parties, or the interaction of several causes.

Reputational burdens are mediated by particular audiences. A formal finding against one actor might be understood by some observers as an individual matter and by others as grounds for distrust of associates, relatives, or coworkers. Accordingly, an empirical account should identify *who* revised a judgment, *what* information was available, *which* opportunities changed, and *when* those changes occurred. A lost invitation, denied assignment, or breakdown of trust may be evidence of a propagation pathway, but the observer's reasons cannot be established solely from the temporal proximity of the loss to the sanction.

An emotional consequence is also a genuine possible burden without being reducible to a fungible quantity. Anxiety, humiliation, anger, fear, obligation, and relief can coexist; one person may view assistance as meaningful solidarity and also experience strain. Such variation should be preserved rather than forcing every relational response into a single negative index. The research ethics of studying these effects also requires care: a theorist cannot infer that disagreement, silence, continued loyalty, or expressed gratitude is proof of coercion. Participants' accounts matter, as do the conditions under which they can safely express disagreement.

Participation is especially relevant where costs accumulate by limiting access to processes that could change the sanction's effects. A person burdened with extra work may miss meetings in which resources are allocated. A relative exposed to stigma may cease using an available assistance programme. A junior staff member who anticipates retaliation may avoid reporting an allocation decision. These pathways can reduce effective *voice* and the accessibility of alternatives, concepts with antecedents in Hirschman's treatment of exit and voice [22]. The associated power effects are conditional: the loss of participation must be connected to a meaningful decision or opportunity, and the availability of independent procedures must be investigated.

Analytically, this channel creates a distinction between *manifested accountability* and *experienced incidence*. A public apology, recorded fine, or formal reprimand may make accountability visible while the resulting burdens continue to affect others. Visibility does not establish either the fairness or the effectiveness of the underlying allocation. Conversely, a sanction can prompt changes in institutional practice that improve other participants' opportunities. The empirical object is the situated history of access, recognition, and participation, not a presumption that every reputational change is a disguised extension of punishment. Section 6 will examine separately how power over testimony, interpretation, and records may condition such histories.

5.4 Multistep, Intertemporal, and Intergenerational Propagation

A sanction-related burden may arise in the same transaction as a penalty, but it may also appear through several intervening relations and decisions. The intervening sequence matters because it determines which causal claims can plausibly be defended. For example, a payment may reduce household liquidity; a liquidity shortage may produce delayed rent or a deferred educational expense; the subsequent loss of mobility or opportunity may reshape later employment and reliance on relatives. Each link requires its own mechanism and temporal ordering. A researcher should avoid treating the entire resulting history as a direct, deterministic effect of the original sanction.

The intergenerational dimension is more than the repetition of a cost across persons of different ages. Horowitz and colleagues explicitly analyze court-imposed debts as *stigmatized intergenerational exchange*, finding reported strains both among adults receiving help from parents and among people supporting their own minor children [23]. Drawing on 70 semi-structured interviews with people carrying court-imposed monetary debt in Minnesota, the study identifies an important set of narrated consequences in a particular US setting. It does not estimate how much a sanction changes the life chances of future generations or establish an invariant propagation rule. The present paper uses it to motivate questions about transfers, exposure, timing, and relational dependence, not to claim that generational disadvantage has been causally demonstrated in every case.

Intertemporal incidence has several forms. A *front-loaded* burden occurs immediately, such as a payment, missed shift, or emergency care arrangement. A *deferred* burden occurs after a delay, for example through loan repayment or lost training. A *recurrent* burden involves repeated administrative, care, or financial demands. A *contingent* burden arises only when a later condition is met, such as a second shock striking depleted reserves. These temporal forms can coexist. The classification is intended to make observable histories more precise, rather than to imply a particular mathematical law.

The relation between propagation and time should not be represented as the circulation of a conserved quantity. A direct fine can be paid once while its opportunity costs recur; the same disrupted schedule can affect several people in different ways; one supportive intervention can eliminate a cost that otherwise would have developed. Burdens may be amplified, mitigated, transformed, or partly offset across dimensions. Double counting is therefore a serious risk. An empirical analysis that sums the principal amount of a fine, the financial transfer used to pay it, and the resulting loss of household savings as if these were three independent money losses would exaggerate incidence. An appropriate record distinguishes *flows*, *stocks*, *foregone alternatives*, and *nonmonetary consequences*.

Table 5 identifies candidate paths with their different units and inferential requirements. Its entries are prompts for evidence collection, not assertions that each channel operates in any particular case.

Table 5: Candidate channels of sanction-related burden propagation and their identification requirements.

Channel	Potential observed change	Evidence needed for incidence and steering
Material	Payment source, depleted reserve, foregone purchase, new liability	Funding origin, alternative uses, allocative authority, feasible payment options
Care and labor	Additional tasks, displaced paid work, missed care, altered schedule	Prior task allocation, hours and substitutions, assignment authority, ability to refuse
Reputation and participation	Changed standing, exclusion, reduced access to decision processes	Audience, dated decisions, exposure mechanism, alternative explanations
Temporal and generational	Deferred debt, repeated costs, transfers between generations	Ordered histories, intervening mechanisms, baseline constraints, later mitigating events

Multiple channels can create feedback, yet their connection must be demonstrated rather than inferred from co-occurrence. A monetary shortage may require more labor, extra labor may constrain participation, and constrained participation may reduce the ability to contest the subsequent allocation of resources. An observation of these three outcomes in the same household is suggestive, while a stronger explanation would compare their timing, trace the decisions linking them, and consider whether an independent shock could produce the same sequence. The relevant explanatory target is a *history of mediated changes in feasible actions*, with identifiable actors and institutional conditions at each step.

Historicity also allows propagation to be interrupted. Savings, trusted external support, alternative employment, independent review, collective bargaining, or a transparent agreement can prevent initial burdens from becoming long-term dependence. Counterexamples of this kind are valuable: they clarify which relational conditions are necessary for a proposed mechanism and prevent the theory from reducing every cooperative response to a hidden cycle of power. In GRT terms, attention to future possibilities requires recording both constraints and newly generated alternatives, including those that make later contestation easier.

5.5 Incidental Spillover, Anticipated Pass-Through, and Directed Externalization

The presence of burdens among people other than the named sanction target is a descriptive observation. The explanation of how they arose, the identification of an actor who could alter them, and the evaluation of that actor's conduct are further inquiries. A careful account should therefore discriminate at least three analytically different mechanisms. *Incidental spillover* describes burdens that arise through interdependence without a demonstrated effort by the accountable actor to direct them. *Anticipated pass-through* describes adjustments taken in expectation of a sanction or its consequences, whether by the target, another person, or an institution. *Directed externalization* describes a case in which a relevant actor exercises control over a feasible burden pathway so as to relocate or intensify burdens borne by others. Directed externalization can be established as an action pattern without establishing the actor's ultimate psychological motives or every legal implication.

These categories organize causes rather than morally ranking persons. An unpaid carer who takes over duties from a sanctioned relative may have made an informed and voluntary decision; a parent who covers a penalty may have chosen a protective transfer. In a different case, a resource-controlling actor may impose a substitute budget that imposes losses on a dependent while preserving personal discretionary expenditure. Evidence of redirected incidence would require details about decision authority, feasible alternatives, expected burden differences, and the actual result. Evidence of coercion would additionally require analysis of threats, restrictions, penalties for refusal, or comparable conditions. Evidence of intent would require its own warranted inference rather than being read directly from the outcome.

Anticipation produces an important identification difficulty. An accountable person may never issue an explicit instruction, while another household member makes a preemptive sacrifice because a prior

history has made adverse reallocation predictable. Such a history can indicate the operation of durable power; it can also reflect shared planning or inaccurate expectations. Distinguishing these possibilities requires contemporaneous testimony, past allocation records where available, meaningful opportunities to dissent, and attention to whether feared repercussions were credible. A retrospective statement alone may be informative but may leave several causal histories consistent with the evidence.

For this paper, evidence of *sanction-pathway steering* requires a specified decision point at which an actor could plausibly alter the distribution of burdens. The analyst then compares the observed course to relevant feasible alternatives, taking account of external constraints, the sanction's purpose, the distribution of legitimate obligations, and any counterweights. The causal question is how the actor's decision changed incidence relative to those alternatives. The normative question is whether that allocation and the means through which it was produced were justified. The epistemic question is whether the historical records and testimony support either conclusion. These questions can be related, but their evidential thresholds need not coincide.

A further distinction concerns *avoidance*. An accountable actor may reduce their direct financial payment while incurring a major reputational, emotional, or practical consequence. A second actor may pay an authorized fine on the accountable actor's behalf while the accountable actor voluntarily assumes a compensating duty. In neither case does a single payment record establish net avoidance. A defensible claim should identify the burden dimension in which avoidance is proposed, the period of observation, the relevant counterfactual, and how changes affecting the actor and other participants are evaluated. The theory must also leave room for the possibility that costs arise for many persons without being commensurable in a common scalar metric.

In the constructed family case motivating this study, the most significant observation would therefore be the combination of a correctly attributed wrong, a formal sanction, control over subsequent allocative decisions, and a history showing that consequential burdens fell on persons who lacked comparable control. If the responsible actor selected an allocation that produced this outcome from among materially different feasible alternatives, that sequence can support a hypothesis of sanction externalization. Further evidence would be required to claim strategic intent, illegitimate coercion, or reproduction of dominance. The same four observations in an organization might have different explanations because formal job duties, safety obligations, collective agreements, and independent authorization can govern substitution.

The five channels provide a burden inventory, not a common scale on which losses can automatically be added. Their combinations can transform a sanction's consequences as resources, obligations, and access to opportunities change. Identifying a propagation path requires a link between the sanction episode and the observed alteration; identifying directed externalization additionally requires a feasible decision point and comparative evidence. Section 6 examines how participants can document and challenge these paths when access to records and interpretations is unequal.

6 Epistemic Power and Interpretive Closure in Accountability Relations

An inquiry into the incidence of sanctions requires an account of how participants come to know, describe, dispute, and record the burdens that a sanction produces. A household or institution may assign responsibility correctly while retaining a highly unequal distribution of authority to interpret the resulting costs. Conversely, a disputed attribution of wrongdoing can influence both the original sanction decision and the later willingness of other participants to bear its effects. This section specifies the epistemic conditions of relational accountability, identifies interpretive mechanisms that may accompany burden propagation, and distinguishes those mechanisms from the material allocation of burdens itself. It addresses access to evidence and testimony, competing accounts of responsibility, the interpretation of distributed costs, and possible couplings between epistemic and material control. The analysis draws selectively on established work on epistemic injustice, silencing, gaslighting, and blame reversal, while treating the proposed coupling to sanction incidence as a separate, conditional theoretical extension.

Miranda Fricker distinguishes testimonial injustice, involving a prejudicial credibility deficit assigned to a speaker, from hermeneutical injustice, involving unfair disadvantage arising from gaps in

shared resources for interpreting social experience [17]. Kristie Dotson examines testimonial silencing in relation to hearers' failures to meet speakers' vulnerabilities in linguistic exchange [12]. Such work establishes that participation in knowledge practices can itself be structured unequally. Paige Sweet's sociological analysis of gaslighting further shows why the manipulation of perceived reality in intimate relations must be situated within social inequalities and institutional arrangements rather than reduced to an isolated conversational technique [38]. These contributions illuminate epistemic conditions relevant to the proposed model. The present section's additional question is whether particular configurations of interpretive authority help an actor maintain control of sanction-related burden pathways even when the identity of the accountable actor is already known.

6.1 Evidentiary Access and Testimonial Standing

The distribution of evidentiary access determines which features of sanction incidence can be reconstructed from a relationship's records. A formal sanction often generates visible documents: an administrative judgment, a payment receipt, an organizational report, or a written apology. Subsequent incidence may be recorded elsewhere, if at all, in personal accounts, informal transfers, omitted care, rearranged work, lost opportunities, or changes in the capacity to refuse later demands. Whoever controls the official record may thus possess a different form of influence from whoever controls household spending or workload assignments. Their powers can coincide, but there is no conceptual reason to presume identity. A credible analysis begins by identifying the record producers, holders, interpreters, and audiences for each relevant event.

Evidentiary access refers here to the practical opportunities available to an actor to obtain, preserve, introduce, examine, and challenge information relevant to a disputed responsibility or burden. These opportunities depend on permissions, capacities, technologies, privacy requirements, resources, and the risk of retaliation. *Testimonial standing* refers to the extent to which an actor's account is solicited, heard, considered credible, and allowed to affect an authoritative assessment. The two conditions are related: documents may be widely available while an affected person's interpretation receives little weight; a trusted witness may have standing but lack access to financial or institutional records. The paper accordingly treats documentary possession, procedural participation, and interpersonal credibility as distinct dimensions.

Fricker's analysis concerns wrongs done to people in their capacity as knowers, and her central conception of testimonial injustice explicitly concerns prejudice in credibility assessment [17]. Consequently, unequal credibility and unequal access should not automatically be labelled testimonial injustice. A supervisor may restrict access to a confidential personnel file under a legitimate and independently reviewable rule. A parent may be unable to provide a complete financial explanation because the records are genuinely missing. A claimant may present a mistaken reconstruction despite possessing a legitimate interest in being heard. The normative diagnosis depends on the source of the restriction, its justification, its effects, and available safeguards. An analyst should distinguish a factual absence of records, an unequal ability to produce records, prejudicial discounting of testimony, and the active obstruction of an evidentiary challenge.

Dotson's account draws attention to the vulnerability of speakers whose testimony can fail to receive the uptake required for communication [12]. In a long-standing relationship, anticipated non-uptake may alter what a participant attempts to report. A dependent family member may keep a private record of additional duties but withhold it because previous objections led to dismissal or practical repercussions. The resulting public silence is compatible with several histories: fear of repercussions, a learned expectation of non-uptake, a voluntary preference for privacy, or uncertainty about the facts. The observation should initially be coded without deciding among these explanations. A single absence of complaint cannot decide among them. Research would require a temporally ordered inquiry into available forums, previous responses to objection, perceived risks, and the individual's own account, elicited under conditions of meaningful safety and consent.

The distinction matters for sanction burdens because their observation is commonly mediated by the

very relations through which they propagate. If the administrator of a household budget is also the only recognized interpreter of that budget, a transfer may appear in a shared account without revealing whose discretionary resources declined. If a manager controls both substitute staffing arrangements and the report explaining them, additional work can appear as an ordinary team contribution despite a sanction-related cause. Neither example establishes manipulation without further evidence. Each identifies a site where independent sources, temporal comparisons, and meaningful contestability can improve causal identification.

6.2 Responsibility Misattribution and Narrative Reconstruction

Narrative reconstruction can change the perceived author of an action, the significance of the action, or the obligations believed to follow from it. Responsibility displacement is the special case in which responsibility for a wrong is attributed to someone other than the actor who should, under the relevant evidential and normative standards, bear it. It can operate before a sanction is authorized, during adjudication, or retrospectively when participants interpret the sanctioned event. It may also occur without any corresponding externalization of material costs: a dependent might be blamed publicly even while the responsible actor personally pays the penalty. The analytical relation between misattribution and incidence is therefore contingent. In particular, a dispute about testimony, disagreement over responsibility, or an asymmetry in record access is not independently sufficient to classify a real participant as deceptive or abusive. Such classifications require their own evidence, definitions, and context-specific normative criteria.

Research on the denial, attack, and reversal of victim and offender roles (DARVO) provides a useful, specifically delimited comparison. Harsey and Freyd's two vignette experiments examined whether exposure to DARVO-involving accounts changed observers' evaluations of responsibility, credibility, and abusiveness. Their reported findings show shifts in attribution under the studied vignette conditions, and some mitigating effects from education about the tactic [19]. These results concern observer judgments in particular experimental settings. They do not establish that every allegation of blame shifting is an instance of DARVO, nor that DARVO necessarily changes actual sanction payments, care assignments, or longer-run dependence. The present analysis therefore borrows the distinction between an accountability event and its narrative treatment without asserting empirical equivalence between DARVO and the mechanisms of burden propagation.

Narrative reconstruction can occur through several separable operations. One operation concerns *event description*, such as portraying an unauthorized decision as the outcome of shared deliberation. A second concerns *causal attribution*, as when a subsequent hardship is described as caused only by an external penalty while omitting a discretionary internal allocation. A third concerns *responsibility classification*, such as treating a person who carried out an instruction as solely responsible for the decision to issue it. A fourth concerns *normative characterization*, in which the same resulting sacrifice is framed as a reasonable collective duty, a required expression of loyalty, or an unfair imposition. The operations can be combined, and a particular statement may perform more than one. Analytic precision requires specifying which proposition is disputed, what evidence could settle it, and what kind of authority is being claimed for the interpretation.

A constructed family example illustrates the difference. Suppose an accountable adult admits to an error that generates a financial sanction. A second household member subsequently pays part of the amount from independently controlled savings. An accurate narrative may recognize both the admission and the second member's voluntary contribution. A distorted narrative may instead allege that the second member caused the original error, or may omit the adult's role in deciding which savings would be used. These are different departures from an adequate account: the first changes responsibility attribution, whereas the second concerns decision authority and incidence. A third possibility is that the adult's proposed payment arrangement was reasonable under mutually accepted obligations. Deciding among these accounts requires more than identifying which party occupies the more powerful social position.

An additional risk concerns the epistemic circularity of evaluation. If the person whose conduct is

under review determines which testimony is permissible and how credibility is assessed, the procedure may become incapable of independently testing an alternative account. Yet formal recusal alone does not guarantee an adequate inquiry: a nominally independent listener can remain informationally dependent on a single record holder. Conversely, relational authority can coexist with accountable procedures where evidence can be challenged and decisions reviewed. The concept of *interpretive closure*, developed below, names this practical concentration of interpretive control; it should not be read as a presumption that a particular authorized decision is false.

6.3 Correct Responsibility Recognition under Closed Interpretation

The analytically decisive case for the present paper is one in which responsibility attribution remains correct. An actor's wrongdoing may be acknowledged by everyone concerned, its formal sanction may be public, and its causal history may be largely undisputed. Nevertheless, the distribution of resulting burdens can be decided within a relationship whose interpretive rules and allocation decisions are controlled asymmetrically. This possibility establishes a logical separation between accuracy about responsibility and effective accountability for sanction incidence. It does not, by itself, establish how frequently such cases occur.

For the purposes of this manuscript, *interpretive closure* denotes a configuration in which one actor or a narrow coalition possesses a durable practical advantage in determining which descriptions of responsibility, burden incidence, and repair are treated as authoritative, while materially affected participants lack effective and reasonably safe opportunities to contest those descriptions. Closure is a matter of degree and domain. It may concern financial justification but leave interpersonal acknowledgment open; it may be strong inside a family but weak before an independent tribunal; or it may be limited to a particular stage of an organizational procedure. An explanation of closure therefore needs to identify the relevant audience and decision point, rather than treating a relation as uniformly epistemically sealed.

Consider a stylized case in which an adult accepts responsibility for a sanctionable decision and pays an assessed penalty from a shared account. The adult subsequently chooses to restore the account by cancelling another member's planned expenditure while preserving their own discretionary allocation. All parties may continue to agree about who committed the original wrong. The disputed issue concerns whose interests were burdened, what alternatives were feasible, and who had authority to choose among them. If the adult also dictates that the cancellation counts as "the family's necessary sacrifice" and prevents consideration of other allocations, interpretive closure may accompany material steering. The member's practical loss remains possible even when everyone privately knows that the adult caused the original sanction.

The constructed scenario admits several different counter-histories. Under one, the sacrifice follows an unavoidable external shortfall and the household has exhausted feasible alternatives; interpretive agreement may be justified. Under another, members deliberate with comparable voice and voluntarily endorse the allocation, including its opportunity costs. Under a third, a formally unequal relation is offset by independent review or an effective exit option. These cases show why the mere conjunction of authority and third-party burden is insufficient to identify an epistemic wrong or an abusive sanction practice. The proposed analysis needs evidence concerning options, expressed and unexpressed dissent, procedural protection, counterfactual allocations, and the consistency of the stated reasons with actual decisions.

Interpretive closure has a distinct analytic effect even where it does not change the original wrong's attribution. It can impede the discovery of secondary losses, prevent recalculation of equitable contributions, narrow the perceived set of legitimate objections, and obstruct later corrections. In this sense, correct recognition of the first event may coexist with limited recognition of the *incidence history*. The distinction is especially useful for longitudinal inquiry: participants might agree at time t about a sanction's addressee, while later disputes concern how apparently necessary adjustments at time $t + 1$ were selected and represented. Independent acknowledgment of responsibility at the first date does not settle the fairness of a decision made at the second.

The proposed concept also has limits. Fricker’s hermeneutical injustice concerns structural gaps or biases in shared interpretive resources, while the present definition of closure may refer to restricted evidence, control of decision venues, strategic reinterpretation, or legitimate confidentiality; the two constructs are neither synonymous nor coextensive [17]. A relation may have ample vocabulary for describing a harm while lacking an accessible institution willing to hear it. Another may have fair procedures but unresolved conceptual disagreement about the nature of the loss. Both require analysis, but they present different remedies and different evidence requirements. The present paper consequently reserves the stronger normative language of epistemic injustice for cases where the relevant justificatory conditions are established.

6.4 Reinterpretation of Sanction Burdens and Legitimacy

Descriptions of sanction incidence carry normative implications because they help determine which costs are treated as obligations, gifts, solidaristic contributions, or unjustified impositions. The same recorded transfer may be presented as voluntary support, ordinary family expenditure, payment on behalf of the accountable actor, or compensation for an independent service. Each description can be accurate in some histories. An analyst should inquire into authorization, understanding, reasonable alternatives, the continuity of consent, and the effect of the arrangement on participants who did not authorize it. Interpretive disagreement is especially salient where customary family duties, institutional codes, or tacit practices are invoked without specifying their scope.

A burden can be normalized without denying either the wrongdoing or the sanction. The authority-bearing actor may concede the original error and insist that the resulting additional work is simply what a loyal subordinate, child, or colleague ought to perform. Alternatively, a group may genuinely accept collective provision as a legitimate response to a member’s difficulty. What distinguishes a potentially wrongful normalization from an ordinary solidaristic practice is not the language of duty alone. Relevant questions include who could negotiate the allocation; whose alternatives were recognized; whether the imposed costs were foreseeable, proportionate, and revisable; and whether refusal triggered independently unjustifiable consequences. These conditions are normative assessment questions and may receive different answers across institutions and jurisdictions.

The relation between interpretation and material action is bidirectional. A shared account describing a new caregiving duty as voluntary may reduce perceived entitlement to relief and thereby sustain the duty. At the same time, the existence of a long-standing unpaid care arrangement may make an audience more receptive to the description that such additional duties are ordinary. A formal apology or a symbolic fine may reinforce public confidence that accountability has occurred while leaving the actual labor or resource losses unexamined. A documented obligation may also improve bargaining: once an external authority records which actor caused a cost, members may be able to resist an unfair internal allocation. The mechanisms are therefore potentially amplifying, mitigating, or neutral, depending on the relational history and institutional context.

Sweet’s research locates gaslighting within power-laden intimate relations and examines the mobilization of social stereotypes and institutional inequality in undermining victims’ experienced reality [38]. Abramson’s earlier philosophical discussion contributes an account of gaslighting as a distinctive interpersonal phenomenon [1]. Their contributions warrant attention when an actor persistently undermines another person’s capacity to trust their account of what occurred. They do not warrant describing every authoritative interpretation, family disagreement, or failure to recognize indirect costs as gaslighting. The proposed incidence analysis instead records the narrower mechanism under investigation and treats any clinical, legal, or moral characterization as a separate inference requiring appropriate grounds.

The specific figure of the “rescuer” adds a further temporal complication, reserved for detailed treatment in Section 7. An actor may both influence the production or distribution of hardship and later control resources offered to mitigate it. If only the remedial intervention is recorded or publicly interpreted, the actor may receive moral credit while earlier allocative choices remain invisible. Equally, a person may offer sincere and costly assistance in a crisis they did not cause, or may genuinely repair a

Table 6: Epistemic interfaces in the interpretation of sanction burdens and corresponding evidential questions.

Interface	Possible incidence-related effect	Relevant evidence or counterweight
Record access	Obscured transfers, substitutions, or delayed costs	Source provenance, access permissions, independently retained records
Testimonial standing	Discounted accounts of material or practical losses	Hearing rules, response histories, credibility criteria, safe channels for objection
Causal description	Attribution of externalized costs to allegedly unavoidable conditions	Alternative allocation options, dated decisions, contemporaneous reasons
Normative classification	Recasting imposed burdens as duties, gifts, or voluntary support	Consent, duty scope, bargaining conditions, ability to revise participation
Remedial narration	Moral credit for assistance while prior allocation is omitted	Chronology of harm and repair, opportunity costs, independent review

harm for which they accepted responsibility. To distinguish these histories, the analyst must reconstruct the sequence connecting the wrong, sanction, burden decisions, subsequent losses, and any remedial action. Whether moral recognition is warranted depends on that reconstruction and a justified standard of repair.

6.5 Material and Epistemic Mechanism Couplings

Material and epistemic power may interact through several interfaces while remaining analytically distinct. A material decision assigns a cost, changes access to resources, or alters opportunities; an epistemic decision selects, validates, excludes, or frames information about that change. In some instances the same actor controls both interfaces. In others, an employer sets a schedule while a separate review body determines what counts as adequate evidence; a family member distributes resources while another maintains an independent record; or an institutional sanction authority monitors whether internal cost-shifting has occurred. The distribution of these roles is an empirical property of the relational system, not a feature to assume from its formal hierarchy.

Table 6 offers a compact audit of five candidate interfaces. Its analytical purpose is to indicate what a claim about interpretive authority would require beyond an assertion that a powerful actor controls the narrative. The table does not constitute a measurement instrument or classify named persons.

A preliminary coupling hypothesis can now be specified in ordinary causal terms. Where an accountable actor has consequential discretion over sanction burden pathways, durable control over the authoritative account of those pathways may reduce the chances that affected people secure correction. If uncorrected allocations erode independent resources or the practical ability to dissent, subsequent dependence may enhance the actor's capacity to direct later allocations and authoritative interpretations. This is a conditional possibility with distinguishable component mechanisms: discretionary choice, a material incidence change, an epistemic restriction, reduced correction, and a later change in options. None follows from the others as a matter of definition. Their occurrence and temporal ordering must be investigated independently.

The hypothesis also admits a converse. Independent record access can expose an uneven distribution even where participants initially accept the original sanction decision. Credible testimonial standing can bring unseen care burdens into review. Meaningful opportunities to contest explanations may lead to compensating transfers, restorative commitments, or new constraints on unilateral resource allocation. Such changes could weaken the feedback mechanism without reversing the original sanction. These possible effects suggest that *epistemic contestability* is relevant not only to truthful recognition of wrongdoing but also to the governance of subsequent material incidence. The institutional means of sustaining

that contestability can vary; confidentiality, privacy, safety, and legitimate procedural boundaries remain important constraints.

For empirical research, a causal claim about coupling should specify the unit of observation, the relevant decision makers, the accessible evidence, the order of events, and a plausible alternative history. Repeated interviews, dated financial or labor records, independently elicited accounts, and documented changes in access to review may help distinguish the candidate paths. Care is needed because participants can give inconsistent testimony for ordinary reasons, and official records can be incomplete without purposeful suppression. Triangulation should improve evidential interpretation without subjecting vulnerable contributors to demands for impossible proof, compelled disclosure, or retaliation risks. The epistemic and ethical requirements of study design will be addressed in Section 13.

Interpretive power enters the analysis through evidence access, credibility assessments, authoritative narratives, and opportunities to contest documented incidence. Its exercise may affect what a participant can demonstrate even when responsibility attribution is accurate. Evidence of narrative control and evidence of material redistribution must nonetheless be assessed separately. Section 7 considers a further decision interface: the terms on which losses are repaired and remedial assistance is recognized.

7 Remedial Resource Control and the Appropriation of Repair

Remedial decisions constitute an additional allocation interface within a sanction-related episode. People who experienced losses may require restitution, access to care, correction of institutional records, protection from further interference, or opportunities to rebuild independent lives. The practical provision of such remedies occurs through relations whose decision rights, resources, and credibility structures may already be asymmetric. This section examines the possibility that an actor associated with wrongdoing, or an actor responsible for distributing its consequences, retains substantial control over the relief subsequently offered to affected people. Its objective is to distinguish fulfillment of an obligation from discretionary assistance, identify the conditions under which relief can alter dependence and moral recognition, and describe the historical consequences of the resulting arrangements. The analysis is conceptual, comparative, and provisionally causal; illustrative households and organizations are constructed examples, not observations of particular persons.

The relevant sequence has several distinguishable parts: the recognition of a loss, the establishment of a duty or discretionary commitment, the availability and control of remedial resources, the practical delivery of relief, the allocation of public or interpersonal credit, and subsequent changes in relational capacities. Each part can differ in its agents and justifications. The term *appropriation of repair* will designate a candidate configuration in which an actor's consequential control over remedial pathways permits that actor to capture recognition or authority associated with relief while leaving materially significant obligations, imposed costs, or dependencies unresolved. The term names a candidate research object rather than a diagnosis inferred from an apology, gratitude, publicity, or unequal relations alone. A positive account of assistance can be factually accurate even when the provider has previously been held responsible for a different act; claims of appropriation require evidence of the relevant source, entitlement, decision pathway, and authority effects. The section's five parts examine remedial duties, selective relief, attribution of remedial credit, restorative alternatives, and longitudinal repair incidence. These distinctions connect epistemic contestation in Section 6 with the historical feedback studied in Section 8.

7.1 Duties of Repair and Practical Control over Remedies

Responsibility for a wrong, a liability to undergo a sanction, and an obligation to contribute to repair have different justificatory sources. A fine may be a punitive response authorized by public rules; a payment to a harmed person may discharge a duty of compensation; a change in organizational procedure may address the recurrence of preventable harm; and material support offered by relatives may reflect care without imposing an obligation on the recipient to forgive. Even when these responses concern the same

event, their purposes, intended beneficiaries, and procedures should be recorded separately. The architecture in Section 3 therefore extends to remediation through questions of entitlement, control, delivery, and actual benefit, while retaining the distinction between compensatory obligations and punishment.

Margaret Urban Walker's account of moral repair gives this distinction an important philosophical foundation. In her discussion of making amends, acceptance of responsibility for wrongdoing provides the relevant basis for intentionally reparative action; relieving suffering without that acknowledgment may be generous, charitable, compassionate, or dutiful, yet differs in moral meaning from making amends for a wrong [46]. The present analysis retains Walker's intellectual provenance and narrower normative object. It adds a separate incidence question: even where an accountable actor acknowledges the wrong, whose resources accomplish the relief, who is entitled to determine its terms, and what happens to those whose earlier losses made the remedy necessary? The answers may reveal significant discrepancies without invalidating the genuine moral value of an apology or act of assistance.

A *remedial duty* is understood here as a contextually justified obligation to undertake or support a specified response to a wrong or attributable harm. Such an obligation may derive from a legal order, a valid institutional rule, a promise, a moral relationship, or another defensible normative source; it cannot be inferred solely from a finding that somebody suffered. The substance of the duty must be assessed within the applicable context. *Practical control over a remedy* refers to the capacity to influence access, timing, terms, quality, continuation, or allocation of a remedial good or service. An obligated actor and a controlling actor may coincide, although remedial provision can also involve guardians, insurers, public agencies, employers, friends, or independent fiduciaries. The same resource may be financed by one participant, administered by another, and delivered through a third. Distinguishing these roles is especially important when a nominal wrongdoer presents institutionally funded compensation, a collective contribution, or the return of previously withheld resources as a personal contribution.

For a particular remedial event, the minimal incidence inquiry should identify the original loss, the applicable obligation if one exists, the resource source, the decision maker, the conditions attached to delivery, the persons who receive relief, the participants who bear its financing and administrative costs, and any loss that persists. These variables may be incompletely observed. They also resist reduction to one numerical "amount of repair": an acknowledgment, protected time, debt cancellation, access to independent records, and accommodation of a disability may each matter in different dimensions. A payment can restore a recorded balance without restoring trust or lost opportunities; a sincere apology can matter while leaving material losses unaddressed. These are possible partial accomplishments rather than a reason to treat every remedial effort as empty.

Consider a constructed household where an adult whose decisions contributed to a financial loss is formally held responsible. One arrangement requires repayment from resources over which the adult has personal discretion and grants the affected relative independent access to the returned amount. Another arrangement authorizes the same adult to distribute a jointly funded emergency grant while keeping control over the recipient's later spending. Both arrangements may display an identical amount on a receipt. In the second, the source of funds, entitlement to the funds, and continuing control of their use require separate examination. A record of the final transfer establishes delivery, but it does not by itself establish that the adult discharged a personally borne duty, relinquished influence over the recipient, or earned additional moral authority. Conversely, use of joint funds can be legitimate under mutually authorized arrangements or legal requirements. A finding of wrongful appropriation needs an independently justified baseline and evidence about feasible alternatives.

The distinction between *assistance* and *amends* should be used carefully when a third party intervenes. A relative or community organization may provide urgent support because a person needs safety or food, irrespective of who caused the initial harm. Such assistance need not await an agreement about responsibility. Later investigation may determine whether its costs ought to be reimbursed or whether additional duties arise. Young's social-connection approach is relevant where many agents share forward-looking responsibilities for changing unjust structures, although it is not equivalent to fault-based compensation by a particular wrongdoer [49]. A relational framework should preserve both opportunities for cooperative relief and distinctions among the grounds on which different parties have reasons to act.

7.2 Selective Relief, Conditional Support, and Renewed Dependency

Relief often arrives through a sequence of decisions. An actor may determine which losses qualify, what documentary evidence is required, which expenses receive priority, when payments are made, whether another person's participation is mandatory, and how future support is reviewed. *Selective relief* denotes a distribution that provides some available remedies or reaches some beneficiaries while leaving others excluded or delayed. Selectivity is ubiquitous in circumstances of scarce resources and competing duties; it becomes analytically concerning where the actor responsible for a loss can use discretionary selection to shield their own interests or to make affected people dependent upon continued personal approval. The mechanism is therefore located in control over a meaningful margin of allocation, not in the mere fact that remediation is incomplete.

Two different kinds of condition must be distinguished. *Functional conditions* may be necessary to verify eligibility, protect safety, prevent duplicate compensation, or coordinate scarce services. Their validity depends on authorization, reasonableness, proportionality, and appropriate review. *Relationally extractive conditions*, by contrast, are requirements whose practical effect is to secure compliance, silence, gratitude, withdrawal of a justified complaint, or personal allegiance unrelated to the legitimate purpose of relief. An identical administrative form may operate differently across contexts because of who can refuse it, who can challenge a denial, and whether alternative channels remain accessible. The hypothesis is that the second kind can convert remedial provision into a further exercise of power under particular asymmetries; it does not follow that every requirement attached to assistance is coercive.

The question of genuine choice is consequently more demanding than observation of an affirmative response. A person may sign an agreement because the available alternative is loss of housing, care, employment, or contact with dependent relatives. Consent can remain meaningful in constrained settings, but its quality depends on the nature of the constraints and the adequacy of the available alternatives. Emerson's power-dependence formulation helps characterize the relevance of alternatives within exchange relations, while Hirschman's distinctions among exit, voice, and loyalty draw attention to the different routes by which participants respond to deteriorating arrangements [15, 22]. Neither work directly demonstrates coercion in any particular remedial transaction. The proposed application is to investigate the conditions under which the recipient has an effective option to decline a proposed term without losing the underlying remedy to which they are entitled.

A constructed workplace case illustrates the difference. An employee reports a substantiated organizational wrong and becomes eligible for an independently defined benefit. In one history, a designated office makes support available through clear criteria, while the employee can pursue an appeal and can accept care without endorsing the employer's narrative. In another, the supervisor implicated in the wrong retains unilateral discretion over reimbursement and makes continued aid contingent on a public statement praising that supervisor or a promise to abandon a separate protected concern. The second history would raise questions about retaliatory control and the legitimate limits of settlement, but a legal conclusion requires the applicable law, actual agreements, and verified facts. Conceptually, the pertinent mechanism is the conversion of a previously owed or independently justified good into a conditional advantage controlled by an interested party.

Relief can also foster dependence without an improper condition or deliberate strategy. A person receiving intensive assistance during illness or unemployment may remain materially dependent because relevant resources are scarce. An affected relative may sincerely prefer help from a family member over an impersonal institution. Conversely, a formally unconditional grant can sustain dependence if it is periodically renewable at the sole discretion of an actor who controls essential resources. The analysis must therefore distinguish observable attachment of conditions, background dependence, anticipated risk of withdrawal, credible opportunities for review, and reported motives. Subjective fear can be socially important evidence, but causal attribution requires more than an investigator's inference from unequal status.

A further temporal mechanism arises when apparent relief is reversible. The supplying actor can promise reimbursement, pay an installment, delay the balance, or repeatedly reopen eligibility. Even where each installment is beneficial, the arrangement can maintain a continuing requirement to seek

approval. Whether this constitutes justified staged implementation or undue leverage depends on resources, implementation constraints, transparent commitments, and the recipient's alternatives. To study it, records should distinguish promise dates, delivery dates, unilateral changes, independent appeal attempts, the recipient's access to emergency substitutes, and subsequent changes in their labor or living arrangements. A longitudinal reconstruction can then test whether control over relief contributed to a change in dependence, rather than assuming a simple sequence of assistance followed by gratitude.

7.3 Remedial Credit Narratives and Moral Recognition

A remedial event has both distributive and interpretive consequences. Payments, public apologies, offers of protection, and assistance in navigating institutions can reduce real hardship. They can also become occasions on which observers assign moral credit. *Remedial-credit asymmetry* is a provisional description of a potentially measurable discrepancy between an actor's publicly attributed contribution to relief and an independently reconstructed account of that actor's causal contribution, obligations, control over remedial resources, and the contributions of others. This characterization should be tested against the available history; it is not inferred from the use of sympathetic language or the fact that a recipient expresses gratitude. Positive recognition can be deserved, disproportionate, contested, or simultaneously justified in some respects and misleading in others.

The analytical object is *credit attribution* as a relational process. A beneficiary may express thanks for an immediate act that genuinely mattered, an observer may infer a broader claim about the benefactor's character, and an organization may use the event to communicate accountability. These are three distinct interpretations. The first does not entail the second, and a public account need not faithfully reproduce the causal history of relief. Recognition may further become consequential when it affects who is believed, who receives institutional privileges, whose decisions are reviewed, and who can allocate future resources. The section therefore treats moral standing as an empirically investigable relation among audiences, practices, and institutions, without claiming that it is a transferable commodity or that gratitude always stabilizes domination.

A constructed sequence clarifies the possibility of appropriated recognition. An accountable adult retains access to resources after a sanction, reduces the spending available to a dependent household member, and later restores part of the reduction under a promise of continuing support. Family observers may see the final restorative transfer while lacking access to the earlier budget decision. Their recognition of the adult as exceptionally generous may coexist with an ongoing loss for the dependent member and with the adult's continuing control of resources. The account would remain incomplete even if every observer correctly identified the adult's initial wrongdoing. Material incidence, remedial incidence, the information presented to different observers, and later authority are separate elements of the historical explanation. A credible inquiry would require records of the decisions, resource ownership, feasible alternatives, the independent standing of the support, and any conditions imposed after it. This constructed sequence is not a disguised account of private household events; a favorable public account would not alone establish intentional misrepresentation or undeserved credit.

The combination of material and interpretive control is contingent. A person might receive praise for undertaking considerable restitution that directly reduces their own discretionary resources and for supporting an independent remedy. That praise can coexist with unresolved criticism and can be normatively appropriate. Another actor might inaccurately receive credit for funds provided by the community. A third might supply meaningful help while retaining a misguided belief that the original harm was justified. A fourth could strategically stage relief to neutralize challenge. These examples have different causal and moral structures, even if observers employ a similar language of rescue. The proposed category of appropriation should be restricted to cases where evidence shows a consequential mismatch between the credit or renewed authority claimed and the actor's actual contribution, obligation, and control over the remedial process.

Epistemic power, addressed in Section 6, helps explain why such a mismatch may persist. Actors with privileged access to financial records, speaking platforms, or institutional decision makers can influ-

ence which episodes are visible and which are treated as irrelevant. The broader literature on testimonial credibility and structural gaslighting offers conceptual resources for understanding particular forms of interpretive disadvantage [17, 38]. The present mechanism is nevertheless narrower in one respect and broader in another. It can arise without anyone denying the original wrong, and it can involve a genuine relief action whose public interpretation overlooks the source of its resources or the costs left with others. The existence of uneven publicity alone neither demonstrates gaslighting nor proves strategic intent.

The identity of the audience matters. A household observer, an employer, a public agency, and the direct recipient may have different information, evaluative standards, and incentives. A beneficiary's refusal to express public gratitude might be a legitimate exercise of autonomy, a sign of unresolved harm, or a response to a different cultural understanding of assistance; the analyst should not turn it into evidence of ingratitude or wrongdoing. Likewise, an observer may welcome emergency intervention while reserving judgment about the intervener's accountability. Separating *recognition of an effective act* from *authorization of future discretionary control* prevents a simple compliment from being treated as a measure of political or familial legitimacy.

A plausible feedback hypothesis follows. Where relief is repeatedly presented as the actor's freely bestowed favor, and where recipients remain dependent on that actor's discretionary allocation of essential goods, public moral credit may contribute to greater deference or reduced scrutiny. The intervening steps need explicit evidence: repeated presentations, reception by relevant audiences, changes in decision rights or practical oversight, and altered opportunities to contest a later allocation. Other histories are equally compatible with visible praise. Public recognition may facilitate fundraising by an independent service, encourage appropriate restitution, or strengthen democratic oversight when it rewards transparent disclosure. A general theory of power reproduction must accommodate these opposite outcomes.

7.4 Restorative Practices and Benign Alternative Explanations

Remedial arrangements should be compared with practices that increase the affected person's practical agency. Restorative justice is an established and internally diverse field, concerned in relevant settings with participatory responses to wrongdoing, affected persons, responsibilities, and processes of repair. Braithwaite's work on reintegration is one important antecedent; evaluation by Shapland, Robinson, and Sorsby concerns particular restorative justice programmes rather than a guarantee that every restorative procedure improves outcomes [6, 34]. The present paper does not rename those theories as generative relational findings. It uses them to test whether conditions that constrain remedial discretion also help prevent inappropriate incidence shifting and the capture of moral recognition.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's *Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes*, second edition, describes rights and safeguards relevant to informed and voluntary participation, including attention to power imbalances, safety, and the ability to decline or withdraw from restorative processes [44]. These are programme-design considerations from a particular international guidance text, rather than a universally binding code for domestic households, employment relationships, or every institutional procedure. Their relevance to this paper lies in the difference between the appearance of agreement and a process in which participants possess a practicable choice. Transplanting restorative language to a family or workplace with entrenched resource control requires context-specific attention to these safeguards.

A meaningful comparison should evaluate at least five aspects of a proposed remedy: whether the participant can access an independent account of the underlying obligation; whether material support required for safety is separable from a demand for reconciliation; whether the participant can refuse a narrative or public performance without forfeiting an entitlement; whether a neutral or independently accountable party can review disputed allocations; and whether the arrangement can be revised when new consequences emerge. These aspects need not be maximized in every situation. Emergency assistance may precede a complete inquiry, and a fair adjudicative process may require disclosure or procedural conditions. The objective is to preserve distinctions among emergency protection, adjudication, negotiated settlement, and reconciliation, whose procedural requirements and permissible trade-offs can differ.

An organizational comparator is provided by the literature on *institutional betrayal* and *institutional*

courage, concepts developed in research associated with Jennifer Freyd. In a cross-sectional self-report study of workers who reported workplace sexual harassment, Smidt, Adams-Clark, and Freyd examined institutional betrayal and institutional courage in relation to health and organizational outcomes [35]. Their reported associations, including potentially buffering patterns, are relevant to the importance of responsive and transparent institutional conduct. They do not establish the causal effect of remedial independence on sanction incidence, and the findings should not be generalized to families, every workplace, or all kinds of wrongdoing. The proposed contribution here is limited: the concepts provide an existing comparator for asking whether a response prioritizes affected persons' needs and accountable procedures rather than the self-presentation of the party controlling relief.

Benign rival explanations deserve full weight. A financially constrained household may pool resources because its members have transparently agreed to support one another. A guardian may allocate a remedy on behalf of a child or someone who needs representation, subject to safeguards rather than a pretense of unconstrained independence. A person may express gratitude to an accountable adult for an action that was genuinely costly, even while the adult remains subject to criticism. A temporary eligibility condition may protect recipients from fraud or unsafe service delivery. In each case, the existence of dependence, discretion, or positive recognition is insufficient to establish appropriation. Evidence must identify a problematic exercise of control, an unjustified burden or condition, and an ensuing claim to credit or authority that cannot be explained adequately by the legitimate purpose and actual contribution of the assistance.

Mixed motives are similarly ordinary. A responsible actor may seek reconciliation, avoid litigation, protect personal status, and experience genuine concern for the affected person at the same time. A causal account should prioritize available decisions, constraints, material consequences, and the means by which authority changes; claims about inaccessible mental states require independent justification. Some cases may display material externalization without a discrepancy in remedial credit, or favorable publicity without measurable power reproduction. Both outcomes would limit the stronger version of the proposed hypothesis. Alternative causal histories should therefore be retained as live explanations rather than described merely as exceptions to a preferred interpretation.

7.5 Repair Incidence and Longitudinal Relational Effects

A longitudinal analysis of remediation asks what the intervention actually changed and for whom, including what it made possible afterward. *Repair incidence* denotes the distribution of remedial resources, costs, access rights, and continuing obligations among participants over a specified history. Unlike an accounting exercise restricted to receipts, the inquiry considers who financed relief, who could direct it, who benefited, what losses remained, and whether recipients' future capabilities changed. Repair incidence can be favorable without being complete; it can also be materially substantial while leaving decisive control concentrated in the actor whose conduct required repair. The relevant unit is a sequence of relations and decisions rather than a single public presentation of assistance.

Table 7 distinguishes observables that may support different candidate histories. Its columns are deliberately heterogeneous: money, time, procedural standing, and authority do not necessarily admit a common scale. The table also indicates evidentiary questions rather than prescribing universal remedies or diagnosing named participants.

The hypothesized connection between remedial incidence and future power is conditional. Suppose an accountable actor controls significant relief resources and can make continued delivery dependent on the recipient's compliance. Suppose further that independent alternatives are weak and that the remedy's public presentation increases the actor's informal authority. Under those combined conditions, an intervention that reduces an immediate loss could also diminish the recipient's ability to contest a later allocation. A separate history in which restitution is placed under independent administration, delivered according to a publicly reviewable rule, and accompanied by secure opportunities for refusal might reduce the same initial loss while weakening unilateral control. The comparative claim concerns a possible difference between histories, not a necessary consequence of receiving assistance.

Table 7: Dimensions of remedial incidence and evidence relevant to the proposed distinction between repair and its appropriation.

Analytical dimension	Possible history of remediation	Evidence or counterweight
Resource origin	Restitution paid personally, shared contributions, returned withheld resources, external assistance	Funding provenance, prior ownership, counterfactual uses
Delivery control	Independent entitlement, negotiated schedule, unilateral conditional grant	Rules, delegated authority, delays, appeal and withdrawal options
Residual burden	Fully addressed loss, partial relief, shifted care or administrative cost	Pre- and post-remedy resource, time and opportunity records
Moral recognition	Acknowledgment of actual contribution, contested narratives, exaggerated personal credit	Multiple accounts, chronology, disclosure of financing and obligations
Future options	Greater autonomy, unchanged dependence, increased discretionary control	Later access, decision rights, exit and voice opportunities

The temporal analysis should include changes that occur before visible relief. A remedial promise can affect bargaining positions while a sanction is pending; anticipation of aid may shape a recipient's employment or housing choices; an apology can change social expectations before funds are transferred. After delivery, the effects may include restored opportunities, obligation to repay third-party lenders, a new dependence on case managers, altered willingness to seek independent advice, or enhanced trust rooted in the provider's reliable conduct. The investigator must therefore distinguish the immediate transfer, secondary effects of its terms, and subsequent feedback. A change in future options should not be assigned to the remedy merely because it followed the remedy in time; competing influences, prior trajectories, and selection into assistance matter.

The concept of *generativity* is relevant here in its limited GR sense: historically constituted relations condition the feasible creation, maintenance, or transformation of future possibilities. Within the present conceptual framework, an adequately reparative response may help restore the ability to study, work, care, speak, form independent relationships, or shape institutions. A controlling response may preserve the affected person's material survival while imposing continuing restrictions on some of those activities. These possibilities are empirically distinct and ethically non-equivalent. A measurement scheme that records only money supplied or declared satisfaction could miss how the relation changed, yet a claim that autonomy improved likewise requires specified evidence about actual options and perceived safety. The later formal architecture in Section 9 must retain separate dimensions for resources, decision rights, testimony, and feasible future action.

One way to test the proposed feedback would compare matched or carefully interpreted cases with similar initial losses and comparable available remedies but different governance of remedial delivery. The analysis would collect dated records of obligations, funding, control decisions, recipient reports, third-party support, dispute resolution, and subsequent changes in resources and opportunities. Process tracing may be preferable where cases are few and decisions are sequential; larger comparative samples could test the stability of the proposed mechanism, with due attention to selection and confounding. Researchers must be cautious about contacting dependent persons in ways that expose them to retaliation, extracting intimate disclosures as a price of assistance, or assuming that access to private records is ethically warranted merely because the records would improve causal identification. These constraints limit conclusions as well as shape feasible methodology.

A final distinction concerns the evaluation of the *repairer*. An accountable actor may lose discretionary power while legitimately earning trust through reliable amends. Another may retain authority for reasons unrelated to the remedy. A third may increase control without intentionally seeking that result. Moral recognition, legal compliance, material incidence, and causal impact on power therefore require separate judgments. The concept of appropriation of repair is useful only where tracing their relation reveals a mechanism otherwise obscured by a one-stage evaluation of assistance. Its explanatory value remains to be demonstrated against established frameworks of moral repair, dependency, restorative practice, institutional accountability, and power.

Remedial resources may alleviate a loss while also changing dependence, decision rights, or opportunities to contest the terms of assistance. Evaluation consequently requires separate records of remedial duties, delivered relief, conditions of access, and subsequent changes in relational capacity. A beneficiary's gratitude or an agent's public recognition supplies neither a sufficient diagnosis of manipulation nor a complete measure of repair. Section 8 examines the historical mechanisms connecting these distinct observations.

8 Historical Feedback and the Reproduction of Asymmetric Power

Sanction incidence has a historical dimension because an imposed burden can alter the relations through which later resources, claims, and decisions become possible. A household that pays a fine on behalf of one member may subsequently have less money for housing, education, or an independent exit; an organization that reallocates staff time after disciplining a manager may change who can challenge future decisions. Such consequences are neither exhausted by the original sanction nor necessarily captured by a snapshot of the resulting transfers. This section specifies the temporal object of inquiry: the interaction between sanction-related burdens, the historical organization of dependencies, and the future capabilities of affected participants. It proceeds through relational memory, changes in generative capacities, feedback in authority relations, institutional and interpersonal reconfiguration, and the timescales and thresholds that distinguish alternative trajectories. The approach is analytical and comparative. Claims about mechanisms are proposed hypotheses and conditional arguments rather than reports of observed causal effects.

The proposed generative relational (GR) extension is limited but consequential. A sanction may act on a relation that was historically formed, may produce effects mediated by that relation, and may change the conditions governing subsequent relational formation. The temporal coupling is the relevant object. It is not sufficient to infer domination merely from the presence of recurring burdens or to infer a successful feedback loop merely because an initially powerful actor remains powerful. The central questions concern who controlled consequential choices, what alternative arrangements were feasible, which capacities changed, and whether those changes causally affected later exercises of authority. These questions connect the distinctions among responsibility and enforcement in Section 3, the pathways developed in Sections 4–5, and the epistemic and remedial interfaces in Sections 6–7. The formal representation in Section 9 will treat these historical relations as typed, revisable objects rather than assume that one descriptive metaphor supplies a validated social law.

8.1 Path Dependence and Relational Memory

A relation has historical properties when earlier interactions affect the opportunities, expectations, and practical permissions available in later interactions. Relevant histories include prior divisions of labor, accumulated debt, control over joint accounts, habits of consultation, memories of previous punishments, institutional seniority, and the perceived credibility of a participant's complaints. These properties need not be explicit legal rules. They may appear as stable procedures, repeated informal practices, third-party expectations, or learned anticipations of what will occur when a person objects. In the present account, *relational memory* names those historically formed and presently consequential traces of earlier interaction. It is an analytical term for records, resources, dispositions, commitments, and expectations with observable possible effects, rather than a claim that a network literally possesses human memory or a unified mind.

Historical institutionalism already offers conceptual resources for understanding the importance of timing, sequence, and reinforcement. Pierson's analysis of increasing returns and path dependence specifies circumstances in which earlier choices can alter the relative attractiveness and reversibility of later choices; the mere existence of a temporal sequence is insufficient to establish such a process [31]. Mahoney's historical-sociological account likewise provides an established basis for treating path dependence as a specific explanatory claim requiring attention to contingent sequences, rather than as a syn-

onym for the general proposition that history matters [27]. The present paper inherits this caution. A repeated externalization of costs may be path-dependent under identifiable reinforcement conditions; a one-off burden with no durable effect on subsequent choices may not be.

Suppose a constructed household initially contains an adult with control over most liquid assets and a younger relative with limited independent income. A sanction is formally imposed on the adult for a recognized wrong. The adult pays the fine from a joint account that had supported the younger relative's planned move to independent accommodation. A record of the payment establishes that funds left the account and that the adult was the formal addressee. It does not yet establish how much of the resulting burden the adult personally bore. A historical inquiry would examine whether account access was already unequal, whether the younger relative could reject the allocation, what contractual or familial duties applied, what alternative funds were available, and whether the postponed move increased the adult's capacity to direct subsequent household decisions. The latter possibility is a longitudinal hypothesis. It follows neither from the existence of the fine nor from the loss of a deposit considered in isolation.

Relational memory operates through several analytically separable channels. *Material persistence* concerns assets, debts, deferred purchases, and durable changes in access to resources. *Organizational persistence* concerns decision procedures, job assignments, formal standing, and permissions to disclose information. *Interpretive persistence* concerns the evidentiary status of past events, including whether a stated sacrifice later becomes a precedent for new demands. *Practical-expectational persistence* concerns what participants reasonably anticipate about objection, retaliation, assistance, or exit. These channels may interact. An employee whose overtime absorbed the disruption caused by a superior's sanction may acquire additional procedural knowledge and bargaining leverage; the same overtime may instead exhaust the employee and make future dissent costly. The sign of the later effect depends on the organization of the relation, available counterweights, and the employee's alternatives.

An important distinction concerns memory as evidence and memory as a mechanism. Archived decisions, expense records, and witness accounts can help investigators reconstruct past events. These records have a second possible role when their existence or selective control influences later conduct: a recorded precedent may make an unjust allocation appear routine, while an accessible and independently maintained record may constrain the next attempt at externalization. The epistemic analysis of Section 6 becomes historically relevant when the interpretation of earlier burdens changes whose future testimony is accepted. Still, the fact that an interpretation persists does not prove that it caused the subsequent allocation. Temporal ordering, evidence of uptake, and plausible alternative explanations are needed to move from descriptive continuity to causal influence.

Historical explanations should also preserve the possibility of discontinuity. Retirement, organizational reorganization, inheritance, legal intervention, new social alliances, independent earnings, and the restoration of documentation can change the consequences of earlier dependencies. An apparently stable path may be interrupted without erasing the fact that it constrained participants during an earlier period. Conversely, a short episode can establish a durable arrangement if it alters a binding contract, custody arrangement, debt obligation, or allocation of authority. The empirical task is therefore to establish which traces endure, by what mechanism, with whose participation, and for how long.

8.2 Burden Incidence and Changes in Generative Capacities

A historically oriented incidence analysis requires a concept of what changes beyond current welfare or expenditure. The term *generative capacity* is used provisionally for the context-dependent ability of an actor, group, or relational configuration to participate in producing, maintaining, revising, or initiating possible future arrangements. In this study its observable dimensions include access to resources, practical options, effective voice, capacity to organize with others, freedom to refuse a proposed allocation, and opportunities to initiate relationships or procedures without an interested superior's permission. Such capacities are relationally conditioned and may be heterogeneous. They are neither an assertion of unlimited individual choice nor a unitary moral metric. Their specification must respect disability, age, caregiving interdependence, legal protections, and different forms of agency.

A burden may affect these capacities through a mechanism distinct from its immediate cost. Lost savings can delay exit from a coercive setting; additional unpaid care work can reduce time for education or participation in a grievance process; loss of professional reputation can close a channel through which evidence might otherwise reach independent reviewers. The direction of the effect is not fixed. A collective response to an unfair allocation can produce shared records, mutual support, and stronger capacity for contestation. Even where a sanction creates material hardship, participants may gain institutional recognition or access to new assistance. The analytical value of generative-capacity language depends on its ability to describe the changing opportunity structure more precisely than a retrospective tally of pain, spending, or formal rights.

The category should not be collapsed into an individualistic account of achievement. A family member's capacity to act may be sustained by reciprocal caregiving, and an independent grievance channel may require collective support rather than solitary self-sufficiency. The relevant question is whether the terms of dependence remain contestable and whether participants retain meaningful ways to alter, refuse, or renegotiate the arrangement. Emerson's relational account of power and dependence helps identify the significance of alternatives in an exchange relationship [15]; Hirschman's concepts of exit and voice distinguish different responses available to affected participants [22]. Neither source by itself establishes that sanction burdens impair generativity. Their concepts provide points of comparison for an empirical account of which alternatives were available before and after a particular sanction-related sequence.

At least four analytical contrasts help prevent inflation of the concept. First, *current burden* and *prospective constraint* may differ: a small immediate payment can matter greatly if it closes the only available route to independent accommodation, while a larger payment from readily replaceable funds may leave feasible choices essentially intact. Second, *capability reduction* and *preference change* differ: participants may voluntarily revise priorities without losing access to legitimate alternatives. Third, *relational reliance* and *subordinating dependence* differ: mutually chosen cooperation can expand the participants' abilities, whereas unilateral control over a necessary resource can restrict effective refusal. Fourth, *collective resilience* and *private cost absorption* differ: a successful shared response may preserve important functions without being equitable to all participants. These distinctions require independent inquiry into preferences, rights, costs, opportunities, and the circumstances of choice.

Consider two constructed organizations that formally sanction an executive and temporarily divert employees to correct resulting compliance failures. In organization A, paid correction work occurs under an independently approved plan, workers receive protected time and information, the executive's discretionary budget funds the expense, and staff gain access to a new reporting route. In organization B, correction work is added to uncompensated responsibilities, project evaluations penalize staff for missed deadlines, the executive retains control over their promotions, and complaints about workload require approval through that same executive's office. Both organizations may report equivalent monetary remediation and the same sanction against the executive. Their later opportunity structures differ. The case illustrates what evidence a comparative design should gather; it does not establish that one of the organizations has been observed or that formal safeguards always produce the intended effects.

The formation of future possibilities is analytically important because the person who bears a cost at one time may be different from the person whose later options narrow. A caregiver may absorb present unpaid work while a dependent child experiences a delayed educational loss; an institution may impose present administrative restrictions while future researchers lose access to a discontinued programme. These are possible intertemporal pathways requiring traceable mechanisms, and a responsible analysis should not aggregate heterogeneous losses into a single inferred debt without an explicit normative basis. Young's distinction between backward-looking attribution and forward-looking social responsibilities helps clarify why different people may have reasons to prevent subsequent structural injustice even when they did not cause the originating wrong [49]. Future-oriented collective obligations do not erase the specific historical responsibility of the initial actor.

8.3 Feedback between Sanctions, Dependency, and Authority

The principal theoretical hypothesis concerns a *feedback pathway*: a sanction-related allocation changes relational dependencies or authority, and those changes affect the conditions under which later allocations or challenges take place. A feedback pathway involves at least two causally connected periods and a mechanism carrying the effects of one into the next. It is conceptually distinct from a static discrepancy between the nominal sanctioned party and the immediate burden bearers. It is also distinct from a repeated practice that happens to remain similar for unrelated reasons. The terms *reproduction*, *attenuation*, and *transformation* here designate possible later configurations of power, not assumed outcomes.

A candidate reinforcing pathway has four elements. An accountable actor exercises relevant discretion over the distribution of sanction-associated costs or relief. Affected participants experience a change in resources, access, or usable alternatives. That change modifies the actor's comparative ability to determine subsequent allocations, block scrutiny, or control the availability of remedies. Later decisions in turn sustain or intensify the earlier disparity. The empirical requirement is evidence for the mediating steps. A finding that a household stayed unequal after a sanction does not suffice: the observed persistence may arise from prior assets, external rules, longstanding care needs, or independent events. Stronger claims require process evidence or a credible counterfactual account showing that the sanction-mediated change made a difference to later power.

Three varieties of feedback deserve separate analysis. *Resource feedback* occurs when the allocation of one burden changes who retains resources for future action. *Procedural feedback* occurs when the distribution of costs changes who can participate in deciding later questions, for example by depriving an affected employee of the time needed to submit a complaint. *Recognition feedback* occurs when a narrative about sacrifice or repair changes who is trusted, deferred to, or authorized to speak for others. The last category involves an epistemic component, but it is not identical to blame reversal: participants may know who committed the initial wrong and nevertheless grant practical authority to the wrongdoer because the person controls the remedy. Section 7 identified this as one candidate form of appropriation of repair. For feedback analysis, the issue is whether recognition actually changes later decisions or opportunities, not merely whether appreciative language is present.

The reproduction of authority is also compatible with an actor's personally incurred burden. An accountable person might lose money, endure a formal restriction, or offer a sincere apology and still retain disproportionate control over household resources. Their later power may decline, remain stable, or rise for reasons partly independent of the sanction. It is therefore more precise to speak of *partial burden attenuation* or *relative relational advantage* where the actor continues to bear meaningful costs. The word *escape* warrants a stronger showing that a specified burden was substantially avoided over a specified horizon compared with an appropriate baseline. Demonstrating that someone else bore an additional cost, by itself, does not quantify how much the accountable actor escaped.

A counterfactual distinction clarifies the proposed feedback claim. Imagine two otherwise comparable households with correct responsibility attribution and the same formally imposed fine. In one, an independently administered account absorbs the obligation according to a pre-existing, contestable arrangement, while discretionary household funds are protected for the dependents' agreed needs. In the other, the accountable adult can unilaterally draw on those funds and can condition later assistance on consent to a revised household budget. If the second arrangement produces new dependency and enables the adult to dictate subsequent allocations, a historian of the relation would seek evidence linking the initial account decision to the later change. A contrast in control arrangements may be suggestive, but differences in prior income, debts, caring responsibilities, and third-party intervention can defeat the inference. The thought experiment identifies variables to investigate, not a ready-made causal estimator.

Table 8 maps the proposed mediators to observations that could support or challenge each pathway. It is deliberately non-exhaustive. A record of reimbursement, for example, might show that a caregiver's direct financial loss was repaired while leaving the effects on employment or household bargaining unknown. Likewise, an official new complaint policy may leave practical access unchanged if its administrator remains the same interested actor. The evidentiary task is to observe consequential permissions and decisions in addition to documentary promises.

Table 8: Candidate historical feedback pathways in sanction incidence and the evidence required to distinguish them. Each pathway is a research hypothesis, not an established effect.

Candidate pathway	Historical mediator	Discriminating observations
Resource concentration	Depleted alternatives, retained discretionary funds	Baseline assets; source and control of funds; feasible allocation choices; later spending rights
Procedural exclusion	Lost time, restricted access to records or review	Complaint access before and after; actual denials; independent channels; third-party rules
Recognition capture	Credit for selective repair or apparently voluntary sacrifice	Source of relief; duties owed; who received recognition; subsequent effect on decisions
Collective counterweight	Coordination, shared evidence, or independent support	Sequence of collective action; access to outside review; subsequent ability to refuse
Institutional replacement	Change in formal authority or resource stewardship	Rule revisions; enforcement independence; continuity after personnel changes

Normative evaluation enters after the historical process has been specified. An unequal burden may follow a legitimate legal rule, a voluntarily accepted contribution, an unavoidable scarcity constraint, or a strategically imposed allocation that violates an independently defensible entitlement. The causes of the burden and its moral status therefore require distinct analyses. Pettit’s approach to non-domination helps frame concern about uncontrolled discretionary interference, including where threatened intervention influences conduct without an overt command [30]. Yet domination theory does not itself determine whether a particular fine was justified or whether an affected person’s chosen contribution constituted a wrongful burden. The inquiry must retain the relevant rights, obligations, institutions, and feasible alternatives.

Mediating conditions and competing continuations. The mechanism called power reproduction contains several distinct links. An incidence change may deplete a participant’s accessible reserves, which may raise the practical cost of appealing a decision; an effective appeal constraint may then increase the other actor’s control over some later decision. Each link calls for separate observation. Independent assistance could interrupt the reserve-to-appeal link; a legally enforceable right of review could interrupt the appeal-to-control link; collective action could produce an offsetting increase in bargaining capacity. Thus even a demonstrable incidence effect does not identify a total effect on subsequent domination. Conversely, later concentration of authority might arise from a pre-existing governance change rather than from sanction incidence. The proposed historical account should compare these rival mediating histories and avoid interpreting an observed sequence as proof that every intermediate arrow is causal.

A useful research protocol would record a declared outcome domain for subsequent power, such as whether a participant can secure review without the resource controller’s approval, whether protected essentials remain independently accessible, or whether a unilateral veto is exercised. The relevant comparison horizon and measurement rule must be fixed before inspecting favorable outcomes. If protected review capacity improves while discretionary funds shrink, the history does not have an unambiguous scalar value of “more domination” without further evaluative premises. The formal update in Equation 5 preserves such heterogeneous possibilities but does not itself license a monotonic law of power reproduction.

Reverse causation and structural persistence. A proposed feedback effect is also vulnerable to reversal: an earlier power asymmetry can determine both the initial distribution of burdens and the later ability to obtain review, without the burden allocation having changed that asymmetry. Likewise, external support may be allocated in response to signs of domination, yielding a misleading association between assistance and later weakness or strength of authority. A longitudinal model should compare

paths conditional on defensibly measured pre-episode dependencies, record the allocation of independent assistance, and retain common causes of both incidence and contestation. The operative question is whether a feasible intervention on the burden pathway would change later capabilities, under stated assumptions about other actors' responses. Path dependence alone supplies a vocabulary for persistence; it does not identify a causal reinforcing effect of the particular sanction episode. Findings consistent with an unchanged structural hierarchy should be reported as such rather than recoded as proof of sanction-induced reproduction.

8.4 Relational Reconfiguration and Resistance

Historical structures condition action while remaining susceptible to alteration through participants' conduct, collective coordination, and institutional change. Sewell's account of the duality of structures and the possibility of transformation restores agency to social actors within historically constituted relations [33]. Archer's morphogenetic approach offers a different and explicitly temporally differentiated analysis of the interplay of agency and structure [3]. These accounts are intellectually prior resources, not results derived from GR. The proposed contribution of the present paper is narrower: to specify a concrete sanction-incidence sequence as an occasion on which historically conditioned constraints may be reproduced or altered, and to identify what observations would show that the sanction sequence mattered.

Affected people may resist burden externalization through individual or collective action. The repertoire includes independent accounting, retaining documentary evidence, negotiating explicit limits on joint spending, sharing caregiving under fair terms, organizing with coworkers, obtaining representation, activating an independent complaint procedure, or separating an entitled remedy from the discretion of the actor who caused the loss. The feasibility and safety of such practices are context-dependent. Particularly in dependent relationships, apparent opportunities for complaint may expose a person to retaliation or loss of essential support. A theoretical preference for contestability should not be converted into an expectation that vulnerable participants bear the practical risks of correcting a structure on their own. Independent institutions may have responsibilities to supply usable protection and resources.

The relationship between resistance and sanction incidence is not reducible to direct confrontation. A person may quietly build alternative financial capacity or establish an outside evidentiary record before contesting an allocation. A group may negotiate a durable shared-resource arrangement without assigning new moral blame. An institution may separate adjudication, implementation, and remedy administration among different decision makers. Each intervention changes a different part of the relational configuration. Some improve future possibilities while leaving the original sanction's costs only partly repaired. Others shift formal authority without changing the underlying resource dependence. A research design should therefore report the dimensions of change rather than label a relation simply liberated or unchanged.

In constructed household settings, the absence of open objection can support several incompatible interpretations. Affected relatives may agree with the allocation, regard the burden as a defensible shared commitment, judge open contestation too dangerous, expect it to fail, or lack information about the alternatives. Observed silence alone does not distinguish informed agreement, strategic accommodation, uncertainty, and restricted choice; each interpretation requires independent contextual evidence. The same caution applies when an affected person later praises the accountable actor's assistance. The praise may express sincere gratitude, a strategic accommodation, an internalized expectation, or several of these simultaneously. The historical inquiry should locate who could alter the terms of support, whether disagreement had consequences, and whether alternative sources of help were practically accessible. Where direct inquiry risks harm, the research design should privilege privacy, safety, and independently verifiable institutional records.

A mechanism of *countervailing feedback* can arise if an externalized burden produces collective knowledge or organizational reform that subsequently limits the accountable actor's discretion. For example, employees who repeatedly absorb the consequences of their manager's sanctions may document the cost distribution, form an independent committee, and secure a policy requiring audited allocation of

remediation resources. This sequence is compatible with an initial injustice followed by a meaningful structural improvement. It is also compatible with a reform that remains symbolic. Evidence would be required about actual use of the committee's authority, how resource decisions changed, and whether affected staff retained access when the manager objected. Treating resistance as a possible feedback pathway guards against a deterministic theory of domination.

Relational change also involves tensions among potentially legitimate aims. Protecting dependents from immediate hardship may motivate a family member to pay part of an accountable adult's sanction, while long-run accountability may counsel against making that arrangement permanent. A public institution may need swift action to protect affected persons even before responsibility is fully settled, while later investigation may reassign appropriate remedial duties. Normatively responsible design can accommodate emergency provision, procedural fairness, and later reimbursement without allowing the wrongdoer to monopolize the terms of repair. These problems connect the prospective account of capacities to the more specific institutional principles developed in Section 12.

8.5 Timescales, Thresholds, and Alternative Trajectories

The time horizon used to evaluate sanction incidence affects both the descriptive result and any defensible causal inference. An immediate household payment may be offset by subsequent reimbursement; an unpaid leave requirement may produce a short income loss but a longer interruption of professional standing; an externalized caregiving burden may be redistributed again as relatives grow older or institutional support becomes available. Analysts should therefore distinguish at least the sanction's immediate execution period, the period in which associated burdens propagate, the period of remedial adjustment, and the subsequent interval over which authority and capacities might change. The boundaries of these periods should be justified by the case, rather than selected retrospectively to make one participant appear more or less burdened.

Timescales may differ across mechanisms. Transfers from a shared account can be recorded over days, whereas lost qualifications, reorganized work histories, changed willingness to complain, and intergenerational obligations may unfold over years. A cross-sectional interview can document reported current burdens and remembered sequences, but alone provides limited identification of a historical feedback mechanism. Repeated interviews, administrative traces, independent third-party accounts, and process comparisons can help establish temporal ordering, while remaining sensitive to selective recall and data-access bias. A formal time-indexed account in Section 9 will be valuable only if it clarifies which observed differences count as a transition and which remain latent or unresolved.

The language of thresholds requires particular care. A threshold is a specified point or region of a measured relation at which a change in outcome becomes materially different, under a defensible measurement rule. For instance, loss of access to a particular amount of independent funding may make a planned move infeasible, while a smaller reduction does not. The threshold depends on rent, alternative accommodation, legal eligibility, health, social support, and other conditions. It should not be inferred simply because a case feels severe. Neither should a theoretical discussion of threshold behavior automatically invoke a physical critical point, phase transition, or universal law of social dynamics. Such analogies would require precise variables and empirical justification beyond what the current manuscript provides.

Historical feedback can produce at least four trajectories. *Reinforcing dependence* arises when sanction-related burdens weaken practical alternatives and the responsible actor gains further control over later decisions. *Stable but contested asymmetry* arises when the burden is distributed unequally but counterweights prevent additional concentration of authority. *Reconfiguration toward greater contestability* arises when the episode produces enforceable review procedures or new alternatives. *Dissipation or unrelated change* arises when initial effects are temporary or later shifts result from independent causes. These trajectories are ideal types for comparative inquiry. The same relation may display different trajectories across monetary resources, testimonial standing, caregiving, and procedural participation. An account that calls the relation stronger or weaker in the aggregate must specify how

different domains are weighted and whose standpoint supplies the valuation.

A conceptual countermodel demonstrates the importance of distinguishing immediate incidence from historical reproduction. In history A, two relatives each pay half of an accountable adult's fine under an independently negotiated and reviewable family agreement; both retain their prior access to financial accounts and future choices. In history B, the relatives pay the same shares under a rule imposed by the accountable adult, lose access to an independent account, and must seek that adult's approval for later expenditures. The immediate observed burden allocation can be identical, yet subsequent control differs. If the distinction is grounded in evidence about decision rights and their consequences, immediate incidence data underdetermine future authority. This is a statement about the constructed histories, not a proof that all unequal incidence produces feedback. A second countermodel is equally important: an actor redirects costs but an external authority promptly reimburses affected persons and removes the actor's allocation discretion; the attempted externalization need not reproduce power.

The conditional character of the argument sets limits on any claim of theoretical novelty. Existing accounts of path dependence, power-dependence, structure and agency, non-domination, and institutional responsibility already explain important parts of the phenomena [31, 15, 33, 49]. The proposed GR extension contributes, if substantiated, an integrative research object connecting a formally recognized responsibility, a sanction event, heterogeneous and sometimes multistep burden incidence, actors' control over propagation and repair, and changes in subsequent relational possibilities. A successful test would show that tracing these couplings yields discriminating explanations unavailable from analyzing each stage separately. A negative result would narrow the programme: if established concepts and ordinary process tracing already account for the observed trajectory without added precision from GR language, the additional apparatus should be reduced accordingly.

The historical claim concerns conditional feedback, not a universal tendency toward domination. A sanction-related alteration in resources or obligations can affect subsequent opportunities to leave, object, cooperate, or obtain independent review; institutional counterweights may interrupt or reverse the effect. The formal representation in Section 9 makes these alternatives explicit, while Section 10 specifies the inferential limits of reading relational mechanisms from their recorded manifestations.

9 A Preliminary Formal Architecture of Sanction Incidence

This section develops a limited formal language for analyzing how a sanction imposed on an accountable actor can produce burdens distributed across a historically constituted relation structure. Its purpose is to separate three questions that ordinary descriptions often combine: which actors and events are represented, how sanction-associated burdens reach particular people, and whether a participant can alter the pathways through which those burdens arise. A fourth question concerns the future relations made possible by the resulting distribution. The formalization is deliberately preliminary. It provides typed records, conditional incidence maps, counterfactual comparisons, and bounded non-entailment results; it offers neither a general social law nor an empirically calibrated predictor. The five subsections specify agents and histories, heterogeneous burdens, conditional propagation and control, endogenous changes in relations, and the logical and empirical limits of the representation.

The choice of form reflects the argument developed in Sections 3–8. Legal or organizational responsibility can be ascertained independently of who ultimately bears particular losses. Material burdens can propagate without a misleading account of wrongdoing, whereas an actor's influence over enforcement or resource allocation can affect their propagation. These distinctions require a representation in which the formal target of a sanction, its practical implementation, its consequences, and the historical relations among participants occupy different positions. Since the resulting consequences may involve money, time, care obligations, restricted participation, emotional disruption, or diminished future opportunities, a universal scalar measure of harm is neither presumed nor needed for the main claims. The proposed formalism is a research device to organize the necessary distinctions and expose its own identification obligations.

9.1 Typed Agents, Roles, Relations, and Sanction Events

The analytic unit is a *sanction episode* embedded in a relational history. Let N denote a finite, contextually delimited set of represented participants. Finiteness is a modeling restriction allowing the local case to be described, not an assumption that a sanction's effects end at the boundaries selected by the researcher. A participant may be a natural person, a collective actor, or a legally constituted institution when the case supplies a defensible account of its practical decision capacities. These types are recorded rather than collapsed: an institution's budget, a family's shared resources, and a person's experienced distress are not interchangeable bearer categories. A second, optional set J contains institutions or collective arrangements that authorize, assess, implement, or review sanctions. A particular institutional actor can also belong to N when its own resources or capabilities are analytically relevant.

Roles are associated with stipulated or observed episodes rather than fixed permanently to persons; the typed representation alone makes no inference about any person's character, motive, or legal culpability. A subject may act as an attributed wrongdoer, a formal sanction target, an enforcer, a resource controller, a dependent, a witness, an actual burden bearer, or a recipient of repair, and several roles may be occupied by the same actor. A *responsibility determination* is recorded separately from a *sanction decision*. Whether that determination is accurate, whether a sanction is justified, and whether a later externalization is wrongful are different questions requiring distinct evidential and normative arguments. A formally imposed sanction may also be partly executed, modified through lawful review, or frustrated by practical arrangements; the record must preserve this difference between normative authorization and material effect.

Definition 9.1 (Typed sanction episode). A typed sanction episode is a record $e = (w, r, d, s, a, \tau)$ with specified interpretation rules. Here w is the conduct or event under consideration, r is an attribution or determination of responsibility, d is an authorized or purported sanction decision, s is the sanction as imposed and executed within a stated observation window, a is the formally designated target, and τ identifies the episode and its temporal window. Entries may be unresolved, disputed, or absent. Their appearance in the same record does not establish that their legal or moral status is equivalent.

Definition 9.1 deliberately includes the implementation-sensitive entry s alongside the decision d . For example, a legally imposed fine and the execution of a payment from a shared household account are different observations; an administrative decision to remove a manager and the redistribution of that manager's remaining work are different events. The type of each entry, the competent decision maker, and the relevant rules must be specified by the particular setting. There is no presumption that household sanctions and judicial penalties share legal validity conditions.

For a declared discrete observation index t , a candidate relational history is recorded in Equation 1. The symbols identify categories of evidence and hypothesized relations rather than ontological constituents of the world. The relation $\leq t$ is an index convention chosen for the case; it does not assert a universal temporal order or a privileged present. Where the evidence supports only a partial event order, $\leq t$ should be read as an appropriately defined down-set of events preceding the selected observation cut, with incomparable events retained as such.

$$H_t = (N, \mathcal{R}_{\leq t}, X_{\leq t}, E_{\leq t}, O_{\leq t}). \quad (1)$$

Here $\mathcal{R}_{\leq t}$ denotes typed relational ties and their attributed histories, such as control over assets, caregiving duties, formal authority, informal dependence, and opportunities to contest. The family $X_{\leq t}$ records the contextually chosen material and institutional state variables; $E_{\leq t}$ comprises sanction episodes and other consequential events; and $O_{\leq t}$ comprises the manifestations available to an investigator, including documents, statements, records, and observations. For an intervention comparison, h is specifically the prefix of H_t fixed at the decision cut, before the allocation regime whose effects are compared takes effect. The component $E_{\leq t}$ can contain a sanction decision and other prior events, but must exclude the very regime-dependent consequences being estimated. Any evidence generated by the execution of a candidate regime belongs to the ensuing record, rather than being conditioned on as common baseline

information. The distinction between H_t and $O_{\leq t}$ is epistemically significant. Recorded observations are evidence about a history, not an automatically complete or transparent representation of that history. An analyst may therefore work with a set of histories compatible with available evidence rather than claim direct access to a unique underlying causal structure.

The model requires typed relations because an actor’s influence over a bank account, access to a complaint procedure, and perceived moral credibility need not have the same source, direction, or mode of operation. A family member can have little formal authority yet hold an effective veto through control over finances, while a manager can possess formally defined disciplinary discretion but lack practical control over independent auditors. A relation must be linked to a possible mechanism before it is used to infer causal power. The mere existence of a hierarchical role supplies neither proof of control over a particular burden pathway nor proof of improper conduct. Such requirements connect the episode representation to the conditional steering concept introduced in Section 4.

9.2 Formal Targets and Heterogeneous Burden Vectors

Sanction incidence describes effects experienced by participants, not merely payments or restrictions entered in an administrative record. For each $i \in N$, let K_i be a finite set of burden dimensions justified by the empirical question. Each dimension $k \in K_i$ is assigned a domain $\mathcal{B}_{i,k}$ with an explicit, possibly partial, order $\preceq_{i,k}$ interpreted as *no greater burden than*. Possible dimensions include foregone disposable resources, additional hours of care, diminished access to a grievance channel, displacement from work, or a context-specific indicator of lost participation. A burden observation can remain missing or interval-valued. The dimensions of different participants need not coincide, and no rule requires the burdens of two people to be aggregated into a single welfare total.

For a specified episode and an admissible history h , Equation 2 records the vector of burdens associated with a propagation regime π and relevant external conditions u . The recorded comparison baseline must accompany any causal interpretation.

$$\mathbf{b}_i(h, s, \pi, u) = (b_{i,k}(h, s, \pi, u))_{k \in K_i} \in \mathcal{B}_i := \prod_{k \in K_i} \mathcal{B}_{i,k}. \quad (2)$$

The variables in Equation 2 are indexed by a chosen historical horizon; the duration is stated in a given analysis. A high level of hardship after punishment is not, by itself, the hardship *caused by* punishment. A causal burden requires a comparison with an explicitly defined alternative course of events or intervention. For a quantitative domain, such a contrast could compare the same participant’s potential outcomes under two specified regimes; for an ordinal or qualitative domain, the comparison may identify changed opportunities without inventing a numerical intensity. The central formal claims below require only a limited within-dimension order, not a comprehensive interpersonal calculus.

This approach also distinguishes an administrative transaction from its incidence. Suppose an accountable household member pays an assessed charge from a bank account held jointly with a dependent. The administrative payment may be correctly attributed to the accountable person. The additional burden on the dependent depends on the account’s prior use, the control of substitute resources, and the dependent’s lost options; the administrative payer cannot be taken as a sufficient proxy for the final burden bearer. The opposite case is equally possible: a payment is made from shared funds through an independently agreed arrangement, and the jointly affected parties retain effective rights of deliberation, redress, and exit. The presence of shared financial effects alone does not resolve whether the arrangement is legitimate or abusive.

A *componentwise comparison* between two burden vectors for one participant means that, for each comparable dimension, the first has no greater burden than the second. When some dimensions improve and others worsen, the vectors may remain incomparable. In such cases an aggregate judgment requires further evaluative commitments and cannot be inferred from the descriptive vector alone. Cross-person comparisons are even more demanding. To claim that an accountable actor escaped a *commensurate* sanction requires criteria of relevant responsibility, sanction purpose, liability, procedural fairness, and

justified burden, none of which follows from Equation 2. The formal description therefore remains distinguishable from a moral conclusion about deserved treatment. This preserves the difference between the architecture of sanctions in Section 3 and a theory of justified punishment.

9.3 Propagation, Control, and Conditional Incidence Operators

A propagation model requires the analyst to specify how implementation decisions, relations, and contextual changes contribute to the observed distribution. Let $\Pi(h, s)$ be a class of *feasible regimes* for allocating resources, duties, and access during the relevant sanction episode. A regime can include a household budgeting rule, the assignment of replacement work, the distribution of care obligations, or an institutional decision about compensation and support. Feasibility includes both practical possibilities and any constraints the researcher explicitly chooses to represent. It does not imply moral permissibility. Let U collect the exogenous conditions required for a particular counterfactual comparison. Conditional incidence is represented in Equation 3.

$$\mathcal{P}_{h,s} : \Pi(h, s) \times U \longrightarrow \prod_{i \in N} \mathcal{B}_i, \quad \mathcal{P}_{h,s}(\pi, u) = (\mathbf{b}_i(h, s, \pi, u))_{i \in N}. \quad (3)$$

Equation 3 specifies the single-valued deterministic version of a *conditional incidence map*. A probabilistic extension instead requires measurable burden spaces and a probability kernel $Q_{h,s}(\mathbf{db} \mid \pi, u)$ over their product; a distributional steering claim must specify an estimand or comparison of distributions. An evidentially incomplete extension can use a set-valued map into nonempty subsets of the burden product, retaining incompatible admissible completions without choosing a single vector. These extensions have different mathematical types and cannot be substituted into the deterministic propositions without restating their assumptions. The deterministic map is not assumed linear, additive, conservative, symmetric, or stationary through time. In particular, a one-unit nominal sanction need not produce one unit of experienced total loss. Enforcement costs, care substitution, missed work, exhaustion, and losses associated with altered future possibilities may arise in addition to the administrative amount. Conversely, some burdens may be mitigated by protection, insurance, shared support, or independent relief. Without commensurable burden dimensions and a defensible aggregation rule, an asserted conservation law would be analytically unwarranted.

For some narrowly scoped financial examples, a matrix $K(h, \pi)$ may be used to approximate the distribution of a vector of measurable shocks. Such a matrix is a *local modeling special case*, not the definition of relational propagation. A fitted coefficient requires observed data, a design, and assumptions about what remains stable across conditions. The present paper retains the more general map because many of its conceptual examples concern discontinuous institutional decisions, historically variable relationships, and heterogeneous burdens. Its additional value would have to be demonstrated against standard network, causal, or institutional descriptions rather than assumed from the use of operator language.

Control requires another distinction. Let $\Pi_a(h, s) \subseteq \Pi(h, s)$ contain the regimes that a candidate actor a can plausibly bring about through a specified set of decisions while the stipulated external conditions, formal sanction, and other actors' modeled choices are held appropriately comparable. The class must be supported by institutional authority records, practical resource control, credible histories of intervention, or other mechanism evidence. A researcher cannot infer membership in Π_a from seniority or family status alone. Feasible alternatives depend on other participants' choices and can be represented as joint policies if unilateral control is implausible.

Action-to-regime specification. Membership in $\Pi_a(h, s)$ is a substantive claim, not an automatic consequence of nominal authority. To make it auditable, let $\mathcal{A}_a(h, s)$ be a documented set of available actions and let r_{-a} denote a stipulated response rule or a set of admissible responses by other participants and institutions. The study must declare how (α_a, r_{-a}) induces a regime $\pi = \Gamma(h, s, \alpha_a, r_{-a})$; when multiple responses are compatible with the evidence, Γ is set-valued. The image of this mapping

gives only a *candidate* feasible-regime set. Institutional records, resources, costs of refusal, enforceable vetoes, and behavioral evidence are required before identifying it with $\Pi_a(h, s)$. A comparison holding another actor’s response artificially fixed can estimate a controlled contrast in a constructed model, but it should not be misdescribed as what the focal actor could unilaterally impose. Similarly, observational support for a regime does not entail that the accountable actor selected it.

Definition 9.2 (Conditional burden steering). Actor a has *conditional burden-steering capacity* for a specified sanction episode if two feasible regimes $\pi, \pi' \in \Pi_a(h, s)$ can be induced through distinct actions available to a under the expressly stipulated response rule of other actors, and, at a defensibly common background u , the regimes differ in at least one participant’s comparable burden dimension under $\mathcal{P}_{h,s}$. When other participants’ responses are merely possible rather than controllable by a , the capacity is conditional on those responses and is not unilateral control. This is a statement about capacity to alter incidence, conditional on the specified feasible set and model assumptions. *Directed externalization* is the stronger, separately evidenced case in which a chosen intervention causally reduces a relevant burden of the accountable actor while increasing a relevant burden of another participant, relative to a stated feasible comparator.

Definition 9.2 does not impute intention to evade sanctions. Steering could instead redistribute burdens toward the accountable actor, protect vulnerable parties, or limit otherwise avoidable losses. For claims of strategic evasion, the researcher would additionally need evidence that the actor anticipated pertinent consequences and chose an arrangement to protect their own position. For claims of abuse, further institutional or normative grounds are required. One can therefore be formally responsible, retain capacity to steer, and nonetheless exercise it in a cooperative or protective manner. Conversely, a self-serving outcome may arise where there is no evidence that the formally responsible actor had meaningful control over its emergence.

The comparison must also distinguish alternative *forms* of the sanction. A regime change that cancels or lawfully reduces the official charge is not the same intervention as keeping the charge fixed while shifting the burden of payment to dependents. Holding s fixed means holding the relevant formal requirement and execution conditions fixed to the degree required by the claimed comparison. When an intervention itself changes enforcement, the study must record that change rather than conceal it within a redistribution map. A comparison between consequences under different enforcement decisions can be legitimate, but it answers a different causal question.

This intervention-sensitive conception inherits a general methodological constraint from potential-outcomes reasoning: conclusions about an effect concern the outcomes of specified alternatives, of which at most one is observed under an actual history [26]. Family and organizational relations present an additional challenge because the burdens borne by one participant can respond to assignments, choices, and outcomes involving other participants. Such interference has long been a defined problem in causal inference, and the present framework does not claim to originate its treatment [25]. What the framework adds provisionally is a sanction-specific vocabulary specifying exactly which interference pathway is under examination and whether a powerful participant can influence it.

Intervention contrasts and their identification conditions. For an explicitly chosen burden coordinate k with a common real-valued scale, a declared origin and direction of increasing burden, the formal contrast in Equation 4 is defined as follows.

$$\Delta_{i,k}(\pi^1, \pi^0 \mid h, s, u) = b_{i,k}(h, s, \pi^1, u) - b_{i,k}(h, s, \pi^0, u) \quad (4)$$

represents a *model-relative* arithmetic difference when both potential burdens have values on that scale. A positive value is a greater modeled burden for participant i under π^1 . An ordinal or merely partially ordered burden coordinate is compared through its declared relation $\preceq_{i,k}$, without subtraction; incomparable values remain incomparable. Equation 4 does not define an aggregate across heterogeneous burden types, and it does not imply that both terms are empirically observable. The sanction requirement and the intervention versions must be explicit; “a supportive household” or “a strong actor” are too imprecise to

serve as manipulable regimes by themselves. Consistency of the observed outcome with the selected version, credible comparability or exchangeability of regime assignment, sufficient support for the proposed contrast, and a defensible treatment of network interference are distinct requirements for estimating an empirical effect [21, 25]. In particular, practical feasibility does not imply statistical positivity: an option may have been available in principle but never observed among cases sharing the relevant conditions.

The symbol u cannot simultaneously be held fixed and then estimated from data without assumptions about how it varies with π . Shared scarcity, prior dependence, anticipation of enforcement, and institutional selection may affect both the chosen arrangement and the resulting burdens. Where a stochastic map is used, the analysis must state a distributional estimand, its outcome coordinate, target population, and assignment or exposure process; an assertion that the supports of two kernels differ is insufficient to infer an actor’s individual causal effect. Where only an admissible-history set is available, the most defensible conclusion may be a range of compatible contrasts or non-identification rather than a point estimate. Appendix B supplies an elementary observational-equivalence example.

9.4 Endogenous Relation Dynamics and Prospective Capabilities

Sanction incidence acquires a generative dimension when the burdens and the responses to them alter later opportunities, dependencies, or decision rights. To represent this possibility, introduce a transition rule whose state includes the historically constituted ties represented in H_t . Equation 5 specifies the minimal recursive form for an analyst’s chosen time resolution.

$$H_{t+1} = \mathcal{T}(H_t, e_t, \pi_t, \mathcal{P}_{H_t, s_t}(\pi_t, u_t), u_{t+1}). \quad (5)$$

The transition in Equation 5 is a proposed structural representation, not a validated equation of social evolution. It treats H_t as a pre-regime state at the declared decision cut, with the outcome-generating choice and subsequent evidence incorporated in H_{t+1} . The symbol u_{t+1} records additional transition inputs and is not assumed to have been known or fixed when π_t was chosen. It incorporates the sanction episode e_t , a feasible implemented regime π_t , the resulting distribution of burden, and additional circumstances. The relational component of H_{t+1} may differ from that of H_t through changed control of savings, debt, participation rights, social alliances, access to mediators, or formal oversight. Change can strengthen existing asymmetry, leave it largely intact, or limit it. A history may also contain no informative sanction-related transition. The proposed theory admits these outcomes within the same descriptive vocabulary.

For each participant, define $\mathcal{C}_i(H_t)$ as a contextually specified set of *effectively feasible prospective actions* during an identified horizon. These may include refusing a proposed arrangement, seeking an independent review, arranging housing, initiating a new support relation, participating in collective decisions, or performing care without coercive deprivation. A statement that $\mathcal{C}_i(H_{t+1})$ is narrower than $\mathcal{C}_i(H_t)$ presupposes a common task space and a defensible comparison: the sets cannot simply be compared as if their elements automatically possess identical meaning in different social circumstances. Effective feasibility also depends on barriers, time, knowledge, and risk, not only the nominal existence of a right. This is an operational proposal for studying generative opportunities, not a claim that a finite action list exhausts a person’s dignity, freedom, or future possibilities.

Power relations require a similarly disciplined representation. Let $Q_{a,i}(H_t)$ denote a case-specific and openly declared relation of actor a ’s influence over a decision domain affecting i . Depending on the setting, a comparison of $Q_{a,i}$ across dates might rely on actual approval rights, unilateral budget-setting capacity, demonstrable control of access to complaint procedures, or independently observed interference. The notation does not yield a universally ordered scalar called *power*. If the analyst cannot identify a stable domain of comparison, the historical interpretation should remain qualitative. Existing theories of power-dependence and non-domination already address portions of this task; the proposed GR contribution concerns the intertemporal coupling between sanction incidence and changes in those relational conditions [15, 30].

Consider a constructed family history in which a formally accountable resource controller pays a fine out of a shared account, subsequently withdraws funding for a dependent’s independent transport,

and gains a practical veto over the dependent's attendance at an external review. The post-sanction reduction in the dependent's options could be causally relevant to future power if the resource decision was discretionary and other pertinent factors were comparable. But the observation that the dependent subsequently attended fewer meetings would be insufficient: illness, time demands, voluntary agreement, independent restrictions, or other background events might explain the same trace. A different history could involve identical immediate costs while a third party secures protected funds and accessible review, enabling stronger resistance. The two sequences illustrate the need for temporally ordered mechanism evidence rather than the expectation of a predetermined direction of development.

A generative claim in this paper is therefore prospective and historically indexed: particular burden pathways can change conditions for producing future relations and choices. The claim does not imply that all future possibilities can be listed, or that a single economic value function can stand for their moral significance. It also permits *new* opportunities to emerge through mutual aid, solidarity, institutional learning, and reform. The formal state H_t remains revisable when new participants, relations, or evidence become relevant; a model whose boundary excludes decisive actors should be revised rather than treated as complete.

Boundary and intervention stress tests. The modeled participant set N is a chosen analytical boundary. An apparently favorable allocation inside N may export uncompensated costs to omitted contractors, relatives, service users, or institutions; the model-relative sign of a burden contrast can therefore change when the boundary is expanded. For a comparative claim, analysts should record who is excluded, what transmissions cross the boundary, and whether inference remains stable under a defensible enlargement of N . Moreover, an intervention label such as "shared payment" may hide materially different versions distinguished by consent, account ownership, enforcement, or availability of refusal. Such differences affect consistency and the interpretation of the regime contrast. A positive causal effect estimated for one implementation version cannot be transferred to another without further assumptions. Missing ties and incomplete exposure definitions are established methodological concerns in network causal analysis [39, 25]. The typed representation prompts these checks but does not solve them mathematically.

9.5 Bounded Propositions, Countermodels, and Identification Limits

Formalization permits limited inferences where assumptions are stated. It cannot supply missing information about a concrete household, institution, or person's intentions. The following countermodels establish logical separations between responsibility, nominal sanction, experienced incidence, and later power. They do not estimate the frequency of these configurations in real settings. Table 9 summarizes what each claim establishes and what additional evidence would be necessary for causal and normative conclusions.

Proposition 9.3 (Formal accountability does not uniquely determine incidence). *In a class of typed histories admitting the two burden allocations described below, correct responsibility attribution and identical formal sanction conditions do not, by themselves, determine a unique burden vector for affected participants.*

Constructive demonstration. Let $N = \{a, b\}$; actor a is correctly held responsible for the conduct at issue, and the formally executed sanction requires one specified unit of financial payment. Adopt one comparable burden coordinate per person, measured as the loss of discretionary resources relative to a stipulated baseline. Consider a model M_1 in which a bears that loss and b does not, so incidence is $(1, 0)$. Consider a second admissible model M_2 in which the identical official payment is made through a shared arrangement and the resulting loss of discretionary resources falls on b , so incidence is $(0, 1)$. Both models agree on responsibility and the official sanction. They differ in the conditional relation or allocation regime. Thus the formal conditions alone leave the incidence allocation undetermined. The conclusion follows by counterexample within the stated admissible class. The amounts are deliberately schematic: the construction does not claim that all real harms are additive, conserved, or monetizable,

and it leaves legitimacy of either arrangement unresolved. Proposition 9.3 therefore establishes a non-entailment, not evidence that a particular actor successfully escaped an actual sanction.

Assumption 9.4 (Comparable steering interventions). A proposed steering comparison identifies two feasible and meaningfully specified regimes, a common or appropriately adjusted sanction requirement, a defined burden coordinate, an observation horizon, and a defensible treatment of external drivers and other actors' responses. Feasibility and relevant control by the candidate actor are supported by evidence or explicitly assumed for a constructed model.

Proposition 9.5 (Conditional externalization is independent of blame reversal). *Under Assumption 9.4, suppose actor a can select between regimes π^0 and π^1 , with the correct responsibility determination and relevant testimonial record held fixed. Suppose further that implementing π^1 strictly reduces at least one relevant burden coordinate of a while strictly increasing at least one comparable coordinate of another participant relative to π^0 . This comparison meets the defined incidence criterion for conditional externalization with no blame reversal. It does not establish that the actor actually chose the alternative for an evasive purpose.*

Argument. The relation between the regimes establishes the specified burden differences with the formal responsibility determination held fixed. Because the definition of externalization concerns incidence conditional on a feasible intervention, no change in the attribution record is required. Proposition 9.5 therefore isolates the material pathway emphasized in this article from blame reversal or narrative distortion. It is a conditional definitional result, not a proof of strategic motive: whether a selected π^1 knowingly, whether a had practical unilateral control, and whether the increase imposed on the other participant was unjust each require separate support. Improvements and deteriorations in additional dimensions may prevent a comprehensive ranking of the two regimes.

Proposition 9.6 (Present incidence does not determine subsequent authority). *Suppose the admissible transition class in Equation 5 includes two completions sharing the same responsibility determination, sanction requirement, implemented regime, and immediate burden vector, while an independently variable review-support input changes effective review access and that access is represented in the later contestation state. Then these completions can differ in the later contestation state. A difference in authority additionally requires that effective review access enter a separately specified decision-power mechanism.*

Constructive demonstration. Hold the immediate payment and the dependent's lost discretionary resource fixed across two histories. In one history, outside review remains inaccessible because available support is zero; in the other, independently supplied support makes review accessible, despite the same immediate burden vector. If a stipulated effective review process can constrain the resource controller's veto, these continuations also differ in the specified authority relation. The stipulated transition conditions and future opportunity sets differ while the earlier incidence data coincide. As these two outcomes are admissible under the transition rule, the immediate burden record does not entail a unique later authority structure. Proposition 9.6 does not assert that oversight always works, nor that an individual historical change has been measured. It identifies the additional longitudinal variables a researcher must observe before making a power-reproduction claim.

The countermodels demonstrate non-entailment within their stipulated classes of admissible histories. They do not establish the prevalence or intention of redirection in observed settings. In particular, the model leaves open the empirical dependence of later authority on oversight, substitute resources, participant agency, and institutional enforcement. Table 9 records these unresolved obligations, and Appendix B makes the relevant countermodels explicit.

Causal identification poses at least four methodological challenges. First, most observational histories do not reveal both relevant regimes for the same participants under otherwise identical circumstances. Second, the regimes themselves are selected through resources, relationships, and prior events that also shape outcomes, making confounding likely. Third, effects cross participants: an accountable actor's

Table 9: Formal claims and their empirical and normative remainders

Formal result	What the model establishes	Additional empirical or normative obligations
Incidence non-entailment	Identical formal responsibility and sanction can coexist with different burden allocations in admissible constructions.	Trace actual resource flows, affected options, sanction execution, and credible alternative allocation regimes.
Conditional externalization	A feasible intervention can reduce the accountable actor's selected burden while increasing another's without changing blame attribution.	Verify decision capacity, timing, comparator validity, other burden coordinates, intentions, and justified duties.
Future-authority non-entailment	Equal immediate incidence is compatible with different later relational configurations.	Establish longitudinal controls, mediator access, feasible voice, alternative causes, and defensible power measures.

spending choice changes a dependent's prospects and can change the responses of additional people. This is a setting of interference rather than the independent-unit idealization that conventional treatment designs often begin from [25]. Fourth, the sanction episode may alter the very relation structure that conditions later interventions. A research design would need to state which histories and mechanisms remain comparable and when changes in the network invalidate a previously specified estimand. Potential-outcomes formulations clarify the comparison problem but cannot replace domain-specific measurement and institutional analysis [26].

Empirical work may consequently use detailed process tracing, document comparison, prospective observation, appropriately designed natural experiments, or mixed-method evaluation when ethically and practically viable. A source record might identify a nominal sanction and payment route; interviews and third-party records might establish whose needs were displaced; procedural documents could identify the discretionary controller; and longitudinal evidence could track review access, resource independence, and later decisions. Each piece contributes a different inference. Reports from vulnerable participants need consent-sensitive handling and should not be treated as a license to infer an identifiable perpetrator's intentions in the absence of adequate evidence. Nor should the research treat refusal to participate as confirmation of a hidden account.

The formal representation preserves three separations: recorded decisions versus experienced burdens, feasible steering versus exercised intervention, and historical consequences versus their normative evaluation. Its propositions concern relations among explicitly admissible models. Substantive inference requires evidence for the episode's feasible alternatives, the causal channels of interference, and the social or legal standards appropriate to its setting. Sections 10–13 examine the interpretive, comparative, institutional, and empirical implications without treating the formalism as a complete causal description.

10 Three Generative Relational Reality Levels in Sanction Analysis

The explanatory status of a sanction depends partly on the kind of claim being made about its existence, effects, and interpretation. A court order, a household's allocation of expenses, an individual's loss of practical options, and a public account of an actor's repentance can be related within the same episode, yet each presents a different question of evidence and explanation. This section uses three analytical registers provisionally distinguished in generative relational (GR) theory: ontological reality, whose ultimate constitution remains open; relational reality, in which historically constituted arrangements are examined for their causal and generative efficacy; and manifestation reality, in which those arrangements become accessible through situated records, statements, practices, and appearances. The aim is to establish a disciplined interface between these registers for the sanction-incidence problem. The four subsections address ontological restraint, the relational standing of burdens and power, the multiplicity

of manifestations, and cross-register inference. The method is conceptual reconstruction informed by the typed-history framework of Section 9; it establishes requirements for inquiry rather than conclusions about an observed household or institution.

These registers describe distinct *roles in analysis*, rather than three independently proven substances or mutually sealed worlds. An institutional rule can be a historically operative relation and also appear in a written decision; a person's experienced loss may be accessible through testimony while being causally connected to events not fully visible in that testimony. Conversely, an official description may have real effects by changing enforcement and recognition even where it gives an incomplete account of prior events. The purpose of distinguishing the registers is to avoid inferring an entire relational history from one authorized manifestation, or inferring the normative propriety of a sanction directly from a modeled causal pathway. The proposal remains answerable to the broader traditions of social ontology, social theory, epistemology, and philosophy of responsibility, which have already analyzed different aspects of these problems [32, 18, 16, 17].

10.1 Ontological Suspension and the Limits of Social-Object Claims

The ontological register concerns questions about what exists and what constitutes the entities and relations invoked by an account of sanctions. Its role in the present study is primarily disciplinary: an analyst may investigate enforceable decisions, resource dependencies, and the consequences of interpersonal acts without first settling a comprehensive metaphysics of persons, institutions, collective agency, or normativity. *Ontological suspension* denotes this limited commitment to keeping ultimate constitutive claims open where they are unnecessary for the local explanatory task. It is a methodological choice, rather than the assertion that ultimate reality is unknowable or that different accounts of reality have equal empirical support.

Social objects already attract substantial philosophical inquiry. Searle's work on institutional and social facts examines how social reality is maintained through collective practices and recognition; Hacking's treatment of social construction emphasizes the importance of identifying precisely which object, classification, or practice is said to be constructed [32, 18]. Contemporary social-ontology literature distinguishes questions about what constitutes social entities from questions about how social categories are established or anchored [16]. These established contributions are not derived from GR theory. The present study uses them to delimit its more specific question: whether a historically identifiable configuration of responsibilities, enforceable decisions, resource arrangements, and dependencies can explain the actual incidence of sanctions and its consequences. The GR proposal adds an explicit emphasis on changes in the *future conditions for relation formation*, while leaving its explanatory advantage over existing approaches subject to comparison.

Consider the term *family*. A researcher could represent a family as a legally recognized grouping, an interdependent household, a durable network of care, or a historically developed set of obligations. These descriptions may select different participants and boundaries. The divergence matters whenever a formally sanctioned family member draws on shared resources held by someone outside the legal household, or when an individual with no recognized custodial title nonetheless controls the practical use of family assets. A complete metaphysical account of family membership is not required to identify such a mismatch. What is required is a declared membership criterion for the inquiry, a justification of which relations are modeled, and an account of people whose burdens may be hidden by the chosen boundary.

The same restraint applies to institutional agency. A corporation, court, school, or nonprofit organization may be treated as a bearer of responsibilities within its legal and governance context, while particular decisions are made by natural persons or delegated bodies. The typed episode definition in Section 9, Definition 9.1, accommodates collective participants where their decision capacities can be specified. It does not license the transfer of a natural person's psychological predicates to an institution, or the reverse inference that every institutional burden must be experienced by an individual member in the same way. A corporate fine, an institution's opportunity cost, a shareholder's loss, and a worker's

increased labor each require a separately defensible bearer description. The social existence of a legally recognized entity and the distribution of experienced burdens are related questions with different criteria of assessment.

Sanction terminology likewise combines constitutive and normative issues that should be resolved at appropriate levels. Whether an administrative action qualifies as a legal punishment depends on the applicable authority and rules; whether it produces hardship depends on its effects; and whether it is justified depends on relevant legal and ethical standards. Labeling all three an instance of a single object called *punishment* would conceal the differences that motivate this paper. A household practice described by one participant as discipline might be experienced by another as deprivation, but the existence of conflicting descriptions does not itself establish which classification is legally valid or morally defensible. Evidence and argument are required for each assessment.

Ontological suspension therefore introduces constraints rather than permissions. It does not permit an analyst to relativize the reality of a payment, a denied opportunity, or an experienced injury merely because classifications vary. Nor does it imply that every description has equal causal or ethical standing. It requires attention to how a claim is grounded, which distinctions are stipulated for an analysis, and what follows from them. A loss of access to a bank account can remain an identifiable event when family members disagree about the legitimate owner or about whether the restriction constitutes a sanction. The classification dispute is a further matter, not grounds for denying the event.

This disciplined restraint is especially important when a theory includes geometric, field, or operator language. A relational network, propagation operator, or spacetime analogy is a representation whose adequacy depends on its definitions, admissible histories, and evidential use. Equations 1 and 2 specify typed histories and possible burden records; they do not establish that social reality is fundamentally a mathematical graph or that the dimensions of burden are objectively commensurable. Neither does a formal non-entailment result prove a metaphysical thesis about the nature of social persons. The status of these constructions should remain proportionate to their explanatory work.

A defensible application of the ontological register therefore records the assumed entity types, boundary conditions, temporal scale, and level of aggregation, while allowing competing constitutive accounts to remain open when they do not change the supported inference. When different ontologies produce distinct predictions about who can authorize a sanction or who bears an institutional obligation, the disagreement becomes an explicit research question. Ontological suspension is compatible with such comparison, and it may be revised when the inquiry genuinely requires a stronger constitutive claim.

10.2 Relational Reality of Power and Sanction Burdens

The relational register addresses patterns of relations that are historically constituted, sufficiently persistent for the relevant inquiry, and capable of making a causal or generative difference under stated conditions. In the sanction setting these patterns include access to resources, enforceable decision rights, caregiving obligations, information channels, reputational dependencies, institutional review arrangements, and credible alternatives available to affected participants. Their analytic reality is not established simply by appearing in a graph or being described in a theory. It is supported to the extent that the proposed pattern yields discriminating explanations, survives relevant counterevidence, and helps account for variations across comparable histories. This evidential conception of relational reality is consistent with inquiry into the temporally differentiated relations of structure and agency in earlier social theory, while its precise GR articulation remains proposed rather than settled [33, 3].

Three properties are especially consequential for sanction incidence. First, *historicity* means that contemporary burden pathways may depend on earlier transfers, promises, practices, institutional decisions, and accumulated dependencies. Second, *relationality* means that a subject's practical exposure cannot always be explained by individual holdings alone; it may depend on who can require expenditures, assign care, restrict access, or authorize exceptions. Third, *generativity* concerns the way these interactions reshape the range and conditions of later possibilities, including the feasible formation, maintenance, or transformation of other relationships. These properties describe analytical interests, not a guarantee that

every observed inequality is the product of domination or that every burden produces a lasting structural effect.

The burden record developed in Section 9.2 helps operationalize the second property. A formally imposed fine names the target and financial requirement. Its relational incidence may depend on whether the payment is extracted from personal assets, diverted from shared household savings, funded by a voluntary third-party contribution, or met by changing caregiving and labor arrangements. An independently recorded payment establishes a transaction; it does not uniquely establish the loss of discretionary resources, foregone support, or exposure to future dependence for each person. These latter claims require attention to the surrounding relations and a stated counterfactual baseline. Similarly, a professional sanction imposed on a manager can alter employees' workloads through established delegation practices even when the official decision remains correctly directed at the manager.

The relational category *power* should remain mechanism-specific. Possessing a recognized title can authorize an intervention; controlling a scarce resource can make a demand effective; having credible alternatives can limit another actor's leverage; and access to an independent reviewer can change the practical costs of objection. The social relations supporting these mechanisms may overlap without being identical. The analysis of power-dependence in Emerson and the republican concern with domination in Pettit offer prior ways to understand the relevance of alternatives and control [15, 30]. The present article's proposed sanction-pathway steering concept, defined in Section 9.3, is narrower: it asks whether a specified actor can alter a particular allocation or implementation regime under meaningful comparison conditions. Control over one regime does not entail control over all the effects of the sanction.

A constructed household example illustrates the distinction. Suppose an adult *A* is correctly held responsible for a financial violation, and the fine is validly imposed. Household member *B* is dependent on a shared expenditure account. Under one feasible arrangement, *A* pays from a personal reserve, leaving *B*'s practical options comparatively unchanged. Under another, *A* directs the payment from the shared account, after which *B* must reduce education expenses and assume additional care work. These stipulated alternatives may describe different relational incidence even though the formal attribution and sanction are unchanged. The scenario is an analytic construction, and it supplies no evidence that an actual household followed either trajectory. Establishing *steering* in an observed case would additionally require proof that *A* could influence the allocation, that the relevant alternatives were feasible, and that *B*'s loss was attributable to the allocation rather than independent circumstances.

The example also shows why the outcome cannot be captured merely by shifting a fixed quantity from one person to another. A reduced education budget may change *B*'s later income opportunities; additional care work may affect a third person's time; restrictions on the account may reduce opportunities for independent action even after the nominal fine has been paid. Such outcomes can be nonlinear, delayed, and dimensionally heterogeneous. Equation 5 treats subsequent relational changes as conditional transitions precisely because the burden distribution does not specify a unique evolution. Institutions, collective action, alternative resources, and later decisions can interrupt, reverse, or intensify the proposed feedback.

The existence of distributed costs also admits benign or mixed histories. An autonomous third party may knowingly contribute toward a sanction out of solidarity, while retaining meaningful alternatives and rights of contestation. A family may openly reallocate expenditures because medical care or subsistence takes priority. A particular redistribution may be mandated by valid institutional procedure, or produced by budget rules that no directly involved actor can unilaterally modify. These histories can generate unequal burdens without strategic evasion. Moreover, a person who suffers an immediate loss may later gain political influence or access to external support. The relational analysis should permit each possibility and should distinguish actor control, action, intention, comparative burden, and later power outcomes as separate empirical predicates.

Generative consequences have at least three analytically separable temporal forms. A *retentive effect* preserves the previous relation structure, for example by maintaining an incumbent controller's effective veto. A *reproductive effect* changes material or institutional conditions in ways that expand the controller's future options or reduce others' independent options. A *reconfigurative effect* changes the

network or rules, perhaps by producing a new independent account, an effective appeal, or a durable coalition capable of contesting a decision. The sign and scale of such effects require case-specific indicators. In particular, the language of power reproduction should be reserved for evidence of consequential changes in future relational capacities, not invoked as a synonym for persistence or merely unequal immediate costs.

This register therefore supports a provisional criterion for explanatory adequacy. A proposed relational mechanism merits attention when it connects historically identified arrangements to observed or credibly reconstructed burden pathways, specifies a meaningful contrast, accommodates relevant rival histories, and generates claims that could be revised by additional observations. The criterion does not independently pronounce a sanction legitimate, a burden unfair, or a controller culpable. Those evaluations require normative premises and institutionally applicable standards.

10.3 Manifestation Reality of Accountability and Repair

The manifestation register concerns the forms through which sanction-related relations become presented, recorded, enacted, experienced, and interpreted by situated participants and investigators. Manifestations may include a written ruling, a public apology, an account statement, an internal memo, a family member's testimony, a change in a person's attendance, or an organization's public description of its remedial actions. They can be materially consequential in their own right: issuing a notice can activate an enforcement rule, a public statement can change a person's reputation, and a recognized complaint can trigger a review. Manifestation is therefore neither mere illusion nor an intrinsically superficial layer. It is the situated availability and presentation of a relational process, whose completeness and significance remain questions for examination.

A first distinction concerns *formal visibility*. A sanction may be highly visible in official documents while its burden distribution is dispersed across unrecorded forms of care, time, dependence, or lost opportunity. A penalty receipt establishes a payment event and perhaps the designated payer, but may reveal little about whose consumption or prospects were sacrificed. In a workplace, a recorded disciplinary measure may coexist with unrecorded overtime or an informal reassignment of duties. Conversely, a consequence absent from official sanction records may be salient in private communications, diaries, bank transfers, or testimony. The analyst should specify the provenance and purpose of each source rather than treat administrative legibility as complete social visibility.

A second distinction concerns *authorized interpretation*. Institutional records and powerful narrators may enjoy privileged credibility or control over which testimony enters a decision process. Epistemic-injustice research has shown why testimonial standing and available interpretive resources matter for people seeking to make their experiences intelligible to others [17, 12]. In the present model, these insights identify a possible asymmetry in access to manifestations and in the uptake of competing accounts. They do not establish that a particular disputed testimony is true merely because a speaker lacks power, or that a formal institutional record is false because it originates from an authority. The evidential task is to compare claims, contexts, procedures, and independent traces in a manner that does not automatically discount vulnerable participants.

The distinction also matters when responsibility has already been admitted. Suppose an official finding identifies *A* as responsible, and *A* openly accepts the finding. Other members may nevertheless experience reductions in resources after *A* exercises control over a shared budget. A public statement of acceptance is one manifestation; the budget reallocation and resulting losses are additional manifestations of a process whose causal structure requires reconstruction. An observer who infers effective accountability solely from the admission and payment document may incorrectly assume that the accountable actor bore the burdens. Such an error does not require a false account of the original wrongdoing. It can arise because different manifestations provide access to different components of a single historical episode.

A third distinction concerns *repair appearances*. An actor may issue an apology, provide selective aid, or publicly announce that an injured party has been restored. These actions can have real benefits,

and acknowledgment can be part of responsible moral repair [46]. The manifestation of repair, however, need not establish the adequacy or independence of the remedy. A donation, for example, can be genuine assistance while leaving an earlier coercive condition unchanged; conversely, material restitution may repair a loss even when it produces little public recognition. The empirical investigation should distinguish the content and origin of remedial resources, the recipient's independent options, any remaining obligations, the conditions attached to help, and the actor's gain in discretionary authority or moral status.

The previously discussed *remedial-credit asymmetry* is one possible configuration in this register. A person who controls access to relief may be represented as a benevolent rescuer even where the need for relief was partly created or intensified by arrangements the same person controlled. The analytical concern is the potential discrepancy between a publicly accessible account of rescue and a historical account of causal contribution and remedial duties. It would be an error, however, to infer manipulation from gratitude, from a beneficial act, or from the coexistence of care and authority. A defensible finding of strategic appropriation would require evidence concerning earlier responsibilities, available alternatives, the actor's knowledge and choices, and any connection between relief and demands for compliance or limitations on contestation. A mismatch in public credit may also result from incomplete information, convention, or mistaken accounting. The social-psychological and sociological literature on narrative manipulation offers relevant comparative material but does not replace that evidential work [38, 19].

Manifestations are also distributed unequally across audiences. A child, a dependent adult, a staff member, an external auditor, and an administrative decision maker may each encounter different documents and practices. A household payment recorded as a simple expense can appear to another participant as the disappearance of their savings, the cancellation of a course, or an increase in labor. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive descriptions. Their reconciliation requires clarity about subject position, access, temporal scope, and the specific outcome described. A first-person account may be indispensable evidence of an experienced burden while remaining insufficient on its own to identify the controller of every upstream decision. A bank statement may establish financial changes while remaining silent about experienced fear or the absence of feasible alternatives. Different manifestations can supplement and correct one another without collapsing into a single privileged viewpoint.

Historical records add another complication: representations can themselves change the relational system. A formal finding that a penalty has been paid may close an appeal window; a declaration that a family matter has been resolved can create social expectations of silence; a published account of institutional improvement can alter funding decisions or the credibility assigned to critics. In such cases, the act of manifestation participates in the causal history it purports to describe. The researcher should record both the content of the account and its downstream institutional or interpersonal consequences. This reflexive possibility is compatible with ordinary causal analysis when temporal ordering, decision mechanisms, and plausible alternatives are specified. It does not warrant treating language as the sole cause of material outcomes.

For the purposes of this paper, manifestation reality is thus the domain in which the evidence and practical visibility of accountability are constituted and contested. It encompasses documentary, experiential, symbolic, and procedural forms. Its analytically important property is the potential for a many-to-many relation with reconstructed histories: one history can generate divergent presentations, and a superficially similar presentation can be compatible with different causal histories. The problem is methodological as well as political because the appearance of accountability can become detached from the distribution of actual costs even when all parties agree about the original wrongful act.

10.4 Cross-Level Evidence and Inferential Discipline

The three-register framework becomes useful only if transitions among its claims can be made explicit. Ontological restraint limits what the formal model purports to establish about the ultimate constitution of its objects. Relational reconstruction proposes the mechanisms through which sanction burdens arise and future capacities change. Manifestation analysis identifies how participants and investigators gain access to those mechanisms and how acts of presentation may themselves affect them. These roles

Table 10: Analytical registers for claims about sanction incidence and accountability

Register	Analytic object	Appropriate warrants	Typical inferential risk
Ontological	Constitution and scope of social objects, agents, rights, and institutions	Defended assumptions, conceptual arguments, and context-specific institutional rules	Treating a modeling representation as a proof of ultimate ontology
Relational	Historically operative ties, sanction pathways, control, and changes in future options	Process traces, comparators, causal models, longitudinal and contextual evidence	Inferring agency, intention, or domination from an unequal outcome alone
Manifestation	Records, testimony, public narratives, practices, and situated appearances	Provenance, corroboration, interpretation, access analysis, and attention to audiences	Equating official visibility, reported rescue, or a completed payment with full accountability

are distinguishable but interact in the investigation of a single episode. A rigorous case study must specify which inference connects a record, a hypothesized relation, a causal comparison, and a normative assessment.

The observational component of the typed history H_t in Equation 1 provides a convenient interface. Investigators encounter selected elements of $O_{\leq t}$: enforcement notices, bank records, care schedules, witness accounts, and other accessible traces. They use these to construct candidate accounts of the relational ties $\mathcal{R}_{\leq t}$, the state variables $X_{\leq t}$, and the sequence of consequential events $E_{\leq t}$. Those accounts can remain underdetermined. An observation of an increased care burden after a financial penalty, for instance, may be compatible with a coercive reassignment, a negotiated temporary arrangement, or an unrelated change in health needs. Discriminating among them requires different evidence. The analyst should maintain a set of credible alternatives where the present observations fail to resolve the causal path, rather than artificially selecting a unique hidden history.

Table 10 summarizes the different questions and evidential obligations that the registers place on sanction research. The rows are analytical interfaces, rather than competing criteria of which realm is more real. The final column records characteristic inference errors that become likely if a distinction is neglected.

At least four distinct inferential transitions require care. The first is from a *manifested event* to a *descriptive claim*: a record may reliably document that a fine was paid, while offering limited support for identifying who lost disposable resources. The second is from *described outcomes* to a *causal mechanism*: a dependent’s reduced educational participation after the fine may arise through several pathways, some of which do not involve actor control. The third is from *identified control* to *purpose or strategy*: demonstrating feasible influence over an account allocation does not, without further evidence, show that it was exercised to escape sanction costs. The fourth is from *causal findings* to *normative evaluation*: whether a given burden allocation was permissible, exploitative, proportionate, or owed as restitution depends on standards that incidence records cannot supply by themselves. Each transition asks a different question and requires its own warrant.

These transitions can be examined through a deliberately constructed contrast. Imagine two organizations in which a responsible manager receives the same formal disciplinary sanction, after which frontline employees report the same quantity of additional work. In the first organization, the work follows a binding continuity policy enacted before the violation and reviewed through independent consultation. In the second, the sanctioned manager retains discretionary authority to assign the work and selects a schedule that shields their own unit while burdening complainants. The surface measures of formal sanction and immediate overtime may coincide, but the histories differ in decision rights, alternative options, procedural independence, and potential downstream effects. If a record contains only the formal sanction and the overtime total, neither account is identified. A process audit of assignment authority and dated decisions may separate them. The example remains hypothetical and does not imply

that one design always produces better outcomes, nor does it establish a legal verdict absent the relevant jurisdiction and procedure.

A second contrast concerns a household in which a sanctioned actor's payment is followed by reduced discretionary resources for a dependent. Observers might reasonably infer that the dependent bears part of the material cost. Additional records could reveal that the dependent chose to contribute from an independently controlled reserve with full knowledge and freedom to refuse, or that the sanctioned actor unilaterally diverted resources that the dependent could not access or protect. The immediate spending change alone leaves these histories observationally similar. Information about control, consent, the availability of substitutes, and institutional recourse is needed to evaluate the relation. An observer also needs to distinguish direct sanction effects from parallel shocks such as job loss or illness. The cases are designed to identify evidence requirements, not to classify real interpersonal conflicts on the basis of a theoretical template.

The relation between testimony and institutional records introduces an additional ethical obligation. Investigators should avoid both automatic deference to authorized accounts and the conversion of a theory of structural power into a device that predetermines whose testimony must be correct. A credible inquiry creates safe opportunities for affected parties to describe burdens and contest classifications, records their sources and limitations, and seeks independent corroboration where proportionate and feasible. When participation may expose a dependent to retaliation, methodological adequacy also depends on consent, confidentiality, and suitable safeguarding. The present article does not prescribe a universal research protocol, but these conditions delimit what would count as responsible investigation of vulnerable participants.

A fifth, temporally extended inference concerns the claimed *reproduction of power*. A post-sanction loss to a dependent can reduce their options during the observation period, yet the later relational field may change because of external assistance, legal review, collective action, new employment, or changed family commitments. Section 8 therefore treats power trajectories as conditional. To claim that burden incidence reproduced an asymmetry, a study needs longitudinal indicators of resources, effective decision rights, credible alternatives, and the practical possibility of challenge. It should compare the observed trajectory with plausible alternatives and examine the mechanisms connecting the original sanction to the later distribution of capabilities. The countermodel in Proposition 9.6 demonstrates why identical immediate burden records permit different later authority structures; it does not estimate which occurs in practice.

The three GR registers organize questions about social-object status, reconstructed relations, and the evidence through which accountability is encountered. They are a proposed interpretive interface, not a replacement for institutional chronology, network analysis, or process tracing. Their value should be tested by whether they preserve distinctions among observations, causally reconstructed burden pathways, and feasible alternative histories with less evidential loss than simpler protocols. A mere translation of established conclusions into new terminology would establish conceptual compatibility, not an explanatory advance.

The three GR registers impose different standards of interpretation. Ontological suspension limits claims about ultimate social kinds; relational reconstruction asks which historically constituted dependencies and decisions could explain observed burdens; manifestation analysis specifies the testimony, documents, and practices through which those processes are encountered. Their usefulness depends on improved traceability of inference rather than terminological equivalence with existing social theories. Section 11 assesses the framework across settings where authority and sanctions carry different institutional meanings.

11 Comparative Configurations of Relational Sanction Incidence

The role of this section is to examine the domain dependence of the proposed account of sanction incidence. Sections 3–9 distinguish responsibility, sanction authorization, executed measures, burden propagation, feasible control over propagation pathways, and changes in subsequent relational capacities. A

comparative inquiry must establish which of these distinctions remain useful across settings and which acquire different meanings under particular legal arrangements, organizational rules, social relationships, and histories of dependence. Five configurations are considered: households, workplaces and corporate organizations, collective public authority, educational and religious institutions, and humanitarian assistance. The discussion uses literature-grounded conceptual analysis and explicitly constructed episodes. Its examples are constructed; legal classifications and causal explanations are established within each domain, and no motives are attributed to identifiable persons.

Three levels of comparison organize the section. At the *descriptive* level, the analyst identifies an accountability episode and reconstructs the people and institutions whose resources, activities, or prospects are affected. At the *causal* level, the analyst asks whether the burden pathway was practically alterable by a specified actor and whether a defensible alternative would have changed its incidence. At the *normative* level, the analyst considers the rights, duties, mandates, and justified protective constraints particular to the setting. These levels remain distinct when a sanction has been implemented correctly and when affected participants regard its distribution as unfair. A history-sensitive GR representation, developed in Section 9, offers a shared vocabulary for comparing the pathways; its useful scope must be tested against legal and institutional differences rather than assumed from a common vocabulary.

11.1 Household Relations, Age, and Resource Dependence

Household relations provide an analytically revealing setting because the same relationship may simultaneously organize economic provision, care, emotional attachment, residence, social recognition, and opportunities for independent judgment. These dimensions are historically constituted and often incompletely separated. Dependence is also heterogeneous: a person may be financially reliant on another while providing indispensable care, exercising legal rights, maintaining external alliances, or influencing consequential decisions. An analysis that labels one adult a household authority and another a dependent would leave the actual distribution of powers insufficiently specified. Power-dependence theory directs attention to the available alternatives and the conditions of reliance, while work on coercive control identifies particular circumstances in which restrictions on autonomy can be organized across several dimensions of intimate life [15, 37]. These literatures provide different explanatory resources. Their existence neither establishes coercion in a given family nor reduces relational asymmetry to a single behavioral pattern.

Consider a constructed household containing an adult a , a second adult b , and a dependent child c . Assume that an independent authority correctly identifies a as responsible for a violation and imposes a lawful monetary penalty. The formal sanction is imposed on a . The household shares certain living expenses, but a administers a substantial portion of the available income and can decide whether discretionary spending reductions fall on personal consumption, general reserves, or expenditures essential to b 's and c 's activities. In a first possible continuation, a bears the payment from individually controlled discretionary resources and the household preserves care arrangements and essential spending. In a second continuation, the formal penalty remains identical, but a directs the payment through shared funds and subsequently restricts the resources available to b and c . An identical enforcement record is then compatible with different incidence histories. The consequences may include increased labor for b , foregone educational participation for c , or reduced access to independent transport or advice. These burdens should be documented as distinct types rather than compressed into an assumed universal monetary equivalent.

The second continuation by itself does not identify a strategic evasion of punishment. Shared finances may involve legally enforceable obligations, prior consent, mutual insurance against uncertainty, or pragmatic responses to a genuine income constraint. Some reductions would have occurred even under the first allocation because a household's jointly used assets can be affected by a member's legitimate obligations. A valid attribution of *directed externalization* requires an additional causal question: was an alternative distribution feasible for a , and did an intervention attributable to a move burdens away from that actor toward another participant? In the notation of Definition 9.2, the case investigator must

justify inclusion of the relevant alternatives in $\Pi_a(h, s)$ and establish a meaningful comparison of burden dimensions. Evidence of intentional avoidance would require further proof of anticipation, choice, and a motive or plan relevant to self-protection. Economic dependence creates an opportunity for burden steering under some conditions; it does not demonstrate that the opportunity was used.

A third constructed continuation illustrates the limits of a static cost allocation. Suppose b temporarily accepts a greater care burden so that the household can retain housing, and obtains protected control over a bank account and an independent opportunity to revisit the arrangement. Even if b carries an immediate burden, the episode may be part of a voluntary joint strategy that preserves or expands later alternatives. Conversely, the same immediate increase in care hours may accompany a restriction on b 's access to external employment and independent review. These trajectories cannot be distinguished by hours of unpaid labor alone. The relevant historical inquiry concerns the origins of the arrangement, effective possibilities for refusal, control of informational and financial resources, and subsequent changes in participation. The prospective-capability vocabulary introduced in Section 9 is useful precisely because equal immediate incidence may be followed by different relational configurations.

Age and legal status change the assessment. A child's financial and residential dependence is ordinarily connected with protective duties, and the child's interests cannot simply be represented as one negotiable preference among adult household members. A lawful demand that parents contribute to household expenditure is not thereby a legitimate ground for depriving a child of essential support. At the same time, the content of parental authority, maintenance obligations, child protection, and the operation of enforcement measures differ across jurisdictions. The present conceptual model supplies no substitute for those rules. The relevant comparison must identify an actor's actual ability to preserve dependent members' essential resources, the limits imposed by public law, and the existence of accessible independent safeguards. It must also distinguish harms attributable to the underlying wrongful act, harms attributable to a lawful sanction, and burdens arising from a separate post-sanction decision.

Intergenerational monetary-sanction research provides a limited but important empirical point of contact. Horowitz and colleagues examine monetary sanctions through family exchange and intergenerational relationships, while Condry and Minson develop the concept of symbiotic harms in the context of imprisonment and families [23, 9]. Those studies support treating family effects as analytically significant. Their findings do not establish that the family members carrying costs in a given case were deliberately selected by a powerful actor. The distinctive question advanced here is whether the burden-bearing pathway was steered through an actor's feasible control over a historically constituted relationship, and whether that intervention altered subsequent capacities to refuse, contest, or cooperate. The empirical distinction between constrained solidarity and imposed sacrifice is central to that question.

11.2 Workplace Hierarchies and Organizational Accountability

Work organizations introduce formal positions, delegated authority, employment contracts, budgets, and organizational legal personality. They may also embed unequal access to information, discretionary assignments, reputational resources, and routes for collective voice. Acker's account of organizational inequality regimes offers a prior framework for investigating the reproduction of inequality through interconnected ordinary organizational practices [2]. The present paper applies a narrower inquiry to the allocation of sanction-related burdens. The relevant institutional actors need to be differentiated carefully: an employee, a manager, a corporate entity, its owners, a regulator, and a harmed external party may have distinct obligations, rights, and causal roles. Collapsing those actors into an undifferentiated "organization" would obscure both legal accountability and practical incidence.

Consider an invented organization in which a manager m breaches an internal duty. The organization correctly finds that m was responsible and announces an individual disciplinary consequence. If m retains authority over staff assignment, however, the manager may distribute tasks arising from the violation among junior employees or influence which staff lose time for independent projects. Such a decision could represent ordinary remedial cooperation, a managerially justified response to operational needs, or an attempt to reduce personal consequences. Its classification requires institutional evidence. The ana-

lyst should separate the direct burden of the disciplinary decision from the additional work generated by investigating and repairing the underlying harm, and from the costs created by the manager's subsequent allocation decision. Employees who spend time restoring damaged work may face opportunity losses without thereby undergoing a punishment in the legal or disciplinary sense.

In one hypothetical trajectory, independent administrators remove m from decisions concerning task distribution following the finding, fund the repair through a protected budget, and invite affected employees to challenge unreasonable allocations. In a contrasting trajectory, m retains access to the staffing system, withdraws time from employees who provided evidence, and presents their additional labor as a voluntary collective contribution. The second configuration raises separate questions about burden steering, retaliation, credibility, and the exercise of managerial power. The investigator would need time-stamped staffing records, decision permissions, documented budget constraints, communication records where lawfully available, and employee testimony gathered without exposure to retaliation. An observed workload increase alone is compatible with changed demand, staffing shortages, safety requirements, or employee choice. The claim of strategic externalization therefore requires a more specific causal history than the claim of asymmetric workload incidence.

A distinct institutional case concerns monetary penalties imposed upon a corporation as a legal entity. In its 2006 statement on financial penalties, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission expressly considered whether shareholders who were harmed by securities-law violations might also bear costs of a corporate penalty [40]. The Commission described shareholder benefit from the underlying violation and possible further injury to already harmed shareholders as considerations in its exercise of enforcement discretion; the statement supplies an explicit policy rationale, not an estimate of the realized economic incidence of a specific penalty. This statement is jurisdiction-specific, dated policy guidance regarding U.S. securities regulation; it neither defines the rules of every corporate sanction regime nor entails that a corporate penalty should generally be avoided. Its comparative significance is that an enforcement authority explicitly recognized the difference between the legally penalized entity and the persons bearing some economic consequences. In many cases, the shareholders at the time of penalty payment also differ from those present when misconduct occurred.

Corporate incidence introduces a separate identification problem. A reduction in a company's value following the disclosure of misconduct may reflect the underlying wrongdoing, expected future losses, enforcement costs, reputational change, shifts in demand, or the legally imposed penalty. Employees may face reduced hours because of an independent downturn, a management decision to protect particular expenditures, or liquidity constraints caused by several jointly operating mechanisms. Investors can bear losses even if a manager has no discretion to transfer them, while a manager may strategically preserve compensation despite a corporate penalty. The analyst should therefore compare mechanisms at their relevant margins: the regulator's choice of legal target, the organization's accounting of the sanction, internal resource-allocation authority, and decisions affecting employees or investors. Evidence regarding one margin is insufficient to infer control over another.

The GR contribution is potentially useful at the boundary between organizational and individual time horizons. The allocation of an immediate burden can modify who retains access to training, employment, complaint procedures, promotion opportunities, or organizational voice. Some compliance investments create new collective capacities and strengthen future safeguards; others place continuing workloads on low-authority staff while leaving decision rights unchanged. A longitudinal study should observe whether oversight, personnel practices, and resource allocations are changed independently of the sanction's public announcement. Comparative language must preserve the fact that corporate entities can be properly accountable for legal violations under applicable rules even when economic costs reach persons other than particular decision-makers. A claim about incidence neither invalidates that legal responsibility nor decides the proper sanction.

11.3 Collective Authority and Public Sanction Burdens

Public sanction regimes introduce further differences in agency, institutional mandate, and scale. A government, regulatory body, international institution, state, corporation, political leader, and civilian population are distinct types of participant. Public authority may impose a measure for purposes of deterrence, compliance, security, or remediation, while affected individuals possess different degrees of influence over both the conduct prompting the measure and the decisions taken in response. The legal basis and consequences of a regulatory fine, an individual targeted asset freeze, a trade restriction, and a collective organizational discipline measure differ substantially. A comparison framed solely around the shared word *sanction* would erase those differences. Accordingly, this subsection identifies a bounded similarity in the distribution of burdens and retains the particular legal authority, target definition, enforcement instrument, and protected interests of each regime.

Consider first a constructed public agency penalized financially for an institutional violation under a hypothetical legal arrangement permitting such a measure. Agency leaders may have choices about how to finance the response: reduce nonessential administrative expenditure, draw on an approved reserve, seek an authorized appropriation, or reduce services affecting people with limited influence over the original violation. The relevant questions are whether each option is legally and financially available, who may choose among them, and whether the practical burdens of an implemented option are borne by those whose conduct gave rise to the finding. A decline in service provision can be a sanction-related consequence while lacking any punitive intent toward service users. An intentional effort by decision-makers to preserve their own privileges by reducing essential services would be a stronger allegation requiring records of feasible alternatives and actual decisions. The language of *relational incidence* allows the two possible histories to be compared without assuming that each reduction has the same cause or normative significance.

Economic restrictions imposed across national borders offer a more distant comparison, with a notably different causal structure. Research by Neuenkirch and Neumeier uses an econometric matching approach to investigate U.S. economic sanctions and poverty gaps in target countries during 1982–2011, reporting greater measured poverty gaps in sanctioned observations under their design [28]. The estimate is bounded by the sample, outcome definition, assumptions of the matching approach, and the historical composition of regimes. It offers evidence that effects on populations are a central empirical issue in sanctions research. It does not show that a particular government directed these burdens to individual citizens, that the imposition of any particular sanction was unlawful, or that the responsible actor personally escaped costs. The present theory would require different units and evidence before such stronger conclusions could be drawn.

The distinction between the intention of an imposing authority and the incidence of a measure is institutionally recognized. United Nations Security Council resolution 2664 (2022) establishes a standing humanitarian exemption to specified asset-freeze measures for the covered provision of resources, goods, and services needed for humanitarian assistance or other activities supporting basic human needs [45]. Its operation is tied to specified measures, actors, and relevant follow-on decisions; it cannot be treated as a general abolition of sanctions or as a universal exemption from all restrictions. For the comparative analysis, the important point is that a sanctions framework can incorporate differentiated treatment of protected activities and affected populations; the exemption concerns specified asset-freeze measures and covered providers, rather than all sanctions or all humanitarian activity. The existence of such an exemption provides a concrete institutional example of a response to potential burden propagation. Whether it adequately protects persons in a particular setting requires separate evidence regarding implementation, access, and effects.

Collective and public cases introduce agency problems that differ from those of a household. The actor whose wrongdoing allegedly prompted a sanction may be a collective entity whose decision procedures are disputed. A public population includes persons who never participated in the disputed conduct and may lack realistic avenues to influence the government's response. Those who administer the consequences may include independent banks, commercial suppliers, public officials, and external humanitarian providers. Some of these actors respond to compliance uncertainty or transaction costs rather

than direct instructions from an accountable leader. A proposed transmission pathway therefore needs to map intermediary institutions and distinguish mandated restrictions from private decisions, risk aversion, administrative delay, and direct interventions by officials. The causal pathway may include multiple jurisdictions and heterogeneous legal obligations.

The power-reproduction hypothesis is correspondingly conditional. A public authority might preserve its discretion while civilians bear loss, but the same measure might weaken incumbent authority, stimulate independent civic cooperation, alter external alliances, or produce no identifiable change in domination. Greater civilian suffering, even when established, provides insufficient evidence of an incumbent's net gain in relational power. Evaluating authority requires an operationally meaningful horizon and outcome: control over revenue, discretion over allocation, access to outside information, opportunities to challenge a ruling, capacity for civic coordination, or another specified relation. Political legitimacy and lawful jurisdiction likewise require independent arguments. The GR framework contributes an explicit path-sensitive causal question; it does not substitute for international law, political economy, or empirical sanctions research.

A further comparison concerns the normative status of shared burdens. In a family, shared provision may express legitimate reciprocal obligations. In public fiscal policy, some costs are necessarily socialized through tax and expenditure systems. In international sanctions, the authority to impose measures and the protection of affected populations depend upon distinct legal instruments. Evidence that costs diffuse across persons consequently cannot by itself establish a wrongful *transfer* from a guilty individual to innocent others. The evaluative inquiry must reconstruct the objective of the measure, its legal target, the normative distribution of responsibility, available alternatives, and the relevant duties of protection. Incidence-sensitive analysis can inform that inquiry while leaving its legal and ethical conclusions open.

11.4 Educational, Religious, and Assistance Settings

Educational institutions, religious organizations, and assistance providers share some structural features with households and workplaces: participants may depend upon them for valued resources, recognition, access, or protection, while institutional authorities influence how disputes are recorded and resolved. Yet their mandates and legitimate forms of authority differ. A school's responsibility for the welfare and education of minors, the voluntary or otherwise situated commitments of members of a religious community, and a humanitarian organization's obligations to people affected by crisis cannot be reduced to a single model of hierarchy. The comparison must begin by distinguishing a formal sanction from an administrative decision, a preventive safeguard, a religious norm, an allocation of aid, and a consequence of an earlier wrong. The common analytical question concerns pathways of dependence and practical control, not a presumed equivalence in purposes or rights.

In a constructed educational episode, an administrator correctly establishes a serious breach of institutional rules by one member of staff and imposes a disciplinary measure upon that staff member. The resulting schedule disruption is managed by reallocating teaching and supervision obligations among other employees. Some additional work may be necessary to maintain students' access to education; some may reflect an institution's discretionary refusal to fund substitute coverage. Staff members who carry those tasks might incur fatigue or lose professional development opportunities, and students might face reduced continuity of instruction. The school could have reasonably exercised protective obligations while also generating collateral burdens. A stronger allegation that an administrator directed the burden to less powerful teachers to shield a favored colleague would need evidence of feasible staffing alternatives, authorization rights, communications, and the distribution of burdens under comparable circumstances. Student welfare requirements may set limits on otherwise plausible alternatives. Their presence should be modeled as constraints on the feasible set, rather than regarded as evidence that the resulting allocation is self-evidently fair.

Another constructed educational configuration concerns the interpretation of a discipline episode. A student may be formally assigned a penalty for their own conduct while staff present the consequences for classmates as the student's personal moral debt, or classmates may voluntarily help restore shared

resources. Such episodes invite analysis of who had a voice in defining the initial act, who decided the consequence, and how an apparently helpful reconciliation affected further opportunities to participate. A student's age and vulnerability make independent channels of review particularly significant. A requirement that an affected young person provide a statement can itself carry social costs if it exposes the person to retaliation or humiliation. Consequently, the researcher should separate evidence access, the credibility afforded to testimony, the formal legitimacy of the sanction, and the practical burden of participation in the review process.

Religious organizations add forms of interpretive and symbolic authority that may be inseparable from a community's internal moral language. A member's sanction under a religious rule can involve communal participation, ritual roles, status, or access to support. Those consequences may be understood by participants within religious traditions of responsibility, forgiveness, membership, and restitution. A scholar cannot determine their meaning simply by relabeling them as penalties equivalent to statutory fines. At the same time, organizations holding trusted authority may cause additional harm when responding inadequately to misconduct. Smith and Freyd's work on institutional betrayal examines how trusted institutions can fail those who depend on them, including in settings involving schools and religious institutions [36]. That literature offers a relevant account of institutional response to harm; the present proposal adds the distinct question of how burdens and remedial resources are allocated following accountability processes.

Consider an entirely synthetic community model in which a rule violation is determined under stipulated procedures, its responsible actor accepts the determination, and a later remedial contribution is recorded. Members of the community recognize the provision of assistance, while the affected person loses access to an independent forum in which to question the authority-holder's use of shared resources. The public narrative could make the authority-holder's benevolence more visible than the material source of the remedy. The episode illustrates how *manifestation* and *relational* registers may diverge. It cannot support an allegation of manipulative intent without evidence of decision-making, obligations, participant consent, resource provenance, and feasible alternative procedures. A parallel scenario in which the assistance is transparent, freely accepted, independently reviewed, and accompanied by meaningful changes in authority would support a different assessment even when gratitude is equally visible. Institutional betrayal, genuine pastoral support, and strategic appropriation of repair therefore require different indicators.

Humanitarian assistance calls for particular caution because provision of life-sustaining support frequently follows a crisis caused by actors other than the assistance provider. The distribution of assistance generally aims to address needs or uphold rights; the person receiving aid is typically not an accountable wrongdoer subject to an authorized penalty. Withholding assistance may have sanction-like coercive effects in particular circumstances, but describing an ordinary eligibility decision as a *sanction* would require justification. The 2024 Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability frames nine commitments around the dignity, participation, protection, safe complaints, feedback, and ethical resource management of people affected by crises [10]. These commitments supply an independently developed normative benchmark for accountable assistance. They do not empirically establish that every organization implements the standard or that any particular aid decision violates it.

A constructed assistance case clarifies the methodological difference. After an independently caused displacement crisis, an organization allocates temporary shelter resources through an announced procedure. An applicant cannot contest a denial because appeals are processed solely by the staff member who made the initial eligibility judgment, and the applicant depends on that staff member for continued access to information. Such a configuration raises questions about review independence and power over a remedial pathway even though there may be no attributable sanction episode at all. If a separate official disciplinary measure against an aid worker leads the organization to withdraw services from the applicant, the case would more directly concern sanction-related incidence. The two events should not be merged for conceptual convenience. The first tests procedural accountability in aid distribution; the second tests the propagation of costs from a sanction to people beyond its nominal target.

These settings are also relevant to the conditions of valid participation. A signed consent form, a

Table 11: Comparative configurations of sanction-related burdens and their identification constraints

Setting	Potential burden channels	Candidate control interface	Key boundary or rival account
Household	Shared expenses, care hours, dependent members' opportunities	Spending decisions, obligations, access to outside support	Maintenance duties, consent, unavoidable shared loss
Workplace or firm	Staffing, wage and training opportunities, firm value	Managerial assignments, corporate budgets, entity-level penalty decisions	Organizational legal personhood, workload necessity, market effects
Public authority	Service provision, financial access, civilian livelihoods	Fiscal allocation, implementation discretion, intermediary compliance	Legal mandate, collective agency, international transmission
School or religious body	Learning access, membership, credibility, institutional care	Discipline, review, support eligibility, record keeping	Child protection, institutional mission, voluntary participation
Humanitarian assistance	Essential resources, complaint access, participation	Eligibility, distribution, referral, independent grievance channels	Need-based support often lacks any sanction episode

recorded statement of gratitude, or nominal access to a complaints process may coexist with practical fears of losing educational access, community membership, or essential assistance. Conversely, people may knowingly choose reciprocal obligations and assistance arrangements that carry costs. Effective alternatives, the availability of trusted independent review, and the consequences of dissent are relevant to distinguishing these cases. The research method should protect participants against the possibility that producing evidence for a theory of power will itself expose them to further disadvantage. Identifying which decisions can be observed without jeopardizing vulnerable people is an ethical condition of study, particularly in relationships involving minors, confidential pastoral information, or crisis-affected populations.

11.5 Cross-Context Comparability and Unmatched Mechanisms

The preceding configurations support a restricted comparative proposition. Selection of settings for analysis does not imply that families, employers, religious communities, or aid institutions generally behave coercively; the comparison concerns specified decision structures, including legitimate support and cooperative burden sharing. In more than one type of relationship, formal accountability can coexist with a distribution of subsequent costs that differs from the normative or administrative description of the sanction. Such divergence is a *comparative question* and a possible object of empirical reconstruction; its presence, scale, and causes must be established in each domain. Table 11 maps the principal sites of burden propagation, candidate steering interfaces, and domain-specific constraints. The table is a research-design aid, not a list of findings about any actual institution. Several rows include settings in which the observed harm could arise without an enforceable sanction or an actor with intentional burden-steering capacity.

Five distinctions define the permitted comparison. First, the *kind of target* matters. A natural person held liable for a personal act, a corporation punished as a legal entity, and a state subjected to external restrictions do not have interchangeable relations to the affected population. The allocation of public burdens under taxation or social insurance likewise depends on collective rules and political judgments that cannot be derived from individual penal responsibility. Second, the *source of authority* matters. Parental duties, managerial delegation, public regulation, organizational discipline, and humanitarian eligibility processes are grounded in different rules and expectations. A shared language of “power” is analytically useful only when it names the specific decision right, resource relationship, or credible interference capacity at issue. Third, the *function of the measure* matters. A punitive decision, protective

restriction, compensation order, emergency reallocation, and voluntary contribution may generate similar resource flows while remaining normatively distinct.

Fourth, the *causal interface* matters. A powerful actor might select among feasible budget allocations, control access to a complaints channel, choose the timing of disclosure, or influence a public justification. These are different interventions. An actor can be powerful in one domain while unable to steer burden incidence in another. The capacity criterion in Definition 9.2 must therefore be adapted to each domain-specific set of feasible regimes. The set must account for restrictions imposed by law, contract, professional duty, other participants' rights, and practical constraints. A comparison that imagines a legally impossible alternative would create an artificial appearance of avoidable harm. Fifth, the *historical horizon* matters. Immediate expenses, later loss of employment or schooling, public reputational effects, and changes in an institution's complaint procedures operate at different scales and cannot be converted into a shared scalar without additional evaluative commitments.

A useful comparative case design would hold selected characteristics of an accountability episode reasonably stable while varying the implementation pathway. Within a workplace, one could compare documented cases of similar sanctions and similar staffing constraints in which independent reviewers did or did not control the subsequent task allocation. Across households, a researcher might compare similar formal financial obligations under contrasting access to protected accounts and outside mediation. Across public institutions, analysis might focus on whether an independently authorized relief mechanism prevents costs from being shifted to dependent service users. Such comparisons remain subject to selection, confounding, and interference. They would need detailed context-specific protocols for defining cases and relevant alternatives. Cross-domain comparisons can test a mechanism's portability, but they are generally weaker for estimating a common numerical effect of "power" on "punishment," since those terms do not have a shared measurement scale across the domains.

Adverse cases have particular theoretical value. One could observe a household member in a position of authority who voluntarily carries additional costs to protect dependents; a corporate manager whose discretion is curtailed and whose personal prospects worsen after an enforcement action; a state-level intervention that leaves the claimed incumbent power unchanged; or an aid provider whose complaints system expands recipients' autonomy despite the provider's control of scarce resources. These are potential outcomes within the same conceptual vocabulary. A finding that the accountable actor had substantial formal status but lacked control over the observed incidence pathway would count against a case-specific steering claim. A finding that a suspected dependent could refuse the arrangement at reasonable cost would require the investigator to revise the account of domination. A finding that initial burden externalization generated stronger countervailing alliances would challenge a monotonic power-reproduction hypothesis. These examples discipline the theory's causal reach and preserve the possibility of falsification in a suitably specified empirical design.

The comparative analysis also reveals two non-equivalences central to the ethical interpretation. *Incidence-sensitive accountability* does not require eliminating every burden to family members, employees, or publics; legitimate sanctions and remedial actions may involve unavoidable shared effects. It requires distinguishing who is formally accountable, who experiences what costs, which allocations were discretionary, and which protections are justified under the applicable normative framework. *Generative effects* similarly do not imply that responsibility dissolves into an impersonal network. Individuals and institutions may hold determinate duties under law or morality, while the consequences of their acts traverse multiple relationships and transform later opportunities. The historical relation is relevant to explaining how accountability is realized and experienced; it does not replace the independent arguments needed to determine responsibility.

A portability failure condition. The apparent similarity of an official fine, an internal disciplinary decision, and a reduction in access to voluntary assistance is not evidence that each is an instance of one institution-independent punitive mechanism. In a setting where the operative legal competence, counterfactual options, and rights of third parties cannot be mapped without loss, the category of sanction incidence must be restricted or replaced by a domain-specific account of burden distribution. A claim of

cross-context portability requires demonstrating comparable causal decision points, not merely similar vocabulary for power or disadvantage. Cases that defeat this mapping are negative results for the scope of the proposed framework, even if their burdens remain substantively important.

Cross-context comparison is warranted where a sanction decision, a burden pathway, feasible decision rights, and later opportunities can be specified under the local rules. It should cease where distinctions between public punishment, organizational liability, informal discipline, and voluntary assistance carry decisive explanatory weight. The comparisons therefore generate candidate mechanisms and adverse cases, rather than a single verdict applicable across institutions. Section 12 considers safeguards at the interfaces that remain comparable.

12 Accountability Safeguards and Institutional Design Implications

The role of this section is to translate the preceding conceptual and comparative analysis into a provisional framework for institutional design. A formal sanction may identify the responsible party while leaving the consequences of enforcement to be distributed through relationships over which that party retains influence. Institutional arrangements should therefore be examined at several separate interfaces: assessment of responsibility, specification and execution of the authorized measure, distribution of its effects, opportunities for affected participants to contest the distribution, and independence of subsequent repair. This section develops five corresponding design considerations. It draws selectively on established work concerning public integrity, grievance mechanisms, children's participation, and restorative safeguards. The resulting design considerations are proposals for comparison, not pre-existing international standards or empirically validated interventions.

The argument is conditional on the legal and institutional setting. A criminal fine, a regulatory penalty on a firm, an employment sanction, a protective household measure, and an obligation to compensate a victim have different authorities and purposes. A measure can be valid while generating serious external costs, and some shared costs may be unavoidable under defensible public arrangements. Institutional design consequently concerns the justification and governability of those costs as well as the existence of the sanction itself. Neither perfect individualization of burdens nor permanent independence from every social dependency is assumed to be feasible. The relevant standard is one of reasoned scrutiny: competent decision makers should have ways to recognize materially significant third-party burdens, distinguish feasible and lawful alternatives, and respond to contestable allocations while respecting the rights and duties of the participants.

12.1 Responsibility Assessment and Incidence-Sensitive Evaluation

An incidence-sensitive accountability process has two objects of assessment. The first is the determination of conduct, responsibility, liability, and the authorized consequence. The second is the pathway through which executing that consequence affects specific people, institutions, and shared resources. The second inquiry does not reopen a supported finding merely because the sanction imposes hardship on others. It identifies whether the burden pathway is part of the legally intended measure, an incidental consequence of interdependence, or an alterable allocation attributable to subsequent decisions. The distinction follows from the separation of an authorized sanction episode and a heterogeneous burden record in Section 9. In particular, Definition 9.2 requires attention to feasible alternatives and specified control interfaces before a claim of burden steering can be made.

The proposed design begins with an *incidence record* accompanying the relevant enforcement record when the anticipated effects warrant further review. Such a record would identify the designated accountable actor, the legal or institutional purpose of the measure, the executing body, the expected source of payments or other compliance activities, and those third parties for whom serious consequences are reasonably foreseeable. It would preserve types rather than assigning every burden a common currency. A reduction in disposable income, an increase in necessary care hours, a missed examination, and loss of access to independent representation call for different observations and normative arguments. If monitor-

ing instruments measure only the amount of money collected or the percentage of orders completed, they may mistake administrative completion for successful individualization of accountability. Conversely, if they measure only hardship among relatives, they may overlook the lawful basis of an obligation or the genuinely shared character of the resources affected.

The temporal resolution of a review must also be declared. An immediate accounting period can show that a penalty was paid from a named account, but it may conceal an associated reduction in another member's access to essential resources or a later assignment of unpaid work. A longer observation horizon can reveal subsequent dependence, although attribution becomes harder as unrelated events accumulate. Incidence-sensitive evaluation should therefore record the date and type of an implemented measure, subsequent reallocations, relevant intervening events, and plausible comparison paths. The discrete chronology used in Section 9 is a practical modeling choice; it does not imply that the social meaning of harm, responsibility, or future possibility is exhausted by the selected time coordinate.

A constructed household example illustrates the design distinction. Suppose an adult pays a valid fine and, afterward, reduces expenditures supporting a dependent child. A conventional compliance indicator registers complete payment by the formally sanctioned adult. A burden review additionally examines the source of funds, the adult's control over household budgeting, any lawful maintenance obligations, the existence of feasible reductions in the adult's own discretionary expenditure, and the effects on the child's essential opportunities. Even if the evidence supports that account, the judgment remains multidimensional. Payment from shared assets might have been authorized and practically necessary; an imposed reduction in essential support could be subject to distinct legal restrictions. The first question identifies the penalty's target. The second locates its effects. The third concerns the permissibility of the post-sanction allocation. Keeping those questions separate protects the integrity of responsibility assessment while expanding the information available for proportionate safeguards.

A similar difficulty arises when organizations face financial sanctions. Entity-level liability does not automatically make each employee or shareholder personally culpable, and legal personhood cannot be dissolved into the personal acts of a manager. An organizational burden review might examine whether a post-penalty staffing reduction was necessitated by documented liquidity constraints, selectively directed toward less powerful workers, or offset by discretionary distributions benefiting decision makers. A finding of unequal exposure alone cannot resolve these possibilities. The assessment would need comparable financial records, decision histories, governing duties, and an account of market or regulatory constraints. This is an instance of the causal and normative non-equivalence emphasized in Section 11.

Three practical outcomes should be distinguished. An assessment may affirm both the sanction and its implementation; it may affirm responsibility while modifying the implementation mechanism to protect a third party; or it may identify a separate wrongful intervention in the burden pathway that calls for its own remedy. None follows mechanically from the incidence record. Policy makers must decide whether a legal system authorizes exemptions, protected accounts, hardship procedures, direct personal penalties, proportionate installments, employment protections, or other instruments. Each alternative can shift costs elsewhere, reduce deterrence, or introduce administrative burdens. The case for a safeguard therefore requires an explicit account of beneficiaries, residual cost bearers, institutional competence, and possible evasive adaptation by the accountable actor.

12.2 Independent Oversight and Effective Enforcement

Independent oversight addresses a particular structural vulnerability: an interested actor may influence both the conduct under review and the practical implementation of its consequences. The appropriate institutional response begins by mapping specific decision rights. Determining whether an act occurred, identifying the applicable rule, setting a consequence, receiving a payment, deciding how organizational resources are reallocated, handling an appeal, and certifying repair are separable functions. Their assignment to distinct people or bodies may limit particular conflicts of interest. Independence is therefore relational and task-specific: a reviewer can be formally outside an organization yet rely on the accused manager for essential records, funding, or access to witnesses; an internal officer can have meaningful

protection through guaranteed tenure, enforceable disclosure duties, and independent appeal. Organizational titles alone cannot demonstrate effective independence.

The *OECD Public Integrity Handbook* discusses external oversight, objective enforcement, complaints from third parties, and the complementary roles of internal and external control in public-sector integrity systems [29]. Its scope is public governance, and it does not establish the sanction-incidence theory advanced here. It offers an institutional comparison: review should examine whether the accountable entity's own administrative chain possesses excessive control over information, remedies, or implementation. A proposed incidence audit extends the question from whether rules were properly followed to whether discretionary follow-on decisions created a materially different burden pathway from the one presupposed by the original sanction. Such an audit would be a research and design proposal requiring independent justification, resources, and evaluation.

An operational design might separate four roles: a competent authority for the underlying responsibility determination; a body implementing the authorized measure; a reviewer able to scrutinize the actual source and distribution of compliance burdens; and an accessible forum for affected third parties. In small households, firms, or schools, four fully independent institutions may be unrealistic. Functional separation may instead be provided through external advocates, independent financial trustees, labor representation, ombuds procedures, judicial review where available, or an appropriately authorized child-protection service. Their legal competence differs. A mediator cannot unilaterally alter a court judgment; an employment representative cannot override a protective order; a humanitarian complaints mechanism is not a criminal tribunal. The requirement is a defensible allocation of review functions within the applicable structure, rather than a uniform bureaucracy imposed across settings.

Oversight should be capable of examining implementation evidence that an accountable actor does not solely curate. Relevant materials may include budget authorizations, assignment records, correspondence, repair schedules, access logs, and independent accounts of affected persons. A decision-maker's testimony remains important evidence, but a process dependent exclusively on that testimony provides limited capacity to test incidence pathways. Evidentiary independence is also not equivalent to uncontrolled disclosure. Access should be bounded by privacy, professional confidentiality, witness safety, data minimization, and rights of reply. Detailed household expenditure records, for example, can expose vulnerable members to additional monitoring if made available without restrictions. Safeguards must therefore regulate who may request evidence, for what purpose, under what protective conditions, and with which correction or deletion procedures.

Institutional response needs more than an independent final decision. Consider a workplace in which an adjudicator properly sanctions a senior manager while the manager retains authority over staffing assignments. If the manager subsequently diverts the work of compliance to junior staff, the disciplinary record can remain legally complete while the organizational incidence pathway changes. An incidence review would compare feasible post-sanction staffing arrangements, identify who made the assignments, evaluate applicable managerial obligations, and determine whether affected employees could contest the allocation without retaliation. A separate rule governing conflicts of interest during sanction execution may be more effective than a second review of original culpability. Conversely, a firm facing mandatory staffing requirements might have no comparable alternative; extra review cannot create resources that are unavailable.

Independence should itself be auditable. Indicators might include the number of recusal decisions, availability of third-party complaints, the source of the reviewer's budget, delay between a complaint and protective action, actual correction of burden-shifting decisions, and whether affected people can seek another forum without losing essential support. These are candidate process measures, not evidence that any particular institution functions well. The review system may also become a new source of discretionary power, creating delays, costs, and unequal access. Its procedures and decisions should therefore be open to proportionate scrutiny, with clear authority boundaries and avenues of correction. The institutional objective is to constrain arbitrary interference over sanction pathways without replacing one unreviewable allocator with another.

12.3 Protections for Third Parties and Dependents

Third-party protection concerns people who bear sanction-related costs without being designated as the accountable target. Its normative foundations differ across types of relationship. A dependent child, a partner who knowingly enters a shared financial arrangement, a worker employed by a sanctioned corporation, and a civilian affected by public restrictions possess different rights, duties, and feasible alternatives. A general framework should therefore begin with an analysis of legally and morally relevant vulnerability, rather than a presumption that every redistributed cost is illegitimate. Some family support, shared insurance, public expenditure, and organizational risk allocation may be justified independently of the underlying wrong. Other burdens may represent a breach of protective obligations or a separately imposed deprivation.

In matters concerning children, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* provides context-specific legal principles. Article 2(2) requires States Parties to protect children against discrimination or punishment on the basis of a parent's, guardian's, or family member's status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs. Article 3 makes the child's best interests a primary consideration in the covered actions concerning children, while Article 12 addresses opportunities for children to express their views and to be heard in proceedings affecting them [42]. These provisions are treaty provisions addressed to States Parties, operating with further interpretive and domestic-law conditions. They should not be treated as a self-executing formula for every private budget dispute. Their relevance to sanction incidence is nonetheless substantial: a child should not disappear analytically merely because the sanction formally names an adult, and the process of assessing the child's interests should be competent to identify burdens that adults experience differently or do not report.

The proposed framework distinguishes *baseline protections*, *mitigation of consequential harms*, and *allocation of residual costs*. Baseline protections identify essential entitlements and obligations that an adult's wrongdoing or later sanction ordinarily does not erase. Mitigation concerns practical measures such as continuity of schooling, substitute care, emergency financial support, safe housing, or access to independent guidance where permitted and necessary. Residual allocation asks who funds these measures and with what legal authority. A court or regulator may be unable to require an unrelated third party to finance protection. Public funds can spread costs through taxation; nonprofit assistance can rely on voluntary donors; a legally accountable adult can retain independent duties of maintenance or restitution. These financing pathways create different kinds of obligation and cannot be grouped together as if mitigation eliminates social cost.

Consider two possible responses to a household sanction. In the first, a penalty is paid without affecting a dependent person's access to food, healthcare, or schooling, because the accountable adult reduces discretionary consumption or uses a lawfully available installment procedure. In the second, the same adult withdraws the dependent person's support, and an external agency supplies emergency assistance. The emergency transfer may be justified and necessary, yet a complete accountability assessment would still ask why the withdrawal occurred, whether alternative allocations existed, and whether the adult's separate support obligations remain enforceable. A protective intervention may improve the dependent person's immediate condition while leaving the original controller's discretion substantially unchanged. Mitigation success and accountability success are therefore separable evaluations.

The design should also avoid creating perverse incentives. If an accountable actor anticipates that every imposed cost will be absorbed by dependents or relieved entirely by third parties, some institutional arrangements could weaken the intended burden on that actor. This is a conditional concern requiring evidence about the relevant incentive mechanism; it should not be used to withhold basic protection from vulnerable people. An incidence-sensitive instrument might combine independently administered support for the affected third party with legally authorized recovery from the accountable actor, restrictions on retaliatory reallocations, or a change in implementation method. Where recovery would produce still greater harms, a different balance may be required. Normative evaluation must state its priority rules rather than portray heterogeneous harms as already ranked by a single numerical objective.

Protection also has a generative dimension. A temporary shelter payment, protected savings account, wage-protection mechanism, or independent care arrangement can change the set of effectively feasible

actions available to a person after a sanction. Section 9 treats this set as contextually defined, not as a complete enumeration of human possibilities. An intervention that improves immediate consumption but conditions future support on silence may preserve an important dependency; one that grants access to representation and a protected decision channel may enlarge meaningful possibilities of contestation. Evidence about these effects needs a suitable historical horizon, consent-sensitive data collection, and a comparison with the options that were realistically available. Protection can be effective without producing complete independence, and efforts to increase formal choice may fail if practical constraints remain unchanged.

12.4 Interpretive Plurality, Contestation, and Exit Capacity

An accountability arrangement is vulnerable when the actor whose conduct or allocations are disputed controls the only legitimate account of the episode. Section 6 distinguished mistaken responsibility attribution from interpretive closure under correctly attributed responsibility. In the second situation, everyone may acknowledge who committed the wrong, yet the identity of the actual burden bearers, the availability of alternative allocations, and the meaning of subsequent assistance remain under the practical control of the same actor. Procedural safeguards should therefore protect the capacity to challenge *incidence explanations* in addition to contesting a finding of culpability. Such protection concerns opportunities for intelligible representation and responsive assessment, rather than a demand that all accounts receive equal evidentiary weight.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights offer an established reference point within their own field. Principle 31 describes non-judicial grievance mechanisms using criteria such as legitimacy, accessibility, predictability, equity, transparency, rights-compatibility, and learning; operational-level mechanisms additionally emphasize engagement and dialogue [43]. These criteria do not constitute a universal grievance code for households, schools, or criminal courts. They nevertheless illuminate a recurring design issue: the formal existence of a complaints address differs from an affected participant's actual capacity to use it on informed and fair terms. This paper adds a specific incidence question to that broader concern: can a participant dispute the source, pathway, and subsequent effects of a cost that the formal record assigns to someone else?

A meaningful opportunity for contestation has informational, material, procedural, and protective conditions. *Informational access* includes understandable reasons for the original measure, a record of the implementation decision, and a way to correct material errors. *Material access* may require affordable advice, translation, protected time away from work, or independent transport. *Procedural access* concerns jurisdiction, deadlines, a hearing of relevant evidence, and an appropriate standard of review. *Protective conditions* concern retaliation, confidentiality, safety, and credible access to interim relief. A complaints procedure can exist formally while becoming practically unavailable if using it threatens employment, housing, care, or continued access to an essential service. The adverse effects of contesting may themselves become new relational burdens, even where no explicit threat is recorded.

Plurality also needs discipline. A third-party reviewer should be able to hear competing descriptions, distinguish testimony from financial records, give reasons for accepting some claims, and preserve a channel for revising an incomplete finding. Equally, parties accused of wrongdoing or improper burden allocation retain procedural interests: notice of the allegation, a fair chance to respond, protection against unsupported public accusation, and proportionate treatment of sensitive evidence. A design that merely replaces a powerful family's narrative with an unreviewable institutional narrative would reproduce the epistemic problem at a different location. Institutional credibility emerges from corrigible procedures, competent evidence assessment, and answerability for errors, not solely from the external status of the reviewer.

Exit capacity broadens this design question. Hirschman's distinction between exit and voice is relevant to the availability of alternatives [22]. In a household, independent residence may be materially or legally constrained; in employment, the theoretical opportunity to resign may come with serious immigration, health insurance, or economic consequences; in schooling, transfer may sever important rela-

tionships. The present analysis therefore treats exit as an effectively feasible option within a specified decision domain and institutional setting. A safeguard could improve contestation without demanding exit, while a safe exit option may strengthen the credibility of refusal even when never exercised. The preferred arrangement depends on the affected person's rights, choices, resources, and safety, and cannot be decided from a general model of domination alone.

A constructed comparison clarifies the joint effect. Two institutions adopt identical grievance policies and announce that affected members can appeal sanction-related budget allocations. In the first, an independent body can obtain the relevant documents, issue a reasoned decision, and protect complainants from retaliation. In the second, appeals are transmitted to the actor responsible for the original allocation, who controls the claimant's work schedule and access to evidence. Nominal rights coincide, yet effective opportunities to contest diverge. A study that examines only the text of the grievance policy misses the relational condition of voice. A study that examines only complaint frequency is also incomplete: low frequency may mean few legitimate complaints, low awareness, fear of retaliation, or successful informal resolution. Mixed evidence, including confidentiality-protected accounts and process tracing, would be needed to distinguish these alternatives.

12.5 Remedial Independence and the Governance of Repair

Repair creates a further allocation problem because the resources used to address harm may remain under the control of the actor responsible for it. Section 7 distinguished obligations of restitution, voluntary generosity, selective assistance, and the possible appropriation of moral recognition. A design for remedial independence need not prohibit direct help by accountable actors. They may have enforceable duties to repair and may also make valuable contributions beyond those duties. The institutional concern is whether delivery conditions permit an accountable actor to exchange indispensable relief for renewed authority, suppressed testimony, or unjustified waiver of independent claims. The evaluation therefore examines both what was supplied and the control relations established through supplying it.

The design can distinguish at least three kinds of decision: determining the extent and legal or ethical basis of a remedial obligation, administering its delivery, and verifying whether the affected person's position has in fact changed. Where one interested party controls all three decisions, an apparent remedy can become difficult to contest. Depending on context, an independent administrator, escrow mechanism, external caseworker, court-supervised plan, protected account, or transparently governed community process may constrain this concentration. Each arrangement introduces additional costs and authority, requiring oversight of the administrator as well. Independence is functional and limited; the affected person's own preferences should remain significant, and an imposed third-party process can be harmful when it overrides informed participation or creates unwanted publicity.

Restorative practices provide an instructive but domain-specific point of comparison. The United Nations Economic and Social Council's 2002 Basic Principles concern restorative justice programmes in criminal matters and attend to consent, safety, and power imbalances [41]. UNODC guidance further discusses the risks that unequal power and unsafe participation pose to such processes [44]. Their relevance here is the procedural distinction between a genuine opportunity to participate and apparent agreement produced under severe dependency. They do not authorize the importation of criminal restorative procedures into every family, workplace, or humanitarian setting. In some circumstances, independent enforcement and protective distance may be more appropriate than dialogue, particularly when a participant's safety or freedom to decline cannot be secured.

A repair protocol sensitive to incidence would document the baseline harm and the party's acknowledged or adjudicated responsibilities; distinguish support owed as of right from discretionary additional assistance; identify the sources and legal ownership of remedial resources; specify conditions, deadlines, and recourse in the event of nonperformance; and provide an independent account of delivery and later burdens where feasible. Such records should remain proportionate to the case. A private family apology need not become an extensive administrative file, and disclosure of sensitive experiences may expose participants to further harm. A formal institutional settlement, by contrast, may justify a more elaborate

Table 12: Proposed institutional interfaces for incidence-sensitive accountability

Interface	Provisional safeguard	Relevant evidence	Possible limitation
Responsibility and incidence	Separate review of formal target and actual burden pathway	Authorized measure, payments, resource and care allocations	Shared effects may be unavoidable
Oversight and enforcement	Independent scrutiny of discretionary implementation	Decision rights, recusal, enforcement and audit records	Additional costs or capture of reviewer
Third-party protection	Protected essentials and context-specific mitigation	Dependence, entitlements, service continuity, residual financing	Mitigation may shift costs or weaken incentives
Voice and exit	Accessible challenge, anti-retaliation and feasible alternatives	Complaints, reasons, reprisals, access barriers, protective action	Nominal access may have high practical costs
Remedial governance	Separate duty, delivery and verification where justified	Obligations, resource origins, conditions and actual relief	Overproceduralization or unwanted disclosure

record of implementation when funds, dependent persons, or future rights are at stake. The appropriate documentation threshold depends on material consequences, legal duties, privacy, and the participants' informed choices.

Moral recognition is a separate object of inquiry. Genuine restitution may deserve public acknowledgment where the affected parties consent to such recognition. A public story emphasizing the benefactor's role can nevertheless obscure the original allocation of burdens, the beneficiary's continued losses, or the fact that repair was legally required. A possible institutional response is to support accurate records and participants' representational agency where lawful and proportionate. Such measures should not regulate expressions of gratitude or impose disclosure of private relationships. Investigators should ask whether claims of rescue contributed to a documented expansion of discretionary control, whether observers had access to important omitted facts, and whether a claimant could contest the account without forfeiting assistance. These evidentiary requirements preserve a distinction between deserved praise, misleading publicity, strategic self-presentation, and the independent social value of receiving help.

Table 12 summarizes the design interfaces and the types of evidence needed to evaluate them. The table describes candidate safeguards and associated failure modes; it is not a scorecard established by field trials or a rule that the institutional arrangement with the most procedures is necessarily best.

The five interfaces constitute a conditional design framework, not an algorithm for inferring justice from administrative indicators. Any proposed intervention should be assessed against at least four questions. First, is its authority grounded in the applicable legal and ethical arrangement? Second, does it reduce a clearly specified avoidable burden or unfair concentration of discretion, relative to a feasible comparator? Third, what new burdens or dependencies does the intervention itself generate? Fourth, can affected participants contest the intervention and correct adverse effects without losing essential protections? The framework can support heterogeneous answers, including cases where an institution permissibly accepts a shared cost, preserves a proportionate sanction, or declines to mandate a particular reparative form.

Incidence-sensitive design calls for reviewing effects as well as authorized decisions. Independent examination of implementation, accessible contestation, protection of dependents, and remedial independence are candidate safeguards whose legality, proportionality, and secondary consequences must be assessed locally. Table 12 maps these candidates to observable decision interfaces. Section 13 specifies research designs capable of testing whether particular safeguards change actual burdens and future options.

13 Empirical Research Obligations, Theoretical Limits, and Synthesis

This section specifies the research obligations that follow from the proposed account of sanction incidence in asymmetric relational structures. The central explanatory claim concerns a possible disjunction between formally assigned accountability and the practical burdens borne by participants whose relations are affected by sanction enforcement. Its distinctive, provisional extension is that actors with control over implementation, resources, or remedial interfaces may alter these burdens and the relational conditions under which subsequent accountability becomes feasible. Establishing such a mechanism requires evidence extending beyond a record of punishment or an observed inequality in loss. The present section accordingly develops an empirical protocol, explicit causal rivals and adverse cases, ethical conditions for inquiry, the limits of the formal and ontological framework, and a staged programme of comparative evaluation. The analysis reports no original fieldwork, effect estimates, or findings about identifiable households or institutions. Its examples are constructed and are independent of private accounts.

The preceding sections distinguish responsibility attribution, authorized punishment, implementation, heterogeneous incidence, interpretations of accountability, control over repair, and possible transformations of relational capacity. These components are connected in a proposed explanation, while each preserves an independent evidential question. A documentary statement that a sanction was paid establishes an administrative fact under an appropriate recordkeeping regime. The lived incidence of that payment depends on resources displaced, work transferred, alternative sources of support, and the decision processes governing the displacement. A subsequent decline in a dependent participant's options may be causally connected to the sanction, to a separate economic disturbance, to an enduring inequality that predates the episode, or to several such conditions together. A defensible research programme needs designs capable of separating those possibilities. Its methodological commitments should remain compatible with the formal restraint of Section 9, the three analytical registers of Section 10, and the institutional diversity examined in Section 11.

13.1 Measurement, Case Selection, and Process Evidence

The primary unit of empirical inquiry is a *bounded sanction episode within a documented relational history*. A case definition specifies the relevant norm or institutional arrangement, the conduct at issue, the authority competent to attribute responsibility, the formal or informal response, the actors plausibly affected, and the observation or reconstruction boundary. These components should be recorded independently, including instances of disputed responsibility or contested competence. A legal penalty, an employer's disciplinary decision, and a family's withdrawal of privileges warrant different coding of authorization and procedural validity. Coding their burden channels with a shared comparative vocabulary need not erase their separate normative and jurisdictional foundations.

A minimal episode record would describe the responsible party as determined under the relevant criteria; the sanctioned target; the enforcement channel; the immediate administrative transaction or restriction; the participants whose resources, labour, access, or opportunities changed; the agents able to authorize or redirect those changes; and the available sources for each claim. It would further distinguish contemporaneous testimony from subsequent recollection and from the researcher's reconstruction. As Section 9 makes explicit, the typed history H_t of Equation 1 is a representation conditioned by chosen categories and incomplete observations. For empirical research, its temporal indices require an explicitly stated observation order or causal partial order. The terms *preceding*, *subsequent*, and *continuation* refer to documented order relations within that design rather than a universal, independently established arrow of historical reality.

Measurement must preserve the heterogeneity of incidence. Financial impacts could be represented by changes in liquid resources, outstanding obligations, asset disposal, access to shared accounts, or the affordability of essential goods. Care and labour impacts could be represented by alterations in caregiving schedules, uncompensated workload, forgone employment, or foregone educational participation. Reputational, emotional, and participatory effects require instruments and qualitative protocols appropriate to their particular meanings. A recorded hour of caregiving and an observed reduction in access

to a complaint channel occupy different domains. Equation 2 therefore employs typed burden dimensions with potentially partial comparisons. The researcher should report dimension-specific uncertainty and missingness and document any additional evaluative rule used to aggregate them. The choice of a composite indicator is itself a methodological and sometimes normative intervention.

Evidence for an *incidence mechanism* should include the pathway linking enforcement to another person's burden. Payment receipts and institutional records can establish a formal transaction; payroll, account-use histories, time-use records, work reassignment documents, and confidential interviews can help identify who lost alternatives or absorbed additional obligations. An independent counterfactual comparison remains necessary before those losses can be attributed causally to the sanction. A household experiencing deprivation after a fine may have encountered an unrelated income shock. A team facing additional work after an employee's suspension may have redistributed tasks under a pre-existing, collectively approved rule. A cross-sectional association between sanction exposure and hardship provides an initial trace, whereas the causal mechanism requires a more specific reconstruction.

Process tracing offers an established methodological resource for this reconstruction. Collier's account emphasizes diagnostic evidence, careful description, and the placement of observations within a causal sequence [7]. Applied here, the procedure would specify in advance the rival explanations for an observed burden, the traces predicted by each explanation, and the conditions under which a trace is discriminating. Relevant observations may include an explicit instruction to transfer a payment to a dependent, the use of a resource veto after a sanction becomes payable, a documented pattern of reallocations under comparable episodes, or evidence that the ostensibly powerful actor could neither decide nor foresee the burden's route. An investigator should avoid construing a participant's retrospective account as proof of the full causal history; testimony can be significant evidence while remaining situated, incomplete, or disputed. Institutional documents also warrant contextual interpretation, particularly when the relevant institution controls their production and classification.

Case selection should include situations chosen for their diagnostic differences. A proposed initial matrix could contrast cases with correct responsibility attribution and unequal incidence; cases with correct attribution and comparatively matched incidence; cases with blame reversal; and cases of burdens shared by voluntary or collectively authorized arrangements. Within each class, variation in resource concentration, independent oversight, exit options, and the existence of alternative payers may help distinguish mechanisms. Researchers should also seek episodes in which the formally accountable actor retains high status but lacks control over enforcement, as well as episodes in which a less powerful participant nevertheless steers a consequential resource interface. The latter cases test the limits of equating social rank with operational capacity. Cases should be coded under the same evidence thresholds regardless of which participant alleges a wrong, controls a resource, receives assistance, or disputes a public narrative. Disagreement among sources warrants an explicit unresolved or contested designation where the available material cannot settle it.

A limited prospective design could measure resources and decision rules at a baseline defined by the particular research protocol, document any subsequently observed enforcement episodes, and follow selected dimensions of incidence and contestation at justified intervals. Ethical permission and participant safety may make repeated contact infeasible in household settings. Archival or retrospective designs may therefore be preferable where prospective inquiry would expose participants to pressure. The evidential trade-off should be documented instead of treating a more intrusive design as automatically more rigorous. Comparative samples involving only public institutional records may provide stronger procedural reproducibility but weaker access to less visible household transfers. The design must specify which causal claims its observations can reasonably support.

Interference between connected participants makes isolated-unit comparisons especially demanding. In the conventional potential-outcomes vocabulary, one person's exposure or sanction can affect another person's outcomes. Research on causal inference under interference provides explicit methods and estimands for some settings, subject to assumptions about interference structure, treatment assignment, and observable outcomes [25, 39]. The present paper's propagation proposal resembles that research problem at the level of affected relational units. It does not follow that interference methods developed

Table 13: Empirical distinctions and diagnostic evidence for relational sanction incidence

Inference	Indicative evidence	Principal ambiguity
Formal accountability	Responsibility finding, sanction authorization, implementing record	Competence, validity, review status
Observed incidence	Resource loss, care burden, interrupted opportunity, affected testimony	Baseline hardship and measurement error
Causal pass-through	Timing, allocation rules, transactions, process observations, counterfactual comparison	Unrelated shocks and joint obligations
Steering capacity	Decision rights, credible alternatives, control of accounts, veto or delegation power	Nominal rank without operational control
Exercise and intention	Recorded choices, contemporaneous communications, repeated responses to alternatives	Shared motives, retrospective inference
Relational continuation	Changes in exit, voice, resource access, oversight, or bargaining conditions	Independent institutional or economic changes

for other applications immediately identify household coercion, workplace burden steering, or the ethical legitimacy of an allocation. A candidate evaluation must define exposure mappings, the scope of spillover connections, plausible comparison regimes, and the consequences of unobserved ties. For rare or contested sanctions, transparent within-case analysis may provide more informative diagnostics than a nominally quantitative estimate unsupported by comparable observations.

Table 13 organizes the levels of evidence that would be required to move from an observable burden to a claim of actor-conditioned steering. Its columns identify analytically different questions; the table does not impose a uniform evidentiary standard across criminal, familial, administrative, and organizational settings.

13.2 Rival Causal Histories and Adverse Cases

The central steering hypothesis requires a rival-sensitive causal design. A sanction may generate burdens outside the formally targeted actor through several distinct processes. *Incidental spillover* describes consequences arising from interdependence without an identifiable allocation intervention by the accountable actor. *Anticipated pass-through* describes a pattern in which an actor foresees that a sanction will affect others, even when the actor does not actively choose the route. *Directed externalization* attributes a distributional change to a specific exercise of control, subject to evidence about the feasible alternative actions and the actor's practical authority. These categories should be investigated as possible causal descriptions rather than fixed labels attached to a participant at the outset. A single episode may include multiple channels, and the evidence may support only a partial classification.

One rival is *ordinary relational interdependence*. A household that shares an essential budget may experience reduced consumption across members after a penalty is collected, irrespective of the payer's intention. Such shared loss can be severe, unjust in its distribution, or relevant to preventive policy. Its occurrence supplies a reason to study incidence while leaving the attribution of deliberate steering unresolved. A second rival is *legitimate collective allocation*. An institution may distribute the work associated with an employee's suspension under an independently adopted rota, or a household may agree to mutual assistance after independent deliberation and with meaningful opportunities to decline. The same observable transfer of labour might occur through both an imposed allocation and a freely accepted one. Evidence concerning decision procedure, coercive constraints, and feasible alternatives distinguishes these histories.

A third rival is *structural dependence without episode-specific intervention*. A dominant actor may benefit from an existing hierarchy, yet a particular burden shift could arise through automatic contract

rules or institutional procedures beyond that actor's control. This case separates the broader social background that enables vulnerability from the episode-level causal claim that a specific actor steered the burden. A fourth rival is *exogenous disturbance*: job loss, illness, changes in public benefits, price increases, or another sanction may simultaneously affect the household or organization. In these cases, temporal proximity is insufficient evidence of causation. A fifth rival concerns *measurement and selection*. Interviews with people seeking remedial help may disproportionately reveal visible harm; administrative data may omit private resource transfers; and unavailable witnesses may be precisely those whose participation was constrained. Selective observation can produce a distorted account in either direction.

The proposed model should be exposed to adverse cases that might reduce the plausibility of its distinctive claims. High formal status with demonstrably constrained decision rights would challenge a simple status-to-steering inference. A sanctioned actor who absorbs most costs despite extensive discretion would challenge a general expectation of self-serving redirection. A dependent who gains independent resources and stronger procedural voice after an episode would challenge a one-directional power-reproduction story. A household with severe financial spillovers but documented voluntary decisions would show that unequal incidence and deliberate coercion can diverge. A formally sanctioned organization whose managers personally bear meaningful reputational or career consequences, while innocent shareholders remain partly exposed, illustrates mixed incidence rather than total evasion. These are important observations even if they complicate the theory's application.

There is a further possibility of *reactive institutional reform*. Public exposure of an unfair allocation may trigger an independent audit, changes to shared-account rules, or new access to grievance channels. The immediate burden distribution could then coexist with reduced authority over future decisions. Sections 8 and 9 already allow distinct admissible continuations to share similar present burden vectors. An empirical theory that predicts reinforcement in all exposed cases would therefore impose an additional and currently unsupported assumption. The defensible hypothesis is conditional: reproduction becomes more plausible where burden redistribution measurably worsens affected participants' alternatives, where the actor retains effective decision rights, and where independent constraints do not counteract the change. Each condition requires its own evidence.

Two forms of inferential reversal deserve special care. First, an actor can have a capacity to intervene without exercising it. Sections 4 and 9 separate steering capacity, actual intervention, and motivation. Second, an observed intervention can be justified under circumstances that an external observer initially misunderstands. Emergency redistribution may protect vulnerable participants, shared payments may express chosen solidarity, and institutional delegation may be required to maintain essential services. Such justifications are open to independent scrutiny. Neither the structural possibility of abuse nor the presence of a legitimate general rationale establishes the moral status of an individual episode.

A useful case report would therefore present a claim table identifying: the alleged mechanism; the evidence directly bearing on it; evidence bearing on alternatives; the possible impact of missing records; the scope of the counterfactual comparison; and the remaining uncertainty. A claim that an actor *could redirect* burdens requires evidence about feasible decision alternatives, whereas a claim that the actor *did redirect* burdens requires a specified intervention and causally diagnostic traces. A claim that the actor *intended to evade* personal costs adds an evidential layer concerning knowledge, objectives, and available choices. A judgment that the intervention was wrongful adds a further normative layer concerning duties, rights, sanctions, proportionality, and procedural legitimacy. The distinctive contribution of the research programme depends on keeping these layers visible under both supportive and adverse cases.

Selection, measurement, and post-treatment adjustment. An adversarial analysis should also test whether the cases entering a dataset have been selected by a variable affected by both intervention and outcome. For example, participation in a complaints process can depend on resource control and on experienced hardship; restricting the sample to complainants may generate misleading associations even if the respective upstream causes were independent. Conditioning on a common effect, or collider, is a known source of endogenous selection bias [14]. Attrition may depend on fear, settlement, relocation, or restoration of trust; official ledgers may record who paid while missing who lost effective access

to the funds; and bounded network samples may omit a decisive third-party payment or veto. A causal claim should specify inclusion mechanisms, treatment-version consistency, a pre-intervention adjustment strategy, treatment of missing ties and outcomes, and sensitivity to alternative selection models. None of these problems is cured by collecting a more detailed relational narrative after observing the sanction outcome.

13.3 Research Ethics, Confidentiality, and Vulnerable Participants

Research on sanctions and relational power can itself alter the relations it investigates. Participation may disclose contested conduct, expose unequal control of money or records, or become a new occasion for surveillance and retaliation. The problem is especially acute where a potential participant depends on another person for housing, care, income, immigration support, professional assessment, or access to education. A sound protocol therefore evaluates the safety of recruitment, interviewing, data retention, and publication as components of the inquiry's causal setting. Ethical approval according to the applicable jurisdiction and institution is a necessary part of a field-study design where required; the present conceptual article does not represent itself as an approved human-participants project.

Guidance developed for domestic-violence research provides a particularly important caution about the exposure created by inquiry itself. The World Health Organization's *Putting Women First* addresses ethical and safety practices for research on domestic violence against women [47]. Its original scope should be preserved: it is neither a general definition of punishment nor a universal legal protocol for all sanction studies. Nonetheless, its attention to research-related safety offers relevant considerations where investigating economic coercion or interpersonal control could increase risk. The CIOMS international guidelines, prepared with WHO for health-related research, address context-dependent vulnerability and proportionate protections in Guideline 15, explicitly cautioning against unexamined stereotypes about entire groups [11]. Extending particular operational practices to organizational sociology, legal research, or historical inquiry would require independent ethical assessment in those settings.

Recruitment through a purportedly powerful household member, an employer, or an institutional gatekeeper may compromise voluntariness or create the appearance that participation is required. Where interviews are ethically justified, an investigator should provide direct and comprehensible information to potential participants, assess whether contact is safe, and avoid using the implicated authority as the participant's sole channel for consent or refusal. The researcher should establish procedures for discontinuing a conversation if privacy becomes compromised, clarify the limits of confidentiality under applicable law, and consider how compensation or reimbursement interacts with dependency. The right to decline questions or withdraw should be practically exercisable to the extent allowed by the protocol and data-processing commitments. For minors and persons whose decisional capacity is in question, procedures need particular legal and ethics review; the child's interests or a participant's rights should not be reduced to the consent of a dominant relational actor.

Data minimization is analytically as well as ethically important. The formal notation of Section 9 permits records to specify roles, relations, and burdens without reproducing names, addresses, or detailed biographies in public outputs. A research database may need protected identifiers and secure linkages for longitudinal reconstruction, while a public paper can present aggregated mechanism descriptions or carefully generalized illustrations. Removing names is frequently insufficient where a rare employment dispute, small household, unique sanction, or publicly accessible sequence could permit re-identification. Decisions about quotation, chronology, and the combination of institutional records with interviews should consider these cumulative risks. Data should be retained for a justified duration under documented access restrictions, with procedures for responding to unauthorized disclosure.

Investigators also face pressures to treat affected persons as passive data sources. A participant may value a relation, voluntarily accept shared costs, or interpret a disputed episode in terms different from the researcher's theoretical categories. A respectful inquiry makes those accounts available as evidence without automatically converting them into either proof of autonomy or proof of false consciousness. Where people disagree about whether a payment was coerced, the disagreement may concern observ-

able constraints, normative expectations, remembered agreements, and divergent interpretations. The researcher's task is to specify the evidence and appropriate normative criteria for each claim. The GR vocabulary of manifestation and relational reality supplies a reminder that statements and records are situated, while offering no warrant to dismiss testimony merely because it conflicts with a favored structural account.

Ethical governance should also address *feedback effects from research*. Publishing an alleged mechanism may change an institution's enforcement practice; approaching a witness may alter the participant's relationship with an authority; a recommendation to separate accounts may expose a dependent to a new threat. Some research questions are better answered initially with publicly available records, policy audits, simulated cases, and expert review of anonymized institutional procedures. Where safe independent participant involvement is possible, consultation about accessible reporting channels and the risks of proposed remedies can improve a design. Such participation must remain voluntary and should not shift the duty to establish safety from the research team onto people already affected by the sanction. A theoretically ambitious research programme is compatible with refusing a study whose anticipated harms exceed its prospective epistemic and social benefits.

An explicit null benchmark. The framework would face a strong informative failure if a prespecified comparison found that conventional administrative chronology, a well-constructed incidence ledger, and power-dependence process tracing jointly delivered the same reliably justified conclusions at lower privacy and research cost. A different failure would occur if independent coders could not agree on the distinction between feasible steering and cooperative allocation even in well-documented cases. A third would be a longitudinal null result in which changing independently verified burden pathways had no supported effect on later contestation once pre-existing dependence and exogenous support were accounted for. These are legitimate outcomes for the proposed study, not exceptions to be retrospectively explained away. The construction of a countermodel establishes only non-entailment from selected premises; it does not supply a positive prediction or calibrate the representation.

13.4 Formal, Epistemic, and Normative Limits

The model of Section 9 serves as a typed representation of candidate histories and interventions. Its propositions are bounded non-entailment and conditional comparison statements within the stipulated class of admissible representations. Proposition 9.3 establishes that specified formal sanction information is insufficient to determine a unique incidence vector under the permitted variation of relational arrangements. Proposition 9.5 shows that an externalizing allocation is logically compatible with accurate responsibility attribution within the constructed cases. Proposition 9.6 establishes that matching burden vectors can coexist with different represented changes in authority. Their logical force depends on the definitions and admissible histories. They provide neither an estimated prevalence of such configurations nor an inference that a specific person acted with intention, malice, or legal culpability.

A second limitation concerns the status of a *propagation map*. Equation 3 makes space for implementation-sensitive channels and decision rules, but its mathematical notation does not establish that observed transfers obey a stable operator, that the operator is uniquely identified, or that a parameterization generalizes across settings. Relational ties may be unobserved, stochastic, shifting, or context dependent. A payment can be followed by delayed bargaining, migration, institutional review, or solidarity, each changing which pathways remain available. For empirical calibration, researchers would need operational definitions, temporal and network boundaries, feasible regime comparisons, and sensitivity analyses for unmeasured common causes or omitted connections. An apparent fit to observed episodes would remain compatible with multiple causal explanations unless the design generated discriminating evidence.

The burdens themselves resist unrestricted aggregation. Monetary loss, care obligations, diminished credibility, and constrained exit have different metrics and evaluative implications. Equation 2 preserves that heterogeneity through types and partial comparisons. This preserves some empirical distinctions

while also leaving substantial questions unresolved: how to compare intensity within a domain, whose assessment should count when preferences conflict, when delayed burdens can be causally attributed, and whether a public decision maker has legitimate authority to trade one person's losses against another's. These questions cannot be settled by choosing weights in a computational model. A case-specific numerical index may serve an explicitly limited evaluation purpose, accompanied by separate qualitative accounts and normative justification for its construction.

A third limitation concerns the concept of power. Steering capacity is intervention-relative and context-relative, as specified in Definition 9.2. Formal rank, social respect, and control over one particular resource can correlate in some settings while diverging in others. The selection of feasible alternative interventions is consequently central. It may be impossible to observe an alternative allocation under the same historical conditions, and a counterfactual may rely on contested assumptions about legal constraints, external support, or the agency of other participants. Evidence supporting a credible exercise of steering in one episode does not automatically establish generalized domination across the actor's relationships. The normative evaluation of that exercise depends on appropriate duties and justifications, including protection of third parties and the procedural integrity of enforcement.

Epistemic reconstruction is distinct from ethical and legal judgment. Section 10 distinguishes ontological suspension, historically reconstructed relational mechanisms, and manifestations such as official decisions or claims of gratitude. A record's existence and authenticity are questions of evidence; the meaning attributed to it and the causal process it represents are separate analytical questions. A successful account may identify materially displaced costs while leaving motives indeterminate. It may establish an unequal distribution without showing that a legal institution possessed jurisdiction to prevent it. It may describe a beneficial remedial intervention without settling whether the actor had an antecedent duty to supply it. The analyses of epistemic power in Section 6 and repair in Section 7 accordingly retain their own inferential and normative tasks.

The framework is also constrained by its comparative scope. Criminal sanctions, family discipline, workplace suspensions, corporate fines, international asset restrictions, and decisions within assistance settings operate through heterogeneous powers and rules. In particular, decisions about humanitarian eligibility and assistance require their own legal, professional, and ethical characterization; they are not automatically punitive sanctions. The comparative proposal concerns possible structural similarities in control over burden channels, decision rights, and subsequent dependencies. It should be considered successful only if it identifies mechanisms in the relevant domain with greater clarity than domain-specific analysis alone and without suppressing essential institutional differences. A case for which established criminological, legal, or economic incidence methods already provide a complete explanation does not acquire greater validity simply from being relabeled generative relational.

Finally, a theory of relational continuation needs a carefully specified conception of history. Temporal labels in the present manuscript refer to research-selected sequences of events, recorded dependencies, and possible continuations under stipulated transitions. The existence of one observed outcome does not make its alternatives unrealized destinations awaiting a privileged present; alternative continuations are formal or counterfactual constructions within a model. The distinction matters because sanction-related action may change the conditions under which the relevant events, roles, and categories are constituted. The framework represents some of these changes through endogenous relational updates, while leaving the ontology of time, causal order, and social objects unresolved. This restraint protects the argument from requiring a broader metaphysics than its empirical questions can support.

Inference boundaries and symmetric assessment. The argument's evidential structure can be summarized as five separate research tasks. Table 14 makes explicit the candidate finding, the evidence required to support it, and the inference that remains open. The same standards apply irrespective of a participant's position as sanction recipient, alleged wrongdoer, relative, manager, complainant, or remedy provider. In particular, neither an official finding nor a participant's disagreement with that finding is treated as dispositive evidence of a later burden-steering decision.

Table 14: Evidence thresholds for distinct sanction-incidence claims, applied symmetrically to involved participants

Candidate conclusion	Minimum evidential object	Additional conclusion requiring separate support
Formal responsibility	Valid decision, operative rule, scope of determination	Personal intent, actual cost incidence
Observed distribution	Source-specific burden records, units, relevant window	Attribution of causal redirection
Effective steering capacity	Feasible choices, rights, alternative responses, enforceable limits	Exercise of capacity in the episode
Directed externalization	Dated conduct, credible comparators, response pathways	Conscious purpose, illegitimacy
Historical power effect	Supported longitudinal mediators and alternative histories	General or inevitable reproduction of domination

13.5 Provisional Contribution and Open Research Agenda

The paper proposes a bounded joint analytical object: sanction decisions, the heterogeneous incidence of their consequences, feasible control over propagation pathways, and subsequent changes in relational options. Its component ideas draw on established accounts of symbiotic harms, relational dependence, epistemic injustice, and historical structure [9, 5, 15, 17, 31]. The contribution to be evaluated is the *integrated inference protocol*, particularly its ability to distinguish an unexercised capacity to redirect costs from an intervention that actually changed incidence and later possibilities. No priority claim is made over those component literatures.

Its more specific theoretical proposal concerns the conjunction of four conditions. Responsibility can be correctly identified under the rules relevant to an episode. A sanction can be authorized and partly or fully executed. The formal target can nevertheless influence the route through which associated costs reach other people. The resulting distribution can then alter resources, contestation, or other decision capacities relevant to subsequent exercises of power. Each component is independently contestable. A finding that any one condition is absent does not erase the substantive harms that might be present, but it limits attribution of the full steering-and-reproduction mechanism. This keeps the proposed account open to partial confirmation, mixed cases, and informative negative findings.

The programme suggests three sequential, revisable studies. A *conceptual and measurement study* would construct a transparent classification of sanction episodes, burden types, decision rights, and evidential status, then test inter-coder agreement on deidentified records or synthetic examples. It would evaluate whether researchers can distinguish sanction decisions from implementation and material incidence without assuming hidden intentions. A *mechanism-focused comparative study* would select cases across different degrees of resource control, oversight, and available exit, with process-tracing protocols and pre-specified rival explanations. It would seek evidence differentiating incidence shifts generated by interdependence from those linked to actor-conditioned interventions. A *longitudinal relational study*, subject to safety and feasibility, would examine whether changes in observed incidence are associated with changes in practical voice, material independence, accountability access, and authority under explicit causal assumptions. These stages are proposals for research, not a claim of an existing programme of approved studies.

The project should also set out conditions of informative failure. If independent researchers cannot distinguish incidence categories using reasonably obtainable evidence, a coarse but reliable typology may be preferable to a highly granular scheme. If apparent steering disappears when common resource constraints, voluntary agreements, or institutional rules are reconstructed, the actor-specific hypothesis should be narrowed. If incidence and dependence show little connection once baseline inequalities and external disturbances are taken into account, the historical-feedback proposal should be limited accordingly. If the formal framework adds no explanatory, interpretive, or design value beyond established methods, its additional structure should be reduced or abandoned for that application. Such outcomes

Table 15: Proposed comparison of explanatory tools, not an empirical ranking

Protocol	Strength to test	Possible informative failure
Institutional chronology	Competence, procedural sequence, enforcement record	Insufficient tracing of burdens outside official target
Incidence / collateral-harm ledger	Third-party costs and resource transfers	Missing decision rights or later authority changes
Power-dependence / process tracing	Choice constraints, credible influence, rival mechanisms	Unstable classification of heterogeneous burden types
Proposed GR typed histories	Joint recording of sanctions, incidence, steering and continuation	No measurable improvement, excessive complexity or privacy cost

would improve the intellectual precision of the programme rather than simply obstruct its development.

Comparative explanatory-value test. The added vocabulary of generative relational history should be evaluated against credible baseline approaches rather than against an artificially impoverished description. A planned study could provide independent analysts with the same deidentified sanction-episode material and compare four protocols: ordinary legal and institutional chronology; a collateral-harm or monetary-incidence ledger; a power-dependence and process-tracing reconstruction; and the proposed GR typed-history and continuation representation. Before coding begins, the study should register claim-level targets: whether the protocol detects different actual burden bearers, separates feasible control from exercised control, identifies missing evidence, represents relevant third-party spillovers, and distinguishes later contestation opportunities. It should also measure reproducibility, time and privacy costs, and whether the additional representation changes any justified institutional recommendation. Scoring requires domain experts and a common evidential standard; greater narrative detail is not automatically greater accuracy.

The proposed added value should be assessed on prespecified outcomes: claim-level classification agreement, identification of missing causal evidence, accuracy under constructed ground-truth cases, the stability of coding under plausible alternative histories, and the practical cost of obtaining and protecting the necessary data. If an established protocol meets those targets as well as GR with lower complexity, the richer representation is unnecessary for that task. The comparison is a methodological research proposal, not an empirical finding.

A particularly valuable evaluation would distinguish *intervention capacity* from *intervention exercise*. Research could ask whether an actor who controls accounts, schedules, or remedies can influence the allocation of a comparable sanction under feasible intervention conditions, even where a given episode provides no evidence that the actor used that capacity. An independent second question would examine whether actual decisions exploited that capacity, and a third whether the decisions altered affected participants' longer-term opportunities. The distinction allows researchers to assess preventive governance without treating the existence of powerful discretion as conclusive proof of abuse. It also allows serious discussion of institutional constraints that protect others from sanctions while preserving legitimate flexibility and restorative support.

The normative programme is comparably conditional. Section 12 proposes incidence-sensitive assessment, independent oversight, protections for dependents, contestable interpretation, and remedial independence. The value of these arrangements would depend on their accessibility, proportionality, legal competence, practical cost, and effects on affected persons' agency. Independent enforcement may reduce unilateral steering while imposing administrative burdens; external review may protect some people while increasing confidentiality risks; an apparently protective intervention may reduce immediate losses while consolidating control over assistance. Evaluation should include those second-order costs rather than assume that adding procedural layers necessarily improves justice. Rights, ethical obligations, and institutional competences require reasons grounded in the particular context, alongside empirical evidence about whether the safeguards operate as intended.

The analysis yields a conditional synthesis. A justified sanction may impose burdens beyond its nominal addressee; some of those burdens are mediated by choices made within pre-existing relations. Where a specified actor exercises effective control over such choices, the incidence may differ from an admissible alternative. Where those differences change resources or independent review access, subsequent practical authority may also differ. Each step requires its own evidence. Legitimate solidarity, unintended shared hardship, corrective oversight, and increased independence remain equally admissible pathways in the present theoretical framework.

The paper’s provisional contribution is a structured inquiry into the connections among formal sanction decisions, heterogeneous burden incidence, feasible pathway control, and changes in subsequent relational options. The formal countermodels demonstrate the insufficiency of selected observations within stipulated model classes; they neither estimate empirical effects nor settle the normative status of a particular response. Comparative research should retain cases of unintentional spillover, voluntary support, effective oversight, and increased independence as informative alternatives. Any stronger conclusion about exercised steering or lasting domination depends on evidence specific to the relation and institution under study.

A Typed Sanction and Burden Records

This appendix specifies a provisional record architecture for the sanction-incidence analysis developed in Section 9. Its role is to make explicit which observational and inferential commitments are hidden by compact expressions such as H_t , $\mathcal{P}_{h,s}$, and $\Pi_a(h, s)$. The objective is methodological: to identify a defensible unit of recording, to preserve heterogeneous burden dimensions, and to state what evidence would be needed to connect implementation decisions with historical changes in relations. The appendix proceeds through six parts: event and participant typing, provenance and historical ordering, burden dimensions, intervention comparators, a constructed worked record, and limitations of use. The specification is a proposed analytical schema. It is neither a validated software ontology nor an assertion that institutions, persons, and harms possess an exhaustive natural classification.

The architecture is deliberately compatible with an incomplete historical record. Administrative documents may establish a sanction decision while leaving household resource arrangements unknown. A participant’s testimony may establish experienced hardship while the causal contribution of a particular sanction remains disputed. Multiple records may support incompatible explanations without requiring the analyst to force a single reconciled narrative. The typed representation is useful precisely insofar as it retains such distinctions and exposes what additional observations would discriminate among possible histories. Case-specific legal interpretation, affected participants’ perspectives, and the ethically permissible scope of documentation remain essential to any application.

A.1 Event Types, Participants, and Episode Integrity

Let Id be a set of local record identifiers, Participant a context-bounded set of references to participants, Kind a set of event categories, and Span a set of time windows or partially ordered event positions. The participant type is tagged by category: a natural person, a collectively acting group, or an institution may be represented, but their decision capacities and burdens remain differentiated. An identifier functions as a research key rather than a claim that the referenced participant is an irreducible ontological atom. If anonymity or data minimization is required, participant keys should be pseudonymous and should not embed names, contact details, or uniquely identifying household circumstances.

The minimal event kinds for a sanction study include *conduct allegation*, *responsibility determination*, *sanction authorization*, *sanction imposition*, *execution*, *burden manifestation*, *resource or duty reallocation*, *review*, and *repair*. An allegation may have no substantiated finding. A finding may be overturned on review. Execution can be partial or repeated; repair can arise under an independent duty or through discretionary support. These entries have different epistemic and institutional types even when

Table 16: Typed record fields and the inferences their presence does not settle

Field class	Illustrative record content	Remaining inferential question
Authority and role	Decision body, accountable party, affected participant, resource controller	Whether the recorded person or institution could practically alter implementation
Implementation	Authorized requirement, observed execution, lawful adjustment, procedural window	Whether the nominal target ultimately absorbed the burden
Burden and baseline	Person-specific coordinate, horizon, reference course, uncertainty	Whether the recorded loss was caused by the sanction or its implementation regime
Relation and choice	Asset control, care duty, feasible alternatives, third-party veto	Whether a candidate actor could select a meaningfully comparable regime
Evidence and status	Source identifier, consent status, corroboration, dispute, missingness	Whether the sources adequately distinguish rival causal histories

a narrative describes them as one continuous occurrence. Their separation prevents an investigator from silently treating the decision to penalize an actor as proof of an equivalent experienced burden.

Equation 6 gives one compact record signature; fields can remain explicitly unknown where a verified entry is unavailable.

$$\rho = (\iota, \kappa, \nu, \theta, \lambda, \eta, \sigma), \quad \rho \in \text{Id} \times \text{Kind} \times \text{Participant}^* \times \text{Span} \times \text{Link}^* \times \text{Evidence}^* \times \text{Status}. \quad (6)$$

Here ι is the local identifier; κ denotes the event kind; ν lists typed references to those involved and their episode-specific roles; θ records the relevant temporal or procedural interval; λ contains relation or event links; η points to admissible evidence entries; and σ records an explicit epistemic or procedural status. The star denotes a finite list of entries and does not assign a numerical weight to evidence or imply universal completeness. In a deployed implementation, Link should distinguish legal authority, material transfer, caregiving assignment, testimony, review, and hypothetical causal relation. An ordinary reference to another record does not itself establish a causal link.

Definition 9.1 introduces the analytic tuple $e = (w, r, d, s, a, \tau)$. The tuple is an episode-level view assembled from more granular records, rather than a competing definition. A well-formed episode may contain several execution records and several disputed responsibility entries. Its formal target a is read from the competent decision record, and its implemented sanction s is reconstructed from the subset of execution records that satisfy an expressly defined matching criterion. Correctness of responsibility, lawful authority, and actual incidence are not properties supplied merely by well-formed syntax.

The following integrity conditions are useful for a local research dataset. Every event key should resolve uniquely within the study; each participant reference should have a declared type and role; the origin and status of every factual entry should remain traceable; an execution should identify the decision it implements or declare that relation unresolved; and the researcher should be able to distinguish a missing value from an observed absence. In particular, *no observed penalty* and *unknown execution status* are distinct descriptions. Likewise, a decision record can be coded as authenticated without its underlying determination being endorsed as morally or legally correct. These are procedural safeguards for interpretation, not logical guarantees that a historical account is true.

Table 16 distinguishes representative fields from their evidential and inferential limitations. The listed fields are a proposed minimum for transparency, rather than mandatory variables for every ethically permissible investigation.

A.2 Historical Ordering, Evidence Provenance, and Uncertainty

An event-indexed study needs ordering information, yet that does not license an assumption that social relations share a universal sequence or that an observer has access to an ontologically privileged present. The notation t in Equation 1 is an analytical index. Within a bounded study, some events have documented timestamps, some have intervals, and others admit only a partial ordering such as a decision

recorded as preceding an observed payment. Two testimony records may concern overlapping periods, and contemporaneous actions in separate organizations may not have a defensible total order. A useful data structure therefore records an event-order relation only where its evidential basis is identified.

For this purpose, take E^{rec} as the set of event records and $\preceq_E$ as a documented or explicitly hypothesized precedence relation on the subset for which ordering can be stated. Where the relation is asserted as a partial order, its antisymmetry and transitivity are modeling requirements, not claims that the actual historical process is a simple chain. Cycles in a data dependency graph may represent simultaneous feedback or an inconsistency in the recording scheme; the researcher needs to identify which interpretation applies. The distinction between a *recorded event sequence* and a *causal dependency* also matters: observing resource depletion after a fine is insufficient to establish that the fine caused that depletion. The sanction and another event may jointly shape the observed outcome.

A provenance entry should state the origin of an assertion, the means by which it was obtained, the relevant scope of permission, and any known limitation on verification. Source material may include public decisions, administrative correspondence, transaction summaries, voluntarily supplied testimony, or independent procedural review. Records in sensitive settings should minimize retention of original identifying material and separate access-controlled source repositories from the analytical schema. The present specification offers no authority to collect private financial documents, health information, or testimony without an appropriate ethical and legal basis.

For each substantive proposition q , let $\mathcal{E}(q)$ denote the set of sources offered in its support and $\mathcal{R}(q)$ the set of unresolved rival accounts. These sets need not support a numerical confidence score. A useful epistemic status vocabulary includes *documented*, *corroborated*, *reported by participant*, *inferred under assumptions*, *disputed*, *unknown*, and *constructed for illustration*. The categories should not be collapsed into an ordered scale of credibility, as sources can be independently informative in different ways. A documented sanction decision can coexist with a disputed description of who controlled the funds used to satisfy it. A participant account can be important evidence of experience without establishing the intent of every person mentioned in that account.

The resulting analytic object should permit a *set of compatible histories*, represented schematically by $\mathcal{H}(O; A)$, where O denotes the accessible record and A denotes the stated modeling assumptions. A hypothesis should be treated as identified only to the degree that the admissible histories agree on the claim under consideration. The following distinction can be stated without assuming a probability model: agreement of surviving histories may make a descriptive claim stable under the chosen assumptions, whereas disagreement preserves an explicit inference boundary. Such stability is conditional on how candidate histories were generated and screened. If the record excludes material relations or actors, apparent convergence could be an artifact of that omission. This represents ontological restraint in practice: a structured description of evidence is not a complete account of what exists or has occurred.

A.3 Heterogeneous Burden Coordinates and Incidence Ledgers

A sanction-related burden can be recorded only after the investigator defines who bears it, which dimension is at issue, the comparison baseline, and the observation horizon. Financial depletion may be expressed in currency units under a defensible accounting rule, additional care in documented hours, and restrictions on participation as a task-specific accessibility or opportunity indicator. Emotional and reputational experiences may require carefully contextualized qualitative records. An entry should distinguish exposure to a harmful condition, testimony concerning hardship, and a counterfactual estimate of sanction-attributable change. Combining these three observations without an identified bridge would confer unwarranted causal precision.

For each participant i and dimension k , introduce the typed incidence entry shown in Equation 7. It supplements, rather than replaces, the burden vector in Equation 2.

$$\beta_{i,k} = (i, k, \omega, \zeta, \vartheta, v, \eta, \sigma), \quad \text{value}(\beta_{i,k}) \in \mathcal{B}_{i,k} \cup \{\text{unknown}\}. \quad (7)$$

The component ω denotes an explicitly declared observational or potential-outcome contrast; ζ is a measurement or descriptive value; ϑ identifies the bounded observation window; v identifies a unit or

qualitative coding rule; η provides provenance; and σ provides epistemic status. The value function in Equation 7 deliberately admits an unknown entry. Censored evidence, mutually incompatible reports, and insufficient comparators are not equivalent to a zero burden. A reader must also know whether ζ is the gross post-sanction level, an incremental burden relative to a reference history, or a participant's reported interpretation of hardship. A reliable comparison cannot be made from identical numeric values with different units or baselines.

An incidence ledger $L(e; \omega)$ collects the person-and-dimension entries relevant to episode e under one declared contrast ω . Its type is a heterogeneous family indexed by (i, k) ; the ledger is not presumed to admit addition into a total social cost. A single change in a family budget may influence more than one reported dimension, so a ledger should also record suspected overlap. For example, inability to purchase transport and inability to attend an independent review may be causally linked rather than two separable losses that could be summed. Where economic cost calculations are justified, double-counting precautions and assumptions about the valuation of unpaid work must be specified. Where they are unjustified, a partial qualitative ordering or a vector of separate measurements is adequate.

The coordinatewise burden order from Section 9.2 can support a limited dominance statement if the same participant, dimension definitions, window, and baseline are held comparable. Under those conditions, a regime may weakly reduce all recorded burdens and strictly reduce at least one; another pair of regimes may be incomparable because one reduces monetary loss and increases care time. A policy choice between incomparable regimes requires further evaluative commitments. The formalism should not hide such commitments in an unreported weight vector. Likewise, incidence records for a household and a corporation may share financial terminology while differing in whose interests, authority, and rights the relevant accounts represent.

An important quality-control rule concerns the direction of recording. A transfer from the responsible actor to another participant may appear to reduce the first actor's cash balance while affecting the second actor's unpaid labor or control over discretionary funds. An analyst should not define burden solely by cash outflow, by the sign of a transaction, or by the identity of the nominal account holder. A complete entry in a practical research design would link source transactions to control rights, who could refuse the arrangement, availability of substitutes, and subsequent effects on feasible activity. The ledger then becomes a disciplined interface between descriptive manifestations and historically inferred relational consequences.

A.4 Regime Comparisons, Steering Capacity, and Identification

The intervention vocabulary in Section 9.3 requires a record of which choices are accessible to whom and under what conditions. A feasible implementation regime π may specify budget decisions, enforcement arrangements, assignments of replacement work, access to legal review, or the timing and conditions of repair. To compare π with π' , the researcher should specify a common outcome question and identify which elements of the sanctioned event are held constant. The choice set $\Pi_a(h, s)$ should be supported by evidence of actor a 's effective discretion, including practical vetoes and dependencies, and should distinguish unilateral decisions from joint choices or changes requiring an independent authorization.

A proposed comparator record can be given by $c = (e, h, s, a, \pi, \pi', u, \omega, \eta_c)$, with ω declaring outcomes and the horizon and η_c identifying the evidence or assumptions supporting the comparison. The record is well formed only if both regimes have declared meanings, the intervention target is identifiable, and the asserted feasibility conditions are consistent with the modeled institutional setting. The existence of a syntactically well-formed comparator does not establish counterfactual identification. In many cases one of the regimes will be unobserved, and the available data will leave multiple causal models compatible with the same factual record. For this reason, steering capacity is appropriately reported as *supported*, *conditional on stated assumptions*, *disputed*, or *not established*, rather than inferred automatically from the actor's role.

The comparison should also handle interference. Other participants may respond to actor a 's attempted reallocation by refusing, providing substitute funds, seeking collective review, or changing their

own contributions. If a proposed intervention assumes their cooperation, the joint-policy assumption should be written into the comparator. An implemented regime can be observed without fully specifying the range of alternative regimes that the focal actor could have realized. Consequently, a finding that a dependent bore more cost than the accountable actor may identify an unequal incidence pattern while leaving the accountable actor's causal steering capacity unresolved. The distinction is fundamental to Proposition 9.5 and to the empirical research obligations in Section 13.

A steering dossier should separate at least four inferential items. The first is *capacity*: whether the actor possessed effective control over relevant choices. The second is *exercise*: whether an identifiable choice or omission altered burden allocation. The third is *anticipation or intention*: whether evidence supports a purposive effort to protect the actor or impose costs on others. The fourth is *normative status*: whether the action violated a specific duty, unjustifiably infringed another's interests, or was otherwise legitimately undertaken. Each item requires its own provenance. For instance, a caregiver's voluntary, revocable participation can change the moral interpretation of a burden-sharing arrangement without changing the gross amount of care labor observed. An inability to leave a controlling relationship may make nominal agreement a poor proxy for meaningful consent; it still does not, on its own, establish a specific historical intention to evade a sanction.

The comparator design makes explicit what is required to move beyond the non-entailment results of Section 9.5. Those propositions show that certain conclusions do not follow from fixed formal data within constructed admissible classes. A real-world conclusion that an accountable actor exercised power to externalize burdens would require credible evidence for the decision pathway, a comparator whose feasibility is substantiated, and an account of confounding and other actors' responses. A further claim that the redirection reproduced domination would require longitudinal assessment of effective alternatives, decision rights, and independent review. The record schema facilitates such inquiry but does not by itself identify the requisite causal effects [26, 25].

A.5 A Constructed Household Record

Consider a deliberately simplified and entirely invented setting with actors a , b , and an independent review role c . None of these roles corresponds to an identifiable person, and all values below are stipulated rather than extracted from private records. The hypothetical official record is stipulated to assign responsibility for a violation to a and specifies a financial sanction of one hundred abstract units. The execution record establishes that a payment of one hundred units was made by the required deadline. It does not identify the final person-specific burden distribution. A separate household account record indicates that the payment depleted a jointly accessible balance; a testimony record reports that b subsequently cancelled transportation needed for an appointment. The record establishes a temporal and resource relationship relevant to incidence, while alternative uses of the account and other contemporaneous expenses remain unknown.

A first constructed completion, h_1 , stipulates that a replaced ninety units from exclusively controlled discretionary funds, leaving a ten-unit reduction in a balance used by b . A second constructed completion, h_2 , stipulates that a replaced ten units, leaving a ninety-unit reduction attributable to b 's foregone discretionary use. These illustrative allocations require explicit initial endowments and accounting conventions, and the numerical coordinates are limited to one defined monetary dimension. They are countermodel inputs, not estimates derived from the sparse source record. Both completions are compatible with the official assessment and payment record. They differ in the unobserved resource allocation. A different completion could produce added care costs or third-party assistance, which would require additional burden dimensions and could not be reduced to the same one-hundred-unit total.

Suppose a later statement indicates that a had sole practical authority to decide which account funds were restored. That statement contributes evidence about potential steering capacity, contingent on its reliability and the availability of alternatives. It does not establish whether a exercised the alleged discretion to minimize a personal burden. A separate dated instruction directing funds away from b 's independently controlled allowance, together with evidence that another feasible arrangement was available,

Table 17: Constructed household episode: records, conjectured mechanisms, and evidence thresholds

Analytical stage	Information stipulated or observed within the example	Additional requirement for a stronger inference
Formal accountability	Correct attribution to <i>a</i> ; charge and recorded payment of 100 units	Verification of competent authority and final execution details in an empirical case
Burden incidence	Shared balance reduced; person-specific incidence unresolved	Account control, reference consumption, substituted funds, and other costs
Steering capacity	Possible discretionary restoration by <i>a</i>	Feasible alternatives, effective vetoes, and third-party responses
Directed externalization	A candidate choice could shift specified burden coordinates	Dated decision mechanism, credible comparator, and evidence of actual exercise
Power reproduction	Subsequent independent-review access may differ	Longitudinal decision rights, practical exit options, and rival explanations

would strengthen an exercise claim. Evidence that *a* explicitly sought to avoid suffering consequences might further support a strategic-intention hypothesis, yet the assessment of wrongdoing would still need a specified normative or legal standard. Likewise, evidence that independent review subsequently enabled *b* to regain a protected account would be relevant to prospective power relations without requiring the analyst to infer a universal direction of historical change.

The compact comparison summarized in Table 17 shows how each inference requires different information. No empirical subject or real household is described by the constructed case.

The example also illustrates an asymmetry between proving that a formal record underdetermines a burden allocation and proving a specific actor’s responsibility for a realized allocation. The first can be demonstrated by exhibiting two compatible completions. The second requires adequate evidence about the historically available decisions, effective agency, and mechanisms that transformed the implemented sanction into experienced losses. Record incompleteness is therefore a substantive result about available inference, even when a precise causal account remains out of reach. Its proper use is to specify an investigable uncertainty, not to insinuate that an unobserved mechanism necessarily occurred.

A.6 Data Minimization, Interoperability, and Formal Scope

A deployable record schema would benefit from a machine-readable vocabulary, versioned transformation rules, and a transparent mapping between source assertions and derived analysis. Nevertheless, the present appendix deliberately stops short of publishing a standardized JSON schema or claiming implementation validation. Variable names such as `record_id`, `kind`, `participants`, `time_scope`, `source_refs`, `epistemic_status`, `burden_coordinates`, and `comparator_assumptions` indicate plausible fields without specifying a completed software protocol. Future implementations would have to reconcile units, access permissions, participant revocation, cross-jurisdiction definitions, historical correction, and secure linkage without embedding sensitive raw evidence in public datasets.

Interoperability here means preservation of distinctions during translation. A family researcher might describe caregiving obligations through interview-based codes, whereas an administrative researcher might access only payroll and account data. A translator can map each dataset into the shared categories of decision, execution, experienced burden, relation, and evidence status while retaining unmatched context-specific fields. Apparent agreement in category names should not be interpreted as agreement in causal identification or moral meaning. Cross-setting comparability therefore depends on declared mapping rules, the ability to represent partial information, and the preservation of local disciplinary vocabulary. The same caution applies to event and relational graphs: a graph representation is an analytic convenience and does not establish a privileged spacetime ontology.

Ethical requirements may also limit record completeness. Research involving family coercion, sanctions imposed by institutions, or other asymmetric relationships can expose participants to retaliation if raw histories are linked or shared. A schema should provide for consent-specific access boundaries, suppression of identifying fields, protective aggregation, correction of materially misleading entries, and withdrawal procedures where applicable. Independent review may be needed when collection or interpretation itself reproduces the power asymmetry under examination. These protections introduce real constraints on reproducibility; an ethics statement should describe the tradeoffs rather than imply that open publication of all records is automatically desirable. The main text’s research-ethics considerations in Section 13.3 govern any later empirical application.

The typed schema links decisions, roles, observed burdens, evidence provenance, and feasible alternatives while allowing incomplete or contested records. Its purpose is to make the evidential requirements of Section 9 reproducible across constructed or ethically collected cases. Appendix B uses the schema to test logical non-identification; Appendix C develops procedures for evaluating rival empirical explanations. Adoption of the schema itself confers no special evidential status on a claim.

B Propagation Assumptions and Formal Countermodels

This appendix examines the mathematical scope of the conditional incidence framework introduced in Section 9 and operationalized through the records in Appendix A. Its object is the relation among formally designated sanctions, heterogeneous consequences, feasible interventions, and subsequent changes in the effective possibilities of affected participants. The analytical method is constructive. Explicit assumptions define an admissible class of represented histories; countermodels show which conclusions remain underdetermined by formal accountability data; conditional examples indicate when a burden-steering intervention can influence a later power relation. The appendix also specifies what these demonstrations leave unresolved in an empirical case. Six subsections address the formal domain, propagation and accounting, incidence non-identification, steering and causal ambiguity, historical feedback, and inference limitations.

The mathematical objects used here are research representations. Every actor and resource assignment in the countermodels is invented for the mathematical construction, with no linkage to private records or identifiable people. They do not establish that persons, social groups, responsibilities, or historical possibilities possess a privileged mathematical ontology. A finite actor set, an episode index, and a chosen event order are conveniences for investigating a delimited question. In particular, the notation t is an ordering or observation coordinate declared by the investigator; it is neither an independently justified universal temporal parameter nor evidence that the relevant relational history admits a unique total ordering. This convention follows the paper’s commitment to ontological restraint and to explicit distinctions among observed manifestations, reconstructed histories, and normative judgments.

B.1 Admissible Histories, Regimes, and Burden Comparisons

The starting point is the typed sanction episode of Definition 9.1. Let N be a finite collection of analytically represented participants; let $a \in N$ be the formally accountable participant; and let s specify an implemented sanction with its relevant enforcement constraints. The history h contains the contextual relations, resource holdings, feasible institutional procedures, and evidence under consideration. An implementation regime $\pi \in \Pi(h, s)$ specifies a relevant allocation policy, potentially including the source of payment, assignment of additional labor, timing of duties, and access to remedial or review resources. A regime comparison holds the stipulated sanction requirement fixed while varying a well-specified implementation choice. Changing the sanction decision itself is analytically permissible, but would constitute a different contrast requiring a revised episode specification.

An admissible model also fixes a comparison window W , burden-coordinate definitions K_i , and a regime-comparison background u . The notation $\mathbf{b}_i(h, s, \pi, u)$ in Equation 2 is understood as a potential burden record under the selected regime, not automatically an observed outcome. If π is implemented,

the analyst may observe only some coordinates and may not have evidence sufficient to identify the counterfactual vector under π' . The observation interface introduced by Equation 6 preserves this missingness through provenance and epistemic-status fields. Thus a mathematically complete demonstration can coexist with an incomplete empirical ledger without disguising the latter as a measured result.

Assumption B.1 (Explicit countermodel domain). Each constructed comparison in this appendix declares a finite participant set, an implemented sanction, a feasible-regime set, a burden domain, and a stipulated counterfactual completion. Within the explicitly numerical examples, money-denominated losses refer to the same currency-equivalent unit and the same baseline and observation window. Other burden dimensions are retained as separate typed coordinates. The stipulations define mathematical cases and make no claim about their empirical prevalence.

Assumption B.1 gives the limited domain required for a proof by counterexample. It allows a coherent comparison without assuming that every household burden is measurable in money. When the analysis concerns care time, opportunity sets, or reputational effects, a distinct dimension and an interpretation rule are required. For some dimension k , the relation $b_{i,k}(\pi) \preceq_{i,k} b_{i,k}(\pi')$ means that participant i bears no greater burden under π than under π' along that declared coordinate. The order may be partial, and the orderings of different people cannot be combined without additional value judgments. A monetary coordinate for one participant may be perfectly measurable while the relevant burden on another remains qualitative or disputed.

The distinction between feasibility and legitimacy is essential. Let $\Pi_a(h, s)$ contain regimes the accountable actor can effectively bring about under the modeled decision procedure, with the roles and responses of other participants specified. A policy can be feasible yet impermissible, and an ethically preferable policy may be unavailable because the actor lacks legal authority, adequate information, or cooperative resources. A formal construction in which $\pi^0, \pi^1 \in \Pi_a(h, s)$ stipulates practical control for the purpose of examining its consequences; a case study must establish that membership through independent records and contextual investigation. Comparative feasibility is also sensitive to the response of other parties. For example, a relative who can refuse to contribute resources and a relative whose payment access is unilaterally controlled may have substantially different effective positions despite identical household balance sheets.

B.2 Propagation Maps, Composition, and Resource Accounting

The general propagation operator $\mathcal{P}_{h,s}$ in Equation 3 allows different implementation regimes to produce different heterogeneous burden vectors. It is an outcome mapping conditional on a historical context; its definition does not impose a conservation law, a fixed network topology, or an additive structure. One may provisionally factor a particular investigated mechanism into typed suboperations: an implementation choice determines a resource or duty shock, relational arrangements mediate responses, and observation rules translate consequences into burden entries. Such factorization is optional and requires the intermediate types to be declared. An investigator who knows the final household expenditure and recorded testimony may be unable to identify the intervening allocation mechanism even when an algebraic factorization can be written down.

A narrow monetary example can be made explicit. Suppose a sanction requires a payment of $q > 0$ units, and the set of represented participants is $N = \{a, b\}$. Under an assumed fixed-total financial allocation, let $\alpha_a(\pi)$ and $\alpha_b(\pi)$ describe the fractions of the immediate assessed payment absorbed through participant-specific lost discretionary resources. The assumptions for this restricted accounting case are recorded in Equation 8.

$$b_{a,m}(\pi) = q\alpha_a(\pi), \quad b_{b,m}(\pi) = q\alpha_b(\pi), \quad \alpha_a(\pi) + \alpha_b(\pi) = 1. \quad (8)$$

Here m denotes the specially defined monetary-loss coordinate. Equation 8 is valid only under the explicit stipulations that the payment is fully borne inside this two-person accounting boundary, measured amounts are attributable to the payment, no outside actor contributes, and no additional monetary effects

are counted. Its conservation identity is a feature of the restricted example, not a theorem about sanctions. A transfer from a shared fund into an official account does not by itself establish a person-specific loss: the allocation fractions depend on rights of access, intended expenditure, replenishment, and the chosen comparison baseline.

The restriction can be relaxed without introducing a universal aggregate welfare measure. Suppose implementation triggers bank charges $f \geq 0$ and a separately documented transport cost $c \geq 0$. A narrow transaction ledger could then record aggregate monetary outlays of $q + f + c$ under a specified accounting boundary. Whether the transport cost was caused by enforcement, an unrelated appointment, or an opportunity created by the sanction must be assessed independently. Further care time, restrictions on review participation, and emotional hardship retain their own coordinates. When an institution provides relief or an insurer covers some expense, the person-specific loss can be smaller than the official charge. Thus an empirical study should specify whether it reports gross payments, net losses, opportunity costs, or welfare-relevant consequences. Treating these as synonymous would violate the typing in Appendix A.

For multi-step pathways, let the researcher posit a finite graph of authorized financial, labor, or institutional relations. A local linear approximation may describe one kind of shock through a matrix K when units, edges, and response assumptions permit multiplication. In that special case, K encodes hypothesized or estimated transmission coefficients. Networks with threshold access rules, conditional consent, budget exhaustion, and changing relationships generally require nonlinear or set-valued representations. Likewise, a matrix governing cash contributions cannot be assumed to generate the direction or intensity of reputational harm. Mathematical convenience does not resolve the separate empirical questions of network boundary, mediation, response heterogeneity, and identification. Even a well-fitted transfer matrix would require justification before it could be interpreted as causal control by a particular actor.

A further issue is overlap among recorded burdens. If a child loses transport because a jointly controlled account was depleted, recording both the loss of money and the forgone journey may be descriptively informative. Summing the monetary amount with an imputed monetary value of the journey can double-count a single causal chain unless a valuation protocol explicitly separates the outcomes. For the same reason, recording increased care hours together with a caregiver's missed work may represent two dimensions of the same disruption. The heterogeneous record is a structured family of consequences, and the existence of a graph path does not guarantee independent additive losses at each node. These restrictions determine how the formalism can responsibly be connected to evidence.

A further special case provides an arithmetic check on multistep propagation. Suppose three participants face induced replacement-labour demand in a common unit of participant-hours. Let d_i specify the direct additional hours of demand associated with the stipulated disruption. The coefficient W_{ij} represents the extra demand on participant i occasioned by one unit of demand at participant j , with each counted task defined to avoid duplication. The truncated relation and, when $\rho(W) < 1$, its stationary mathematical completion are stated in Equation 9.

$$\mathbf{b}^{(m)} = \sum_{j=0}^m W^j \mathbf{d}, \quad \mathbf{b} = (I - W)^{-1} \mathbf{d} \quad \text{if } \rho(W) < 1. \quad (9)$$

The index m counts stipulated stages of dependency propagation; it need not describe equally spaced clock-time intervals or a universal direction of temporal evolution. For finite m , the partial sum is well-defined without a stability assumption. In a finite-dimensional real matrix model, $\rho(W) < 1$ ensures convergence of the matrix Neumann series to $(I - W)^{-1}$; it also entails an invertible $I - W$. The residual after m stages is $W^{m+1}(I - W)^{-1} \mathbf{d}$, by subtracting the finite geometric sum from the convergent one. This identity is a conditional calculation, not an empirical convergence finding. The stationary expression is an optional closure of the constructed mechanism, not evidence that an indefinitely repeated feedback process exists in a family or institution.

For a numerical construction, fix the following nonnegative matrix and direct demand vector in

Equation 10.

$$W = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{10} \\ \frac{1}{2} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \frac{2}{5} & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{d} = \begin{pmatrix} 10 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{b} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{500}{49} \\ \frac{250}{49} \\ \frac{100}{49} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (10)$$

Since $W^3 = I/50$, the spectral radius of W is $(1/50)^{1/3} < 1$. Substituting Equation 10 into Equation 9 yields approximately 10.2041, 5.1020, and 2.0408 additional participant-hours. Their sum, approximately 17.3469 hours, exceeds the initial ten-hour direct shock under the stated *induced-demand* interpretation. This is not a violation of a financial conservation principle, because each represented edge conditionally creates additional replacement-work requirements. If the coefficients merely reassign a fixed stock of work, the induced-demand interpretation is inapplicable and the example would have to be reconstructed. The same matrix cannot simultaneously measure heterogeneous distress, legal liability, and financial loss without additional type conversions and normative choices.

Equation 10 is a deterministic constructed arithmetic illustration, not an estimated social network. Several coefficient matrices may generate the same observed totals, and the values could change across settings or after institutional intervention. The example therefore strengthens the warning against inferring causal pathways from final costs alone. It also shows why a local monetary conservation identity cannot serve as a general law governing relationally generated sanction burdens.

B.3 Countermodel I: Formal Accountability and Incidence Non-Identification

The first construction strengthens the demonstration of Proposition 9.3 by making the comparable accounting conventions explicit. The episode has participants a and b , responsibility for an acknowledged violation correctly attributed to a , a valid financial sanction with assessed and paid amount $q = 100$, and an administrative payment record that identifies the amount and deadline. Both participants have sufficient initial resources or legally available contributions for the stipulated reallocations to be feasible, and the regime comparison concerns person-specific reductions in discretionary purchasing capacity over the same bounded horizon. These are formal stipulations. A real study would have to establish the initial resources, the source account's authorized use, and relevant substitute funding.

Define π^0 as the arrangement in which a 's own discretionary resources absorb ninety units and b 's resources absorb ten. Define π^1 as the arrangement in which a absorbs ten and b absorbs ninety. The official responsibility determination, nominal sanction, transaction amount, and payment deadline are identical. Applying Equation 8, the financial coordinates in the two models are stated in Equation 11.

$$\mathbf{b}^m(\pi^0) = (90, 10), \quad \mathbf{b}^m(\pi^1) = (10, 90). \quad (11)$$

The superscript m restricts Equation 11 to one monetary burden dimension and the ordered participant pair (a, b) . Neither vector purports to quantify dignity, consent, caregiving, lost access to assistance, or longer-run power. In particular, the model does not claim that a particular sanction naturally divides into shares summing to exactly its nominal amount; the identity is stipulated for this case alone.

Proposition B.2 (Underdetermination by formal sanction records). *Within the two-model class just specified, the correctness of the responsibility determination and identity of the assessed and paid sanction are insufficient to select a unique person-specific monetary-incidence vector.*

Demonstration. Both π^0 and π^1 satisfy the same formal accountability conditions and the accounting assumptions. The two incidence vectors in Equation 11 are distinct. A rule that infers one unique vector solely from those shared formal conditions would select the same value in both cases and would therefore be incorrect for at least one case. Proposition B.2 is a logical non-entailment result. Additional account records, access rights, and reliable process evidence could distinguish the histories. The claim does not prohibit successful identification from richer data.

A second observational distinction is useful. Suppose a researcher knows the final household expenditure but lacks person-specific source-of-funds records. Even when the total payment and household

financial balance are known, the researcher may be unable to distinguish the two allocations. Adding a record of the actual transfers may identify the immediate allocation yet leave the actor's intention and the voluntariness of the other person's contribution unresolved. Adding the participant's testimony may clarify experience without by itself verifying the entire resource history. Each evidentiary increment answers a different question. Appendix A's provenance field enables the study to preserve those increments separately rather than conflating them into one assertion that the sanction was "paid by" the accountable actor.

The construction also clarifies why descriptive burden inequality can be normatively ambiguous. Participant b may have knowingly, voluntarily, and revocably offered financial support under an independent agreement. Alternatively, b may have faced effective denial of essential resources unless the payment was covered. The vectors in Equation 11 are identical under those different consent and control histories. Their ethical evaluations can differ for reasons independent of the amount. Consequently, an inference from numerical incidence to wrongdoing requires grounds beyond the displayed vector. The research question about power-directed externalization remains open until the available alternative actions and the decision mechanism are established.

B.4 Countermodel II: Steering Capacity, Exercise, and Intention

The second construction compares an actor's conditional steering capacity with an observed incidence pattern. Retain the two-person setting and the feasible regimes π^0 and π^1 . Suppose a has practical unilateral discretion, within the constructed model, to choose either arrangement while b has no operative veto over that allocation. This stipulation makes both regimes members of $\Pi_a(h, s)$. Since changing the selected regime changes the burden coordinates of both participants, a satisfies the conditional capacity definition in Definition 9.2. If a exercises that discretion and selects π^1 from an available π^0 , the monetary coordinate of a is reduced while that of b is increased. The corresponding bounded conclusion is incidence externalization with respect to the stipulated comparator and coordinate.

Now consider an observationally similar model with the same final $\mathbf{b}^m(\pi^1) = (10, 90)$, but the allocation is set by an independently binding arrangement over which a has no ability to intervene. It might result from an existing legally valid obligation or a decision by a third party; whether either is fair is a separate question. In the second model $\pi^0 \notin \Pi_a(h, s)$, and the condition used to establish a 's steering capacity is absent. The shared observed incidence consequently leaves the control claim underdetermined. Changing only the decision-capacity stipulations changes which causal conclusion the analyst is licensed to draw.

Proposition B.3 (Incidence equality and control ambiguity). *For an observed burden vector $\mathbf{b}^*$, there can be admissible histories agreeing on the formal sanction and on $\mathbf{b}^*$ in which actor a has conditional steering capacity and admissible histories in which a lacks that capacity. The vector and the sanction record alone do not identify the actor's control set.*

Demonstration. In the first model a can select two feasible, incidence-distinct regimes and the observed selection yields $\mathbf{b}^*$. In the second model the regime producing $\mathbf{b}^*$ is externally fixed and the proposed alternative lies outside $\Pi_a(h, s)$. Both models agree on the observation while differing in the control-set membership condition. Proposition B.3 therefore follows by construction. As before, this does not preclude the use of institutional rules, signed instructions, or credible accounts of prior effective vetoes to identify the control relation in a real investigation.

Control over a feasible set also differs from actual exercise. An actor may have the option to shift a cost while choosing an arrangement that reduces a dependent's exposure. An actor may be formally authorized to allocate expenses but defer to a voluntary collective decision. Conversely, an observable expense pattern may be created by a previously established rule that the actor had the ability to amend but did not revisit during the episode. Distinguishing commission, omission, reasonable foreseeability, and intentional evasion calls for process evidence and a justified account of the relevant duty. The mathematical contrast need not force one moral interpretation of these choices.

An intention to evade a sanction requires stronger evidence still. A dated instruction requesting that another person bear the cost, knowledge that the cost would otherwise be borne by the accountable actor, and subsequent implementation might support a deliberate externalization hypothesis. Yet a request for shared assistance can arise from inability to pay, mutual support, or lawful family obligations. The wording, practical availability of refusal, history of threats or bargaining, and alternative sources of resources would affect how such evidence is evaluated. The present formalism records those as investigable variables; it does not calculate mental states from the sign of a transfer. Normative findings about improper externalization should cite a separate legal or ethical standard and its scope of application.

Observational equivalence does not identify regime effects. The previous constructions distinguish the existence of steering capacity from a recorded outcome. A further comparison shows why observational association between the chosen regime and a third party’s burden cannot identify the size of a causal effect. Let $X \in \{0, 1\}$ indicate a binary implementation regime, $Y \in \{0, 1\}$ indicate one ordered burden coordinate of an affected participant, and $U \sim \text{Bernoulli}(1/2)$ be unobserved. Consider two explicitly constructed structural models:

$$\begin{aligned} M_{\text{effect}} : \quad & X = U, \quad Y = X, \\ M_{\text{common}} : \quad & X = U, \quad Y = U. \end{aligned} \tag{12}$$

Both imply $\Pr(X = 0, Y = 0) = \Pr(X = 1, Y = 1) = 1/2$ and zero probability for the other observational pairs. Yet the intervention $\text{do}(X = x)$ produces $Y = x$ in M_{effect} , whereas it leaves $Y = U$ in M_{common} . Consequently, the difference $\mathbb{E}[Y \mid \text{do}(X = 1)] - \mathbb{E}[Y \mid \text{do}(X = 0)]$ equals 1 in the former model and 0 in the latter. These are deliberately artificial models with one binary burden coordinate; they do not describe an actual family, and the formal intervention does not establish that an identifiable actor possessed practical authority to set X .

Proposition B.4 (Observational non-identification of the regime contrast). *In the constructed class containing both models in Equation 12, the observational law of (X, Y) does not identify the causal contrast between the two interventions on X .*

Demonstration. The two models generate the same distribution of observed (X, Y) but imply different intervention distributions for Y . A functional of the common observational distribution therefore cannot equal both distinct causal contrasts. The proposition does not show that the effect is never identifiable: randomized assignment, conditional exchangeability with adequate covariate support, suitable instrumental or structural assumptions, or additional process information can change the admissible model class. It also does not establish purposeful cost displacement. The construction is an elementary illustration of already established causal-identification problems [21, 26]; here it specifies why the paper’s steering vocabulary cannot substitute for identification assumptions.

B.5 Countermodel III: Historical Feedback and Conditional Power Reproduction

An account of power reproduction requires an additional state transition beyond immediate incidence. Section 9.4 represents the broader transition by $\mathcal{T}$ in Equation 5. The following construction isolates a narrower mechanism relating a dependent’s financial reserve to effective access to an independent review. It is intentionally minimal: the example does not equate one measure of review access with a complete representation of autonomy, future opportunity, or social domination.

Let x_b denote a participant’s immediately available independently controlled resources after the implemented sanction, measured relative to an explicitly stipulated baseline. Let $\theta > 0$ represent the effective cost threshold for accessing an independent review process in the example, including necessary transport or communication expenses. Let z be the independently provided, usable support for review access. Define the local review-access indicator by Equation 13.

$$c_b(x_b, z) = \begin{cases} 1, & x_b + z \geq \theta, \\ 0, & x_b + z < \theta. \end{cases} \tag{13}$$

Equation 13 models a single effective option over a specified horizon. Its threshold assumption may be inaccurate when an institution provides free proceedings, remote participation, legal representation, or non-financial obstacles. The construction therefore claims only conditional compatibility with such a mechanism. It also allows the episode to create new support relationships through the independent input z . A history's later institutional responses are not presumed to be mechanically determined by its earlier resource balance.

Assume the illustrative baseline has independently controlled reserves $x_b^0 = 5$ units and the access threshold is $\theta = 4$, with no independent support initially available. Under a low-dependent-burden regime, b bears zero units on the relevant resource coordinate, so $x_b = 5$ and $c_b = 1$. Under a burden-shifting regime, b bears two units, so $x_b = 3$ and $c_b = 0$. If actor a controls a decision whose effective alternatives are these regimes, and access to review constrains an otherwise available resource veto held by a , the change in c_b can be a mediating condition of continued asymmetry. The sufficient conditions include the two feasible regimes, the stipulated resource threshold, and a causal connection between the accessible review and the relevant decision power. These conditions are not established merely by observing a lower post-sanction balance or fewer review applications.

Proposition B.5 (Conditional threshold-mediated feedback). *In the constructed threshold model, if a feasible burden-steering choice lowers the dependent's usable reserves from a value at least θ to a value below θ , and if $z = 0$ and other relevant access conditions are held fixed, then the dependent's modeled review-access indicator changes from 1 to 0. For the additional authority claim, assume a binary veto indicator v_a is defined within the same constructed mechanism by $v_a = 1 - c_b$, meaning that effective independent review suffices to disable the specified veto, while absent review leaves it operative, with other routes of constraint excluded by stipulation. Under these additional assumptions, the intervention changes v_a from 0 to 1.*

Demonstration. The first conclusion follows directly by evaluating Equation 13 at the two reserve levels. Substituting those two access-indicator values into the expressly assumed relation $v_a = 1 - c_b$ yields the veto-indicator comparison. Without this additional mediator equation and the exclusion of offsetting constraints, access loss alone would leave the authority outcome undetermined. Neither the threshold equation nor the veto relation establishes the existence of such power in an actual case, or its legal or moral status. Proposition B.5 therefore gives a sufficient conditional mechanism in a deliberately bounded model, not a general monotonic law of power reproduction.

For a contrasting trajectory, keep the dependent's immediate resource burden at two units in both histories. In history h_1 , independent support remains unavailable and $c_b(3, 0) = 0$. In history h_2 , an external organization provides two usable units for the review, so $c_b(3, 2) = 1$. The formal sanction and the immediate person-specific financial burden are the same; the subsequent effective opportunity differs. This supplies an explicit continuation countermodel for Proposition 9.6. In another admissible completion, collective action could secure review through a nonfinancial route, invalidating the simple cost threshold while strengthening the case for historical relational reconfiguration. The same analytical vocabulary therefore accommodates reproduction, protected stability, and resistance without fixing an inevitable evolutionary direction.

An additional subtlety concerns the meaning of a historical comparison. Let the observation index of the sanction and the later review decision be fixed by a recorded dependency or procedural order; the mathematical relationship requires a relevant ordered pair of events, not a universal metaphysical future. Moreover, θ , the available support, decision rights, and the identities of relevant parties may change with institutional reform. When that occurs, one should revise the transition relation and the comparator set rather than force a stationary mapping onto an evolving history. A model that captures one barrier today may miss newly generated channels of contestation, collective aid, or coercion in another history.

Adversarial status of the formal demonstrations. Propositions B.2 and B.3 follow because the admissible model class permits different burden allocations and feasible-action sets under the same restricted observations. Proposition B.4 exhibits a second kind of underdetermination: different counterfactual

Table 18: Formal countermodels and the additional evidence required for empirical inference

Constructed result	Formal content	Empirical or normative remainder
Incidence non-identification	Common sanction record is compatible with distinct person-specific burden vectors.	Trace funding rights, substitutions, baseline resources, and loss valuation.
Control ambiguity	Common incidence can arise with or without a focal actor’s feasible steering alternative.	Establish effective decision rights, vetoes, other actors’ responses, and actual intervention.
Threshold feedback	Altered burden can cross a stipulated access threshold; identical immediate burdens can admit different later access.	Verify resources, support, eligibility, institutional response, and the link between review and effective power.
Normative divergence	Equivalent quantitative records can coexist with different consent and legitimacy conditions.	Assess legal duties, practical voluntariness, proportionality, and justified remedial obligations.

completions can match the stipulated observed conditional patterns. None supplies a lower bound on how frequently the configuration occurs, identifies who selected an allocation, or demonstrates that the GR representation outperforms an ordinary potential-outcomes or network account. The threshold-mediated result requires a further assumption tying review access to a specific veto relation; removal of that link destroys the authority conclusion while preserving the access calculation. In an application with external review available regardless of discretionary funds, the stipulated feedback mechanism may not apply at all. These are scientifically material limitations, and the comparison study must report them rather than treating the existence of a formal proof environment as explanatory success.

B.6 Identification, Sensitivity, and Mathematical Scope

The preceding countermodels support a disciplined separation of logical possibility from empirical identification. A pair of admissible models can show that a conclusion does not follow from given premises; it cannot determine which model describes a particular institution or household. To identify a causal contrast in observations, investigators need specified interventions, consistency of the measured outcome under those intervention definitions, relevant exchangeability or another defensible identification design, sufficiently supported comparisons, and a model of interference where participants’ outcomes respond to other participants’ decisions. These requirements have extensive antecedents in potential-outcomes research and interference analysis [26, 25]. The present contribution is the alignment of those obligations with the stages and consequences of sanction incidence, not a new identification theorem.

A practically useful research design could compare two implementation regimes within a narrowly defined institutional setting where an exogenous rule allocates payment sources or protects dependents’ accounts. It would need to separate the effects of the rule on formal sanction execution from its effects on downstream resource allocation. Alternatively, archival process tracing could identify dated decisions governing who could choose payment accounts, whether a dependent could refuse a transfer, and how independent review subsequently operated. Neither method automatically reveals intentions, and randomization of harmful dependence or coercive burden shifting may be ethically unacceptable. When a complete identification design is unavailable, qualitative and interval-valued bounds can be more defensible than an apparently precise steering coefficient.

Table 18 collects the distinct results and additional requirements. It distinguishes formal record completion, steering evidence, later institutional feedback, and normative appraisal. In particular, an investigator can identify a material cost shift while remaining uncertain whether it was authorized, voluntary, unavoidable, or malicious. Stronger claims should therefore be expressed as separately supported conclusions with their own evidence records.

The framework’s most demanding open question concerns the nature of historically feasible alternatives. A counterfactual regime can be mathematically described yet infeasible within the resource,

institutional, and relational constraints of the case. Conversely, a regime may have become feasible only because the sanction provoked external scrutiny or new cooperation. Feasibility is therefore itself historically conditioned. The analyst should report the provenance of a proposed alternative, its dependency on other actors' responses, and the observation horizon over which it was available. Selection of a convenient hypothetical option is not sufficient to establish that the accountable actor could have implemented it.

The formal analysis also faces representational boundaries. A limited graph or matrix may omit an intermediary who determines access to funds; an event sequence may misrepresent simultaneous obligations or contested ordering; and a numeric indicator of review access may overlook fear, linguistic barriers, or dignitary harms. These are potential failures of model specification. Empirical findings that the representation does not discriminate rival histories better than an existing institutional audit, conventional network model, or careful qualitative account would count against claims of distinctive practical value. The framework should be retained or refined only where it improves explanatory precision, exposes consequential missingness, or identifies ethically relevant burden pathways while remaining compatible with domain-specific methods.

The countermodels establish bounded relations of non-identification and conditional possibility. They show why identical formal decisions, or identical immediately observed burdens, can remain compatible with distinct causal and historical configurations. Evidence about feasible interventions, institutional authority, and independent resources is required to distinguish those configurations in an empirical case. Appendix C translates these needs into a participant-protective research protocol.

C Evidence, Causal Rivals, and Ethical Research Protocol

This appendix specifies an empirical research protocol for the relational incidence of sanctions under asymmetric power. Its task is to translate the analytical distinctions of Sections 3–13, the typed record architecture of Appendix A, and the conditional countermodels of Appendix B into procedures that can be criticized and, where ethically justified, tested. The central methodological difficulty is that a formally documented sanction, an observed household or organizational loss, an actor's influence over its allocation, and a later change in authority may leave different evidential traces. An empirical design must specify the information that bears on each claim and identify admissible rival histories. The proposed protocol combines process tracing, constrained comparisons of implementation regimes, provenance-sensitive burden ledgers, participant-protective research procedures, and staged adjudication of competing explanations. It remains a proposal for future inquiry. No participants have been recruited, no research protocol has received ethics approval on the basis of this manuscript, and no empirical effects or individual misconduct are reported here.

The terms *sanction*, *burden*, *implementation*, *repair*, and *power* retain the domain-specific distinctions developed in the main text. In an administrative enforcement setting a sanction may have a formal legal status; in a household a purported punishment can be an informal exercise of authority whose legitimacy itself requires investigation. Coding both under a common analytical heading enables a limited comparison of burden pathways without conferring legal equivalence. Likewise, an individual may receive public recognition for assistance without having appropriated repair, and a family member may voluntarily share a cost without having been coerced. The protocol is designed to preserve those alternatives throughout evidence collection and interpretation.

C.1 Research Units, Sampling Frames, and Claim Registration

The primary observational unit is a *sanction episode* defined by an identifiable responsibility or rule determination, a specified proposed or implemented adverse response, and a bounded network of potentially affected relationships. An episode record may be incomplete, disputed, or limited to an alleged sanction. Those evidential states should be retained in its eligibility field. Secondary units include individual burden coordinates, resource-control decisions, relational links, remedial interventions, and the situated

observations from which they are reconstructed. Appendix A provides the preliminary types; Appendix C assigns research procedures to those types. Researchers should declare an episode boundary before interpreting the outcome. Including everyone who experienced a later loss as a member of the original episode risks retrospectively constructing an apparently coherent network from downstream harm alone.

A future comparative study should pre-specify a sampling frame separately for each institutional context. Administrative records may support enumeration of formal sanctions within a defined office and interval, but can omit privately shared payment and labor burdens. Confidential interviews may reveal these burdens while disproportionately including individuals who can safely speak or who already recognize an episode as coercive. Public complaints may overrepresent disputes that reached a grievance system, while unreported or informally settled matters remain absent. Case-selection records should therefore distinguish the target population, access mechanism, reasons for inclusion, known exclusions, and probable selection pressures. It would be misleading to combine purposively sampled household narratives, administrative fines, and public international sanctions into an incidence-prevalence estimate without a separately justified population model.

Before collecting any case-specific testimony, an approved study should register a limited set of competing explanatory propositions and their predicted traces. The initial claims are: (i) formal responsibility attribution and sanction execution occurred as represented; (ii) sanction-associated burdens reached particular participants through specified mechanisms; (iii) an actor possessed practical discretion over at least two feasible implementation regimes; (iv) that discretion was exercised in a particular episode; and (v) a resulting burden difference affected later contestation or dependence through a traceable mediator. Claims about the actor's intention, culpability, and the legitimacy of the sanction constitute additional inquiries governed by context-appropriate evidential and normative standards. A researcher should register the comparison baseline for each burden coordinate and indicate where such a baseline is unavailable.

The study should admit episodes in which one or more of those claims fails. A household may contain a powerful adult who bears the entire sanction-associated cost; a dependent may offer freely chosen assistance with a credible opportunity to decline; independent oversight may prevent a proposed reassignment of duties; and the relevant enforcement burden may originate in an external rule inaccessible to the formal target. These are analytically informative cases. Sampling only dramatic examples of apparent escape from punishment would confound the existence of dispersed harms with the stronger hypothesis of actor-directed burden steering. Deliberately seeking adverse cases and institutionally constrained cases therefore serves both causal discrimination and protection against an accusatory research design.

C.2 Observation Records, Provenance, and Diagnostic Tests

An evidence ledger should connect each research statement to its source, collection context, scope, and conditions of interpretation. The ledger records whether a claim originates in an enforcement notice, payroll entry, bank statement, written instruction, care schedule, interview account, independent observation, or researcher-derived reconstruction. The same payment appearing in an official receipt and a participant's account may be corroborated as a transaction, while the two sources may remain silent about who permanently lost control of the resources. A formally signed agreement can document a stated allocation rule without settling whether consent was voluntary or whether that rule was followed in practice. Researchers should therefore separate the evidential status of a document's existence, the accuracy of its content, and the inferences drawn from it.

For each datum, the record should include a pseudonymous source identifier, permitted purpose, access classification, collection or document date when safely available, temporal precision, provenance chain, potential conflicts of interest, and an explicit epistemic status such as observed, reported, inferred, contested, missing, or withheld for safety. These categories should coexist: a record may establish that a testimony was given while the content of that testimony remains contested. A derived burden estimate should retain a trace to its underlying inputs and the baseline assumptions used to calculate it. Version control should record corrections and changes in coding policy; the public audit trail may contain only deidentified methodological transformations where source-level disclosure would create risk. The

Table 19: Evidence gates for distinct claims in a sanction episode

Claim	Relevant observations and comparisons	Principal unresolved alternative
Formal implementation	Competent decision, execution notice, actual enforcement records	Recorded decision was partly enforced, reversed, or never executed
Experienced burden	Person-specific loss, baseline, access to funds, substituted labor, observation window	Gross transaction differs from net loss or attribution to sanction
Practical steering capacity	Decision rights, feasible alternatives, effective vetoes, third-party responses	Actor held nominal authority without effective discretion
Exercise and incidence effect	Dated choice, implementation trace, counterfactual regime, changed burden coordinate	Allocation followed an independent rule or voluntary choice
Strategic intention	Contemporaneous contextual evidence of aims, foreseeability, and alternatives	Assistance, necessity, routine delegation, or mixed motives
Subsequent power effect	Repeated capacity measures, review access, external shocks, countervailing support	Pre-existing dependency, institutional reform, or unrelated change

schema is intended to support critical revision rather than to transform every narrative into a verified fact.

Process tracing provides a methodological precedent for evaluating diagnostic observations relative to competing explanations [7]. An investigator could look for dated evidence that an actor instructed a bank transfer, reassigned care shifts, used a discretionary veto, or offered relief on conditions related to withdrawing a complaint. Such traces can support propositions about implementation decisions when their authenticity, context, and available alternatives are established. An absent written instruction is considerably less diagnostic when decisions are ordinarily communicated orally; an explicit allocation memo can still be equivocal when a third party had binding authority over the policy. Researchers should articulate what an observation would mean under each rival history before interpreting its apparent strength.

Temporal reconstruction requires comparable discipline. Interviews may produce retrospective narratives with approximate dates, while contracts and administrative files may timestamp only the formal action. The episode should be represented as a partially ordered collection of events whose sequencing is supported by recorded dependencies. A researcher's chronological index is a coordinate for arranging evidence, not an assumption that the underlying relational system evolves along a universally privileged clock. When two decisions cannot be ordered from evidence, the ledger should preserve both compatible sequences. Where expectations influenced behavior before a formal notice or a resource arrangement had been established earlier, the history must accommodate anticipatory and inherited mechanisms. Temporal proximity alone does not constitute a causal link.

Table 19 specifies the inferential gates between increasingly demanding conclusions. These gates are cumulative only when the corresponding assumptions hold; a well-supported statement of an actor's available veto, for example, does not establish that the actor exercised it in the episode under study.

C.3 Rival Causal Histories and Adverse Case Tests

The proposed mechanism should be examined against several rival causal histories. *Incidental relational spillover* arises when enforcement diminishes a shared resource and existing interdependence produces additional losses without an actor-specific redirection. *Anticipated institutional pass-through* occurs when a stable procedure allocates costs in a predictable way, whether or not any individual currently controls that procedure. *Voluntary solidarity* arises when another person knowingly contributes resources with a credible option to decline and without coercive conditions; the value of that solidarity is not erased by the existence of underlying asymmetry. *Power-directed externalization* requires evidence that a particular actor exercised effective influence over a feasible allocation choice with consequences for

Table 20: Rival histories, mechanism traces, and informative adverse observations

Candidate history	Expected diagnostic trace	Potential adverse observation
Incidental spillover	Automatic shared-resource loss, limited discretionary variation	Documented discretionary allocation choice changes incidence
Routine institutional pass-through	Stable rule consistently applied across comparable episodes	Ad hoc override selected by accountable actor
Voluntary solidarity	Independently expressed willingness and feasible refusal	Credible coercive threat or withdrawal of essentials
Directed externalization	Effective control plus enacted choice and burden response	Binding outside constraint removes target's choice
Third-party steering	Separately documented institutional or other actor intervention	Alleged third party had no effective authority in episode
Common-cause disturbance	Independent shock explains burden and dependency movement	Valid comparison isolates burden allocation as a distinct mediator

another participant's burden. *Third-party coercion* arises when the decisive intervention is made by an institution or another actor rather than the formal target. *Common-cause change* occurs when a separate event, such as loss of employment or a sudden care need, generates both an observed burden and a change in dependency. These candidate histories can coexist in part, and an empirical classification need not force exclusive attribution where multiple mechanisms operated.

A diagnostic comparison asks whether the evidence would be substantially more expected under one history than its rivals. For example, a recorded transfer from a shared account is compatible with all six mechanisms until investigators reconstruct access rights, replenishment, necessity, alternatives, decision procedures, and additional shocks. A dated unilateral order against a documented objections process would be more discriminating for actor-directed implementation than a payment record alone. An independent binding rule that removed the alleged actor's discretion would challenge an actor-specific steering claim even if the burden on others was severe. Positive testimony that assistance was freely offered matters, while inquiry must examine whether the reported option to refuse was substantively available. Coercion should neither be presumed from inequality nor ruled out solely because an agreement was signed.

The analyst should also seek *mechanism failures*. An actor may have apparent financial control but be constrained by an independent trustee or enforceable joint-account rule. The enforcement body may allow an installment schedule that prevents a dependent's expenses from being reduced. A family may redistribute labor in ways that increase collective autonomy rather than reinforcing the original authority structure. Public recognition for relief may be accompanied by meaningful acknowledgment of wrongdoing and transparent restitution, which would count against a claim of appropriative repair. A case where the formal target fully bears the practical sanction and access to review improves is a strong negative instance for a hypothesis of habitual externalization, even if the broader relationship remains asymmetric. Such cases help specify conditions in which the proposed mechanism has little explanatory purchase.

Table 20 maps the principal rivals to observations that could challenge them. The entries are research prompts rather than automatic decision rules; the weight of a trace depends on its reliability, the case-selection process, and the opportunities for its production.

Adverse evidence need not support a single binary judgment. A case may establish that an actor controlled resource allocation without evidence that the actor used this power to evade punishment. It may establish directed burden reassignment without evidence of hostile intent. It may establish harmful consequences despite a defensible legal or moral allocation of duties. Conversely, an independently authorized sanction may still be seriously disproportionate in its effects on third parties. The purpose of maintaining differentiated claims is to avoid both unwarranted accusations and unwarranted exoneration through the mere existence of a formally correct decision.

C.4 Counterfactual Identification and Longitudinal Comparison

Appendix B proves model-relative non-identification statements by constructing alternative admissible histories. Empirical research faces the more demanding task of identifying which completion, or which subset of compatible completions, is supported by observations. Let $\mathcal{O}$ denote a research record with provenance and explicit uncertainties, and let $\mathcal{H}(\mathcal{O})$ be the set of histories admissible under declared background constraints and consistent with that record. For a candidate inference ϕ that is well-defined and truth-valued on each complete admissible history, model-relative entailment requires a nonempty class of admissible completions in which the candidate conclusion holds throughout. Missing or disputed evidence is represented through the range of completions; an undefined predicate must be specified further before the criterion can be applied. This logical criterion is recorded in Equation 14. It is distinct from statistical identification of a causal estimand from the distribution of observed data.

$$\mathcal{O} \models_{\mathcal{M}} \phi \iff \mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathcal{O}) \neq \emptyset \wedge \forall h \in \mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathcal{O}), \phi(h) = \text{true}, \quad (14)$$

where $\mathcal{M}$ fixes the declared measurement rules, admissibility assumptions, and relevant counterfactual structure. Equation 14 is a nonvacuous, model-relative logical entailment condition. It does not claim that a researcher has enumerated every real possibility, identified an average treatment effect, inferred intention, or acquired a normative warrant. Statistical identification of causal effects requires additional assumptions about assignment, interference, measurement, and observability. If the compatible-history set admits both ϕ and its negation, the conclusion remains undecided within this model. If the set is empty because records or restrictions conflict, the displayed condition fails and the analyst must examine that conflict rather than infer an arbitrary proposition.

Study designs that compare alternative implementation regimes require a defensible feasibility argument. The counterfactual π^0 must represent an arrangement that could have been brought about in the relevant historical context, taking into account other actors' vetoes, resource constraints, procedural authority, and likely responses. Merely proposing that a household could have paid from a different account is insufficient if that account was inaccessible, legally restricted, or committed to essential care. Comparators should be documented as actual institutional alternatives, demonstrated prior practices, plausibly available options confirmed by independent sources, or carefully qualified sensitivity scenarios. The possible regime set may itself depend on earlier relations; therefore the investigation should not assume that the same alternatives were available to different families or at different points in the same history.

Cross-case comparison should stratify, where the available evidence permits, by sanction type, institutional enforcement regime, resource access, dependent-care responsibilities, relevant oversight, and initial dependence. Matching only on an equal fine or disciplinary measure would leave these conditions unaccounted for. Selecting cases after observing severe downstream loss can also introduce outcome-dependent selection; controlling for a post-sanction variable created by the very intervention under study may distort the estimand. Some affected participants are connected across households, workplaces, or support institutions, so the common assumption of no interference across units is often implausible. Existing causal-inference research provides tools for explicitly modeled interference, but only under suitable assignment, exposure, and partial-interference assumptions [39, 25]. Where those conditions cannot be defended, a transparent comparative process-tracing study may be more informative than a causal coefficient whose meaning depends on untested independence assumptions.

Estimand registration and design gates. Before assigning a causal meaning to regime differences, an empirical protocol should specify the unit and network boundary, the treatment or policy version, the bearer-specific outcome coordinate, the observation window, and the relevant comparison. A one-time choice of who pays a fine and a longitudinal policy governing savings, care, and appeal access are different interventions. For the latter, anticipation and actions responding to earlier burdens may affect later treatment choices, so a cross-sectional comparison can conflate parts of the proposed feedback process. The analyst should state whether the intended estimand is an immediate controlled incidence contrast, an overall effect of a sustained implementation policy, or a subsequent authority outcome. These quantities answer different questions even when all are called “sanction steering.”

Table 21: Design gates before a causal interpretation of burden steering

Gate	Required specification	Consequence of failure
Intervention version and authority	Concrete actions, implementer, other actors' responses, enforceable constraints	Vague regime or nominal position does not define an actor-controlled effect
Consistency and measurement	Burden coordinate, provenance, observation cut, implemented version	Observed and counterfactual outcomes may refer to different objects
Assignment and common support	Pre-regime conditions, alternative allocation, positivity/exchangeability claims	A feasible option may lack identifying observational comparisons
Interference and boundary	Affected third parties, exposure pathways, network spillovers	Individually indexed potential outcomes may be misspecified
Longitudinal ordering	Prior control, anticipatory changes, later mediators and attrition	Reverse causation or post-treatment conditioning may distort feedback inference

These are proposed auditing questions, drawn from established causal-inference requirements rather than novel methodological criteria of GR theory [21, 25]. The evidence may not permit these gates to be satisfied, especially when affected parties face retaliation risks. Failure should be recorded as limited identification, not repaired by a stronger verbal claim. A careful descriptive record and comparative mechanism account may then be the ethically and scientifically preferable output.

The historical-feedback claim requires repeated observations of practical options, authority, and constraints, together with explicit mediating hypotheses. A reduction in a dependent's monetary reserve may narrow effective appeal access under the threshold assumptions in Equation 13; access can nonetheless be restored through pro bono assistance, collective action, procedural reform, or other newly generated relations. Researchers should therefore observe both resources and the availability of independent alternatives rather than infer domination directly from a balance sheet. Reverse causation and anticipation must be considered: a pre-existing inability to contest may influence the allocation decision, while the expectation of a forthcoming sanction may change contributions before formal implementation. The resulting analysis should report heterogeneous trajectories, possible feedback, and uncertainty about unobserved counterfactuals rather than treating a single incident as a sufficient explanation of subsequent authority.

Pre-registered negative controls and competing analyses. Before observing case outcomes, an empirical protocol should fix the primary incidence and contestation measures, define its participant-network boundary, and state rules for handling shared accounts and third-party providers. It should register a baseline model in which pre-existing dependence and institutional rules account for both the allocation and later voice without any episode-specific steering. Where defensible, a negative-control outcome that the episode's allocation cannot plausibly affect may help detect uncontrolled common causes; a negative-control exposure requires the same degree of causal justification. Such controls are diagnostics rather than automatic identification devices. Analysts should report selection into the study, missing relationship edges, unobserved feasible alternatives, and sensitivity to assumptions about other actors' responses. The hypothesis of directed externalization is unsupported where the design cannot distinguish it from routine pass-through, voluntary coordination, or institutional compulsion. The safer conclusion may be descriptive incidence only.

C.5 Participant Safety, Consent, and Researcher Independence

Investigation of household sanction burdens, informal punishment, and control over care or finances can expose participants to interpersonal retaliation, institutional disciplinary consequences, reputational damage, or renewed dependency. Research authorization and study operations must be responsive to those

risks. The World Health Organization's guidance on domestic-violence research foregrounds participant and researcher safety, confidentiality, specialized preparation, and appropriate support pathways [47]; its later intervention-research guidance addresses risks particular to studies seeking to prevent or respond to violence against women [48]. These documents have defined domains, and neither supplies an automatic procedural rule for every workplace, educational, or public-law study. The CIOMS guidelines similarly recommend context-sensitive protection of voluntariness and confidentiality where institutional or interpersonal positions can increase vulnerability, while cautioning against automatically treating an entire category of persons as inherently vulnerable [11]. Before research with human participants, researchers must seek the ethics review, legal assessment, safety planning, and local expertise appropriate to the study's jurisdiction and design.

Recruitment should avoid making a potentially controlling person the exclusive intermediary between the research team and another participant. Dependents and employees may reasonably fear that nonparticipation will affect housing, income, schooling, grades, employment, or access to aid. Consent materials should state that participation is voluntary, the investigator is independent of sanction adjudication, and withdrawal or refusal carries no study-imposed disadvantage. Informed consent is an ongoing process, particularly when questions move from publicly known sanction facts to contested private interactions or possible coercion. Researchers should offer safe ways to skip questions, stop an interview, or decline a follow-up, subject to clearly described legal and practical limits on withdrawal of already aggregated or published material. A signed consent form is not by itself evidence that a participant can speak safely or independently.

A household interview should proceed only when a safety assessment supports private communication. This paper supplies neither a list of potential participants nor permission to approach any particular family; the proposed protocol is hypothetical and would require independent ethical approval or review appropriate to the jurisdiction and method. Shared devices, monitored messaging accounts, synchronized calendars, shared cloud backups, and obvious researcher-branded communications can disclose participation. Researchers should agree on contact preferences, avoid leaving identifying voicemail or message content when unsafe, and never promise absolute secrecy where law imposes a disclosure obligation. In particular, interviews about child safeguarding, imminent harm, or reportable abuse can trigger jurisdiction-specific duties; participants must understand relevant limits before sharing sensitive material. It may be inappropriate to recruit both an alleged controlling actor and a dependent from the same small network if their participation could become identifiable through the study itself. Methods that require confrontational joint interviews or evidentiary confrontation should undergo independent safety scrutiny and ordinarily be avoided where retaliation risks are foreseeable.

The researcher should avoid performing the roles of therapist, judge, investigator of criminal guilt, or family mediator unless separately competent, authorized, and explicitly engaged for such a purpose. The present theoretical manuscript includes no interviews or access to private case files; this protocol is limited to future research subject to independent ethical review. Interview prompts ought to elicit events, choices, access conditions, and differing interpretations without imposing a predefined narrative of victimhood or culpability. Participants can disagree about responsibility or the meaning of assistance; those differences should be preserved with appropriate evidential status. Distress-reduction and referral arrangements should be designed with locally competent services before recruitment rather than improvised as the interviewer learns of acute need. Remuneration should compensate time and reasonable costs without becoming a source of pressure or creating a visible household transfer that increases danger. Benefits of participation, and the possibility of no direct benefit, should be represented without exaggeration.

Researcher independence also requires reflection on the origin of the project. A study developed from a concern about power's ability to redirect punishment risks over-detecting intentional externalization while under-detecting mutual aid, independent institutional decisions, or successful corrective action. Conversely, researchers dependent on an institution or household gatekeeper may minimize coercion to preserve access. Study governance should disclose relevant conflicts and funding relationships, separate access negotiations from evidence interpretation where possible, and give trained reviewers a meaningful

opportunity to challenge coding decisions. A participant's narrative authority deserves ethical respect; the evidential status of particular historical claims remains an inquiry rather than a privilege conferred upon the researcher or the participant.

Illustrations and data minimization. Publication-facing illustrations in the present manuscript are synthetic and use role symbols and abstract units. A future empirical project should avoid releasing raw family narratives, direct identifiers, exact residences, organizational contact details, or linkable small-network sequences merely to demonstrate a formal mechanism. Reconstructed histories may require aggregation, access controls, consent-sensitive disclosure review, or withholding when re-identification risk remains material. Removing a name alone does not guarantee anonymity. Likewise, public source availability does not settle the ethics of republishing a vulnerable person's information. The decision to disclose a case, and its necessary detail, should be justified independently of the researcher's preference for a vivid example.

C.6 Data Governance, Analytical Audits, and Publication Thresholds

Data minimization is integral to the research design because a detailed network of resource flows, care responsibilities, location traces, and testimony may identify a household even after obvious names are removed. The project should distinguish an identifiable recruitment registry, restricted raw evidence, pseudonymized analytical records, and a public methodological layer. Direct identifiers should be stored separately from coded episode records where feasible, with access restricted by role and purpose. Storage and transfer arrangements should be evaluated for the jurisdiction, sensitivity, and likely adversary; encryption, access logs, retention schedules, and deletion processes are candidate controls requiring actual implementation and independent review. Describing a dataset as anonymized is insufficient when rare institutional events, kinship roles, or dates permit deductive disclosure. Where release risk remains substantial, controlled access, aggregation, simulated records, or publication of coding logic without microdata may better serve reproducibility and participant safety.

An audit should preserve the difference among source text, analyst paraphrase, inferred variables, and model-derived quantities. A coding record can specify the rule used to infer person-specific monetary loss from an expenditure, the assumptions used to estimate care hours, and the evidence supporting a discretionary veto. Two analysts can independently code a deidentified subset to evaluate whether essential categories have operational meaning; disagreements should be studied for systematic ambiguity rather than resolved by deference to a senior investigator's interpretation. Researchers should report the frequency of unresolved, contested, and suppressed entries alongside any reliability measures. A high agreement score obtained by excluding difficult cases would present a misleading image of evidential quality.

Publication thresholds ought to correspond to inferential claims. A descriptive report may state that a documented fine coexisted with an observable reduction in another person's resources. A mechanism report requires additional records linking the sanction's implementation to the burden. An actor-specific steering conclusion requires evidence of a feasible choice controlled and exercised by the actor. A claim of intentional evasion requires a justified inference about purpose from contextual evidence, while a claim of illegality or moral wrongdoing requires independent domain-appropriate reasons. Historical reproduction requires a measured or carefully reconstructed mediator from incidence to changed relational capacity. Table 22 summarizes the escalating disclosure and review requirements. When an assertion could identify a private person or produce material retaliation, the ethical permission to publish it is a separate decision from whether the assertion is well supported.

A pre-specified analytic workflow could proceed from a synthetic-record pilot to a feasibility review of documentary data, then to ethically approved low-risk comparative case work, and only then to studies requiring participant interviews or sensitive longitudinal linkage. The synthetic pilot should test whether independent readers can reliably code the typed categories and reproduce the arithmetic countermodels in Appendix B. The documentary stage should evaluate how often the available records leave incidence

Table 22: Proposed reporting levels and associated review obligations

Reporting level	Required analytical support	Additional publication safeguard
Documented event	Authentication, scope, appropriate uncertainty qualifiers	Minimize identifiers and disclose source limits
Incidence pattern	Baselines, participant-level or typed loss measures, provenance	Suppress unsafe linkage and small-cell disclosures
Control mechanism	Feasible alternative, decision-right evidence, implementation trace	Independent rival-history review and legal-risk assessment
Intentional conduct	Contemporaneous and contextual evidence bearing on purpose	Enhanced corroboration; avoid personal allegations without warrant
Normative or legal conclusion	Explicit rule, jurisdiction, competence, and moral premises	Domain expert review and procedural fairness
Longitudinal power effect	Repeated capacity measures and mediated causal account	Assess risks of re-identification through histories

and control unidentified. A comparative field stage, if permitted, should test process hypotheses and rival explanations using predefined diagnostic evidence. A longitudinal extension should require additional justification because repeated contact, linked records, and dependence histories can increase identification and retaliation risks. Each stage should include an explicit decision to stop or reduce the scope if the research question cannot be answered without disproportionate risk.

The programme’s evaluation should include negative and indeterminate findings. An outcome in which nominal incidence and actual burdens align, or in which a presumed resource controller cannot affect feasible implementation, would restrict the steering claim without diminishing the importance of relational harms. Inconclusive records should remain explicitly unresolved. Such results should be reported under the same anonymization, re-identification assessment, and reproducibility standards used for apparently supportive cases.

The protocol separates three tasks that warrant distinct standards of evidence: recording decisions and experiences, identifying mechanisms and feasible alternatives, and assessing duties or institutional legitimacy. Under the proposed GR interpretation, these tasks correspond to manifestations, reconstructed relational histories, and deliberately restrained ontological commitments. Their outputs remain open to revision as credible evidence or alternative explanations emerge. Privacy protection, meaningful consent, and an explicit publication threshold are prerequisites to ethical use, not evidence that a causal hypothesis has been confirmed.

Research Ethics and Source Provenance

Status of case material. All household, organizational, and numerical case descriptions are constructed analytical examples; none is a disguised account of a person or private event known to the author. The manuscript reports no original interviews, observations, institution-specific findings, or empirical identification of strategic sanction externalization.

Source provenance. Sources cited in Sections 1–13 and Appendices A–C were checked against authoritative metadata, official documents, publisher abstracts, and, where available, open full text. The versioned `refs/VERIFICATION_LEDGER.tsv` distinguishes these verification levels. Restricted full-text sources and any pinpoint-level interpretations not supported by accessible text remain disclosed limitations; the source ledger records their verification scope.

Limits of authority. Descriptive claims about burden incidence do not establish legal duties, moral blame, individual motives, or the legitimacy of penalties in a specific jurisdiction. Internal scientific and editorial review passes R18–R28 are documented in the accompanying audit record. External peer

review, new empirical investigation, and independent verification remain outside this manuscript's evidential basis.

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