

Beyond the Damsel in Distress: Gender Differences and Similarities in Enacting Prosocial Behavior

Amanda B. Diekman

Emily K. Clark

Miami University

Final draft of chapter to appear in *The Oxford Handbook of Prosocial Behavior*,

Schroeder and Graziano (Eds).

please do not circulate or cite without permission

Abstract

We examine gender differences and similarities in prosocial behavior from the vantage point of social role theory. According to this perspective, the gendered division of labor leads to gender roles, which are elaborated in internalized attributes as well as social interactions. We consider gender differences and similarities in prosocial behavior in light of the different environments, experiences, and expectations encountered by each sex. Consistent with a social role perspective, the evidence shows gender-differentiated behavior particularly when contexts implicate central aspects of the male gender role or the female gender role. In particular, prosocial behavior that involves real or perceived physical risk or chivalry tends to be enacted more by men than women. In contrast, prosocial behavior that involves long-term, sustained caregiving or concern for societally disadvantaged others tends to be enacted more by women than men.

Keywords: Gender, Gender Roles, Social Role Theory, Helping, Altruism

Introduction

Is there a “more helpful” sex? Even brief thought suggests that the question of gender differences in prosocial behavior does not have a simple answer. Whether men or women are more likely to enact prosocial behavior depends on several different factors, including what type of help is being requested or offered, on who is being helped, or on whether the help is in an emergency situation or sustained through years of sacrifice. To give away the end of the story before we begin, there is not a “more helpful” sex; both men and women help others, and helping others can manifest in different ways. These differences emerge most vividly when the particular form of prosocial behavior is aligned with gender roles – that is, with the environments, expectations, or experiences associated more with one sex or another.

In our exploration of how gender roles are implicated in prosocial behavior, we define prosocial behavior quite simply as behavior that helps another person. In this regard, there is certainly considerable overlap between the construct of communion (Bakan, 1966), which describes a cluster of traits that are focused on others (e.g., warm, nurturant, sensitive). However, consistent with Batson and colleagues (Batson, Ahmad, Powell, & Stocks, 2008), we consider prosocial behavior as having multiple determinants and perhaps involving multiple motivations. Although prosocial behavior might stem primarily from other-oriented motives, it might include agentic motives that reflect a self-focus (Bakan, 1966), such as egoistic motives (Batson, 1998). As such, the end state of helping another person might stem not only from communal motives but also from a wide range of other motives, including agentic motivations as well as motivations to fulfill societally acceptable roles.

This chapter will explore prosocial behavior from a social role theory framework (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000; Eagly & Wood, 2011; Wood & Eagly, 2010). This perspective considers the helping behavior of men and women as intricately intertwined with the social roles of men and women. In short,

gender differences and similarities in prosocial behavior both arise from and contribute to gender differences and similarities in social roles.

A Social Role Perspective on Prosocial Behavior

The social role perspective (Eagly et al., 2000) has usefully been applied to understand gender differences and similarities across a wide range of psychological phenomena, including motivation (Diekmann & Eagly, 2008), social behaviors such as aggression, altruism, and social influence (Eagly, 1987), preferences for close relationship partners (Eagly, Wood, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003), and political attitudes (Diekmann & Schneider, 2010). As shown in Figure 1, the social role framework posits that the behavior of men and women stems from the distribution of labor in a society. A biosocial perspective thus proposes that the gendered division of labor results from the particular constraints of men and women's biology as well as aspects of the local economy and culture. Assumptions about the characteristics that equip men and women to perform their roles are then elaborated in gender roles, which in turn facilitate individual-level processes including hormonal regulation, self-regulation to internalized standards, and social interaction (Wood & Eagly, 2010). For the purposes of this chapter, we focus our analysis primarily on how gender roles produce gender-differentiated prosocial values and behavior, and in turn how these gender differences might influence social role selection. In doing so, we omit some aspects of social role theory that are discussed in detail elsewhere (e.g., hormonal regulation; Wood & Eagly, 2010).

In the U.S., the division of labor has included women's specialization in supportive and caretaking roles and men's specialization in leadership roles or roles with relatively high power. The enactment of these different kinds of roles leads to gender differentiation along the dimensions of *agency* and *communion*. These traits have emerged as primary dimensions both in self-reported traits and in gender stereotypes (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Bakan, 1966; Deaux & LaFrance, 1998; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005). In short, women have been disproportionately represented

in caretaking roles, which leads to the assumption that women have *communal* traits – that is, a focus on others, reflected in characteristics such as warm, nurturant, or sensitive. Men have been disproportionately represented in leadership roles, which leads to the assumption that men have *agentic* traits – that is a focus on the self, reflected in such characteristics as dominant, courageous, or aggressive. In addition to these personality dimensions, gender stereotypes also differentiate men and women in terms of physical and cognitive attributes (Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Diekman & Eagly, 2000). For example, men are expected to be physically strong, whereas women are expected to be petite; men are expected to be analytical, whereas women are expected to be intuitive. These gender-differentiated traits are further elaborated in societal gender roles, which specify traits that are believed to be both typical and appropriate for each sex (e.g., Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

A critical point is that the uneven distribution of men and women into social roles can foster gender-differentiated attributes in both perception and reality. First, association of one sex with certain roles leads to the presumption that members of that sex possess the internal predispositions that align with those roles (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990). The attribution of a person's behavior to their inner qualities rather than to external constraints occurs through the process of correspondent inference (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Second, the division of labor means that individuals will gain practice and skill at the social roles they occupy, at the exclusion of other gains in practice and skill. In this way, both expectations and experiences based in social roles play critical parts in producing gender-differentiated characteristics.

In exploring a social role perspective, we hope to shed light not only on the differences between men and women but also on the similarities that they share. Consistent with Hyde's (2005) *gender similarities hypothesis*, we propose that that men and women have a great deal of overlap in their psychological and behavioral tendencies. In this chapter, we first elaborate the logic of a social role framework and identify mechanisms that could lead from social roles to prosocial behavior. We then

explore empirical evidence of gender similarities and differences in prosocial behavior, with close attention to the factors that have been shown to moderate gender differences. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications of differences in prosocial behavior for the specific social roles that people choose.

Diffuse and Specific Social Roles Influence Prosocial Behavior

The examination of prosocial behavior from a social role perspective helps to shed light on the ways in which both *diffuse* and *specific* social roles influence behavior. Diffuse social roles exert influence across a wide range of situations, whereas specific social roles apply to a particular situation. In other words, some expectations apply broadly to almost all individuals, whereas other expectations are focused more narrowly on members of specific social groups or individuals in particular occupational or family roles. At any one time, an individual will occupy multiple roles, and both personal and environmental factors can influence the salience of these different roles. For example, a female teacher may think of herself primarily in terms of her occupational role when in the classroom, even though her gender role can also influence her behavior.

With regard to prosocial behavior, there are diffuse expectations that individuals are interpersonally kind and supportive, because such behavior facilitates social relationships that tend to be fundamental human motives (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 2003). For example, there are general expectations that individuals will be friendly and courteous to each other, or help those in need (e.g., S. Schwartz, 1977). Consistent with the idea that prosocial behavior is generally positively evaluated is the finding that for both boys and girls, peer and teacher ratings of prosocial tendencies (e.g., “this child is helpful to peers,” “this child is kind to peers”) positively predict subsequent social acceptance, even when controlling for aggressive tendencies (Crick, 1997).

In addition to this general expectation of prosocial behavior is the expectation that different kinds of prosocial behavior are and should be performed by men and women. Prosocial behavior is thus

likely to be patterned by diffuse gender roles: Even when motivated to act prosocially, women and men may perform that behavior in different ways, given divergent gender role expectations as well as different skills and experience. Beliefs about what men and women should do and are able to do are part of widespread cultural beliefs, and the impact of these beliefs can accumulate over many different contexts to produce different outcomes for women and men (see Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, for a review). As we detail below, prosocial behavior can be performed in ways that align more with the traditional male role (for example, engaging in physically demanding rescues, being chivalrous) – or in ways that align more with the traditional female role (for example, engaging in self-sacrifice within the context of close relationships, supporting groups disadvantaged in society).

Finally, prosocial behavior can also be affected by one's specific social roles, such as occupational roles or family roles. For example, individuals who are in the "helping professions" of teaching or nursing may have greater opportunity to learn and express prosocial behavior than individuals in other kinds of professions, and they may internalize prosocial values and norms as a result of their role occupancy. Indeed, prosocial motivation has been theorized to be influenced not only by features of particular jobs that can enhance others' well-being, but also the specific organizational context, such as contact with beneficiaries (Grant, 2007). For example, firefighters not only help others, but they also have close emotional and physical contact with those that they help, which in turn can fulfill and sustain prosocial motivation.

As shown in Figure 1, occupancy in social roles, and thus different gender roles, can elicit gender differences in psychological attributes and behaviors (e.g., motivation, cognition). Moreover, these gender-differentiated attributes can then contribute to the selection of particular social roles. As we describe below, individuals tend to prefer specific social roles that can fulfill their valued goals; to the extent that men and women endorse different agentic and communal goals, they are likely to opt into different kinds of occupational and family roles (Diekmann & Steinberg, under review; C. D. Evans &

Diekman, 2009). In this way, a social role framework represents a cyclical process, in which social roles contribute to gender-differentiated attributes, which can in turn contribute to sex segregation in social roles.

Role Congruity Theory: Consequences of Alignment Versus Misalignment

Particularly important is that both men and women elicit positivity from the self and others when they display traits and behaviors that cohere with their gender roles. These benefits can be direct and explicit, such as praise from others (e.g., positive comments on helping a classmate), or relatively indirect or implicit, such as subtle omission of praise. In addition, these consequences can stem from others or can stem from the self. Individuals who personally endorse traditional gender norms thus experience affective benefits when they participate in social interactions that conform to their personal gender-normative standards, whether in a laboratory setting (Wood, Niels, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997) or in naturalistically-occurring interactions recorded in daily diaries (Witt & Wood, 2010).

The penalties for misfit to one's surroundings have broader implications, as well. For example, college students whose socioeconomic status did not align with that of their peers demonstrated worse self-regulatory ability (Johnson, Richeson, & Finkel, 2011). Another example of the consequences of lack of alignment is that individuals in occupations dominated by the other sex reported more job hassles and more negative physical or psychological health outcomes (O. Evans & Steptoe, 2003). The forces that encourage alignment with valued social roles are many, and overcoming them can require a great deal of effort.

Moreover, expectations related to both diffuse and specific social roles influence evaluations of role occupants. Experimental evidence supporting this point is that individuals who displayed extremely dominant behavior were particularly penalized with regard to interpersonal (rather than instrumental evaluation), and particularly when they occupied specific social roles that require prosocial behavior (e.g., elementary school teacher; Diekman, 2007).

From Roles to Behavior: Environments, Experiences, and Expectations

A fundamental idea within the social role framework is that the different constraints of gender roles lead men and women to display different types of behavior. In this section, we provide an overview of different mechanisms that produce such gender-differentiated behavior. Throughout these different mechanisms, an underlying assumption is that when gender roles or specific social roles are more salient, role associations will have a greater impact on behavior. Consistent with other theoretical models of gender-related behavior (e.g., Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Deaux & Major, 1987), role norms, expectations, and standards will primarily influence behavior when they are highly accessible to one or more interaction partners.

We delineate three sets of mechanisms that contribute to gender-differentiated prosocial behavior. First, we posit that men and women (and girls and boys) are likely to inhabit somewhat different *environments*, both due to self-selection and to constraints imposed by others. Second, the repeated observation of men and women acting within different environments leads to *expectations* that men and women will behave differently or have different kinds of characteristics. Thus, individuals might explicitly believe that it is more appropriate for men to help in certain situations, or their implicit associations may lead them to approach women for help in other kinds of contexts. Third, these different environments lead men and women to have different types of *experiences*, even from a very young age. As a consequence, men or women may accumulate different levels of skill and comfort in some domains of prosocial behavior than others.

Environments. Particular roles are defined by specific social and physical contexts, which might encourage specific traits or behaviors and discourage other traits or behaviors. Such environmental affordances can lead to the display and development of gender-specific traits or behaviors. For example, male-dominated roles might encourage physical aggression, whereas female-dominated roles might discourage this very behavior. Research on automaticity suggests that physical contexts that accompany

social roles might lead to the automatic activation of different cognitions and goals. Social roles often occur in a specific physical context (e.g., students and teachers are in classrooms), and mere physical contexts have been shown to prime nonconscious goal states and to lead to behaviors that are consistent with such goal states (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003). In addition, others in the social environment can automatically activate goals (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003), as well as influence perceived goal attainability, persistence toward goals, and goal-related performance (Shah, 2003a, 2003b).

Expectations. Another way that roles might lead to gender differences is through various mechanisms related to social interaction. Interacting with people who endorse traditional gender roles can lead to gender-normative behaviors through the self-fulfilling prophecy, in which individuals conform to the stereotypic expectations of others (Geis, 1993; Skrypnek & Snyder, 1982). Given the widespread approval of gender roles, the gendered beliefs of both interaction partners are important in influencing such gender-normative behavioral outcomes (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998; Deaux & Major, 1987). In general, it is particularly men and women who adhere most strongly to traditional gender identities who tend to display gender-differentiated behavior (see Wood & Eagly, 2009, for a review).

As noted above, robust gender stereotypes include beliefs that align men and boys with agency and women and girls with communion. These gender role beliefs include *descriptive norms* (i.e., beliefs about what women and men are typically like; Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). As a consequence, individuals are likely to expect men and women to enact prosocial behavior in different ways. For example, men may be perceived as more likely to engage in risky behaviors to aid another person, whereas women may be perceived as more likely to engage in long-term caregiving. Evidence consistent with this distinction is Rankin and Eagly's (2008) study of heroism stereotypes. They found that participants tend to think men are more likely than women to rescue others in an emergency. In addition, participants asked to name public heroes tended to name men or male groups (e.g., firefighters), whereas participants asked to name personal heroes tended to name women and men

equally. Furthermore, some aspects of traditional gender role attitudes specifically include beliefs that men will engage in behavior that helps or protects women. One example is Glick and Fiske's (1996, 2001) construct of *benevolent sexism*, which includes items such as "Women should be cherished and protected by men" or (reverse-scored) "In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men." Thus, ideas about who should help whom are encoded as part of traditional gender roles.

Experiences. The different experiences that men and women have as a result of their divergent social roles are also likely to influence prosocial behavior in a range of ways. The repeated exposure to certain environments is likely to enhance comfort in those particular environments; in addition, repeated enactment of certain behaviors is likely to cultivate expertise in those behaviors. We thus posit that the different roles that boys and girls occupy from childhood can form the basis of differential comfort and expertise with corresponding domains of prosocial behavior.

Particularly important is that prosocial tendencies might be internalized through an individual's sense of *self-efficacy*. Self-efficacy beliefs reflect one's own assessment of how well or competently one could carry out a specific behavior or action. Beliefs about one's own abilities have a profound effect on subsequent behaviors. For example, self-efficacy beliefs in academic domains strongly predict actual performance (e.g., Eccles, 1994). Empathic self-efficacy beliefs in particular predict self-reported prosocial behavior among adolescents of both genders, but women report greater empathic self-efficacy than do men (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003). Self-efficacy beliefs are important in explaining behavior because expertise or perceived expertise is an important factor in determining the kinds of actions one undertakes.

Relationships among roles, traits, and behavior. An important insight of the social role framework is that social roles can sometimes lead directly to behavior – that is, if a social role requires an individual to be helpful, he or she is likely to enact that behavior, and consequently to be viewed by others as someone who is internally predisposed to be helpful. However, this behavioral sequence does

not necessarily entail the role occupant internalizing the trait “helpful” or becoming more internally motivated to be helpful. In other words, once outside of that particular context, that individual may no longer be any more helpful than he or she was before. The ability of social roles to lead to differential perceptions of role occupants was powerfully demonstrated in the classic “quiz show study” (Ross, Amabile, & Steinmetz, 1977), in which participants were randomly assigned to be either a questioner or an answerer. Even though all participants knew that questioners were able to select questions based on their own areas of expertise, both questioners and answerers agreed in their ratings of questioners as more intelligent than answerers. The mere occupancy of the social role led to role-bound behavior being interpreted as inherent to the role occupant.

With repeated role occupancy, however, role-related experiences are likely to shape the content of an individual’s *self-concept*, or how an individual thinks about himself or herself. A wide range of research finds that men and women tend to differ on the traits that they report as descriptive of the self. In particular, these differences tend to emerge on communal characteristics, with greater convergence between men and women on agentic characteristics (Eagly & Diekmann, 2003). Studies of gender differences in self-reported communal traits typically show that women tend to endorse communal characteristics more than do men. For example, meta-analytic data show that women self-report higher traits of tendermindedness ($d = -.97$; Feingold, 1994; $d = -.31$ for U.S. adults; Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001), warmth ($d = -.33$ for U.S. adults; Costa et al., 2001), and altruism ($d = -.43$ for U.S. adults, Costa et al., 2001).ⁱ

Other individual-difference measures also reflect women’s orientation to other people. Gabriel and Gardner (1999) found that women were more likely than men to show a relational self-construal, in which the self was defined in relation to close others. Similarly, sex differences on self-reported values show that women endorse higher levels of benevolent values ($d = -.29$) and universalist values ($d = -.21$; S. H. Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). Women are also more likely than men to express prosocial values, such as

responsibility for others and concern for their well-being (Beutel & Marini, 1995) or desiring a world at peace, equality, and true friendship (among other specific items; Kasser, Koestner, & Lekes, 2002). In addition, women are more likely than men to focus on people over things (Lippa, 1998); when person orientation is measured independently of thing orientation, women more than men endorse an orientation toward people ($d = .49$; Woodcock et al., 2012). Finally, women are more likely than men to display a care moral orientation ($d = -.28$), in which moral dilemmas are resolved with a focus on “a desire to maintain relationships and a responsibility not to cause hurt” (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000, p. 704).

Consistent with gender roles, men more than women tend to report higher levels of agentic attributes. Meta-analyses show that men report higher levels of masculine or instrumental traits, such as independence or assertiveness, but that gender differences in these traits have diminished over time, particularly due to women gaining higher levels of these traits (Twenge, 1997, 2001). In addition, men’s tendency to engage in greater risk-taking behavior also appears to be diminishing over time (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999). These stereotypically masculine traits thus still favor men in the present day, but do show fluctuation over time.

Also consistent with these gender-differentiated attributes are gender differences in reports of agentic and communal goals. Women tend to rate communal goals as more important than do men, as well as more important than agentic goals (Diekmann, Brown, Johnston, & Clark, 2010; Diekmann, Clark, Johnston, Brown, & Steinberg, 2011). According to one study, most women (60.2%) rated communal goals as more important than agentic goals, but most men (61.6%) rated agentic goals as more important (Pohlmann, 2001). In addition, a different study found that women listed people-oriented occupational goals more than did men (Morgan, Isaac, & Sansone, 2001). These differences, particularly in a communal orientation that focuses on close relationships with others, might underlie gender differences in prosocial behavior. From a social role perspective, such gender-differentiated behavior

might result directly from the environments, expectations, and experiences of a social role, or it might result from internalized characteristics that are in turn the result of differential role occupancy.

Gender Differences and Similarities in Prosocial Behavior

In our analysis, we first apply the role congruity perspective to understand gender differences and similarities in prosocial behavior, across a wide range of types of behavior (Eagly & Koenig, 2006). We then examine the important question of whether gender differences in communal tendencies equate to gender differences in prosocial behavior.

Role Congruity Evidence: What Moderates The Manifestation Of Prosocial Behavior?

To start, we review evidence supporting the role congruity prediction that gender-differentiated prosocial behavior tends to be found in those domains that are particularly associated with traditional gender roles. Where possible, we draw on meta-analytic evidence in order to report conclusions that reflect multiple data sets, rather than relying on a single study.

In particular, the role congruity perspective predicts that domains in which men help more than women are likely to be those in that draw on traditional features of the male gender role, such as men's physical strength, men's higher status, and men's protection of women. In parallel, domains in which women help more than men are likely to be those that draw on traditional features of the female gender role, such as help provided in the context of close relationships. In contexts that do not strongly implicate traditional gender roles, we expect to see greater similarity between the prosocial behavior of men and women. For example, a meta-analysis of sex differences in cooperation in social dilemma games (Balliet, Li, Macfarlan, & Van Vugt, 2011) found that overall, men and women tended to cooperate at fairly similar levels ($d = .05$).

To the extent that gender-differentiated experiences and expectations underlie gender differences in prosocial behavior, we would expect to see larger gender differences in domains where

male and female socialization particularly diverges. Meta-analytic evidence (Lytton & Romney, 1991) suggests that parental socialization of boys and girls tends to be similar in most areas, such as achievement encouragement, amount of interaction, and discipline. The only area to differ statistically from zero was encouragement of gender-stereotypic activities (including activities, play, toy choices, household chores and perception of gender-stereotypic characteristics; $d = .43$ combined across parents, North American samples). It thus stands to reason that boys are more likely to be socialized toward independent, physically challenging, and protective or chivalrous acts. In contrast, girls are more likely to be socialized toward behaviors that show care and concern for others, as well as those that emphasize helplessness in some situations. Moreover, prosocial behavior that aligns with gender roles is more likely to elicit praise and social acceptance than prosocial behavior that violates gender role expectations. One function of gender role expectations is that they help to clarify ambiguous or uncertain circumstances; thus, we would expect to see gender-differentiated prosocial behavior particularly when help is not directly requested or the situation is otherwise unclear.

Further support for a role congruity explanation of gendered patterns of prosocial behavior comes from evidence about developmental changes. Generally speaking, studies of prosocial behavior over different ages reflects more gender-differentiated behavior at those points in the developmental trajectory when gender roles become more salient and important. Fabes and colleagues (Fabes, Carlo, Kupanoff, & Laible, 1999) found that gender differences in prosocial behavior were larger in early adolescence (13-15 years) and late adolescence (16-18 years) than in early childhood (0-6 years) or childhood (7-12 years). The authors point out that early adolescence marks the onset of gender intensification, when gender roles become more important and less flexible to both boys and girls. Additionally, Beutel and Johnson (2004) found that the gender gap in prosocial values was larger in late adolescence than in early adolescence, primarily because white male adolescents decreased in their prosocial values. Similarly, Weisgram, Bigler, and Liben (2010) found that boys and girls endorsed similar

levels of altruism, but adolescent and young adult women endorsed altruism to a greater extent than did adolescent and young adult men. In general, these patterns cohere with Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive model of gender differences, in which gendered self-standards become more important at specific points in development. As such, adherence to societal norms about helping behavior may be more important at these points when gendered self-standards intensify.

Prosocial behavior aligned with the male gender role. Consistent with a role congruity perspective, we primarily expect to see men's greater prosocial behavior when the behavior is consistent with the male gender role – that is, when it involves real or perceived risk or when it incorporates chivalrous norms.

In the first meta-analysis to examine gender differences and similarities in helping behavior, Eagly and Crowley (1986) found that men more than women tended to help across the studies in their sample. The difference was moderate ($d = .34$), but did differ significantly from an effect size of zero, which would indicate no difference between men and women. Eagly and Crowley further relate the size of the difference in helping behavior to various characteristics of the studies. Consistent with a role congruity explanation, men especially tended to help more than women as the settings grew less familiar and were more likely to involve strangers (i.e., when studies were conducted in the field compared to campus, and on campus compared to the laboratory). Thus, in physical settings that involved potentially greater risk, men helped more than women. In particular, types of help that women perceive as dangerous tend to be performed more by men than women. These findings suggest that when helping draws on men's greater tendency to take risks, men tend to help more.

In addition, the sex difference in helping was smaller when help was directly requested rather than presented more ambiguously as a need. This pattern of responses is interpreted as showing that when the specific situational requirements are somewhat unclear, the chivalrous and heroic aspects of the male gender role exert a greater influence than when situational requirements are clear. Moreover,

the idea that others' expectations reinforce gendered notions of helping is consistent with the finding that men tend to help more than women particularly when the helping request is witnessed by an audience.

Emergency helping. Becker and Eagly's (2004) examination of various forms of heroism provides an excellent example of the ways in which men and women might differ in their performance of prosocial behavior. For example, analysis of the Carnegie Medals awarded through April, 2003, found that these were nearly exclusively won by men (91.1%). Becker and Eagly suggest that this male predominance in heroism is in part due to the requirements for the award, which state that the act must be an attempt to save another's life that puts the actor's own life at risk, and occurs outside of the individual's occupational role. These awards often involve emergency rescues of strangers, and thus draw on qualities of physical strength and risk-taking that are central to the male gender role. Becker and Eagly explain this patterning of gender differences, in which men outperform women in quick responses to physically dangerous situations, in terms of alignment with broad gender roles. Men's socialization, including athletics and occupational training, often prepares them to participate in physically dangerous situations, and thus they may have greater comfort when these situations arise. In addition, the act of rescuing a stranger is more consistent with the traditional male role than the traditional female role.

Chivalrous helping. The tendency to engage in prosocial behavior can differ not only by the gender of the actor, but also by the gender of the helping recipient. Eagly and Crowley's (1986) meta-analysis revealed a gender difference in receiving help, such that women were more likely than men to be helped. Furthermore, men's overall tendency to help more than women was qualified by the gender of the helping recipient, and emerged primarily when helping behavior would benefit a woman. This pattern of helping behavior may reflect traditional gender roles, which presume men to be responsible for protecting and providing for women (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001).

Men's chivalrous helping, which involves acting for the protection of less powerful individuals (Dovidio & Penner, 2001), is more likely in situations that heighten the salience of gender roles. For example, when primed with memories of romantic love, men were more likely to help a confederate pick up dropped items (Lamy, Fischer-Lokou, & Guéguen, 2009), or to give directions to a confederate who requested them (Fischer-Lokou, Lamy, & Guéguen, 2009). Importantly, these priming effects only induced helping for female rather than male recipients. Similarly, an observational study of door-holding behavior found that in male-female pairs, men were more likely to hold the door only in dating contexts (Yoder, Hogue, Newman, Metz, & LaVigne, 2002). Heightened situational accessibility of gender norms may thus increase this specific form of prosocial behavior, in which men provide help to less powerful individuals.

Extending this concept to chronic individual differences, Viki, Abrams, and Hutchison (2003) introduced the concept of paternalistic chivalry, defined as attitudes that promote treating women with courtesy and politeness, but also restrict the behaviors and roles that are considered appropriate for women to enact. Endorsement of benevolent sexism positively predicted scores on Viki et al.'s (2003) scale of paternalistic chivalry, indicating that individuals who support traditional gender roles especially believe that men should extend courteous help toward women. Thus, it may be the case that men who chronically endorse gender traditionalism are particularly likely to engage in chivalrous helping.

Prosocial behavior that conforms to standards of chivalry is also likely to elicit external rewards. For example, the gender-normative behavior of a male experimenter holding the door for a woman tended to elicit expressions of gratitude from the beneficiary, whereas non-normative behavior (e.g., a female experimenter holding the door for a man) tended to elicit confusion (Ventimiglia, 1982).

Prosocial behavior aligned with the female gender role. Parallel to the idea elaborated above that certain forms of helping align with the male role is the role congruity idea that the sex difference in

prosocial behavior will favor women when the behaviors are aligned with the female role – that is, when they are related to caring or concern for others, particularly in the context of close relationships.

Caregiving. Caregiving is a central element of the female gender role, and many of the occupational and family roles performed by women focus on taking care of others. In terms of paid work, many of the jobs that are most highly female-dominated involve teaching, health care, or direct service or support of others (Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau, 2012). In terms of unpaid work, women continue to be responsible for caring for children, even when they are employed or when their spouses are highly involved (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). Women are more likely than men to perform primary caregiving duties for close others, including children as well as elderly parents (Cancian & Olinker, 2000). In addition, women are more likely than men to provide emotional support to those who need it (see Burleson & Kunkel, 2006, for a review).

Becker and Eagly’s (2004) analysis of heroic behavior reasoned that a broader definition of heroism – one that maintained the idea of accepting life-threatening risk to oneself but allowed this risk to be enacted in the context of longer-term relationships – would show greater gender equality. Their analysis examined different archival data sources, including rates of participation in rescuing Holocaust survivors, as well as participation in the Peace Corps, Doctors Without Borders, and kidney donation. In each of these contexts, women participated at equal or greater rates than did men. This form of heroic behavior is consistent with women’s socialization, which prepares them to attend especially to close others and to sacrifice the self in order to care for those close others (Cross & Madson, 1997). Thus, Becker and Eagly conclude that there is nothing inherently more heroic in men’s dispositions than in women’s, but that it depends on the specific nature of the heroic act and its congruity with the social roles that men and women occupy.

Concern for societally disadvantaged. Across a wide range of political issues and attitudes, women tend to support policies that aid the disadvantaged (see Diekmann & Schneider, 2010, for a

review). For example, women are more likely than men to agree that the government should intervene to help the needy, or to support affirmative action policies for minority individuals. Women tend to endorse policies intended to aid a wide range of groups that are disadvantaged in society – including women, but also including groups that are disadvantaged based on race, sexual orientation, and social class (e.g., Norrander, 2008). An analysis of these socially compassionate political attitudes from 1973 through 1998 found a robust and stable gender difference, with women endorsing these attitudes more than men (Eagly, Diekmann, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Koenig, 2004). In addition, one study of women's long-term political participation found that political participation across 16 years was positively related to their communal traits (i.e., feminine interpersonal relations; Cole & Sabik, 2010). These findings suggest that women's prosocial political behavior may be enacted, at least in part, because of care about others and commitment to benefitting others.

Communal Characteristics and Prosocial Behavior

Although there is a great deal of overlap between communal characteristics and prosocial tendencies, there are also critical distinctions. As noted earlier, a wide range of evidence documents that women endorse communal traits, goals, and values more than do men. These self-reported differences in communion might be expected to foster greater prosocial behavior among women. However, prosocial behavior instead seems to be shaped by diffuse gender roles, with men and women each enacting prosocial behavior in line with their gender roles. Here, we examine further reasons why women's greater communal orientation does not simply equate to women's greater prosocial behavior.

As noted above, there are diffuse role expectations and motives for all individuals, regardless of sex, to engage in prosocial behavior. For example, Prentice and Carranza (2002) found that characteristics such as *warm and kind*, *friendly*, and *cooperative* were desirable for both sexes, although these prescriptions were intensified for women. Thus, a critical but overlooked point is that communal traits and goals tend to be highly endorsed by both men and women. Consistent with the idea that it is

beneficial for individuals of both sexes to get along with others, both men and women have internalized characteristics that facilitate prosocial behavior.

In addition, there are certainly cases where being oriented to others does not serve prosocial ends. One such example is the growing literature on relational aggression, in which individuals use close relationships to harm or hurt others (e.g., ostracism or gossip; Crick & Rose, 2000). Meta-analyses tend to show that girls and women display relational aggression to a greater extent than do boys and men, although there is considerable variability. Archer (2004) found that girls displayed relational aggression more than boys particularly when relational aggression was measured by observation ($d = -.74$) or peer report ($d = -.19$). In a study that asked children to respond to hypothetical situations that might potentially elicit aggressive responses, girls were more likely than boys to positively evaluate relationally aggressive responses to relational conflicts (Crick & Werner, 1998). The growing literature documenting relational aggression strongly suggests that an orientation toward others can be used for antisocial as well as prosocial purposes, which again argues against a simplistic interpretation that women's greater other-orientation will necessarily lead to women's greater enactment of prosocial behavior.

Another negative aspect of high levels of communion stems from an all-encompassing focus on others, or *unmitigated communion*, in which individuals' focus on others is not balanced by an appropriate focus on the self (see Helgeson & Fritz, 1998, for a review). Research on unmitigated communion has demonstrated a range of negative outcomes for the self and for interpersonal behavior. Unmitigated communion is associated with lower self-esteem, greater depressive symptoms, and poorer health behavior (Fritz & Helgeson, 1998; Helgeson, 1993). Interpersonally, unmitigated communion is associated with overinvolvement in others' problems, including intrusive and overprotective behavior (Fritz & Helgeson, 1998; Helgeson, 1993), while also predicting discomfort with receiving social support from others (Fritz & Helgeson, 1998).

These brief illustrations of the potential “dark side” of communal tendencies suggest that prosocial behavior should not simply be equated with communal tendencies. Prosocial behavior may indeed stem from communal traits such as kindness or warmth, but it may also stem from more self-focused traits (e.g., egoistic altruism) or be facilitated by expertise in male-stereotypic domains (e.g., physically-demanding rescues, Becker & Eagly, 2004). For these reasons the gender difference in communal traits does not translate simply into a female advantage in prosocial behavior. Instead, prosocial behavior will be multiply influenced, as our gender role analysis indicates.

Implications of Gender Differences in Prosocial Behavior for Specific Role Selection

We turn now to considering how gender differences in prosocial behavior might lead to differences in the *selection* of specific social roles by men and women. We have examined how diffuse gender roles might elicit different types of prosocial behavior from men and women, particularly in contexts where gender roles are highly salient. To the extent that prosocial traits and goals are internalized and highly valued, they should in turn influence the kinds of roles that men and women find attractive. Specific social roles can thus be viewed as an opportunity structure, with individuals gravitating toward those occupational, family, or leisure-time roles that they perceive as most likely to fulfill their valued goals (Diekmann & Eagly, 2008; Diekmann & Steinberg, under review).

Individuals’ preceding experiences, traits, and skills lead them to prefer some roles over others. Thus, features that are internal to an individual can lead him or her to select external “niches” that align with these internalized features. For example, Abele (2003) found that communal traits particularly led individuals to select into family-oriented roles. In addition, women are disproportionately represented in *hierarchy-attenuating* occupations that serve groups oppressed in society (e.g., social services, education, child care, public interest law); in part, this gender gap is explained by women’s motives to

better the circumstances of the needy through reducing hierarchy (Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius, & Siers, 1997).

Recent research in our laboratory has provided evidence consistent with the goal congruity perspective that individual's own endorsement of specific goals intersects with their perception of the goals afforded by career roles to produce interest in specific careers. Particularly relevant to prosocial behavior are perceived communal goal affordances, or beliefs about whether careers afford communal goals such as helping others and serving the community. We predicted that communal goal affordances will have particular implications for understanding gender-differentiated patterns of career interest, especially with regard to attraction to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers. First, we (Diekman et al., 2010) documented robust beliefs suggesting that female-dominated careers (e.g., nursing, social work, teaching) were especially thought to afford communal goals, and that STEM careers (e.g., mechanical engineer, computer scientist) were especially thought *not* to afford these communal goals. Moreover, interest in these careers varied with personal endorsement of communal goals. Individuals who highly endorsed communal goals tended to report high levels of interest in female-dominated professions but especially low levels of interest in STEM professions (see Figure 2). This prediction held even when controlling for other robust predictors of STEM interest, such as self-efficacy or previous experience in math and science. Thus, individuals may select into particular occupational roles in part because of their implications for their ability to help others or to serve the community.

Further evidence that demonstrates the importance of communal affordances for career selection comes from studies that experimentally manipulate the extent to which the occupational role is portrayed as working with or helping others. For example, an entry-level scientist career increased in attractiveness when the scientist was portrayed as mentoring others and in close communication with others (relative to doing similar tasks without others; Diekman et al., 2011, Experiment 3). Moreover,

the close link between these communal goals and the female gender role is reflected in the finding that it is particularly female scientists who are prototypic of their gender who signal that science affords communal goals (Clark & Diekman, 2012). Finally, engineering courses that include a service-learning component (i.e., using three-dimensional modeling skills to design a playground), compared to traditional projects (i.e., using three-dimensional modeling skills for a class project), are perceived as affording more communal goals and elicit more positivity toward taking the course (Belanger & Diekman, 2012). Opportunities for prosocial behavior, in the form of helping others, are thus an important attractor to educational and career opportunities.

Although communal goals are certainly one aspect that lead to divergent levels of attraction to the so-called helping professions compared to STEM fields, other important aspects should not be overlooked. One of these, certainly, is the financial incentive to enter the helping professions versus other kinds of work. Many of the occupations that provide direct help to those in need are relatively poorly paid (e.g., social workers, Barth, 2003; Ng, 2010). The lack of financial incentive to enter and persist in these professions virtually ensures that internalized prosocial motivations will need to be a prominent influence.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have related gender differences and similarities in prosocial behavior to the kinds of environments, experiences, and expectations encountered by each sex. Consistent with a social role perspective, the evidence shows gender-differentiated behavior particularly when contexts implicate central aspects of the male gender role or the female gender role. In particular, prosocial behavior that involves real or perceived physical risk or chivalry tends to be enacted more by men than women. In contrast, prosocial behavior that involves long-term, sustained caregiving tends to be enacted more by women than men.

Future Research Questions

Change and Stability in Gender-Differentiated Prosocial Behavior Over Time

The social role perspective predicts that changes and stability in gender-differentiated social roles will be accompanied by parallel changes and stability in gender-differentiated attributes. Examination of change in social roles since the mid-twentieth century in the U.S. suggests that women's roles in particular underwent a great deal of transition. Women entered the paid work force in massive numbers in the latter part of the twentieth century, even as they retained primary responsibility for domestic work and family caregiving. In contrast, men's roles remained relatively stable. Social role change has thus been fairly asymmetric, with greater change for women than men, and in male-dominated rather than female-dominated roles (Eagly & Diekmann, 2003).

Generally speaking, patterns of self-reported agentic and communal traits aligned with this asymmetric role change. Meta-analyses of gender differences in self-reported traits showed convergence over early 1970s through the late 1990s, particularly because of women's gains in masculinity/instrumentality (Twenge, 1997). In contrast, women's levels of communal traits have tended to remain stable over this time period, which aligns with women's continued responsibility for caregiving in family roles, as well as their continued occupancy of communally-demanding occupations (e.g., nurse, teacher).

From a social role perspective, we would expect that gender differences in prosocial behavior will converge to the extent that they are related to elements of gender roles that have shown convergence over time. For example, girls' participation in athletics has increased over the past decades (Carpenter & Acosta, 2011). If sports socialization increases girls' confidence and skill in physical domains, then some aspects of prosocial behavior that rely on these physical differences might show greater gender similarity over time. However, such change would likely be tempered by the maintenance of traditional gender role beliefs for some time after social roles change (i.e., Brinkman & Brinkman, 1997).

Intersection of Multiple Roles

Although we have delineated how prosocial behavior might be influenced by general expectations of prosociality, by gender roles, and by specific occupational or family roles, very little research examines how these roles intersect. An important question for those who wish to facilitate prosocial behavior is to understand how the intersections of multiple roles might enhance or diminish prosocial behavior. For example, appeals to prosocial values might have different effects depending on the fit of those values to broader gender roles. Moreover, even when individuals are motivated to behave prosocially, they may have different levels of comfort or skill at enacting certain types of prosocial behavior.

Valuing (and Undervaluing) of Different Forms of Helping

Our analysis documents that prosocial behavior can occur in a range of different ways, and it is likely that this wide spectrum of behaviors are important for a well-functioning community or society. Nonetheless, some kinds of helping appear to receive greater recognition and reward than others. As Rankin and Eagly (2008) note, the types of heroism that are publicly notable often occur in the context of specific occupational roles that are not as accessible to women (e.g., military, police). Female-typical heroism, which can include sustained risk or self-sacrifice, may not be as easily visible, and thus less likely to be noted and rewarded. Examination of, and ultimately recognition of, less visible forms of helping is important for a full understanding of prosocial behavior.

Final Thoughts

To return to the question we posed at the beginning of this chapter, we advocate that new questions be asked. The question of whether one sex is more helpful than the other ignores a wide range of important information. Our hope is that a social role framework can provide a useful lens to understand how environments, experiences, and expectations all conjoin to produce some conditions that favor helping among men, among women, or among both sexes.

References

- Aarts, H., & Dijksterhuis, A. (2003). The silence of the library: Environment, situational norm, and social behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 18–28.
- Abele, A. E. (2003). The dynamics of masculine-agentic and feminine-communal traits: Findings from a prospective study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 768–776. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.85.4.768
- Abele, A. E., & Wojciszke, B. (2007). Agency and communion from the perspective of self versus others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*, 751–763. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.93.5.751
- Archer, J. (2004). Sex differences in aggression in real-world settings: A meta-analytic review. *Review of General Psychology, 8*, 291–322.
- Bakan, D. (1966). *The duality of human existence: An essay on psychology and religion*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Balliet, D., Li, N. P., Macfarlan, S. J., & Van Vugt, M. (2011). Sex differences in cooperation: A meta-analytic review of social dilemmas. *Psychological Bulletin, 137*. doi:10.1037/a0025354
- Bandura, A., Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Gerbino, M., & Pastorelli, C. (2003). Role of affective self-regulatory efficacy in diverse spheres of psychosocial functioning. *Child Development, 74*, 769–782. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00567
- Barth, M. C. (2003). Social work labor market: A first look. *Social Work, 48*, 9–19.
- Batson, C. D. (1998). Altruism and prosocial behavior. In *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 282–316). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Batson, C. D., Ahmad, N., Powell, A. A., & Stocks, E. L. (2008). Prosocial motivation. In J. Y. Shah & W. L. Gardner (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivation Science* (pp. 135–149). Guilford Press.

- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*, 497–529.
- Becker, S. W., & Eagly, A. H. (2004). The heroism of men and women. *American Psychologist*, *59*, 163–178.
- Belanger, A., & Diekmann, A. B. (2012). *Service learning as a cue that engineering affords communal goals*. Manuscript in preparation, Miami University.
- Beutel, A. M., & Johnson, M. K. (2004). Gender and prosocial values during adolescence: A research note. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *45*, 379–393. doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.2004.tb00017.x
- Beutel, A. M., & Marini, M. M. (1995). Gender and values. *American Sociological Review*, *60*, 436–448.
- Bianchi, S. M., Robinson, J. P., & Milkie, M. A. (2006). *Changing rhythms of American family life*. New York: Sage.
- Brinkman, R. L., & Brinkman, J. E. (1997). Cultural lag: Conception and theory. *International Journal of Social Economics*, *24*, 609–631.
- Burleson, B. R., & Kunkel, A. W. (2006). Revisiting the different cultures thesis: An assessment of sex differences and similarities in supportive communication. In K. Dindia & D. J. Canary (Eds.), *Sex Differences and Similarities in Communication* (2nd ed., pp. 137–159). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bussey, K., & Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation. *Psychological Review*, *106*, 676–713. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.106.4.676
- Byrnes, J. P., Miller, D. C., & Schafer, W. D. (1999). Gender differences in risk taking: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *125*, 367–383.
- Cancian, F. M., & Olinker, S. J. (2000). *Caring and gender*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Carpenter, L. J., & Acosta, R. V. (2011). *Women in intercollegiate sport: A longitudinal, national study - Thirty three year update, 1977-2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.acostacarpenter.org/2010pdf%20combined%20final.pdf>

- Cejka, M. A., & Eagly, A. H. (1999). Gender-stereotypic images of occupations correspond to the sex segregation of employment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *25*, 413–423.
- Cialdini, R. B., & Trost, M. R. (1998). Social influence: Social norms, conformity and compliance. In *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 151–192). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Clark, E. K., & Diekmann, A. B. (2012). *Signaling communal goals: Female-prototypic role models elicit positivity toward science*. Manuscript in preparation., Miami University.
- Cole, E. R., & Sabik, N. J. (2010). Associations between femininity and women's political behavior during midlife. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *34*, 508–520. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2010.01600.x
- Costa, P. T., Terracciano, A., & McCrae, R. R. (2001). Gender differences in personality traits across cultures: Robust and surprising findings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *81*, 322–331.
- Crick, N. R. (1997). Engagement in gender normative versus nonnormative forms of aggression: Links to social-psychological adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, *33*, 610–617.
- Crick, N. R., & Rose, A. J. (2000). Toward a gender-balanced approach to the study of social-emotional development: A look at relational aggression. In *Toward a Feminist Developmental Psychology* (pp. 153–168). New York: Routledge.
- Crick, N. R., & Werner, N. E. (1998). Response decision processes in relational and overt aggression. *Child Development*, *69*, 1630–1639.
- Cross, S. E., & Madson, L. (1997). Models of the self: Self-construals and gender. *Psychological Bulletin*, *122*, 5–37.
- Deaux, K., & LaFrance, M. (1998). Gender. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 788–827). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Deaux, K., & Major, B. (1987). Putting gender into context: An interactive model of gender-related behavior. *Psychological Review*, *94*, 369–389. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.369

- Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. (2012). *20 leading occupations of employed women: 2010 annual averages*. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. Retrieved from <http://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/20lead2010.htm#.UKqXV4c0V8F>
- Diekman, A. B. (2007). Negotiating the double bind: Interpersonal and instrumental evaluations of dominance. *Sex Roles, 22*, 551–561. doi:doi:10.1007/s11199-007-9198-0
- Diekman, A. B., Brown, E. R., Johnston, A. M., & Clark, E. K. (2010). Seeking congruity between goals and roles: A new look at why women opt out of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics careers. *Psychological Science, 21*, 1051–1057.
- Diekman, A. B., Clark, E. K., Johnston, A. M., Brown, E. R., & Steinberg, M. (2011). Malleability in communal goals and beliefs influences attraction to STEM careers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 101*, 902–918.
- Diekman, A. B., & Eagly, A. H. (2000). Stereotypes as dynamic constructs: Women and men of the past, present, and future. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26*, 1171–1188.
doi:10.1177/0146167200262001
- Diekman, A. B., & Eagly, A. H. (2008). Of men, women, and motivation: A role congruity account. In J. Y. Shah & W. L. Gardner (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivation Science* (pp. 434–447). New York: Guilford.
- Diekman, A. B., & Schneider, M. C. (2010). A social role theory perspective on gender gaps in political attitudes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 34*, 486–497. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2010.01598.x
- Diekman, A. B., & Steinberg, M. (under review). *Navigating social roles in pursuit of important goals: A communal goal congruity account of STEM pursuits*. Invited manuscript, *Social Psychology Compass*.
- Dovidio, J. F., & Penner, L. A. (2001). Helping and altruism. In J. G. O. Fletcher & M. S. Clark (Eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Interpersonal Processes* (pp. 162–195). Malden, MA:

Blackwell. Retrieved from

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9780470998557.ch7/summary>

- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Eagly, A. H., & Crowley, M. (1986). Gender and helping behavior: A meta-analytic review of the social psychological literature. *Psychological Bulletin*, *100*, 283–308.
- Eagly, A. H., & Diekmann, A. B. (2003). The malleability of sex differences in response to changing social roles. In L. G. Aspinwall & U. M. Staudinger (Eds.), *A Psychology of Human Strengths* (pp. 103 – 115). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Eagly, A. H., Diekmann, A. B., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & Koenig, A. M. (2004). Gender gaps in sociopolitical attitudes: A social psychological analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87*, 796–816.
- Eagly, A. H., & Koenig, A. M. (2006). Social role theory of sex differences and similarities: Implication for prosocial behavior. In D. J. Canary & K. Dindia (Eds.), *Sex Differences and Similarities in Communication* (pp. 161–194). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Eagly, A. H., & Wood, W. (2011). Social role theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange,, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of Theories in Social Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 458–476). London: Sage.
- Eagly, A. H., Wood, W., & Diekmann, A. B. (2000). Social role theory of sex differences and similarities: A current appraisal. In T. Eckes & H. M. Trautner (Eds.), *The Developmental Social Psychology of Gender* (pp. 123–174). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Eagly, A. H., Wood, W., & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C. (2003). Social role theory of sex differences and similarities: Implications for partner preferences of women and men. In A. H. Eagly, A. E. Beall, & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *The Psychology of Gender* (pp. 269–295). New York: Guilford.

- Eccles, J. S. (1994). Understanding women's educational and occupational choices: Applying the Eccles et al. model of achievement-related choices. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 18*, 585–609.
doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1994.tb01049.x
- Evans, C. D., & Diekmann, A. B. (2009). On motivated role selection: Gender beliefs, distant goals, and career preferences. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 33*, 235–249.
- Evans, O., & Steptoe, A. (2003). Gender-related psychological characteristics and situational determinants of psychophysiological stress reactivity. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 33*, 756–774.
- Fabes, R. A., Carlo, G., Kupanoff, K., & Laible, D. (1999). Early adolescence and prosocial/moral behavior I: The role of individual processes. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 19*(1), 5–16.
doi:10.1177/0272431699019001001
- Fischer-Lokou, J., Lamy, L., & Guéguen, N. (2009). Induced cognitions of love and helpfulness to lost persons. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal, 37*(9), 1213–1220.
doi:10.2224/sbp.2009.37.9.1213
- Fiske, S. (2003). Five core social motives, plus or minus five. In S. J. Spencer, S. Fein, M. P. Zanna, & J. M. Olson (Eds.), *Motivated Social Perception: The Ontario Symposium* (Vol. 9, pp. 237–246). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Fitzsimons, G. M., & Bargh, J. A. (2003). Thinking of you: Nonconscious pursuit of interpersonal goals associated with relationship partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 148–163.
- Fritz, H. L., & Helgeson, V. S. (1998). Distinctions of unmitigated communion from communion: Self-neglect and overinvolvement with others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(1), 121–140. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.75.1.121

- Gabriel, S., & Gardner, W. L. (1999). Are there “his” and “hers” types of interdependence? The implications of gender differences in collective versus relational interdependence for affect, behavior, and cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*, 642–655.
- Geis, F. L. (1993). Self-fulfilling prophecies: A social psychological view of gender. In A. E. Beall & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *The Psychology of Gender*. (pp. 9–54). New York: Guilford Press.
- Gilbert, Daniel T., & Malone, P. S. (1995). The correspondence bias. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 21–38.
- Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1996). The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 491–512. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.70.3.491
- Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (2001). An ambivalent alliance: Hostile and benevolent sexism as complementary justifications for gender inequality. *American Psychologist, 56*, 109–118. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.56.2.109
- Grant, A. M. (2007). Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference. *The Academy of Management Review ARCHIVE, 32*, 393–417.
- Graziano, W. G., & Tobin, R. M. (in press). The cognitive and motivational foundations underlying agreeableness. In M. D. Robinson, E. Watkins, & E. Harmon-Jones (Eds.), *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*. New York: Guilford.
- Helgeson, V. S. (1993). Implications of agency and communion for patient and spouse adjustment to a first coronary event. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*(5), 807–816. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.64.5.807
- Helgeson, V. S., & Fritz, H. L. (1998). A theory of unmitigated communion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 2*, 173–183. doi:10.1207/s15327957pspr0203_2
- Hoffman, C., & Hurst, N. (1990). Gender stereotypes: Perception or rationalization? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58*, 197–208.

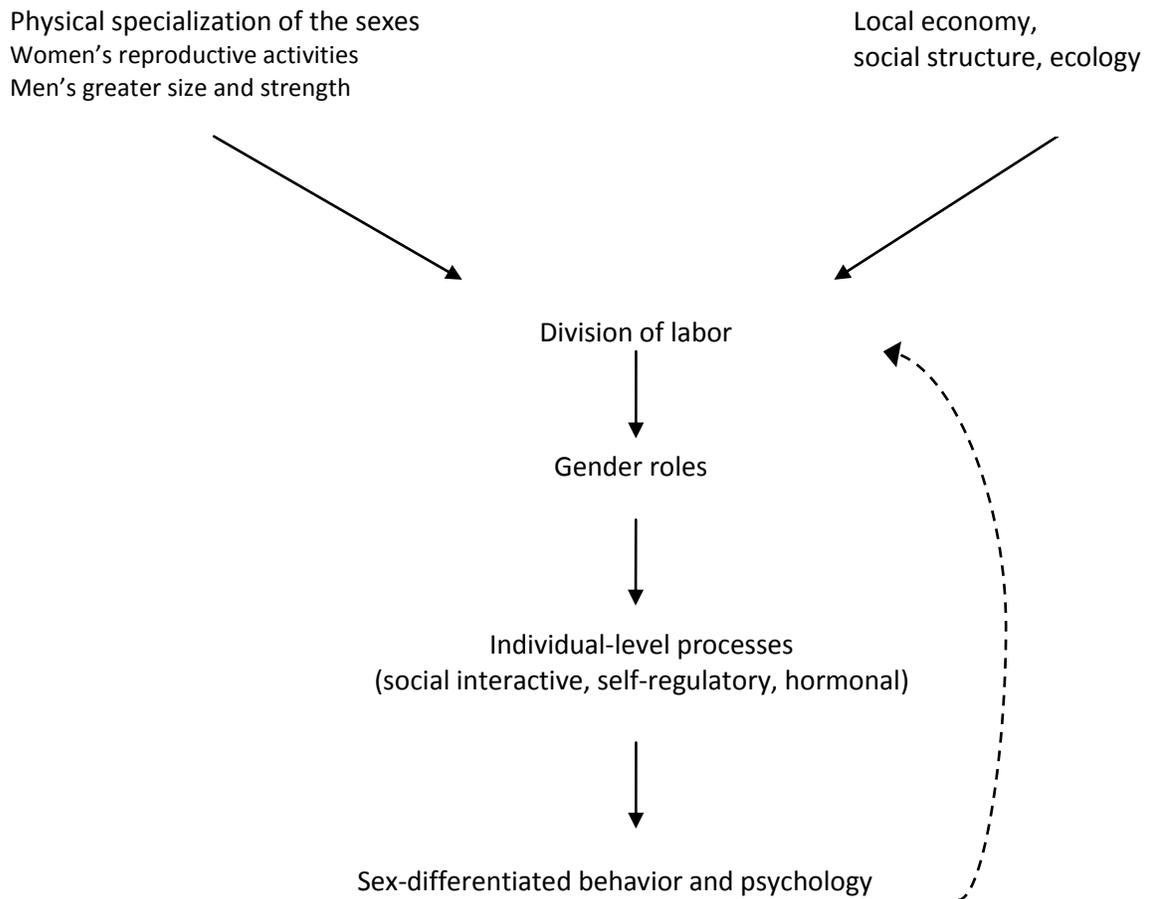
- Hyde, J. S. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist, 60*, 581–592.
- Jaffee, S., & Hyde, J. S. (2000). Gender differences in moral orientation: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*, 703–726.
- Johnson, S. E., Richeson, J. A., & Finkel, E. J. (2011). Middle class and marginal? Socioeconomic status, stigma, and self-regulation at an elite university. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*, 838–852.
- Judd, C. M., James-Hawkins, L., Yzerbyt, V., & Kashima, Y. (2005). Fundamental dimensions of social judgment: Understanding the relations between judgments of competence and warmth. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 899–913.
- Kasser, T., Koestner, R., & Lekes, N. (2002). Early family experiences and adult values: A 26-year, prospective longitudinal study. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28*(6), 826–835.
doi:10.1177/0146167202289011
- Lamy, L., Fischer-Lokou, J., & Guéguen, N. (2009). Induced reminiscence of love and chivalrous helping. *Current Psychology, 28*, 202–209. doi:10.1007/s12144-009-9059-9
- Lippa, R. (1998). Gender-related individual differences and the structure of vocational interests: The importance of the people-things dimension. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 996–1009.
- Lytton, H., & Romney, D. M. (1991). Parents' differential socialization of boys and girls: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 109*, 267–296.
- Morgan, C., Isaac, J. D., & Sansone, C. (2001). The role of interest in understanding the career choices of female and male college students. *Sex Roles, 44*, 295–320.
- Ng, I. Y. H. (2010). What if social workers were paid more? *Administration in Social Work, 34*, 351–360.
doi:10.1080/03643107.2010.500988

- Norrander, B. (2008). The history of the gender gaps. In *Voting the Gender Gap*. (pp. 9–32). Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Pohlmann, K. (2001). Agency- and communion-orientation in life goals: Impacts on goal pursuit strategies and psychological well-being. In P. Schmuck & K. M. Sheldon (Eds.), *Life Goals and Well-being: Towards a Positive Psychology of Human Striving*. (pp. 68–84). Seattle, WA: Hogrefe and Huber.
- Pratto, F., Stallworth, L. M., Sidanius, J., & Siers, B. (1997). The gender gap in occupational role attainment: A social dominance approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 37–53.
- Prentice, D. A., & Carranza, E. (2002). What women should be, shouldn't be, are allowed to be, and don't have to be: The contents of prescriptive gender stereotypes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *26*, 269–281.
- Rankin, L. E., & Eagly, A. H. (2008). Is his heroism hailed and hers hidden? Women, men, and the social construction of heroism. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *32*, 414–422.
- Ridgeway, C. L., & Correll, S. J. (2004). Unpacking the gender system: A theoretical perspectives on gender beliefs and social relations. *Gender & Society*, *18*, 510–531.
- Ross, L. D., Amabile, T. M., & Steinmetz, J. L. (1977). Social roles, social control, and biases in social-perception processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *35*, 485–494.
- Schwartz, S. (1977). Normative influences on altruism. In Leonard Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. Volume 10, pp. 221–279). Academic Press. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0065260108603585>
- Schwartz, S. H., & Rubel, T. (2005). Sex differences in value priorities: Cross-cultural and multimethod studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *89*, 1010–1028.

- Shah, J. Y. (2003a). Automatic for the people: How representations of significant others implicitly affect goal pursuit. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 661–681.
- Shah, J. Y. (2003b). The motivational looking glass: How significant others implicitly affect goal appraisals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 424–439.
- Skrypnik, B. J., & Snyder, M. (1982). On the self-perpetuating nature of stereotypes about women and men. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 18*, 277–291.
- Twenge, J. M. (1997). Changes in masculine and feminine traits over time: A meta-analysis. *Sex Roles, 36*, 305–325.
- Twenge, J. M. (2001). Changes in women's assertiveness in response to status and roles: A cross-temporal meta-analysis, 1931-1993. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*, 133–145.
- Ventimiglia, J. C. (1982). Sex roles and chivalry: Some conditions of gratitude to altruism. *Sex Roles, 8*, 1107–1122. doi:10.1007/BF00290967
- Viki, G. T., Abrams, D., & Hutchison, P. (2003). The “true” romantic: Benevolent sexism and paternalistic chivalry. *Sex Roles, 49*, 533–537.
- Weisgram, E. S., Bigler, R. S., & Liben, L. S. (2010). Gender, values, and occupational interests among children, adolescents, and adults. *Child Development, 81*, 778–796.
- Witt, M. G., & Wood, W. (2010). Self-regulation of gendered behavior in everyday life. *Sex Roles, 62*, 635–646. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9761-y
- Wood, W., & Eagly, A. H. (2009). Gender identity. In M. Leary & R. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior* (pp. 109–128). New York: Guilford.
- Wood, W., & Eagly, A. H. (2010). Gender. In S. Fiske, D. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 629–667). New York: Wiley.

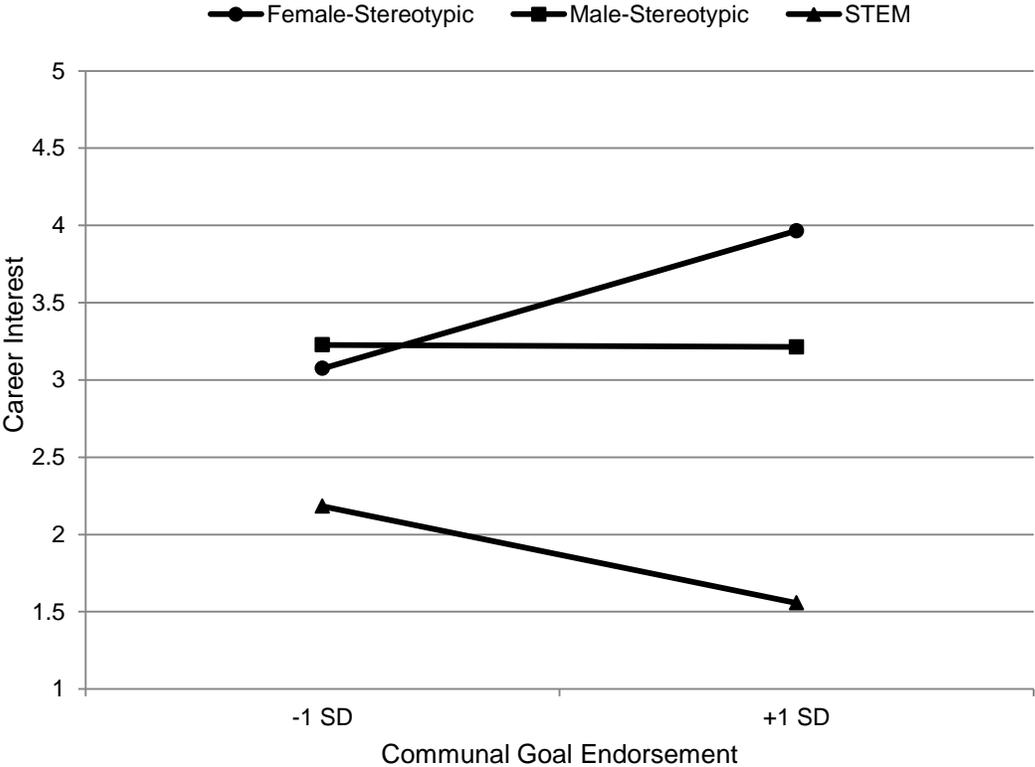
- Wood, W., Niels, P., Hebl, M. R., & Rothgerber, H. (1997). Conformity to sex-typed norms, affect, and the self-concept. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 523–535. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.73.3.523
- Woodcock, A., Graziano, W. G., Branch, S. E., Habashi, M. M., Ngambeki, I., & Evangelou, D. (2012). Person and thing orientations: Psychological correlates and predictive utility. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. doi:10.1177/1948550612444320
- Yoder, J. D., Hogue, M., Newman, R., Metz, L., & LaVigne, T. (2002). Exploring moderators of gender differences: Contextual differences in door-holding behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32(8), 1682–1686. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2002.tb02769.x

Figure 1.



Note. Adapted from Eagly & Wood, 2010; Evans & Diekmann, 2009

Figure 2. Communal Goal Endorsement Predicting Attraction to Different Careers



Note. Reprinted from Diekmann et al. (2010).

Endnotes

ⁱ The broader construct of Agreeableness, which focuses on maintaining smooth interactions with others, certainly overlaps with communal traits (see Graziano & Tobin, in press). For precision, we focus on the specific facets that are closest to orientation toward others (i.e., tendermindedness, altruism).