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Servant Leadership: Antecedents, Processes, and Outcomes

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[–] Abstract and Keywords

Servant leadership was first introduced in 1970, but was slow to attract the attention of academic researchers until recently. Today research on servant leadership is being conducted at an accelerated pace. Psychometrically sound measures are available, and servant leadership has passed the test of showing incremental validity after controlling for the two most widely studied approaches to leadership, leader-member exchange, and transformational leadership. Now that servant leadership has established legitimacy in the academic field, theory development is needed to guide its further advancement. The purpose of the current chapter is to offer a comprehensive theoretical model that captures the development (antecedents) of servant leadership, its consequences (outcomes), and the mediating and moderating processes through which servant leadership behaviors result in key outcomes.

Keywords: Servant leadership, leader awareness, core self-evaluation, empowerment, trust, organizational citizenship behaviors, emotional intelligence, leader prototypes, community citizenship, identity

Our goal in this chapter is to provide an overview of servant leadership and recommend future directions. In doing so, we hope to stimulate interest in servant leadership so as to entice researchers to devote increased attention to this intriguing form of leadership. We attempt to accomplish this by developing theory on the antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership, as well as articulating the underlying processes through which this form of leadership operates. We illustrate our theory with a model depicted in Figure 17.1. In our theory, we identify individual characteristics of leaders and followers that are conducive to servant leadership, as well as the mediating mechanisms through which servant leader behaviors lead to attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Finally, we suggest several elements in the context thought to moderate proposed relationships between servant leadership and outcomes. Prior to the introduction of our theoretical model, we present a brief overview of servant leadership research.

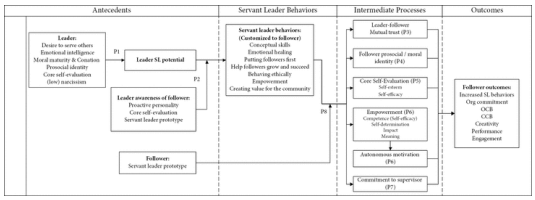

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Figure 17.1 . Model of Servant Leadership: Ancedents, Processes, and Outcomes.Note: SL=Servant leadership; Org commitment= Organizational commitment; OCB= Organizational citizenship behavior; CCB= Community citizenship behavior.

Although aspects of servant leadership appeared in writings of Confucianism and in the Bible, modern servant leadership was introduced in a now-classic article by Robert K. Greenleaf (1970). Greenleaf worked for American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) from 1926 to 1964, rising from a job as a laborer on a line construction crew to

head of management research. Greenleaf also introduced many creative training programs during his tenure at AT&T. Following retirement, Greenleaf taught university classes, served as a consultant, and inspired the formation of the Center for Creative Leadership in North Carolina. But he is best known for forming the Center for Applied Ethics, which after several name changes continues to exist as the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (Frick, 2004). Greenleaf asserted that being a truly effective leader requires a focus on serving others, particularly one's followers. Due in part to the positive response to Greenleaf's (1970) essay, Greenleaf formed a center devoted to the promotion of servant leadership, which later bore his name. Over the years, the Greenleaf Center has successfully introduced servant leadership to many practitioners. However, with the exception of an article by Jill Graham in the inaugural issue of *Leadership Quarterly* back in 1991, servant leadership attracted little interest in the academic community until the 2000s. In the last few years, there has been a noted increase in scientific research on servant leadership that has been published in top academic journals (Ehrhart, 2004; Hu & Liden, 2011; Hunter et al., 2013; Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, in press; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008; Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012; Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011; van Dierendonck, 2011; Walumbwa, Hartnell, & Oke, 2010).

In order for rigorous empirical research on servant leadership to proceed, it was recognized that a servant leadership measure developed using sound psychometric practices was essential. Van Dierendonck (2011) argued that of the attempts to measure servant leadership, only scales by Liden and colleagues (2008) and by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) meet adequate psychometric standards. The Liden et al. scale (2008), used in research by Hu and Liden (2011), Schaubroeck and colleagues (2011), and by Peterson and colleagues (2012), captures seven dimensions of servant leadership: putting subordinates first, helping subordinates grow and succeed, empowering, emotional healing, creating value for the community, behaving ethically, and conceptual skills. Consistent with the work of Greenleaf, a servant leader serves others by prioritizing the needs of followers above the leader's needs. This includes assisting subordinates in recognizing their full potential, which is done partially through empowerment. Paralleling Greenleaf's emphasis on servant leaders being genuine only if they behave as a servant leader in all realms of life, another dimension of servant leadership identified by Liden and colleagues (2008) is helping to create value for the community in which the organization is embedded, both by directly contributing service to the community as well as encouraging followers to do the same. Finally, Liden and colleagues found support for the dimension of promoting ethical behavior by acting with honesty and integrity.

Although support was found for multiple dimensions of servant leadership through factor analyses and differential relations between dimensions and outcomes (Liden et al., 2008), the seven dimensions have been shown to map onto a higher order or global "servant leadership" factor (see Hu & Liden, 2011, for analyses). Indeed, as with many multidimensional constructs in organizational behavior, most researchers (Ehrhart, 2004; Hu & Liden, 2011; Neubert et al., 2008; Schaubroeck et al., 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2010) have employed global servant leadership, rather than investigating the dimensions separately. But even when a global factor is used exclusively in research, multidimensional scales more clearly reveal the full domain of the construct under study, as each dimension represents a different component of the content contained in the realm of the construct. Due to space constraints and for greater clarity, the relationships proposed in this chapter refer only to global servant leadership and not the separate dimensions. We do, however, encourage researchers to further explore the dimensions of servant leadership presented by Liden and his colleagues (2008).

While there is a dedicated ethical leadership model (for a review, see Brown and Treviño, 2006) defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005, p. 120), servant leadership is a different, more holistic leadership approach. Essentially, ethical leaders make ethics a salient feature of the workplace by modeling and communicating fair ethical values, and providing for a reward and punishment schema in line with those values. In contrast to the ethical leadership model, which is a single dimensional construct with three main foci (ethical role clarification, which includes transparency; concern for morality and fairness; and power sharing, or voice; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008), servant leadership includes ethical behavior as a component that represents only one of seven servant leadership dimensions. So, for the servant leader, ethical behavior is only one mode of service. [See van Dierendonck, 2011, for a review of the differences between servant leadership and other leadership models.]

To date, many scholars have contributed to our understanding of the impact of the servant leader in the workplace, but research on servant leadership is still in its infancy, as evidenced by a servant leadership literature

review by van Dierendonck (2011) that uncovered a modest 14 refereed journal articles. To avoid redundancy, for our review we have selected the key articles among those 14, as well as select articles published subsequent to van Dierendonck's (2011) review.

Ehrhart (2004) is one of the first published authors of an empirical article on servant leadership. Ehrhart developed his own scale from seven dimensions of servant leadership based upon his review of the literature and used this scale in a cross-sectional study involving a grocery store chain. While scale development was not the focus of this paper, it is important to note that a three-factor confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with servant leadership, leader-member exchange (LMX; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Liden & Maslyn, 1998), and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) showed adequate fit, which provides evidence that servant leadership is empirically distinct from these other two leadership styles. Support was found for a relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The relationship was partially mediated by procedural justice climate. This suggests that servant leadership promotes a fair workplace environment, and this fair environment along with servant leadership, promotes discretionary helping behaviors that benefit the organization.

Liden and colleagues (2008), in the process of developing their servant leadership scale, showed a positive relationship between servant leadership and the outcome variables of in-role performance, organizational commitment, and community citizenship behaviors even after controlling for both LMX and transformational leadership in an organizational field sample. Like Ehrhart (2004), these scholars contributed evidence that servant leadership is distinct from LMX and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985).

Neubert and colleagues (2008) investigated the impact of initiating structure and servant leadership in the same model. These authors used the 14-item Ehrhart (2004) servant leadership measure and collected same source data, with three weeks separating collection of IV/mediator and DVs. Neubert and colleagues conducted a CFA that revealed separate factors for servant leadership and initiating structure. Their results suggest that promotion (vs. prevention) focus mediates the relationship between servant leadership and helping and creative behaviors, suggesting that servant leadership can shift followers' focus from prevention to promotion. Essentially, followers of servant leaders, relative to followers of supervisors high in initiating structure, are more likely to focus on nurturance rather than dwelling on security needs. Their analyses for servant leadership also controlled for initiating structure, adding to a growing body of evidence that servant leadership is not redundant with previously researched leadership models.

Walumbwa and colleagues (2010) extended Ehrhart's (2004) findings. The focus of their study was to show group and individual-level intermediary processes that explain how servant leadership increases OCB. These authors used Ehrhart's (2004) 14-item scale in a longitudinal study involving multisource data from seven multinational corporations operating in Kenya, Africa. Findings supported partial mediation between servant leadership and OCB for procedural justice climate and service climate at the group level, and self-efficacy and commitment to supervisor at the individual level. Procedural justice and service climate were proposed to moderate the impact of the individual-level variables on OCB, but support was only found for the impact of procedural justice climate and service climate on the relationship between commitment to the supervisor and OCB. LMX and transformational leadership were not controlled for in this study. Nevertheless, this study provides important support for the theoretical expectations of servant leadership. Specifically, servant leaders are expected to "grow" their followers into more capable members of the organization who eventually become servant leaders themselves. Finding servant leadership to be associated with increased self-efficacy, OCB, and climates of justice and service provide empirical support for this theoretical expectation.

Hu and Liden (2011), using Liden and colleagues' (2008) 28-item scale, investigated the impact of servant leadership on the team-level variables of team potency and team OCB in a sample of five banks in China. In this study, support was found for a moderated-mediation model, showing that servant leadership has direct positive effects on team effectiveness as well as effects that are partially mediated by team potency. Team potency also mediated the impact of goal clarity and process clarity on team effectiveness. Interestingly, both mediated relationships were strongly impacted by servant leadership, such that servant leadership increased the importance of goal and process clarity for team potency. In fact, in the absence of a servant leader, results showed that potency was higher in teams with *lower* goal clarity. Evidently, if the leader did not provide the support associated with servant leadership, it was better *not* to have a clear idea of the goal. Having a clear picture of the goal, but not getting the leader support needed to accomplish the goal, was evidently frustrating for team members. However,

with a servant leader, the relationship between goal clarity and team potency was strong and positive. Therefore, this study provides evidence that servant leadership provides important benefits to teams, including enhanced team potency and team effectiveness.

Schaubroeck and colleagues (2011) conducted a cross-sectional study sampling United States and Hong Kong branches of the same bank using the Liden et al. (2008) 28-item scale. This study is similar to Neubert and colleagues (2008) in that the impact of two different leadership models was investigated in the same study. Here, servant leadership and transformational leadership were shown to relate to increased team performance, but through differing mechanisms. Servant leadership appears to operate through affect-based trust and increased team psychological safety, whereas transformational leadership seems to manifest itself via cognitive-based trust and increased team potency. But clearly the key finding of the study was that servant leadership explained an additional 10 percent of the variance in team performance when controlling for variance explained by transformational leadership.

Peterson and colleagues (2012) examined antecedents and outcomes of CEO servant leadership in a sample of 126 technology organizations in the United States, using a shortened 16-item version of the Liden et al. (2008) scale. Data were collected over four time periods. This study's results showed a negative relationship between CEO narcissism and servant leadership, and a positive relationship between CEO founder status (vs. non-founder) and servant leadership. Further, CEO organizational identification partially mediated these two relationships. More interesting, a positive relationship was found between CEO servant leadership and firm performance measured as return on assets, even after controlling for transformational leadership. This study provides evidence that top management servant leadership enhances organizational-level performance. This study also contributed to the growing body of evidence that supports the differentiation between servant leadership and transformational leadership.

Van Dierendonck (2011) provided a six-point comprehensive review of servant leadership research. First, he provided a brief overview and background of the construct. Second, he assessed the key components of servant leadership. Third, he addressed the empirical and theoretical differences between servant leadership and other leadership models, specifically transformational leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, empowering leadership, spiritual leadership, self-sacrificing leadership, and Level 5 leadership. Level 5 leadership, identified by Collins (2001) as the best form of leadership in terms of organizational effectiveness, stresses the importance of leaders to be guided by humility. Fourth, van Dierendonck reviewed current methods for measuring servant leadership. Fifth, he reviewed antecedents and consequences of servant leadership based upon the extant empirical evidence. Sixth, and finally, he offered suggestions for future research. In order to avoid redundancy, we refer the reader to van Dierendoncks' review of the past literature, extant servant leader measures, and differences between servant leadership and other leadership models. Our goal then, is to address new issues and to provide a theoretical model accompanied by propositions that are designed to guide future research.

Challenges of Servant Leadership

Before proceeding with the presentation of our model, we must acknowledge that some scholars have identified potential challenges to the servant leadership approach. First, it is likely that not all followers or organizations will openly receive servant leadership as an appropriate or valid leadership style. Further, servant leaders must balance the concerns and preferences of multiple stakeholders (organization, supervisor, followers, community, and personal life and family), which can be both logistically and emotionally taxing. These issues elucidate potential challenges for implementing servant leadership.

Follower leadership preferences may be an important issue that impacts the way in which servant leaders' actions are perceived (Meuser, Liden, Wayne, & Henderson, 2011). Quite simply, not all people may desire the benevolent behaviors of a servant leader. A mismatch between follower comfort with or desire for servant leadership and actual leadership style may cause deleterious effects in the workplace (e.g., reduced follower performance or OCB) when servant leadership is applied, and in extreme cases may even result in followers not perceiving their immediate superiors to be leaders.

Research into the scarcity paradigm (e.g., Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) provides a basis for understanding the complexities and challenges of the role and resource conflicts a servant leader may experience. All stakeholders

place a claim on the servant leader's finite time, energy, and financial resources, and there may simply not be enough to go around. Emotional labor costs (see Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006; Morris & Feldman, 1996) are likely to be high for servant leaders. The more traditional way to lead via directing and controlling is much less demanding than engaging in servant leadership, which requires listening, empathy, mentoring, guidance, and emotional support. This approach to leadership may be emotionally taxing due to the emotional regulation that is required when attempting to serve others. In addition to the cost of emotional regulation, making oneself so readily available to followers as a source of help and support, also raises the possibility of role conflicts in attempting to serve all relevant "others" first. The problem becomes exacerbated by demands placed on the servant leader by other role set members, such as the immediate superior. Servant leadership is defined as putting others' needs first. Doing so is essential for becoming a genuine servant leader. However, if servant leaders put the needs of all members first, they themselves may risk stress and eventual burnout. Further, the servant leader may be susceptible to manipulation by more savvy followers, who might exploit the servant leader for personal gain, thus placing an inordinate emotional and logistical burden on the leader (Whetstone, 2002).

Indeed, due to role and resource conflict, servant leaders may struggle to defend their leadership style in some organizations. Anderson (2009), for example, criticized the servant leader model as detrimental to organizational goals. To him, servant leadership represents an agency problem, where concern with followers reduces the concern and energy applied to organizational goals. When the immediate superior of a servant leader holds a view similar to Anderson or the organizational culture is unsupportive, the servant leader encounters additional obstacles that can increase the emotional labor associated with being a servant leader.

Role conflict may not only occur with respect to attempting to satisfy the competing demands of followers and others at work. Indeed, servant leaders, who by definition should be servants in *all* realms of life, may also experience conflict between demands of followers, family members, and members of the community. Conflicts may not only occur within the work context, such as between satisfying the needs of multiple followers and/or the immediate superior, but also across contexts, such as wanting to serve a follower at the same time that a family member needs help. In attempting to satisfy all relevant others, the servant leader likely engages in high levels of emotional labor. Tremendous stress can result from situations in which the servant leader is faced with multiple simultaneous demands to put others first. Sometimes the role conflict is such that the servant leader must decide who to help, and who cannot be helped at the moment. For example, a leader's daughter needs help on a school project, but followers need the leader to stay at work late to provide guidance on an important report. Using a role conflict framework, research integrating work, family, and community is needed to fully understand the potential competing demands of servant leadership.

Antecedents of Servant Leadership

While the servant leadership literature has devoted considerable attention to the study of what constitutes a servant leader and the outcomes of servant leadership, scarce attention has been paid to the development of servant leadership, or the antecedents of servant leadership behaviors. Drawing from servant leadership's theoretical underpinnings, we identified six leader characteristics that arm leaders with the potential to engage in servant leadership behaviors. However, because servant leadership does not occur in a vacuum, context likely influences the degree to which these leader characteristics result in manifestations of servant leadership. In line with recent calls to account for individual differences in the study of servant leadership (e.g., Walumbwa et al., 2010), we propose that follower characteristics alert leaders to the receptiveness of each follower to servant leadership, and the leader's awareness of follower desire for servant leadership moderates the relationships between leader characteristics and servant leader behaviors.

Leader Characteristics

Six leader characteristics are proposed as antecedents of servant leadership potential: the desire to serve others, emotional intelligence, moral maturity and conation, prosocial identity, core self-evaluation, and (low) narcissism.

Desire to serve others. Readiness and motivation to lead have been portrayed as key prerequisites for effective leadership (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Servant leaders, however, are thought to be driven by an additional

force, which is the desire to serve (Ng, Koh, & Goh, 2008). This desire is viewed as the prime motivation for engaging in servant leadership behaviors. In essence, servant leaders make a conscious choice to lead as a means of serving others (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf's description of the servant leader as one who "wants to serve, to serve first" (1977, p. 13) and one who is genuinely concerned with serving followers, clearly places the notion of service at the core of servant leadership. This emphasis on serving others epitomizes the selfless or altruistic motives of servant leaders, and contributes to setting servant leadership apart from other leadership theories, which make serving the organization the main focus.

In line with Greenleaf's seminal work, the desire to serve has been embedded in one form or another in several conceptualizations of servant leadership (e.g., Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Graham, 1991; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008; van Dierendonck, 2011). Following our view of servant leadership as a set of behaviors, rather than a combination of personal characteristics, we argue that desire to serve others is best seen as an antecedent of these behaviors, because desires and needs foster motivation, which in turn drives behavior (Kanfer, 1990). Specifically, we propose that servant leaders' desire to serve fosters a motivation to serve, which predisposes one toward servant leadership behaviors. In our view, the desire to serve others includes, but goes beyond, the propensity to be concerned for others, or other orientation (Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004), because it corresponds to an intrinsic motivation to engage in serving behaviors rather than a mere predisposition to be concerned for the well-being of others. Further, a desire to serve also motivates leaders to know their followers in order to better serve each individual's needs.

Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, "the ability to understand and manage moods and emotions in the self and others" (George, 2000, p. 1027), represents an integration of emotion with cognition (Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002). Recent theoretical work proposes a cascading model of emotional intelligence, which views emotion perception (the ability to identify emotions in oneself and in others), emotion understanding (knowledge of the origins and consequences of emotions), and emotion regulation (influencing how one experiences and expresses emotions) as elements of a sequential process (Joseph & Newman, 2010). This model further proposes that conscientiousness, cognitive ability, and emotional stability, respectively, contribute to these dimensions of emotional intelligence, and that the latter partially mediate their impact on job performance. These antecedents of emotional intelligence also present links with servant leadership. For instance, a leader with a high level of cognitive ability is more likely to possess a high level of conceptual skills. Similarly, because conscientious individuals are methodical, dependable, organized and tend to perform at high levels (Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki, & Cortina, 2006), conscientious leaders are likely to demonstrate a high level of conceptual skills and the propensity to provide valuable assistance in helping followers grow and succeed. Lastly, because emotionally stable leaders tend to experience less negative affect and are generally happier, more satisfied people (Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008), they may be in a better position to provide emotional healing. Empathy, "the ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them oneself," is also seen as a central characteristic of emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 194) and highly relevant to servant leadership.

We contend that individuals who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence are more likely to manifest servant leader behaviors. Indeed, serving others requires knowledge and awareness of how followers need to be helped. Specifically, most servant leader behaviors require empathy, an awareness and understanding of others' emotions, and/or the ability to manage emotions (emotion regulation). For example, in order to effectively provide emotional healing, the leader must correctly identify a need for such healing. Because of their awareness (perception and understanding) and empathy, individuals high on emotional intelligence may possess the sensitivity to recognize each individual's unique needs and consequently be more apt to soothe others than would a less emotionally intelligent leader (Goleman, 1995; Humphrey, 2002).

We also contend that in order to engage in servant leadership behaviors, leaders need an awareness and ability to manage their own emotions (i.e., perception and understanding of one's own emotions). For example, in times of crisis, putting followers' needs first and providing emotional healing may require the leader to acknowledge and overcome his or her own negative emotions. This may be easier for emotionally intelligent individuals, because they understand their emotions better, and are more likely to regulate them appropriately (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dashborough, 2009). The servant leader behavior, "empowering followers" (Liden et al., 2008), includes acceptance of the risk associated with follower mistakes that may result from the increased influence and control granted to them by the servant leader. Whereas non-servant leaders may be reluctant to assume such risks, servant leaders accept the risks as a necessary part of the process through which followers reach their full

potential. Dealing with the disappointment that is natural when followers make mistakes may be easier for emotionally intelligent leaders, who by definition are more adept at managing feelings of frustration (emotion regulation). Finally, empathy, a key element of emotional intelligence, is a driver for altruistic behavior (Batson, 1990) that should predispose individuals to adopt behaviors that are, by nature, selfless.

We contend that emotional intelligence is a necessary—but not sufficient—prerequisite for servant leader behaviors. This view is consistent with prior theoretical work on servant leadership, which views empathy and awareness as important attributes of servant leaders (e.g., Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Spears, 1998), and empirical work on emotional intelligence, which suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders tend to engage in altruistic behaviors (Carmeli, 2003), including behaviors associated with serving followers.

Moral maturity and moral conation. From its inception, servant leadership has explicitly included an ethical or moral dimension (e.g., Graham, 1991; Greenleaf, 1970; Liden et al., 2008; Sendjaya et al., 2008; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), which acts to distinguish servant leadership from other leadership theories. For example, neither LMX, transformational, transactional, charismatic, behavioral, contingent nor situational leadership theories include a "moral safeguard" (Walumbwa et al., 2010).

The relationship between morality and the ethical behaviors of a servant leader can be understood in light of the theoretical contribution of Hannah, Avolio, and May (2011). Hannah and his colleagues (2011) offer a taxonomy for moral processes with two categories of individual differences that are relevant for moral thought and action: moral maturation and moral conation.

Moral maturity reflects a high capacity for moral judgment resulting from the adoption of personal moral codes and the ability to think in an independent way (Kohlberg, 1984; Rest et al., 1999). Moral maturation is comprised of three components: moral complexity (the ability to recognize, organize, and categorize moral phenomena), metacognitive ability (the ability to consider and refine those mental categorizations), and moral identity (the centrality of "moral" to the focal person's self-view). We propose that moral complexity and metacognitive ability are antecedents to the ethical behaviors contained within servant leadership, as one cannot behave in a consistently moral fashion if one has not developed the ability to recognize and categorize moral situations.

An identity is a self-definition that guides behavior (Erikson, 1964; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). Moral identity, "a specific kind of identity that revolves around the moral aspects of one's self" (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007, p. 1611) is an important determinant of moral behavior. Moral identity goes beyond mere thoughts about moral phenomena, capturing the extent to which "being a moral person" is central to an individual's self-concept, thus compelling him or her to think, judge, *and* act in a moral manner (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hannah et al., 2011). Recent empirical work by Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, and Kuenzi (2012) supports a connection between leader moral identity and moral behaviors that are consistent with that self-definition.

Leaders who possess moral maturity likely behave in a way that is consistent with their personal moral or ethical norms (i.e., their moral identity), as behaving otherwise would create cognitive dissonance. Consistent with this view, leaders' cognitive moral development has been found to be significantly and positively related to ethical decision making (Ashkanasy, Windsor, & Treviño, 2006), perceived leader integrity, and to servant leader behaviors (Washington, Sutton, & Feild, 2006). Leader moral maturity may also foster other types of servant leader behaviors, as individuals who have achieved high cognitive moral development are less likely to behave in a self-serving manner (Schminke, Ambrose, & Neubaum, 2005). In line with a recent review of the servant leadership literature (Van Dierendonck, 2011), we view leader moral maturity as an antecedent to servant leadership behaviors.

However, moral maturity, the understanding of right vs. wrong, alone is not sufficient to secure moral action. *Moral conation* (Hannah et al., 2011) is the capacity to believe one is morally responsible and act in a moral way, even in the presence of obstacles to moral action. Moral conation is comprised of three components: moral ownership (extent to which one feels responsible for moral action, either on behalf of oneself or a larger group), moral efficacy (belief that one can act in a moral way in a given situation), and moral courage (tenacity to engage in moral behaviors and overcome obstacles to moral action). We propose that the attainment of moral conation is also an antecedent to the ethical behaviors contained within servant leadership. Servant leaders, therefore, are expected to have a high degree of moral ownership, moral efficacy, and moral courage, and as such, feel responsible for moral action, believe they can act morally, and do so in the face of obstacles.

Prosocial identity. Identity theory and empirical research suggest that individuals hold multiple identities, which influence behavior as a function of their salience (Grant, Molinsky, Margolis, Kamin, & Schiano, 2009; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Similar to moral identity, a strong prosocial identity, "the dimension of the self-concept focused on helping and benefiting others" (Grant et al., 2009, p. 321), may predispose individuals to adopt servant leadership behaviors. This can be expected, because helping and being of service to others—followers and the broader community—are at the very core of servant leadership theory (Liden et al., 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011). As servant leader behaviors are by nature prosocial, a strong prosocial identity should predispose individuals to manifest them.

Core self-evaluation. Core self-evaluation (CSE; Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003) is a combination of four lower-level personality traits. Specifically, CSE is comprised of self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism and can be summarized in terms of one's fundamental view of one's self as a competent, worthy, and effective person. We contend that individuals with higher CSE are more likely to manifest servant leadership behaviors. Indeed, it has been suggested that those with positive self-concepts would be more likely to adopt altruistic behaviors, as they are less preoccupied with themselves (Rushton, 1980). More specifically, leaders with high self-esteem are less likely to seek approval and self-gratification through leadership roles, and their belief in their self-worth may shield them against the risks of failure associated with servant leadership behaviors, such as empowering and developing followers. Individuals with high self-efficacy, because they believe in their own abilities, are more likely to go beyond traditional leadership and engage in the more challenging servant leadership behaviors of empowering followers and helping them grow, or creating value for the community. Having an internal locus of control should also predispose leaders to engaging in servant leadership behaviors as these behaviors require a belief in one's ability to actively influence one's environment, including followers and the broader community. Lastly, as low neuroticism leads one to focus on the positive side of things, leaders low on neuroticism are more likely to see, and thus want to develop, followers' strengths. Conversely, leaders high on neuroticism are less likely to "involve themselves in their subordinates' efforts" (Bass, 1985, p. 173).

Narcissism. Narcissism can be broadly defined as a "grandiose sense of self-importance" (Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006, p. 762). Narcissists require excessive admiration, have a sense of entitlement, are interpersonally exploitive and lack empathy. Insensitive to others' needs, narcissists tend to focus on their goals at the expense of others' goals (Judge et al., 2006; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Clearly, this self-serving tendency contrasts with servant leadership's prioritization of others' needs and goals. Specifically, an individual with such a pervasive self-focus is unlikely to put subordinates first, help them grow and succeed, and empower them, as these behaviors are based on a prioritization of subordinates' (rather than one's own) needs. We thus contend that individuals with higher narcissism are less likely to engage in servant leadership behaviors. In line with our view, Peterson and colleagues (2012) recently found a negative relationship between narcissism and servant leadership behaviors among CEOs.

Proposition 1: Leader desire to serve others, emotional intelligence, moral maturity and moral conation, prosocial identity, and core self-evaluation are positively, and narcissism negatively, related to servant leadership potential.

Follower Characteristics

Although leadership does not exist without followers, most attention in leadership theory and research is on leaders. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the trait theories dominated thinking on leadership since early Greek philosophers. Indeed, leaders alter their behaviors based on the characteristics and behaviors of followers (Herold, 1977; Lowin & Craig, 1968). Servant leaders act on their knowledge of their followers' needs, desires, and potential, by adjusting their leader behaviors accordingly. For example, one follower may require more individual guidance and mentoring than a proactive follower who mainly seeks empowerment.

Although relationships are important to many leadership approaches (Ferris et al., 2009), they are central to servant leadership. The servant leader forms unique relationships with each follower, and these relationships enable the servant leader to focus followers' motivation and behavior, modifying the application of the servant leader dimensions to each particular case. The servant leader can thereby draw out the best from each follower by providing tailored attention to each follower's needs. We consider three follower characteristics that may influence leader engagement in servant leadership: proactive personality, CSE, and servant leader prototype. We contend

that servant leaders' perceptions of follower characteristics drive the specific way in which servant leader behaviors are employed for each follower.

Proactive personality. Proactive people "select, create, and influence work situations that increase the likelihood of career success" (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001, p. 847), and these individuals engage in proactive behaviors, or personal initiative directed toward improving a current situation. A meta-analysis on proactive personality (Fuller & Marler, 2009) found positive population correlation coefficients for the proactive behaviors of voice (ρ = .26), taking change (ρ = .28), networking (ρ = .31), and career initiative (ρ = .35). Servant leaders, given their focus on service versus authority and power, are particularly well situated to allow those followers with proactive personalities to shine. Consistent with Greenleaf's arguments (1970), rather than attempting to stifle alternative points of view, servant leaders welcome followers to express different points of view. In essence, the servant leader is comfortable with those who show initiative and enact voice, and this is manifested by empowering and helping subordinates grow and succeed. Conversely, servant leaders recognize that followers low on proactive personality need a more active "hands on" leader, and the servant leader, given his or her relational orientation with followers, discerns when to apply assistance in order to maximize follower potential (Liden et al., 2008).

Core self-evaluation. Social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1991) suggests that people higher on CSE will be more willing and motivated to engage in productive workplace behaviors to the extent that they perceive their actions will result in positive outcomes (either tangible or intangible, e.g., higher self-evaluation after accomplishing a desired goal). The self-regulation and motivation that results in performance will depend on the cognitive regulation that occurs within a person. Self-esteem and self-efficacy are fundamental components in the social cognitive theory of motivation (SCT; Bandura, 1991; Wood & Bandura, 1989). SCT views a person as an influencer of the environment as well as influenced by the environment (Bandura, 1999). Those with higher self-esteem and self-efficacy view themselves as capable of exercising influence and control over their environment. Internal locus of control, therefore, joins with self-esteem and self-efficacy as important predictors of one's belief that he or she can affect the environment. Under the SCT view, the possession of relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities is necessary but not sufficient for performance. Individuals must believe that they can effectively influence their environment in order to be motivated to do so. As such, the type of servant leadership applied to a follower depends on the follower's CSE. We propose that followers high in CSE react more favorably to empowerment opportunities and more readily benefit from the servant leader's attempts to help a subordinate grow and succeed. Conversely, followers low in CSE benefit from more emotional healing in order to address the negative psychological well-being that can accompany low self-esteem and self-efficacy. Thus, we argue that follower CSE positively influences the leader's engagement in servant leader behaviors.

Servant leader prototype. Category theory (Rosch, 1978) describes a process by which people develop and use mental shortcuts, grouping similar things together, at least for some purposes. Lord and colleagues have leveraged Rosch's work, applying it to the domain of leadership. Leadership category theory (Lord, Foti, & Devader, 1984) suggests that all followers have their own mental representation of "leader," which is built and refined over time (Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). Leadership prototypes are an individual difference (Gerstner & Day, 1994), and as such, a priori agreement on leadership preferences should not be assumed, even for servant leadership.

A servant leader is a benevolent, supportive, and caring leader. One may expect that all followers would desire a servant leader, and that more servant leadership yields more positive outcomes. However, theory and research support a contrary perspective (Meuser et al., 2011). There is variability in the extent to which followers form implicit perceptions or prototypes of an ideal leader that is consistent with servant leadership theory. Specifically, there is variance in the degree to which followers desire a leader who engages in servant leadership behaviors. Because servant leaders are empathic and sensitive to the needs of followers, we contend that in forming relationships with followers, servant leaders become aware of follower leadership preferences (Graham, 1991).

The literature is silent with respect to leader awareness of follower preferences. Servant leadership theory emphasizes that in order to be in a position to help followers, leaders must be attentive to the unique qualities and aspirations of each follower. In fact, a hallmark of servant leadership is that servant leaders take the time to learn about the backgrounds, interests, and preferences of each follower, which is crucial if the leader is to place the needs of followers first in serving followers (Greenleaf, 1970). Extending beyond the individualized consideration of

transformational leadership theory, servant leaders empathize with followers and not only attempt to provide task assignments and rewards based on individual needs as described by transformational leadership theory, but also providing emotional support and guidance. Thus, we contend that relative to non-servant leaders, servant leaders are especially attuned to the unique aspirations and preferences of each follower and individually customize the application of servant leader behaviors based upon these perceptions. We further argue that the more accurately leaders perceive followers' servant leadership prototypes, the stronger the positive relationships between servant leader potential and servant leader behaviors.

Proposition 2: Servant leader awareness of follower characteristics (proactive personality, core self-evaluation, and servant leader prototype) moderates the relationship between servant leader potential and servant leader behaviors.

Intermediate Processes and Outcomes

We propose that servant leader behaviors influence follower outcomes via the following individual-level processes: leader-follower mutual trust, follower prosocial/moral identity, follower CSE (specifically self-esteem and self-efficacy), empowerment, autonomous motivation, and commitment to the supervisor. We argue that these processes in turn lead to favorable follower-level outcomes, such as creativity/innovation, servant leadership behaviors, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), community citizenship behaviors, in-role performance, and engagement. These processes and outcomes are discussed in the following subsections.

Leader-follower mutual trust. Although trust has been discussed with respect to LMX and transformational leadership, it is critical for servant leadership**.** The notion of trust has been present in the servant leadership literature since its inception with Robert Greenleaf's seminal essay (1970), either as an attribute of servant leaders, or as a state elicited by them (e.g., Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Russell & Stone, 2002). Servant leadership and trust are positively related (Joseph & Winston, 2005), which is salient given that trust in the leader has been found to influence follower outcomes, such as job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Theory and empirical evidence point to trust as a key mediating mechanism through which servant leader behaviors influence follower outcomes.

Trust is "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, p. 395). Conceptual work suggests that perceived ability, benevolence, and integrity are important predictors of trust (Hosmer, 1995; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Ability refers to the skills that enable an individual to have influence within a specific domain (Mayer et al., 1995). This overlaps with servant leaders' conceptual skills, which involves possessing the knowledge of the organization and tasks to support and assist others (Liden et al., 2008). The second antecedent of trust, benevolence, refers to the extent an individual believes the other party is concerned for his or her welfare (Mayer et al., 1995). Servant leaders' helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and emotional healing behaviors are likely seen as providing evidence of benevolence. Lastly, integrity is the extent to which individuals believe that the other party adheres to principles that they find acceptable (Mayer et al., 1995). As servant leaders behave ethically and interact openly, fairly, and honestly with others (Liden et al., 2008), they are likely perceived to have integrity. The conceptual proximity between predictors of trust and servant leadership behaviors suggests that the latter contribute to the development of leader-follower trust.

Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that concern for employees, a defining characteristic of servant leadership, and open communication, which servant leaders are thought to favor (Humphreys, 2005; Liden et al., 2008) are related to trust in the leader (Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener, 2002). In addition to inspiring trust, servant leaders likely convey to followers a sense of their own trustworthiness by showing concern, empathy, dependability, and full acceptance of them (Greenleaf, 1977) and by sharing information freely (Humphreys, 2005). Indeed, theoretical (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997) and empirical research clearly suggests that via social exchange mechanisms, when one party of a dyad trusts the other individual, the dyadic partner tends to feel the same sense of trust (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). Given that servant leaders tend to form high LMX relationships with followers (Liden et al., 2008), it follows that the trust that characterizes servant leader-follower relationships is mutual.

We contend that mutual trust, in turn, leads to favorable outcomes, such as enhanced creativity/innovation. Innovation-related behaviors involve proactive idea implementation and proactive problem solving (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Proactive idea implementation involves promulgating new and creative ideas, as well as self-implementation and the support of others who also may implement the new and creative ideas within the workplace (Axtell et al., 2000). Innovative behaviors encourage new ideas and processes, and involve stepping "outside the box" in order to improve group or organizational processes and procedures. Because of the inherent risk associated with innovative behaviors due to the fact that these behaviors, by definition, challenge the status quo (Neubert et al., 2008), employees are more likely to manifest such behaviors only if they feel safe (Hülsheger, Anderson, & Salgado, 2009). Research suggests that employees are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors in a climate of supervisory benevolence, security, and trust (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Oldham & Cummings, 1996), such as that likely created by servant leaders. Indeed, the leader is thought to be particularly impactful in the emergence of innovative behaviors (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, & Karmer, 2004; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Because of the mutual trust that we argue characterizes the servant leader-follower relationship, servant leadership should thus contribute to enhanced employee creativity and innovation.

Proposition 3. Leader-follower mutual trust mediates relationships between servant leader behaviors and follower outcomes.

Follower prosocial/moral identity. Scholars have emphasized the importance of modeling as an important element of servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002). For instance, Graham (1991) viewed the emulation of leaders' service orientation as the distinctive follower response to this leadership. Servant leaders may thus influence follower outcomes through role modeling, a phenomenon that can be understood using social learning theory (Bandura, 1986). According to this theory, individuals learn by observing the behavior of role models chosen based on their attractiveness and credibility. While leaders naturally tend to be seen as role models (Neubert et al., 2008), those who enact servant leadership behaviors are particularly likely to become role models, because these behaviors enhance their attractiveness and credibility in the eyes of followers. Specifically, their concern for others and strong ethics may enhance attractiveness, and the trust that they inspire in others as well as their expertise (conceptual skills) likely translate into greater credibility (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Farling et al., 1999; Walumbwa et al., 2010).

In terms of outcomes, an important tenet of servant leadership theory is that servant-led followers will themselves tend to become servant leaders (Greenleaf, 1970; Liden et al., 2008), which implies that they engage in prosocial behaviors, as servant leader behaviors are, by nature, prosocial. We argue that this may occur through the development of followers' prosocial/moral identity. The service mentality and orientation of the servant leader imply that the servant leader is interested in the holistic growth of his or her followers. As followers grow and their prosocial/moral identity becomes more salient, they become more capable of behaving as servant leaders. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social categorization theory (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987) explain why followers act on this capability. The leader leads the in-group to which the follower desires to belong. This desire may be motivated by a predilection to increase self-esteem (Turner, 1982; J. C. Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979) or to decrease uncertainty (Hogg, 2000; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Hogg & Mullin, 1999). Through a process of self-categorization and depersonalization, followers come to see themselves as prototypical group members, that is, those who behave according to the social norms of the group: in our case, norms established by the servant leader. As such, the prototypical in-group members behave as the servant leader does. The follower can be sure that servant leader behaviors are the "right" behaviors to model within the group, which provides a strong incentive for adopting such behaviors.

Organizational and community citizenship behaviors are also likely associated with servant leadership behaviors through follower prosocial/moral identity. Citizenship behaviors are prosocial activities that may be directed toward a variety of recipients. OCBs are behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness, but are not explicitly required of employees nor formally rewarded (Organ, 1997). These behaviors can be directed toward the organization (OCB-O) or an individual within the organization (OCB-I; Williams & Anderson, 1991). The same prosocial concern may be extended outside of the organization via community citizenship behaviors, which are prosocial actions directed at benefiting recipients outside of the organization (Liden et al., 2008). A unique feature of servant leadership as compared to other leadership approaches is that concern is *not* restricted to purely organizational goals, but follower and community goals as well (Graham, 1991). Concern for stakeholders beyond the organization manifests itself for the servant leader in the creating value for the community dimension. As such,

the servant leader is concerned with prosocial actions toward a multitude of stakeholders. Previous research has supported a connection between servant leadership and follower OCBs (e.g., Ehrhart, 2004; Hu & Liden, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2010) as well as community citizenship behaviors (Liden et al., 2008). We contend that this relationship occurs due to servant leaders' activation of a prosocial identity within followers. In sum, we propose that servant leaders elicit followers' prosocial/moral identity through role modeling and repeated exposure to servant leader behaviors, and the increased salience of this identity results in followers engaging in prosocial behaviors, such as servant leadership behaviors, and organizational and community citizenship behaviors in order to maintain consistency with their own identity.

> *Proposition 4. Follower prosocial/moral identity mediates relationships between servant leader behaviors and follower outcomes (in particular, follower servant leader behaviors, organizational citizenship behaviors, and community citizenship behaviors).*

Core self-evaluation. CSE is positioned in our model as an initial follower characteristic, but also as a mediator of relationships between servant leader behaviors and individual outcomes. Of the four components of CSE, we contend that servant leadership behaviors are most likely to positively influence self-esteem and self-efficacy. The remaining two components of CSE, locus of control and neuroticism, are relatively more stable personality traits and thus not likely to be influenced to the same degree as self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Self-esteem is a self-evaluation reflecting one's perceived value as an individual (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). It has been shown to exert a positive influence on employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, performance, and well-being (e.g., Judge & Bono, 2001). While theoretical and empirical work suggests that leaders have the ability to enhance their followers' self-esteem (e.g., Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993), we propose that servant leaders are particularly likely to do so for two reasons. First, servant leader behaviors, such as putting subordinates first, providing emotional healing, and helping them grow and succeed convey to followers the message that they are worthy and valuable individuals. This likely contributes to self-esteem, as messages sent by "significant others in one's social environment," such as mentors and role models, are important determinants of self-esteem (Pierce & Gardner, 2004, p. 593). Leaders generally represent a highly salient significant other in followers' work environments, and servant leaders are likely to become mentors (as mentoring is one way to help subordinates succeed) and, as argued above, role models. In addition to messages sent by significant others, another important determinant of self-esteem is successful experiences for which individuals take credit (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). As a result of servant leaders' empowering behaviors, followers may have such successful experiences when their own decisions lead to positive outcomes (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Servant leaders may thus contribute to enhancing their followers' self-esteem via empowering behaviors.

With regard to outcomes, follower self-esteem may be another mechanism, in addition to follower prosocial/moral identity, through which servant leaders motivate followers to engage in servant leadership behaviors themselves. Indeed, research suggests that those who identify with a group and adhere to group norms often operate from a prevention focus (Higgins, 1997, 1998), where they are restricted by the norms of the group. This is not conducive to the development of servant leader characteristics, especially within those who do not yet exhibit these characteristics, because in such a state, one is motivated to avoid loss and minimize cost and thus less likely to manifest new behaviors. However, the cultivation of a supportive environment and the bolstering of follower self-esteem helps shift employees from a prevention focus to a promotion focus (Higgins, 1997, 1998), and employees with a promotion focus are inclined to try new behaviors in order to maximize gains and benefits over the long term (Wang & Lee, 2006). Through the direction of a servant leader, we contend that the majority of new behaviors benefit others and are not focused on self-promotion. As servant leaders create positive work climates and engage in behavior that increase follower self-esteem (Liden et al., 2008), we propose servant leaders have the ability to develop followers into servant leaders themselves through increasing their self-esteem.

Although other forms of leadership, such as transformational leadership, have been shown to be positively related to follower self-efficacy (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012), we contend that servant leaders are especially well-positioned to enhance follower self-efficacy (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Self-efficacy reflects one's belief in his/her capacity to skillfully perform an activity (Bandura, 1986). Servant leaders provide opportunities for followers to have successful experiences through increased responsibility associated with empowering behaviors, and feedback to further enhance self-efficacy (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Furthermore, in helping followers grow and succeed, servant leaders may assist them in improving and developing new skills, and using their knowledge of the

work and the organization (conceptual skills). This helps followers to successfully solve problems at work, which likely results in more successful experiences (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Servant leaders' emotional healing behaviors may also contribute to increasing self-efficacy via positive affective states, as their followers may experience less psychological strain at work. Finally, servant leaders may enhance follower self-efficacy by putting subordinates first and empowering followers, giving them increased confidence in their ability to perform well.

> *Proposition 5: Follower core self-evaluation (specifically self-esteem and self-efficacy) mediates relationships between servant leader behaviors and follower outcomes (in particular, follower servant leader behaviors).*

Empowerment. Empowerment has long held a prominent place in the servant leadership literature, with many conceptualizations including empowerment (or empowering) as a dimension of servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002). Empowerment is conceptualized as a psychological state resulting from an enabling process that comprises four dimensions: self-determination, impact, meaning, and competence (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). We contend that empowerment is a mediating process through which servant leader behaviors impact follower outcomes. As can be seen from our model in Figure 17.1, we propose that empowerment impacts these outcomes in part via autonomous motivation. In the following paragraphs, we present our rationale for expecting followers of servant leaders to experience empowerment; relationships involving autonomous motivation are discussed in the next subsection.

Self-determination, the first dimension of empowerment, represents the perception of having choice in initiating and regulating actions; it corresponds to the notion of autonomy (Spreitzer, 1995). The empowering dimension in Liden and colleagues' (2008) servant leadership conceptualization is closely related to this facet of empowerment, as it focuses on giving followers latitude in decision making. Empowering behaviors are also likely to give followers a sense of impact, empowerment's second dimension, which reflects the degree to which employees feel they can influence outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 1995). Indeed, giving followers decision-making power increases their perception of making a difference at work. Meaning, the third dimension, refers to the perceived value of work goals, or the degree to which employees care about their tasks (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Because servant leaders are committed to creating value for the community and society as a whole, follower work goals should be aligned with this mission, making it likely that followers perceive work goals as being meaningful.

Competence, empowerment's fourth dimension, is synonymous with the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), which has also been identified as a key dimension of CSE (Judge & Bono, 2001). Followers of servant leaders may develop a heightened sense of competence due to the perception of having their leader's trust and of being worthy of his or her attention and support, which also likely results in positive affective states (Chen & Bliese, 2002; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Empowerment, as comprised of the four dimensions described above, is proposed to lead to autonomous motivation as captured in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Autonomous motivation. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) distinguishes autonomous motivation, an internalized form of behavioral regulation based on volition and choice, from controlled motivation, which results from external pressures. We propose autonomous motivation as another mechanism through which servant leadership leads to positive follower outcomes. Autonomous motivation is thought to stem from the satisfaction of three basic, universal needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Empowerment, through its self-determination (autonomy) and competence dimensions, fulfills needs for autonomy and competence. As servant leaders are expected to empower followers, it follows that servant leaders should foster autonomous motivation through feelings of empowerment. In addition, by providing emotional healing and putting subordinates first, servant leaders may contribute to fulfilling followers' need for relatedness, which is a need to feel connected to others, loved and cared for (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The idea that servant leaders cultivate followers' autonomous motivation by fulfilling their basic needs is consistent with servant leadership's emphasis on serving others. Indeed, a core characteristic of servant leaders is that they place their followers' needs above their own and strive to fulfill them (Graham, 1991; Liden et al., 2008), as evidenced by positive relationships found between servant leadership and the three basic needs (Mayer, Bardes, & Piccolo, 2008).

Self-determination theory purports autonomous motivation to be most beneficial in terms of employee outcomes, and empirical evidence supports this contention, as autonomous motivation has been linked to in-role

performance, prosocial behaviors, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee well-being, among other outcomes (Gagné & Deci, 2005). We propose that autonomous motivation mediates relationships between servant leader behaviors and in-role performance and engagement. Indeed, research has shown servant leadership to have a positive relationship with individual job performance (Liden et al., 2008). This relationship likely occurs in part because the servant leader enhances followers' sense of competence/self-efficacy. In turn, this heightened sense of competence likely promotes autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which leads to increased in-role performances (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Engagement is defined as the complete investment of one's entire self in a role (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010). This concept has close conceptual ties with autonomous motivation, as engagement is defined as a motivational concept (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011), and the underlying mechanisms leading to the development of autonomous motivation have been proposed as drivers of engagement (Meyer & Gagné, 2008). Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that autonomous motivation leads to employee engagement (e.g., Van Beek, Hu, Schaufeli, Taris, & Schreurs, 2012). We thus propose that servant leadership behaviors contribute to employee engagement via empowerment and autonomous motivation.

> *Proposition 6: Via autonomous motivation, psychological empowerment mediates relationships between servant leader behaviors and follower outcomes.*

Commitment to the supervisor. Commitment to the supervisor is proposed as the last mediating variable between servant leader behaviors and follower outcomes. Theory and empirical evidence suggest commitment to the supervisor can take various forms (e.g., Clugston, Howell, & Dorfman, 2000; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Affective commitment to the supervisor, an employee's emotional attachment to his or her leader (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), is thought to develop following social exchange and reciprocity mechanisms (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960) as a result of positive work experiences perceived to be offered by the supervisor (Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998). Specifically, support and fair treatment received from the supervisor have been shown to influence this commitment mindset (Liao & Rupp, 2005; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). Similar processes are thought to lead to the development of normative commitment to the supervisor, which is based on a sense of loyalty and duty toward the leader (Clugston et al., 2000; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). As servant leaders are likely to provide support (via emotional healing and helping subordinates grow and succeed), fairness (through ethical behaviors), and, generally, to offer followers a positive work experience in the broad sense of the word (by putting subordinates' needs first, for example), followers are likely to become affectively and normatively committed to them in return.

With regard to outcomes, research suggests commitment to the supervisor enhances organizational commitment, the psychological force that binds employees to their employing organization (e.g., Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011). This may be due to the fact that the supervisor is seen as a key representative of the organization (Levinson, 1965), and when one experiences favorable treatment from the supervisor, one develops a positive view of the organization and experiences a need to reciprocate this favorable treatment. One form of reciprocation is to increase one's organizational commitment (Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997). Commitment to the supervisor has also been shown to contribute to in-role performance and OCBs (e.g., Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996; Becker & Kernan, 2003). This is likely due to the fact that these behaviors also represent ways to reciprocate for the favorable treatment received from the organization via its representative, the supervisor. We thus propose that commitment to the supervisor mediates relationships between servant leader behaviors and follower outcomes, such as organizational commitment, in-role performance, and OCBs. In line with our view, commitment to the supervisor has been shown to partially mediate the relationship between servant leadership and OCBs (Walumbwa et al., 2010).

> *Proposition 7: Commitment to the supervisor mediates relationships between servant leader behaviors and follower outcomes (in particular, organizational commitment, in-role performance, and OCBs).*

Impact of Servant Leadership Prototype

We contend that follower servant leadership prototypes, previously presented as a moderator of associations between servant leadership potential and actual servant leader behaviors, also moderate relationships between servant leader behaviors and the intermediate processes. Our proposition is based on the linkage between

followers' leadership prototypes and their self-identities. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1972) suggests that one's surroundings impact one's self-image through a process of self-identification. Social identity has been defined as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292). Essentially, one defines in- and out-groups based upon salient group characteristics, sees oneself as a member of the in-group, defines oneself (at least in part) by that group's characteristics, and becomes concerned with group goals, making them his or her own (Hogg, 2001; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Turner et al., 1987).

Congruence with follower mental representation of the ideal leader (i.e., the follower's leadership prototype) yields higher follower ratings of leader effectiveness (e.g., Hogg & Terry, 2000; Nye & Forsyth, 1991), and charisma (Platow, Van Knippenberg, Haslam, Van Knippenberg, & Spears, 2006), and impacts follower perceptions of leader legitimacy, power, and discretion (Maurer & Lord, 1991). Such a leader is seen as one to follow, a leader of the social "in-group" to which it is advantageous and attractive to belong. Belonging increases follower self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1982; Wagner, Lampen, & Syllwasschy, 1986) and reduces uncertainty (Hogg, 2000). That is, congruency between actual and expected leadership behaviors activates (makes salient) the subordinate's identity as a follower of the leader. We submit that these general effects of leadership prototypes on follower identity hold for servant leader prototypes. It follows that followers will see themselves as part of the in-group to the extent that their servant leadership prototype is congruent with the behaviors of the servant leader. Forehand, Deshpandé, and Reed (2002) found empirical support for their hypothesis that exposure to identity primes is positively related to identity salience, and in this case, servant leader prototype congruency is that identity prime.

We contend that a servant leader primes a particular identity within followers. The behaviors of the servant leader are fundamentally prosocial, and serve as an environmental factor that primes a prosocial identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Forehand et al., 2002; Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008). Activation of a prosocial identity within a follower in turn motivates the follower to perform actions consistent with that identity, that is, prosocial actions that benefit the collective "we" of the group. Specifically, this motivates other orientation and further cements commitment to the supervisor, as a moral referent (Aquino & Reed, 2002) that at least in part informs the focal employee's prosocial identity.

Empirically, Grant et al. (2008) demonstrated that providing tangible and emotional support to employees strengthens their prosocial identity and organizational commitment. Similar results have been found with charismatic leaders, who are able to connect individual contributions to a larger group identity (Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000; Shamir et al., 1993). Even though leaders may be able to influence the leadership prototypes that followers develop, because leaders vary in the extent to which they engage in servant leadership, there similarly are differences in the extent to which followers form leadership prototypes that are consistent with servant leadership. As a result, we contend that the congruence between follower servant leadership prototypes and servant leader behaviors moderates the relationships between servant leadership behaviors and intermediate processes, consistent with the initial findings of Meuser and colleagues (2011). Note that the "moderation arrow" in Figure 17.1 from follower servant leader prototype to the relationship between servant leader behaviors and intermediate processes does not refer to traditional cross-product moderation analysis, but rather response surface methodology (Edwards, 2007), which is better suited to analyzing hypotheses dealing with congruence or fit (e.g., person-environment fit, follower-leader fit, etc.)

> *Proposition 8: Congruence between follower servant leader prototype and the behaviors of his or her servant leader moderates the relationship between servant leader behaviors and intermediate processes.*

Propositions 3 through 8 focus on the intermediate processes between servant leadership behaviors and outcomes that involve a single level of analysis. Although beyond the scope of our chapter, many team and cross-level propositions could also be developed using the model in Figure 17.1 as a general framework. For example, the trust that is engendered through servant leadership at the individual level may enhance team identification, as it has been shown that followers tend to trust coworkers who are trusted by the leader (Lau & Liden, 2008). When team members trust one another, they should identify more with the team.

Future Directions

Although servant leadership pre-dates key leadership approaches studied today, such as LMX and transformational leadership, far fewer empirical studies have been conducted on this theory of leadership. Our proposed model suggests many avenues for enhancing knowledge of servant leadership and, in turn, providing insights on the practical value of this approach for organizations. While each proposition merits attention by scholars, in this section we prioritize the numerous opportunities for advancing research on servant leadership. Specifically, we offer five recommendations for future research that we believe have potential for establishing servant leadership as a dominant theory of leadership among researchers and practitioners. While we recognize that initial empirical studies provide support for the distinctiveness of servant leadership compared to other leadership approaches, our future research recommendations would provide even further evidence of the value of servant leadership to the leadership literature.

Determine Key Antecedents of Servant Leadership. What's More Important: Nature or Nurture?

There is a definite need for research on antecedents of servant leadership. Our model identifies specific characteristics of the leader such as desire to serve others, emotional intelligence, moral maturity and conation, and prosocial identity. In terms of priorities, future research should examine a broad set of predictors including those that might be personality based (nature) as well as those that may be more malleable (nurture). In order for servant leadership to gain prominence, it is important to understand how to increase these behaviors or create servant leaders, especially through management development programs. For example, some studies suggest that emotional intelligence can be enhanced through training. However, at this point we do not know the relative importance of various predictors of servant leadership and the extent to which they are malleable through training. We believe this should be a high priority of scholars interested in servant leadership.

Explore the Process by Which Servant Leadership Proliferates within an Organization

Research is also needed on the contention that servant leaders groom some of their followers to be servant leaders. No other leadership approach stresses the notion of propagating the leader's behaviors through followers as does servant leadership. This defining feature of servant leadership which separates it from other leadership approaches, is in need of empirical research. At a microlevel, what is the process through which leaders identify followers with the potential to be developed into servant leaders? And once identified, how are followers transformed into servant leaders? We have suggested that modeling may be critical, but direct forms of mentoring followers to adopt servant leader behaviors may also be in evidence.

As more and more followers are transformed into servant leaders within an organization, a serving culture emerges in the organization (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., in press). Essentially, the process involves moving from the presence of isolated servant leaders in an organization to a culture that promotes serving others. Exploring the processes, however, represents a formidable challenge, as an adequate sample of teams or organizations to produce adequate variance in culture is necessary for exploring this idea. Yet, the value of exploring servant leadership at the macro level is significant.

Investigate the Process by Which Servant Leadership Impacts Follower and Team Outcomes and How This Process Compares to Other Approaches to Leadership

Our model identifies a number of intermediate processes by which servant leader behaviors may impact follower outcomes. We argue that one way by which servant leadership impacts follower outcomes is through follower moral identity. With the exception of the ethical leadership model, behaving ethically is not emphasized in other leadership frameworks to the extent that it is in servant leadership theory. Thus, in order to demonstrate the uniqueness of servant leadership, examining whether servant leaders enhance followers' moral identity should be a priority. Furthermore, given the importance of moral identity to ethical behavior, demonstrating that a workplace leader could enhance the salience of others' moral identity through servant leader behaviors, and in turn influence ethical behavior, would be noteworthy.

In addition to the growing attention on the influence of servant leadership on follower outcomes, a small group of research highlights the value of servant leadership in work teams and focuses on processes between servant

leadership and team effectiveness. For example, following the lead of Walumbwa and his colleagues' (2010) individual-level research revealing the mediating effect of service climate on relationships between servant leadership behaviors and individual OCBs, we recommend that scholars place a priority on examining service climate as a mediator between servant leadership and team outcomes. Especially in the service industry, we expect that servant leadership will have a significant impact on team outcomes through service climate. An ideal setting for such a study may be branches of banks or a restaurant chain where there are few layers of management such that leaders interact frequently with followers, who directly serve customers. In these settings, we expect that service climate may be an important mediator. In addition to service climate, other potential mediators of the relationship between servant leadership and team outcomes include team potency, cohesiveness, communal sharing, and procedural justice climate.

Examine the Outcomes of Servant Leadership beyond Follower Performance and OCB

Because scientifically designed empirical research published in top academic outlets on servant leadership in organizations is recent, with the first study appearing in 2004 by Ehrhart, the set of outcomes considered has been limited. Most of the studies have linked servant leadership to individual performance and OCB. Few studies have investigated outcomes of servant leadership that may be unique to this particular theory of leadership. In addressing this gap, we suggest that scholars focus their attention on the individual outcome of community citizenship behavior, which has been addressed in only one study (Liden et al., 2008) to our knowledge. One of the distinguishing characteristics of servant leadership is the emphasis on caring about the needs of others, including those in the community. No other theory of leadership focuses attention on this behavior, despite the growing interest among researchers and practitioners in corporate social responsibility (CSR), which includes improving the larger community. If future research finds the relation between servant leadership and follower community citizenship behavior reported by Liden and colleagues generalizes across situations, this would further discern servant leadership from prevailing theories of leadership. It would also offer insights on how leadership may be instrumental in enabling organizations to achieve their CSR goals.

Another priority for research on servant leadership outcomes is to continue investigating team-level performance to better understand the boundary conditions associated with the relationships between servant leadership and team performance demonstrated by Hu and Liden (2011) and Schaubroeck and his colleagues (2011) and the relationship between servant leadership and team-level OCBs shown in Ehrhart's (2004) study. An underlying assumption is that servant leaders attempt to meet the needs and provide support to all followers, not just a subset. This is in contrast to LMX, which argues that due to a lack of time and resources the leader develops a high-quality exchange with some followers, but not all. Because servant leaders attempt to meet the needs of each member, the question is whether servant leadership enhances interpersonal relations among team members, engendering synergistic effects, such that team performance exceeds the cumulative performance of the individual members. Conducting research that examines additional contextual and moderating variables not examined by Ehrhart (2004), Hu and Liden (2011), and Schaubroeck (2011) would lay the groundwork for establishing servant leadership as a driver of effective team dynamics.

Identify Boundary Conditions for Servant Leadership, Including Cross-Cultural Comparisons

As would be expected in an emerging area of study, servant leadership needs to be examined at multiple levels of analysis and include a wider range of job types, organizations, and cultures. Ehrhart studied grocery store workers in the United States and focused on the team level. Liden and colleagues (2008) examined production, distribution, and marketing employees of a small building products organization located in the United States. Walumbwa and colleagues (2010) investigated clerical, administrative, professional, and managerial employees representing seven multinational organizations located in Kenya, Africa. Schaubroeck et al.'s study (2011) was conducted in both the United States and Hong Kong within the same banking organization. Hu and Liden's (2011) study was based on data collected in banks located in the People's Republic of China. The latter two studies were conducted only at the team level. Neuberg and colleagues (2010) employed an online research services company to collect their data, and thus the country(ies) from where the data originated do not appear to be known. Peterson et al. (2012) studied CEOs in technology companies in the Western United States. These studies suggest that servant leadership may be impactful in a broad range of jobs and in different cultures. However, we encourage scholars to explore cultural factors within the context of servant leadership. Specifically, servant leadership studies that are

able to investigate national culture as a moderator between leader characteristics and engagement in servant leadership would make great strides in determining boundary conditions for this form of leader behavior. Although culture may need to be assigned based on country tendencies, the preferred approach is to directly measure cultural values so that both within- and between-group variance can be assessed, and so that tests involving culture as a moderating variable are more accurate.

Conclusion

Although over 40 years have passed since the publication of Greenleaf's (1970) seminal essay, empirical research beginning with Ehrhart (2004) has shown great promise for servant leadership. Results have demonstrated that servant leadership influences important work outcomes, such as OCBs and performance, at both the individual and team levels, even when controlling LMX and/or transformational leadership. With recent accusations that economic downturns are often caused by greed and excessive self-interest, servant leadership holds promise for the future of organizations and society. We hope that our model and accompanying propositions will stimulate continued interest and further research on servant leadership.

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