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# Multiple Identity Configurations: The Benefits of Focused Enhancement for Prosocial Behavior

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**Abstract.** This paper introduces a configurational approach to the study of multiple identities. Specifically, it examines how prosocial identity combines with collective and individualistic identities in conflicting and enhancing ways to affect prosocial behavior in organizational settings. We examine an unexplored intuition in the multiple identities literature that when all identities are enhancing (a mutual enhancement configuration), it will be best for prosocial outcomes. Our results show, however—across two field studies and two experiments—that enhancement between prosocial and collective identities (a focused enhancement configuration) results in the highest levels of prosocial behavior. Furthermore, we trace this result to the greater self-serving orientation activated in a mutual enhancement configuration, where one’s individualistic identity enhances one’s other identities. Our work demonstrates the value of a configurational approach to the study of multiple identities, and it challenges the assumption that a mutual enhancement configuration is always desirable.

**Supplemental Material:** The online appendix is available at <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2017.1129>.

**Keywords:** identity • identity configurations • multiple identities • prosocial behavior

## Introduction

Prosocial behavior—behavior that protects, promotes or contributes to the welfare of others (Grant 2007)—is crucial for organizations and societies to function well. Organizations have sought to promote prosocial behavior by activating their members’ prosocial identities—identities such as “mentor” or “volunteer”—that orient a person toward helping others (Piliavin and Callero 1991, Grant et al. 2008). Yet, a person’s prosocial identity does not exist in a vacuum. Scholars have long recognized that people have *multiple* identities (James 1890). Organizations are a fertile context for the activation of their members’ multiple identities, not just prosocial identities, but also individualistic and collective identities (Bartel 2001, Blader 2007). However, little research has examined how multiple identities affect prosocial behavior, particularly in organizational contexts.

Individualistic and collective identities are fundamental aspects of the self-concept and therefore especially important to examine in combination with prosocial identities (Brewer and Gardner 1996). Individualistic identities are egoistic, “me” oriented aspects of the self-concept and include idiosyncratic personal characteristics such as “trailblazer” or “star.” Collective identities are “we” oriented aspects of the self-concept, and include one’s group memberships, such as ethnic or professional affiliations (Brewer and Gardner 1996). Prosocial identities are “you” oriented

aspects of the self-concept and include those parts of the self that are in a giving or helping relationship with others (Grant and Dutton 2012, Piliavin and Callero 1991). In this paper, we examine how individuals’ prosocial, individualistic, and collective identities combine to affect their prosocial behavior.

The perspective we take hinges on understanding how individuals experience their multiple identities. Building on past research showing that *two* identities can be related in conflicting (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005, Greenhaus and Beutell 1985) or enhancing ways (Dutton et al. 2010, Rothbard and Ramarajan 2009), we take a novel, configurational approach to multiple identity research, examining patterns of conflict and enhancement among three identities. Moreover, we investigate an unexplored intuition in the multiple identities literature that multiple identities will be most effective for outcomes when they are all mutually enhancing, because the full set of meanings, values, and behaviors associated with one’s identities can be applied to a task (Ashforth 2007, Dutton et al. 2010, Pratt and Foreman 2000). By explicitly considering all three specific types of identities (prosocial, collective, and individualistic), we question this assumption, both theoretically and empirically. Instead, we propose that a person with an identity configuration characterized by *focused enhancement* (in which prosocial and collective identities are mutually

enhancing but both are unrelated to an individualistic identity) will exhibit higher levels of prosocial behavior than a person with an identity configuration characterized by *mutual enhancement* (mutual enhancement among all three identities—prosocial, collective, and individualistic). Across two field studies and two experiments, we consistently find that identity configurations of *focused enhancement* between prosocial and collective identities result in higher prosocial outcomes than configurations of *mutual enhancement* among all three identities. Our work contributes to research on both multiple identities and prosocial behavior by demonstrating the value of a configurational approach that highlights the importance of the specific types of identities that enhance one another, rather than assuming that mutual enhancement is always desirable.

## Prosocial Behavior and Multiple Identities

### Prosocial Behavior in Organizations

Prosocial behavior in organizational contexts captures how organizational members engage with one another as givers and receivers, as well as how they engage with beneficiaries in the larger society. Prosocial organizational behavior is defined as behavior which is “(a) performed by a member of an organization, (b) directed toward an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role and (c) performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organization toward which it is directed” (Brief and Motowidlo 1986, p. 711). The organizational importance of prosociality is evident from studies of a wide range of behaviors, such as donating (O’Reilly and Chatman 1986), volunteering (Grant and Sumanth 2009), and helping in groups (Blader and Tyler 2009) as well as studies in a range of contexts, including voluntary organizations (Schaubroeck and Ganster 1991), university alumni (O’Reilly and Chatman 1986), and among employees who volunteer inside or outside their organizations (Bartel 2001, Grant et al. 2008, Grant and Sumanth 2009).

### Identities: Types and Relationships

**Identity Types.** Identities, “the set of meanings that define who one is” (Burke and Stets 2009, p. 3), are a fundamental driver of individual behavior in organizations (Bartel et al. 2007). Individualistic identities drive behaviors that promote one’s personal welfare and goals; collective identities drive behaviors that promote or stem from feelings of group belonging (Brickson 2013, Brewer and Gardner 1996) and prosocial identities drive behaviors that promote the welfare of others (Grant 2007). Prosocial identity differs from collective identity because it is defined in terms of helping others regardless of whether the recipient shares the giver’s group memberships. For instance,

Grant and colleagues (2008) show that employee participation in a corporate giving program affected both prosocial identity and organizational identity (a collective identity) independently.

Two of the three types of identities we consider have been found to influence prosocial behavior in organizational contexts. A prosocial identity drives prosocial behavior (Grant 2007, Penner et al. 2005). For example, identifying oneself with an altruistic role, such as donor, increases how much, how often, and how consistently one donates to others (Grube and Piliavin 2000, Piliavin and Callero 1991). A collective identity also leads to prosocial behavior. For example, alumni identification with their university influences their donation behavior (Mael and Ashforth 1992, O’Reilly and Chatman 1986). Whether individualistic identity also drives prosocial behavior remains an open question.

**Relationships Among Identities.** Scholars have begun to recognize that two or more identities may be simultaneously salient or coactivated for individuals, raising questions about how one’s identities are related (Ashforth and Johnson 2001, Blader 2007, Rothbard and Ramarajan 2009). Research suggests that simultaneously salient identities may be related in *conflicting* (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005, Greenhaus and Beutell 1985) or *enhancing* ways (Dutton et al. 2010), or they may be unrelated and operate independently of one another (Lipponen et al. 2005).

When people experience identity conflict, they feel caught between opposing meanings that they associate with their different identities. Their cognition narrows, their energy is depleted, and negative affect abounds (Hugenberg and Bodenhausen 2004, Rothbard 2001, Hirsh and Kang 2016), often leading to diminished well-being and poor task performance (Brook et al. 2008, Cheng et al. 2008). When people experience identity enhancement, they feel that the values and meanings associated with their various identities are complementary. Energy and positive affect are abundant, creating engagement and inspiring growth (Creary et al. 2015, Dutton et al. 2010, Rothbard 2001). Consistent with research on the independence of positive and negative affect and motivation (Carver and White 1994, Watson et al. 1988), low identity conflict is not equivalent to high identity enhancement. Furthermore, identity conflict and enhancement can coexist. For example, some aspects of one’s work identity can be in conflict with some aspects of one’s family identity, while other aspects of both identities can enhance one another (Tiedje et al. 1990).

### Multiple Identity Configurations

The above research has largely examined relationships between two identities (i.e., whether identities A and B are related in conflicting or enhancing ways). Yet,

examining a single relationship of conflict or enhancement between a pair of identities (such as work and family identities or organizational and professional identities) overlooks the reality that there may be more than two identities operating and therefore many more relationships among those identities to consider. By moving from two to three identities, as we do here, more complex patterns of relationships between identities emerge. For instance, people may experience all three identities as unrelated, two identities as enhancing and the third as unrelated, two identities as enhancing and the third conflicting with both, and so on.

Scholars have called for greater understanding of the complexity of people's experience and management of more than two identities, suggesting a variety of patterns that better characterize how multiple identities may operate as a "whole," rather than simply as individual parts (Ashforth 2007, Pratt and Foreman 2000, Roccas and Brewer 2002, Ramarajan 2014). We use the term "multiple identity configurations" for patterns of conflict and enhancement among more than two identities, as "configuration" implies "a single set of relations among many components" such that they "can be considered a single entity" (Schachter 2004, p. 170).

Although many different multiple identity configurations may exist, the dominant intuition in the literature is that a configuration characterized by mutual enhancement among all simultaneously salient identities will be the most effective one for fostering many organizationally relevant behaviors (Ashforth 2007, Dutton et al. 2010, Pratt and Foreman 2000). The reasoning is that in this configuration, each identity facilitates the meanings, values, and behaviors of the others. Yet, this intuition overlooks the specific types of identities that may be enhancing one another. Below, we question this intuition by considering both the types of identities and the relationships among them to hypothesize how prosocial, collective, and individualistic identities jointly operate to influence prosocial behavior.

## Identity Configurations and Prosocial Behavior

To develop hypotheses about how configurations of prosocial, collective, and individualistic identities affect prosocial behavior, we define three theoretically relevant patterns of relationships.

### Mutual Conflict

This identity configuration is characterized by a pattern of conflicting relationships between an individual's prosocial, collective, and individualistic identities. We propose that high levels of conflict between all three identities lead to low levels of prosocial behavior. When people perceive their identities as conflicting, they feel caught between opposing values, expectations, and

meanings (Hirsh and Kang 2016, Brook et al. 2008). The experience of feeling torn between different aspects of "who one is" creates a sense of psychological stress and insecurity (Marcussen 2006), which may detract from one's ability to advance the other party's welfare. Identity conflict is also likely to turn one's focus inward toward oneself rather than outward toward others, because one is deciding between various aspects of who one is. Regulating and choosing among aspects of who one is can deplete one's cognitive and motivational resources, leaving less energy and attention to give to others (Baumeister et al. 1998, Marks 1977, Rothbard 2001). Thus, we have the following:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *Identity configurations characterized by high mutual conflict between an individual's prosocial, collective, and individualistic identities will be associated with low levels of prosocial behavior.*

### Mutual Enhancement

This identity configuration is characterized by a pattern of mutual enhancement between an individual's prosocial, collective, and individualistic identities. Consistent with the dominant intuition, we propose that high levels of enhancement between all three identities should increase prosocial behavior. Identity enhancement can expand the cognitive and motivational resources people bring to their work, fostering more task-focused behavior (Creary et al. 2015, Ramarajan 2014). This is because when a person feels that all aspects of herself are facilitating one another, she can focus on the task at hand rather than on who she is (Baumeister et al. 1998, Marcussen 2006). Further, the more people engage with the groups and relationships associated with their various identities, the more likely they are to gain meaning and energy, which they can then devote to the task (Marks 1977, Rothbard 2001). Identity enhancement can also provide relevant resources to apply to the task because it enables access to the variety of identity-based knowledge, skills, and behaviors one possesses (Caza and Wilson 2009, Cheng et al. 2008).

Identity enhancement may also create a sense of psychological security, because different aspects of who one is are being expressed and validated simultaneously (Stets and Harrod 2004, Swann 1983). The greater one's sense of psychological security, the more one may be able to transcend focusing on oneself (i.e., be less self-oriented) and the more one is likely to take others into account (i.e., be more other-oriented) (Pratt et al. 2012). This should make one more likely to engage in prosocial behavior (Mikulincer et al. 2005). Thus we have the following:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *Identity configurations characterized by high mutual enhancement between an individual's prosocial, collective, and individualistic identities will be*

*associated with higher levels of prosocial behavior than configurations in which all three identities are mutually conflicting.*

### Focused Enhancement

While the above hypothesis is both intuitively appealing and supported by research, a closer examination of the types of identities under consideration suggests that a focused enhancement identity configuration may lead to even higher levels of prosocial behavior. Enhancement in this configuration is relatively greater between the prosocial and collective identities, with the individualistic identity unrelated to the other two. We explain why this configuration should exhibit the highest levels of prosocial behavior by unpacking how enhancement between different identity types influences prosocial behavior.

**Prosocial–Collective Identity Enhancement.** Prosocial and collective identities compel a person, in one way or another, to focus on the welfare of others (Brickson 2013, Penner et al. 2005). Hence, configurations in which prosocial and collective identities enhance one another are likely to foster prosocial behavior because they motivate and mutually reinforce other-oriented actions. For example, imagine a lawyer (collective identity) who is also a volunteer (prosocial identity). Enhancement between her lawyer and volunteer identities might well encourage her to seek out and take on pro bono work: her lawyer identity motivates her to contribute on behalf of her profession, and her volunteer identity motivates her to contribute her services to clients who cannot afford to pay for legal services.

**Individualistic–Prosocial and Individualistic–Collective Identity Enhancement.** Adding to the mix enhancement between one's individualistic identity, on the one hand, and one's prosocial and collective identities, on the other—i.e., full mutual enhancement—is likely to curtail prosocial behavior relative to a configuration in which prosocial and collective identities are unrelated to the individualistic one—i.e., focused enhancement. Individualistic identities focus a person on his or her personal goals and achievements (Brewer and Gardner 1996, Brickson 2013). As a result, when an individualistic identity enhances an other-oriented identity, the other-oriented identity may be co-opted by the individualistic identity's self-oriented pursuits. For example, imagine a lawyer (collective identity) who is a volunteer (prosocial identity) but who also defines herself as a high-achieving legal expert (individual identity). While enhancement between her lawyer and volunteer identities would foster her interest in volunteering, she might only take on pro bono work that would advance her own skills. Likewise, enhancement between her lawyer and expert identities might propel her to take on only those pro bono cases that would

increase her standing in the profession. Thus, configurations with prosocial–collective identity enhancement in which these other-oriented identities are also enhanced by individualistic identities may result in some prosocial behavior, but the individualistic identity, because of its self-serving orientation toward helping, may function as a countervailing or limiting force on prosocial behavior.

Research on self-serving motives for prosocial behavior supports the argument that individualistic identity enhancement may ultimately suppress prosocial behavior by activating a more self-serving orientation toward helping, though this idea has not been directly tested. This work identifies a number of egoistic, self-serving reasons for engaging in prosocial behavior, including improving one's own psychological or material state, gaining career or knowledge benefits, and making a good impression (Batson et al. 1983, Clary et al. 1998, De Dreu and Nauta 2009).

Importantly, this research suggests that while self-serving motives to engage in prosocial behavior can encourage a certain amount of prosocial behavior, they may also limit it, especially in comparison to other-oriented motives. For instance, when people view others in need, those motivated by a desire to alleviate their own distress engage in more limited helping behavior than those motivated by empathy (Batson et al. 1983). Engaging in prosocial behavior to feel intrinsic pleasure can also divert attention away from the goal of prosocial activities, thus limiting how much help one actually gives to those in need (Andreoni 1990, Bales 1996, Grant 2008). In work settings, a common self-serving motive for helping others is impression management (Rioux and Penner 2001). When people are motivated to help others to make a good impression on their boss or colleagues and gain rewards such as praise or promotions, their prosocial behavior is less extensive than when they are motivated by other-oriented reasons (Grant and Mayer 2009). In sum, configurations in which prosocial and collective identities are enhanced by an individualistic identity (i.e., the mutual enhancement configuration) may invoke a self-serving orientation toward helping, ultimately resulting in lower prosocial behaviors relative to configurations in which there is prosocial–collective identity enhancement but individualistic identity is unrelated (i.e., the focused enhancement configuration). Thus, we have the following:

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *Identity configurations characterized by high focused enhancement—prosocial and collective identities are mutually enhancing but unrelated to an individualistic identity—will be associated with higher levels of prosocial behavior than configurations in which all three identities are mutually enhancing.*

## Overview of Studies

We use a mixed-method research design to test our hypotheses because research on multiple identity configurations is still emerging (Edmondson and McManus 2007). In Study 1, we take an exploratory approach to understanding identity configurations, using qualitative and quantitative data from a longitudinal field study. In Study 2, we extend the generalizability of our results by examining identity configurations and prosocial behavior in a team setting. In Study 3, we test causal relationships using an experimental design and also examine logically generated configurations that did not emerge in our field studies. In Study 4, we experimentally examine self-serving motives as an underlying mechanism for the hypothesized effect of focused versus mutual enhancement on prosocial behavior.

### Study 1

#### Research Setting, Sample, and Procedure

Our setting involves two nonprofit organizations in Israel that raise funds for charities through bike rides. The first, Alyn Children's Hospital (Alyn), involves approximately 300 Jewish riders who collectively raise over \$2 million per year. The second, the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (Arava), involves approximately 200 Jewish riders who raise close to \$700,000 per year. Riders in both events cycle roughly 60 miles per day, pay their own transportation costs (approximately \$1,000 for North Americans) and registration fees (\$400), and are required to raise a minimum amount, which is \$2,500 for Alyn and \$3,600 for Arava. Event participation and fundraising represent major investments of time and money and suggest a strong commitment to charity, cycling, and Jewish ethnicity.

To verify the appropriateness of our setting for testing hypotheses concerning the rich dynamics of multiple identities, we conducted 33 semistructured interviews with 25 informants (8 were interviewed pre- and post-ride), prior to fielding our survey. Informants' ages ranged from 40 to 65 years old; 44% were female. Interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes and were taped and transcribed by the authors. The interview protocol covered the participants' motivations for joining the ride, their identities, self-perceptions in each domain, and their training and fundraising experiences. Our interview data illustrate the salience of multiple identities to our informants and reveal relationships of conflict and enhancement between those identities (see online appendix for illustrative examples). Quantitative data were collected using pre- and post-ride, 20-minute, web-based surveys. In 2007, the survey was distributed to 281 Alyn riders, and in 2014, it was distributed to 321 Alyn riders and 160 Arava riders. A total of 162 participants completed the surveys

(response rates: Alyn 1 = 37%, Alyn 2 = 40%, Arava = 23%). The response rates are within the commonly reported range for longitudinal organizational field research (Roth and BeVier 1998). We combine the data from all three rides and control for the year the survey was taken and the beneficiary organization (Alyn or Arava).

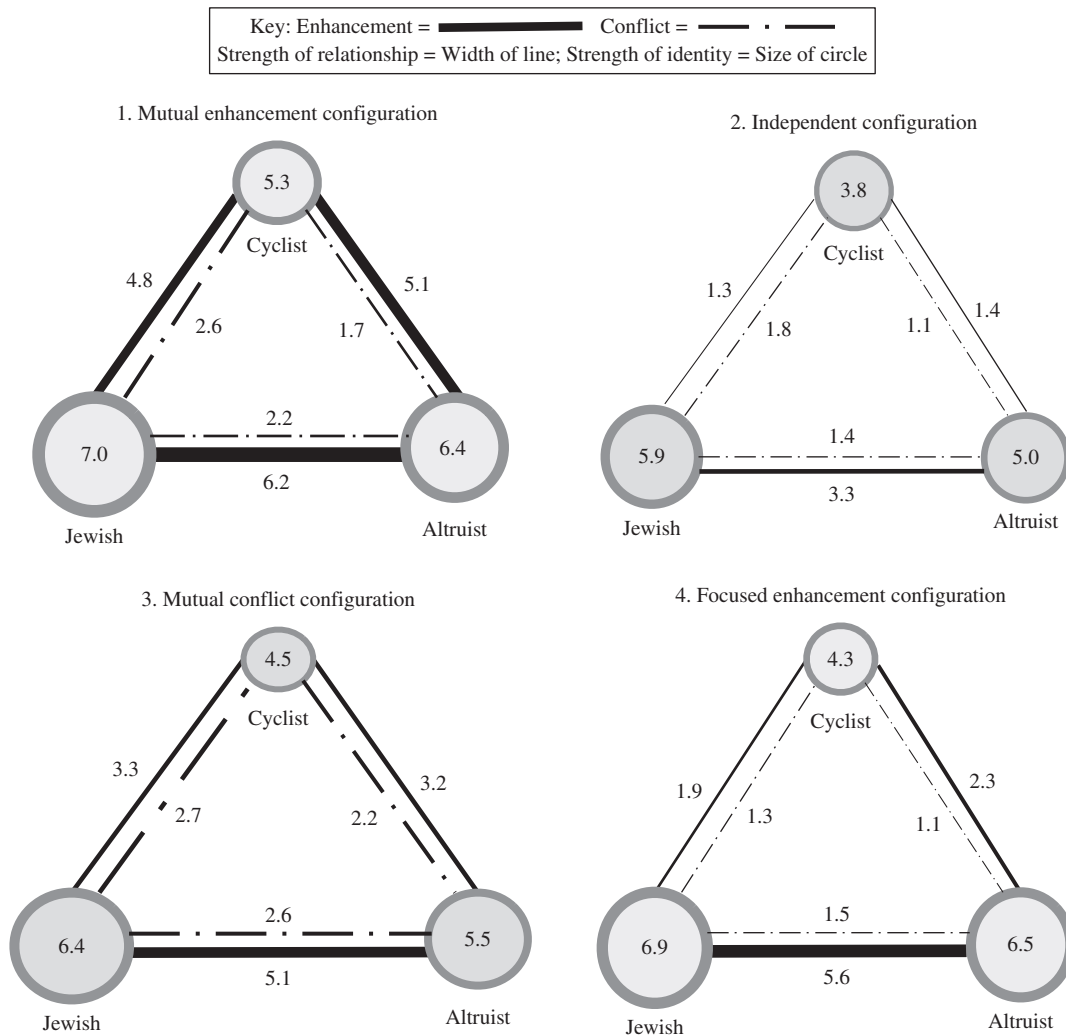
#### Measures Independent Variables.

**Identities.** In 2007, participants' identities were measured using Bergami and Bagozzi's (2000) overlapping circles scale. Participants were asked to choose the extent of overlap between a pair of circles—one representing themselves and the other representing the target identities: prosocial (altruist), individualistic (cyclist), and collective (Jewish). Eight pairs of visual circles were rated on a scale from 1 (far apart) to 8 (completely overlapping), and the means were as follows: prosocial (altruist) identification ( $M = 5.7, SD = 1.68$ ); individualistic (cyclist) identification ( $M = 4.4, SD = 1.84$ ); and collective (Jewish) identification ( $M = 6.5, SD = 1.7$ ).

In 2014, participants' identities were measured using three items of the Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) identity subscale: "this identity is important to how I see myself"; "this identity is an important reflection of who I am"; and "this identity has very little to do with who I am" (reverse coded). These items were rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), for each identity, and the means were as follows: prosocial (altruist) identification ( $M = 3.66, SD = 1.09$ ); individualistic (cyclist) identification ( $M = 3.31, SD = 1.28$ ); and collective (Jewish) identification ( $M = 4.58, SD = 0.87$ ). We standardized the variables before combining them across samples.<sup>1</sup>

**Identity configurations.** Our focal independent variable was a measure of multiple identity configurations. We used cluster analysis to identify the configurations because it is a commonly used technique to reduce complex data in a manageable way and to build theory inductively by identifying common characteristics among units (Punj and Stewart 1983, Sonenshein et al. 2014).

To identify the clusters, we first measured identity conflict and enhancement between all three pairs of identities: prosocial–collective, individualistic–collective, and individualistic–prosocial. Measures were adapted from existing multiple identity scales (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005, Brook et al. 2008). The item stem was as follows: "Of the times when you think of yourself as a [X] and [Y], how often do you think . . ." which was then followed by three conflict and three enhancement statements for each dyad (counterbalanced). The three conflict items were as follows: "I struggle to maintain an [X] and [Y] way of

**Figure 1.** Study 1 Configurations of Multiple Identities—Empirical Results

Note. Means presented are from Alyn Ride 2007 sample for illustrative purposes.

doing things”; “Being a ‘good’ [X] interferes with being a ‘good’ [Y]”; and “I feel a [X] way of doing things and a [Y] way of doing things are opposed.” The three enhancement items were “I am a better [X] because of my [Y] identity”; “I rely on both [X] and [Y] way of doing things”; and “I appreciate being an [X] more because I am a [Y].” Responses were on a scale from 1 (never) to 7 (always). The reliabilities for the identity conflict and identity enhancement scales ranged from 0.7 to 0.8 for both identity conflict and identity enhancement across all pairs. We averaged the three items for each pair of identities.

For robust cluster analysis, Punj and Stewart (1983) recommend *K*-means clustering, and theoretically predetermining the number of clusters. Relying on prior research suggesting that conflict and enhancement are independent dimensions (Tiedje et al. 1990),<sup>2</sup> we specified four clusters that are based on four possible patterns of multiple identity relationships:

low enhancement–low conflict, low enhancement–high conflict, high enhancement–low conflict, and high enhancement–high conflict.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 displays the four configurations resulting from the cluster analysis.

While cluster analysis is “quantitative,” it remains an inductive technique calling for the careful interpretation of clusters (Punj and Stewart 1983). Here, the interpretation needed to take into account the meaning of the identities along with their pattern of relationships. The enhancement–conflict patterns of the four clusters showed that one cluster most resembled a configuration characterized by enhancement across all three pairs, with relatively low conflict; we labeled this *mutual enhancement*. Another was characterized by low levels of both enhancement and conflict; we labeled it *independent*. A third was characterized by high levels of conflict, with some enhancement; we labeled it *mutual conflict*, and the fourth cluster displayed a pattern of focused relationships with strong enhancement of the

**Table 1.** Study 1 Mean Scores for Conflict and Enhancement for Identity Dyads by Configuration

Configuration	Individualistic–collective identities		Prosocial–collective identities		Individualistic–prosocial identities		Average of 3 identity dyads	
	Enhancement (1)	Conflict (2)	Enhancement (3)	Conflict (4)	Enhancement (5)	Conflict (6)	Enhancement (7)	Conflict (8)
Mutual enhancement	0.82 (1.06)	−0.09 (0.60)	0.40 (0.79)	−0.14 (0.56)	1.07 (0.88)	−0.09 (0.59)	0.76 (0.57)	−0.11 (0.43)
Independent	−0.54 (0.90)	−0.16 (0.91)	−0.92 (1.07)	−0.37 (0.52)	−0.78 (0.66)	−0.48 (0.28)	−0.75 (0.52)	−0.34 (0.44)
Mutual conflict	0.60 (0.68)	1.13 (1.59)	0.14 (0.82)	0.82 (1.19)	0.11 (0.57)	1.40 (1.49)	0.28 (0.44)	1.11 (0.93)
Focused enhancement	−0.55 (0.46)	−0.34 (0.45)	0.40 (0.73)	0.01 (1.22)	−0.55 (0.54)	−0.40 (0.19)	−0.23 (0.35)	−0.24 (0.48)

Notes. Standard deviations are in parentheses. Number of observations are as follows: mutual enhancement = 53; independent = 39; mutual conflict = 23; focused enhancement = 47; total = 162. Because of the combined samples, the presented means and standard deviations are standardized values.

collective–prosocial dyad, but relatively low enhancement of the individualistic identity; we labeled this pattern *focused enhancement*. We describe each configuration in greater detail below (see Table 1 for mean scores for conflict and enhancement by configuration). Illustrative examples are from our qualitative data.

1. *Mutual enhancement configuration*. The distinguishing characteristic of this configuration is that all three identity dyads exhibit high levels of enhancement. In comparison to the other configurations, we can observe this in the average enhancement score, which was the highest of the four configurations ( $M_{\text{enh}} = 0.76$ ) (Table 1, Column 7). The prosocial–collective enhancement score ( $M_{\text{pro-coll enh}} = 0.40$ ) in this configuration and in the focused enhancement configuration were identical (Table 1, Column 3). However, the prosocial–collective enhancement score was the lowest of the three enhancement scores in this configuration (Table 1, Columns 1 and 5). There was also a moderate degree of identity conflict in this configuration ( $M_{\text{conf}} = -0.11$ ) (Table 1, Column 8).

In the qualitative data, we saw this configuration expressed by participants who felt that all three facets of the ride were complementary. They found it difficult to rank order the various aspects of the ride. Instead, they spoke of a “perfect fit” among the components:

I’m participating because it is something that in every aspect is close to my heart. It’s Eretz Israel [Land of Israel], *Tzedakah* [charity] and *Ofnayim* [bike], so my three passions. (Interview #13)

I think that there’s very little gap in the importance of each of them. I think it’s a confluence rather than a ranking. It’s a convergence of events that make it for me, what makes it happen. . . . If any one of those reasons weren’t there, it would diminish the focus for me. (Interview #18)

These quotes illustrate the participants’ sense that each identity domain was unique (e.g., my *three* passions, any *one* of those reasons) but each positively

reinforced the other (e.g., convergence) and that their coming together formed a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts.

2. *Independent configuration*. The distinguishing characteristic of this cluster was the low level of both conflict and enhancement between identities. In essence, the three identities did not interact with one another positively or negatively, but rather they operated relatively separate from one another. In comparison to the other configurations, this configuration ranked the lowest of the four in terms of both enhancement ( $M_{\text{enh}} = -0.75$ ) and conflict ( $M_{\text{conf}} = -0.34$ ) (Table 1, Columns 7 and 8).

In our qualitative data, we saw this configuration expressed by participants who described their identities as fairly distinct, with the event providing an opportunity to enact each identity separately. In contrast to the mutual enhancement group, who had difficulty responding to questions about how they would rank their identities, participants within this configuration could rank their identities. This configuration was, therefore, consistent with dominance of identities as noted in the literature (Ashforth 2007, Pratt and Foreman 2000, Roccas and Brewer 2002):

I think Israel is number one and I guess number two really is doing the charity work in a way that’s a personal and a physical challenge for me. I think it is Israel, charity and a physical bike ride. (Interview #21)

It [is] the biking, then Israel, and then the fundraising. (Interview #14)

As the quotes above suggest, the most important identity domain differed from person to person; for some it was the collective identity, for others it was the individualistic one. Thus, the common experience for people with this configuration was fairly little conflict or enhancement between their identities, suggesting that all three identities were independent.



3. *Mutual conflict configuration.* The distinguishing characteristic of this configuration is the high level of conflict. These participants reported high conflict between all three identity dyads. Comparatively, the average conflict for this configuration was the highest of the four configurations ( $M_{\text{conf}} = 1.11$ ) (Table 1, Column 8). It is notable that participants in this cluster also experienced some enhancement ( $M_{\text{enh}} = 0.28$ ) (Table 1, Column 7).

In our interviews, people who most resembled this configuration were individuals feeling torn between the demands of various identities. One female rider noted, for example, the conflict between her individualistic (cyclist) and collective (Jewish) identities and how she was debating which to prioritize:

When I go into Jerusalem, am I going to be wearing shorts or am I going to be wearing a skirt on top, I don't know. It's kind of an issue, like here [in North America] I ride in shorts but I don't know about Eretz Israel. . . . When you're in Jerusalem, the holy city, we're going to be riding around, they'll be all kinds of Yeshiva [religious education] students there, I might put on a skirt for the Jerusalem ride. . . . I don't think it will slow me down. . . . that's the thing, I don't know. I might wear a shorter skirt, you know just a skirt that will cover my knees, or maybe riding pants. (Interview #20)

She was also struggling to reconcile her desire to go on the ride, which was driven by her collective identity ("There's something in my nature that draws me to the Land of Israel"), with her desire to support the cause as much as possible, which was driven by her prosocial identity ("I donate to all kinds of organizations. I give way more than 10 percent of my income to Tzedakah [charity] every year"). For example, although she was going on the ride, she was still questioning the money spent on the trip, and whether or not it was a "waste" compared to giving more to the organization:

I spent more money going there than I raised. If you think about it, the plane ticket is 1,500 dollars and then you get to Israel and you're going to spend at least 500 dollars hanging around there and then you stay an extra two weeks and that's at least an extra 1,000 dollars. . . . I wasted or spent more money than I raised. (Interview #20, continued)

While people with this configuration exhibited greater conflict relative to other clusters, they also experienced some enhancement between identities. For example, the above woman also described how fulfilling one aspect of herself enhanced her fulfillment with another:

Bicycle riding—I really enjoy it. . . . Today, I cycled downtown. . . . See my little hole in my arm. I donate blood platelets for cancer patients, so that's why I have a hole in my arm. I rode downtown and I gave blood, takes about three hours, and then I rode for about two

and a half hours after I gave blood. I thought that was very easy. I did the three hours today, nothing. (Interview #20, continued)

4. *Focused enhancement configuration.* In this cluster, participants experienced their prosocial and collective identities as enhancing one another and their individualistic identity as more separate, neither conflicting nor enhancing. Compared to other configurations, focused enhancement ranks just above the independent configuration in both average enhancement ( $M_{\text{enh}} = -0.23$ ) and conflict ( $M_{\text{conf}} = -0.24$ ) (Table 1, Columns 7 and 8). However, this configuration is distinguished by high prosocial–collective enhancement ( $M_{\text{pro-coll enh}} = 0.40$ ) relative to the individualistic identity dyads ( $M_{\text{ind-coll enh}} = -0.55$  and  $M_{\text{ind-pro enh}} = -0.55$ , Table 1, Columns 1 and 5). This is unlike the mutual enhancement configuration, in which the same level of prosocial–collective enhancement ( $M_{\text{pro-coll enh}} = 0.40$ ) was relatively lower than the two individualistic identity dyads ( $M_{\text{ind-coll enh}} = 0.82$  and  $M_{\text{ind-pro enh}} = 1.07$ , Table 1, Columns 1 and 5).

In our qualitative data, we saw focused enhancement among participants who spoke about the enhancement produced through being Jewish and altruist, while feeling low conflict and enhancement with their cyclist identity. For example, the descriptions of one woman about her contributions illustrate the ways in which her prosocial identity and her collective identity mutually enhance one another:

I don't feel like I'm taking from Israel but I'm giving. Not just my tourist dollars but myself. . . . and there's the issue of. . . giving to an organization that's a worthy organization. I think there's a really good feeling with that. If you really believe in something, an organization or a charity or a cause, and you really work hard and contribute to it, it's a very satisfying feeling you know. . . . I feel very strongly that it's a very good organization so I feel very satisfied in working hard for it. (Interview #12)

Another participant noted the enhancement of prosocial and collective identities and pointed to the importance of a prosocial cause that served more than the collective he was part of:

I feel I'm supporting a hospital plus. . . it's a Jewish hospital but I know they treat everyone. . . . I know that they treat not only Jewish children but Arab children as well. To me, it is great. They should treat everyone who has any type of problem. But the fact that it's in Jerusalem, it's in Israel, has everything to do with the work I'm doing for Alyn. . . [and] when I see these children who have these terrible problems, it gives me extra energy to try and work for them. (Interview #15)

Despite his focus on Jewish and altruist identities, he was not ignoring his cyclist identity; indeed, in describing himself he noted, "[As a cyclist], I would say I am sort of untamed, individualistic, and a little reckless

even... I take a lot of risks that maybe people may not take when it comes to dodging traffic and doing off road riding and some dangerous stuff." Yet his cycling experience was not necessarily enhanced by his prosocial or collective identities. He said, "it's great to ride there, I love it, but as for a physical challenge... it will not [be] a huge one."

In sum, we found four configurations of multiple identities in this setting: mutual enhancement, in which all identities enhanced one another; independent, in which all identities were largely separate from one another with both low conflict and low enhancement; mutual conflict, distinguished by strong conflict among identities; and focused enhancement, in which the collective-prosocial identities were enhancing and the individualistic identity was less enhanced. We used these four identity configurations as independent variables to test our hypotheses about the effects of configuration on prosocial behavior.

**Dependent Variable.**

**Prosocial behavior.** We operationalized prosocial behavior as the self-reported amount of money (in USD) raised by each participant for their respective charity organizations. Prior research on prosocial behavior has used the amount raised as a meaningful criterion in fundraising contexts (Grant and Sumanth 2009). Our interviews with ride organizers suggested that this was also an important outcome for the organizations. The mean amount raised was 6,509 USD.

**Control Variables.**

Our control variables include the following: *gender* (binary) and *age* (continuous) of riders, *survey year* (2007 or 2014), and the *ride* (Alyn or Arava). We also controlled for prior experience with similar activities: *biking experience*—respondents' self-reported cycling expertise (1 = novice to 5 = experienced), which we dichotomized as 1 (expert cyclists) and 0 (novice and intermediate cyclists); as our qualitative data suggested, novice and intermediate riders were more similar to one another (they tend to take on-road routes) compared to experts (who took off-road routes). *Altruist experience* was measured by asking participants approximately how much of their annual income they donated to charity on a scale from 1 (<1% of income) to 5 (>10% of their income). *Charity ride experience* was measured by the number of times participants had been on their respective bike rides (never, once, two to three times, more than three times), which we dichotomized as 1 (three times or more on the ride) and 0 (less than three times). Our interviews with ride organizers suggested that people who went several times were more likely to return than those who went just a few times. (See Table 2 for descriptives and correlations.)

**Table 2.** Study 1 Summary Statistics

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 Gender (1 = Female)	—														
2 Age	-0.13	—													
3 Survey Year (1 = 2014)	-0.08	0.19*	—												
4 Ride (1 = Alyn)	-0.03	-0.23**	-0.42**	—											
5 Charity ride experience (1 ≥ 3)	-0.24**	0.13	0.16*	0.22**	—										
6 Biking experience (1 = Expert)	-0.20*	0.15*	-0.07	0.10	0.18*	—									
7 Altruist experience	0.02	0.10	-0.06	0.16*	0.06	0.07	—								
8 Individualistic identity (cyclist)	-0.07	0.12	0.06	-0.03	0.14*	0.35**	0.06	—							
9 Prosocial identity (altruist)	-0.06	0.01	-0.02	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.35**	0.28**	—						
10 Collective identity (Jewish)	0.02	-0.04	-0.01	-0.08	-0.02	-0.15*	0.14	0.33**	0.14	—					
11 Mutual enhancement	0.08	-0.08	0.18*	-0.25**	0.01	-0.05	0.00	-0.35**	-0.47**	0.28**	—				
12 Independent	0.08	0.08	-0.23**	0.10	-0.00	0.00	-0.17*	-0.35**	-0.47**	-0.53**	-0.39**	—			
13 Mutual conflict	-0.01	-0.13*	-0.20*	0.10	-0.12	0.03	-0.00	0.02	-0.02	0.04	-0.28**	-0.23*	—		
14 Focused enhancement	-0.15	0.11	0.18*	0.09	0.09	0.03	0.17*	0.03	0.31**	0.19*	-0.45**	-0.36**	-0.26**	—	
15 Amount raised	-0.08	0.08	-0.22**	0.20**	0.18*	0.02	0.18*	0.05	0.15	0.03	-0.17*	-0.10	0.05	0.23**	—
Descriptive statistics															
Mean	0.27	52.36	0.63	0.77	0.26	0.36	3.36	-0.06	0.08	0.09	0.33	0.24	0.14	0.29	6,509.18
SD	0.45	11.53	0.48	0.42	0.44	0.48	1.17	1.01	1.01	0.97	0.47	0.43	0.35	0.46	6,828.68

Note. Number of observations = 162.  
 \**p* < 0.05; \*\**p* < 0.01; \*\*\**p* < 0.001.

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## Results

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) of funds raised by configuration type was significant ( $F_{3,158} = 3.78, p = 0.01$ ). In support of Hypothesis 3, participants with the focused enhancement configuration raised the most money ( $M = 8,993.15, SD = 10,988.27$ ). This amount was significantly greater than the mutual enhancement configuration ( $M = 4,846.11, SD = 2,971.03$ ), ( $t = 3.11, p < 0.01$ ) and the independent configuration ( $M = 5,330.96, SD = 3,285.91$ ), ( $t = 2.54, p < 0.05$ ). However, the focused enhancement configuration was not significantly greater than the mutual conflict configuration ( $M = 7,263.35, SD = 5,136.04$ ), ( $t = 1.02, p = ns$ ), and the mutual enhancement, mutual conflict, and independent configurations were also not significantly different from one another, indicating H1 and H2 were not supported.

Because there is over-dispersion in the dependent variable (indicated by the variance being greater than the mean), we further tested our hypotheses using a negative binomial regression. The regression results (see Table 3) indicate that the configurations have a significant effect on prosocial behavior. The key configuration variables are significant after accounting for the control variables as well as the individual effects of each identity (Models 1 and 2). Furthermore, in Model 3, using the mutual enhancement configuration as the reference category we see that only the focused enhancement configuration has a greater effect on the amount of money raised ( $\beta = 0.44, p < 0.01$ ). The amount of money raised by the independent ( $\beta = -0.26, ns$ ) and mutual conflict ( $\beta = 0.20, p = ns$ ) configurations are not significantly different from the mutual enhancement configuration.<sup>4</sup> In sum, the focused enhancement configuration exhibited greater prosocial behavior than the mutual enhancement configuration.

**Discussion.** Study 1 provides several important insights regarding multiple identity configurations and prosocial behavior. First, we observed that participants' experiences of conflicting and enhancing relationships between the three identities could be meaningfully captured both quantitatively and qualitatively. We identified four configurations: independent, mutual conflict, mutual enhancement, and focused enhancement. Second, as hypothesized, we found that the focused enhancement configuration (in which the prosocial-collective identities were mutually enhancing but both were unrelated to the individualistic identity) resulted in higher levels of prosocial behavior than the mutual enhancement configuration. This suggests that the type of identity being enhanced may matter.

**Self-serving motives for prosocial behavior.** To further understand why the mutual enhancement configuration had lower levels of prosocial behavior

**Table 3.** Study 1 Negative Binomial Regression for Funds Raised

Variables	Model 1 B (SE)	Model 2 B (SE)	Model 3 B (SE)
<b>Controls</b>			
<i>Gender</i> (female)	0.08 (0.13)	0.06 (0.13)	-0.03 (0.12)
<i>Age</i>	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
<i>Survey year</i> (2014)	0.58*** (0.14)	0.60*** (0.14)	0.70*** (0.13)
<i>Ride</i> (Alyn)	-0.19 (0.13)	-0.18 (0.13)	-0.02 (0.13)
<i>Charity ride experience</i> (>3)	-0.45** (0.17)	-0.44** (0.16)	-0.46** (0.15)
<i>Cyclist experience</i> (expert)	0.10 (0.14)	0.22 (0.15)	0.27 (0.14)
<i>Altruist experience</i>	0.13** (0.05)	0.11* (0.05)	0.09 (0.04)
<b>Identities</b>			
<i>Individualistic</i> (cyclist)		0.11 (0.08)	0.11 (0.07)
<i>Prosocial</i> (altruist)		0.09 (0.08)	0.04 (0.06)
<i>Collective</i> (Jewish)		-0.10 (0.08)	-0.20* (0.08)
<b>Identity configurations</b>			
<i>Independent</i>			-0.26 (0.17)
<i>Mutual conflict</i>			0.20 (0.15)
<i>Focused enhancement</i>			0.44** (0.17)
Constant	7.73*** (0.37)	7.71*** (0.36)	7.67*** (0.32)
Log likelihood	-1,543.75	-1,541.80	-1,538.46

Notes.  $N = 162$ . Reference category is the mutual enhancement configuration. When focused enhancement configuration is the reference category, the coefficients are as follows: mutual enhancement ( $\beta = -0.44, SE = 0.17, p < 0.01$ ); independent ( $\beta = -0.70, SE = 0.21, p < 0.01$ ); mutual conflict ( $\beta = -0.25, SE = 0.20, p = ns$ ).

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; two-tailed tests.

relative to the focused, we returned to our qualitative data. Quotes from our interviews suggest that the mutual enhancement configuration may contain a self-serving orientation. For instance, mutual enhancement is described by a participant as follows:

It's this unique chemistry... where the light bulb was turned on and I said yeah, that sounds good. So it's various components and I'm not sure what ranks highest. (Interview #22)

This interviewee further admitted his self-serving orientation. He continued,

There is something self-serving about the whole process for me. If it wasn't a bike ride and just money I maybe wouldn't be giving Alyn 2,000 dollars. But on top of that

there's the expense of the hotel and the adjustments for the bike and the flight and so on. So it's way more than just the charitable contribution I've given to Alyn. So there is something self-serving about it and while Israel may call me, so does the bicycle. So it's a fun thing. (Interview #22, continued)

Similarly, the mutual enhancement rider that we quoted previously as feeling a "confluence" and "convergence" (interview #18) was highly personally invested in going. He stated, "something happened last week and I was thinking I might not be able to go and I was very disappointed personally. If I could predict the future, I would like to do this for as long as I can for as often as I can." He further described his reluctance to raise as much money as he possibly could because it might compromise his ability to go on the ride again:

I got an e-mail from the chairman of Alyn... and it says he got so overwhelmed by Alyn and what they do and how great it is that he decided to surpass his fundraising minimum of 2,000 and I thought I was going to read 4,000, 5,000, and he said he raised 25,000 dollars last year and he encouraged everyone to do that. I'm not going to do that. I probably could if I tried but then I would never be able to raise money again because I would basically tap every source I had. I'm trying to do it in a way so that if I want to do it again next year, and I will want to, then I can go back and raise a similar amount. I decided to raise 5,000 dollars and I'm there. (Interview #18)

For this rider, fulfilling his personal desire to ride the following year limited the amount of money he was willing to raise in the short term for the organization. These examples suggest that the smaller amounts of money raised by those with the mutual enhancement configuration might be the result of a more self-serving motive for participating, namely promoting one's own pleasure and fulfillment.

In contrast to H3, we did not find support for H1 and H2; the mutual conflict configuration was not different from either the focused or mutual enhancement configurations. This may be because of the voluntary nature of the ride. Those experiencing pure conflict among their identities could have self-selected out of the event, possibly limiting the level of conflict. In fact, we chose this setting because it allowed us to gain deeper insight into the understudied dynamics of enhancement (Dutton et al. 2010). However, it would be useful to examine settings in which identity conflict is likely to be more salient.

In addition to the lack of conflict, Study 1 is also in a unique context. The Jewish identity is a collective identity containing religious and cultural components (Berger and Gainer 2002). In addition, as with other religions (Shariff and Norenzayan 2007), the religious aspects of Jewish identity may overlap with the altruist identity. Further, the individualistic identity, cyclist,

was related to a leisure activity. Therefore, examining other instantiations of the three types of identities and prosocial behavior in a nonvoluntary, work-related context would be useful. Accordingly, in Study 2 we examined prosocial behavior in a team setting (Tyler and Blader 2003).

## Study 2

In Study 2, our goal was to replicate and extend the generalizability of our findings in a team context with a different operationalization of individualistic, collective, and prosocial identities.

### Sample and Procedure

Participants were 70 executive MBA students at a European business school enrolled in a course on corporate social responsibility taught in English. Respondents were 77% male with an average age of 35 and were working full time in their respective organizations. Data were gathered via a questionnaire that students were required to complete as part of their coursework. Students had been assigned to study teams of four to six members at the start of the semester with ongoing teamwork as a required element of the curriculum. Consequently, teams were meaningful collectives in which work was accomplished and collective identities were built. We focused on identities likely to be salient for participants in this setting: individualistic (high-achieving student), collective (team member), and prosocial (helper of their teammates unrelated to group tasks). Survey items asked about conflict and enhancement between each pair of identities, which we used to construct our independent variable, *identity configurations*. We also asked participants to rate the prosocial behavior of other study group members, which served as our dependent measure. We matched individual survey responses to their teammates' ratings.

### Measures

#### Independent Variables.

**Identity configurations.** Identity configurations again served as the independent variable and were constructed in the following three steps:

(1) *Identities.* First, as in Study 1, participants rated the extent to which they identified with each of the three identities using the "circles overlap" measure (Bergami and Bagozzi (2000);  $M_{ind} = 5.53$  ( $SD = 1.43$ );  $M_{coll} = 5.73$  ( $SD = 1.44$ );  $M_{pro} = 5.47$  ( $SD = 1.88$ )).

(2) *Identity conflict and enhancement.* Second, similar to the procedures of Study 1, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they experienced conflict and enhancement between identities. They rated a single statement about conflict and a single statement about enhancement for each pair of identities as follows: "Think of your [individualistic identity as a high achieving student] and your [collective identity

as a member of your study group]: How frequently do these identities conflict with one another? And how frequently do these identities enhance one another?" Items were rated on a scale from 1 = never to 7 = always ( $M_{\text{conf}} = 2.61$  ( $SD = 0.91$ ) and  $M_{\text{enh}} = 4.80$  ( $SD = 0.89$ )).

(3) *Configurations*. Reflecting the focus of our hypotheses and building on the findings of Study 1, we used the identity conflict and enhancement scores to derive the configurations. Using the same *K*-means clustering approach (Punj and Stewart 1983), we again specified a four-cluster solution. To understand and interpret the resulting configurations, we looked at both the inter-cluster and the intra-cluster patterns of conflict and enhancement. As in Study 1, we labeled the clusters based on their closeness to our theorized configurations:

(a) *Focused enhancement (FE)*: This configuration was characterized by having the highest level of prosocial-collective identity enhancement and low identity conflict ( $M_{\text{conf}} = 2.61$  (0.99);  $M_{\text{pro-coll enh}} = 6.32$  (0.48)).

(b) *Mutual enhancement (ME)*: This configuration was characterized by the lowest level of conflict and equivalent levels of identity enhancement among the identities ( $M_{\text{conf}} = 2.19$  (0.65);  $M_{\text{pro-coll enh}} = 5.16$  (0.37)).

(c) *Mutual conflict (MC)*: This configuration was characterized by the highest levels of conflict and moderate identity enhancement ( $M_{\text{conf}} = 3.67$  (0.67);  $M_{\text{pro-coll enh}} = 4.63$  (0.52)).

(d) *Independent (IND)*: This configuration was characterized by the lowest level of identity enhancement coupled with a moderate level of conflict ( $M_{\text{conf}} = 2.81$  (0.77);  $M_{\text{pro-coll enh}} = 3.67$  (0.49)).

### Dependent Variable.

**Prosocial behavior.** We operationalized prosocial behavior in this team context as voluntary actions directed toward helping other teammates' personal goals or needs in ways *not* related to the team's tasks. Such discretionary helping behavior has been recognized as a critical form of prosocial behavior in organizations (Brief and Motowidlo 1986). We specifically chose behaviors that were not related to the core work of the team to distinguish our measure of prosocial behavior from helping behavior that may be motivated by personal benefits (such as helping the team perform well so one could be a high performer). Thus, this measure is consistent with altruistically (versus egoistically) oriented helping (Batson et al. 1983) and some measures of extra-role behavior in teams that emphasize helping behavior when actors do not expect credit for such behavior (Blader and Tyler 2009).

To measure prosocial behavior, participants were asked to think about their experience working with [X], who is a teammate, and answer the following question: "Please think about how often [X] does the following

in his/her altruistic role as a person who helps [study] group members on issues NOT related to the group's task performance." The items, rated on a scale from 1 = never to 7 = always, were as follows: (1) helps teammates advance their personal (nongroup-related) goals and (2) is generally helpful toward others, even when it is not personally beneficial to him/her. For each participant, we then used the average of team members' ratings as the dependent variable. Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.85$ ;  $M = 4.96$  ( $SD = 0.69$ ).

### Results

An ANOVA of prosocial behavior means by configuration type was significant ( $F_{(3,66)} = 3.03, p < 0.05$ ). Specifically, team members rated those with a focused enhancement identity configuration as more helpful to teammates compared to those with other identity configurations, thereby exhibiting the greatest prosocial behavior ( $M_{\text{FE}} = 5.26$  ( $SD = 0.72$ )  $> M_{\text{ME}} = 4.86$  ( $SD = 0.51$ )  $> M_{\text{IND}} = 4.75$  ( $SD = 0.78$ )  $> M_{\text{MC}} = 4.62$  ( $SD = 0.71$ )). Supporting Hypothesis 3, pairwise contrasts show that those with the focused enhancement configuration exhibited significantly greater prosocial behavior than those with mutual enhancement ( $t = 2.13, p < 0.05$ ). Those with focused enhancement also exhibited greater prosocial behavior than those with the mutual conflict ( $t = 2.40, p < 0.05$ ) and the independent ( $t = 2.21, p < 0.05$ ) configurations. Further, consistent with Study 1, the mutual enhancement, mutual conflict, and independent configurations were not significantly different from one another, once again suggesting that H1 and H2 were not supported.<sup>5</sup>

**Discussion.** The results of Study 2 demonstrate that those with a focused enhancement configuration engaged in greater prosocial behavior compared to those with a mutual enhancement configuration. Furthermore, Study 2 extends the generalizability of our findings by showing that the identity configurations of working adults engaged in task groups function in a similar fashion to those of the volunteers in Study 1. We also found that mutual conflict exhibited significantly lower prosocial behavior than focused enhancement in this study, suggesting a greater role for conflict in this nonvoluntary setting. However, one limitation of Studies 1 and 2 is that we could only examine identity configurations that emerged naturally in our field settings. As a result, we do not know whether the focused enhancement configuration was beneficial specifically because the prosocial and collective identities were mutually enhancing and the individualistic identity was unrelated, or whether any configuration with two enhancing identities and the third set apart would have similar effects. In addition, it is possible that the mutual conflict that emerged in these field settings was more similar to configurations with both conflict and enhancement rather than pure conflict. It would, therefore, be useful to experimentally

manipulate alternative identity configurations to more thoroughly test our hypotheses. Therefore, we designed Study 3 to constructively replicate and extend the findings from Studies 1 and 2 by experimentally inducing work-related identity configurations.

### Study 3

In Study 3, we conducted a scenario experiment that allowed us to test causal relationships and extend generalizability by using a different context and different operationalizations of identities. We also aimed to compare the focused enhancement configuration to structurally similar identity configurations that did not emerge in Studies 1 and 2 and to examine a configuration of pure mutual conflict.

### Sample and Procedure

Participants were adults recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk ( $n = 1,399$ ). Participants' average age was 35 years ( $SD = 11.34$ ), 47.2% were female, and all were located in the United States. Each participant was paid \$1 for the study.

The study design was a seven-condition scenario experiment. The scenario presented an architecture firm trying to balance multiple goals—profitability, environmental sustainability, and good design—and asked participants to imagine they were employees in the firm. Participants were told they thought of themselves in terms of the following: (1) their individualistic identities as star “hotshot” employees in the firm, which oriented them toward their personal success; (2) their collective identities as professional architects, which oriented them toward their profession; and (3) their prosocial identities as environmental activists, which oriented them toward the welfare of wider society.

Participants were also told they were members of a voluntary “fellows” program in the firm and as part of that program they could mentor junior employees; this was meant to be an indicator of prosocial behavior within the organization. They were told they could raise money as part of the sustainability efforts of the firm and, as in Study 1, this served as an indicator of philanthropic prosocial behavior. The scenario then presented one of seven identity configurations described below (see the online appendix) and asked respondents to imagine the configuration represented their own feelings regarding their identities and to respond to the outcomes described below.

### Measures

#### Independent Variables.

**Identity configurations.** Participants were randomly assigned to one of seven conditions. Three described

the identity configurations reflected in our hypotheses: (1) pure mutual conflict, in which all three identities are only conflicting; (2) mutual enhancement, in which all three identities enhance one another; and (3) focused enhancement, in which prosocial and collective identities are enhancing and the individualistic identity is separate.

We included four additional configurations for comparison purposes: (4) independent, in which all three identities are separate (as observed in Study 1); (5) divided, in which all three are conflicting and enhancing. This configuration was to help us compare pure mutual conflict as theorized with the mutual conflict configuration we empirically observed in Studies 1 and 2, in which there was mutual conflict and some enhancement. We expected that the mutual conflict configuration would have lower prosocial behavior than this divided configuration. The last two additional configurations, (6) individualistic–prosocial enhancement with the collective separate; and (7) individualistic–collective enhancement with the prosocial separate, were to help us examine whether the beneficial effect of the focused enhancement configuration in Studies 1 and 2 was simply structural (three versus two mutually enhancing identities with the third set apart) or specifically due to the lack of enhancement of the individualistic identity as we proposed. If the latter, then the focused enhancement configuration should exhibit greater prosocial behavior than these two additional “partial” configurations as well.

#### Dependent Variable.

**Prosocial intentions.** Two items measured intentions to behave prosocially:

(1) *Intention to mentor young professionals.* This item asked, “How much time do you want to put into mentoring young professionals who could be future fellows?” on a scale from 1 = none to 7 = a lot.

(2) *Effort to raise funds.* This item asked, “How much effort would you devote to raising money for this program?” on a scale from 1 = none to 7 = a lot. These measures are consistent with research suggesting that time and effort given in a prosocial task are indicators of prosocial behavior (Grant and Sumanth 2009).

### Results

An ANOVA examining the means of prosocial intentions by experimental condition shows that configuration type had a significant impact on both mentoring ( $F_{6,1,392} = 23.76, p < 0.001$ ) and fundraising ( $F_{6,1,392} = 10.46, p < 0.001$ ) (see Table 4 for means). First, consistent with Studies 1 and 2 and in support of H3, planned comparisons show that participants in the focused enhancement condition were significantly more likely to spend time mentoring young employees ( $t = 2.21, p < 0.05$ ) and expend greater effort in raising funds ( $t = 2.71, p < 0.01$ ) than those in the

**Table 4.** Study 3 Analysis of Variance of Prosocial Behavior by Configurations

Configuration	Intention to mentor	Effort to raise funds
<i>Focused enhancement</i> (prosocial–collective enhancement; individualistic identity separate)	5.07 <sup>c</sup> (1.26)	5.23 <sup>b</sup> (1.37)
<i>Mutual enhancement</i>	4.77 <sup>a</sup> (1.29)	4.80 <sup>a</sup> (1.46)
<i>Independent</i>	4.29 <sup>b</sup> (1.32)	4.61 <sup>a</sup> (1.47)
<i>Divided</i> (conflict and enhancement)	4.26 <sup>b</sup> (1.29)	4.55 <sup>a</sup> (1.55)
<i>Individualistic–prosocial enhancement</i> (and collective identity separate)	4.06 <sup>b</sup> (1.55)	4.72 <sup>a</sup> (1.75)
<i>Individualistic–collective enhancement</i> (and prosocial identity separate)	3.91 <sup>b,d</sup> (1.47)	4.21 <sup>c</sup> (1.67)
<i>Mutual conflict</i> (pure)	3.71 <sup>d</sup> (1.53)	4.19 <sup>c</sup> (1.68)
Mean (across configurations)	4.30 (1.46)	4.62 (1.60)

*Notes.* Standard deviations are in parentheses. Number of observations are as follows: mutual enhancement = 197; independent = 208; divided = 202; focused enhancement = 204; individualistic–collective enhancement = 203; individualistic–prosocial enhancement = 193; mutual conflict (pure) = 192; and total = 1,399. Means that do not share a superscript differ at  $p < 0.05$ .

mutual enhancement condition. The focused enhancement configuration was also significantly greater than the two additional partial enhancement configurations (the individualistic–collective enhancement and the individualistic–prosocial enhancement), both for mentoring and fundraising (all  $p$ 's < 0.01). This finding offers some support for the role of identity type in the focused enhancement configuration. That is, all three configurations containing individualistic identity enhancement led to lower prosocial behavior than the focused enhancement configuration, suggesting that focused enhancement may be beneficial for prosocial behavior because of the types of identities being enhanced (prosocial–collective) and not enhanced (individualistic). Last, consistent with H1 and H2, the pure mutual conflict configuration resulted in significantly lower prosocial intentions for both mentoring and fundraising than the mutual enhancement, focused enhancement, and divided configurations (all  $p$ 's < 0.05).

**Discussion.** This study constructively replicated the focused enhancement effect with a set of work-related individualistic and collective identities (e.g., hotshot and professional) and a distinct prosocial identity (e.g., environmental activist) in a context similar to employee volunteering initiatives (Bartel 2001). Furthermore, in contrast to the earlier studies, in this study we found that the experimental manipulation of pure mutual conflict resulted in lower levels of prosocial behavior

than focused and mutual enhancement. This may be because the naturally emergent mutual conflict configurations in Studies 1 and 2 may not have been as purely or as strongly conflicting as the experimental manipulation. However, this remains an open question for future work. Last, by comparing focused enhancement to mutual enhancement as well as the two other partial configurations, this study provides some suggestive evidence for the potential negative impact of individualistic identity enhancement on prosocial behavior. However, Study 3 still does not directly test the proposed mechanism through which the focused versus mutual enhancement effect operates. Specifically, Hypothesis 3 posited that the weaker prosocial behavior of the mutual enhancement configuration was rooted in the enhancement of the individualistic identity. Such enhancement may amplify self-serving motives and thereby dampen prosocial behavior. To test this explanation for Hypothesis 3 more thoroughly, we undertook one final experimental study.

## Study 4

In Study 4, we conducted a scenario experiment to examine self-serving motives for prosocial behavior as a possible mediator for the focused versus mutual enhancement effect.

## Sample and Procedure

Participants were 397 adults recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Their average age was 36.6 years ( $SD = 12.74$ ), 57.2% were female, and all were located in the United States. Participants were paid \$2.50 for the study.

The study design was a two-condition, between-subjects experiment. We created an organizationally relevant scenario involving a corporate volunteering program similar to that used in Study 3 and modeled after an existing corporate volunteering program at IBM. The setting was a consumer goods firm called AMI. Participants were told that they had three identities: (1) their individualistic identity as expert employees in the firm, oriented toward their personal career success; (2) their collective identity as AMI employees, oriented toward the welfare of the organization; and (3) their prosocial identity as volunteers, oriented toward helping beneficiaries. Participants were presented with a configuration and asked to imagine that it represented their own experience of their identities within AMI (see the online appendix). Participants responded to the survey measures described below.

## Measures

### Independent Variables.

**Identity configurations.** Participants were randomly assigned to one of two scenario conditions that

operationalized identity configurations: (1) mutual enhancement, in which they were told all three identities enhance one another; (2) focused enhancement, in which they were told their collective and prosocial identities were enhancing and the individualistic identity was not.

### Dependent Variables.

**Prosocial behavioral intentions.** We measured prosocial intentions with two scales: involvement in corporate volunteering and helping behavior as a corporate volunteer.

(1) *Involvement in corporate volunteering.* This was measured as a composite of four items: participation, time, energy, and effort devoted to the AMI program. Using a 5-point scale (1 = not likely, 5 = very likely), these items asked, “How likely are you to participate in the voluntary service activities?” “How much time do you expect to devote to helping beneficiaries on their problems?” “How much energy will you give to helping beneficiaries on their problems?” and “How much effort will you give to helping beneficiaries with their problems?” Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.90$ ,  $M = 4.13$  ( $SD = 0.75$ ).

(2) *Helping behavior.* This was measured using six items from Blader and Tyler’s (2009) extra-role behavior scale adapted to the corporate volunteering context: (1) Do things that are not expected of volunteers to help the beneficiaries; (2) Volunteer to help orient new volunteers; (3) Offer to help other volunteers when they have heavy volunteer workloads; (4) Put an extra effort into doing your volunteer work well, beyond what is normally expected; (5) Share your knowledge with beneficiaries or other volunteers even when you will not receive credit; and (6) Work extra volunteer hours even when you will not receive credit for doing so. These items were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = never, 7 = always). Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.93$ ,  $M = 5.36$  ( $SD = 1.14$ ).

### Mediator.

**Self-serving motives for prosocial behavior.** Scholars have examined various self-serving motives for engaging in prosocial behavior, ranging from pleasure to the desire to gain career rewards (Batson et al. 1983, Clary et al. 1998). In Study 1, the interviews revealed a self-serving motive that was relevant in a leisure context (to seek pleasure and personal fulfillment). In this study, we use a self-serving motive that has been examined in a work context: being helpful to impress one’s colleagues and managers at work so one can gain work-related material and social rewards (Clary et al. 1998, Grant and Mayer 2009, Rioux and Penner 2001). This motive has been measured with a 12-item scale labeled impression management motives to engage in prosocial behavior and has been validated and used in work contexts (Rioux and Penner 2001). The stem was as follows: “How important is each of the following reasons

in your decision to volunteer?” Sample items included the following: “to avoid looking bad in front of others; to look better than my co-workers; because I want a raise.” Items were measured on a 6-point scale (6 = extremely important, 1 = not at all important). Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.95$ ,  $M = 2.76$  ( $SD = 1.37$ ).

### Results

An overall ANOVA examining the means of prosocial intention by configuration type showed that those in the focused enhancement condition reported greater involvement ( $M_{FE} = 4.23$  ( $SD = 0.69$ )  $>$   $M_{ME} = 4.03$  ( $SD = 0.79$ ),  $F_{1,395} = 7.12$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and helping behavior ( $M_{FE} = 5.50$  ( $SD = 1.13$ )  $>$   $M_{ME} = 5.20$  ( $SD = 1.14$ ),  $F_{1,395} = 6.83$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) than the mutual enhancement condition. An ANOVA examining the means of self-serving orientation by configuration type was also significant ( $M_{FE} = 2.48$  ( $SD = 1.29$ )  $<$   $M_{ME} = 3.05$  ( $SD = 1.40$ ),  $F_{1,395} = 17.70$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A mediation analysis using Hayes’ (2013) PROCESS macro with 1,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% CI shows that consistent with our expectations, self-serving motives mediated this effect. Specifically, the indirect effect estimate for *involvement* was  $B = -0.07$  ( $SE = 0.03$ ), the 95% CI did not include zero ( $LL = -0.13$  to  $UL = -0.03$ ), and the indirect effect estimate for *helping* was  $B = -0.14$  ( $SE = 0.04$ ), and the 95% CI did not include zero ( $LL = -0.24$  to  $UL = -0.07$ ). These results support the argument that self-serving orientation mediates the negative effect of the mutual enhancement configuration on prosocial behavior.<sup>6</sup>

**Discussion.** Consistent with the earlier studies and supporting Hypothesis 3, Study 4 shows that the focused enhancement configuration exhibited greater prosocial intention than the mutual enhancement configuration. Study 4 also replicates and extends the findings of the earlier studies by demonstrating that, as theorized, self-serving motives exhibited by those with the mutual enhancement configuration are an underlying mechanism driving their lower level of prosocial behavior relative to the focused enhancement configuration. Whether this mechanism also differentiates the focused enhancement configuration from other configurations remains an avenue for future exploration.

### General Discussion

Prosocial behavior, which protects, promotes, and contributes to the welfare of others, is crucial for the healthy functioning of organizations and societies. This paper set out to understand how configurations of prosocial, collective, and individualistic identities combine to influence prosocial behavior. Intuitively, a configuration of mutual enhancement—in which all three identities are enhancing—should lead to the highest levels of prosocial behavior; however, across



four studies, utilizing multiple methods and multiple contexts, we found that a focused enhancement configuration, characterized by high prosocial–collective identity enhancement and limited individualistic identity enhancement, resulted in the highest levels of prosocial behavior.

Our paper contributes to the literatures on both prosocial behavior and multiple identities in organizations. First, by taking a configurational approach to identity relationships, we have introduced a new way to study multiple identities that extends beyond existing single- and dual-identity approaches. In addition, the results of Study 1 suggest that identity configurations better explain prosocial behavior than single, salient identities. Interestingly, other studies have also found that single identifications were not significantly related to outcomes while identity relationships were (Cheng et al. 2008). Reading our results alongside the existing literature suggests that when several identities are simultaneously salient, a configurational approach may be more informative than examining identities alone.

Second, by attending to both identity types and relationships, we questioned the dominant intuition regarding the mutual enhancement configuration and instead demonstrated that a focused enhancement configuration could lead to higher levels of prosocial behavior. Our research also articulates and provides support for a mechanism through which focused enhancement maximizes prosocial behavior. Specifically, we suggest that individualistic identity enhancement may be counterproductive, because it amplifies a self-serving orientation when helping others (Batson et al. 1983, Grant and Mayer 2009, Rioux and Penner 2001).

Third, by focusing on prosocial behavior—an other-oriented outcome (Creary et al. 2015)—this paper moves research on multiple identities beyond personally oriented outcomes such as well-being, work engagement, and creativity (Brook et al. 2008, Cheng et al. 2008, Rothbard 2001, Thoits 1983). This opens up new opportunities for studying the links between multiple identities and prosocial behavior.

The results are bolstered by the multimethod approach we used to unpack the complexity of multiple identity configurations. Across the four studies, we used qualitative, quantitative, and experimental designs, and we consistently found that the focused enhancement configuration leads to higher levels of prosocial behavior than the mutual enhancement configuration. Furthermore, the strengths of some studies offset the limitations of others (McGrath 1981). For example, although Study 1 examines a voluntary setting, the subsequent studies examine work-related contexts. The concerns with utilizing “minimal” identity configurations, hypothetical scenarios, and hypothetical behavioral intentions in Studies 3 and 4 are

somewhat mitigated by the field settings and situated identities of participants in Studies 1 and 2. Likewise, the experimental approaches of Studies 3 and 4 help address concerns with causality and configurations that did not emerge in the field. Moreover, we used multiple measures of prosocial behavior (our dependent variable), ranging from actual donations, to prosocial behavior rated by others, to prosocial intentions measured by validated scales. Taken together, the four studies illustrate that our key findings hold across various operationalizations of identity configurations and prosocial behavior.

Future research on both multiple identities and prosocial behavior can build on this paper’s findings in several ways. First, a key boundary condition of our studies is that we examine the effects of identity configurations on prosocial behavior. Extending these findings to other outcomes is an important direction for future work. Specifically, we do not imply that the focused enhancement configuration will be more effective than the mutual enhancement configuration for all tasks and outcomes. Our pattern of findings may not extend, for example, to outcomes such as satisfaction or career success. Even within the literature on prosocial behavior there is a common distinction between altruistic and egoistic prosociality (Batson et al. 1983, Brief and Motowidlo 1986). The effects of focused enhancement may be most applicable to prosocial behavior that is largely altruistic, while the mutual enhancement configuration may be no different, or better, for prosocial behavior that jointly benefits oneself and others. Relatedly, perhaps the mutual enhancement configuration optimizes performance across multiple outcomes, while the focused enhancement configuration is most effective for prosocial behavior alone.

Second, future work should examine the relationship between collective and prosocial identities in greater detail. In our studies, we did not manipulate whether givers and receivers shared a collective identity. Our findings suggest that the benefits of focused enhancement are present for helping members of one’s ingroup (Study 2) as well as helping nongroup members (Studies 1, 3, 4). However, ingroup/outgroup dynamics may moderate these effects. Focused enhancement may make it easier to help outgroup members, while mutual enhancement may be more effective for helping ingroup members because individualistic identity enhancement may backfire less when one can gain status within the group by helping group members. A related boundary condition may be that the benefits of focused enhancement are most likely to occur in contexts where the collective identity and the prosocial identity somewhat overlap; for example, among organizations with social responsibility programs.

Third, future work should also examine the generalizability of these results beyond the identities studied in this paper. For example, future work could explore the valence of these identities (e.g., a has-been instead of a hot-shot). It is likely that people will still focus on fulfilling their personal needs even when the individualistic identity is negatively valenced because people maintain negative self-views (Swann 1983). However, future work needs to explore whether the valence of the identities alters the impact of individualistic identity enhancement. Future work could also examine different types of identities (e.g., relational identities in the work domain, such as a boss or subordinate).

Contemporary trends suggest that organizations will increasingly try to integrate prosocial behavior with other goals (Battilana and Lee 2014, Grant 2012). Organizational members are also increasingly attempting to blend prosociality with personal and professional aspects of their lives (Bartel 2001, Grant et al. 2008). This paper proposes a configurational approach to investigate how people experience and manage the complexity of their multiple identities in the face of such trends. We suggest that managing our prosocial identities along with other personal- and work-related identities has important consequences for prosocial behavior in organizational settings: mutual enhancement may backfire, while focused enhancement may provide important benefits.

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Given the load on participants, we did not use both measures in tandem in the field study. However, in a separate survey study ( $n = 500$ ) on Mturk the correlations between the visual scale and the three-item measure for the same identity ranged between 0.7 to 0.8, providing

some evidence that the two measures were valid measures of the same construct. Therefore, we standardized the measures.

<sup>2</sup> The correlation between conflict and enhancement for a given pair of identities was between 0.1 and 0.25, and the correlation between identity conflict and enhancement averaged across all the pairs was 0.17,  $p < 0.05$ . This also supported the idea that conflict and enhancement are not opposites of one another.

<sup>3</sup> We also examined the four-cluster solution against two-cluster and three-cluster solutions based on theoretical grounds. The four-cluster solution was the most efficient clustering solution, providing maximum variation between clusters while still exhibiting coherence within cluster.

<sup>4</sup> We conducted several robustness checks. First, we examined the results for a subsample of participants that raised over \$2,500 (the minimum for Alyn) ( $n = 133$ ) because we did not have a measure of income as a control variable. That is, participants who could afford to do so may have simply paid the minimum. The results are consistent with those presented here: the focused enhancement configuration raises significantly more than the mutual enhancement and independent; in addition, it is also significantly higher than mutual conflict. Second, we also had two outliers in the data, and we tested our results without those two observations to ensure they were not being driven by the outliers. The results are consistent with those reported here. Third, we also examined the results separately for the two Alyn samples (2007,  $n = 60$  and 2014,  $n = 65$ ; note the Arava ride sample was too small to test the hypothesis ( $n = 37$ )). The results were also consistent with those reported here. Last, OLS results are also consistent with those presented here. All additional results are available from the first author.

<sup>5</sup> Because group members rated one another, we calculated the intraclass correlation coefficient, ICC(1), which measures how much variance in prosocial behavior is accounted for by nesting measures within a given unit (in this case, the group). ICC(1)s that are over 0.25 are considered a “large” effect (LeBreton and Senter 2008), meaning that one-quarter or more of the variability in the outcome is due to systematic within-group differences. The ICC(1) was 0.08. In addition, the smaller the number of observations within a group, the lower the impact of a small ICC(1) (Kreft and de Leeuw 1998). Here we had four to six observations per group. Thus, we expect the impact of the within-group variability to be low. However, because there was still some variation explained by the group, we also examined a multilevel model accounting for the group. Because multilevel modeling typically requires much larger sample sizes at both levels (here we had 13 groups and 70 people; Maas and Hox 2005) and because there were no differences between the mutual enhancement, independent, and mutual conflict configurations, we examined only the focused enhancement configuration compared to the others. We found that our results are robust ( $B_{\text{focused}} = 0.40, p = 0.014$ ).

<sup>6</sup> We conducted a replication of Study 4 to examine an additional measure of self-serving orientation toward helping. We used the same design, manipulation, and population from which to sample ( $n = 418$  Mturk workers). We included both the measure of impression management motives (Rioux and Penner 2001) used in Study 4 and a four-item self-oriented helping scale (Roth 2008). The correlation between the two scales was 0.57. A mediation analysis as above shows that both measures of self-serving orientation toward helping were significant. Specifically, the indirect effect estimate of the impression management motives scale (Rioux and Penner 2001) was  $B = -0.06$  ( $SE = 0.02$ ), and the 95% CI did not include zero ( $LL = -0.11$  to  $UL = -0.03$ ), and the indirect effect estimate for the self-oriented helping scale (Roth 2008) was  $B = -0.06$  (0.02), and the 95% CI did not include zero ( $LL = -0.11$  to  $UL = -0.02$ ). This suggests that our results are robust to these two different operationalizations of self-serving orientation toward helping in this context.

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