ROLE BREADTH -
A HIGHER ORDER CONSTRUCT IDENTIFYING THE GOOD SOLDIER

With the goal of addressing weaknesses of the OCB construct and identifying the good soldier, the role breadth construct is introduced. Conceived as a higher order construct of individuals’ self-concept in the organization, it intends to capture the amount of work responsibility embraced. It is proposed that RB effectively identifies the good soldiers and distinguishes them from the good actors.

Ever since early works (Barnard, 1938; Katz & Kahn, 1966) first exalted the importance to the organization of spontaneous behaviors exceeding formal expectations, a large volume of role research has emerged, most of which has focused on organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). The organizational behavior literature is replete with studies of individual roles in organizations, focusing almost exclusively on extra role behaviors and even more so, on organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). With a near singular focus on substantive validity, research on OCB exploring its relationship with important constructs such as organizational commitment and performance has had a significant impact not only in organizational behavior (OB) but in diverse fields including human resource management, strategy and international business (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). Evolving beyond the identification of antecedents to also include important organizational outcomes, arguably among the most significant contribution of OCB research has been the empirical confirmation of Organ’s original assumption that OCBs, aggregated over time and people, enhances organizational performance (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Alongside this surge in attention, some important conceptual and measurement confounds challenging the construct’s validity have been identified. Conceptually, the widespread focus on OCBs as extra role remains the construct’s most noted shortcoming, while operationalizing an intrapsychic construct as a behavior is arguably its most serious measurement problem. In agreement with research calling for a reconceptualization of OCBs (Morrison, 1994; Organ, 1997; Van Dyne, L., Graham, J. W. & Dienesch, 1994) this paper introduces role breadth (RB) as an individual’s self-concept in the organization. The introduction of RB into the role nomological network does not intend to replace OCBs, but instead, to provide a measure that alongside it will better inform OCB research.
This paper is presented in three parts. Given that OCBs have been proposed as fulfilling the promise of identifying the good soldier, and that individuals who expend such behaviors are commonly referred to as good citizens, the first section examines the construct’s effectiveness toward achieving this goal. It is argued that in addition to conceptual and measurement challenges, its construct validity is undermined by a disconnect between its conceptual and measurement components. In the second section the role breadth construct is introduced and a theoretical case presented for its effective identification of the good soldier in the organizational context. This higher order construct composed of conscientiousness, psychological ownership, work ethic and perceived job breadth contributes to OCB research by introducing an OCB typology which allows for the “good soldier” to be theoretically and empirically distinguished from the “good actor”. Finally, the third section of this paper concludes with a discussion of the contribution of RB and opportunities for future research.

The Problem of Inferring the Good Soldier from a Measure of Behavior

A key argument of this paper is that while research on OCBs have significantly contributed toward our understanding of positive behaviors dispensed toward the organization and its members, challenges to the construct constrain its ability to effectively identify the good soldier. In addition to addressing conceptual and measurement issues identified in the literature, this section makes the case that a weak correlation between its conceptualization and operationalization is arguably the greatest threat to its construct validity and effective identification of the good soldier.

The in-role-extra-role distinction on which OCBs were initially grounded has consistently been identified in the literature as the construct’s most troublesome issue. The original conception of OCBs described extra-role behaviors; i.e. those which are not prescribed or required for the fulfillment of one’s job (Bateman & Organ, 1983). In-role behaviors, in contrast, were defined (though never subjected to empirical validation) as those that are “required or expected ... the basis of regular and ongoing performance” (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998, p. 108). Despite empirical challenge to such neatly prescribed distinction (for example, see Morrison, 1994), as well as reflection by Organ (1997) himself on the need for the construct’s reconceptualization, much of the emerging OCB research continues to be anchored on the in-role-extra-role distinction and OCBs continue to be described as discretionary. A justification for doing so despite empirical evidence to the contrary is that given the unlikelihood that most job descriptions include listings of various OCBs these behaviors are discretionary and extra-role (Organ et al, 2006).

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the in-role-extra-role distinction grounding OCBs remains Morrison’s (1994) findings that employees holding the same position or office can differ in how broadly they define their jobs. Evidence of employee variation in defining their in-role responsibilities renders it inaccurate to define in-role behaviors as consisting strictly of the formally prescribed tasks associated with one’s office in the organization, whereby it would be expected that these be static among individuals holding the same functional position. Instead, rather than a set package negotiated with the organization and varying only with a change in office, empirical evidence suggests that in-role behaviors can best be understood as a cognitive construction of each individual employee and can even include
behaviors that are previously conceptualized as strictly extra-role (Morrison, 1994). Also seeking to account for the overlap between in-role and extra-role behaviors, Kidder and Parks (2001) propose gender as a moderating variable of whether certain extra-role behaviors will be considered in-role or extra-role. In other words, the authors demonstrate that gender differences account for some variation in employee identification of extra-role behaviors as in-role. Categorizing OCBs as either masculine or feminine, the authors found that individuals tend to consider an OCB of the same gender to be in-role while viewing an OCB of the opposite gender as extra-role. For example, a male in a male job role will more likely consider a masculine OCB to be part of his role and a feminine OCB as extra-role.

The in-role-extra-role confound inherent to much of the OCB research may be aggravated by its measurement. Research investigating whether respondents in fact consider OCBs to be extra-role is limited to work by Morrison (1994) and Kidder’s (2002) subsequent investigation on gender and OCBs, and to less than a handful of subsequent work incorporating Morrison’s measure of perceived job breadth (Bachrach & Jex, 2000; Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler & Purcell, 2004; Klieman, Quinn, & Harris, 2000). Instead, the majority of research takes for granted that OCBs are extra role, asking simply whether or not the behaviors are performed and oftentimes even including leading questions intended to clarify to respondents that extra-role behaviors are those which are not rewarded by the organization and not punished if withdrawn (for ex.: Puffer, 1987; Tepper, Lockhart & Hoobler, 2001; Zellars, Tepper & Duffy, 2002).

The strict assumption of OCBs as being discretionary offers another challenge to the construct. As evidenced by Morrison’s (1994) findings, it would seem insufficient to conclude discretion on a behavior on the basis of absence of its specification in the job description. In other words, given her findings that some OCBs are in fact considered in-role, it would logically follow that individuals would report little discretion in the execution of these behaviors even if they are not specified in their formal job descriptions. Also, and related to the in-role-extra-role confound, specifying OCBs as a discretionary behavior fails to consider the change in expectations that can result after an individual dispenses never performed before valuable behaviors. This is especially the case in current organizational landscapes in which one’s success or mere continuance in the organization can no longer be achieved by strict adherence to the minimal prescriptions contained in one’s job contract.

Research has also called into question the construct validity of OCB measures, cautioning that “it is essential to investigate the construct validity of OCB before continuing with further substantive research in this area” (Latham, Millman & Karambayya, 1997, pp. 210). Like much of the research that followed, Bateman and Organ’s (1983) first study on OCBs was a substantive, rather than construct validation study, whereby the relationship between supervisors’ measures of employee OCBs and employees’ job satisfaction was explored. As a consequence, and coupled with the fact that many of the OCB instruments “have been developed without explicit theoretical frameworks” (Van Dyne et al., 1994, p. 785), the list of OCBs presented to respondents is far from comprehensive (Schnake, 1991). Additionally, a survey of subject matter experts (OCB researchers, scholars, managers and union employees) found that only OCB researchers were able to distinguish OCB items from altruism, collectivism and organizational commitment (Latham et al., 1997). The important implication of these findings is that there may not be a significant difference between the content domain of OCBs and the other behavioral constructs, including those measuring behaviors uncharacteristic of the good soldier, such as impression management.
More broadly speaking, it is proposed that the greatest challenge facing OCBs is the arguably weak correlation coefficient between the OCB construct and the OCB measures. In his first book on OCBs as well as in his most recent volume on the construct, Organ recounts an experience with a physically demanding task he was required to perform in a contract summer job during his college years (Organ, 1988; Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). He describes his struggle pushing large rolls of paper off an elevator and the impending disaster averted thanks to the unsolicited help of a regular paper mill worker. This helping act leads the authors to christen Organ’s benefactor as ‘Sam’, “short for the Good Samaritan” (Organ et al., 2006, p. 2), as he is subsequently referred to in the book. In that same chapter, where the basic assumptions of OCBs are laid out and explained, possible reasons for Sam’s behavior are offered. Despite the authors’ contention that “understanding the proximal motive for OCB is not essential to our appreciation of it, nor to our recognition, definition, or understanding of it” (Organ et al., 2006, p. 7), a self interested motive for Sam’s behavior is conspicuously lacking. However, is it totally farfetched to also consider that perhaps Sam’s supervisor was present, and that this was a good chance for Sam to be seen in a good light? More cynically speaking, would it also not fall within the realm of possibility that Sam only engages in such behaviors in his supervisor’s presence? In line with research demonstrating that what are thought of as OCBs may in fact be impression management (Bolino, 1999; Bolino, Varela, Bande, & Turnley, 2006; Bowler & Brass, 2006; Rioux & Penner, 2001), this paper argues the importance of not discounting the possibility that Sam’s behavior was motivated by the presence of his supervisor. Given this very real possibility, it becomes especially problematic that the assessment of the occurrence of such behaviors is most commonly measured by surveying Sam’s supervisor, the most likely target audience of self-serving OCBs. Furthermore, given the fact that unless Sam is brought into the discussion his motive remains unknown, it seems hasty to discount self-interested motivations when making attributions about his behavior. This is especially problematic since, while Organ and colleagues (2006) maintain that it is not important to make attributions or identify the motivation behind OCBs, organizational citizenship behaviors are increasingly equated with, and referred to in the literature as reflecting the acts of self-less good citizens and good soldiers.

Role Breadth (RB) – Identifying the Good Soldier through the Soldier’s Self-Concept

Role breadth is proposed as both enabling OCBs to effectively identify the good soldier as well as addressing the challenges facing the OCB construct. In other words, the introduction of RB provides two distinct yet related contributions to the organizational behavior literature: the identification of the “good soldier” and the introduction of a typology of OCBs which will make it possible to distinguish between the behaviors performed by “good soldiers” and those performed by “good actors”.

Role breadth (RB) is conceived as an individual’s self-concept capturing the breadth of responsibility he/she feels ownership for in the organization. Given that a self-concept refers to an idea about the self (Baumeister, 1998) consisting of an “organized informational summary of perceived facts about oneself” (Bergner, Raymond & Holmes, 2000), and that the basic and primary purpose of organizational membership is to contribute one’s effort to the achievement of organizational goals, it is argued that an employee’s RB constitutes a major determinant of his/her felt identity in the
organization. Identifying an individual’s RB allows for the identification of those employees who are increasingly valuable in the workplace: those who will stick around when times are tough and who do not reduce their pace, effort, or commitment to the organization when no one is watching. RB therefore makes it possible to identify the good soldiers; i.e. those most likely to make personal sacrifices that are likely to go unrewarded by the organization in tough times, despite similarly observed behaviors in normal times.

Similar to how core-self evaluations contribute a theoretical concept to explain the effect of disposition on job satisfaction, by addressing the shortcomings of OCBs, RB is proposed as identifying the self-concept of a “good soldier”. Conceived as a higher order construct of existing measures in much the same manner as the higher order core self-evaluations construct (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997) and similar Judge and colleagues’ (2002) procedure in the selection of the factors combining to form core-self evaluations, as well as other recent work involving higher order constructs (for ex., Stajkovic, 2006), the choice of factors combining to form RB is theoretically driven.

Given that the fundamental raison d’être of all organizational membership is to contribute effort toward the accomplishment of group goals, an individual’s response to “how much am I responsible for?” is proposed as constituting a major determinant of one’s psychological positioning in the organization, reflecting his/her organizational self-concept. Furthermore, given that the underlying reason for organization membership is to contribute effort toward organizational goals, at all times individuals are faced with two possible behavioral options at work: behaviors that contribute toward the attainment of organizational goals (for example negotiating with a supplier or helping a co-worker) or those contributing nothing toward organizational goal attainment (such as taking a smoking break or writing a personal email). As such, and in line with evidence that an individual’s self-concept is relatively stable and resistant to change (Bergner et al., 2000), it is proposed that one’s response to “how much am I responsible for?” permeates all his/her subsequent decisions regarding whether to meet minimal requirements or to exceed the call of duty. In other words, the belief regarding the amount of responsibility an individual owns is expected to result in relatively little within subject variance in expressions of how wide or narrow his/her contribution should be, as congruent behavioral choices reinforce one’s self concept directly as well as indirectly through outcomes and others’ expectations (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

The Process of RB Formation and Persistence over Time
An individual’s felt responsibility toward the organization is key to the conceptualization of role breadth and essential toward understanding the proposed factor structure of this formative higher order construct. A dictionary search on responsibility in varied sources\(^7\) yields two major components of its meaning: a quality of being responsible and an object or target of responsibility. Capturing these two broad components, four factors are proposed as indicators of a higher order role breadth construct: conscientiousness, psychological ownership, work ethic, and perceived job breadth. Whereas conscientiousness taps into the quality of being responsible, psychological ownership, work ethic and perceived job breadth capture the object or target of responsibility.

Comprised of four narrow traits (achievement, dependability, order and cautiousness) (Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki and Cortina, 2006) conscientiousness is proposed as the most significant dispositional predictor of an individual’s sense of responsibility. In fact, some researchers equate conscientiousness with responsibility, while others believe the construct also captures volitional aspects such as being hardworking and achievement oriented (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Characteristics of a high scorer include being organized, reliable, self-disciplined, and scrupulous, while a low scorer will tend toward being lazy, unreliable, and negligent (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Research provides evidence of a positive relationship with behaviors associated with the quality of being responsible (such as retention and attendance) and a negative relationship with behaviors associated with irresponsibility (such as theft and disciplinary problems) (Ones, Viswesvaran & Schmidt, 1993).

In line with the raison d’être of organizational membership, the object or target of responsibility in the organizational context can be broadly captured by felt responsibility toward the organization as a whole (captured by psychological ownership) as well as toward one’s work (manifested by work ethic and perceived job breadth).

In much the same way that in daily life individuals demonstrate the most responsibility toward that which they feel ownership toward (for example, the responsibility they feel to sweep their walkway stops at the invisible boundary where it turns into the public sidewalk) so it is in the organization. It is proposed that the broadest and most fundamental appraisal of responsibility toward the organization is psychological ownership, or the felt possessiveness toward one’s workplace, whereby “the target becomes part of the psychological owner’s identity” (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001, p. 299). At the core of the psychological ownership construct as well as its operationalization and measurement, is the notion of possession (mine!) with most research on ownership being directed toward the organization (for example, “this is MY organization”, “this is OUR company”) (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Although not much empirical work has been done on psychological ownership, existing evidence supports the link between a sense of ownership and felt responsibility for the ownership object. For example, Parker and colleagues (1997) demonstrated that increased sense of ownership led to a greater recognition of the

importance of certain knowledge and skills in employees’ performance of their job as well as more attention and concern being paid to the goals and problems of the organization. Research has also provided evidence of commitment resulting from greater sense of ownership (VandeWalle, Van Dyne, & Kostova, 1995; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004).

Two factors are proposed as effectively capturing an individual’s felt responsibility toward his/her work; one representing the value one places on responsibility and the other consisting of a quantification of the value of felt responsibility toward work. Capturing “a commitment to the value and importance of hard work” (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2002, p. 452), work ethic is arguably the most effective gauge of an individual’s attitudes and beliefs regarding his/her felt responsibility toward work. Consistent with the fact that individuals who espouse a high work ethic tend to make efficient use of their time as well as value hard work and recognize the intrinsic value of work, work ethic has been found to be significantly correlated with job involvement (Brockner, Grover, & Blonder 1988; Miller et al., 2002). The relationship between work ethic and job involvement has also been examined under varying conditions of stress, such as in layoff situations, and findings indicate that, with the exception of situations of extreme stress, layoff survivors with a high work ethic seem to be less distracted by stress as evidenced by their job involvement scores (Brockner et al., 1988).

Finally, consisting of a list of organizational citizenship behaviors which individuals may or may not report as being their responsibility, perceived job breadth (Morrison, 1994) quantitatively captures the range of responsibility an individual takes ownership for in the organization. In other words, perceived job breadth quantifies individuals’ sense of responsibility toward their jobs by determining “where they draw the line between in-role and extra-role behavior” (Morrison, 1994, p. 1544). The theorized relationship between an individual’s perceived job breadth to and his/her sense of responsibility toward work is also supported by its positive relationship with supervisor rated OCBs (Morrison, 1994).

Perceived job breadth is operationalized as the count of OCBs that an individual indicates as considering a part of his/her job, whereby the greater the amount of OCBs indicated as part of the job, the wider the perceived job breadth. While at first glance perceived job breadth might seem to consist of the very nature of what RB intends to capture, the two are complementary but distinct. Because it consists of a count of OCBs considered to be a part of the job, in and of itself, it is impossible to know why this is the case. If an individual reports a wide perceived job breadth solely because the organization requires that such OCBs be performed as part of the job, then it is possible that that he/she may not continue to perform them in a job where the same requirements do not exist. In order to better understand and predict individual behavior it is necessary to more fully account for variation in felt responsibility. It is therefore argued that along with conscientiousness, psychological ownership and work ethic, perceived job breadth more fully accounts for variation in individuals’ self concept of felt responsibility toward the organization.

In sum, conceived as capturing an individual’ self-concept as determined by his/her breadth of felt responsibility in the organization, role breadth consists of two key aspects: a quality of being responsible and a target of responsibility. Role breadth is therefore proposed as a higher order construct consisting of conscientiousness (capturing the quality of being responsible), psychological
ownership (capturing responsibility toward the organization), and work ethic and perceived job breadth (capturing responsibility toward one’s work).

Proposed Outcomes of RB

Two broad sets of outcomes as envisaged as significant correlates of RB (see Figure 2). The first set of outcomes taps into times of change or instability for the organization such as when it is facing hardship or implementing change initiatives. While the real test of a good soldier occurs during difficult and trying times to the organization when making personal sacrifices and exceeding the call of duty is most likely go be unrewarded, it is argued that by the inclination and constancy of their actions these individuals can also be effectively identified in normal times by means of supervisor assessments of employee willingness, ability and commitment to exceed the call of duty during trying times. As such, while impression management tactics and politicking might effectively influence promotion decisions, a different set of supervisor evaluations are expected to come into play in identifying the good soldier. The suggested relationships therefore reflect supervisor evaluations of employees’ ability and willingness to exceed the call of duty in difficult times.
Functional flexibility, loyalty in future hardship, perceived benevolence, affective commitment and task performance are supervisor rated and signal supervisor perceptions of employees’ ability and willingness to perform additional and/or varied tasks in uncertain times. Functional flexibility refers to using multi-skilled staff in flexible ways so that the pace of work is kept constant as employees experiencing low levels of activity are utilized in areas strained by higher demands, short-staffing and bottlenecks. As a management strategy, functional flexibility is an effective means of managing uncertainty and dealing with unpredictable variations in demand (Desombre, Kelliher, Macfarlane & Ozbilgin, 2006) as it consists of work arrangements which reduce organizational slack by maximizing individual input and involvement in the organization. As such, on average, functionally flexible initiatives require greater input and even sacrifice on the part of the individual employee to the benefit of the organization. Research indicates that neither tenure, education, commitment nor affective well-being are significantly related to attitudes toward functional flexibility (Cordery, Sevastos, Mueller & Parker, 1993). Instead, functional flexibility seems to be related to personality traits as well as perceptions of trust and task formalization, indicating individual awareness in the personal sacrifice involved in undertaking functionally flexible initiatives. It is therefore expected that good soldiers, or individuals with a wide RB, will most likely consider it their responsibility to partake in functionally flexible initiatives.

*Proposition 1: RB will be positively related to functional flexibility.*
In addition to individual willingness to be functionally flexible, RB is also expected to predict one’s perceived willingness to endure and remain in the organization during difficult times. An important component in this assessment is the belief that an individual will remain loyal to the organization in uncertain times in spite of more attractive alternatives. In other words, good soldiers are those which remain in the organization during difficult times not because of a lack of better options, but instead, because they consider it their responsibility to contribute to the organization in such times to ensure and contribute to its recovery. A supervisor’s assessment of loyalty in future hardship extends beyond the evaluation of a subordinate’s ability to contribute effort in rough times to also capture his/her willingness to do so. Individuals with a wide RB signal this heightened sense of responsibility by both their actions and behaviors, which in turn inform supervisor evaluations of their loyalty in future hardship. It is therefore expected that:

**Proposition 2:** RB will be positively related to perceived loyalty in future hardship.

Related to functional flexibility and perceived loyalty in future hardship is individuals’ perceived affective commitment to the organization. Individuals with a wide RB are also expected to be perceived as having a greater emotional attachment to the organization, whereby organizational membership is a choice rather than an obligation or result of lack of alternatives. Individuals who have high affective commitment toward the organization tend to be easily identifiable, as evidenced by research demonstrating that these individuals tend to perform more OCBs as well as tend to be viewed as more valuable employees (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the same way that self-referent affective commitment is manifested in observable behaviors, it is proposed that the outward manifestations of an individual’s role breadth will demonstrate and be interpreted by observers as a signal of affective commitment toward the organization. In other words, individuals who define themselves as holding a greater range of responsibilities toward their work and their organization, will demonstrate an attitude and exhibit behaviors which to observers indicate high affective commitment to the organization.

**Proposition 3:** RB will be positively correlated to perceived affective commitment.

Supervisor rated perceived benevolence captures the extent to which a supervisor feels an individual has the organization’s best interest at heart (Levin, Whitener & Cross, 2006). Found to be significantly related to trust (Davis, Schoorman, Mayer, & Tan, 2000), benevolence is conceived as an indicator of the extent to which an individual is considered to be a good soldier; one that can be relied upon and counted on through thick and thin. While benevolence is usually assessed from the individual’s perspective, it is argued that assessing supervisor ratings of individuals’ benevolence to the organization provides an effective gauge of the extent to which employees have internalized and take the organization’s best interest to heart. In other words, it is expected that supervisors will attribute good soldiers as being more benevolent toward the organization, reflecting their confidence in and greater reliability on such individuals.

**Proposition 4:** RB will be positively related to individual benevolence toward the organization.
Finally, a wide RB is also expected to translate into higher task performance as the outcome of a greater sense of responsibility toward one’s work and the organization. In other words, by virtue of the fact that a good soldier is more likely than his/her more narrow RB counterparts to exceed minimum expectations in the organization, it is expected that this greater sense of responsibility will translate into higher levels of performance.

*Proposition 5: RB will be positively related to task performance.*

In addition to the expected positive relationship with the above outcomes, RB is also expected to be negatively related to two deviant organizational behaviors: counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) and absence. The benefit and value of identifying the good soldier lies not only in predicting his/her positive expected outcomes, but also in the negative behaviors he/she is most likely to not be associated with. It is argued that individuals holding a wide RB will exhibit fewer counterproductive work behaviors than their more narrow RB counterparts. Furthermore, given that the performance of CWBs would be incongruent with a self-concept of a wide RB, the RB-CWB negative relationship is conceived as being stronger than the modest negative relationship between OCBs and CWBs identified in a recent meta-analytic investigation (Dalal, 2005). In fact, it is argued that this modest negative relationship identified between OCB and CWB is in part due to the fact that because OCB measures do not distinguish individuals’ RB, these behaviors do not distinguish between individuals’ holding a wide RB (i.e. good soldiers) or those performing OCBs as a coin of exchange for favors granted or to elicit future gains (i.e. good actors).

*Proposition 6a: RB will be negatively related to counterproductive work behaviors CWB.*

*Proposition 6b: The strength of the negative correlation between RB and CWB will be greater than that between OCB and CWB.*

Similarly, with the exemption of illness or exceptional situations, it is expected that individuals holding a wide RB will be much less likely than their narrow RB counterparts to engage in discretionary absence. Given that absence invariably involves “an individual’s lack of physical presence at a given location and time when there is a social expectation for him or her to be there” (Martocchio and Harrison, 1993), it is argued that individuals with a wide role breadth are most likely to conform and internalize this social expectation of presence at work as a significant part of their responsibility toward the organization. Research indicating a negative relationship between absence and job involvement and organizational commitment (Harrison & Martocchio, 1998) provides evidence supporting the argument that good soldiers will tend to exhibit fewer absence episodes than their more narrow RB counterparts.

*Proposition 7: RB will be negatively correlated with absence.*
A Proposed Typology of OCBs

One issue currently challenging OCBs is that merely as an observed behavior good citizenship is not always readily distinguishable from impression management, making it sometimes difficulty to separate the ‘good actors’ from the ‘good soldiers’ (Bolino, 1999). This is compounded by the fact that OCBs are generally assessed by supervisors, or the very individuals most likely to be a target of impression management tactics. Assessing individuals’ RB along with their OCBs is proposed as a means to address this confound, given that OCBs performed as an expression of one’s RB is conceived as different from those performed as reciprocation, ingratiation or even as an expression of one’s felt positive affect that day.

While there is no denying the short-term benefit of OCBs performed by either a good soldier or a good actor, overtime it is arguably most desirable for the organization that its OCBs come from individuals possessing a wide RB. Whereas the observed benefit of an isolated OCB may not differ whether performed by a good soldier or a good actor, knowledge of the level of felt responsibility accompanying the OCB is expected to inform not only the frequency with which such behaviors will be repeated, but also the value these will accrue the organization over time. This should prove especially true in the case of OCBs performed strictly as impression management as these are likely to happen only in managerial view. The ultimate benefit of distinguishing between a good soldier and a good actor is the more accurate ability to explain the relationship between their actions and the value ultimately accrued to the organization. For example, while a good soldier is likely to consistently engage in OCBs, a good actor will more discretionarily dispense such behaviors, increasing their performance in periods preceding performance appraisals or promotion decisions, for example. In the field of academia for example, differences in RB might be more clearly observed
in within subject variability over the long run after tenure decisions have been made. A good soldier is more likely to maintain his/her productivity and level of organizational citizenship behaviors constant than a good actor, whose pre- and post-tenure performance would most likely exhibit greater variance. It is therefore maintained that identifying an individual’s RB along with the amount of OCBs performed makes it is possible to more precisely predict OCB outcomes (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

A Proposed Typology of OCBs

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<tr>
<th>RB</th>
<th>OCBs</th>
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<tr>
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<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wide</td>
<td>Internalized OCBs (&quot;I define as my job&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Prescribed OCBs (&quot;required in my job&quot;)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transitional OCBs (&quot;I define as my job, but am unable to perform&quot;)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reciprocated OCBs (&quot;not my job&quot;)</td>
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Broadly speaking, unlike the good soldier with a wide RB, impression management tactics are most likely undertaken by individuals with a narrow RB. Given that individuals engage in impression management with the goal of influencing the image others hold of them (Rosenfeld, Biacalone, & Riordan, 1995), and that many behaviors labeled as OCBs are also effective impression management strategies (Bolino, 1999), different outcomes are expected of an individual performing OCBs as impression management and of an individual enacting OCBs in line with his/her RB. Four OCB types are proposed: internalized, transitional, prescribed and reciprocated.

Reciprocated OCBs refer to those OCBs dispensed discretionarily to reciprocate the organization or co-workers in some way as a form of exchange for current or future expected rewards. Given that OCBs dispensed as impression management are undertaken with the goal of a future payoff, these would fall in this category. Stated differently, because impression management involves the
performance of a behavior with the goal of eliciting a future payoff, this primary exchange nature is also captured in reciprocated OCBs.

Prescribed OCBs on the other hand, and in line with Morrison’s (1994) account, refer to those OCBs performed based on the belief that they are a required part of the job. In other words, prescribed OCBs account for those instances in which individuals perform OCBs because these are, either implicitly or explicitly, judged as expected in their jobs. There is increasing evidence of such instances, where OCB type behaviors are considered part of the job and as such involve little individual discretion in their performance. While identification of such instances is leading to a call for reconceptualization of these behaviors as compulsory citizenship behaviors (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007), it is argued that the confound in the strict discretionary assumption of OCBs makes the introduction of a variant related construct unnecessary. Instead, prescribed OCBs are proposed as accounting for situations in which OCBs are considered to be a required part of the job and in which this additional requirement may add to the potential of negative outcomes such as stress and burnout.

Transitional OCBs accompany a situation characterized by current or upcoming change (either inside or outside the organization) as well as greater constraints, for example with time. For example, an individual in this category could be someone who is transferring jobs within the organization and is being trained for this and taking on responsibilities for the new job while signing off and preparing a replacement for the old one. Although this individual could have a wide RB and consider OCBs to be part of the job, he is in a situation where he is unable to perform them in a typical manner. Another example might be that of a female employee days before undertaking maternity leave, whereby in addition to training her replacement, the experience of the physical stresses and discomforts characteristic of the close proximity of her impending labor make her unable to maintain her usual performance of OCBs.

In contrast, internalized OCBs are proposed as those that are performed by individuals holding a wide RB, whose behaviors are in line with their felt sense of broadened responsibility toward the organization. In other words, internalized OCBs are most in line with a wide RB and therefore those likely to be most often performed by the good soldier.

Given the typology proposed above, it is argued that RB provides two key contributions to OCB research: it provides a more comprehensive and theoretically grounded account clarifying the in-role-extra-role confound of OCBs while contributing a framework to distinguish good actors from good soldiers. Whereas previous research has furthered our understanding of factors affecting an individual’s in-role or extra-role interpretation of OCBs and the resulting effect on the quantity of OCBs performed (for ex., Bachrach & Jex, 2000; Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler & Purcell, 2004; Ehrhart & Godfrey, 2005; Kidder, 2002; Kidder & Parks, 2001; Morrison 1994), RB makes it possible to begin to
uncover the intentions behind an OCB, broadening the theoretical framework on which to base predictions of future individual behavior as well of positive outcomes that may accrue to the organization.

Finally, it is also proposed that by identifying attitudes of the good soldier, RB may be more informative of which individuals are most willing to go above and beyond the call of duty in the organization. As Bolino and colleagues (2006) have demonstrated, OCBs can be performed by both good soldiers and good actors. As such, inferring a good soldier from a behavior becomes a problem if that behavior could equally as well be performed by a good actor. In line with Bolino et al.’s (2006) conclusion that supervisor ratings of OCBs do not necessarily capture employees’ actual engagement in such behaviors, it is proposed that assessing individuals’ RB and identifying their OCB type provides a means of ensuring that good citizenship is in fact being identified. In other words, it is expected that individuals performing reciprocated OCBs are more likely to engage in impression management tactics than individuals performing internalized OCBs.

*Proposition 8a: Reciprocated OCBs will be positively related to impression management.*

*Proposition 8b: Internalized OCBs will be negatively related to impression management.*

*Contribution and Opportunity for Future Research*

The introduction of the role breadth higher order construct attempts to make two contributions to the field. The first is that, by building on OCB research and seeking to address some of its challenges, a self-concept of the good soldier is proposed, allowing for a direct assessment of attitudes of the good soldier, rather than inferring his/her existence based on observed behaviors. An important correlate of this contribution is that identifying the good soldier in this manner reduces the likelihood that a good actor will be identified in his/her place. A second contribution, also building on OCB research, is that it proposes a comprehensive model toward better understanding when OCBs will be considered in-role and extra-role. Also, assessing an individual’s RB along with his/her level of OCBs enables the distinction among otherwise identical behaviors and the identification of OCBs performed by good soldiers and those performed by good actors.
References


