

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY: A CRITICAL REVIEW WITH THEORETICAL REMEDIES

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Social exchange theory is one of the most prominent conceptual perspectives in management, as well as related fields like sociology and social psychology. An important criticism of social exchange theory; however, is that it lacks sufficient theoretical precision, and thus has limited utility. Scholars who apply social exchange theory are able to explain many social phenomena in *post hoc* manner but are severely limited in their ability to make useful *a priori* predictions regarding workplace behavior. In this review, we discuss social exchange theory as it exists today and identify four critical issues within the social exchange paradigm that warrant additional consideration. The four concerns, around which we center this review, include the following: (1) overlapping constructs that need to be more clearly distinguished; (2) insufficient appreciation to the positive or negative hedonic value of these various constructs; (3) an assumption of bipolarity, which treats negative constructs (e.g., abuse) as the absence of positive constructs (e.g., support); and, following from the prior three issues, (4) theoretically imprecise behavioral predictions. Given that these problems are inherent in the current unidimensional framework for social exchange theory, we suggest an additional dimension—activity. We explain how conceptualizing social exchange within a two-dimensional space, while giving equal consideration to both hedonic value and activity, creates new opportunities for future research.

INTRODUCTION

Social exchange theory is a broad conceptual paradigm that spans a number of social scientific disciplines, such as management, social psychology, and anthropology. Despite its name, it is not a single theory but is better understood as a family of conceptual models (Croppanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In this regard, all social exchange theories share a number of common features. All social exchange theories treat social life as involving a series of sequential transactions between two or more parties (Mitchell, Croppanzano, & Quisenberry, 2012). Resources are exchanged through a process of reciprocity, whereby one party tends to repay the good (or sometimes bad) deeds of another party (Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960). The

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quality of these exchanges is sometimes influenced by the relationship between the actor and the target (Blau, 1964). Economic exchanges tend to be *quid pro quo* and involve less trust and more active monitoring, whereas social exchange tend to be open ended and involve greater trust and flexibility (Organ, 1988, 1990).

Building on these straightforward ideas, social exchange theory is one of the most enduring and widely used conceptual frameworks (Croppanzano & Mitchell, 2005). At one time or another, many of the most important topics in organizational behavior have been analyzed through the lens of social exchange theory. For example, organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ, 1988, 1990), commitment (Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000), justice (Tepper & Taylor, 2003), and both supervisory and organizational support (Ladd & Henry, 2000) have been fruitfully explored using this conceptual model. In

this review, we discuss historical and current themes within social exchange theory, highlight critical areas of the social exchange literature that warrant additional consideration, and offer new insights to help address the existing framework's limitations. Although there are many variants of social exchange, most contemporary models in organizational behavior share a few common features: (1) an actor's initial treatment toward a target individual, (2) a target's reciprocal responses (both attitudinal and behavior) to the action, and (3) relationship formation.

The social exchange process begins when an organizational actor or perpetrator, usually a supervisor or coworker, treats a target individual in a positive or negative fashion (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004; Farrell & Rusbult, 1981; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988; McLean Parks, 1997). For clarity, we refer to these initial behaviors as initiating actions. Positive initiating actions may include activities such as providing organizational support (Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009) or justice (Croppanzano & Rupp, 2008). Negative initiating actions might involve abusive supervision (Tepper, Carr, Breaux, Geider, Hu, & Hua, 2009), incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2005), or bullying (Lewis, 1999, 2004; Rayner & Keashly, 2005).

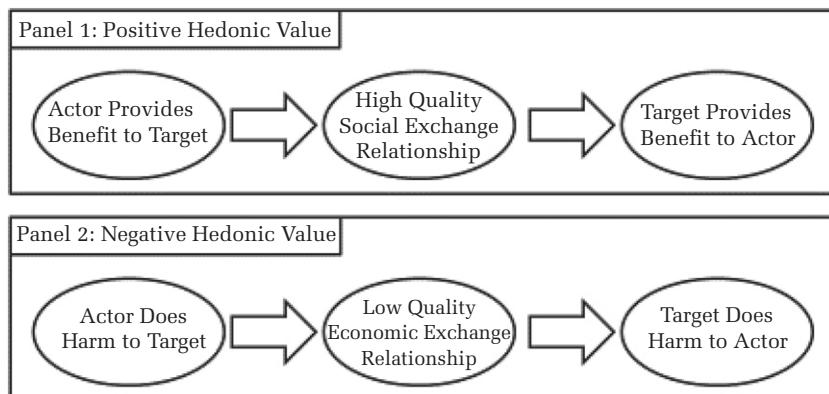
In response to the initiating action, the target, often a subordinate or coworker, may then choose to reciprocate this treatment with good or bad behavior of his/her own (Eisenberger, Cotterell, & Marvel, 1987; Gergen, 1969; Gouldner, 1960). Collectively, we refer to these behaviors as reciprocating responses. Social exchange theory predicts that, in reaction to positive initiating actions, targets will tend to reply in kind by engaging in more positive reciprocating responses and/

or fewer negative reciprocating responses. Speaking loosely, these responses can be broadly organized into two types—relational responses and behavioral responses. Notably, one type often causes the other.

Speaking very generally, a series of successful reciprocal exchanges may transform an economic exchange relationship into a high-quality social exchange relationship. In this way, people may become affectively committed to organizations (Meyer, 1997; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), more trusting (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994), and so on. This process is shown in Figure 1, panel 1. Less attention has been paid to relationship formation (or its absence) when subordinates are treated poorly. Presumably, a positive social exchange relationship would be less likely to develop (e.g., low commitment, see Schyns & Schilling, 2013). It is also possible that the resulting exchange could be economic, as individuals are less apt to find close and open-ended associations with those who hurt them. In either case, the quality of the relationship would be low, as mutually beneficial interchanges are less likely to be engendered when people are transacting in harm. We show this in Figure 1, panel 2, though we caution that more conceptual development could benefit this topic, and we provide some of that in this article.

This brief review suggests that social exchange theory is an extremely broad conceptual framework that has proven itself capable of describing almost any reasonable pattern of findings, at least in a *post hoc* manner. Although we are impressed with the wide applicability of social exchange theory, we argue that this breadth has come at a serious cost. Specifically, our assessment suggests that social exchange theory's theoretical utility is challenged by at least three major issues, all of which play into a fourth.

FIGURE 1
Generic Model of Social Exchange.



- First, there are many similar and overlapping constructs used to operationalize initiating actions and target responses. We address this issue in two steps, initially providing a thorough review of this problem (Issue 1a) and subsequently discussing some of the solutions that have been proposed within social exchange theory (Issue 1b).
- Second, there is insufficient appreciation of the extent to which some of the constructs frequently employed in social exchange research are hedonically positive (e.g., supervisor support, helping), whereas others are hedonically negative (e.g., abusive supervision, incivility). Social exchange researchers would benefit from having the ability to better distinguish these constructs from each other.
- Third, social exchange theory fails to completely articulate the distinction between behavioral action and inaction. More clearly, social exchange theory inherently assumes the absence of something that is hedonically positive (justice, trust) is effectively the same as the presence of something that is hedonically negative (injustice, distrust). However, evidence suggests this is not necessarily true.
- Fourth, as a consequence of the prior three concerns, another critical issue emerges. The behavioral predictions offered by social exchange theory have become too general and imprecise.

ISSUE 1A: MYRIAD AND OVERLAPPING CONSTRUCTS

As we have seen, tests of social exchange theory have tended to contain at least three parts—an initiating action, a relationship between parties, and a reciprocating response. Each of these parts can be represented by multiple constructs. For instance, a supervisory initiating action might involve abusiveness, incivility, justice, or support. A relationship could be committed or trusting, while reciprocating responses might include organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) or counterproductive work behavior (CWB). The generality of social exchange theory has therefore led to myriad constructs that often play similar functional roles within the theory—different actions, resulting relationships, and reciprocating behaviors. Notice that constructs within each of these sets occupy a very similar position within the theory—what someone does, how someone responds to favorable treatment, and so on, and thus are likely to include parallel sets of behaviors. In this way, social exchange theory has done nothing to discourage the proliferation of

closely related constructs. Our point is not that these overlapping constructs are empirically identical; we will see that they often are not (cf., Spector & Fox, 2005; Vadera, Pratt, and Mishra , 2013). Rather, we maintain that many are theoretically similar and will tend to be correlated. At the extreme, it may become difficult to psychometrically disentangle certain constructs. To illustrate this idea, we begin with the negative work behaviors, for which there is general consensus of overlap.

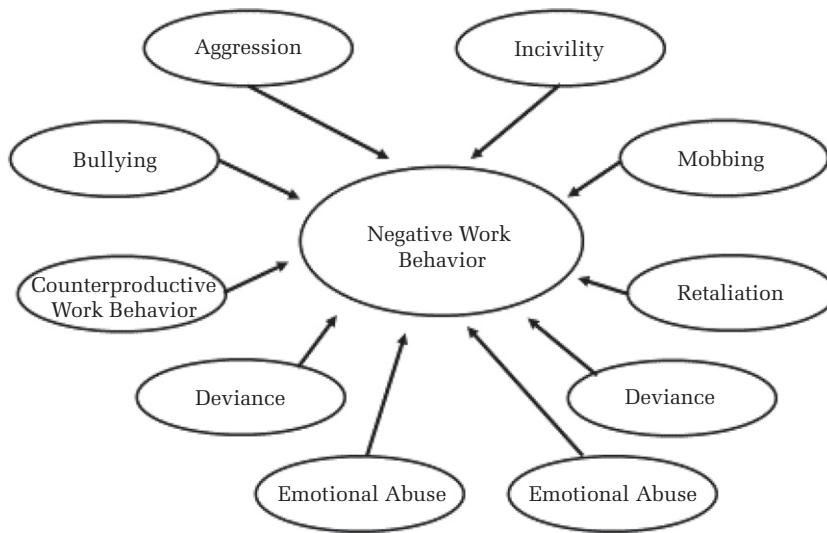
CWB and Workplace Aggression

A number of constructs pertain to dysfunctional or negative workplace behavior. Although these concepts are pertinent to various theoretical models, it is not uncommon to find them used as criterion variables in test of social exchange theory (e.g., by Cohen-Charash & Mueller, 2007; El Akremi, Vandenberghe, & Camerman, 2010; Glomb & Liao, 2003). These include deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), workplace harassment (Bowling & Beehr, 2006), and the like. It is widely recognized that, despite their distinct differences, many of these overlap conceptually and correlate empirically (Griffin & Lopez, 2005). As a result, various researchers have collected them into families, which have such names as CWB (Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002), aggression (Hershcovis & Barling, 2007), and antisocial behaviors (Shapiro, Duffy, Kim, Lean, & O'Leary-Kelly, 2008).

Counterproductive Work Behavior. Several scholars have argued that the term CWB can refer to a set of related constructs (e.g., Fox & Spector, 2005; Pearson et al., 2005; Spector & Fox, 2005, 2010a, 2010b). One way of classifying “Counterproductive Work Behavior Concepts” is provided by Spector and Fox (2005: 303), who summarize 10 negative work behavior constructs (see their Table 12.1, p. 303, and our Figure 2)—aggression, bullying, CWB, deviance, emotional abuse, incivility, mobbing, retaliation, revenge, and violence. They classified these 10 concepts along six dimensions. Their summary confirms certain conceptual differences for negative workplace behaviors. For instance, the role of intentions varies. However, the Spector and Fox (2005) taxonomy also highlights some similarities. All of these constructs may target people, although retaliation does so indirectly. All but three (aggression, deviance, and retaliation) do not target the organization. All but two (emotional abuse and incivility) may include physical actions.

Pearson et al. (2005) classify a similar set of behaviors in a different way. According to these

FIGURE 2
Constructs Associated With Negative Behavior (Spector & Fox, 2005).



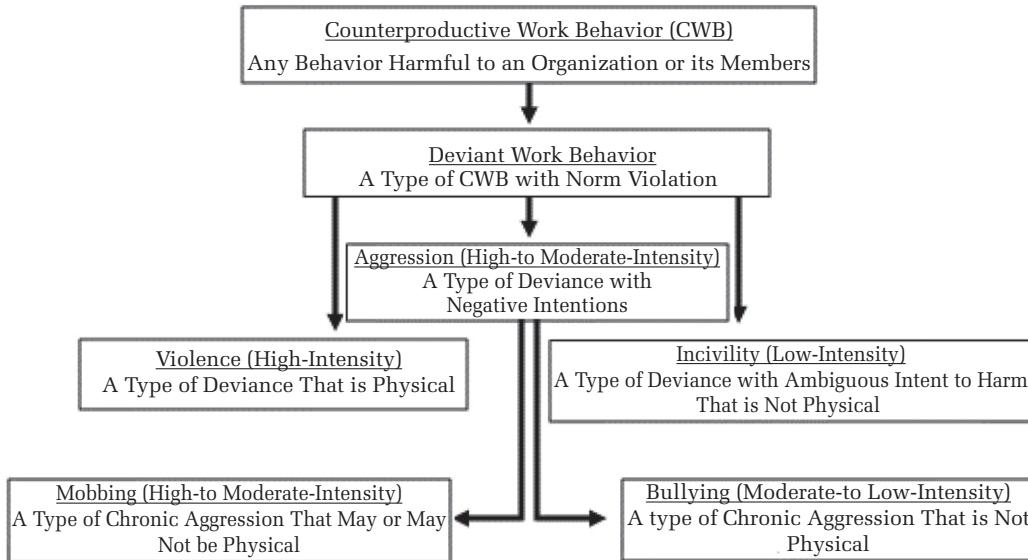
authors, there are sundry negative constructs that are all considered to be harmful to the organization and/or its employees. Based largely on this commonality, Pearson et al. (2005) refer to these separate constructs as aspects of CWB. As such, the term “CWB” may describe an overarching characterization of behaviors that seek to hinder or hurt the progress of the organization and individuals associated with the organization (Gruys & Sackett, 2003; Martinko et al., 2002; Spector & Fox, 2010a, 2010b). Pearson et al. (2005) organize this set of constructs in two ways. First, they view the narrowly defined constructs as nested within more broadly defined ones. In this regard, CWB is the most general and so it subsumes deviant behavior. Workplace deviance, in turn, subsumes violence, aggression, and incivility. Second, Pearson et al. (2005) also take into account the intensity implied by the different constructs.

Using two criteria, specificity and intensity, to classify seven different constructs is complicated, but it yields interpretable results. Figure 3 displays the Pearson et al. (2005) model. The constructs and definitions are paraphrased from their Figure 8.2 (p. 191). Notice that CWB is presented as a broad family of negative work behaviors, which are termed “deviant” when a norm is transgressed. In this model, there are three types of deviance—violence, aggression, and incivility. These range from high intensity (violence) to low intensity (incivility), with aggression lying in between. Finally, there are two types of chronic aggression, mobbing (high to moderate intensity) and bullying (moderate to low intensity).

Aggression. While Pearson et al. (2005) view aggression as narrower than CWB, other researchers treat aggressive behaviors more expansively. Some researchers have considered workplace aggression as a broad concept that subsumes potentially hurtful and harmful constructs (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Particularly, it is inclusive of a range of behaviors that seeks to harm someone physically or psychologically. Perhaps the broadest approach is taken by Hershcovis (2011) and Hershcovis and Barling (2007). They define workplace aggression as “any negative act, which may be committed towards an individual within the workplace, or the workplace itself, in ways that the target is motivated to avoid” (Hershcovis & Barling, 2007: 271). Their approach diverges from others as it does not consider intention to harm as part of the definition (Shewach & Sackett, 2016).

Taking a similar view, Neuman and Baron (2005) classify the various types of aggressive behaviors along the following three dimensions: (1) physical or verbal, (2) active or passive, and (3) direct or indirect. For example, a type of aggression that is physical, active, and direct might be homicide, while one that is verbal, passive, and indirect might involve a failure to provide needed feedback. Neuman and Baron’s three-dimensional taxonomy could account for many of the different constructs that have been mentioned so far. Incivility could be viewed as active and direct. Theft or sabotage, which are types of productive deviance, are classified as physical, active, and indirect. Although there are distinct differences regarding these behaviors, there are some similarities as well. Overlaps

FIGURE 3
Counterproductive Work Behaviors (Adapted from Pearson et al., 2005: 191).



may be attributed to varying research goals as scholars seek to untangle the negative actions and interactions within organizations.

First, some researchers tend to conceptualize aggressive behaviors as retaliatory, whereas others view them as voluntarily deviant. Speaking very loosely, retaliatory behaviors are provoked by the wrongdoing of others, whereas voluntary behaviors are chosen by the actor without provocation. As an example of the former, Skarlicki and Folger (1997) conceptualize workplace aggression as organizational retaliatory behavior (ORB). These behaviors are employed to punish the organization and its members in response to perceived injustices. The revenge literature also assumes this retaliatory perspective. Revenge is conceptualized as a response to a perceived transgression that is intended to inflict harm on the transgressor (Bies & Tripp, 1996, 1998, 2001). Similar to ORB, revenge may include aggressive behaviors that range “from verbal to physical, from covert to overt, from indirect to direct, and from interpersonally directed to organizationally directed” (Bies & Tripp, 2005: 66). Alternatively, other researchers treat workplace aggression as deviant rather than retaliatory (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Specifically, an employee may engage in negative workplace behaviors that are contrary to the norms determined by the organization. As such, this perspective implicitly suggests that workplace aggression occurs as a result of a difficult employee rather than in response to a perceived offense (Hershcovis & Barling, 2007).

A second difference involves whether aggressive conduct is studied from the perspective of an actor, who engages in the action, or a target, who is the recipient of the action (Inness, Barling, & Turner, 2005; Lim & Cortina, 2005). As discussed in the following sections, the distinctions between the actor and the target are parallel to the distinctions provided in our model between initiating actions and reciprocal responses. Specifically, the “actor” is the entity that performs the “initiating action,” whereas the “target” is the recipient who may perform a “reciprocal response.”

The third issue involves intentionality. Specifically, there is disagreement among researchers regarding whether intent on behalf of the actor should be considered when defining workplace aggression. Many constructs include intention in their definition, such as bullying, deviance, and emotional abuse (Spector & Fox, 2005). However, other constructs do not share this perspective. Incivility, for instance, considers intention as ambiguous (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Definitions of aggression tend to include an inference of intentionality, though this is not always explicit in the actual measures (Shewach & Sackett, 2016). Additionally, intentionality is not always included in definitions of CWBs (Sackett & DeVore, 2001).

Antisocial behaviors. In many respects, the taxonomies of aggression, which were provided by Neuman and Baron (2005) and Hershcovis and Barling (2007), overlap considerably with the taxonomies of

CWB, which were provided by Pearson et al. (2005) and Spector and Fox (2005). This would be expected if CWB and aggression were both viewed as broad concepts, which subsume more narrow dimensions. Empirical support of this notion has been provided by Shapiro et al. (2008: 227) in their study of “antisocial behaviors.”

As was the case with CWB and aggression, Shapiro et al. (2008: 227) used the term antisocial behavior broadly, to refer to “negative interpersonal treatment in the workplace.” The authors suspected that various constructs that indicate negative interpersonal treatment would empirically load on a common factor. To test this idea, they examined multiple negative and positive workplace behaviors. These included such constructs as verbal aggression, interactional justice, incivility, retaliation (toward both the supervisor and the organization), OCB (also toward the supervisor and the organization), conciliatory behavior, and quality of treatment. Data were collected in both South Korea and the United States. Although the results were complex, it was clear that positive constructs tended to load together and were empirically separate from the negative constructs. When only negative items were considered, these formed two factors. The factor loadings depended on whether the behavior was enacted by the employee or, alternatively, by the supervisor.

These findings support the view that the negative constructs share a good deal in common, overlapping empirically as well as conceptually. At one time or another, this broad dimension, which can be taken to include the narrower constructs, has been termed CWB, aggression, and antisocial behavior. This provides an important insight into our investigation of social exchange constructs—there are a lot of them. Although they differ in some ways, they are much alike in others. Research on negative workplace behaviors has provided some insights that will aid in our evaluation of social exchange relationships, for which, we examine these relationships in further detail in the proceeding sections. With this in mind, we first turn to two positive constructs that show a reasonably strong empirical relationship, commitment, and identification. We then turn our attention to a large set of positive constructs, again seeking to organize them into umbrella concepts.

Differences in How Definitions Are Formulated: Specificity, Intentions, Organizational Setting, and Multidimensional Umbrella Constructs

Over the years, scholars have constructed a menagerie of behavioral responses. Many of these, such

as OCB (Organ, 1988), contextual performance (Jawahar & Carr, 2006), extra-role behaviors (Kim & Mauborgne, 1996), constructive deviance (Parks, Ma, & Gallagher, 2010), and prosocial organizational behavior (McNeely & Meglino, 1994), have been examined through the lens of social exchange theory. Although the actual behavioral domains subsumed by these constructs shows considerable overlap, there are significant differences in the ways in which these constructs are defined. That is, they may refer to similar domains of behavior but these domains are not circumscribed in the same way.

In this regard, we observed the following issues. First, certain constructs are defined narrowly (e.g., unethical pro-organizational behavior), whereas others are defined broadly (e.g., prosocial rule breaking, constructive deviance). Second, some constructs are defined with an explicit intention (e.g., prosocial organizational behavior, extra-role behavior), whereas others are not (e.g., OCB, contextual performance). Third, constructs may include elements of the organizational setting as a component of their definition. For example, some definitions of OCB require that the behavior in question not be part of the formal job description (Organ, 1997). This implies that a firm’s human resource practices could partially define whether or not a behavior is viewed as citizenship versus in-role behavior. Fourth, there are umbrella constructs that contain different sets of component parts, often using the similar terms in contradictory ways. In this section, we explore these differences and focus on particular constructs as examples of each. In a later portion of this chapter we will take up a fifth difference—different constructs contain different referents (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007; Lavelle, Rupp, Manegold, & Thornton, 2015). We consider this possibility separately because it has been widely investigated by social exchange theorists.

Rule breaking: Defining a construct in terms of specificity. As one might expect, descriptions of deviant work behaviors contain some form of rule breaking. Additionally, in defining a behavior as “deviant,” there is a specific intention to do harm (Fox & Spector, 2005). However, other sorts of rule breaking do not encompass hurtful motives. In the workplace, there are times when rules may be violated with “honorable intentions,” as Dahling, Chau, Mayer, and Gregory (2012: 22) and Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004: 833) put it. When rule breaking is intentioned to do something positive, then the name of the construct changes to prosocial rule breaking. The definition of prosocial rule breaking contains at least two attributes: (1) a reference to the actions,

which is much like deviance or CWB, while adding (2) a statement of honorable intentions. In this way, the construct is redefined based on the underlying goals of the individual.

This brief review of the rule-breaking constructs should serve to underscore our earlier point about definitions. Within social exchange theory, and this can be seen in other domains as well, constructs are defined using different criteria. Thus, general rule breaking, without specifying intentions or targets, is best seen as a broad form of deviance (Galperin, 2003). When the “rule” is an organizational standard and the violation was intended to benefit someone, then the construct becomes prosocial rule breaking (Morrison, 2006). In each of these instances, some standard was violated. Moreover, in the case of prosocial rule breaking there is an intention to do something positive, though observers might be less optimistic about the worthiness of these sorts of behaviors (Dahling et al., 2012).

Prosocial organizational behavior: Defining a construct in terms of intentions. As an example of a different issue, let us now examine organizational prosocial behavior, which is sometimes written “ProSocial” (Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks, 1995: 216) or “prosocial” (Dahling et al., 2012: 21). In a seminal explication of the construct, Brief and Motowidlo (1986: 71) define prosocial organizational behavior as follows:

Prosocial organizational behavior is behavior which 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. This definition is deliberately broad. It is designed to encompass a wide range of behavior with important implications for organizational functioning which have in common the central notion of intent to benefit others.

Notice that prosocial organizational behavior is defined by its intentions and not by its effects. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) maintain that at least some types of prosocial behavior may be “organizational[ly] functional or dysfunctional” (p. 714) in their consequences. Thus, an action is “prosocial” because of what it intends to do and not because of what actually transpires.

The principle challenge for prosocial behavior is the wide scope of its definition. Any action by an organizational member that is attended by a beneficent intention can be classified as prosocial behavior. This

would remain the case even if it is has dysfunctional consequences or the “other” is not an organizational member (e.g., is a customer, George & Bettenhausen, 1990). It would also include occasions when the actions lack “organizational relevance” (e.g., helping a coworker with a personal problem, Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006: 32). This is a tremendously broad category of behaviors, which would resist *a priori* classification. George and Brief (1992: 312) observe that: “What we find most troublesome about the POB [prosocial organizational behavior] construct is this breadth.” Concurring with this view, Van Dyne et al. (1995) ask: “what type of [well-intentioned] behavior within an organization would not qualify as PSOB [prosocial organizational behavior]?” (p. 242). Ultimately, these authors conclude that “Researchers should drop the construct Prosocial Organizational Behavior” (p. 273). We find it hard to disagree with their advice.

OCB and contextual performance: Defining a construct in terms of the organizational setting. OCB is an influential outcome variable among scholars who study social exchange theory (Croppanzano & Mitchell, 2005). While the conceptualization of OCB has evolved over the years (cf., Van Dyne et al., 1995; Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994), a good definition is provided by Organ et al. (2006: 8): “*Individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization*” (italics in original).

A key feature of this definition, and perhaps a controversial one, is that it partially includes employee behaviors (e.g., altruism and courtesy) and partially includes a reference to the organizational reward system. Citizenship behaviors are not formally rewarded as part of official job duties (Marinova, Moon, & Van Dyne, 2010). By this thinking, if OCB is formally designated and rewarded as part of a job, then it is no longer OCB. To be sure, OCB is often positively associated with job performance ratings (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Hui, 1993; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009), but it is generally distinguished from in-role job duties (e.g., Organ, 1990; Organ et al., 2006; Van Dyne et al., 1994).

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) introduced the closely related concept of contextual performance. Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996) identified two dimensions of contextual performance—dedication and interpersonal facilitation. Borman and Motowidlo (1997, see their Table 1, p. 102) later expanded this list to five—persistent enthusiasm, volunteering,

helping others, following rules, and supporting organizational objectives. Although the behavioral dimensions that constitute contextual performance share much in common with those that comprise OCB, the two have different relationships to job performance. Although contextual performance is distinguishable from task performance (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994), it can be conceptualized as an aspect of the job (Motowidlo, Bormann, & Schmit, 1997). Put differently, employers may or may not require and reward contextual performance. In other words, Motowidlo et al. (1997) have dropped the aforementioned restriction that these constructive behaviors “not [be] directly or explicitly recognized” (from Organ et al., 2006: 8, *italics omitted*).

These observations imply that the most important difference between OCB and contextual performance is not how individuals behave, which is similar for both constructs. Rather, OCB and contextual performance are primarily distinguished based on an employer’s human resource practices. The same behavior may or may not be OCB, depending on whether it is compensated as part of the formal job duties. Organ (1997: 85) appears to question this, when he maintains that “It no longer seems fruitful to regard OCB as ‘extra-role,’ ‘beyond the job,’ or ‘unrewarded by the formal system.’ A more tenable position is one that defines OCB much along the lines of what Borman and Motowidlo called *contextual performance*” (*italics in original*). Likewise, Marinova et al. (2010) suggest that organizationally focused citizenship behaviors, including complying with norms and taking charge, may sometimes be rewarded and considered to be part of a job. In a later publication, Organ et al. (2006) retain the original definition of OCB as not explicitly rewarded.

In the final analysis, these two phenomena are distinguished less by what the people are said to do and more by how the organization treats these behaviors. It is not completely clear that organizational scientists require both terms. They could, for example, use the term OCB but allow that it might sometimes be included as part of a job description. Alternatively, they might use the term contextual performance, but allow that there are times when it is not explicitly recognized by work organizations. Either approach would collapse these literatures together.

The umbrella constructs of extra-role behavior and constructive deviance: Defining a (broad) construct in terms of its component parts. The proliferation of constructs within the social exchange theory literature, and within organizational

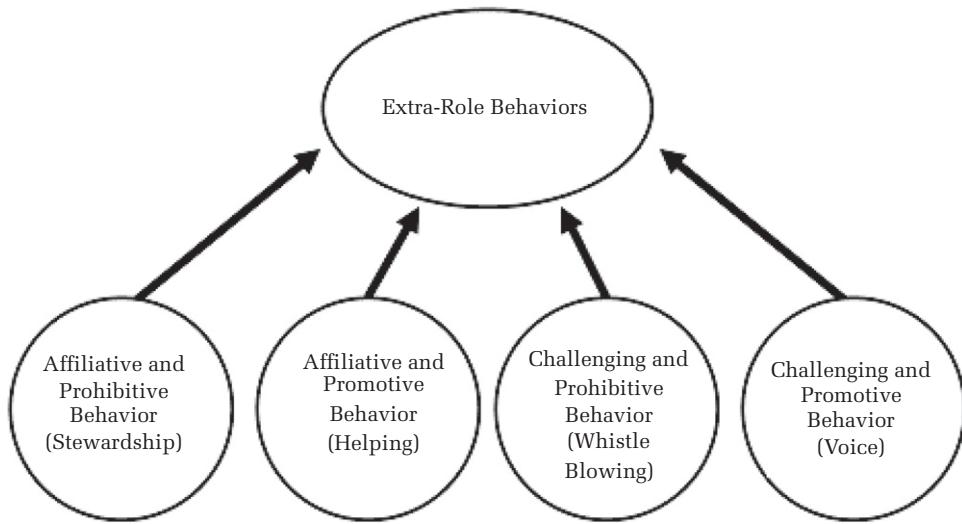
behavior more broadly, has not gone unnoticed. A number of scholars have commented on this development (e.g., Herschovis, 2011; Shapiro et al., 2008; Spector & Fox, 2005). A common and useful response has been to organize behavioral responses into larger, umbrella constructs. There are two especially noteworthy examples, extra-role behaviors and constructive deviance. Here we consider each, highlighting where they differ.

Van Dyne et al. (1995) define the term *extra-role behavior* as “*behavior which benefits the organization, and/or is intended to benefit the organization, which is discretionary and which goes beyond existing role expectations*” (p. 218, *italics in original*). Extra-role behavior is a multidimensional concept, as a number of narrower but related constructs fit under it. These include such things as OCB, voice, whistle blowing, and principled organizational dissent. For example, in their study of extra-role behaviors, Van Dyne and LePine (1998) included two dimensions—voice and helping. These were positively correlated, as one might expect, but their items loaded on separate factors.

In their final typology, Van Dyne et al. (1998) classified extra-role behaviors along two dimensions. The first dimension was anchored by affiliative at the positive pole and challenging at the negative pole. These behaviors range from cooperative and supportive to confrontational and provocative. The second dimension was anchored by prohibitive (stopping something) and promotive (encouraging something). Crossing these two dimensions yields four types of extra-role behaviors—affiliative/prohibitive (stewardship, or protecting those with less power), affiliative/promotive (helping, much like OCB), challenging/prohibitive (whistle blowing and principled organizational dissent), and challenging/promotive (voice). We display the Van Dyne et al. model in Figure 4.

All four of these behaviors can be misaligned with conventional role expectations. Still, to our thinking they may do so in at least two distinct ways. Specifically, they may exceed normative expectations, in which case the individual is acting more desirably than expected. Helping and stewardship, the affiliative behaviors, appear to involve doing more than expected. For the most part, these would likely be correlated and generally viewed as having a positive valance. Conversely, they may violate or conflict with normative expectations, in which case the individual is acting less desirably than expected (at least from the viewpoint of organizational authorities). The two challenging/prohibitive behaviors, whistle blowing and principled organizational dissent, would

FIGURE 4
Four Types of Extra-Role Behaviors (Van Dyne et al., 1995).



likely be discouraged or disliked by many people within the organization. Voice may or may not be met with approval, depending on what is said and how it is expressed (cf., Galperin, 2003).

Another umbrella construct is constructive deviance (Galperin, 2003; Warren, 2003), which has also been referred to as positive deviance (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003). Constructive deviance, like extra-role behavior, involves actions that “depart from the norms of a referent group in honorable ways” (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004: 828, italics in original). As with the definition of ordinary (i.e., hedonically negative) deviance, constructive or positive deviance is understood to include an intention (to illustrate this point, compare Fox & Spector, 2005, with Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). In this case of constructive deviance, of course, the intention is to do something positive, though the outcome of these honorable actions need not always be functional.

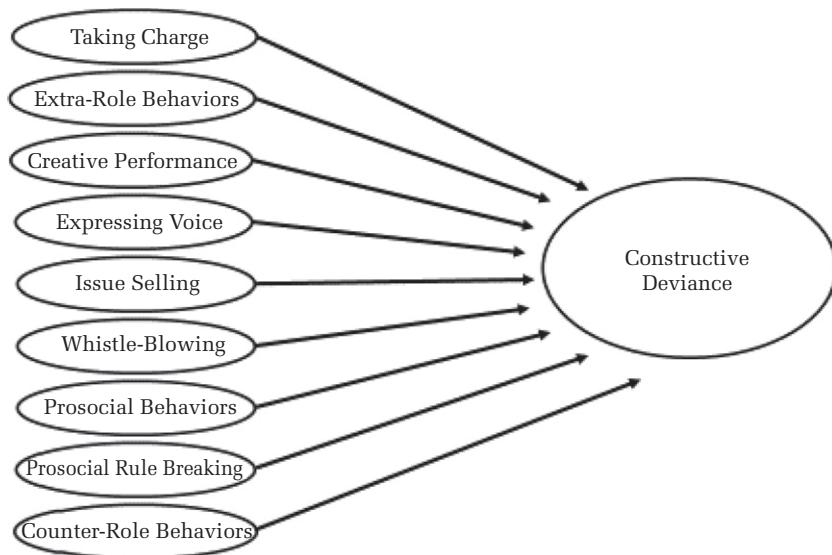
As is the case for extra-role behaviors, constructive deviance is a broad construct, which includes a number of more specific phenomena (Galperin, 2003; Warren, 2003). Although the list of subparts varies among authors, Vadera et al. (2013) suggest that about nine constructs can serve to define constructive deviance. Vadera et al. (2013) model is displayed in Figure 5. Earlier, we made a distinction between (1) behaviors that exceed standards in generally positive ways and (2) behaviors that violate standards in ways that organizational authorities might dislike. Interestingly, this distinction appears

to hold for constructive deviance, as it did for the components of extra-role behavior. In the case of constructive deviance, it is probable that behaviors such as creative performance, issue selling, and prosocial organizational behavior will be viewed as largely advantageous (i.e., these exceed expectations). However, whistle blowing, prosocial rule breaking, and counter-role behavior may be met with more controversy because they confront or challenge prevailing standards of conduct. If this is so, then the umbrella constructs of extra-role behavior and constructive deviance may be mixing two sets of actions—some that are often seen as hedonically positive and others that are often seen as hedonically negative. The model presented by Van Dyne et al. (1995) accounts for this possibility in a systemic way, which is a major strength.

Speaking more broadly, these multidimensional umbrella constructs partially address the conceptual confusion by summarizing a large amount of literature. Unfortunately, extra-role behavior and constructive deviance are inconsistent in a number of ways, and these issues raise another set of questions. Notably, the lists of constructs that comprise constructive deviance and extra-role behavior are of different lengths, with more constructs classified as constructive deviance and fewer as extra-role behaviors. However, this is a relatively simple matter and could be resolved by contracting one list or expanding the other.

The more serious issue is that some of the constructs are redefined. First, Vadera et al. (2013), as

FIGURE 5
Components of Constructive Deviance (Vadera et al., 2013).



well as Warren (2003), retain prosocial organizational behavior and treat it as a type of constructive deviance. However, Van Dyne et al. (1995) find the definition of prosocial organizational behavior to be so broad that it is not useful. Second, prosocial organizational behavior is separated from whistle blowing. Van Dyne et al. (1995) argue that prosocial organizational behavior overlaps with whistle blowing. Third, Vadera et al. (2013) treat voice as separate from extra-role behavior, whereas Van Dyne et al. (1995) argue that the former is a component of the latter. Fourth, Vadera et al. (2013) imply that extra-role behavior is a narrower dimension that is subsumed by constructive deviance. Van Dyne et al. (1995) view extra-role behavior more broadly. There are profound differences between the two umbrella constructs, extra-role behavior and constructive deviance. The present literature offers little guidance as to which is to be preferred. Later, we will propose a different type of taxonomy that we hope will shed light on these differences and better support *a priori* predictions within management scholarship.

ISSUE 1B: OVERLAPPING CONSTRUCTS AND SOLUTIONS FROM SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

In the previous section we began our review of the many constructs within social exchange theory, arguing that some of these tend to exhibit considerable overlap. We would be misleading the reader if our

analysis was taken to imply that social exchange theorists have been oblivious to this concern. As we shall see, there are at least two existing theoretical solutions to the problem.

Solution 1: Two Types of Reciprocating Responses: Behavioral and Relational

To understand how social exchange constructs have been organized, it is worth taking a second look at the general theoretical paradigm. An actor behaves in a certain way toward a target (the initiating action). The target then reacts (the reciprocating response) in two possible and nonexclusive ways. In particular, recipients of the initiating action may (a) perceive that they have a better or worse interpersonal relationship with the actor and/or (b) behave in a manner that helps or harms the actor (recall Figure 1). From this, we can identify three (not two) classes of actions that have been encapsulated in social exchange constructs. The initiating actions remain the same. These involve the manner in which the actor treats the target. Constructs studied in this way might include justice (Cropanzano & Rupp, 2008), abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000, 2007), or mobbing (Zapf & Einarsen, 2004).

However, the reciprocating responses need to be expanded, as these have been divided into two subfamilies—behavioral and relational. In the former set, which we emphasized in our previous section, are those constructs that presume to measure

work behaviors. These might include OCB (Organ, 1988, 1990; Organ et al., 2006), prosocial organizational behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Robinson & Bennett, 1995, 1997), constructive deviance (Galperin, 2003; Warren, 2003; Vadera et al., 2013), CWB (Spector & Fox, 2005), and so on. The latter set contains the relational or interpersonal constructs. A number of constructs have been used to operationalize relationship quality. These include Leader Member Exchange (LMX; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993; Wilson, Sin, & Conlon, 2010), trust (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007), identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Mael & Tetrck, 1992), and commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1991, 1997). As one would expect, these relational constructs sometimes pose distinctions that are similar to those between economic exchange relationships and social exchange relationships (cf., Blau, 1964). The behavioral constructs being more instrumental and quid pro quo and the relational constructs being more open ended and emotional (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). To illustrate, let us consider two examples.

Types of commitment. According to the three-component model, commitment can be divided into the following types: affective, continuance, and normative (Meyer, 1997; Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1997; Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990). Each has its own definition. At least two of these two types of commitment can be interpreted in social exchange theory terms, with continuance commitment being similar to an economic exchange relationship and affective commitment being similar to a social exchange relationship (cf. Shore & Wayne, 1993; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006; Wayne et al., 1997). If one accepts this interpretation, then social exchange theory anticipates that a positive initiating action should boost affective commitment, which is a relational reciprocating response. This appears to be the case. For example, in a field study of 254 manager-employee pairs, Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) found that organizational support was an antecedent to affective commitment. Consistent support for organizational support as an antecedent of affective commitment was also obtained in three studies by Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli 2001 (for additional evidence see Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Shore & Wayne, 1993). Extending these findings, Bishop et al. examined both commitment, a relational response, and OCB, a behavioral response. Among 380 manufacturing workers, Bishop et al. observed that organizational

supported boosted affective commitment, while commitment boosted OCB. As these authors observed, their findings were consistent with social exchange theory (Bishop & Scott, 2000; Bishop et al., 2000).

Types of trust. In their well-known article, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) defined trust as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (p. 712). This is an important, though broad, definition, and other scholars have divided trust into different types. Let us briefly consider two typologies.

Lewis and Wiegert (1985) distinguish between cognition-based trust and affect-based trust. The former is based on “good reasons” (p. 970), such as work competence and conscientiousness. The latter is affective attachment connecting individuals. The former has to do with a rational calculation of interests, the latter with interpersonal closeness. Explicitly grounding his work in social exchange theory, McAllister (1995) found support for this model in a work setting. Research on trust violation has given rise to a related framework, dividing trust into “competence based” and “integrity based.” Violations of competence-based trust are grounded in the perception that an individual lacks the ability and/or motivation to perform a given set of tasks, whereas violations of integrity-based trust is an evaluation of the person’s moral character (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004; Kim, Dirks, Cooper, & Ferrin, 2006). Kim et al. model is not completely isomorphic with social exchange theory. Nevertheless, it captures some of the same distinctions between cognitive calculations and affective judgments.

As with commitment, social exchange theory would predict that a positive initiating action would increase trust (a relational response) and this increased trust would promote positive behavioral responses. This possibility was supported in research conducted by Konovsky and Pugh (1994). Similar findings were obtained in a study of public sector employees by Aryee, Budhwar, and Chen (2002). In general, justice improved trust, whereas trust subsequently increased OCB. Similar to the results from commitment that we considered earlier, these findings are consistent with social exchange theory. These findings further suggest that reciprocating responses can be divided into two subtypes—relational and behavioral.

Solution 2: Different Referents or Sources

Target similarity model. Our review of social exchange theory captures how employees conceptualize their work experiences by differentiating referents or sources of initiating actions. By distinguishing between referents of the social exchange relationship, scholars are better able to predict employee behavior. In this regard, the target similarity model (Lavelle et al., 2007, 2015) is useful for understanding the link between employee perceptions, relationships, and behaviors. Lavelle et al. (2007) used the target similarity model to argue that there are several different referents who may be held responsible for injustice. In this way, the target similarity model integrates a multi-foci perspective on the sources of justice and suggests that employees hold distinct social exchange relationships with each referent (e.g., organization, supervisors, and coworkers). Lavelle et al. (2007) reasoned that the same defining qualities of social exchange are similarly relevant for constructs such as support, identification, and trust, which can be used as an alternative lens through which we understand social exchange relationships.

The target similarity model suggests a social exchange relationship may develop between an initiating actor and a target when the actor provides hedonically positive treatment (such as justice, see Lavelle et al., 2015). Moreover, when employees are in high-quality social exchange relationships with an initiating actor, the employee feels a sense of reciprocity and, in turn, is motivated to engage in kind with behaviors such as, citizenship behaviors targeted to the initiating actor (Lavelle, McMahan, & Harris, 2009).

Aggression and antisocial behaviors. Over the last 15 years, there has been a plethora of research conducted on the effects of workplace aggression. Research on workplace aggression has revealed that nearly half of workers experience some type of psychological aggression at work. In a study to integrate the diverse literatures on workplace aggression, Hershcovis et al. (2007) discussed two issues regarding conceptual differences among forms of workplace aggression and their predictors. The first issue is regarding the conceptualization of workplace aggression and whether there is a specific target. They defined target specificity as the propensity to aggress against a referent such as the organization (e.g., damaging equipment at work) or an employee such as a coworker or supervisor (e.g., yelling at someone at work). The second dilemma highlights

the complexity of individual and situational variables in predicting different forms of workplace aggression. The two issues discussed above highlight referents of workplace aggression. However, various other constructs consider different referents or sources as well.

Trust. Trust has been linked to a number of positive outcomes such as job satisfaction (Edwards & Cable, 2009), citizenship behaviors (Mayer & Gavin, 2005), effort and performance (Aryee et al., 2002; Colquitt et al., 2007) to name a few. In a systematic review of trust, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) argued that trust has mostly been examined at the individual level and that this is problematic for advancing scholarship on referents of trust. In their review, trust was examined across referents that include interpersonal, team, and organizational at the individual, team, and organizational levels of analysis.

Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) emphasize the referent or target of trust (i.e., interpersonal, team, organization). Accordingly, there exist at least three referents of trust. The interpersonal referent refers to an individual, which could be a supervisor or a coworker. The team referent refers to trust in a collective form such as a workgroup that is assembled to achieve a shared goal. Given the increasing reliance on workgroups and teams to accomplish organizational tasks, trust in the team as a referent is a critical source to examine (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Finally, the organization as a referent refers to trust in the organization as a whole. Understanding the referents of trust is theoretically important because doing so allows researchers to tease out the needs employees have regarding trust as it uniquely and distinctly relates to their coworkers, supervisors, and organizations.

Commitment. Social exchange theory plays a prominent role in research on commitment (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). Although organizational commitment is important, Reichers (1985) argued that both supervisors and coworkers can serve as referents for employee commitment. Commitment to a workplace is insufficiently explained when considered in isolation of other referents (e.g., coworker, supervisor, and organization). Reichers found support for his multifocal perspective in that commitment to a supervisor and workgroup were predictors of job satisfaction, intentions to turnover, and prosocial behavior above and beyond commitment to the a single referent, an organization.

Building on these ideas, Becker (1992) found evidence for at least three foci—upper management, the immediate supervisor, and teammates. Supportive results were also obtained by Becker, Billings, Eveleth,

and Gilbert (1996). In a later study, Bishop, Scott, Goldsby, and Cropanzano (2005) found that study participants differentiated between two referents of commitment: team and organizational. The results of their study further confirmed that social exchange relationships can uniquely and distinctly exist between an individual and multiple referents (for additional evidence, see Bishop & Scott, 2000; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005).

Support. According to organizational support theory, employees' perceptions of organizational support (POS) are born out of their need to determine whether the organization will recognize and reward their increased efforts (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995). In this view, POS leads to a feeling of reciprocity such that an employee is more likely to engage in extra-role behaviors (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). Although organizational support is an important construct, evidence suggests that workers distinguish between supportive organizations (POS) and supportive teammates (PTS; Bishop et al., 2000, 2005).

A third referent, perceived supervisor support (PSS), involves the manager (Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007). POS and PSS load on separate factors (Hutchinson, 1997; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Rhoades et al., 2001). The two appear to be causally related. In three empirical investigations of the PSS/POS relationship, Eisenberger et al. (2001) found that PSS was positively related to temporal change in POS, that the PSS–POS relationship increased with perceived supervisor status in the organization, and that POS mediated a (negative) relationship between PSS and employee turnover. These findings suggest a referent view of POS in that PSS contributes to POS and, subsequently, to employee retention. It also appears likely that the effects of organizational support trickle down (Masterson, 2001; Tepper & Taylor, 2003), thereby boosting PSS. When supervisors experience organizational support in their own careers, they are more likely to become more supportive of their subordinates (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006).

ISSUE 2: HEDONICALLY POSITIVE AND HEDONICALLY NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTS

There is an additional taxonomic issue that we have yet to make explicit but which has been circulating around all that we have said to this point. Even a cursory look at the literature will demonstrate that social exchange theory has been operationalized

with two types of concepts—those with a positive valance and those with a negative valance. Positive initiating actions might include organizational support and empowerment, while positive reciprocating responses could include commitment and prosocial behavior. Alternatively, negative initiating actions might include incivility and mobbing, while negative reciprocating responses could include revenge seeking or aggression. As we have also discussed, the umbrella constructs of extra-role behavior and constructive deviance may contain both positive and negative components, depending on who is evaluating the behavior in question (e.g., society at large vs. senior management). These raise two more specific (but related) matters.

Issue 1: Good for Whom? Bad for Whom?—What We Learn from the Deviance Literature

"Good" and "bad" are potentially loaded terms, which sometimes risk ideological consequences. As Bies and Tripp (2005) caution, "dysfunctional behavior" should not be defined with respect to a "manager-centered approach" because doing so "diminishes the scholar's ability to understand, or even empathize, with avengers" (p. 76). What is negative behavior to management may be perfectly reasonable, indeed moral, from the perspective of aggrieved employees (cf., Bies & Tripp, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005). Hence, when researchers speak of behaviors that are "deviant" or "counterproductive," there is a danger of neglecting the perspectives of working people. Of course, scholars do not intend to convey this sort of message, but good intentions do not always make for good science. With this in mind, it is worth considering whether we can find a philosophical vantage point from which to evaluate the valance of different social exchange constructs. From our review of the literature, we have identified two approaches by which the valance of a behavior can be determined.

Definition 1: Performance-enhancing norms and workplace deviance. Deviance is typically defined as behavior that (1) violates acceptable standards of conduct and is (2) destructive. As Robinson and Bennett (1995: 556) state the matter: "voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization and/or its members." By this definition, an act of theft would be deviant (specifically, this would involve property deviance, see Stewart, Bing, Davison, Woehr, & McIntyre, 2009). While this makes a good

deal of sense, a closer look suggests that the first part of the definition, norm violation, poses a problem. As Bennett, Aquino, Reed, and Thau (2005) observe, some organizational cultures might “normalize” destructive conduct. If deviance includes norm violation, and the norms support the action, then it is not deviant by the earlier definition. To borrow the example presented by Bennett and her coauthors, if a culture condones swindling shareholders, then this would not be “deviant” even if the firm were hurt by these actions.

To address this issue, Bennett et al. (2005: 110) propose that “there is a broader standard against which such behavior can be judged as deviance. We use shared performance-enhancing norms as the common standard against which deviance is judged from outside the organization.” That is, a behavior is considered deviant if it works against the overall success and well-being of an organization. With this in mind, Bennett et al. (2005: 111) redefine deviance as “*the voluntary behavior of organizational members that has the potential to cause harm to the organization to those within, and in so doing violates significant performance-enhancing norms*” (italics in original, see also Galperin, 2003).

While Bennett et al. (2005) were primarily interested in defining deviance, their definitional approach can be expanded to provide a broad-based solution to our earlier question. Behaviors that violate the performance-enhancing norm can be seen as negatively valanced or dysfunctional to the organization, those that buttress the norm can be viewed as positively valanced or functional to the organization. In this view, deviance would be hedonically negative as a result of its generally deleterious consequences (Berry et al., 2007; Dunlop & Lee, 2004), whereas OCB would be hedonically positive as a result of its generally beneficial consequences (Podsakoff et al., 2009; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997).

An interesting aspect of this approach is that it defines various phenomena in terms of their organizational outcomes or potential outcomes. This appears to work well most of the time, but it may yield some questionable conclusions if researchers are not careful. For one thing, Bennett et al. (2005) are referring to effectiveness over the long run. Thus, a challenging behavior, such as whistleblowing, can be viewed as constructive deviance because it has strong potential to enhance long-term success (Galperin, 2003). Another concern has to do with defining deviance against a standard of organizational health, perhaps giving too much priority to the interests of managers. These interests are not always

aligned with those of other stakeholders, such as workers and consumers. For example, firms may disapprove of revenge seeking, but it can push social systems toward positive change (Tripp & Bies, 2009) and address instances of injustice (Nadisic, 2008). Likewise, supervisors and coworkers appear to respond negatively to prosocial rule breaking, even though these violations may be driven by positive intentions to help customers (Dahling et al., 2012). Consequently, researchers should be mindful of ideological assumptions that creep into our construct definitions. The chapter by Bennett et al. (2005) provides a discussion of this issue. For greater detail, we also refer the reader the works of Bies and Tripp (1996, 1998; Tripp & Bies, 1997; Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2007).

Definition 2: Hypernorms and constructive deviance. A second philosophical solution was provided by Warren (2003) and Vadera et al. (2013). Somewhat reversing things, these authors sought to define constructive deviance. Such acts violate organizational norms, but do so in a way that benefits others. In proposing a definition, these authors evoked Donaldson and Dunfee's (1999) concept of hypernorms. A hypernorm is a “step back” from an ordinary norm. As Donaldson and Dunfee (1994: 265) state: “Hypernorms, by definition, entail principles so fundamental to human existence that they serve as a guide in evaluating lower level moral norms. As such, we would expect them to be reflected in a convergence of religious, philosophical, and cultural beliefs, and, indeed, such convergence is a handy clue to use in attempting to specify hypernorms.” On this view, Vadera et al. (2013: 1223) defined constructive deviance as “*behaviors that deviate from the norms of the reference group such that they benefit the reference group and conform to hypernorms*” (italics in original).

To illustrate this definitional approach, consider two field studies reported by Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchell (2010). Umphress et al. predicted unethical behavior that benefited the organization (Miao, Newman, Yu, & Xu, 2013; Umphress & Bingham, 2011). This might include neglecting to provide clients with information, exaggerating on the company's behalf, and even denying refunds. Consistent with social exchange theory, Umphress et al. (2010) found that people who identify with their employer are more likely to engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior, especially when they have positive reciprocity beliefs. Even though such actions could well be sanctioned by some firms, they are properly called “unethical” or “deviant” because they violate hypernorms (Vadera et al., 2013; Warren, 2003).

Consistency with hypernorms is a useful idea, as it suggests a sort of ethical judgment based on widespread standards of conduct. That said, defining deviance only with respect to hypernorms is insufficient, as Vadera et al. (2013) recognize. Conformity to hypernorms, in and of itself, could yield a tremendously large set of behavior. This is because one would only have to avoid violating a fairly general standard of good conduct to be in compliance. Thus, Vadera et al. (2013) add two additional criteria: (1) deviation from reference group norms such that (2) the group is benefitted by these actions. Using these two criteria alongside hypernorm conformity considerably narrows the conceptual space. However, it shifts the focus of the definition back to the organizational context, an issue we discussed earlier when we considered OCB and contextual performance. That is, the same behavior will be constructive deviance within some organizations but not in others. This will be based on the norms of the group and not necessarily on the actions of the individual.

This is especially problematic for aspects of constructive deviance that exceed standards of positive behavior. To illustrate, consider a facet of constructive deviance, according to Vadera et al. (2013) and Galperin (2003)—creative performance. No doubt, there are firms that discourage creative thinking (to their own peril), and some creative persons might be deviant with respect to their employers' norms (cf., Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). Still, creativity is generally regarded as a good thing (Amabile, 1988, though for a qualification, see James, Clark, & Cropanzano, 1999). Consequently, the demonstration of creative talent will be deviant in some organizations but high job performance in others. To take a different example, prosocial behavior is also classified as constructively deviant by Vadera et al. (2013). However, at least some organizations have supportive cultures that encourage people to care for one another. Prosocial behavior is not deviant, constructively or otherwise, until or unless a reference group decides that this is inappropriate.

A partial solution might be to limit the term “constructive deviance” to those behaviors that are generally seen as challenging to groups and organizations. When an employee takes issue with an employer or a coworker, then such actions are likely to be regarded with suspicion. Counter-role behavior, prosocial rule breaking, and whistle blowing will be widely viewed as controversial, at least within a given organization. Because these actions tend to confront others with a different viewpoint, they are more easily seen as deviant. Of course, they are also

constructively deviant, to the extent that they benefit the group while also conforming to hypernorms. Conversely, prosocial behavior, creative performance, and issue selling are not fundamentally provocative. They will often, perhaps usually, be viewed as desirable examples of effective conduct. While performing these behaviors may exceed organizational norms, they are not exactly violating them. Giving others more benefits than were expected should not be problematic. Consequently, we would not classify these actions as deviant.

Thoughts before moving on. We have identified two definitional approaches. While neither is perfect, both have important strengths. Performance-enhancing norms allow for a focus on the behavior (rather than the organizational context), but emphasize the interests of managers. Future scholars will need to be cautious of ideological assumptions (Tripp & Bies, 1997, 2009; Tripp et al., 2007). The hypernorm approach captures the importance of moral judgement but shifts the definitional focus back to reference group standards. This creates a certain ambiguity, as organizational norms will influence the definition of an action as “deviant” or not. To partially address this concern, we suggest limiting the domain of constructive deviance to those actions that directly challenge or call into question organizational norms or practices. Being pushed “outside of your comfort zone,” is widely considered uncomfortable, but is very often beneficial. For this reason, confrontational actions are more easily classified as deviant than are generally positive actions.

Issue 2: On the Empirical Distinctiveness of Positive and Negative Constructs

Given that constructive and destructive behaviors can be reasonably distinguished through the use of performance-enhancing norms (Bennett et al., 2005) and hypernorms (Vadera et al., 2013), it remains an open question how these two families of constructs are related to one another. There are two obvious alternatives. The simpler solution would be that conceptually similar concepts, such as OCB and CWB, are opposite ends of a single continuum. By convention we might place high scores on the positive pole and low scores on the negative pole, though this would require re-coding some variables. A different and perhaps more complex possibility would treat positively and negatively valanced constructs as distinct. Thus, there would be two different continua—one for each concept. High scores would be likely to engage in or exhibit the behaviors in

question, whereas low scorers would not. Perhaps counterintuitively, this implies that at some non-trivial number of people could be high on both (e.g., engage in both OCB and also CWB) or low on both (e.g., engage in neither OCB nor CWB). This issue, the possibility of dual continua, will be central to the remainder of this chapter. As we shall demonstrate, the available evidence strongly suggests that otherwise similar constructs have both positive and negative manifestations in many cases. These tend to be negatively correlated to some degree but remain distinguishable from one another. For the moment, we will illustrate this idea by reviewing two literatures. However, we will build on these observations later.

Altruism and antisocial behavior. In an important study, Krueger, Hicks, & McGue (2001) explored the relationship between altruistic behavior and antisocial behavior. When subjected to a factor analysis, items pertinent to altruism loaded on one factor, while those pertinent to antisocial behavior loaded on another. Moreover, each factor was related to different personality traits. Social potency and social closeness were related to altruism more than anti-social behavior. Aggression, control, and harm avoidance were related to antisocial behavior more than altruism. Interestingly, positive emotionality was a solid predictor of altruism ($r = 0.44$) but not anti-social behavior ($r = 0.11$), but negative emotionality was a solid predictor of antisocial behavior ($r = 0.28$) but not altruism ($r = -0.10$). We will be discussing the relationship between affect and these two classes of behavior in a later section.

Organizational citizenship behaviors and CWBs. Within work settings, a reasonably close approximation to Krueger et al. (2001) altruism/antisocial dichotomy can be found in OCB, which has the potential to benefit the organization and/or its members (Organ et al., 2006), and CWB, which has the potential to harm the organization and/or its members (Spector & Fox, 2005). OCB and CWB are both active behavioral responses, which tend to have opposite valances (cf., Spector & Fox, 2010a). This could be taken to imply that these two constructs anchor opposite ends of a single “helpfulness/harmfulness” continuum. But there are theoretical reasons to suspect otherwise (Spector & Fox, 2010a). While OCB and CWB are negatively related in most studies (e.g., Sackett, 2002; Sackett & DeVore, 2001), this need not be the case in all situations. Theoretically, Spector and Fox (2010b) identify at least five situations where the relationship is likely to be positive: (1) an understimulated employee may engage

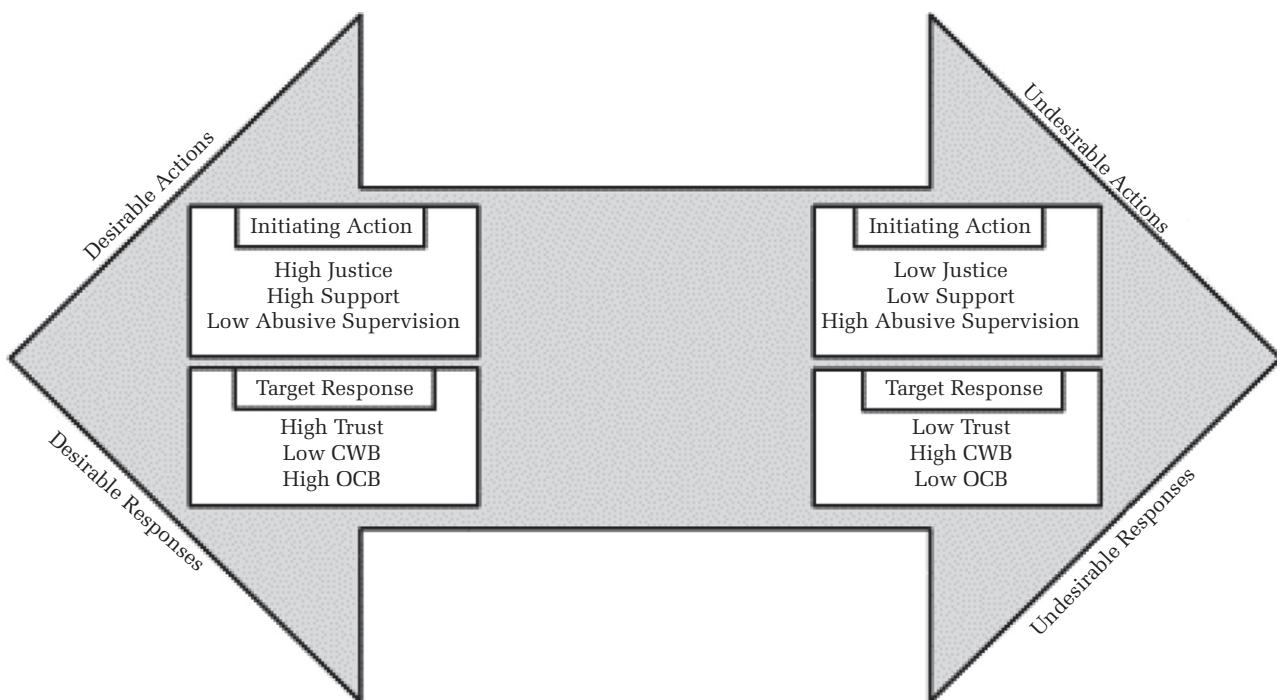
in both behaviors as a means of relieving boredom, (2) OCB may help accommodate workplace constraints eventually producing anger CWB, (3) poor performance from coworkers may trigger compensatory OCB and retaliatory CWB, (4) unrewarded OCB may lead to anger and CWB, and (3) OCB may result from guilt over past CWB. More recently, Klotz and Bolino (2012) add a sixth possibility. They suggest that employees who engage in OCB may feel more license, which in turn entitles them to engage in CWB without threats to their self-image.

Paralleling the work of Krueger et al. (2001), Spector and Fox (2010a, 2010b) and Klotz and Bolino (2012) suggest that the relationship between OCB and CWB can vary in direction. Though correlated, the two constructs are therefore distinguishable from each other. Testing this idea directly, Dalal (2005) conducted an extensive meta-analysis of the OCB and CWB relationship. As anticipated, these two constructs were negatively related ($\rho = -0.32$). While this association is important, it is not so high that they could be used interchangeably. Indeed, it is well below the 0.78 corrected correlation between, say, organizational commitment and organizational identification (Riketta, 2005). Of greater relevance here, Dalal observed that the size of this relationship varied depending on various features of the studies. For example, some OCB items, when reverse scored, have very similar content to their counterparts that measure CWB. When these “antithetical items” (p. 782) were excluded, the correlation between OCB and CWB dropped to -0.16 . Dalal concluded that OCB and CWB were distinct constructs (for additional evidence, see Dalal, Lam, Weiss, Welch, & Hulin, 2009). A later meta-analysis by Spector, Bauer, and Fox (2010) reached similar conclusions, asserting that “CWB and OCB are likely unrelated and not necessarily oppositely related to other variables” (p. 781).

ISSUE 3: CONFUSING ACTION WITH INACTION

To understand how the present theoretical ambiguities produce a problematic construct structure, it is perhaps useful to begin by illustrating the current, unidimensional model of social exchange. We do so in Figure 6. Notice that there is a single and horizontal axis. We label this axis hedonic value, as it runs from desirable actions with a positive valance on the left to undesirable actions with a negative valance on the right. Figure 6 also presents a number of example constructs, which are drawn from the literature on social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell,

FIGURE 6
Unidimensional of Social Exchange.



2005). These are illustrative only, and we will consider others in a moment.

For now, we separate these examples into paired boxes. In each pair, the upper box pertains to the initiating action and the lower box pertains to the target response. Recall that in social exchange theory the actor provides the initiating action that triggers the sequence of reciprocal responses (as shown in Figure 1). Therefore, we can say the upper box often engenders the reactions displayed in the lower one. This follows directly from our previous comments.

Describing the Structure of Reciprocity

Figure 6 provides a visual sense of the taxonomic confusion, which confronts social exchange theories of reciprocity. Survey instruments measuring these constructs have ranged from high-to-low, with the low dimension for positive items (e.g., justice, support, and trust) being viewed as undesirable. Conversely, the low dimension for negative items (e.g., abusive supervision, and CWB) has been viewed as desirable. Psychometrically, this treats the absence of the variable—roughly a low score on the instrument—as the opposite or converse manifestation of the variable in question. Thus, injustice is

tacitly assumed to be the absence of justice (Colquitt, Long, Rodell, & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2010a, 2010b) and distrust is tacitly assumed to be the absence of trust (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). However, in the previous section we questioned whether this was the case. We argued that, for at least some of the social exchange constructs involved in reciprocity, evidence does not support equating the absence with the opposite. As we shall now discuss, the empirically obtained factor structure does not match the model diagrammed in our second figure. This, in turn, suggests that not doing something positive (e.g., not being fair or not being trustworthy) is psychologically distinct from doing something negative (e.g., behaving unfairly or being distrustful) (Nicklin, Greenbaum, McNall, Folger, & Williams, 2011). Below we consider two examples—social support/social undermining (usually treated as initiating actions) and trust/distrust (usually treated as reciprocating responses)—that illustrate this point.

Social support versus social undermining. According to Duffy, Ganster, and Pagon (2002: 333), these two constructs can be defined as follows: “On the one hand, social undermining concerns intentional actions that diminish a target’s ability to establish and maintain positive relationships, work-related success,

and favorable reputation in the workplace. On the other, social support refers to positive behaviors and actions with the purpose of fostering positive interpersonal relationships." Notice that both are active, but the hedonic tone of the behaviors are different—social undermining is hurtful to workers, whereas social support is beneficial.

Social support and social undermining are distinguishable constructs. Though the (negative) correlations between them can be large, especially in studies of close interpersonal relationships (see Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996; Vinokur & van Ryn, 1993), other work has found that social undermining and social support exhibit modest (Lakey, Tardiff, & Drew, 1994) or even nonsignificant (Finch, Okun, Barrera, Zautra, & Reich, 1989) relationships. For example, Duffy et al. (2002) found that supervisory support was correlated with supervisor undermining at -0.18 , while coworker support was correlated with coworker undermining at -0.03 . The two sides of the pairs are conceptually similar but possess opposite valances (positive/negative). Finally, the positive construct in each pair is empirically separable (though sometimes inversely correlated) with the negative construct.

Trust versus distrust. Several studies provide empirical evidence for a distinction between trust and distrust (e.g., Deutsch, 1960; Lewicki et al., 1998; Lewicki et al., 2006). For example, a longitudinal study of college students, Whitbourne, Zuschlag, Elliot, and Waterman (1992) found that the level of trust and distrust were both distinct and unstable over the participants' lifetime. In another study, Dimoka (2010) has even provided neuroimaging evidence supporting the trust/distrust distinction. These studies both theoretically and empirically demonstrate the validity of trust and distrust as separate and distinct constructs.

According to bidimensional models of trust (Dimoka, 2010; Lewicki et al., 1998) the two constructs trust and distrust are distinct and independent of each other. These models propose that although trust and distrust are separate constructs, they consist of the same dimensions, but have opposite valences. Trust is posited to include the positive expectations regarding one's behavior, whereas distrust consists of the negative expectations regarding one's conduct (Luhmann, 1979, 1988). Although both trust and distrust involve the expectation of others' conduct, there are nuanced differences between the two constructs. First, low trust is functionally and operationally different from high distrust. The former induces lack of hope, and

uncertainty about an individual's behavior, whereas the latter induces fear and doubt. Second, though with competing logic, high trust does not equal low distrust. The former suggests optimism and confidence, whereas the latter suggests absence of trepidation and skepticism about another's behavior (Govier, 1994; Lewicki et al., 1998). In other words, trust and distrust are different things, not the absence of one another. Thus, researchers will require a taxonomy that takes these distinctions into account.

Oppositional Constructs, Another Example, and a Caveat

Pairs of similar, though distinguishable, positive/negative constructs—including social support/social undermining and trust/distrust, among others—are not unusual. In a recent chapter, Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, and Hall (in press) use the term oppositional constructs to refer to constructs that are theoretically related in this fashion. As examples, they include supervisory support/abusive supervision, OCB/CWB, and justice/injustice.

When treating justice and injustice as oppositional constructs, Cropanzano, et al. (in press) differentiated between two types of justice judgments—entity-based justice and entity-based injustice. Entity justice refers to global perceptions that a social entity, such as person or organization, has a tendency to behave more or less justly over time and across situations (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001). In the past, entity justice evaluations have been organized as part of a global dimension of "overall fairness" (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Ambrose, Wo, & Griffith, 2015). By contrast, event-based justice "contends that employees evaluate the fairness of a specific event, such as a salary increase" (Choi, 2008: 513). It has to do with a particular occurrence that violates or conforms to normative rules of justice (Choi, 2008; Hollensbe, Khazanchi, & Masterson, 2008). Historically, event-based justice perceptions have been organized into multiple dimensions, such as distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice (for a thorough review, see Colquitt & Rodell, 2015).

Building on these ideas, Cropanzano et al. (in press) argued that when justice is treated as an individual difference, as entity-based, then it becomes appropriate to view justice and injustice as oppositional constructs. Many people can be just and also unjust when examined across different occurrences, situations, and coworkers (Cojuharenco & Patient,

2013). This suggests that oppositional constructs are most likely to be exhibited when ratings are taken as summary labels that describe behavior over a period of time and, perhaps, in different settings as well. Single incidents, by contrast, are more likely to be seen as either fair or unfair (Colquitt, Long, Rodell, & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2015).

In this regard, it is worth re-examining the relationship between OCB and CWB (see also, Klotz & Bolino, 2012; Spector & Fox, 2010a). As we saw earlier, two different meta-analytic investigations have concluded that these are different constructs (Dalal, 2005; Spector et al., 2010). While OCB and CWB are expected to be negatively associated, these relationships are sometimes modest and even positive (Dalal, 2002; Dalal et al., 2009). Yet, they continue to bear a sort of inverse family resemblance. For example, they both predict job performance ratings, though in opposite directions (e.g., Rotundo & Sackett, 2002; Sackett, 2002). In view of these sorts of observations, Spector and Fox (2010b: 21) raise the possibility that these are both “opposite forms of active behavior.” Based on this, Cropanzano et al. (in press) argued that OCB/CWB comprise an oppositional pairing.

The existence of oppositional constructs poses a problem for the unidimensional model presented in Figure 6. Whether these pairings go by the same root name (e.g., trust/distrust, justice/injustice) or by different labels (e.g., social support/social undermining, OCB/CWB) it does not seem to follow that the absence of a positive is equal to the presence of a negative or vice versa. An individual can withhold support without being abusive or can refrain from antisocial conduct without becoming an altruist (cf., Krueger et al., 2001; O’Leary, Griffin, & Glew, 1996). These considerations suggest that there is a second dimension to reciprocity, which complements hedonic value. In particular, an individual can actively engage in a behavior (which may be either good or bad) or else inactively withhold it (which again may be either good or bad). As we shall see, this provides a useful framework for understanding the taxonomic structure of social exchange constructs.

Considerations of Structure: Adding an Activity Dimension

In Figure 6 we represent some major social exchange constructs in a one-dimensional space. That is, they fell onto a single axis, hedonic value, and were either higher or lower on that dimension. After considering oppositional pairs—trust/distrust and

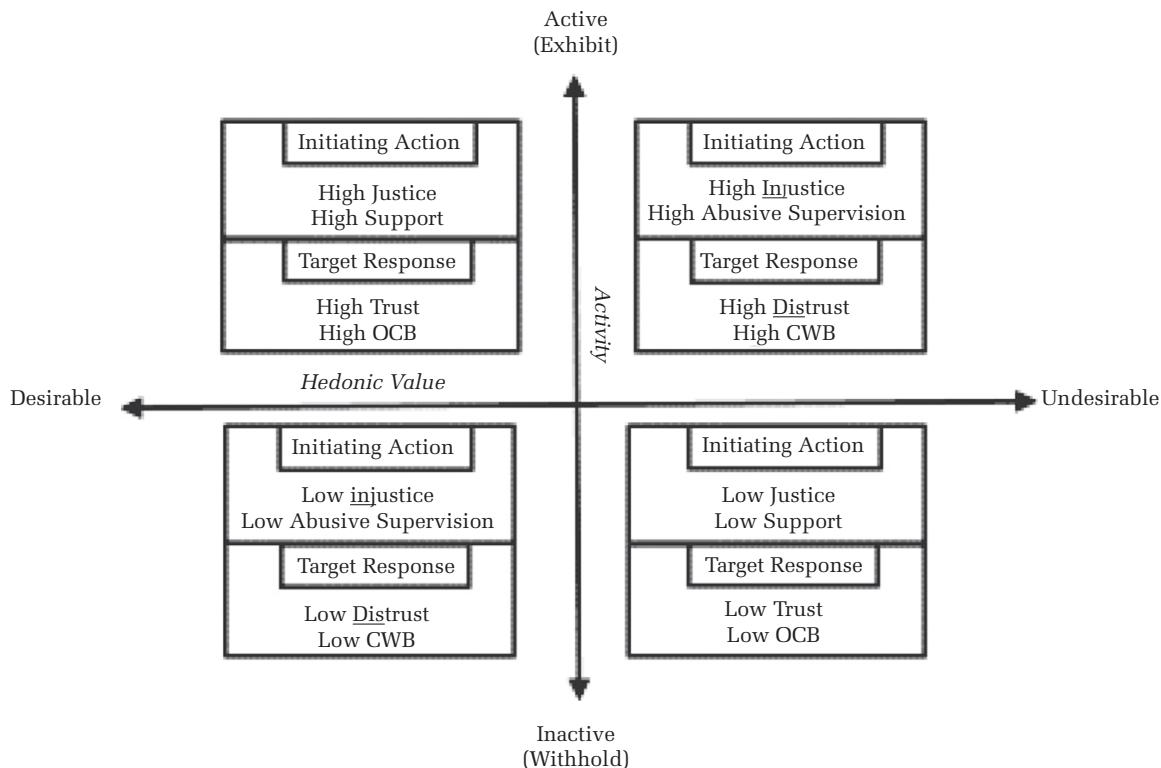
supervisor support/abusive supervision—we can see that this single dimension is incomplete. In each case, the former item in the oppositional pair is conceptually distinguishable from the latter item in each pair. That is, one can behave in a manner that is either active (engaging in a relevant behavior) or inactive (withholding or not engaging in a relevant behavior), and this is true for both members of each pair. For instance, supervisors who are high in social support are doing something that actively benefits most employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Steward, & Adis, in press), whereas an abusive supervisor is actively harming them (Martinko Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013; Mackey, Frieder, Brees, & Martinko, in press; Tepper, 2007). Consequently, supervisory support and abusive supervision can be viewed as oppositional constructs (Cropanzano et al., in press).

There is some historically neglected evidence for this. Some decades ago, Hirschman (1970) proposed a well-known model, which posited that employees respond to workplace dissatisfaction in one of three ways. Specifically, they might (1) show loyalty, (2) exhibit voice, or (3) exit the organization. Sometime later, Farrell (1983) tested Hirschman’s model. However, upon reviewing the work of Kolarska and Aldrich (1980) and Rusbult, Zembrot, and Gunn (1982), Farrell added a fourth dimension, which was neglect. He then wrote items pertaining to these four responses. Using graduate students as research participants, he subjected his items to multidimensional scaling.

These findings are important and deserve greater scrutiny. In contrast to the unidimensional model of reciprocity, Farrell (1983) found that his four sets of items could be placed along two (not one) vectors. The first dimension, destructive/constructive, corresponds to valance or hedonic tone in social exchange theories. The second, active/inactive, refers to whether one does something or whether one actively withdraws something. Thus, behaviors could be active and constructive (making suggestions), active and destructive (quitting), and inactive and destructive (absenteeism). As it happened, there were no items that were inactive and constructive, though it seems likely that such behaviors exist. For example, it would usually be at least minimally constructive to withhold abusive supervision and CWBs (Cropanzano et al., in press).

Based on Farrell’s (1983) work, Figure 7 includes a vertical axis, which we have labeled *activity* or the extent to which an entity actively exhibits the behavior in question. The social exchange constructs

FIGURE 7
Two Dimensions of Social Exchange.



are now presented in two-dimensional space, much like a geographic map that has both a north/south axis, as well as one running east/west. This allows us to take the constructs off of the hedonic value axis and plot them bidimensionally. The activity axis runs from “active/exhibit” on the top to “inactive/withhold” on the bottom. When crossed with hedonic value, this produces four quadrants. We further present examples within each of these quadrants; these include both initiating actions in the top box and reciprocating responses in the lower box. An event may be desirable because it provides something positive (e.g., justice, support) or withholds something negative (e.g., injustice, abusive supervision). Likewise, an event may be undesirable because it administers something negative (e.g., injustice, abusive supervision) or because it withholds something positive (e.g., justice, support).

Finding new constructs. Speaking more generally, we argue that most, perhaps all, social exchange constructs can be treated as members of an oppositional pair. However, we concede that in some cases only one partner in the pair has been extensively

researched. Consequently, there may be some “empty cells” with respect to certain social exchange constructs. In this way, our two-dimensional model can guide future research. We predict that these “missing cells” will be filled by future investigations. We can illustrate this idea by considering research on empowerment/disempowerment.

Our model anticipates an oppositional pairing of empowerment/disempowerment. However, the first partner in the pair, empowerment, has been more widely investigated. That said, if one conceptualizes these oppositional constructs in terms of supervisory actions, then the validity of this pairing appears quite plausible. Empowering acts are defined as behaviors conducted to affect an employee’s perception of his/her work role and responsibilities (Eylon & Bamberger, 2000). Particularly, when supervisors engage in empowering acts such as frequently sharing work-related information, expressing their trust and confidence in their subordinates’ abilities, and increasing the level of work responsibilities for their subordinates, they enhance their subordinates’ sense of self-efficacy, psychological control, and meaningful work

(i.e., increasing their subordinates' empowerment cognitions) (Spreitzer, 1995, 1996, 2008).

For instance, when supervisors share job related information with their subordinates, such as how the job should be performed or feedback regarding subordinate performance, supervisors enhance their subordinates' sense of psychological empowerment (Liden & Arad, 1996). Likewise, by expressing confidence and trust in their subordinates' abilities, such as providing faith, encouragement, and optimism, subordinates will perceive strong sociopolitical support, and therefore, have a stronger sense of empowerment within their work roles (Eylon & Bamberger, 2000). Finally, when supervisors increase their subordinates' level of work responsibility, subordinates also have a heightened sense of influence and accountability in their work roles. These sorts of phenomena, in turn, improve worker attitudes and performance (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011).

While empowerment has been found to be an important contributor to workplace effectiveness (Spreitzer, 2008), there seems to be a bit more to the story. Research on workplace gender and gender discrimination, suggests that employees can also be disempowered (e.g., Eylon & Bamberger, 2000, Vance, Ensher, Hendricks, & Harris, 2004; Young, Vance, & Harris, 2007). Disempowering behavior is not the absence of the aforementioned empowering acts. Rather, a disempowering action is defined as "any intentional or unintentional, verbal or non-verbal behavior expressed in the workplace that can be interpreted by...employees as hostile, offensive, intimidating, demeaning, or threatening" (Young, Vance, & Ensher, 2003: 163). Disempowering acts include many forms of negative workplace behaviors, such as workplace bullying (Rayner & Keashly, 2005) and mobbing (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005). There are also lesser forms of disempowerment, including such things as workplace incivility (i.e., rude and discourteous behaviors) (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2005).

When supervisors engage in disempowering behaviors, they decrease their subordinates' sense of self-efficacy, self-confidence, psychological control, and influence within their work roles (i.e., diminishing their subordinates' empowerment cognitions) (Vance et al., 2004; Young et al., 2003, 2007). Thus, as empowering acts increase the empowerment cognitions of subordinates, disempowering acts have an opposing impact. In sum, there is plausible support for empowering/disempowering acts as distinct oppositional social exchange constructs.

ISSUE 4: IMPRECISE BEHAVIORAL PREDICTIONS

A brief moment of reflection will illustrate the reasons why social exchange theory predictions can be so imprecise. There has been a proliferation of constructs that occupy very similar places in overlapping nomological networks (see the aforementioned discussion of Issue no. 1). Our point here is more conceptual and less empirical. Better psychometric instrumentation is almost always a good thing, but it is not critical to the matter at hand. The problem is that not (only) that measures of social exchange constructs can be highly correlated, though we have seen that this is often the case. Rather, the problem is that social exchange theory, in its most common formulation, does not provide strong theoretical reasons for distinguishing among different antecedents and consequences. Consider these examples involving behaviors with a positive valance:

- Concepts such as organizational support and organizational justice tend to be correlated (r_c between 0.52 and 0.66, depending on the type of justice, Kurtessis et al., in press). This is because, within social exchange theory, they both are ratings of positive initiating actions taken by the organization.
- Likewise, according to Dirks and Ferrin (2002), trust in leadership is high correlated with both LMX ($r_c = .77$), whereas Dulebohn et al. (2012) and his colleagues place this relationship at 0.73. Again, these concepts occupy the same role in social exchange theory. Both are ratings of positive initiating actions taken by the supervisor.

These examples can be multiplied. The point is not that all of these constructs are difficult to distinguish empirically. That may or may not be true, depending on the variables in question. Rather, the point is that they are difficult to distinguish theoretically. They perform the same conceptual function within social exchange theory, as either initiating actions or reciprocating responses. Consequently, social exchange theory provides insufficient conceptual reasons for distinguishing one from the other. For that reason, there can be a certain arbitrariness in the choice of predictors and criteria. Once the researcher selects a referent (e.g., supervisor vs. organization, see Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Lavelle et al., 2007, 2015) then social exchange offers relatively little *a priori* grounds for distinguishing among the available options. Except for changing the direction of the predicted relationship,

a study testing the effects of supportiveness would be just as consistent with social exchange theory as would a study testing the effects of abusive supervision (or psychological contracts, or civility, or social undermining, or justice, or bullying, or LMX, for that matter). All would be reasonable antecedents to OCB, CWB, commitment, and trust.

At our present state of knowledge, there is no complete solution. We suspect that some, though not all, of the available social exchange constructs will prove redundant. This is a necessary long term research endeavor. As we presently lack these answers, our approach thus far has been taxonomic. We have argued that social exchange constructs can be categorized by (1) whether they pertain to a resulting relationship or a behavior (our solution to Issue no. 1) and whether their valance is positive or negative (our solution to Issue no. 2). We were then able to place them on separate continua that range from inactive to active (our solution to Issue no. 3). In this section, we will pay special attention to the valance/activity typology, illustrating how it results in specific and theory-guided hypotheses.

Homeomorphic Reciprocity

In an important extension of social exchange theory, Lyons and Scott (2012) argued “the receipt of help and harm by a given employee will be associated with the extent to which that employee engages in help and harm. Additionally, the behaviors exchanged between an employee and a given coworker should be equivalent, such that engaging in help, but not harm, is associated with receiving help, and engaging in harm, but not help, is associated with receiving harm” (p. 268). Based on earlier work by Gouldner (1960), Lyons and Scott termed this phenomena homeomorphic reciprocity—the form of the items being transacted should be as similar as possible. As Gouldner (p. 172) stated the matter: “the most important expression of homeomorphic reciprocity is found in the negative norms of reciprocity, that is, in sentiments of retaliation where the emphasis is placed not on the return of benefits but on the return of injuries.” As a consequence of homeomorphic reciprocity, the reciprocating responses will match the valance of the respective positive and negative actions. In a study of food service workers, Lyons and Scott (2012) found strong support for these hypotheses. In particular, workers who were helpful were treated in a helpful fashion by others, while those who were harmful tended to be treated in a harmful way by their peers. Interestingly, engaging

in harm was unrelated to whether coworkers were helpful, and being helpful was unrelated to whether coworkers were harmful. We will return to Lyons and Scott’s model in a moment, but for now we consider additional evidence for homeomorphic reciprocity. These can be found in other literatures that have borrowed from social exchange theory.

In introducing the concept of incivility, Andersson and Pearson (1999) discuss the possibility of an “incivility spiral” (p. 458). Poor interpersonal behavior from one party is reciprocated with similar (or even escalated) bad behavior from the recipient. In this way, the incivility is *“deviation amplifying”* (p. 458, italics in original). More clearly, incivility can poison the organization’s climate, while also boosting aggression and turnover (Pearson et al., 2005). Thus, negative conduct engenders additional negative conduct. Broadly speaking, incivility spirals are generally consistent with the literature on conflict escalation (cf., Pruitt, 2008).

A more direct statement of this possibility can be found in Hershcovis and Barling (2007: 276) observation that “aggression begets aggression.” As evidence, they cite the work of Bowling and Beehr (2006), which investigated the consequences of workplace harassment. As is true for aggression, workplace harassment is a broad construct “defined as interpersonal behavior aimed at intentionally harming another employee in the workplace” (Bowling & Beehr, 2006: 998). Bowling and Beehr found that harassment tended to predict CWB (a negative reciprocating response), though not OCB (a positive reciprocating response). Across nine samples the relationship of harassment to CWB was 0.30 (corrected to 0.37), while across five samples the relationship to OCB was -0.02 (corrected to -0.03). Significantly, other quantitative reviewers can be adduced to support Hershcovis and Barling’s (2007) position. A meta-analysis of the abusive supervision literature by Mackey et al. (in press) obtained similar finding. Abusive supervision, which in our terms is a negative initiating action, was more strongly related to CWB ($\rho = 0.41$) than to OCB ($\rho = -0.24$), though it predicted both. Conversely, a meta-analysis of the organizational support literature by Kurtessis et al. (in press) found that these relationships almost reverse when all of the constructs are measured with an organizational referent. In particular, organizational support was more strongly related to OCB ($\rho = 0.40$) than to CWB ($\rho = -0.21$).

Homeomorphic reciprocity and activity. Lyons and Scott’s (2012) work on homeomorphic reciprocity is consistent with the perspective taken here.

The authors argue that some sets of actions have a positive valance (e.g., OCB), whereas others have a negative valance (e.g., CWB). Of course, individuals can be higher or lower on OCB, as well as higher or lower on CWB (Spector & Fox, 2010a, 2010b). As we have already discussed in a different context, this implies that the conceptual space requires at least one additional dimension, activity, in order to capture how frequently and strongly the relevant behaviors are exhibited. Consequently, the concept of homeomorphic reciprocity allows for, and may almost necessitate, something like the two-dimensional model displayed in Figure 7.

Put differently, people may tend to reciprocate on both the hedonic value and also on the activity dimensions. That is, there is a sort of dual reciprocity, with a preference for congruence on both dimensions. Notice that this is distinct from traditional approaches to reciprocity, which only consider hedonic value as a single dimension (as displayed in Figure 6). This has some very specific conceptual implications. In the interest of more precise predictions, it is worth considering these at greater length. If employees match on both value and activity, then some constructs will be more strongly related than will others and, as we shall see, social exchange theory can provide specific guidance as to the most appropriate constructs to include in theoretical models.

Homeomorphic reciprocity in two-dimensional space. Figure 8 presents the Figure 7 content in a simpler form. In particular, we have tried to capture the two-dimensional model as a 2×2 factorial. Of course, we are discussing continuous (and not dichotomous) constructs. However, this format is useful for explanatory purposes. Let us begin by considering the generally desirable constructs, which run from the upper left quadrant (Cell 1) to the lower right quadrant (Cell 4). Among initiating actions, one would anticipate strong relationships among support, LMX, justice, support, and empowerment. All of the constructs would be positively correlated, in some cases to the point where their independence might be questioned. In turn, they would be good predictors of the behavioral concepts that also fall into Cell 1 and Cell 4. These would include OCB, affiliative extra-role behaviors, prosocial organizational behavior, and so forth. This follows if people tend to reciprocate on two (not one) dimensions and consider activity as well as hedonic value. Therefore, initiating actions that are active/desirable (high justice, high support) and inactive/undesirable (low justice, low support) will have the strongest causal relationship to the reciprocal

FIGURE 8
Homeomorphic Reciprocity in Two-Dimensional Space.

		Hedonic Value	
		Desirable	Undesirable
		1	2
Activity	Active (Exhibit)	Administer desirable behavior	Administer Undesirable behavior
	Inactive (Withhold)	Withhold Undesirable behavior	Withhold desirable behavior
		3	4

responses that are also active/desirable (high trust, high affiliative extra-role behaviors) and inactive/undesirable (low trust, low affiliative extra-role behaviors) respectively. Notice that these observations account for the Kurtessis et al. (in press) findings that were considered above. Specifically, organizational support was more strongly related to OCB than to CWB. In our present language, both support and OCB are positive and active, where CWB is negative and active (Cell 2). Thus, support and OCB show a dual match (valance + activity), whereas support and CWB show only a single match (valance and not activity).

Of course, the reverse is also true. The generally undesirable constructs have a high pole that lies in the upper right hand quadrant (Cell 2) and a low pole in the lower left quadrant (Cell 3). This might include initiating actions such as abusive supervision, incivility, and social undermining. We could also add disempowerment and injustice (for entity justice). Following from homeomorphic reciprocity, this set of constructs would be good predictors of negative reciprocating responses that share these cells, including CWB, deviance, workplace aggression, and, of course, distrust and disidentification. This analysis concisely explains the findings of the Bowling and Beehr (2006) study that was considered earlier. People are relatively more likely to respond to abusive supervision with CWB, because both are undesirable and active. They are relatively less likely to respond with OCB because OCB (unlike abusive supervision) is desirable and active (Cell 1). For that reason, CWB could be seen to provide a better

criterion variable for abusive supervision than, for example, OCB.

Interestingly, these predictions should hold even when the constructs in question are oppositional. To illustrate, trust and support, which share quadrants, should be more strongly associated with one another, than trust and distrust, which appear in different quadrants. Similarly, trust should be more closely correlated with the OCB or affiliative extra-role behaviors (holding measurement method and source constant), than it is with distrust. Or, moving to the lower right left side of Figure 8, consider a supervisor who avoids abuse but does little else. The preferred reciprocating response will be low distrust. That is, if the supervisor withholds something negative (low abusiveness) then the subordinate will generally do likewise (hence, low distrust). One has no cause to actively distrust the person, nor does one have reason to, reward low levels of abuse with high levels of OCB, for instance. Responding in kind simply means matching both the value and activity dimensions. We have simply interpreted the traditional approach to reciprocity in light of our two-dimensional model.

We can now see how homeomorphic reciprocity allows for more precise behavioral predictions. These presumed causal processes, as outlined here, should be reflected in the observed correlation matrix. If variables from all four quadrants are measured, then the obtained correlation matrix should reflect both the hedonic value and activity dimensions. Variables are most strongly associated when they reflect similar levels of both desirability and activity. This suggests that constructs within the same quadrants should be more highly correlated than constructs in different quadrants.

But how does it all work? It is probably not lost to the reader that, as homeomorphic reciprocity has been presented thus far, it is fairly mechanistic. People's actions and responses move predictably among cells. This is useful to know, but we have not yet explained the mediating processes by which these patterns occur. As we shall see, social exchange theorists have argued that the principal drivers of these effects are positive and negative affect, but the effects are moderated by reciprocity beliefs.

The Role of Negative and Positive Affect in Maintaining Homeomorphic Reciprocity

As we have seen, Lyons and Scott's (2012) analysis of homeomorphic reciprocity suggests that certain classes of behavior have a positive valance but others

have a negative valance. An interesting analog to this thinking can be found in research on affective states. A number of researchers have argued that negative states (e.g., angry, disgusted, irritable, jittery) are best seen as independent of positive mood states (e.g., alert, enthusiastic, excited, proud) (Watson, 2000; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1984, 1988; Watson & Tellegen, 1985; George, 1992, 1996; Judge, 1992). Negative affectivity (NA) is independent of positive affectivity (PA) (Watson, 1988a, 1988b). More clearly, NA is not the opposite of PA (for reviews, see Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003; Judge & Larsen, 2001). For some researchers, this has suggested an intriguing possibility. Homeomorphic reciprocity could be mediated by these two families of affective states. In particular, hedonically negative initiating actions could engender NA, which in turn could encourage hedonically negative reciprocating responses. Conversely, hedonically positive initiating actions could engender PA, which in turn could encourage hedonically positive reciprocating responses. As we shall see, current research suggests this sort of model is viable. However, the evidence is somewhat scattered and incomplete.

From negative affect to negative behaviors. Interestingly, this taxonomic approach to affect has implications for predicting reciprocal responses. Much of this work originally considered negatively valanced target behaviors. For example, Neuman and Baron (2005) propose a general affective aggression model (GAAM). According to the GAAM, "negative feelings and emotions" (p. 31), rather than the absence of positive feelings and emotions, engender hostile workplace behaviors. Similar conclusions were reached by Spector and Fox (2005) when presenting their stressor-emotion model of CWB. As was true for Neuman and Baron, Spector and Fox underscore negative emotion, rather than positive emotion, as a predictor of CWB.

The aforementioned articles sometimes emphasize general affect rather than specific and discrete emotions. Future research should look at the possibility that only certain negative emotions (and not others) predict CWB. At the present time, there is only limited evidence to consider, but this is a matter in need of additional investigation. In this vein, Martinko et al. (2002) argued that anger and frustration leads to retaliatory acts, such as stealing and sabotage. Guilt, which is also negative but inwardly focused, was said to lead to self-destructive behaviors, such as drug use and passivity. As another example, Khan, Quratulain, and Crawshaw (2013) examined the relationship of anger and sadness, on

the one hand, and two types of CWB, on the other. Khan and his colleague determined that only anger predicted interpersonal abusiveness and production deviance. Sadness had no such effects.

From positive affect to positive behaviors. Although these findings are consistent with the notion of homeomorphic reciprocity, they only tell half—the negative half—of the story. Evidence for positive affect is limited, though it is promising. Some very interesting evidence is presented by Lawler and Yoon (1996, 1997), applying “an affect theory of social exchange” (Lawler, 2001: 321) to sequential negotiations. In real-world applications it is not uncommon for the same two parties to bargain together over a series of occasions. In this way, the results of prior sessions shape negotiators’ responses to later sessions. Lawler and Yoon (1996, 1997) suggested that the positive emotions, such as pleasure/satisfaction and interest/excitement, might impact mutual success as the parties gain experience with one another. In their initial experiment, Lawler and Yoon (1993) found that repeated negotiation sessions tend to increase pleasure/satisfaction but decrease interest/excitement. As a result, there were fewer impasses (that is, more agreements) and more concessions. Building on these findings, Lawler, Yoon, Baker, and Large (1999) found that, over a series of negotiations, pleasure/happiness tended to increase mutual trust. This trust, in turn, produced better agreements in later rounds. Lawler and Yoon’s (1996, 1997) research suggests that positive feeling states can boost interpersonal cooperation, at least within dyads.

Negative and positive affect together. Pulling together different strains of research, Spector and Fox (2010a) posted an emotion-centered model of voluntary work behavior. This framework argued that negative affect motivates employees toward negative behaviors, such as CWB, but positive affect motivates employees toward positive behaviors, such as OCB. These predictions were supported by Dalal et al. (2009, Study 2). When affect and behaviors were measured within-person, positive feeling states were more strongly related to OCB than to CWB. By contrast, negative feeling states were more strongly related to CWB than to OCB. Likewise, Krueger et al. (2001) observed that positive emotionality was related to altruism but not antisocial behavior, whereas negative emotionality was related to antisocial behavior but not to altruism. Though limited, these findings suggest that negative emotions are often antecedent of hostile and antisocial responses and

positive emotions are often antecedent of helpful and altruistic responses.

Negative affect, positive affect, and initiating actions. While useful, these data only suggest that negative and positive feeling states subsequently produce corresponding reciprocating responses. For affect to mediate homeomorphic reciprocity, these negative and positive feeling states must have different sources. In this regard, positive initiating actions should elicit positive feelings, whereas negative initiating actions should elicit negative feelings. Dimotakis, Scott, and Koopman (2011: 573) refer to these as “valance-symmetric affective mechanisms.” In support of these ideas, Dimotakis et al. reported that positive interpersonal interactions were good predictors of workplace PA (but not NA), and negative interpersonal interactions were good predictors of workplace NA (but not PA).

Perhaps the most complete test of these possibilities can be found in the paper by Lyons and Scott (2012), which we examined earlier. As we noted, Lyons and Scott found that helpful employees were treated helpfully, whereas harmful employees were treated harmfully. These findings are consistent with homeomorphic reciprocity. Going further, Lyons and Scott also observed that these effects were mediated by positive affect and negative affect, respectively. In particular, helpful workers created pleasant feelings in others. These positive feelings, in turn, pushed them to be helpful in return. Conversely, harmful workers created unpleasant feelings in others. These negative feelings, in turn, pushed them to be harmful in return.

Positive Reciprocity Beliefs and Negative Reciprocity Beliefs as Moderators of HomeoreciprocitY

Reciprocity can be seen as a social norm (Gouldner, 1960; Levinson, 1965). It has a strong impact on human behavior, but all people do not adhere to this norm to the same degree. People are especially likely to reciprocate when they believe that doing so is right and appropriate. Consistent with this possibility, Eisenberger et al. (1987) present evidence that some individuals are likely to endorse the reciprocity norm but others are less likely to do so. Those who approve of this norm are said to be high in exchange ideology or positive reciprocity beliefs. Positive reciprocity beliefs have been shown to have effects on at least three social exchange constructs—justice, organizational support, and organizational identification.

Employees who strongly adhere to positive reciprocity beliefs are more likely to repay positive initiating actions. For example, Witt (1992) found that participative decision-making boosted acceptance of goal norms and promotion satisfaction, but mostly among those employees with a positive exchange ideology. (Interestingly, participation can be viewed as both empowerment and justice.) In a later study, Witt and Broach (1993) found that the procedural justice of a training program increased satisfaction but, as one would expect, this relationship was stronger for those with positive reciprocity beliefs. These effects have also been demonstrated by organizational support researchers. A study by Eisenberger et al. (1986) has found that organizational support reduced absenteeism among teachers, but mostly when they had a strong (positive) exchange ideology. The moderating effect of reciprocity beliefs on support has been replicated by Eisenberger et al. (2001), Ladd and Henry (2000), Orpen (1994), and Witt (1991).

In addition to justice and support, positive reciprocity beliefs also moderate the impact of organizational identification. In two field studies, Umphress et al. (2010) found that employees who identified with their organization were more likely to display unethical pro-organization behaviors, such as lying, exaggerating, or concealing information. This effect was stronger among those with positive reciprocity beliefs. Parenthetically, it is worth observing that a “positive” behavior is not always an ethical one. As Umphress et al. (2010) emphasize, sometimes people may do bad things to benefit groups with which they identify.

Thus far, we have only been attentive to the positive exchange ideology. However, this is misleading. Consistent with Figures 3 and 4, there are actually two types of reciprocity beliefs. In addition to repaying positive actions, some people believe that it is appropriate to repay the negative behavior of others. As Mitchell and Ambrose (2007: 1159) put things: “A negative reciprocity orientation is the tendency for an individual to return negative treatment for negative treatment.” Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that negative and positive reciprocity beliefs loaded on different factors and were only modestly correlated ($r = 0.10$, in their Study 1). In terms of Figure 8, positive reciprocity beliefs would appear to occupy Cell 2 and Cell 4, whereas negative reciprocity beliefs would appear to occupy Cell 1 and Cell 3.

In support of this view, Mitchell and Ambrose (2007) found that many employees engaged in deviance as a response to abusive supervisors (similar to the findings of Schaubhut, Adams, & Jex, 2004;

Tepper et al., 2009). However, this effect was strongest for subordinates who held negative reciprocity beliefs. Those who did not view retaliation as acceptable were less likely to engage in deviance. Likewise, Eisenberger et al. (1986) observed that people who received negative interpersonal treatment, such as interpersonal injustice or incivility, were more likely to seek revenge. But, again, this tended to occur among those who endorsed a norm of negative reciprocity (for similar observations regarding revenge, see McLean Parks, 1997).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

We opened this paper by emphasizing the richness and breadth of social exchange theory as it has been investigated within the organizational sciences. We devoted special attention to the numerous constructs that have been examined within the context of this theoretical paradigm, as well as their not infrequent tendency to occupy similar conceptual space. As a solution we constructed a two-dimensional taxonomy (Figures 7–8), which takes into account their hedonic tone and activity. We then discussed how this taxonomy can help social exchange theorists formulate more precise conceptual models. In this section we extend these ideas and consider additional directions for future research.

Situational Constraints on Active Reciprocity

Thus far we have described our theoretical model as if events always took place in an ideal world in which people were free to respond as they wished. Following from homeomorphic reciprocity, we suggested that employees often formulate intentions to match on both dimensions. However, this cannot take place in every setting. While matching on both dimensions may be preferable, it is not always possible. For example, people may be constrained by work rules, which might punish deviant conduct (Hollinger & Clark, 1983). Alternatively, there might be a tight labor market, which prevents turnover (Gerhart, 1990). In these common situations, an employee may feel an obligation to reciprocate, but will be unable to act on this feeling. Consequently, individuals will need to select a substitute response.

The unidimensional approach to social exchange is not silent on this possibility. It suggests that individuals will simply not act on blocked urges. To illustrate, consider the consequences when a destructive leader (Schyns & Schilling, 2013) engages

in abusive supervision (Mackey et al., *in press*; Tepper, 2007) or interpersonal injustice (Bies, 2001, 2005, 2015). The recipient's initial motivation may be to retaliate with high deviance (e.g., El Akremi et al., 2010; Holtz & Harold, 2013; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Zoghbi Manrique de Lara, 2006). However, victims of this ill-treatment may be thwarted by the prospect of retaliation (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Cortina & Magley, 2003). In such cases, the unidimensional model of social exchange would anticipate weaker relationships between, abusive supervision and worker deviance, for example. It is hard to dispute this, but we argue that there is more to the matter. When the preferred option is blocked, the unidimensional model tells us what the recipient will not do. We would, however, also like to predict what he or she will do.

This question can be directly addressed within our two-dimensional framework if one looks closely at precisely what is being blocked. Recall that the reciprocal response has two parts—activity and hedonic value. The inhibitory mechanisms typical in organizations block only the desired activity and, generally speaking, have a weaker impact on the felt value. For example, a victim of injustice might wish to seek revenge. A low power individual might fear further punishment (Aquino et al., 2006) and this could inhibit a combative reciprocal response (Hollinger & Clark, 1983). However, such situational constraints do not change the way in which the employee was originally treated. As the activity dimension (and not the hedonic dimension) is thwarted, then the recipient's response retains its original value (negative in this case) and lowers its activity level from active to inactive.

In terms of Figure 7, the reciprocating response will shift "downward" when a desired activity is blocked. Thus, when unable to respond to, injustice or abuse, for example, the employee will exhibit less OCB. Put differently, if the employee cannot respond to abuse by presenting something undesirable, then he or she will respond by withholding something desirable.

These observations also apply to positive actions, though these are less likely to be obstructed. To illustrate, let us return to the example of supervisory support, which we earlier contrasted with both social undermining (Duffy et al., 2002) and abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000, 2007). Unlike undermining and abusiveness, supervisory support is both active and of positive hedonic value (see Figure 7), the subordinate should wish to respond in kind with something that is also active and of positive hedonic

value, such as OCB (Organ et al., 2006). However, if the high activity is blocked, the positive hedonic value remains. Hence, this individual will pursue an alternative that maintains the hedonic value (high, in this case) but lowers the activity level. This supported employee might, for example, reduce turnover intentions or eschew workplace deviance.

For the most part, formal constraints tend to halt the activity while leaving the value intact. A victim of injustice, whose efforts at revenge are obstructed, is unlikely to suddenly become actively supportive or highly trusting of the harm-doer (i.e., she is unlikely to maintain the activity while changing the hedonic value). Likewise, an employee who receives active supervisory support is unlikely to become actively hostile. The most common response is to match as well as one can. When activity is impeded, value is retained and guides the resulting response.

There is a general implication of this response. Situational constraints, which probably exist in all workplaces, tend to make behavior more inactive. Consequently, inactive supervisors and inactive co-workers tend to have inactive subordinates and inactive teammates, respectively. This is both good and bad, depending on what is being considered. On the positive side of the ledger, passivity toward negative constructs decreases their frequency. On the negative side of the ledger, as constructive constructs are treated inactively their frequency drops as well.

While the preference is to match on both dimensions, situational constraints often prevent this. While it is somewhat uncommon for an inactive initiating action to generate an active response, situational constraints on activity make the opposite less infrequent. We note again that this is not necessarily a problematic occurrence. For behaviors with a negative hedonic value, less of them is generally taken to be an improvement.

Transactional Chains and Improving Work Organizations

Historically, the study of social exchange has been an interesting but largely academic endeavor. Relatively few studies in this conceptual tradition have systematically considered individual behavioral change in order to improve working conditions. We suggest that this may be due to the ambiguity that has already been identified. As discussed earlier, traditional predictions have been less precise than might have been expected from a superficial consideration, and we have worked to address this issue in the current

paper. Let us now go one step further to consider a tactic for improving working conditions, which is derived from our discussion thus far. In particular, we will consider the possibility that transactional chains can be used to reduce negative conduct while also promoting positive behavior.

Transactional chains. Thus far we have treated social exchange as if it involved dyads of individuals in one-shot transactions. For example, a supervisor might show justice (an initiating action) and a subordinate might respond by boosting commitment (a reciprocal response). It is worth considering the antecedents of the original initiating action. Often actions occur as part of longer transactional chains. The same behavior can be a reciprocating response to a prior event and an initiating action to a subsequent one. Of course, social exchange theory tends to emphasize initiating actions that are of an interpersonal nature. It is the behavior of an interaction partner, and often the one of higher power, that prompts favorable or unfavorable reactions.

In this regard, senior management does much to set the overall tone of the organization (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Evidence suggests that behavior at one level cascades down to lower levels. As we shall see, powerful organizational leaders can engage in beneficial or harmful conduct, which provokes a response from a direct report. These lower level managers, in turn, model their responses toward their own subordinates (Weaver, Treviño, & Agle, 2005). Such transactional chains can contribute good and bad things to an organization's climate.

There is one additional complexity. According to our model, social exchange constructs, such as trust/distrust and altruism/aggression, are organized into oppositional pairs. As discussed earlier, these opposing constructs are conceptually similar, though empirically distinguishable. They refer to actions (and reactions) that thrust in opposing directions (e.g., supervisory support vs. abusive supervision or justice vs. injustice). Because the constructs making up oppositional pairs are different, organizations have two challenges, optimistically we might call them "opportunities," for behavioral change. Organizations can focus on either reducing negative conduct or increasing positive conduct. As we emphasized in the previous section, the two are not the same thing, and reducing the former will not automatically increase the latter. For instance, while it will probably be beneficial to decrease the frequency of active and undesirable initiating actions, this does not spontaneously increase the frequency of active and desirable actions. These are both negative and

positive transactional chains. Consequently, we will treat these two matters separately.

Transactional chains and decreasing negative activity. Generally speaking, social exchange theory treats poor conduct as a reciprocating response to an unfortunate initiating action. Many of these unfortunate transactional chains start at high levels of the organization and then trickle down. Studies by Aryee, Chen, Sun, and Debrah (2007) and Liu, Liao, and Loi (2012) each found that managers who were victims of abusive supervision were likely to treat their subordinates inappropriately. Thus, if managers were not provoked by higher-level executives, then subordinates would be treated better. An effective intervention might be to deter negative transactional chains from ever starting.

A common recommendation is to conduct training. Our two-dimensional model can provide guidelines for instructional interventions, making theory-guided recommendations regarding the content. Specifically, training should be customized with respect to the position of the target behavior within the two-dimensional model illustrated in Figure 7. Those in the upper right quadrant should be taught to control their negative responses. For example, anger management training can teach one to inhibit bellicose feelings and behavior (e.g., Chapman, 2007; Harbin, 2000). Put more simply, if senior leaders are less angry, then they will make fewer other people angry. As such, the workplace might be more effective for all.

This tactics may bring an additional benefit. As we emphasized earlier, many social exchange constructs tend to be comparable. For example, mobbing (Zapf & Einarsen, 2005) and bullying (Rayner & Keashly, 2005) overlap considerably. Likewise, incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2005) and interactional injustice (Bies, 2001, 2005, 2015) occupy similar places within the nomological net established by social exchange theory. When the behaviors are this similar, actions that limit one set may also limit another. For instance, we might find that efforts to reduce the incidence of aggression may also decrease the amount of abusive supervision. At this stage in our knowledge, this idea is speculative but it warrants additional research attention.

Finally, it is worth re-stating something that we have emphasized throughout this article. Although reducing active/negative actions may be a worthy goal, this will not necessarily increase the instance of actions that are active and positive. As we shall now see, achieving this objective will require reversing the two aforementioned tactics.

Transactional chains and increasing positive activity. Increasing active/positive behavior represents a special challenge. If, as we have suggested, behavior often follows from active-to-inactive, then it may take a particular motivational impetus in order to re-engage these sorts of reciprocal responses. In keeping with social exchange theory, we suggest that much of the stimulus will come from positive interactions. The high-quality social relationships that result from these positive social exchanges can buttress beneficial conduct (Erdogan & Liden, 2002) and initiate positive transactional chains.

Reversing the aforementioned effects of abusive supervision, evidence suggests that when managers are treated well by their bosses, then they are more likely to do the same for their subordinates. Masterson (2001) reported that fairness “trickles down” from one level in an organization to another. In her study, course instructors who were treated fairly by their supervisors were more likely to treat the students in their classes justly (for consistent findings, see Wo, Ambrose, & Schminke, 2015). This trickle down phenomenon is not limited to justice. In a similar fashion, Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, and Kuenzi (2012) and Schaubroeck et al. (2012) found that ethical leadership trickles down from the upper managers to lower level subordinates.

In order to “jump start” the beneficial cycle, various scholars have recommended training as a tool for promoting a respectful and supportive workplace (e.g., Benson, Hanley, & Scroggins, 2013; Estes & Wang, 2008). Evidence also supports this advice. In two quasi-experimental studies, Skarlicki and Latham (1996, 1997) found that supervisors could be effectively trained to increase the fairness with which they treated their subordinates. Despite this success, we caution that, in accordance with our two-dimensional model, it may be difficult to increase the activity of positive conduct unless the work context provides some impetus as well. Training appears to be useful, but the individuals need some motivation in order to put their newly found skills to work.

CONCLUSION

The abundant scholarly advancements that have been enabled by social exchange theory offer clear evidence that the framework has substantial merits. However, social exchange theory is not above reproach. In this chapter, we have identified four critical issues that we argue have limited its theoretical utility to this point. Specifically, our review focused on four important issues that included: (1) significant overlap and unclear distinctions among the numerous social exchange

related constructs; (2) insufficient differentiation between positive vs. negative hedonic value of these various constructs; (3) an assumption of bipolarity, which fails to distinguish the presence of negative constructs (e.g., abuse) from the absence of positive constructs (e.g., support); and, following from the prior three issues; and (4) theoretically imprecise behavioral predictions. We presented considerable evidence from various literatures to support our critiques.

We do not, however, regard social exchange theory as being tragically flawed. By identifying these concerns, we were able to hone in on a common source among these issues and discover a clear path forward. Specifically, we noted that the aforementioned problems are inherent in social exchange theory’s current unidimensional framework. Accordingly, we proposed an additional dimension, activity, which enables scholars to consider social exchanges in a two-dimensional space and give equal consideration to both hedonic value (represented in the unidimensional model) and activity. We argued that the two-dimensional conceptualization would support a more explicit organizing structure for social exchange related constructs and, thus, increase the specificity of *a priori* predictions regarding how people can be expected to behave within a reciprocal dyad. Further, we explained how conceptualizing social exchange within a two-dimensional space creates new opportunities for future research and enables scholars to better support practitioner needs as well. Taken together, we assert that this extension of the social exchange framework has the potential to render the theory even more applicable and useful for scholars in the future than it has been in the past.

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