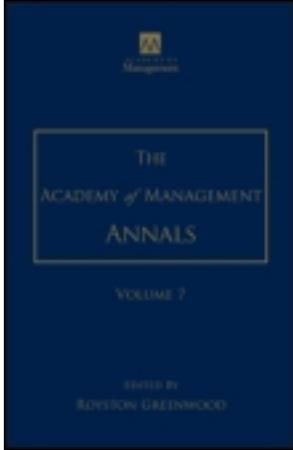


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Giving Versus Giving In

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Abstract

Altruism is central to organizational and social life, but its motivations are not well understood. We propose a new theoretical distinction that sorts these motivations into two basic types: “giving” indicates prosocial behaviors in which one willingly engages, while “giving in” indicates prosocial behavior in which one reluctantly engages, often in response to social pressure or obligation. Unlike those who give, those who give in prefer to avoid the situation that compels altruism altogether, even if doing so leaves the would-be beneficiary empty-handed. We review the existing literature on altruism in behavioral economics, psychology, and organizational behavior and suggest that the distinction between giving and giving in is not only central from a theoretical standpoint, but also has important methodological implications for researchers trying to study prosocial behavior and practitioners trying to encourage it.

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Successful organizations and societies depend on altruistic behavior for their survival. Firms rely on purely discretionary organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (e.g. Organ, 1988) such as employees following best practices and making decisions that benefit the organization, even when their behavior cannot be monitored. Similarly, coworkers rely on prosocial organizational behaviors (e.g. Brief & Motowidlo, 1986) such as getting help from another coworker, even when the personal reward for helping does not seem to selfishly justify the effort. Outside stakeholders such as charities, non-profits, and community organizations often critically rely on the generosity of workers and firms. Therefore, it seems essential to understand the origins and nature of altruistic behavior from the perspective of organizational behavior and management.

In this paper, we propose a new classification of the motivations for altruism along different lines than the existing literature. Altruism is commonly defined by its costs to the agent—i.e. sacrifices of money, time, or energy that in some way aid the betterment of an external entity. As a result, theorists have long puzzled over why individuals are generous, helpful, or prosocial if the costs of such behaviors seem to outweigh the narrow benefits to the individual (Batson, 1991). For example, why do “good citizens” continue to bear the personal costs of bettering the organization and selfish employees focus only on the tasks for which they are remunerated? Most approaches to this puzzle assume that those generous individuals must ultimately be getting something in return for their prosociality, be it reputational benefits, *quid pro quo*, or a positive self-image. We suggest, however, that a surprising amount of prosocial behavior is a compulsory response to a request for help, either implicit or explicit. Sometimes people behave prosocially not because of the benefit of saying “yes”, but rather because they feel they cannot say “no”.

We distinguish two fundamentally different explanations for altruistic behavior, which we refer to as “giving” versus “giving in”. Giving refers to altruistic behaviors in which an individual willingly engages for a variety of possible benefits to the giver, including those that are ultimately self-regarding. Giving in, by contrast, refers to altruistic behavior in which one reluctantly engages (i.e. “reluctant altruism”) without necessarily deriving any benefit aside from fulfilling a request for help—a request which one would rather avoid altogether.

In terms of their immediate, first-order effects, giving and giving in produce identical behavior, especially if there is a direct request: both can lead individuals to help. The second-order effects, however, are quite different:

Individuals who give will not avoid—and may even seek out—opportunities to help because they get something from helping (e.g., positive feelings, reputational benefits). By contrast, individuals who give in will avoid contexts that provide the opportunity to help so that they do not feel obliged to do so.

We stress that giving in is distinct from free-riding. Those who help by giving in would readily avoid the request even if they are certain that no one else would provide help in their place. Therefore, whether an individual avoids a potential giving situation is a behavioral litmus test for distinguishing giving from giving in.

An example may help further clarify this distinction. Consider three employees, Ava, Beatrice, and Celine, each of whom are asked to cover a shift for a coworker. Ava covers because she believes that employees should do such things for each other. Beatrice covers because she thinks her efforts will be recognized by others and that her reputation as a team player will ultimately benefit her. Celine covers because she felt that she could not say no when asked, but feels regretful and wishes she had not been asked in the first place. Perhaps Ava can be described as more purely altruistic while Beatrice can be described as acting in her self-interest, but this is not the distinction we are highlighting here—both Ava and Beatrice are “giving” within our taxonomy. Celine, on the other hand, is “giving in” because she would prefer to avoid the situation so that she does not feel compelled to help.

Failing to understand the difference between giving and giving in might lead one to overestimate the amount of citizenship in the organization if covering the shift is taken to reflect giving. In situations where requests for help can be avoided, one might see much less helping. Also, because Celine was “trapped” into helping, it is possible that her future interactions with her coworker will be much different than Ava’s or Beatrice’s. For instance, Celine could feel resentment toward her coworker or avoid interacting with her altogether so as not to be asked for more favors.

Of course, many instances of prosocial behavior within an organization are discretionary and without reluctance, and individuals even seek out opportunities to help at times. We argue, however, that the literature significantly overstates the prevalence of giving because a substantial portion of what looks like giving is actually giving in. This may seem a somewhat cynical take on human altruism. However, as we outline in further detail, understanding giving in also presents managers with opportunities for encouraging prosocial behavior. As suggested by Flynn and Bohns (2012), direct requests for help are perhaps the most basic weapon of influence.

The remainder of this paper is organized into four main sections. The first section focuses on giving and reviews major schools of thought behind the different benefits individuals may realize from prosocial behavior. The second section focuses on giving in and reviews recent empirical evidence demonstrating that when subjects are placed in situations that “suggest” altruism (such as economic games in which one player is asked to share money with another), providing opportunities to avoid or “exit” the situation reduces rates of altruism by as much as 50%. The third section more broadly discusses the implications of the giving versus giving-in distinction for organizations,

while the final section discusses the implications and potential directions for further research in this area.

Giving

Organizational theorists have long been interested in the role of altruistic behavior in organizations. For example, there has been a tremendous amount of work identifying different types of citizenship behaviors that occur within organizations and how they relate to various dispositional factors (for a review, see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). More recently, literature in management and psychology has recognized the behavioral complexities underlying altruism. For example, Grant (2013) notes that while there are saintly “givers” and selfish “takers”, the vast middle ground is inhabited by so-called “matchers” whose propensity for altruism is highly responsive to the particulars of the social context. Further, the relationship between giving and individual productivity is not so clear cut as it might seem. The least productive employees are often givers, however, so are the most productive employees (Flynn, 2003; Grant, 2013), suggesting that giving pays off under the right circumstances.

Though there are many open questions surrounding the motivations behind prosocial in organizations (Grant, 2007), research has identified an under-recognized power of the direct request. Those in need consistently underestimate how likely a direct request is to be fulfilled (Flynn & Bohns, 2012; Flynn & Lake, 2008; Newark, Flynn, & Bohns, 2014), and those in a position to help underestimate the discomfort those in need have in asking for help (Bohns & Flynn, 2010). Our notion of giving in will incorporate and build upon these elements. It is helpful, however, to first broadly review the schools of thought behind how giving can thrive.

Theorists across the social and natural sciences have offered a litany of possible explanations for altruism and the extent to which it can be understood as beneficial to the individual. Economists often assume that people are rational actors, or at least can be treated “as if” they were rational actors who behave out of self-interested motives. Biologists posit agents whose behavioral tendencies, including altruistic tendencies, somehow reflect strategies that ensured the survival of the agents’ ancestors and subsequent generations. Psychologists have extended the notion of the self-interested benefits of helping others to the psychological realm, e.g. suggesting that giving helps fulfill the desire to maintain a positive self-image. As such, a full review of all explanations for human altruism is beyond the scope of this paper and perhaps any single review. Therefore, we touch upon a few of the major schools of thought and highlight differences among them. Though these explanations broadly differ, their commonality is that they all provide explanations for why giving could be an alluring act in which agents would engage rather than avoid.

Reciprocal Giving and Reputation Effects

Reciprocity. One straightforward explanation for altruism is that it could simply be an investment in the future. For example, covering a shift for a coworker could reflect a long-term strategy of seeking a cooperative equilibrium in which coworkers reciprocally help each other when needed. Even behaviors that are costly to the giver may still be self-interested if one expects to interact with the other party repeatedly in the future, otherwise many gains will be foregone by setting up a long history of non-cooperation (Binmore & Samuelson, 1992; Fudenberg & Maskin, 1986; Nowak, 2006; Sigmund, 2010; Trivers, 1971).

Without the possibility for direct reciprocity, third parties can still observe or be informed about an act of generosity. Therefore, prosocial behavior may also reflect a form of indirect reciprocity in which giving enhances the individual's reputation and increases the likelihood of getting something back from someone else in the future (Nowak & Sigmund, 1998, 2005). Early experimental evidence on economic games (e.g. Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986) has shown that people are more generous with those who are known to have been generous in the past. Moreover, individuals are highly sensitive to reputation effects and are much more likely to behave prosocially when there is a threat of gossip (Feinberg, Willer, & Schultz, 2014).

Partner choice. Helping behavior can also engender cooperation with others by signaling one's type (cooperator) to other potential cooperators, often in subtle and hard-to-detect ways. For example, when non-human primates groom each other—literally a form of “you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours”—the monkey doing the grooming has lower stress markers, which, in turn, raises its status within the group (Shutt, MacLarnon, Heistermann, & Semple, 2007). In this way, giving creates a complex feedback loop in which the animal is able to genuinely signal something about its cooperativeness that otherwise would be hard to fake. Subsequently, this signal allows cooperators to find each other. This account could help explain the evolution of cooperation and is the biological equivalent of being seen as “collegial”.

When described this way, direct and indirect reciprocity and partner choice explain giving as individuals ultimately acting in their long-term self-interests, with prosociality being nothing more than an investment in the future. Though reputational concerns are not incompatible with giving in (e.g. one might give in to avoid a bad reputation), here we present these motivations as reflecting a form of giving whereby individuals will *seek out* opportunities to behave prosocially in order to enhance their reputations.

“One-Shot” Giving

Neither the promise of future benefits nor threat of future punishments can easily explain why people give to individuals who they will not interact with

again. A cottage industry that involves experimenting with economic games (see reviews: Camerer, 2003; Kagel & Roth, 1997) has sprung up, partly to examine altruism and cooperation in these one-shot, anonymous situations. The aim of such designs is to examine giving within a context that neatly strips away the potential for reciprocation. A ubiquitous example of such an experiment is the dictator game (see Kahneman et al., 1986). Participants in the role of “dictator” are given a sum of money and are allowed to divide it in any way they see fit—including giving nothing—with an anonymous recipient who must accept the division. A majority of subjects in the role of dictator give more than zero, and it is not uncommon to see gifts of half of the experimental endowment (e.g. giving \$5 out of a \$10 endowment; Camerer, 2003). These are some of the more interesting cases of altruism; why might people behave altruistically in these situations?

Evolutionary explanations. Evolutionary biologists have suggested several mechanisms for the existence of altruism, even in one-shot interactions. For example, *spatial selection* holds that if altruists are located near one another, their local groups will thrive and out-populate others (Nowak & May, 1992; Nowak, Tarnita, & Antal, 2010). Relatedly, *multi-level selection* suggests that if altruistic cooperators are competing with selfish defectors, the defectors may take advantage of the cooperators when they meet, but the cooperators who interact with each other will thrive and, over time, out-populate the defectors (Skyrms, 1996; Smith & Price, 1973; Weibull, 1995). Finally, *kin selection* suggests that people will recognize and behave altruistically toward kin, so that even if their own survival is not favored, the reproductive success of their kin will be (Dawkins, 1976). Even if altruism costs the individual, if the group to which the individual belongs is benefitted, altruism as a trait can thrive.

Over-generalization. Another evolutionary explanation is that people are generous or cooperative in one-shot situations partly because they are over-generalizing tendencies that are built up in repeated-play environments (Rand & Nowak, 2013; Rand et al., 2013). In other words, people rely on the rule that cooperation is beneficial to the individual and fail to take into account that they will not have repeated interactions. For example, giving may have evolved in small-scale societies where potential recipients were very likely to be seen again, and thus, the prepotent tendency is to treat situations as if they involve repeated play. Indeed, the longer the reaction time when making a decision about cooperation in an anonymous, one-shot economic game, the more likely people are to be selfish (Rand, Greene, & Nowak, 2012), suggesting that the knee-jerk response is to be cooperative.

Similarly, people may over-generalize tendencies that are built up in non-anonymous interactions, which make up most human interaction, to artificial situations in which they are anonymous. Thus, anonymity does not completely

dissolve reputational concerns. Elster (1989) points out that the expectations of even anonymous others matter, noting that

I don't pick my nose when I can be observed by people on a train passing by, even if I am confident that they are all perfect strangers whom I shall never see again and who have no power to impose sanctions on me. (pp. 104–105)

Laboratory games provide an unusually high level of practical anonymity to people whose tendencies are to otherwise behave as if they are being observed.

Managing one's image. Long-standing traditions in social psychology (e.g. Baumeister, 1999; Bem, 1972) and more recent theorizing in economics (e.g. Benabou & Tirole, 2006) have stressed the importance of self-image. Some givers are their own audience and thereby want to impress themselves. One way of promoting a positive self-image is by giving. For example, Murnighan, Oesch, and Pillutla (2001) explain giving decisions in one-shot economic games in terms of managing self-image. Gneezy, Gneezy, Riener, and Nelson (2012) also suggest that generous “pay what you want” behavior is driven largely by individuals' identity and self-image concerns.

Manipulating one's image to others is also an important determinant of prosocial behavior (Ariely, Bracha, & Meier, 2009). For example, Andreoni and Bernheim (2009) suggest that equal-split allocations are commonly chosen in one-shot anonymous games because such allocations signal the chooser's generosity to anonymous others. Similarly, Tadelis (2011) conceives even a one-shot anonymous giving situation as being a “psychological” game in which the giver has intrinsic and extrinsic preferences for fairness, where extrinsic preferences represent concerns for what others think about the gift. These findings suggest that what others are imagined to think, even when those others are anonymous, is crucially important and may play a large role in determining one's self-impression as a good or generous person. This is a notion reminiscent of the “looking glass self” (Cooley 1902, pp. 183–184). Indeed, people often see themselves through social lenses.

Impure altruism. Recent work in cognitive neuroscience suggests that altruism can literally be a reward in and of itself (Keltner, 2009). For example, people who engage in altruistic acts show activation in reward centers of their brains (Harbaugh, Mayr, & Burghart, 2007). Research in economics, dating back to the seminal paper by Becker (1974), has questioned the possibility of pure altruism. Suppose, for example, that people gave to charities because they purely cared about the charitable cause, e.g., finding a cure for a particular disease. Several economic models show that, if people did not care how cures were found but just cared that cures were found, public spending on those causes should “crowd out” private donations to charity dollar-for-

dollar. However, this empirical prediction is almost never borne out (Andreoni, 1990). Instead, people seem to value the act of personally contributing (i.e. their own dollars or time) to the cause, to get what Andreoni (1990) calls a “warm glow”. This motive is sometimes referred to as *impure altruism* because the warm glow is a selfish desire (e.g. the desire to be involved) that is separate from the desire for the charity to realize its goals. An impurely altruistic worker will be a good organizational citizen not necessarily because she wants to see the organization’s goals achieved, but only insofar as she can believe she had a direct role in the result.

Social preferences. Economists have created so-called social preference models to rationalize other-regarding behavior. Many of the earlier models treat giving as a preference for distributional fairness, with motives such as an aversion to inequity (Bolton & Ockenfels, 2000; Fehr & Schmidt, 1999; Loewenstein, Thompson, & Bazerman, 1989), efficiency concerns (Andreoni & Miller, 2002), and “maximin”, which is maximizing the amount that the worst-off person gets (Andreoni & Miller, 2002; Charness & Rabin, 2002). While social preference models are a relatively new tradition in economics, the taste for equity has long been a lens through which workplace behavior has been understood.

Equity theory (Adams, 1965) posits that workers seek to maintain equity between the inputs that they bring to their jobs and the outcomes that they receive against the perceived inputs and outcomes of others. Thus, workers who feel relatively overpaid should increase their efforts in order to “earn their keep”, even with no threat of reprimand. Laboratory studies of “gift exchange” (Fehr, Kirchsteiger, & Riedl, 1993) partly confirm this prediction. Experimental “employees” who are given relatively good wages subsequently choose higher effort levels to reciprocate the experimental “employer’s” generosity, even when the employer cannot effectively monitor their efforts. The point of these models is to suggest that altruists might be rational when helping others, because doing so maximizes on some social preference held by the altruist. This notion opens up a debate about whether such preferences are ultimately selfish. For example, does equity give one a warm glow? Is that warm glow the ultimate goal of the altruist or merely a happy side effect?

In sum, we have offered a glimpse of the vast literature on giving and its motivations. These motivations may dramatically differ, but all of them can be viewed as sharing a fundamental similarity in that they provide reasons why people would “want” to give. In the next section, we turn to the concept of “giving in”.

Giving In

In this section, we review a growing body of evidence suggesting that much of what has previously been interpreted as giving is actually giving in. The

majority of the research reviewed in this section involves simple economic laboratory games, such as the dictator game. Of course, the dictator game is not applied research in the much richer context of an organization, but it is applicable. Our focus is on better understanding the nature and determinants of discretionary behavior in such situations, and laboratory games are a convenient vehicle for doing so. Even in these seemingly straightforward studies, the evidence we review suggests that roughly 50% of what appears to be giving is actually giving in. We argue that this fact has gone unnoticed because researchers have observed the first-order effects of both giving and giving in (responses to direct or indirect requests for help), without the opportunity to observe the second-order effects—i.e. whether participants will avoid the situation so that they do not feel compelled to give. Further, we review field studies that corroborate the laboratory findings in contexts that vary greatly from abstract economic games.

Before turning to the evidence, it is helpful to clarify that giving in is not defined by simply feeling a strong pull to help, wishing that the situation was not occurring, or even doubting whether one wants to give. Consider the example of the so-called Fukushima 50, a group of (more than 50) volunteer workers who exposed themselves to serious risk of harm while trying to stabilize the Fukushima nuclear reactor following the Japanese tsunami of 2011. According to Prime Minister Naoto Kan, the workers were “prepared for death” (Soble, 2011). Certainly, all must have wished that the situation were not occurring and that their help was not needed. In addition, it is not hard to imagine that some would consider backing out. Yet, that is not incompatible with the idea that the Fukushima 50 were giving. By all accounts, many of the Fukushima 50 actively sought the opportunity to help.

Our review of the giving-in effect classifies avoidance behavior into two broad categories. The first, exit, involves secretly avoiding a request for help or preventing others from knowing that one can fulfill the request. For example, if a coworker sends an email request for help with a problem, the individual may pretend not to have seen it in time, or may lead the coworker to believe that there is a previous engagement that prevents the individual from helping. The second, strategic ignorance, involves not letting oneself know critical details about the request. For example, if the individual gets a new email that possibly contains a request for help, he or she may avoid reading it, so as not to trigger the helping response. Both exit and strategic ignorance can be thought of as ways of blurring the opportunity to be helpful. Exit keeps others in the dark, strategic ignorance keeps oneself in the dark.

Exit

Exit in the lab. Dana, Cain, and Dawes (2006) modified the standard dictator game to include an exit option as a means of disentangling giving from

giving in. After allowing dictators to decide how to divide a \$10 endowment, Dana et al. (2006) surprised them with the option to exit by accepting \$9 before the recipient was told about the game. If they exited, the recipient would receive nothing, but the recipient also would not find out that a game was even being played. Of the dictators who planned to share some money, roughly 40% chose to exit instead. On this basis, Dana et al. concluded that a great deal of dictator giving was actually giving in and a function of the dictator's beliefs about what the recipient expected. Indeed, when given the chance to exit from a "private" dictator game in which the recipient would not know why they received money in any case (and thus had no expectations about sharing), only 1 out of 24 dictators chose to exit.

Several subsequent studies employing similar exit opportunities have found that between one-third and one-half of dictators exit, including between 45% and 71% of dictators who otherwise would have given a positive amount (Broberg, Ellingsen, & Johannesson, 2007; Lazear, Malmendier, & Weber, 2012; Mellers, Haselhuhn, Tetlock, Silva, & Isen, 2010). For example, Andreoni and Bernheim (2009) show that otherwise generous dictators are willing to "hide behind randomness" (to exit from giving and blame it on a computer malfunction) to behave more selfishly.

Exit in the field. Similar effects have also been observed in field studies. For example, Andreoni, Rao, and Trachtman (2011) placed Salvation Army bell ringers in front of a busy urban grocery store with two main doors. Their analysis of traffic patterns in and out of the store suggests that people systematically adjust their routes away from the bell ringers, literally paying a cost to "avoid the ask". As a result, more than 65% more giving occurs when bell ringers are at both doors compared to just one door.

Similarly, DellaVigna, List, and Malmendier (2012) performed a massive field experiment in which they solicited door to door for a charity, where some households were given the chance to exit by being informed ahead of time that the solicitors would visit. Households that were warned of the visits answered their doors at a lower rate, ultimately diminishing the amount that the charity raised. Structural estimates implied that nearly 50% of responders "gave in" by donating more than they wanted, a remarkably similar amount to that implied in the laboratory games using exit. DellaVigna et al. provide the most thorough accounting of the costs of charity for the donor, an idea we will consider further in the discussion section.

Overall, these results suggest that individuals do not want to look selfish to an anonymous other, even though they do not mind actually being selfish if the recipient does not know it. These results also provide a first glimpse of why we might not see such high rates of spontaneous giving in real-world contexts as we do in dictator games: people are free to avoid situations in which they will feel compelled to help.

Strategic Ignorance

The exit studies we review above can be said to manipulate what others think as a strategy against giving in, either by not allowing them to ask or by hiding information from them about whether one has helped. Another branch of studies shows that generosity and prosocial behavior are greatly reduced when subjects can remain strategically ignorant by choosing not to know the consequences of their own actions.

Dana, Weber, and Kuang (2007) showed that dictators would refuse free information about the recipient's payoffs so that they could behave more selfishly. In a baseline game, a majority of dictators preferred an equal option (\$5 for both players) to a selfish option (\$6 for the dictator, \$1 for the recipient). In a hidden payoff condition, subjects did not know the recipient's payoffs, but only that a coin flip decided whether payoffs were same as in the baseline or "flipped" (\$6 for dictator and \$5 for recipient versus—and clearly superior to—\$5 for dictator and \$1 for recipient). Nearly half of dictators declined to reveal the true payoffs to themselves by merely clicking a button. This left dictators more likely to choose \$6 for themselves, which was equally likely to help or harm the recipient. As a result, when the payoffs turned out to be the same as in the baseline, only half as many dictators ended up choosing the equal payoff option.

Not knowing how another is impacted by one's action protects one from the pressure to give. Thus, choosing ignorance is a form of probabilistic exit from a giving situation. Subsequent studies involving variants of the hidden payoff treatment have found similar levels of strategic ignorance (Feiler, 2007; Grossman, 2013; Larson & Capra, 2009; van der Weele, 2013). Grossman (2013), however, finds that strategic ignorance is as fickle as generosity itself in dictator games. Dictators in a game like Dana et al.'s (2007) are less inclined to use strategic ignorance when forced to actively choose whether to reveal hidden payoffs rather than being allowed to remain passively ignorant. When payoffs will be revealed by default unless dictators actively click a button to keep them hidden, almost none chose strategic ignorance.

Connections to Social Psychology

Avoiding the disabled. Though recent research on what we classify as giving in is largely in the areas of behavioral and experimental economics, several classic findings in social psychology demonstrate a similarly reluctant aspect of prosocial behavior. Consider the "attributional ambiguity" study on avoiding the disabled by Snyder, Kleck, Strenta, and Mentzer (1979). When subjects were asked to watch a short film in one of two identical rooms, a majority chose the room in which a physically disabled confederate was sitting instead of the one with a control confederate. A "giving" interpretation of this result would be that participants preferred to sit with the disabled. When

the films in the two rooms were different, however, most subjects chose not to sit in the room with the disabled confederate, no matter which room it was. This result suggests that many subjects are giving in when they sit with the disabled person, apparently because they do not want their behavior to be attributed to the unacceptable motive of avoiding the disabled person. The sobering implications for workplace discrimination and social bias are clear. Many people will actually exercise bias if the situation is ambiguous enough to do so without revealing bias.

Aversive racism. Another social psychological example of giving in is seen in Gaertner and Dovidio's (1986) notion of aversive racism. Aversive racism holds that people may hold racist attitudes but take actions to make it appear as though they are egalitarian. Gaertner (1973) had confederates with stereotypically African-American and Caucasian voices call Caucasian members of liberal and conservative political parties. The callers claimed that their car had broken down and they dialed the wrong number with their last dime. Liberals were nearly equally likely to help an African-American and Caucasian caller if asked, while conservatives were more likely to help Caucasian callers. However, liberals were also more likely to hang up the phone prematurely on an African-American caller so that the request was not complete (19% versus only 3% for Caucasian callers; conservatives hung up on 8% of African-Americans versus 5% of Caucasian callers). Gaertner concluded that liberal participants were more strongly compelled by their principles to help once they were asked, but that many did not want to help more. In our framework, hanging up is a form of avoiding the request and raises the question whether some of those who help are giving in.

Diffusion of responsibility. Perhaps the most seminal finding on helping behavior from social psychology is the bystander effect created by diffusion of responsibility (Darley & Latane, 1968). In an emergency situation, the presence of others who can also help reduces one's personal sense of responsibility, thus lowering the chance that one will help. One challenge in understanding the bystander effect, however, is that it conflates two distinct reasons for not helping: (a) a pure diffusion of responsibility when others can help, and (b) free-riding on others to help the victim without personally assuming the costs. Several recent economic experiments have stripped away the free-riding element to study the unique effects of diffusion (see Bartling & Fischbacher, 2012; Coffman, 2011; Dana, Loewenstein, & Weber, 2012; Dana et al., 2007; Hamman, Loewenstein, & Weber, 2010). Most relevant to the issue of giving in, when participants can choose whether to have diffusion by hiring an intermediary to make a dictatorial decision, they often choose intermediaries who subsequently share less than dictators do when they have to make the decisions themselves (Bartling & Fischbacher, 2012).

Organizational Citizenship and Giving In

Though much of the work on OCB has focused on its positive implications, citizenship can also have its dark sides. Managers or powerful coworkers can create external pressures for employees to expand their workload by engaging in extra-role behavior that, contrary to the notion of citizenship, is not truly based on the spontaneous good will of the individual (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). This “compulsory citizenship” (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006, 2007) is often conceptualized as arising when powerful others hijack OCB to increase one’s workload. We have reviewed various instances of giving in to much more subtle social pressures, such that while not literally forced, generous behavior is often not totally voluntary either. Indeed, our argument is that the entire literature on economic games largely neglected this motive by not examining possibilities such as exit. Similarly, perhaps too much of the focus of research on OCB is focused on its benefits to the organization rather than disentangling subtle citizenship motives. Thus, we wonder how much OCB is better described as “organizationally coerced behavior”, a possibility we consider further in the discussion.

Estimating the Magnitude of Giving In

Table 1 summarizes the estimated proportion of giving in across these studies. Despite the variable methods, a remarkable consistency emerges. Roughly 50% of all generosity in these studies can be attributed to giving in.¹ Of course, we do not suggest that this figure can necessarily be applied to understanding all generosity. One caveat among many is that the behavior we are studying is

Table 1 Proportion of Behavior We Code as Giving In

Study	Within subject?	Double blind?	Giving in (%)
Dana et al. (2006)	Y	N	50
Broberg et al. (2007)	Y	N	71
Andreoni and Bernheim (2009, sample a):	Y	N	56
Andreoni and Bernheim (2009, sample b):	Y	N	48
Mellers et al. (2010)	Y	N	45
Lazear et al. (2012)	Y	N	62
Cain and Dana (2014, unpublished “Tokens” experiment)	Y	Y	67
Dana et al. (2007): Plausible deniability	N	N	53
Dana et al. (2007): Multiple dictators	N	N	54
Dana et al. (2007): Hidden payoffs	N	N	49
Larson and Capra (2009)	N	Y	72
Grossman (2013)	N	N	37
DellaVigna et al. (2012)	N	–	49

generosity on the margin. Individuals already budget their preferred amount of resources on prosociality before they become the subject of study, and what we observe is their reaction to another small opportunity to be generous. The subjects who give in, and those who do not give at all, have probably given in some other situations, and we cannot be assured that behavior in these studies is representative. Still, the results are provocative. Substantial giving in is present in every study, with no less than 37% of altruism apparently due to giving in.

The experimental literature reviewed above forces us to reconsider the nature of altruistic behavior. Through careful experimental manipulation, it is clear that many people who engage in apparent acts of giving are actually giving in (i.e. complying with a request that they would otherwise prefer to avoid). Understanding reluctant altruism is important because reluctant altruists are arguably those whose behavior is the most malleable. Givers can be relied upon to be good citizens for the reasons we outlined above, while purely selfish individuals are, by definition, bad citizens. Those who “give in” are the targets of intervention because their behavior is highly responsive to environmental contingencies. If many altruists are reluctant, allowing opportunities to exit will substantially reduce prosocial behavior. Conversely, not allowing opportunities to exit will make behavior more prosocial, but the downstream consequences of pressuring people into prosociality may potentially be negative. In the next section, we consider these and other issues.

Managerial and Organizational Implications

In this section, we consider the implications of the giving versus giving in distinction for organizations. The distinction averts longstanding and intractable philosophical debates about human nature and tautological inferences about selfish motives for altruism, instead pointing to the power of context and intervention. Generous and prosocial behavior is highly sensitive to manipulations in context, such as providing the opportunity to avoid being asked for help, as the basic research we highlighted shows. Here, we consider organizational contexts and managerial interventions that could lead people to help each other more. In addition to these antecedents of prosociality, we consider the possible consequences of intervention that could make people feel that they have given in. We argue that a delicate balance is necessary between creating conditions that lead people to give in to increase helping but not “arm twisting” to the degree that backlash occurs.

Target Those Who Give In

Grant (2013) notes that workers act as various types with regard to helping in the workplace—when they act as “takers” they are characterized by selfishness,

but when they act as “givers” they are characterized by contributing without seeking anything in return. Similarly, in the literature we review, a minority of subjects in most experiments behave as saintly givers who are generous even though there is the possibility of avoidance, while another minority behaves selfishly even when there is no possibility of avoidance. Applied to the workplace, saintly and selfish behaviors are not the targets of intervention. Saints behave as good citizens no matter what, while selfish workers will not be good citizens of their own accord.

Much like Grant (2013), who proposes that the vast middle ground is inhabited by “matchers” who respond in kind to givers and takers, we propose a vast middle ground of giving in, and it is this behavior, by definition, that is responsive to context. In the basic research, 50% of the generosity we observed could actually be attributed to giving in. That 50% tipped the scales in favor of majority generous or selfish behavior, depending on whether the context allowed people to exit, remain strategically ignorant, or otherwise practice some form of avoidance. While a great deal of citizenship literature has identified the traits of good citizens, a paramount concern when managing individuals should focus on those who give in, precisely because the altruistic behavior of those individuals is the most malleable.

Are those who give in a stable, predictable type? The nascent research in this area needs further development along these lines. Just as Grant (2013) proposes that givers, takers, and matchers are stable personality types, there is also evidence of stable personality traits that are associated with giving in. Lotz, Schlösser, Cain, and Fetchenhauer (2013), for example, find that those high in justice sensitivity behave like saintly givers across a variety of contexts, while those low in justice sensitivity are more likely to be selfish, especially when any wrinkle in the situation allows them the possibility of avoidance. Perhaps the group that is low in justice sensitivity contains both takers and those who give in; the takers are never generous, while those who give in are generous depending on the circumstances. There are possibilities for identifying, selecting, and influencing that type to the extent that giving in is a type. Patterns of behavior in basic research would suggest that, in fact, those inclined to give in will outnumber those who consistently give or take, which presents both opportunities and challenges for management. The opportunities arise in the potential to leverage giving in to increase helping in the workplace. The concept of giving in provides a refined view of motives behind helping, shifting the focus from finding those few who help unconditionally to creating the conditions in which most people are turned into helpers. The challenge arises in doing so without creating negative long-term consequences that can occur when workers are made to feel that they have given in.

How to Get People to Give In

Recognize the power of requests. Basic research on giving in suggests mechanisms by which a large proportion of people can be swayed to either generosity or selfishness. Key among mechanisms that induce generosity is the request for aid (Flynn & Bohns, 2010). Our review confirms that both direct requests, such as DellaVigna et al.'s (2012) charity solicitations, and indirect requests, such as economic games that “suggest” that altruism is appropriate, can powerfully influence behavior. However, we also identify a degree of sophistication among would-be targets of requests in that they avoid requests, either by way of exit or strategic ignorance. Often, then, the key to making better organizational citizens will lie in limiting opportunities for avoidance of those requests.

Direct requests for aid are powerful influences on behavior because they are difficult to refuse if they cannot be avoided (Andreoni & Rao, 2011; Andreoni et al., 2011; Flynn & Bohns, 2010). Yet, people systematically underestimate how likely a direct request is to be fulfilled (Flynn & Bohns, 2012; Flynn & Lake, 2008; Newark et al., 2014). Perhaps one reason for this bias is that people hold the wrong model of generosity. If one thinks that a request for assistance will only be successful if the responder has motivations to give, then one will greatly underestimate the likelihood of success. Our review suggests that many will give in to direct requests, even those not especially disposed to help. Future research could be enhanced by exploring this motive. According to Newark et al., if people's requests for help are refused, they underestimate the likelihood of getting a yes the next time they ask, specifically because they underestimate how much other people do not like saying no twice. One possibility is that these second requests are inducing more giving in.

Cialdini (2006) reports that when residents were asked door to door to take a group of juvenile delinquents to the zoo that month, 17% of those asked said yes. Whether or not these respondents would actually follow through, this is a remarkably high level of agreement. When other residents were instead asked to provide counseling to juvenile delinquents for the next two years, nobody said yes. Not all requests result in yeses, but Cialdini remarks that there is a “moment of power” when people say no. After refusing to council delinquents for two years, the residents were given a second request: to take a group of juvenile delinquents to the zoo that month. In this case, 50% said yes to the zoo request. Granted a daytrip to the zoo does not sound so bad when framed next to prolonged counselling. That said, the respondents, having already said no to the first request probably felt greater pressure to say yes to the second request. Requests—and secondary requests—are surprisingly powerful.

Recognize the power of being seen. What is common to nearly all of the research on giving in is that it involves high levels of what one might call

“scrutiny”. In the dictator studies, the potential recipients of generosity were anonymous, but they still knew that the dictator was another participant like them who just happened to be given an endowment of money and the opportunity to share it. The potential recipients also knew how much money the dictator kept. Exit keeps potential recipients unaware of these things and thus reduces the pressure to be generous. As we will discuss further below, critics of the dictator paradigm have pointed out that “scrutiny that is unparalleled in the field” (Levitt & List, 2007, p. 158) should limit the interpretation of laboratory results. We offer a different interpretation. What these studies teach us is that scrutiny is an important contextual factor for helping behavior.

Scrutiny can also be high in natural settings. At one MBA institution we know of, students ran a charity drive in which the pictures of the entire class were initially posted on a main board, in the middle of a common hallway. Pictures were each moved to a donor board when the student made a donation. As more and more students donated, fewer students remained pictured on the main board. Initially, it seemed as if donors were being rewarded. When it got down to just a handful of non-donors on the main board, however, it seemed as if non-donors were being punished. This strategy was tremendously effective in garnering donations, though some students complained about the feeling of coerciveness that this level of scrutiny entails, a problem we address below.

Scrutiny can be tricky to manage. We know from the diffusion literature (Darley & Latane, 1968) that increasing the number of onlookers who could help can actually decrease the likelihood of each individual’s helping. Also, being scrutinized by a large group of recipients can be less compelling than being scrutinized by a single recipient (Haran & Cain, 2010; Nordgren & McDonnell, 2011; Slovic, 2012). Furthermore, borrowing from the “unidentified victim effect” (Small & Loewenstein, 2003), even if a single recipient is merely identified as “receiver #8” or “one who has already made a request to you”, that will be far more compelling than a host of potential recipients that one does not yet feel tied to. Thus, when it comes to helper–recipient relationships, the scrutiny of fully identified one-to-one relationships is often more compelling than the scrutiny of one-to-many or many-to-one. This all suggests that how one is scrutinized, and by whom, can be a powerful but complex determinant of helping behavior.

Recognize the power of strategic ignorance. Experimental subjects are consistently more selfish if they can choose not to receive information about the consequences of their actions for others. Thus, when people want to be selfish or behave unethically, it will be easier to do so if they can structure their environment such that they can avoid knowing things that will make them feel conflicted and/or ashamed (Neilson, 2009). Several examples of ethical failures within organizations can be tied to an organizational structure

that allowed key players to remain ignorant of how objectives were achieved (Dana, 2005; van der Weele, 2013): strategic ignorance was evidently used to avoid accountability by key players in the Watergate and Enron scandals; Nazi minister Albert Speer was advised (and complied) never to inspect the Auschwitz camp to avoid becoming morally conflicted; collegiate coaches and athletic programs create incentives for players to use performance-enhancing drugs while turning a blind eye to the drug use. Pharmaceutical companies reward physicians for recruiting more patients into medical studies than can reasonably meet inclusion criteria, but then do not sufficiently follow-up recruitment procedures.

The delegation of responsibilities is useful for promoting efficiency. However, delegation has a dark side when it merely allows organizations to be structured in ways that shield responsible individuals from actionable knowledge. Certainly, some malfeasance is due to “a few bad apples” (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011), but research on giving in suggests that the behavior of a vast middle, one between the bad apples and the good apples, critically relies on opportunities to remain ignorant of harmful consequences. One can promote good behavior if one encourages that middle to look at the consequences of their actions (Cain & Dana, 2014). For example, if football coaches had to look at frequent blood and liver test results from their athletes, they would feel guiltier about the pressures they are putting on their athletes to do steroids. These coaches use strategic ignorance to fool themselves into downplaying, for example, the effects of encouraging their athletes to “go talk to Tommy about weightlifting. He is an animal!”

Consider Reducing Giving In

A key question is whether leveraging factors that cause people to give in and behave more generously (on average) in the immediate term has negative effects in both the short and long term. Consider the idea of placing tip jars at the point of sale to motivate employees to serve better. The tip jar is an implicit request—a suggestion to give—that could make customers uncomfortable if they do not feel a tip is warranted. Anecdotally, the authors know of someone who uses credit cards (instead of cash) to avoid the pressure of this implicit request, which creates a processing fee for the vendor. To the extent this behavior is common, which is an area of possible future research, subtle relationships between the presence of tip jars and customer behavior may only emerge with awareness of giving in. Haggag and Paci (2014) identify “backlash” to default tip suggestions in taxi cab credit-card processors. Higher suggestions lead to higher average amounts of tip, but they also cause significantly more patrons to leave \$0.

The question of whether backlash ends up making requests more costly than beneficial in the long run is another question in need of research. In a

popular column about point-of-sale charitable requests and the supposed warm glow the consumer feels when giving, Felten (2010, p. 1) writes:

Well, I'm not glowing. It's more like a slow burn. If I answer yes to the pitch, I don't feel the least bit generous; I'm left with the nagging sensation of having been made to cry "uncle." . . . And if you don't pony up at all, there's the reflexive twinge of shame. Are these the emotions that businesses want to produce in their customers?

A recent natural experiment in Sweden suggests that even implicit requests for charity can drive away customers (Knutsson, Martinsson, & Wollbrant, 2013). Swedish bottles and cans have a required deposit for which people can receive a refund at recycling machines located at grocery stores. As machines failed, one grocery chain replaced them with new machines that had an additional option of donating the refund to charity. Locations with these new machines saw an immediate and sustained decline in recycling volume. As total recycling in Sweden slightly increased over the study period, it appears that some people took their recycling to locations where machines did not have a charity option, akin to Andreoni et al.'s (2011) avoidance of the bell ringer. What is interesting is the impersonality of the request. Nobody directly appealed for charity, and in most cases, nobody observes the recycler making the choice.

The impact of generosity on the giver is a subject in need of more research attention, although at least one study we reviewed explicitly suggests that aggressively marketed charities make many individuals worse off for being asked (DellaVigna et al., 2012). One can leverage giving in for some short-term gains, but this can breed feelings of resentment in the long term.

Make it easier to exit. If regulators or organizational designers are worried about the negative consequences of giving in, they may wish to make it easier for consumers to avoid implicit or explicit requests. Though Knutsson et al. (2013) suggests that even very impersonal requests can pressure consumers to exit, less-personal requests will surely tend to be easier to ignore. Sah, Lowenstein, and Cain (2013) examine how to decrease consumer resentment. When advisors are forced to disclose their personal conflicts of interest, it becomes transparent to the advisees that following the advice will personally help the advisor. Perversely, advisees are then burdened with a pressure to comply that is similar to that caused by the direct request for aid. Even though the advisees trusted the advice less, they complied more. One interpretation is that they wanted to help their advisors. However, advisees felt discomfort in complying and reported that they were less likely to deal with the advisor in the future. When advisees were given opportunities to secretly renege their choice or make their initial choice away from the prying eyes of the advisor, this reduced compliance and made the advisees feel better about the advice relationship.

Research Implications

In this section, we consider what the giving versus giving-in distinction offers toward interpreting the results of past studies and designing future research.

What Sorts of Prosocial Behaviors Are Reluctant?

We have argued that much of the altruism seen in simple studies—perhaps 50%—is giving in. What about prosocial behavior that is directly or indirectly reciprocal, such as helping a coworker who has previously helped you, or punishing a norm violator as a third-party observer? Recent research shows that opportunities for exit have little effect on subjects' generosity when they are sharing reciprocally with someone who previously shared with them (van der Weele, Kulisa, Kosefeld, & Friebe, 2014) or when sharing indirectly reciprocal to someone who was previously generous with others (Ong & Lin, 2011).

Conversely, punishment that is not directly reciprocal, such as altruistic punishment by a third party, may be more reluctant. For example, subjects who can punish another player demonstrate lower rates of strategic ignorance if that player's actions affect them personally (reciprocal punishment) than if they affect a third party (Szymanska, 2011). The 50% rule of giving in may then vary, depending on whether individuals perceive themselves as reciprocating, i.e. matching others' behaviors.

Interpreting Field Versus Lab Results

Management researchers often worry that laboratory results will not generalize to field contexts (see discussion in Moore & Flynn, 2008). Indeed, the laboratory designs we have discussed have already come under fire by economists who question whether they reflect anything other than experiment demand effects (Bardsley, 2008; Levitt & List, 2007; List, 2007). The argument is twofold: (a) the results of experiments such as the dictator game are sensitive to notoriously small changes in procedures, and (b) natural observations seem inconsistent with dictator games; e.g. in real life, how often do strangers hand out envelopes of money, or how often do winning investors share some of their gains with losing investors at the close of trading?

It does not follow, however, to conclude that laboratory studies cannot inform us about real-world motives for altruism based on these observations. Behavior in laboratory games is indeed highly sensitive to context. Yet, we have presented several results from these games that have held consistently across multiple replications. Further, behavior across games with varying contexts can be predicted from personality traits that are known to be stable (Lotz et al., 2013). Thus, if the results seem volatile, it is not because the method is unreliable. Rather, dictator

results are fragile and context-dependent because altruism, and perhaps morality at large, is itself fragile and context-dependent. The games provide insight into what these contextual factors are, including transparency of the request, common knowledge² between the asker and the responder, and the culturally shared expectations of the asker (see Dana et al., 2006). We sometimes see more generosity in lab experiments than field contexts in part because of the experiment setting up an unavoidable request. In more natural settings, we can often avoid situations in which we know we will feel such pressure to be generous—e.g. by ignoring an email, ducking out of the hallway, or at least averting one’s eyes, to evade a needy colleague. However, when people cannot opt out in the real world, they often give in. Thus, the question is not whether lab altruism is real, but how we can use it to help us explain and influence behavior outside of the lab. Lab experiments on altruism were developed to better understand the altruism we already see in the real world.

Research Design Considerations

Experimenters should have a better understanding of how observation affects responses when designing experiments. Even in situations that are purportedly non-strategic (e.g. because they are anonymous and one-shot), strategic concerns may remain because the agent is concerned about the audience’s reaction. Therefore, one may wish to design conditions that remove observation, where choices are not only anonymous but private, as in the “private” game of Dana et al. (2006). Furthermore, when there is observation, experimenters should be more careful to consider how it might interact with their experimental designs. Observation may increase pressure to be generous. However, if there is a norm of self-interest (Ratner & Miller, 2001), then people may give *less* when observed. Likewise, Murnighan et al. (2001) explain that participants may want to portray an “economist” self-impression. In fact, the more trained in economics one is, the more one might think that one “ought” to be self-interested (Frank, Gilovich, & Regan, 1993). As such, one might be *reluctantly selfish* because one thinks that others expect him or her to give as little as possible (Dana et al., 2006).

Even a person who only cares about being generous might not be sure what to do in some experiments. Because the exchange in many experimental tasks is purely distributional (\$1 for you versus \$1 for me), keeping as much experimental money as possible and later donating it to a charity might be more “generous” than giving it away to the anonymous—but probably upper-middle-class—lab partner. To combat these problems, one suggestion is to design experiments where expectations are more unanimous (for example, see the experimental designs of Dana et al., 2007). Our more general point is for experimenters to be careful in managing delicate contextual factors that may sway the vast middle portion of people one way or the other.

Some Remaining Theoretical Questions

How is giving in related to approach versus avoidance? The terminology of exit may remind the reader of Lewin's (1935) view of opposing fields of force: "approach" versus "avoidance". A Lewinian framework indeed provides relevant insights on levers of behavioral change (Miller & Prentice, 2013), e.g. allowing one to distinguish between encouraging people to give in versus discouraging people from exit. While we do not dispute a Lewinian analogue to giving in, we think that reluctant altruism's notion of avoidance borrows more from that of Jeremy Bentham.

Bentham (1781) depicted legal sanctions in which fearing the pain of punishment was "coercive" and expecting the pleasure of reward was "alluring". This distinction has become known as the proverbial "carrot and stick" approach to motivation. Pressures either pull behavior toward an outcome or goal (the carrot) or push behavior toward an outcome or goal (the stick). Related to Lewin (1935), the carrot is something people want to approach, and the stick is something that people want to avoid. In the Benthamite model, the carrot and the stick both nudge the actor in the same direction (e.g., to being generous) but with different psychological mechanisms (alluring/coercive). While we agree that Lewin is illuminating on this point, a Benthamite model clearly suggests that some altruistic acts stem from their being alluring (giving), while other acts stem from coercion (giving in).

Is giving in a mistake? Much of the prior literature on altruism asked why people give and to what extent giving is selfish and/or rational. Now, researchers can also ask these questions about giving in. For example, suppose that giving in solely pertains to avoiding psychological threat. This opens deeper questions about the nature of that threat and why people care about it. Recall that, in the lab research on giving in, people were reacting to the scrutiny of observers who were totally anonymous. But, why do people care what anonymous others think of them? Perhaps such concerns are merely misapplications of good rules of thumb (Rand & Nowak, 2013)—e.g. "try not to disappoint others . . . it tends to be dangerous". Yet, subjects seem sophisticated enough to secretly exit situations that elicit giving in. So, we are left wondering whether those who exited are better off, or if they made some sort of mistake. In ongoing experiments, we find that people often predict that they would not give in under circumstances where—unbeknownst to them, but according to the data—a large majority of people actually do give in. This does not allow us to conclude who is making the mistake, those who do give in, or those who predict that they would not, but it does suggest that people underappreciate the forces that lead to giving in.

Does giving in ultimately reflect a concern for others? We end by considering the broader question of whether giving in reflects selfishness or a genuine

concern for others. To tease apart two types of answers, reconsider Celine, the employee who reluctantly covered her coworker's shift. Suppose Celine helps when asked, because she does not want her coworker's feelings to be hurt. Hurt feelings can be avoided in several ways. If Celine avoids the request, her coworker's feelings are spared the pain of refusal. However, the question remains, why does Celine care about not hurting someone else's feelings? Perhaps she is personally close to this coworker and simply cares about *her feelings*. Alternatively, perhaps Celine impurely does not want to be the *target* of those feelings; would Celine be fine if someone else hurt the feelings of her coworker, so long as Celine was left out of it all?

These are interesting questions for future research and discussion. Our point, more broadly, is that it is often hard to say no, even to total strangers who we may never encounter again. But by complying with the request, who is one appeasing by giving in? The studies reviewed here suggest a complicated and perhaps deeply conflicted account. For example, those who exit from the dictator game do not seem particularly concerned about their self-image, what the experimenter might think of them, nor the welfare of the other participant—and yet, publicly keeping all \$10 for oneself seems to immediately raise visceral concerns about offending all three. Though we hope that the giving versus giving-in distinction proves useful to practitioners and researcher alike, collectively, we are only beginning to scratch the surface of the deep complexities of human altruism.

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Notes

1. A weighted average of all studies by sample size would converge to the 49% figure in DellaVigna et al. (2012), which is based on a much larger sample size of 7668. Even the simple average from all studies is 54%, dropping to 51% if the double-blind studies are excluded. The larger percentages in the two double-blind studies are interesting because those are the only studies in which avoidance includes not only the would-be recipient but also observations from the experimenter. It is entirely possible that, when this factor is taken into account, giving in explains *more than* 50% of giving, but we caution against drawing conclusions from these relatively small studies.
2. By “common knowledge”, we refer to knowledge that is mutually known and also is known to be known. For example, a tip jar is compelling not only when the customer and server mutually know about the tip jar, but when each know that the other knows about it, and so on.

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