

The Bright Side of Being Prosocial at Work, and the Dark Side, Too:

*A Review and Agenda for Research on Other-Oriented
Motives, Behavior, and Impact in Organizations*

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Abstract

More than a quarter century ago, organizational scholars began to explore the implications of prosociality in organizations. Three interrelated streams have emerged from this work, which focus on *prosocial motives* (the desire to benefit others or expend effort out of concern for others), *prosocial behaviors* (acts that promote/protect the welfare of individuals, groups, or organizations), and *prosocial impact* (the experience of making a positive difference in the lives of others through one's work). Prior studies have highlighted the importance of prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact, and have enhanced our

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understanding of each of them. However, there has been little effort to systematically review and integrate these related lines of work in a way that furthers our understanding of prosociality in organizations. In this article, we provide an overview of the current state of the literature, highlight key findings, identify major research themes, and address important controversies and debates. We call for an expanded view of prosocial behavior and a sharper focus on the costs and unintended consequences of prosocial phenomena. We conclude by suggesting a number of avenues for future research that will address unanswered questions and should provide a more complete understanding of prosociality in the workplace.

In his first inaugural address as president of the U.S., Abraham Lincoln closed by appealing to the “better angels of our nature”, encouraging his countrymen to act in the best interest of their fellow citizens. This is a theme that has captivated scholars for centuries: individuals are often motivated to engage in actions intended to benefit others. In rich bodies of inquiry, scholars in psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and philosophy have explored the causes of prosocial motivation and behaviors (for reviews, see Batson, 1998; Penner, Dovidio, Schroeder, & Piliavin, 2005). More than a quarter century ago, researchers in the organizational sciences first began to investigate prosocial behaviors in organizations, identifying a range of different ways that employees contribute to others (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986) and showing that, even after accounting for task performance, prosocial behaviors can enhance individual and organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009). Later, organizational scholars directed their attention to prosocial motives, demonstrating that when employees value the success and well-being of others, they are not only more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors—they also become more open to learning from negative feedback and less likely to escalate their commitment to bad decisions (e.g. Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). Most recently, researchers have sought to learn more about the contextual factors that motivate employees to care about helping others and the psychological and behavioral consequences of making a difference, finding that when employees see the positive impact of their work on others, they are more productive (e.g. Grant, 2007, 2012a).

These interrelated lines of work have increased our understanding of the actions that employees take to benefit others, the motives that guide these actions, and the results that they achieve. However, our knowledge of the nature, causes, and consequences of prosociality in organizations has been hindered by three limitations. First, scholars have sometimes conceptualized prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact in different ways, leading to confusion

about the definitions and distinctiveness of these constructs. There are competing views on whether concern for others is a trait or state, and whether it is the opposite of self-interest. Similarly, there are questions about whether prosocial behavior can also be self-serving. By taking stock of these three related lines of work in tandem, and discussing the most relevant issues and findings regarding each of them, we seek to provide greater clarity to each construct, which is important for advancing our knowledge about prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact going forward.

Second, scholars have traditionally focused on organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) as prototypical prosocial actions. However, there are a number of other types of prosocial behaviors that also occur in organizations, such as mentoring, knowledge sharing, and compassion. In spite of their strong prosocial flavor, researchers sometimes fail to explicitly conceptualize or characterize them as prosocial behaviors. Broadening the scope of prosocial behavior, it may be possible to not only deepen our understanding of its antecedents and outcomes, but also develop a more accurate conceptualization of the constellation of these behaviors and their points of convergence and divergence. This could have meaningful implications, too, for measuring prosocial behavior in a more comprehensive manner.

Third, existing research has focused primarily on the positive effects of prosocial phenomena, overlooking their negative effects. Although prosocial motives and behaviors are intended to benefit others, emerging research suggests that they often have unintended consequences. Employees can act prosocially in ways that break rules (Morrison, 2006), commit injustice (Gino & Pierce, 2010), demonstrate dishonesty (Erat & Gneezy, 2012; Levine & Schweitzer, 2015), and violate ethical standards (Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010). They can be pressured or obligated to help (Bolino, Turnley, Gilstrap, & Suazo, 2010; Grant, 2008a; Morrison, 1994; Van Dyne & Ellis, 2004; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006) and sacrifice their own energy and effectiveness (Amanatullah, Morris, & Curhan, 2008; Bergeron, Shipp, Rosen, & Furst, 2013; Bolino, Hsiung, Harvey, & LePine, 2015; Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Flynn, 2003a). Further, as Brief and Motowidlo (1986) originally warned, they may help others in ways that diverge from or even undermine organizational goals. To gain a complete understanding of these phenomena, it is important to consider the full range of their effects (Fineman, 2006).

In this review, we integrate the literatures on prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact with a focus on addressing these issues. Our aim is to expand the range of the core constructs, sharpen their definitions, and pave the way for a richer consideration of their outcomes. Rather than zooming in on the trees by summarizing the findings of individual studies, our focus is on providing insights about the forest. To do so, we organize our review around fundamental questions, highlighting key findings, major research themes, and potential areas of convergence between previously distinct domains. By broadly

considering a variety of prosocial phenomena, we hope to encourage scholars to recognize that although they may be studying different regions of prosociality, they are interested in the same essential terrain.

In each area of our review, we point to specific directions for future research on prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact. In addition, we close by identifying some broader research questions that are also worthy of further inquiry, including the development of more comprehensive models of prosocial phenomena; the identification of general mechanisms that explain the dark sides of prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact; and the implications of gender and time in the context of prosociality.

Defining Prosocial

Although prosocial motives, prosocial behavior, and prosocial impact are closely connected phenomena, each construct is distinct. *Prosocial motivation* describes the desire to benefit others or expend effort out of concern for others (Grant, 2008a). *Prosocial behaviors* are acts that promote or protect the welfare of individuals, groups, or organizations (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). These behaviors may be intended to benefit coworkers, customers, teams, stakeholders, or the organization as a whole. In organizations, prosocial behavior may be either role-prescribed (i.e. in-role behavior) or discretionary (i.e. extra-role behavior), and there may or may not be rewards for engaging in prosocial behavior (Organ, 1997). *Prosocial impact* refers to the experience of making a positive difference in the lives of others (e.g. coworkers, customers, or other stakeholders) through one's work (Grant, 2007; Grant & Sonnentag, 2010). Prosocial impact is related to prosocial motivation in that employees who are prosocially motivated tend to be more interested in benefiting others through their work; however, prosocial impact refers not to motivation itself but to the realization or recognition that one's efforts at work are indeed making a difference to someone. Overall, then, prosocial motivation is the desire and drive to benefit others, prosocial behaviors are the acts that benefit others, and prosocial impact is the awareness that one's actions have succeeded in benefiting others. Table 1 summarizes some of the key attributes of each construct.

Prosocial Motives in Organizations

Researchers have long been interested in understanding what motivates people, and considerable work in psychology has identified dispositional differences between individuals in prosocial motives and situational forces that activate and strengthen these motives (Batson, 1998; Penner et al., 2005). In the section below, we focus on the following questions: (1) Is prosocial motivation different from altruistic motivation? (2) Are prosocial

Table 1 Comparison of Prosocial Constructs

Construct	Prosocial motives	Prosocial behaviors	Prosocial impact
Definition	The desire to benefit others or expend effort out of concern for others	Actions that promote or protect the welfare of individuals, groups, or organizations	The experience of making a positive difference in the lives of others through one's work
Other noteworthy features	Distinct from purely altruistic (self-less) motives or instrumental (self-serving) motives and may involve both concern for others and concern for oneself	May be may be either role-prescribed (i.e. in-role behavior) or discretionary (i.e. extra-role behavior). May be rewarded or unrewarded May be organizationally functional or dysfunctional	Similar to task significance, but focuses on the perception that one's actions are making a difference in others' lives
Nature of the construct	A state or trait	A behavior	A perception or feeling
Representative items	"I want to help others through my work" "I get energized by working on tasks that have the potential to benefit others"	"I help others with heavy workloads" "I share information I have with my colleagues" "I break organizational rules if my coworkers need help with their duties"	"I am very aware of the ways in which my work is benefiting others" "I feel that my work makes a positive difference in other people's lives"

motives the same as altruism and the opposite of self-interest? (3) What are the effects of prosocial motives beyond prosocial behaviors? (4) How do prosocial and intrinsic motivations interact? (5) What are the dark sides of prosocial motives? (6) What are some unresolved issues in research on prosocial motives? In answering these questions, we highlight the findings of a number of studies. [Table 2](#) provides details regarding some of the key investigations referenced in this section, including the relevant citation, information about the operationalization or measure of prosocial motives, and a brief summary of the results. Our intent here is not to be comprehensive, but instead to provide a broad overview of organizational studies that have examined prosocial motives and are relevant to the specific questions highlighted in our review.

Table 2 Studies of Prosocial Motives in Organizations

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Bobocel (2013)	Self-concern and other-orientation, using De Dreu and Nauta's (2009) dispositional orientation items	Following an unfair event, employee perceptions of organizational justice were positively related to forgiveness; the relationship between justice and forgiveness was stronger for employees who were other-oriented. Conversely, it was weaker for employees who were self-concerned. Employee perceptions of organizational justice were negatively related to revenge following an unfair event; the negative relationship was stronger for employees who were other-oriented and suppressed revenge among those who were self-concerned.
Cardador and Wrzesniewski (2015)	<i>S1–S2 measures</i> : Prosocial motives, using the scale developed by Grant (2008a) and competitive motivation, using a 6-item scale adapted from Elliot (1999)	<i>S1</i> : Prosocial motivation, but not competitive motivation, was positively associated with affiliative citizenship behavior. Competitive motivation weakened the relationship between prosocial motives and affiliative citizenship behavior. <i>S2</i> : Prosocial motivation was positively related to challenging citizenship behavior when competitive motivation was low.

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
De Dreu and Nauta (2009)	<i>S1–S3 measures:</i> Self-concern and other-orientation, using non-ipsative measures that asked respondents how much they agreed with certain statements (e.g. “at work, I am concerned about my own needs and interests”; “at work, I consider others’ wishes and desires to be relevant”)	<p><i>S1:</i> Self-concern, but not other-orientation, moderated the relationship between job characteristics and task performance.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Justice climate influenced prosocial behavior among other-oriented employees, but not among employees with low other-orientation.</p> <p><i>S3:</i> Self-concern moderated the relationship between job characteristics and personal initiative (but other-orientation did not); other-orientation moderated the relationship between justice climate and personal initiative (but self-concern did not).</p>
Grant (2008a)	<i>S1–S2 measures:</i> Prosocial motives, using four items adapted from self-regulation scales developed by Ryan and Connell (1989)	<p><i>S1:</i> Intrinsic motivation strengthened the relationship between prosocial motives and overtime hours (an indicator of persistence); however, prosocial motivation was negatively related to persistence when intrinsic motivation was low.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Intrinsic motivation strengthened the relationship between prosocial motivation and both performance (number of calls) and productivity (amount of money raised); however, prosocial motivation was negatively related to productivity when intrinsic motivation was low.</p>

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant and Berry (2011)	<p><i>S1 measure</i>: Prosocial motivation, using the four-item scale developed by Grant (2008a)</p> <p><i>S2 measure</i>: Prosocial motivation, using Grant and Sumanth's (2009) five-item scale</p> <p><i>S3 manipulations</i>: Prosocial motivation, by explaining that a target of assistance had a very significant/insignificant need</p>	<p><i>S1–S3</i>: Prosocial motivation strengthened the relationship between intrinsic motivation and creativity.</p> <p><i>S2–S3</i>: Perspective taking mediated the interactive effects of intrinsic and prosocial motivation on creativity (because prosocially motivated employees tend to be more sensitive to the concerns of others, which facilitates perspective taking).</p>
Grant and Mayer (2009)	<p><i>S1–S2 measures</i>: Prosocial citizenship motives, using the four-item scale developed by Grant (2008a)</p>	<p><i>S1</i>: Prosocial citizenship motives and impression management motives interacted to determine interpersonal OCBs.</p> <p><i>S2</i>: Prosocial citizenship motives and impression management motives interacted to determine OCBs that benefit the organization. Prosocial motives, but not impression management motives, predicted the frequency of voice (a challenging form of OCB).</p>
Grant, Parker, and Collins (2009)	<p><i>S1 measure</i>: Prosocial values, using the four highest-loading items from the Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995)</p> <p><i>S2 measure</i>: Prosocial values, using a 10-item altruism scale (International Personality Item Pool, n.d.)</p>	<p><i>S1–S2</i>: Proactive behaviors were positively related to performance evaluations among employees with prosocial motives.</p>

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant and Sumanth (2009)	<p><i>S1 measure:</i> Prosocial motivation, using a five-item scale adapted from (Grant, 2008a)</p> <p><i>S2 measure:</i> Prosocial motivation, using a three-item scale adapted from Grant (2008a)</p> <p><i>S3 measure:</i> Prosocial motivation, using a five-item scale adapted from Grant (2008a)</p>	<p><i>S1:</i> Manager trustworthiness (in the form of integrity) strengthened the link between prosocial motivation and the number of calls made by student fundraisers working part-time. Further, this relationship was mediated by perceived task significance (i.e. the extent to which students, families, faculty members, and university staff and administration would benefit from fundraising).</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Manager trustworthiness (in the form of benevolence) strengthened the link between prosocial motivation and the amount of money raised by student fundraisers. In addition, the dispositional tendency to trust may compensate for low manager trustworthiness, but prosocial motivation was associated with lower levels of performance when both manager trustworthiness and the employee's propensity to trust were low.</p> <p><i>S3:</i> Replicated results in a sample of professional fundraisers using a measure of performance that captured the initiative that fundraisers took to develop new solicitations and special gift proposals to donors. In this study, though, the relationship between prosocial motivation and initiative was negative when manager trustworthiness (either integrity or benevolence) was low.</p>

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant and Wrzesniewski (2010)	<p><i>S1 measure:</i> Prosocial motivation, using the four-item scale developed by Grant (2008a)</p> <p><i>S2 measure:</i> Agreeableness, using a four-item scale developed by Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, and Lucas (2006)</p> <p><i>S3 measure:</i> Duty, using a four-item scale drawn from several previously published scales (e.g. “I am dependable and self-disciplined”)</p>	<p><i>S1:</i> Prosocial motivation strengthened the relationship between core self-evaluations and performance.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Prosocial motivation, operationalized as agreeableness, strengthened the relationship between core self-evaluations and supervisor ratings of initiative.</p> <p><i>S3:</i> Prosocial motivation, operationalized as duty, strengthened the relationship between core self-evaluations and the objective productivity of employees, and this moderated relationship between core self-evaluations and performance was mediated by anticipated guilt and anticipated gratitude.</p>
Hu and Liden (2015)	<p><i>S1 measure:</i> Team prosocial motivation, using a scale adapted from Grant (2008a)</p> <p><i>S2 manipulation:</i> Team prosocial motivation, by explaining that a target of assistance had a very significant need (versus enhancing the team’s own reputation and financial success)</p>	<p><i>S1 – S2:</i> Team prosocial motivation was positively and indirectly related to team performance and team OCB through team cooperation, and the indirect effects of team prosocial motivation on team performance and team OCB were moderated by task interdependence (such that these relationships were stronger when task interdependence was high). Team prosocial motivation was negatively and indirectly related to team voluntary turnover through team viability, and the indirect effect of team prosocial motivation on team voluntary turnover was moderated by task interdependence (such that the relationship was stronger when task interdependence was high).</p>

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Kim, Van Dyne, Kamdar, and Johnson (2013)	<i>S1–S2 measures</i> : Prosocial values motives, using the citizenship motives scale (CMS) developed by Rioux and Penner (2001)	<p><i>S1</i>: Prosocial values and impression management motives were positively associated with helping, and these relationships were moderated by coworker support (such that the relationship was stronger when coworker support was low). Organizational concern motives were positively associated with voice, and this relationship was moderated by organizational support (such that the relationship was stronger when organizational support was high).</p> <p><i>S2</i>: The relationship between prosocial values motives and helping was mediated by helping role cognitions, as was the relationship between impression management motives and helping. These relationships were moderated by coworker support (such that the relationships between motives and helping were stronger when coworker support was low). The relationship between organizational concern motives and voice was mediated by voice role cognitions. The mediated relationship between organizational concern and voice through voice role cognitions was stronger when organizational support was high.</p>

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Korsgaard, Meglino, and Lester (1996)	<i>S1–S2 measure</i> : Concern for others, using a subscale of the comparative emphasis scale (CES)	<p><i>S1</i>: Individuals who were more concerned for others found the prospect of personal gains less attractive relative to those who were less other-oriented. Those who were more concerned for others were less sensitive to evaluations of payoff and risk.</p> <p><i>S2</i>: Positive affect arousal influenced the relationship between concern for others and evaluations of personal outcomes.</p>
Korsgaard, Meglino, and Lester (1997)	<i>S1–S3 measure</i> : Concern for others, using a subscale of the CES	<p><i>S1–S3</i>: Individuals who were other-oriented tended to be satisfied with feedback and incorporated it into their self-evaluations whether it was favorable or unfavorable, and they were more likely to act upon feedback even if it was negative or might have negative implications for them.</p>
Korsgaard, Meglino, and Lester (2004)	Concern for others, using a subscale of the CES	<p>Employees who were other-oriented were more likely to provide self-assessments that were less inflated (relative to supervisor ratings).</p>

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Korsgaard, Meglino, Lester, and Jeong (2010)	<p><i>S1 measure:</i> Concern for others, using a subscale of the CES</p> <p><i>S2 manipulation:</i> Other-orientation, by asking subjects to read an essay with a high vs. a low other-orientation prime (e.g. helping hurricane victims vs. managing loans and investments)</p> <p><i>S3 Manipulation:</i> Other-orientation, by asking subjects to unscramble sentences containing words that were high vs. neutral in other-orientation (e.g. “I donated blood” vs. “I closed the door”)</p>	Willingness to engage in voluntary helping behavior was more influenced by a sense of obligation to reciprocate benefits already received than by expectations of reciprocity in the future among those who were more other-oriented (operationalized as either a trait or a state). In addition, other-oriented individuals were more willing to engage in OCB even in the absence of potential future benefits.
Lester, Meglino, and Korsgaard (2008)	Concern for others, using a subscale of the CES	Job satisfaction was a relatively weak predictor of OCB among employees who were other-oriented, suggesting that their citizenship behavior is less influenced by judgments of the favorableness of the social exchange relationship with their employer.
McNeely and Meglino (1994)	Concern for others, using a subscale of the CES	Concern for others was related to the performance of OCBs that benefited other individuals, but not OCBs that benefited the organization; moreover, interpersonal citizenship was driven more by other-orientation than it was by reward equity and recognition.
Meglino and Korsgaard (2007)	<i>S1 – S2 measure:</i> Concern for others, using a subscale of the CES	<i>S1 – S2:</i> Individuals who were more other-oriented were less likely to respond positively (i.e. in terms of increased job satisfaction) to enriched job attributes (e.g. skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) than those who were less other-oriented.

Table 2 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Rioux and Penner (2001)	<i>S1 measures:</i> N/A scale development <i>S2 measures:</i> Organizational concern, prosocial values, and impression management motives, using CMS developed in S1	<i>S1:</i> Developed the CMS to measure prosocial values motives. <i>S2:</i> Prosocial values motives were especially important in understanding interpersonal OCB.
Takeuchi, Bolino, and Lin (2015)	Prosocial values motives, using the CMS	Prosocial values motives were positively associated with OCBs that help other individuals. The relationship was strengthened by organizational concern motives, but weakened by impression management motives. Prosocial values motives strengthened the relationship between organizational concern and OCBs directed at the organization. A three-way interaction between prosocial value motives, organizational concern motives, and impression management motives suggested that impression management motives weakened the positive effects of prosocial values and organizational concern on OCBs that help other individuals, but not at OCBs directed at the organization.
Zhu and Akhtar (2014)	Prosocial motivation, using a five-item scale developed by Grant and Sumanth (2009)	Prosocial motivation plays a key role in explaining how transformational leadership influences the helping behavior of followers. Prosocially motivated employees responded more to affective cues sent by their leaders by reciprocating with helpful behavior. Less-prosocially motivated employees tended to be more responsive to cognitive cues sent by their leaders.

Are Prosocial Motives Traits or States?

All motivations can be described at different levels of analysis, ranging from relatively stable dispositional tendencies toward particular reasons for action that employees carry across time and situations, to temporary desires driven by situational or contextual factors that guide action in a specific task, circumstance, or moment in time (Vallerand, 1997). Some scholars have conceptualized prosocial motivation as a trait or disposition, while others have focused prosocial motivation as a state that is influenced by the situation or context. With regard to the trait approach, scholars have examined prosocial motives by studying individual differences in other-orientation (Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004), prosocial values (Grant, 2008a; Rioux & Penner, 2001), the prosocial personality (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995), and concern for others (Korsgaard et al., 1997; McNeely & Meglino, 1994). Research that has investigated prosocial motivation as a state typically experimentally manipulates the desire to help others in specific tasks by presenting collective rewards (for a review, see De Dreu, Weingart, & Kwon, 2000), encouraging people to reflect on how their actions will benefit others and why that matters (Arieli, Grant, & Sagiv, 2014; Bellé, 2013a), and providing information about how a task will affect beneficiaries in need (Bellé, 2013a; Grant & Berry, 2011; Hu & Liden, 2015; see also Grant et al., 2007). Thus, prosocial motives may be a trait reflected by a stable tendency toward prosocial values, other-orientation, and concern for others—or it may be a state characterized by a temporary desire to benefit specific groups of people.

Despite recognition that prosocial motivation can be a trait or state, the vast majority of research that we reviewed has focused on trait-like other-orientation. Indeed, as indicated in Table 2, most of the key studies in this area rely on the comparative emphasis scale (e.g. Korsgaard et al., 1997), the prosocial values dimension of the citizenship motives scale (Rioux & Penner, 2001), or variants of the scales used by Grant (2008a). More attention, then, should be given to understanding the implications of prosocial motivation as a temporary state and how employees become prosocially motivated at work. Further, it would be helpful to know what differences may exist in the arousal of prosocial motives among those who have prosocial values and those for whom self-concern is dominant. For instance, only a few studies have explored the interaction of prosocial motives as traits and states, finding that both self-centrality of values (strong trait or contextual prosocial motives) and the activation of values (high situational prosocial motivation or impact) are important in driving behavior (Bellé, 2013a; Grant, 2008b; Verplanken & Holland, 2002).

Is Prosocial Motivation Different from Altruistic Motivation?

As noted earlier, researchers view the possibility of self-interest with regard to prosocial motives in different ways. Most notably, Meglino and Korsgaard

(2004) conceptualize prosocial motives as the dispositional trait of other-orientation. They argue that other-orientation is an altruistic motive that refers to a concern for others at the expense of concern for oneself. Further, they maintain that self-concern conflicts with concern for others, such that acting on behalf of others involves costs to oneself. De Dreu (2006) critiqued their approach, arguing that self-concern and other-orientation are, in fact, independent constructs that range from low to high—a proposition that has been supported by research on agency and communion (Helgeson & Fritz, 1998, 2000), dual concern (Butler, 1995), social value orientations (Van Lange, 1999), compassion and self-image goals (Crocker & Canevello, 2008), and prosocial and instrumental motives for citizenship (Grant & Mayer, 2009; Rioux & Penner, 2001). In subsequent work, De Dreu and Nauta (2009) further explored the possibility that people may be both self-concerned and other-oriented. They found empirical evidence that self-concern and other-orientation are independent constructs and that people may be both self-concerned and other-oriented at the same time.¹ Taken together, this research indicates that people may be other-oriented, self-oriented (or self-concerned), or both. As Grant and Berry (2011, p. 77) conclude, “prosocial motivation can involve, but should not necessarily be equated with altruism; it refers to a concern for others, not a concern for others at the expense of self-interest”.

In a response to De Dreu (2006), Meglino and Korsgaard (2006) argued that their perspective on prosocial motivation can be reconciled with De Dreu’s by considering both goals (as either self-interested or other-oriented) and rationality (as either high or low). In a 2×2 matrix, then, *other-orientation* would be located in a quadrant characterized by low rationality and the pursuit of other-oriented goals. Employees in this quadrant, the focus of Meglino and Korsgaard (2004), emphasize other-oriented goals with little regard to their own personal costs (i.e. low levels of rationality). Having self-interested goals and high rationality qualifies as *rational self-interest*, and other-oriented goals and high rationality constitutes *collective rationality*—a state of high self-concern and other-concern in which people seek to maximize the interests of others, as well as their own. The fourth quadrant, *mindlessness*, describes instances in which goals are self-oriented, but rationality is low. Individuals in this quadrant act impulsively or spontaneously rather than thoughtfully. Importantly, prosocial behavior may occur in each of the four quadrants. Thus, employees may be helpful or cooperative because they are in a good mood, reflecting mindlessness (e.g. George & Brief, 1992); because it will make them look good to others, reflecting rational self-interest (e.g. Bolino, 1999); because they want to help others regardless of the personal consequences, reflecting other-orientation (e.g. Korsgaard et al., 2010); or because they want to help others and look good, reflecting collective rationality (e.g. Grant & Mayer, 2009).

We believe that some of the remaining tensions between the two perspectives can be reconciled by integrating the 2×2 matrix of goals and rationality

(Meglino & Korsgaard, 2006) with the 2×2 matrix of self-concern and other-concern (De Dreu, 2006), which yields a 2×3 matrix. Rationality can be either high or low; goals can be self-interested, other-oriented, or both. We would reserve the label of *collective rationality* for situations in which rationality is high and goals are *both* self-interested and other-oriented. When rationality is high but goals are solely other-oriented without self-interest, behavior is *self-sacrificing*, as reflected in research on unmitigated communion (Amanatullah et al., 2008; Helgeson & Fritz, 1998, 2000), whereby people fail to secure their oxygen masks before assisting others. Overall, high prosocial motivation coupled with high self-concern appears to generate the most sustainable contributions to others (Frimer, Walker, Dunlop, Lee, & Riches, 2012; Rebele, 2015).

The interplay of self-interest and prosocial motives has been a key topic in the OCB literature, where scholars have debated whether employees engage in OCB because of self-concern or out of prosocial motivation. Bolino (1999) argued that while employees often engage in OCBs because they are “good soldiers” who care about the organization or their colleagues, employees may also perform OCBs as “good actors” who wish to enhance their image at work (see also Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006; Maneotis, Grandey, & Krauss, 2014). Although the literature often depicts these motives as contradictory, it turns out that they contribute independently and interactively to citizenship behaviors. Prosocial values and impression management motives each explain unique variance in helping, civic virtue, and sportsmanship behaviors (Rioux & Penner, 2001). Further, in the U.S., impression management motives strengthened the contribution of prosocial motives to affiliative citizenship behaviors, encouraging employees to demonstrate helping, courtesy, and initiative—behaviors that do good and look good (Grant & Mayer, 2009). Interestingly, though, this interaction reverses in Taiwan, a collectivistic culture where standing out from the group is frowned upon; impression management motives weakened the effects of prosocial values on interpersonal citizenship behaviors (Takeuchi et al., 2015). Competitive motivation, however, can dampen the positive relationship between prosocial motivation and interpersonal citizenship behaviors (Cardador & Wrzesniewski, 2015).

What are the Effects of Prosocial Motivation Beyond Prosocial Behavior?

Not surprisingly, scholars studying other-orientation have often focused on the link between prosocial motives and prosocial behaviors, especially OCB. Early research suggested that concern for others predicted OCBs that benefited other individuals, like helping behaviors, but not OCBs that benefited the organization (McNeely & Meglino, 1994). Prosocial motives may also affect how behavior is interpreted by others. When employees engage in proactive behaviors like voice, issue-selling, taking charge, and offering help before

being asked, supervisors give higher performance evaluations to those with strong prosocial values (Grant et al., 2009). This evidence suggests that supervisors are more likely to give credit for proactive behavior that they believe is performed because of concern for others—and that supervisors have insight into the motives of their subordinates (Halbesleben, Bowler, Bolino, & Turnley, 2010).

In an important departure from work emphasizing citizenship or cooperation as an outcome of prosocial motives, Korsgaard et al. (1996) proposed that other-orientation may influence decision-making, judgment, and reactions to feedback, job design, and job attitudes. In a series of studies, they examined the possibility that other-oriented employees place less value on personal outcomes and are less likely to weigh personal costs and benefits. Other-oriented employees tend to be satisfied with feedback and incorporate it into their self-evaluations whether it is favorable or unfavorable, and are more likely to act upon feedback even if it is negative (Korsgaard et al., 1997). Further, other-oriented employees tend to provide more accurate, less inflated self-assessments (Korsgaard et al., 2004), avoid overconfidence and complacency (Grant & Wrzesniewski, 2010), resist the temptation to escalate commitment to losing courses of action (Moon, 2001), and react more constructively to unfair events (Bobocel, 2013). Other-oriented employees also tend to contribute regardless of whether they expect future benefits (Korsgaard et al., 2010), work in satisfying, enriched jobs (Meglino & Korsgaard, 2007), receive support from coworkers (Kim et al., 2013), are paid well (Miles, Hatfield, & Huseman, 1989), or have a favorable social exchange relationship with the organization (Lester et al., 2008). However, their performance is more dependent on working in jobs with high task significance (Grant, 2008b; Grant & Sumanth, 2009), having trustworthy managers (Grant & Sumanth, 2009) and receiving affect-based trust (Zhu & Akhtar, 2014), and believing that others are treated fairly (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009). Together, this stream of work indicates that prosocial motives have meaningful implications for organizational behavior beyond the tendency to be helpful or cooperative, because other-oriented values may affect the very ways in which individuals evaluate personal consequences (Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). There is also evidence that employees with strong prosocial motivations at work have greater current happiness and later satisfaction in life (Moynihan, DeLeire, & Enami, 2015).

How do Prosocial and Intrinsic Motivations Interact?

Although it may be tempting to think of prosocial motivation as form of intrinsic motivation, research suggests that prosocial motivation can vary on a continuum from the more intrinsic, self-determined to the more extrinsic, obligation-driven (Cunningham, Steinberg, & Grev, 1980; Gagné, 2003;

Gebauer, Riketta, Broemer, & Maio, 2008; Grant, 2008a; Ryan & Connell, 1989; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). When intrinsic motivation is coupled with prosocial motivation, employees are more creative (Grant & Berry, 2011)—prosocial motivation encourages employees to take the perspectives of others, which may help them select and develop the most useful of their novel ideas.

Further, when prosocial motivation is accompanied by intrinsic motivation, firefighters and fundraisers demonstrated greater persistence, performance, and productivity—but when intrinsic motivation was lacking, prosocial motivation was negatively related to these outcomes (Grant, 2008a). It appears that intrinsic motivation makes helping less self-sacrificing, yielding employees an autonomous, sustainable desire to help rather than a sense of pressure to contribute. These findings suggest that prosocial motivation has the capacity to either enhance or undermine persistence, performance, and productivity, depending on the level of intrinsic motivation.

These studies in the organizational domain have found that intrinsic and prosocial motivations interact positively, but more recent research suggests that prosocial motivation can also compensate for a lack of intrinsic motivation. In four studies of students, Yeager et al. (2014) found that when learning was not interesting, students with a global prosocial purpose for learning had better academic self-regulation—and those who were experimentally assigned to focus on learning for the benefit of others achieved higher academic performance and were more likely to persist in boring tasks. This raises important questions about when prosocial motivation requires intrinsic motivation, versus when it substitutes to render boring tasks more important and if similar effects might emerge in an organizational context and across different types of tasks, roles, or jobs (e.g. physical, technical, administrative, managerial).

What are the Dark Sides of Prosocial Motivation?

Research on prosocial motivation has generally focused on its positive effects on prosocial behavior, cooperation, and performance. Nevertheless, some studies have revealed that prosocial motives are negatively related to job performance under certain circumstances, such as when the desire to help others becomes a burden or outweighs one's motivation to fulfill more important job responsibilities (Grant, 2008a; Grant & Sumanth, 2009). For instance, the findings of Grant (2008a) suggest that when individuals feel compelled to help others they may take on too much, which could contribute to overload, stress, and reduced levels of performance (see also Bergeron, 2007; Bolino & Turnley, 2005). Although research has investigated the role of individual and task moderators such as self-concern and intrinsic motivation, it remains unclear how the organizational context matters. However, helping others may undermine career success in organizations that use outcome-based

control systems and primarily reward individual accomplishments (Bergeron et al., 2013). Thus, while being prosocially motivated might be an advantage in some organizations, it could be a liability in others.

Furthermore, while there may be interpersonal and organizational benefits of other-orientation, the individual implications of other-orientation are less clear. For instance, if other-oriented employees do not process information in rational ways or give consideration to what is in their own personal interests, can this adversely affect their job performance or careers (Amanatullah et al., 2008)? Likewise, if other-oriented employees do not respond to organizational interventions such as job enrichment in rational ways, what difficulty might this pose for organizations and managers? There also are some data suggesting that other-oriented supervisors are more prone to nepotism—or at least excessive lenience—in their performance evaluations of employees (for a review, see Levy & Williams, 2004). This leniency makes it more difficult for the organization to gain an accurate understanding of employees' contributions, prevents employees from developing, and may lead them to fulfill the Peter Principle of being promoted to their levels of incompetence (Peter & Hull, 1969) while preventing more deserving candidates from stepping up.

Finally, when the intention is to benefit the group or the organization, some employees may engage in unethical prosocial behaviors. These actions may take the form of commissions like criticizing other workgroups in order to enhance their own team's standing, or omissions such as withholding negative information about the organization's products or services (Thau, Derfler-Rozin, Pitesa, Mitchell, & Pillutla, 2015; Umphress et al., 2010). At minimum, prosocial motives can spur employees to break rules (Morrison, 2006; Vardaman, Gondo, & Allen, 2014), which can lead to more negative performance evaluations (Dahling, Chau, Mayer, & Gregory, 2012)—and may sometimes prove counterproductive for the organization. Prosocially motivated employees may also be susceptible to the “white knight syndrome” of rushing to the rescue, offering help that others do not need or want (see Oakley, Knafo, Madhavan, & Wilson, 2011). In sum, while research on prosocial motives highlights their considerable upsides, additional work is needed to more fully understand their potential downsides, and how these can be overcome.

What Are Some Unresolved Issues in Research on Prosocial Motives?

Work is needed to more fully distinguish between different types of other-oriented motives and values. Some researchers argue that values are organized hierarchically based on their priority or importance (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), and as a result, must be measured using an ipsative approach that requires individuals to rank order their values (Ravlin & Meglino, 1989). Accordingly, it would be useful to develop more consistency regarding the way these labels

are used in research, and it would be helpful for researchers to be explicit in describing their conceptualization of the construct and addressing the use of appropriate labels and measures. Likewise, it would be helpful to distinguish these prosocial motives and other-orientation from related constructs like collectivism (Moorman & Blakely, 1995; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002), empathy (Batson, 1998; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987), agreeableness (Grant & Wrzesniewski, 2010; Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007), equity sensitivity (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987), relational identity orientations (Bolino, Harvey, & Bachrach, 2012; Flynn, 2005), and prosocial personality (Penner et al., 1995). Although these constructs are related, the areas of convergence and divergence are not always clear. Indeed, it might be worthwhile to determine if all of these constructs are truly distinct and relevant, or if there is a potential issue of construct proliferation to be addressed (Harter & Schmidt, 2008).

For example, researchers often assume that among the Big Five personality traits, agreeableness reflects a prosocial orientation (Graziano et al., 2007). However, the core of agreeableness is about being nice, polite, and cooperative (Jensen-Campbell, Knack, & Gomez, 2010), which is not the same as being helpful and caring. In a study demonstrating that independence of agreeableness and prosocial values, Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo (2002) found that agreeableness correlated 0.45 with benevolent prosocial values (concern for protecting and promoting the well-being of others with whom one is in personal contact) and 0.15 with universalistic prosocial values (concern for protecting and promoting the well-being of all people). Agreeableness involves an orientation toward pleasing others; prosocial motives are about benefiting others, especially outside of one's in-group.

In light of this distinction, it is not surprising that whereas agreeableness is negatively related to the likelihood of voicing ideas and suggestions that challenge that status quo (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), prosocial motives are positively related to voice (Grant & Mayer, 2009). It is possible to be disagreeable and prosocial; those who care about benefiting others are willing to give the critical feedback that no one wants to hear, but everyone needs to hear (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Indeed, recent research shows that compassion is more associated with the honesty-humility dimension of personality than the agreeableness dimension (Ashton & Lee, 2007). Similarly, whereas agreeable employees are often reluctant to advocate for their own interests (Barry & Friedman, 1998; Judge, Livingston, & Hurst, 2012), we would only expect the same tendencies for prosocially motivated employees when their concern for others is not accompanied by a healthy dose of self-concern (see Amanatullah et al., 2008). Future research should more carefully distinguish agreeableness and other traits from prosocial motives.

Prosocial motives may also have surprising implications for understanding decisions about trust and lie detection. Some people may assume that prosocial

employees are Pollyannas, and insofar as they tend to see the best in others, they may make themselves vulnerable to exploitation. However, that same tendency to trust others means that they gain access to the full range of human behavior, from the most generous to the most selfish. Over time, being deceived more often may help them discover which cues signal dishonesty—whereas the skepticism of more selfish employees may limit learning opportunities (Carter & Weber, 2010). At minimum, by virtue of the attention that they pay to others, prosocially motivated employees may be better judges of character than their peers (see Kelley & Stahelski, 1970; Vogt & Randall Colvin, 2003).

In addition, it might be worthwhile to explore prosocial motivation that is specific to certain occupational contexts. For instance, in the public management literature, scholars have studied public service motivation, which was originally conceptualized as the desire to benefit citizens through public involvement, and operationalized it in terms of attraction to public policy making, commitment to the public interest, civic duty, social justice, self-sacrifice, and compassion (Perry, 1996; Perry & Wise, 1990). Recently, scholars have identified public service motivation as a context-specific expression of prosocial motivation, grounded in the desire to help others through public institutions (for reviews, see Bozeman & Su, *in press*; Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010). One promising development in this literature has involved the use of field experiments to examine the causal effects of prosocial motives. Bellé (2013a) found that activating the situational public service motivation of nurses in Italy had a positive effect on their persistence, output, productivity, and vigilance, particularly for those who already had high baseline dispositional levels of public service motivation.

Finally, there has been a paucity of research on prosocial motives among teams, entrepreneurs, and leaders. Recent research has examined the consequences of team prosocial motivation, showing that when teams are motivated to help others, they achieved higher performance and engaged in more collective citizenship behavior as a result of higher cooperation, and their members were more likely to stay with the team due to greater viability (Hu & Liden, 2015). These effects were contingent on task interdependence, such that prosocially motivated teams were only more successful, supportive, and cohesive when the work required employees to align their actions toward a common goal. It remains to be seen whether teams excel when all members are prosocially motivated, or it proves more productive to have a mix of prosocial colleagues and those who guard the borders.

With regard to entrepreneurs, Miller, Grimes, McMullen, and Vogus (2012) developed a conceptual model suggesting that prosocial motives lead entrepreneurs to feel compassion and engage in a prosocial cost-benefit analysis that places greater weight on the benefits that will accrue to others (and less emphasis on the costs incurred by the entrepreneur). Thus, their theorizing suggests that social entrepreneurship, which primarily benefits targeted beneficiaries rather

than owners of the venture, is often driven by entrepreneurs who focus on solutions that result in collective gains. Given the growing interest in social entrepreneurship in recent years (Dacin, Dacin, & Tracey, 2011), additional research on the role of prosocial motives among entrepreneurs is warranted (Shepherd, 2015). For instance, is it possible that there are advantages to nonconformity, such that prosocially motivated founders are more successful in for-profit ventures, whereas more selfish founders excel in social entrepreneurship? By contrasting with the norm, prosocial entrepreneurs may be able to build unusual levels of trust in for-profit settings, and selfish entrepreneurs may be especially careful to avoid overextending themselves in social enterprises.

In a top management context, researchers have shown that firms have higher returns on assets when CEOs are rated by their CFOs as servant leaders who care more about the organization's success than their own (Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012). Further, prosocial motives among CEOs also appear to matter for corporate social responsibility, as research suggests that when CEOs have other-regarding values, they pay more attention to employees, the government, and the community, and invest more in the community (Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999)—but not necessarily the environment (Bendell, 2015).² Nevertheless, important questions remain. For instance, are the most effective CEOs high in both prosocial motives and self-concern? Just as other-orientation protects against overconfidence among employees (Grant & Wrzesniewski, 2010), can it buffer against the volatile performance of organizations led by narcissistic CEOs (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007)?

Prosocial Behavior in Organizations

As noted earlier, prosocial behaviors are acts that promote or protect the welfare of others (e.g. coworkers, customers, organizations). Over the years, organizational scholars have identified a number of prosocial behaviors; sometimes these behaviors are explicitly labeled as prosocial, but many times they are not. Table 3 summarizes some of the key prosocial behaviors that have been identified in organizational research and provides references to relevant reviews or meta-analytic investigations of these constructs. In the section below, we focus on the following questions about prosocial behavior in organizations: (1) What organizational behaviors can be considered prosocial? (2) What are the benefits of prosocial behaviors in organizations? (3) What are the dark sides of prosocial behaviors? (4) What are the causes of prosocial behaviors? (5) What are some unresolved issues in research on prosocial behaviors?

What Organizational Behaviors Can be Considered Prosocial?

Brief and Motowidlo (1986, p. 711) define prosocial organizational behavior (POB) as behavior that is

(a) performed by a member of an organization, (b) directed toward an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and (c) performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organization toward which it is directed.

Since then, organizational researchers have identified a number of constructs that are consistent with the definition of prosocial behavior in that they are acts that benefit others.

As noted earlier, OCBs are often regarded as prototypical prosocial behaviors. OCBs include actions like assisting coworkers (helping), defending the organization when other criticize it (loyalty), tolerating impositions and inconveniences at work (sportsmanship), obeying rules when no one is looking (compliance), taking part in the life of the organization (civic virtue), volunteering for additional assignments (individual initiative), and making constructive suggestions for change (voice) (Organ et al., 2006). Some of these behaviors appear to be more fundamentally prosocial than others. For instance, helping is arguably more prosocial in nature than compliance, which may or may not have a direct beneficiary.

However, a larger limitation of this framework is that OCB researchers have rarely considered other prosocial behaviors that are studied by organizational scholars: mentoring, knowledge sharing, brokering introductions, and compassion. Mentoring qualifies as a prosocial behavior because it represents a contribution to the protégé's learning and development (Allen, 2003; Bear & Hwang, 2015; Kram, 1985; McManus & Russell, 1997; Noe et al., 2002). Knowledge sharing focuses on providing information to facilitate problem-solving, creativity, innovation, or change (Gagné, 2009; Kim & Mauborgne, 1998; Wang & Noe, 2010). Brokering introductions enables employees to help others expand their networks, opportunities, and perspectives (Obstfeld, 2005; Van Hove, 2013). Compassion is prosocial because it involves not just noticing and empathizing with the suffering of others, but also providing emotional support and taking action to alleviate their pain (Dutton et al., 2006; see also Kahn, 1993).

When we examine these behaviors as exemplars of prosocial behavior, they can be distinguished along four key dimensions: genesis, target, goal, and resource. First, the genesis of the behavior can be reactive or proactive (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Klotz & Bolino, 2013). The majority of helping is done reactively—research suggests that between 75% and 90% of helping occurs in response to a request from others (Anderson & Williams, 1996), but employees sometimes take the initiative to offer help (Grant et al., 2009). Similarly, employees may provide mentoring, share knowledge, or speak up with suggestions after being directly asked or when they decide to make an offer. Second, the intended target can range from individual beneficiaries to

Table 3 Prosocial Behaviors—Definitions and Key Reviews, Meta-Analyses, or References

Prosocial behavior	Definition	Key reviews, meta-analyses, or references
POB	Employee behavior that promotes the welfare of individuals, groups, or organizations	Brief and Motowidlo (1986)
Affiliative OCB	Helping, assisting colleagues, defending the organization when others criticize it, tolerating impositions and inconveniences at work, obeying rules when no one is looking, taking part in the life of the organization, volunteering for additional assignments	Bolino, Klotz, Turnley, and Harvey (2013) Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006) Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) Podsakoff et al. (2009)
Challenging OCB	Speaking up with suggestions for improvement Selling issues to top managers	Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, and Dutton (1998) Bashshur and Oc (2015) Detert and Burris (2007) Morrison (2011) Van Dyne, Cummings, and McLean Parks (1995)
Mentoring	Providing career advice and emotional support to protégés	Allen (2003) Kram (1985) Noe, Greenberger, and Wang (2002)
Knowledge sharing	Providing information to facilitate problem-solving, creativity, innovation, or change	Argote, McEvily, and Reagans (2003) Gagné (2009) Wang and Noe (2010)
Brokering introductions	Connecting people who do not know each other	Obstfeld (2005)
Compassion	Responding to those who are suffering in an effort to alleviate their pain	Dutton, Worline, Frost, and Lilius (2006)

the entire organization (Williams & Anderson, 1991) and from current to future generations (Wade-Benzoni, 2002; Wade-Benzoni & Tost, 2009). Third, the goal can be affiliative or challenging (Van Dyne et al., 1995). Affiliative behaviors like helping and compliance are intended to promote and maintain the status quo; challenging behaviors such as voice aim to alter and change the status quo. Fourth, prosocial behaviors draw on different types of resources, which span the personal, social, and informational (e.g. Foa, 1993). Knowledge sharing requires informational resources of insights and skills; helping and giving emotional support are much more time-intensive

and often energy-intensive as well. Meanwhile, making an introduction relies on social resources: a network position, interpersonal connections, or social capital (Obstfeld, 2005).

What are the Benefits of Prosocial Behaviors?

Extensive research has documented the individual benefits of engaging in prosocial behaviors. In a meta-analysis of 168 studies with more than 51,000 employees, citizenship behaviors mattered as much for performance evaluations and promotions as doing the job well (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Beyond the citizenship literature, there is evidence that other prosocial behaviors contribute positively to performance. Employees who share knowledge receive higher performance evaluations (Shah, Cross, & Levin, in press), and in the mentoring literature, meta-analytic findings support the notion that being a mentor has career benefits, including higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and subjective assessments of job performance and career success (Ghosh & Reio, 2013). And employees who broker introductions are more likely to play a central role in innovation (Obstfeld, 2005).

Why would engaging in prosocial behavior contribute to one's own job performance and career success? From a social exchange standpoint, following the law of reciprocity and the widespread belief in a just world, many people feel strongly that those who give ought to receive (Blau, 1964; Cialdini, 2001; Emerson, 1976; Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1958). When employees engage in prosocial behaviors, others tend to respond in kind. A related explanation is that prosocial behaviors build social capital (Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002) and increase status (Flynn, 2003a; Flynn et al., 2006). Employees earn respect for putting the interests of others first, and groups tend to reward loyalty and individual sacrifice (Burris, 2012; Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006; Willer, 2009). Employees who engage in prosocial behaviors may have greater access to strong ties by virtue of trust developed, weak ties by reputation, and dormant ties (Levin, Walter, & Murnighan, 2011) due to a combination of both. Further, by engaging in costly prosocial behaviors, employees are able to signal their unique skills, which may raise others' perceptions of their competence (Salamon & Deutsch, 2006). Finally, prosocial behaviors make competence less threatening to others; thus, when talented employees demonstrate concern for others, instead of being viewed as competitors, they become valued allies (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008; Kim & Glomb, 2010). Together, these perspectives suggest that engaging in prosocial behaviors strengthens employees' relationships and reputations.

Although the social exchange mechanism has been the most prevalent, researchers have also forwarded two other classes of explanations for the performance benefits of engaging in prosocial behaviors. From a motivational

perspective, when employees take actions that benefit others, they may feel that they matter (Elliott, Kao, & Grant, 2004) and experience a strengthened sense of meaning and purpose, which energizes them to work harder, smarter, or longer (Grant, 2007). As long as it is voluntary and effective, helping puts employees in a good mood (Koopman, Lanaj, & Scott, in press; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010; Williamson & Clark, 1989), which can reframe unpleasant tasks and colleagues in a more desirable light, leading to greater effort (George & Brief, 1992).

From a learning perspective, the time that employees spend helping others solve problems can enhance their abilities to solve their own problems. Although traditional assumptions held that knowledge sharing enables the recipient to learn, new research suggests that it can help the provider too. Through assisting others in solving task problems, employees are able to acquire new insights and skills (Shah et al., in press). When giving advice, employees take others' perspectives, which can generate leads on new ideas (e.g. McGrath, Vance, & Gray, 2003). Comparable ideas have emerged in the volunteering literature, where researchers have found that skill development is one of the most common benefits of devoting time to serving others (e.g. Booth, Park, & Glomb, 2009; Grant, 2012b).

Beyond individual performance, prosocial behaviors play a central role in group and organizational effectiveness. In a meta-analysis of 38 studies and 3611 work units, greater levels of citizenship behavior in a unit predicted significantly higher productivity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction—and lower costs and employee turnover (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Interestingly, the citizenship-unit performance relationship tended to be stronger in longitudinal than cross-sectional studies, suggesting a causal influence that is also supported by experimental studies (Nielsen, Hrivnak, & Shaw, 2009). Citizenship behaviors are thought to enhance group effectiveness by facilitating problem-solving and efficiency, improving cohesion and coordination, transferring expertise, minimizing variability in performance due to overload and distraction, and prioritizing customer and supplier needs.

The unit performance benefits of behaviors like helping have been documented in a range of settings, from retail stores (George & Bettenhausen, 1990) to paper mills (Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, 1997), intelligence teams (Hackman & Wageman, 2007) to military units (Ehrhart, Bliese, & Thomas, 2006), and pharmaceutical sales teams (Podsakoff et al., 2000) to restaurants (Koys, 2001; Walz & Niehoff, 2000). There is also considerable evidence that teams with more voice make better decisions (for a review, see Bashshur & Oc, 2015) and teams with greater knowledge sharing have lower production costs, faster project completion rates, greater innovation, and higher revenue and sales growth (for a review, see Wang & Noe, 2010). Comparatively fewer studies, though, have tracked the role of mentoring, brokering introductions, and compassion in collective effectiveness.

What are the Dark Sides of Prosocial Behaviors?

Although prosocial behaviors are intended to benefit individuals, groups, or organizations, these behaviors may also have a negative impact on certain parties (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Employees must often harm one party in order to benefit another (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005), and the interests of one generation often conflict with those of future generations (Wade-Benzoni, 2002). Research has identified five key categories of negative impact that prosocial behaviors can have on employees and others: exhaustion, inefficiency, injustice, ethical violations, and exploitation.

First, going beyond the call of duty can lead to feelings of job stress, role overload, and work-family conflict (Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009); some employees may also experience citizenship fatigue, in which they feel worn out, tired, or on edge and attribute this to engaging in OCB, which may lead them to cut back on their contributions in the future (Bolino et al., 2015). Prosocial behaviors are especially likely to be taxing when employees feel compelled (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006) or pressured to help (Bolino, Turnley et al., 2010; Grant, 2008a; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). Citizenship fatigue is also more likely to result when employees who behave prosocially do not feel adequately supported by their organizations, while having high-quality relationships with teammates tends to reduce the likelihood of fatigue (Bolino et al., 2015).

Second, insofar as prosocial behaviors require substantial investments of time and energy, they can undercut task performance, with negative ramifications for employees' careers (Bergeron, 2007; Grant, 2008a). Indeed, in one study, employees who spent more time performing OCBs had less time to engage in task performance and had lower salary increases and slower promotion rates than employees who spent less time performing OCBs (Bergeron et al., 2013). Other studies have found a curvilinear relationship between citizenship behaviors and task performance (Ellington, Dierdorff, & Rubin, 2014; Flynn, 2003a; Rapp, Bachrach, & Rapp, 2013; Rubin, Dierdorff, & Bachrach, 2013). This work suggests that high levels of prosocial behavior can take away from task performance, especially when employees lack interpersonal and time-management skills—and work in environments characterized by high accountability and low interdependence, autonomy, and social density. Overall, prosocial behaviors may be less costly when employees are thoughtful about who, how, and when to help.

Beyond interfering with individual performance, prosocial behaviors can also hamper team effectiveness. On average, citizenship behaviors facilitate team performance, but they sometimes backfire (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994)—especially when task interdependence is low (Bachrach, Powell, Collins, & Richey, 2006; Nielsen, Bachrach, Sundstrom, & Halfhill, 2012). Also, challenging prosocial behaviors appear to be productive at moderate

levels but at high levels can disrupt the smooth functioning of teams, particularly if affiliative behaviors are absent (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011). At minimum, when employees successfully challenge the status quo, it may lead to organizational change that makes life more difficult for other employees who must deal with that change (Bolino, Valcea, & Harvey, 2010). And even affiliative prosocial behaviors like helping are not always accepted, which can damage relationships by leaving would-be recipients feeling insulted and would-be helpers feeling spurned (Rosen, Mickler, & Collins, 1987).

Third, prosocial behaviors can come at the expense of justice (Batson, Klein, Highberger, & Shaw, 1995). Research suggests that employees can be spurred by empathy to give discounts to certain customers, which means they are acting dishonestly toward and discriminating against the rest of their customer base (Gino & Pierce, 2009, 2010). Fourth, after engaging in prosocial behaviors, employees may feel morally licensed to act unethically—"I did a good thing, so now I can get away with doing a bad thing" or worse yet, "I'm a good person, so how could this possibly be a bad thing?" (Klotz & Bolino, 2013; Ott-Holland, Chang, Johnson, & Schaubroeck, 2012). When behaving prosocially leads to resource depletion, it may also lead to an increased occurrence of harmful and unethical behaviors (Bolino & Klotz, 2015). Furthermore, people who have previously acted prosocially may be more likely to get away with unethical behavior because they have developed goodwill in the form of idiosyncrasy credits (Hollander, 1958)—or because their wrongful behavior is discounted or seen as less egregious than it really is (Miller & Effron, 2010).

Fifth, prosocial behaviors can leave recipients feeling indebted or dependent (Beehr, Bowling, & Bennett, 2010; Deelstra et al., 2003; Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Alagna, 1982), resulting in vulnerability to harm. Interestingly, prosocial behaviors are not the polar opposite of antisocial behaviors: they are relatively independent (Dalal, 2005). For example, supervisors often support and undermine the same employee (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002). When mentors become jealous and possessive of their protégés, they may attempt to sabotage and harass them (Eby, Buits, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004; Kram, 1985; Scandura, 1998). This jealousy can stew as a result of protégés eclipsing mentors, but it may also arise from prosocial behaviors themselves. Although the bulk of the evidence suggests that prosocial behaviors help those who do them gain status, there are conditions under which these behaviors hurt employees' reputations. Research has documented that observers may reject moral rebels and derogate do-gooders for threatening their self-images and appearing holier-than-thou (Minson & Monin, 2012; Monin, Sawyer, & Marquez, 2008), and expel unselfish members from the group for establishing undesirable standards and violating norms (Parks & Stone, 2010).

Even when mentors maintain a prosocial stance, they may unwittingly help in ways that limit the development of their protégés. Further, mentors can

become victims of “toxic protégés” (Feldman, 1999), who engage in exploitative, selfish, or deceptive behavior (Eby & McManus, 2004). Selfish behaviors on the part of beneficiaries is a risk across a range of prosocial behaviors: employees may find that recipients are using their help, knowledge, and introductions in a self-serving manner. This may discourage employees from acting prosocially, leaving them with the sinking feeling that no good deed goes unpunished.

What are the Causes of Prosocial Behaviors?

Early research focused on the dispositional, attitudinal, and contextual antecedents of individual prosocial behaviors. Along with prosocial motives, the personality traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and positive affectivity emerged as predictors of helping (Podsakoff et al., 2000). The proactive personality predicted challenging prosocial behaviors like voice and taking charge (Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010; Tornau & Frese, 2013). Attitudinal attributes like satisfaction and organizational commitment predicted the citizenship behaviors of helping, courtesy, initiative, sportsmanship, civic virtue, and compliance (Podsakoff et al., 2000), and positive mood predicted spontaneous (as opposed to planned) citizenship behaviors (George, 1991; George & Brief, 1992)—especially for less agreeable employees (Ilies, Scott, & Judge, 2006). However, dissatisfaction is sometimes conducive to voice (Zhou & George, 2001); that is, employees often take the initiative to make suggestions for improvement when they are unhappy with the status quo, provided that they identify with the organization and believe change is possible (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Withey & Cooper, 1989).

On the contextual side, research has linked work characteristics to prosocial behaviors. Employees are more likely to demonstrate citizenship behaviors like helping and initiative when they work in enriched jobs characterized by task significance, task identity, skill variety, autonomy, and feedback (Grant, 2008b; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Conversely, citizenship behaviors are somewhat less common when tasks are routinized and employees face role conflict and ambiguity (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Leaders appear to have the most robust influence on prosocial behaviors. Employees engage in greater citizenship under leaders who are transformational, trusted, and supportive (Podsakoff et al., 2000), and take more initiative when leaders express gratitude (Grant & Gino, 2010). Similarly, employees are more inclined to share knowledge and speak up when leaders are open, supportive, inclusive, trusted, and create a sense of psychological safety (e.g. Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 1999; Wang & Noe, 2010). There is also evidence that servant leadership and leader self-sacrifice trickle down to encourage more cooperative behaviors among employees (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004; van

Dierendonck, 2011; Ehrhart, 2004; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Walumbwa, Hartnell, & Oke, 2010).

What motivates leaders to engage in prosocial behaviors? Although it is commonly suggested that power corrupts, the data tell a different story: power reveals. When leaders gain power, they have the freedom and resources to express their values. For those with strong communal orientations and moral identities, power leads to greater prosocial behavior; for those with exchange orientations and weak moral identities, power encourages self-serving behavior (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; DeCelles, DeRue, Margolis, & Ceranic, 2012). A sense of belongingness and identification with the organization's mission is also a key driver of prosocial behaviors by leaders (Hoogervorst, De Cremer, van Dijke, & Mayer, 2012). Likewise, while researchers often describe how leaders shape a culture of servant leadership (e.g. Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011), this relationship is likely to be reciprocal, such that employees are more likely to develop into servant leaders when they work in a culture that emphasizes concern, community, high-quality connections, and other values and behaviors associated with servant leadership. Further, management support for mentoring increases the willingness of managers to take on protégés and enhances the quality of mentor-protégé relationships for both parties (Eby, Lockwood, & Butts, 2006). Experiences outside the workplace are consequential too. In particular, it is fascinating that when male CEOs have children, they pay themselves more and their employees less—but if their first child is a daughter, they pay their employees more (Dahl, Dezső, & Ross, 2012).

Beyond leaders, researchers have demonstrated a growing interest in understanding how prosocial behaviors develop and spread in work groups. At this stage, we have evidence that employees' prosocial behaviors are influenced by their coworkers (Bommer, Miles, & Grover, 2003) and conceptual frameworks that explain the emergence of prosocial norms (Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004; Grant & Patil, 2012; Li, Kirkman, & Porter, 2014), but we have relatively few empirical studies of how this process unfolds. Most of the existing studies have been lab experiments using economic and social dilemma games, suggesting that the presence of a single consistent contributor in a group can lead others to contribute and cooperate more (Weber & Murnighan, 2008), and group members' contributions can spread up to three degrees of separation, "from person to person to person to person" (Fowler & Christakis, 2010, p. 5334). These effects are usually explained in terms of socialization, in which new members of a group learn norms through observing the behaviors of existing members. However, there is also reason to believe that selection effects matter: individuals with strong prosocial motives are more likely to affiliate with other prosocial individuals and choose them for their groups (Sheldon, Sheldon, & Osbaldiston, 2000).

Building on the premise that bad tends to be stronger than good (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001), researchers have suggested that the negative impact of selfish behavior typically outweighs the positive impact of prosocial behavior on the group's norms (Felps, Mitchell, & Byington, 2006). Indeed, there is evidence that deviance detracts from business unit performance to a greater degree than citizenship adds (Dunlop & Lee, 2004), and that it is easier to shift from cooperation to competition than vice-versa—groups that start cooperative easily shift to friendly competition, whereas groups that begin competitive develop patterns of “cutthroat cooperation” that are far from prosocial (Johnson et al., 2006). Cooperative people may more vulnerable to these effects, as they cooperate more than their peers in collective cultures, but—by virtue of their desire to follow the norm—contribute considerably less in individualistic cultures (Chatman & Barsade, 1995). And competitive goals can discourage prosocially motivated employees from acting on their desires to help others (Cardador & Wrzesniewski, 2015).

However, researchers are beginning to empirically explore how prosocial behaviors can spread in the form of norms of generalized reciprocity, whereby employees help one colleague without expecting something back, knowing that a third colleague will be willing to help them down the road (Putnam, 2000; Willer, Flynn, & Zak, 2012). Two mechanisms have been implicated to explain this effect—reputation and affect. The reputation perspective suggests that employees engage in generalized reciprocity for impression management reasons, knowing they will be rewarded for helping and punished for failing to help. The affect perspective holds that generalized reciprocity is driven by feelings of gratitude for receiving help, which motivate employees to pay it forward (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). Baker and Bulkley (2014) tracked these dynamics over a three-month period, finding reputational effects in the short run that dissipated over time, and affective effects that were stronger and more sustainable.

What are Some Unresolved Issues in Research on Prosocial Behaviors?

Moving forward, it will be important to explore whether the individual, interpersonal, and organizational consequences of prosocial behaviors vary as a function of the genesis, target, goal, and resource. For example, employees can receive extra credit for being proactive (Tornau & Frese, 2013) and improving the status quo, but also run the risk of being penalized for threatening authority, rocking the boat, or acting at the wrong time (Burris, 2012; Chan, 2006; Grant, Gino, & Hofmann, 2011; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). There is evidence that informal mentoring may provide greater benefits for protégés than participating in formal mentoring programs (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), yet it is by definition harder for organizations

to track and reward informal mentoring. How can mentoring be structured so that it is beneficial to both the mentor and the protégé? Further, employees often seek to gain status by helping experts (van Der Veegt, Bunderson, & Oosterhof, 2006) and stars (Long, Baer, Colquitt, Outlaw, & Dhensa-Kahlon, 2015), even though these people need the least help and this hinders collective effectiveness. Since prosocial motives predict helping downward rather than kissing up (Long et al., 2015; see also Vonk, 1998), should organizations reward employees more for prosocial behaviors toward those who are less likely to help them back—or will this lead to instrumental behaviors that make it more difficult to differentiate good actors from good soldiers?

More research is also needed to understand how employees balance the personal rewards and costs associated with behaving prosocially. As noted earlier, some studies have shown that prosocial behavior in the form of OCB is associated with career benefits (Podsakoff et al., 2009), but the findings of other studies highlight the ways in which being helpful at work and contributing to the organization can be stressful and draining (Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Bolino et al., 2015) and possibly impede one's career success (Bergeron et al., 2013). A recent study that sought to reconcile these perspectives found that being helpful and encouraging can lead employees to feel more positive affect, but at the same time contribute to feelings that they are not meeting their goals (Koopman et al., in press). As a result, acting prosocially can both enhance and detract from feelings of exhaustion, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Koopman et al., in press).

To further understand these tensions, researchers might explore how employees navigate different types of prosocial behavior. For instance, prosocial behaviors that draw on personal resources of time and energy may contribute more value, but also become more draining, than those that involve informational or social resources (Bergeron, 2007). There is evidence that when employees are burned out, they respond by increasing their helping, which strengthens their connections to others and builds support (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). Would it be more effective to battle burnout by engaging in less costly prosocial behaviors, such as shifting from helping to knowledge sharing, or from mentoring to brokering introductions? Unfortunately, there is evidence that employees who are burned out may also cope by engaging in counterproductive work behaviors (Krischer, Penney, & Hunter, 2010). Thus, it would be useful to understand how employees may respond both constructively and counterproductively to the different outcomes, both positive and negative, that may result from engaging in certain prosocial behaviors.

Considering the larger social context may also be important for understanding when behaving prosocially is more likely to lead to stress, exhaustion, and other negative outcomes. As noted earlier, employees who engage in OCB are less likely to experience citizenship fatigue when they have high-quality relationships with their teammates (Bolino et al., 2015), and Bergeron (2007)

suggests that engaging in OCB is less costly when the employee's OCB is reciprocated. However, the fatigue associated with acting prosocially may also be affected by the level of reciprocity that people experience more broadly in their lives. For instance, if an employee is surrounded by others who are also behaving prosocially, even if they are not necessarily the ones that he or she is helping at work, the employee may find that behaving prosocially is less draining as a result of receiving support from others. In addition, more empirical work is needed to understand how people process positive and negative feedback regarding their own prosocial behavior and how such evaluations affect the likelihood of acting prosocially in the future (Bolino et al., 2012; Lemoine, Parsons, & Kansara, 2015).

It is also critical to explore when prosocial behaviors contribute to the objective versus subjective success of others. The mentoring literature points to tradeoffs (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004): protégés are more successful when they receive career mentoring (task-relevant advice, knowledge, coaching, and sponsorship), yet more satisfied when they receive psychosocial mentoring (encouragement, emotional support, and friendship). For busy managers who aspire to contribute to the effectiveness and happiness of others, what does it take to overcome these tradeoffs?

More work is also needed to understand how employees, beneficiaries, observers, and other stakeholders evaluate prosocial behaviors. Indeed, given that prosocial behaviors vary according to their target, the very notion that certain behaviors are "prosocial" may be in the eye of the beholder. For instance, the same behaviors that some organizational researchers have labeled as citizenship behaviors have been labeled by other researchers as impression management tactics (Bolino, 1999; Bolino & Turnley, 1999). Likewise, while employees may feel that their voice behavior is benefitting their colleagues, their colleagues may sometimes feel very differently (Bolino, Turnley et al., 2010). Similarly, the customers who benefit from broken rules may be more likely to consider such behavior "prosocial" than the managers of employees who break rules do. Who, then, is the most appropriate person to judge actions as prosocial, and what factors determine how and when behaviors are labeled as such?

In terms of the antecedents of prosocial behaviors, there is relatively little insight about how to motivate prosocial behaviors among leaders and group members. Also, in contrast to the dominant focus on supportive relationships, sometimes exclusion and ostracism can increase prosocial behavior (Balliet & Ferris, 2013). How tough should groups be on their members? As mentioned above, empirical research on how prosocial norms emerge in groups has not kept up with the theoretical frameworks that have been developed (Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004; Grant & Patil, 2012; Li et al., 2014). We encourage researchers to compare socialization and attraction-selection-attrition effects: is the spread of prosocial behaviors in work groups more heavily influenced by

role modeling and social learning, or by the fact that employees with strong prosocial motives are attracted to, selected by, and retained in groups with corresponding norms? On a related note, given qualitative analyses of how compassion is organized in units (Dutton et al., 2006), and conceptual analyses of how teams coordinate prosocial behaviors (Li et al., 2014), the phenomenon of collective prosocial behavior merits more research.

There has also been surprisingly little attention given to the role of knowledge, skills, and abilities as drivers of prosocial behaviors and an influence on their effects. Existing studies have found that ability, experience, training, and knowledge have little relationship to citizenship behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000) and that cognitive ability is a poorer predictor of voice and cooperative behaviors than of task performance (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Perhaps the problem is that researchers have examined general skills and abilities, instead of focusing on particular kinds of knowledge that are relevant to initiating and succeeding in different prosocial behaviors. For example, helping requires knowledge about who needs help and how to deliver it without causing feelings of embarrassment or incompetence (Dudley & Cortina, 2008), and organizing compassion involves skills around extracting, generating, coordinating, and calibrating resources (Dutton et al., 2006). To speak up and get heard, employees need to identify the appropriate audience, timing, and tactics by reading the wind (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997) and then regulate their emotions (Grant, 2013). A more detailed examination of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that support effective prosocial behaviors is sorely needed.

Research on the affective drivers of prosocial behaviors has been limited in scope. Organizational scholars have focused heavily on positive affect despite advances in psychological research to consider the intensity as well as valence of emotions, and discrete emotions in addition to diffuse moods. New research suggests that the motivational intensity of affect, not the valence, shapes the scope of attention: intense affect narrows attention, whereas more moderate affect broadens it (Harmon-Jones, Gable, & Price, 2011, 2013). In light of this evidence, can we expect intense positive emotions like joy to motivate helping toward teammates and intense negative emotions like righteous indignation to motivate speaking up on behalf of specific victims, while more modulated emotions such as calm and sadness lead employees to notice a broader range of potential beneficiaries of prosocial behavior? Further, psychologists have accumulated evidence that moral emotions include guilt, gratitude, empathy, and elevation (Haidt, 2003), yet there is scant research on how these emotions influence different types of prosocial behavior. We know that helping can be motivated by all four of these emotions (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2002; Ilies, Peng, Savani, & Dimotakis, 2013), but is empathy uniquely relevant to compassion? Does elevation—the feeling of being uplifted

by witnessing generosity or bravery—have a unique role in giving employees the courage to speak up? Is gratitude the pivotal emotion for motivating employees to pay forward the mentoring, knowledge, and introductions that they have received?

There are also other candidates for prosocial behavior that we have not discussed. One intriguing possibility is prosocial gossip—sharing negative reputational information to protect people against selfish or untrustworthy individuals (Feinberg, Willer, Stellar, & Keltner, 2012). To the extent that this behavior protects generous employees and encourages others to exploit others less, it may be beneficial. Yet the gossip may be unfounded, divisive, or counterproductive relative to direct communication. Another potential prosocial behavior is forgiveness (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010; Karremans, Van Lange, & Holland, 2005; Riek & Mania, 2012). After transgressions, forgiveness may be important for repairing relationships and moving on (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Bobocel, 2013). Yet longitudinal research on newly married couples suggests that forgiveness increases the likelihood that their partners will transgress again (McNulty, 2011). Does forgiving coworkers and supervisors have a similar boomerang effect of subtly encouraging future transgressions?

A third prosocial behavior worth considering is intergenerational beneficence, “the extent to which members of present generations are willing to sacrifice their own self-interest for the benefit of future others in the absence of economic or material incentives to present actors for doing so” (Wade-Benzoni & Tost, 2009, p. 166). Such behavior can be driven by the desire to leave a legacy and the sense of responsibility to be a good organizational steward (Tost, Hernandez, & Wade-Benzoni, 2008; Wade-Benzoni, Hernandez, Medvec, & Messick, 2008). Although intergenerational beneficence may be well intended, good intentions may not always translate into good outcomes (Wade-Benzoni, 2002). Decisions that put the interests of future generations ahead of those of the present generation may not always be optimal.

Finally, practically speaking, it is important for researchers in all of these areas to consider the benefits and drawbacks of studying prosocial behaviors individually versus in tandem. In OCB research, different prosocial behaviors are often lumped together, although helping and initiative have sometimes been studied separately, and voice also has a literature of its own (Klaas, Olson-Buchanan, & Ward, 2012; Morrison, 2011). Meanwhile, mentoring, knowledge sharing, introductions, and compassion have generally been investigated in isolation from research on related prosocial behaviors. By recognizing that these behaviors share an emphasis on contributing to others, researchers can cross-fertilize insights and develop a more comprehensive portrait of which predictors and outcomes are consistent across prosocial behaviors. Accordingly, we encourage scholars who specialize in one specific form of prosocial behavior to import ideas from and export discoveries back to the wider conversation about prosocial behavior as a general phenomenon.

More generally, though, researchers need to give additional consideration to the costs and benefits of using very broad labels (e.g. prosocial behavior), intermediate labels (e.g. OCB), and very specific labels (e.g. mentoring, interpersonal helping, and voice). This is more than a thought exercise given that such decisions can have critical implications for theory development and important aspects of research design, including measurement and data analysis. Indeed, when researchers who are interested in prosocial behavior as a general phenomenon operationalize prosocial behavior using a measure of a specific behavior like helping, there are advantages to awareness of the literature in that area. For instance, over the years, a number of debates have emerged within the OCB literature, including disagreement over the discretionary nature of OCB and whether it is truly behavior that is unrewarded. Although Organ (1997) redefined OCB in a way that sidesteps the issue of discretion (by defining it simply as behavior that supports the social and psychological context of the organization), others still prefer to conceptualize OCB as behavior that is relatively discretionary and relatively less likely to be formally rewarded (i.e. compared with in-role task performance) (Organ et al., 2006). Likewise, disagreement remains about how many different dimensions of OCB exist (Podsakoff et al., 2000), what the best way to categorize the various types is (Van Dyne et al., 1995; Williams & Anderson, 1991), whether it is better to conceptualize OCB as a multidimensional or unitary construct (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002), and what the benefits are of investigating specific types of OCB like helping, voice, and initiative (Bolino et al., 2015; LePine et al., 2002; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). It is critical, then, that researchers doing work in the area of prosocial behavior have some familiarity with these debates and issues if they are going to use measures of OCB in their work. For example, researchers who conduct investigations of specific types of prosocial behavior (such as interpersonal helping) should be aware that there is a vast literature on OCB and prosocial behavior that is likely to be relevant to their work.

As a part of this conversation, it may also be helpful to consider the possibility of organizing or (re)categorizing prosocial behaviors into a larger framework based on certain points of convergence or divergence. For instance, perhaps prosocial behaviors that potentially help one party at the expense of another (e.g. prosocial rule breaking), should be categorized differently than behaviors like interpersonal helping, mentoring, or compassion. Further, there may also be value in distinguishing prosocial behaviors based on their target and identifying a separate nomological network for prosocial behaviors that benefit other individuals versus prosocial behaviors that benefit the organization. Indeed, a case could be made for developing a separate label for behaviors that are more pro-organizational than prosocial. It may be useful in future work, then, to develop an conceptual framework for organizing the various prosocial behaviors we have discussed in this article. We suggest exploring

this issue empirically by measuring a wide variety of prosocial behaviors and using factor analytic techniques to identify commonalities and differences. Indeed, it might be worthwhile to pursue the development of a new, broad measure of prosocial behavior that encompasses a variety of actions.

Prosocial Impact in Organizations

Compared to prosocial motives and behaviors, research on prosocial impact is nascent. Prosocial impact refers to the experience of making a positive difference in the lives of others through one's work (Grant & Sonnentag, 2010). Theories of job design have long recognized that it is important for individuals to experience their work as meaningful (e.g. Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Typically, though, experienced meaningfulness describes a sense that one's job is generally worthwhile; as such, experienced meaningfulness does not necessarily speak to the idea that one's work is benefiting others. Moreover, while experienced meaningfulness may partially explain employee job performance (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007), recent research indicates that it is also useful to understand how employees' knowledge of prosocial impact—that their efforts have enhanced the welfare of others—is also relevant to their job performance (Grant, 2008b). In the section below, we focus on the following questions about prosocial impact in organizations: (1) What are the antecedents and benefits of prosocial impact? (2) What are the dark sides of prosocial impact? (3) What are some unresolved issues in research on prosocial impact? Table 4 provides details regarding some of the key organizational studies mentioned in this section, including the relevant citation, information about the operationalization or measure of prosocial impact, and a brief summary of the findings.

What are the Antecedents and Benefits of Prosocial Impact?

Intuitively, perceptions of prosocial impact should flow directly from task significance, the extent to which a job has a positive impact on others inside or outside the organization (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Although employees are more likely to feel that their actions benefit others when their jobs are high in task significance, this is not always the case (Grant, 2007, 2008b; Grant et al., 2007). It is possible to work in a job that objectively benefits others without directly seeing or experiencing that impact on clients, customers, patients, or other end users of one's products and services. In a series of field and laboratory experiments, Grant and colleagues demonstrated that direct contact with beneficiaries enhances perceived impact and in turn persistence, performance, and productivity. For example, when university fundraisers briefly met a student whose scholarship was funded by their efforts, they spiked significantly in call time and revenue—compared to their own baselines,

Table 4 Studies of Prosocial Impact in Organizations

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Bellé (2013a)	<p><i>S1 measure:</i> Public service motivation, using a five-item scale developed by Perry (1996)</p> <p><i>S1 manipulation:</i> Beneficiary contact prior to and during task completion</p>	<p>Beneficiary contact and self-persuasion interventions were positively related to job performance (i.e. persistence, output, productivity, and vigilance). Baseline public service motivation strengthened the positive effects of beneficiary contact and self-persuasion interventions on job performance. In addition, contact with beneficiaries or self-regulated reflection led to an increase in public service motivation which partially mediated the positive relationships between these two interventions and job performance.</p>
Bellé (2013b)	<p><i>S1 measures:</i> Perceived prosocial impact, using a three-item scale adapted from Grant (2008c) and public service motivation, using a five-item scale developed by Perry (1996)</p> <p><i>S1 manipulation:</i> 15-minute meeting with a former patient who benefited from the employee’s work</p>	<p>Beneficiary contact and self-persuasion strengthened the positive relationship between transformational leadership and performance. Perceptions of prosocial impact partially mediated these moderated relationships. The effects of these variables on performance were stronger for individuals with higher levels of public service motivation.</p>

Table 4 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant (2008b)	<p><i>S1 manipulation:</i> Task significance, varied between benefits of the job to others and benefits of the job to the employee</p> <p><i>S2 measures:</i> Perceived social impact, using a three-item scale adapted from Spreitzer (1995) and Grant et al. (2007) and perceived social worth, using a two-item scale adapted from Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2002)</p>	<p><i>S1:</i> University fundraisers who read and discussed stories written by scholarship recipients about how the work of fundraisers had made a difference in their lives earned more pledges and raised more money than fundraisers in a control condition or a condition that emphasized the personal benefits of fundraising experience.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Lifeguards who read and discussed stories about rescues were more likely to volunteer to work more hours and to be more helpful than lifeguards in a control condition or a condition that emphasized the personal benefits of being a lifeguard; moreover, the effect of task significance on working hours was mediated by perceptions of social impact, and the effect on helping was mediated by perceptions of social worth.</p> <p><i>S3:</i> Newly hired fundraisers were more likely to respond to prosocial impact with increased job performance when they were less conscientious and more likely to respond when they held prosocial values.</p>

Table 4 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant (2012b)	<p><i>S1 manipulation:</i> Transformational leadership, varying among three conditions—transformational leadership with beneficiary contact, transformational leadership without beneficiary contact, and no transformational leadership with no beneficiary contact</p> <p><i>S2 measure:</i> Perceived prosocial impact, using a three-item scale developed by Grant (2008b)</p>	<p><i>S1:</i> Transformational leadership had a significant effect on employee performance when employees had contact with a beneficiary of their work; however, transformational leadership was unrelated to performance when employees did not have contact with the beneficiary.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Transformational leadership was positively related to job performance (as rated by supervisors) only when employees reported that they had contact with people who benefit from their work. Perceived prosocial impact mediated the interactive relationship between transformational leadership and beneficiary contact on follower performance. Analyses also ruled out the possibility that other job characteristics (e.g. task identity, task significance, interpersonal feedback) might interact with transformational leadership to affect job performance.</p>

Table 4 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant and Campbell (2007)	<i>S1–S2 measures:</i> Perceived antisocial impact, using a three-item scale developed for this study and perceived prosocial impact, using a three-item scale developed for this study	<p><i>S1:</i> Perceived antisocial impact and perceived prosocial impact were distinct perceptions, not positive and negative ends of the same continuum. Perceived antisocial impact was negatively related to job satisfaction, and the relationship between perceived antisocial impact and job satisfaction was moderated by perceived prosocial impact such that increases in perceived prosocial impact weakened the negative relationship.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Perceived antisocial impact was positively related to burnout. This relationship was moderated by perceived prosocial impact such that increases in prosocial impact weakened the positive relationship between perceived antisocial impact and burnout.</p>
Grant et al. (2007)	<p><i>S1 manipulation:</i> Respectful contact with beneficiaries, varied across three conditions—brief interpersonal interaction with the beneficiary, receipt of a letter from the beneficiary, and no interaction of any kind with the beneficiary</p> <p><i>S2 measure:</i> Developed a four-item scale to measure participants' perceptions of impact on the beneficiary</p> <p><i>S3 manipulations:</i> Mere contact with beneficiaries, varying between either mere contact or no contact, and task significance, varying between high task significance and low task significance</p>	<p><i>S1:</i> Employees who had a brief interpersonal interaction with the beneficiaries of their work demonstrated higher persistence behavior than employees in the other two conditions.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> The positive relationship between interpersonal contact with the beneficiary and persistence was mediated by the perceived impact on the beneficiary.</p> <p><i>S3:</i> Mere contact with beneficiaries increased persistence when the work was prosocially meaningful. And, affective commitment mediated the relationship between beneficiary contact and persistence.</p>

Table 4 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant and Hofmann (2011)	<p><i>S1 manipulation:</i> Exposure to ideological messages delivered by leaders and/or beneficiaries</p> <p><i>S2 manipulation:</i> Message source, varying between a leader-delivered ideological message or a beneficiary-delivered ideological message</p> <p><i>S3 manipulations:</i> Message source manipulation, varying between beneficiary source and leader source, and message content manipulation, varying between prosocial and achievement messages</p>	<p><i>S1:</i> An ideological message delivered in person by a beneficiary elicited higher levels of job performance from employees than an ideological message delivered in person by leaders.</p> <p><i>S2:</i> Suspicion regarding the authenticity of the speaker's ideological message played an important role in explaining whether ideological messages facilitated task and citizenship performance on a proofreading task. Consistent with the findings of the first study, ideological messages (delivered by video) were associated with increased performance; however, this effect was mediated by suspicion.</p> <p><i>S3:</i> Ideological messages delivered by beneficiaries produced higher levels of task and citizenship performance only for prosocial messages (i.e. emphasizing a benefit to a hypothetical patient), not achievement messages (i.e. emphasizing a benefit to a hypothetical organization).</p>

Table 4 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Grant and Sonnentag (2010)	<i>S1–S2 measure</i> : Perceived prosocial impact, using Grant’s (2008b) 3-item scale	<p><i>S1</i>: Prosocial motivation moderated the relationship between intrinsic motivation and core self-evaluations on emotional exhaustion, such that low intrinsic motivation or low core self-evaluations were less likely to be associated with emotional exhaustion when fundraisers felt that their work made a positive difference in lives of others.</p> <p><i>S2</i>: Prosocial impact moderated the negative effects of low intrinsic motivation and low core self-evaluations on emotional exhaustion and job performance; emotional exhaustion mediated the buffering effect of prosocial impact on the link between intrinsic motivation and core self-evaluations on job performance.</p>
Schaumberg and Wiltermuth (2014)	<i>S1a–b, S2 manipulations</i> : Aim of task with three possible conditions (prosocial aim, egoistical aim, and both prosocial and egoistical aim)	<p><i>S1a</i>: Participants were more likely to escalate commitment to a course of action in the prosocial aim condition than in the egoistic condition. Participants were also more likely to escalate commitment to a course of action in the prosocial and egoistic condition than in the egoistic condition.</p> <p><i>S1b</i>: The positive relationship between prosocial aim and escalation of commitment was mediated by desire for a positive moral self-regard.</p> <p><i>S2</i>: The positive relationship between prosocial aims and escalation of commitment was moderated by moral identity such that it was stronger for high moral identifiers than it was for low moral identifiers.</p>

Table 4 (Continued)

Author(s) (year)	Measure/manipulation	Key findings
Sonnentag and Grant (2012)	Perceived prosocial impact, using Grant's (2008b) three-item scale, adapted for day-level assessment	Perceived prosocial impact at work was significantly related to both activated (i.e. feeling inspired and excited) and deactivated positive affect (i.e. feeling calm and relaxed) in the evening at home. The relationship between perceived prosocial impact and activated positive affect was mediated by positive work reflection after work (i.e. thinking positively about one's work in the evening), while the relationship between perceived prosocial impact and deactivated positive affect was mediated by perceived competence.

employees in a control group, and employees who read a letter from the scholarship recipient but did not have a face-to-face interaction (Grant, 2008c; Grant et al., 2007). Further, when nurses met healthcare practitioners who would use surgical kits they were assembling, they demonstrated higher persistence, output, and productivity, and made fewer errors (Bellé, 2013a).

Subsequent experiments suggested that messages about prosocial impact were more motivating when delivered by beneficiaries than by leaders, as leaders were more likely to arouse suspicion about the authenticity of the message (Grant & Hofmann, 2011). However, employees' perceptions of prosocial impact were strongest when the two sources both communicated the message, with transformational leaders articulating an overarching vision for how the work benefited others, and beneficiaries bringing that vision to life with personal examples (Bellé, 2013b; Grant, 2012a). These studies indicate that when employees perceive prosocial impact, transformational leadership has a stronger positive effect on their performance—they can now see how the vision will make a difference in the lives of others (Bellé, 2013b; Grant, 2012a). Finally, there is evidence that when employees are denied feedback about the prosocial impact of their actions, they are less likely to help the same recipients and other recipients in the future (Grant & Gino, 2010; Lemoine et al., 2015; Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 1989).

Research has also examined the role of prosocial impact in employee well-being. Studies suggest that prosocial impact buffers against emotional exhaustion that otherwise arises from harming others (Grant & Campbell, 2007) and holding negative task and self-evaluations (Grant & Sonnentag, 2010). The emotional benefits of prosocial impact can also extend outside the workplace: on days when employees perceive high prosocial impact at work, they experience greater activated positive affect at home those evenings (Sonnentag & Grant, 2012). Prosocial impact boosted activated positive emotions of excitement and inspiration by prompting employees to reflect positively on work, and enhanced deactivated positive emotions of calm and relaxation by enabling employees to feel more competent. Interestingly, the affective benefits of prosocial impact were delayed: they emerged at bedtime but not at the end of the working day. This parallels research on flow, which suggests that when people are completely absorbed in a task, they only become aware afterward of how much they enjoyed it (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Quinn, 2005). Days with high prosocial impact may be marked by deep engagement with tasks or relationships, to the point that it is only after work is over that employees experience the emotional force of how much their contributions mattered.

What are the Dark Sides of Prosocial Impact?

To date, the research on prosocial impact has highlighted its positive implications for individuals and organizations. Nevertheless, there are important

potential downsides to prosocial impact. For instance, while most research has focused on contact with a single beneficiary, there may be multiple groups of beneficiaries of an employee's work. In some cases, these beneficiaries may have contradictory rather than complementary interests. How, then, do employees evaluate the prosocial impact of their work, and how else do they react, when pleasing or helping one beneficiary necessarily means displeasing or harming another (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005)? Indeed, in cases where there may be both beneficiaries and victims, employees may be motivated by their sense of prosocial impact to continue engaging in behavior that is causing harm to others, and the harm that is done to some parties may outweigh the benefits that are provided to others. Similarly, it is unclear what the organizational implications might be when the interests of the organization or other stakeholders are at odds with the interests of a salient beneficiary.

Furthermore, research on compassion fatigue or stress suggests that when caregivers have close interpersonal contact with their beneficiaries (e.g. as nurses do with their patients), they may be more likely to experience sadness, anxiety, psychological distress, and suffering because they care too much (Adams, Boscarino, & Figley, 2006; Figley, 1995). Interestingly, Klimecki and Singer (2012) argue that compassion fatigue is not the result of time and energy invested in helping others, but rather driven by exposure to the suffering of others and the inability to help (see also Schulz et al., 2007). If employees do experience compassion fatigue, it is likely to be associated with burnout, poorer job attitudes, and reduced effectiveness. Thus, it is possible that if employees feel too connected to the beneficiaries of their work, it could be potentially dysfunctional (Grant & Schwartz, 2011). It remains to be seen whether the effects are curvilinear (Grant, 2007; Grant & Parker, 2009), such that very high levels of prosocial impact create tradeoffs between meaningfulness and manageability (Little, 1989; McGregor & Little, 1998).

Another set of landmines is that prosocial impact can enable employees to rationalize unwise, unethical, or harmful acts. When an initiative benefits others, employees are more concerned about following through to validate their moral identities, which renders them more prone to escalating their commitment to losing courses of action (Schaumberg & Wiltermuth, 2014). There is also evidence that people cheat more when the spoils are split: "people may be more likely to behave dishonestly for their own benefit if they can point to benefiting others as a mitigating factor" (Wiltermuth, 2011, p. 115). Similarly, employees are more willing to tell lies that benefit others (Erat & Gneezy, 2012) and are granted power when they break rules to benefit others (Van Kleef, Homan, Finkenauer, Blaker, & Heerdink, 2012). This is also consistent with research on moral disengagement, which suggests that people sometimes see their own harmful conduct as justified on the grounds that it is serving others or some larger good (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996).

These results raise vexing questions about whether employees form perceptions of prosocial impact that are not grounded in reality. Over time, people tend to be self-serving in their judgments of their own generosity (Epley & Dunning, 2000; Flynn, 2006) and overestimate the value of their own contributions relative to the perceptions of recipients (Flynn, 2003b) and teammates (Caruso, Epley, & Bazerman, 2006). Taking this to an extreme, scholars have observed Amway employees arguing they are promoting world peace (Pratt, 2000), suicide bombers claiming they are acting for the common good (Atran, 2003), prostitutes describing their services as therapeutic (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), and prosecuting attorneys insisting that they have rightfully protected society from criminals even when DNA evidence clearly demonstrates the innocence of people they jailed (Tavris & Aronson, 2008). Perceptions of prosocial impact are in the eye of the beholder, and when employees' judgments diverge from beneficiaries' and societal perspectives, they may slide down the slippery slope of justifying all manner of sins.

What are Some Unresolved Issues in Research on Prosocial Impact?

Clearly, the questions above about the dark sides of prosocial impact should be a top priority for researchers. As far as other directions are concerned, Grant's (2007) model suggests that perceptions of prosocial impact will be strongest when the impact of employees' jobs is high with regard to magnitude (i.e. degree and duration), scope (i.e. number or breadth of others affected), and frequency (i.e. how often they are able to benefit others), but with the exception of one preliminary study (Grant, 2008d), the implications of these variables have yet to be investigated in a systematic way. As such, our understanding of relational job design and prosocial impact is somewhat incomplete. For instance, does having a high scope of prosocial impact compensate for lower magnitude, and vice-versa, such that employees are motivated when their work affects many people or when it has a more substantial, enduring effect on a smaller group? These types of questions of equifinality merit further investigation, particularly in light of psychological research showing that people are often more motivated to help one victim than two, in part because they begin to doubt whether they can make a difference (Slovic, 2007; Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007). Beyond simply grouping beneficiaries together (Smith, Faro, & Burson, 2013), are there effective ways of overcoming this problem so that a larger number of beneficiaries does not yield a smaller perception of prosocial impact?

Also, research on the antecedents of prosocial impact has been largely limited to the job characteristics of task significance and beneficiary contact, and transformational leadership. In contrast to these top-down influences on prosocial impact, little research has addressed how employees take initiative from the bottom-up to change their own perceptions of prosocial impact.

From a job crafting perspective (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), we are curious about the task, relational, and cognitive moves that employees make in pursuit of greater prosocial impact—and the unintended consequences that may unfold. For example, do employees prioritize tasks with high prosocial impact, leading to bottlenecks on tasks that have few direct beneficiaries but are still necessary for work to get done?

Discussion

Social scientists in a variety of disciplines have sought to understand the motivation, occurrence, and impact of prosocial behaviors (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006; Penner et al., 2005). In the last three decades, management scholars have broadened our understanding of prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact in organizations. Interest in prosocial constructs has grown (Podsakoff, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Maynes, & Spoelma, 2014) and been further fueled by the more recent emergence of the positive psychology, positive organizational scholarship, and positive organizational behavior paradigms (e.g. Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). However, without integrating the disparate literatures and attending to the dark side, this research cannot advance.

Taking stock of the different sections of this article, one natural direction for future research is to develop a comprehensive model of prosociality in organizations. Many of the studies reviewed above suggest that prosocial motives lead to prosocial behaviors, which in turn strengthen perceptions of prosocial impact. This is how prosocial episodes are likely to unfold, with motivations guiding actions that lead to an understanding of impact. Yet theories of self-perception (Bem, 1972) and sensemaking (Weick, 1995) suggest that over time, prosocial behavior may lead to prosocial motivation, as employees infer what they value from what they do (Gneezy, Imas, Brown, Nelson, & Norton, 2012; Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008).

There is also evidence that once employees recognize that their actions benefit others, their prosocial motives are strengthened (Bellé, 2013a; Lemoine et al., 2015), which hints at the prospect of a virtuous cycle. However, such cycles are unlikely to continue into perpetuity; deviation-amplifying loops must at some point become deviation-counteracting (Weick, 1979). Are exhaustion and exploitation the key forces that disrupt upward spirals of prosocial motivation, behavior, and impact? Another possibility is that prosocial motives sometimes dampen prosocial behaviors. Although common sense would suggest that prosocial motives should lead employees to share knowledge and voice ideas, there are times when prosocial motives actually lead employees to hide knowledge and ideas out of concern for confidentiality or others' privacy (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, & Trougakos, 2012; Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Another complication for an integrative model of prosocial phenomena is that no theory of social behavior can be simultaneously simple, general, and accurate (Thorngate, 1976). Rather than collapsing across different types of prosocial behaviors, we advocate for middle-range theories that take into account the distinct origins and outcomes of behaviors like helping, voice, knowledge sharing, and mentoring. Our aim is simply to underscore the importance of building bridges between these related domains, so that researchers who study one aspect of prosocial phenomena can draw from and contribute back to the wider conversation about prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact.

We highlighted an assortment of future directions in each individual section, but there are also some pressing issues across the motives, behaviors, and impact streams. One exciting avenue is to identify general mechanisms that explain the dark sides of prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact. As a starting point, curvilinearity emerges as a consistent theme: prosociality appears to become increasingly counterproductive at high levels, probably due to resource costs. Another central pattern is that the costs of prosociality are attenuated—and the benefits are enhanced—when employees also have high self-concern. A third point of convergence is that prosociality can lead to unjust and unethical decisions, in large part because employees may prioritize the interests of one beneficiary above those of other individuals or groups, or above organizational rules and moral codes. A fourth principle is that prosociality is ineffective when perspective-taking fails, leaving employees with an inaccurate understanding of what others need or want. Once we have a deeper grasp of these principles, we can conduct more generative research on how prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact can benefit givers, receivers, and the organization.

There has also been little research on the role of time in prosocial episodes (for exceptions, see Flynn, 2003b; Flynn & Brockner, 2003). One possible explanation for mixed findings is that the costs of prosocial behaviors tend to emerge quickly, whereas the benefits are more delayed. At the individual level, exhaustion and exploitation can happen at the drop of a hat. By contrast, the social capital and learning benefits of prosocial behaviors may take time to accrue—relationships and reputations are not developed overnight, and knowledge and skill acquisition can be grueling. A multi-level, dynamic framework is needed to address different prosocial phenomena from short- and long-term perspectives and account for both potential costs and benefits.

In much of the prosocial literature, gender is the elephant in the room. When gender differences are studied, the results are often shocking and disheartening (Diekmann & Clark, 2015). The available evidence indicates that men are more likely to be rewarded for helping, while women are more likely to be punished for not helping (Heilman & Chen, 2005), and that women do the lion's share of prosocial behaviors in close relationships

(Eagly & Crowley, 1986)—like helping and mentoring (Kidder, 2002), actions that are valuable but less visible (Fletcher, 1998). However, men appear to be penalized more than women for being “too nice” (Judge et al., 2012). Research also shows that men are more likely to exercise voice when they have power but women do not out of fear of backlash—even on the Senate floor (Brescoll, 2012). Whereas many studies suggest that women have a harder time getting heard than men (e.g. Burris, 2012; Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014), others find that women and men are evaluated equally for speaking up (Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012). The consequences depend on who speaks up, what they say, how they say it, and to whom they say it—all issues that organizational scholars are just beginning to explore.

Research is sorely needed on how to mitigate the heightened prosocial burdens and harsher judgments that women often face. How can we make sure that men do their fair share of prosocial behavior and women receive the credit they deserve? We know that it is easier for women to decline unreasonable requests and speak up when they are advocating for others (Mazei et al., 2014). We also suspect that when women are in positions of influence, it is easier for them to speak up—indeed, in a credit union where the majority of supervisors and frontline employees were female, women were more likely to get heard (Howell, Harrison, Burris, & Detert, 2015). This suggests that women may be double-disadvantaged by gender stereotypes and their frequent status as organizational minorities (Phillips, Little, & Goodine, 1997). The broader question here concerns the steps necessary to prevent members of non-dominant groups—whether based in gender, race, ethnicity, location, or function—from doing the heavy lifting without being valued for it.

Introductions also strike us as ripe for greater exploration. In terms of time and energy, connecting two people is one of the least costly forms of prosocial behavior imaginable, and it can be life-changing for both parties. We owe Apple to an introduction: had a mutual friend not told Steve Wozniak “you should meet Steve Jobs, because he likes electronics and he also plays pranks” (Moon, 2007), we would have been deprived of the company’s many technological achievements. The same goes for the Beatles: John Lennon and Paul McCartney met thanks to an introduction (Joe, n.d.). Thus, one of the greatest companies and one of the greatest bands in history would not exist without these introductions. Given their relational, communal focus, introductions may be a way for women to engage in gender-stereotypical prosocial behaviors without sacrificing the time and energy necessary for helping and mentoring. But what are the dark sides of introductions? One potential cost is that introductions can fail to result in a desirable connection, especially when both parties have not opted in. Another is that making introductions may have negative implications for the introducer’s creativity, as unconnected parties typically provide unique information, and connecting people can inadvertently cause convergence in their perspectives, limiting

the broker's access to divergent thinking (Fleming, Mingo, & Chen, 2007; Granovetter, 1973).

Overall, the effort to cumulate knowledge about prosocial behavior has been hampered by the absence of broader measures. As noted earlier, although comprehensive scales exist to measure citizenship behaviors, these measures do not take into account other prosocial behaviors such as knowledge sharing, mentoring, introductions, and compassion. They also rarely include the degree to which the behavior originates proactively or reactively, the different groups of intended beneficiaries, the affiliative or challenging goal of the behavior, and whether employees are contributing personal, informational, or social resources. To minimize respondent burden, we would rather see fewer items per behavior to tap the full range of prosocial behaviors than a large set of items to capture a narrow set of actions. An alternative approach, which appears to be increasingly common in recent research (e.g. Grant et al., 2009), is to conduct multiple studies that focus on a variety of prosocial behaviors.

Conclusion

As evident in this review, researchers have greatly enhanced our understanding of prosocial motives, prosocial behavior, and prosocial impact in organizations. At the same time, additional research is needed to answer critical questions and resolve some thorny issues about the bright and dark sides of prosociality at work. Indeed, our jobs and organizations give us an opportunity to have more impact than we could have outside. Wanting to help others, acting on that desire, and feeling that we have made a difference is one of the most meaningful parts of work life, appealing to the better angels of our nature of which Lincoln spoke. But if we are not careful, it can also bring out the devils in our nature.

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Notes

1. Although their results conflict with some of the findings reported by Meglino and Korsgaard (2004), it should be noted that there were important differences in how other-orientation was measured (see Table 2). Specifically, in their study, De Dreu and Nauta (2009) measured self-concern and other-orientation using non-ipsative measures that asked respondents how much they agreed with certain statements (e.g. "at work, I am concerned about my own needs and interests"; "at work, I

consider others' wishes and desires to be relevant"). In contrast, the studies reported by Meglino and Korsgaard (2004) relied on an ipsative measure of other-orientation, which required respondents to choose between self-concern and other-orientation. De Dreu and Nauta's (2009) findings suggest that researchers should consider the influence of both self-concern and concern for others.

2. In contrast to the top-down, rational view of corporate philanthropy decisions, which emphasizes how executives allocate resources with an expectation that it will yield benefits for the organization, Muller, Pfarrer, and Little (2014) articulate a bottom-up process in which the empathy of individual employees translates into collective empathy that plays a critical role in corporate philanthropy decisions. Specifically, they argue that corporate philanthropy, in which organizations allocate resources (e.g. time, money, or goods) to address a social need, is driven in part by the prosocial motives of the employees who comprise the organization.

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