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PART 5

# Dyadic and Team-Centric Theories and Approaches



# Leading for Proactivity: How Leaders Cultivate Staff Who Make Things Happen

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## Abstract



How do leaders promote proactivity among their staff? This chapter focuses on how leaders cultivate individual-level proactivity, with proactivity being defined as a future-focused, change-oriented, and self-starting way of behaving. Behaviors from many domains can be carried out more or less proactively, so we include in our review literature on individual innovation, taking charge, voice, proactive socialization, and other such ways of behaving proactively. After describing existing research on how leadership relates to proactivity, the authors propose a model in which we identify multiple pathways by which leaders can influence their staff's motivation and capability to be proactive, as well as the effectiveness of their proactivity. They propose that both team-oriented and person-oriented leadership inputs can have direct effects on motivation and capability via leader actions, as well as indirect effects on motivation and capability via leader effects on the team climate, work design, or other team-level inputs. The authors then identify several ways that this model can be expanded, as well as directions for future research.

**Key Words:** capability, individual innovation, individual-oriented inputs, motivation, job performance, proactivity, taking charge, voice, team-oriented inputs

## Introduction

Being proactive is about making things happen. It involves anticipating events and taking charge to bring about a different future, such as by speaking out with ideas, self-initiating improved work methods, and actively seeking feedback (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). A great deal of research shows the value of behaving proactively for outcomes such as career success (e.g., Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), job performance (e.g., Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010), organizational innovation (e.g., Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009), and entrepreneurship (e.g., Unger, Keith, Hilling, Gielnik, & Frese, 2009).

However, proactivity can be a challenging way of behaving within organizations. Behaving proactively is often psychologically risky for individuals: its emphasis on change means others do not

always welcome proactivity, and its emphasis on self-initiation increases individual vulnerability to blame if proactive efforts are not successful. At the same time, there are many forces in organizations that act to stifle proactivity. The notion of passive obedience to authority (Milgram, 1974), well embedded in most individuals' psyche by adulthood, is reinforced by hierarchical organizational structures that place leaders in authority over others. Similarly, an array of leader biases can serve to stifle voice and proactivity, such as a confirmation bias, in which leaders attend only to information that supports their own thinking (Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Christianson, 2009). These scholars concluded: "for a variety of reasons, leaders discourage, resist, and ignore voice" (p. 195). Proactivity is also focused on the long term, yet many aspects in organizations reinforce short-term and reactive approaches

to problems. For example, Repenning and Sterman (2002) demonstrated how, because managers often believe getting people to work harder is the key to improvement, they tend to introduce changes to technology that tightly monitor and control worker activities, which in turn generates short-term and inflexible thinking among those in the system. Altogether, several forces operate to create and reinforce employee passivity in organizations.

In light of these forces, we suggest that leaders in organizations who want to cultivate staff proactivity will need to take deliberate, intentional steps both to motivate individuals' willingness to behave proactively as well as to enhance their capability for this way of behaving. In this chapter, we propose a model of leading for proactivity in which we identify multiple pathways by which leaders can influence their staff's motivation and capability to be proactive. This model contributes to existing research by suggesting a set of precise and testable pathways by which leaders can shape proactivity. A further important contribution of this model is that we distinguish team-oriented leader inputs that have cross-level effects on individuals' motivation and proactivity from person-oriented inputs that have individual-level effects on motivation and proactivity. We also distinguish direct effects and indirect effects of leadership on proactivity, showing how leaders can shape proactivity not only by their particular actions, but also by the work designs, climate, and practices they put in place.

First we describe how we conceptualize proactivity in this chapter. We then describe existing research regarding how leadership relates to proactive behaviors. We then put forward our model of leading for proactivity. We conclude by identifying various ways to extend this model, such as considering leading for the proactivity of higher-level entities (e.g., teams and organizations) and other directions for research, such as the value of identifying individual attributes that are likely to be associated with leading for proactivity.

### Understanding Proactivity

Proactivity has been conceptualized from different perspectives, including an individual difference, a behavioral, and a goal process perspective. From the individual difference perspective, Bateman and Crant (1993: 105) proposed the concept of proactive personality to describe a person "who is relative unconstrained by situational forces and who effects environmental change." Proactive personality is distinct from the big five personality dimensions and

related personality variables (Bateman & Crant, 1993), and predicts various proactive behaviors, such as network building (Lambert, Eby, & Reeves, 2006; Thompson, 2005); proactive socialization (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003); career initiative (Seibert et al., 2001); and change-oriented behaviors such as taking charge, individual innovation, problem prevention, and voice (Parker & Collins, 2010). Nevertheless, although a personality-based approach explains why some individuals are more proactive than others, considering proactivity as a trait does not help us to understand the role that environmental factors—such as leadership—have in shaping proactive action.

A more useful perspective from this stance is to consider proactive *behavior*. Studies have focused on a range of proactive behaviors, such as proactive socialization (e.g., Thompson, 2005), career initiative (e.g., Seibert et al., 2001), individual innovation (e.g., Scott & Bruce, 1994), taking charge (e.g., Morrison & Phelps, 1999), and proactive feedback seeking (e.g., Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003). In recent times, scholars have sought to understand what these diverse proactive behaviors have in common. Conceptually, it has been recognized that, even though in different domains, these behaviors all involve self-initiated and future-focused efforts to change the situation and/or oneself (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Empirically, in an effort to synthesize this literature, Parker and Collins (2010) identified three higher order factors that have in common behaviors that are proactive but that vary in the goals of this proactivity. The higher order categories include proactive goals: to achieve a better fit between the individual and their environment ("proactive person–environment fit" behavior, such as feedback inquiry, job-role negotiation, career initiative); to improve the internal organizational environment ("proactive work behavior," such as taking charge, voice, individual innovation, and problem prevention), and to achieve a better fit between the organization or unit and its wider environment ("proactive strategic behavior," such as strategic scanning and issue selling).

From this behavioral perspective, it is important to be clear why proactivity is distinct from related ways of behaving. An early confusion concerned whether proactive behavior is just a type of citizenship. However, scholars have argued that citizenship behaviors such as helping can be executed in a passive, reactive way, or they can be executed in a more proactive, anticipatory way (Grant & Ashford,

2008; Parker et al., 2010). Consistent with this idea, a recent meta-analysis showed more proactive forms of citizenship involving bringing about positive modifications at work were distinct from less proactive forms of citizenship involving maintaining the social context at work (Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, & Gardner, 2011). Behaving proactively is also distinct from creativity, when the latter is defined as “the production of novel and useful ideas” (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996). Proactivity involves actively trying to bring about a future change, and this might or might not be a “new” idea. A similar distinction applies to proactivity and individual-level innovation. Conceptually, individual-level innovation is broader than individual-level proactivity because innovation includes idea generation whereas proactivity does not, as well as narrower than proactivity because innovation applies to novel ideas only<sup>1</sup>.

A further and more recent conceptual development, beyond considering proactivity as a way of behaving, has been to recognize that proactivity is not a single action but involves a broader goal process (Bindl, Parker, Totterdell, & Hagger-Johnson, 2012; Frese & Fay, 2001; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker et al., 2010). Based on the two-stage motivation theory (Chen & Kanfer, 2006), Parker et al. (2010) suggested that when an individual tries to bring about a different future, he or she engages in conscious goal-directed processes, including both goal generation and goal striving. Goal generation involves envisioning, setting, and planning to bring about a proactive goal, whereas goal striving involves the concrete steps to achieve this goal, including persisting in the face of obstacles, as well as reflecting on these actions and their consequences. In support of a process view of proactivity, Bindl et al. (2012) showed evidence for the distinctiveness of two elements of both proactive goal generation (envisioning and planning) and proactive goal striving (enacting and reflecting), and showed these elements have distinct antecedents.

In sum, proactivity has been conceptualized as a personality trait, as a way of behaving that is applicable across many domains, and as a goal process. In this chapter, we draw particularly on the latter two perspectives because our interest is in how proactivity can be enhanced through leadership.

### **Leadership and Proactivity: Existing Studies**

Because proactive behavior aims to bring about change, which can feel psychologically risky to the initiator, leaders’ appreciation, encouragement,

and support of new ideas and changes have been consistently found to be associated with more proactive behavior of their subordinates. Supportive and empowering behaviors such as encouraging free expression of ideas in a nonevaluative atmosphere, encouraging employee participation, keeping employees informed, and rewarding good performance predict various forms of proactive behavior, such as the number of rewarded suggestions of an employee (Frese, Teng, & Wijnen, 1999), innovation behavior (Janssen, 2005; Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010), personal initiative (Ohly, Sonnentag, & Pluntke, 2006), and proactive service performance (Rank, Carsten, Unger, & Spector, 2007). Studies have also shown that transformational leadership—which includes establishing a clear vision, providing individualized support, stimulating thinking, and demonstrating integrity—is positively associated with employees’ innovation (Jansen, Vera, & Crossan, 2009; Rank, Nelson, Allen, & Xu, 2009), organizationally oriented proactivity (e.g., suggesting ideas for solutions for company problems), and interpersonally oriented proactivity (e.g., helping to orient new colleagues) (Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010).

In a related vein, factors such as trust in leaders and leaders’ emotional intelligence can lead to more voice behavior or creativity (Gao, Janssen, & Shi, 2011; Rego, Sousa, Pina e Cunha, Correia, & Saur-Amaral, 2007), although sometimes these relationships have been shown to be contingent. For example, Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) reported that trust in a supervisor can enhance speaking up, in particular among employees who tend to focus on their own inner attitudes, emotions, and dispositions (low self-monitoring).

Coincident with evidence for the effects of positive leader behaviors, negative leader behaviors appear to inhibit proactivity. For example, abusive leadership was associated with lower ratings of pro-social voice behaviors, in part because it reduced perceptions of interactional justice (Rafferty & Restubog, 2011). In a similar study, abusive supervision predicted lowered voice through increased psychological detachment (Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008). Rank et al. (2009) showed that active management by exception (involving close monitoring of subordinates to detect errors) was associated with lower levels of innovation behavior, especially for low self-monitoring individuals (who the authors suggested are more likely to reject the controlling influences of negative leaders).

The quality of the exchange relationship between leader and employee can also affect proactive behavior. For example, higher leader–member exchange (LMX) has been positively related to individual innovation and creativity (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Tierney, Farmer, & Graen, 1999; Van Dyne, Jehn, & Cummings, 2002), voice (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Burriss et al., 2008; Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joireman, 2008), and change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors (Bettencourt, 2004). Tierney et al. (1999) further indicated that the impact of LMX relationships on individual creativity is stronger among people who are “cognitive adaptors” rather than “cognitive innovators” because adaptors tend to be compliant and easily influenced by the quality of LMX toward creativity. Van Dyne et al. (2002) also indicated that better LMX relationships buffer the negative impact of work or home strain on creative performance at work. This is because employees in better LMX relationships are more likely to obtain substantial resources (e.g., higher autonomy, more time), individualized consideration, and guidance from their leaders and thus minimize distracting aspects of work and home strain due to this supportive basis and can devote more time and effort to think beyond the job requirement.

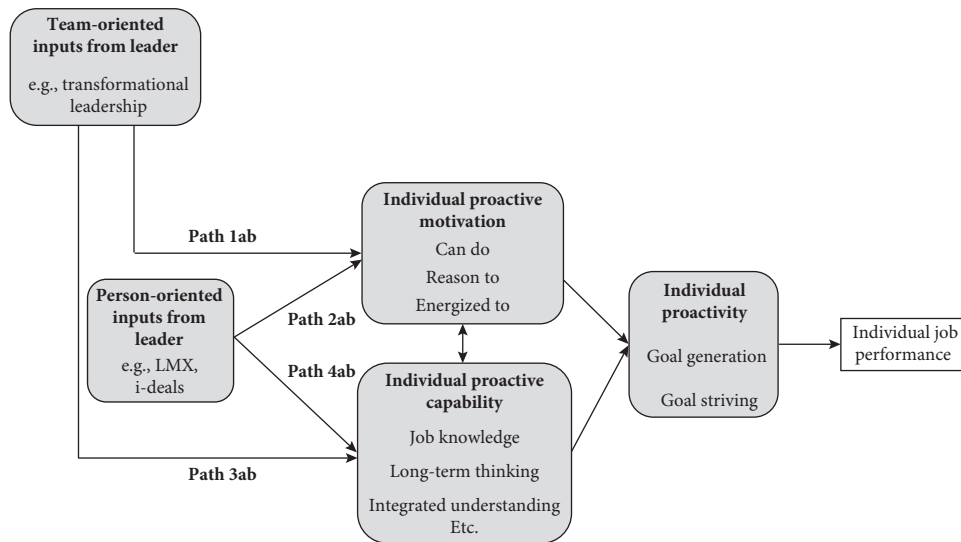
Finally, some studies have found null or inconsistent findings of leader behavior on proactive outcomes. For example, Axtell et al. (2000) reported a null relationship between team leader support and individual innovation; and Parker et al. (2006) reported that, once autonomy was controlled, there was no positive effect of supervisory support on wire makers’ proactivity.

The preceding review shows that leadership matters—at least some of the time—for individual proactivity. In general, positive leader behaviors such as support and empowerment appear to predict proactivity whereas negative leader behaviors such as aggression suppress proactivity. However, this body of work does not provide a coherent framework for guiding further research, in part because little attention has been given to the pathways linking leadership and proactivity. Without a more precise understanding of why leadership relates to proactivity, it is difficult to integrate the literature and to make sense of potential contingency factors. Moreover, insufficient attention has been given to what sort of leadership is most important for proactivity, relative to other behaviors. We therefore propose an integrating framework to guide future research on leadership and proactive work behavior<sup>2</sup>, which we elaborate next.

### Proposed Model of Leading for Proactivity

The model has as its ultimate outcome individual job performance, or observable actions individuals take that are relevant to the goals of the organization (Campbell, McHenry, & Wise, 1990). We propose that proactive goal regulation, involving the generation of a proactive goal and striving to achieve that goal, will lead to higher individual job performance. This is consistent with prior research showing that proactivity predicts job performance (Crant, 1995; Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009; Morrison, 1993; Thompson, 2005; Van Dyne & Le Pine, 1998) (Figure 18.1).

Next, the model indicates that proactive goal regulation is shaped by three motivational states: can do, reason to, and energized to. This part of the model derives from the integrative model of Parker et al. (2010) summarizing how motivation can shape proactivity. Regarding the can do pathway, drawing on theoretical perspectives such as self-regulation theory, scholars have argued that various proactive acts such as taking charge likely involve a deliberate decision process in which the individual assesses the likely outcomes of his or her efforts (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Parker et al., 2006). In essence, individuals ask themselves can do questions such as “Can I do this?”; “Is it feasible?”; and “How high are the costs?” Individuals with high self-efficacy, or a belief in their own capabilities for proactive action, are more likely to weigh potential costs of proactivity more positively, believe they can cope with setbacks, and perceive a higher likelihood of success relative to individuals with low self-efficacy. Empirically, there is strong evidence for the role of self-efficacy in predicting several types of proactivity (e.g., Axtell et al., 2000; Bledow & Frese, 2009; Brown, Cober, Kane, & Shalhoop, 2006; Frese, Garst, & Fay, 2007; Gruman, Saks, & Zweig, 2006; Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Ohly & Fritz, 2007; Raub & Liao, 2012; Saks & Ashforth, 1999; Speier & Frese, 1997). Likewise, evidence suggests that beliefs about whether one can exert control or have an impact also influence proactivity. For example, Ashford and her colleagues (1998) showed that women are more likely to voice gender equity issues when they perceive a higher chance of gaining attention for their issue. Beliefs about potential costs or image risks are also important. For example, Tidwell and Sias (2005) found that the perceived social cost in information seeking in organizations has a negative impact on overt information-seeking behavior among newcomers.



**Figure 18.1.** Summarizes our proposed framework. In this section, we describe the overall model moving from right to left, prior to delving more deeply into the leadership pathways.

The second motivation pathway is summarized as a “reason to” path. As described by (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002: 112): “[E]ven if people are certain they can do a task, they may have no compelling reason to do it.” Parker et al. (2010) argued for the importance of internalized or autonomous, rather than controlled, forms of motivation for prompting proactivity. Internalized forms of motivation can be derived from meeting fundamental needs, such as indicated by studies showing that a desire for control prompts proactive socialization (Ashford & Black, 1996). Internalized forms of motivation can also be derived from one’s commitment toward career, teams, and organizations. Studies have shown, for example, that affective commitment predicts proactive behavior (Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010; Burris et al., 2008; Chiaburu, Marinova, & Lim, 2007; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007; M. A. Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Rank et al., 2007; Strauss, Griffin, & Rafferty, 2009). Internalized forms of motivation can also result from the internalization of external goals or values, or an identified regulation process. As example of this is having a broader role perception in which individuals define their role in a flexible way (Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997) or a sense of felt responsibility to bring about changes (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). These types of identified regulation have been shown to predict an array of forms of proactivity, such as personal initiative (Bledow & Frese, 2009), taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), voice (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006; Grant & Mayer, 2009; Parker &

Collins, 2010; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008), change-oriented behavior (Choi, 2007), proactive problem solving (Dorenbosch, Engen, & Verhagen, 2005; Parker et al., 2006), and feedback seeking (Ashford & Cummings, 1985).

The third motivation pathway is an affective one, which Parker et al. (2010) summarized as “energized to” motivation. Positive affect is likely to influence the selection of proactive goals because it expands thinking and results in more flexible cognitive processes (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001; Isen, 1999), and will likely promote proactive goal striving because affect invokes feelings of energy (Shraga & Shirom, 2009) and can facilitate self-efficacy and persistence (Tsai, Chen, & Liu, 2007). Several studies have shown that positive affect links to proactive behavior, such as proactive socialization (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007), personal initiative (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007), and taking charge (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2009). Bindl et al. (2012) presented evidence for the more specific role of activated positive affect (feelings of enthusiasm, inspiration, etc.) for multiple elements of proactive goal regulation, and showed the incremental role of activated positive affect in predicting proactivity beyond self-efficacy and commitment.

Next, the model proposes that proactive goal regulation can be shaped by individual capabilities, or individual knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). This pathway reflects evidence, albeit less well-developed than that for motivation, regarding the role of capabilities such as depth and breadth

of knowledge and long-term thinking for proactivity. For example, Frese and Fay (2001) argued that deep job knowledge and cognitive ability are resources that allow the individual to handle the job challenges more effectively, thereby promoting the development of mastery, self-efficacy, and stronger aspirations for control, which in turn lead to personal initiative. Studies support the role of KSAs in boosting proactivity. In their eastern German longitudinal study, cognitive ability predicts personal initiative (Fay & Frese, 2001), and in a further study (Frese & Hilligloh, 1994 cited in Frese & Fay, 2001), job qualifications (a summary measure of job knowledge and skill) predicted personal initiative. Other studies have reported links (albeit of relatively modest size) between educational background and proactive outcomes, such as proactive job search (Kanfer et al., 2001) and voicing suggestions (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). In a study that compared innovation champions against non-champions, Howell and Boies (2004) showed that contextual knowledge predicted individuals' packaging ideas for promotion. Other cognitive variables have also been shown to be important. Because proactive behavior involves bringing about future change, individuals need to engage in future-focused thinking, such as envisioning opportunities in the future, identifying potential problems, and paying attention to and processing information in the environment. Consistent with this reasoning, Parker and Collins (2010) identified that individuals with a future-oriented time perspective are more likely to report higher levels of some types of proactivity.

The model thus proposes two key determinants of proactive goal regulation—motivation and capability—which is consistent with models that identify motivation and knowledge/skill as the two primary determinants of job performance (Tesluk & Jacobs, 1998). The model also recognizes that these sets of determinants can influence each other, as depicted by the double-headed arrow between them. For example, showing how motivation influences capabilities, individuals with high proactive motivation will put more cognitive effort into thinking, which will develop their thinking styles and cognitive complexity in the long term. Likewise, showing how capabilities influence motivation, individuals who have strong interpersonal skills will likely experience stronger self-efficacy for introducing change, and therefore experience stronger can do proactive motivation.

Next the model proposes that leadership can shape proactive goal regulation through motivation and capability. Whereas the elements of the model discussed earlier have been articulated elsewhere (Parker et al., 2010), little systematic attention has been given to the various ways that leadership might influence motivation and capability. As we elaborate shortly, we propose that leadership influences motivation and capability through team-oriented inputs (Paths 1ab, 3ab) as well as person-oriented inputs (paths 2ab, 4ab), a distinction identified by Chen and Kanfer (2006) in their multilevel model of individual and team motivation. These effects can be both direct (paths 1a, 2a, 3a, 4a) or indirect (paths 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b). We discuss these pathways next, focusing first on the links between leadership and motivation, and next on the links between leadership and capability.

### Leading for Proactive Motivation

We distinguish between team-oriented and person-oriented leadership inputs as influences on proactive motivation. Chen and Kanfer (2006: 226) made this distinction to recognize “the dynamic, mutual influences of the individual and the team context on individual and team motivation and motivation outcomes.” This differentiation between types of inputs helps to understand how a leader can shape employees' proactive motivation via a team-oriented, cross-level process as well as via an individual-oriented process. Team-oriented stimuli affect the team as a whole, or all team members, and so represent a contextual effect on individual motivation, whereas person-oriented stimuli affect a specific team member, rather than all team members, and so represent an individual effect on motivation. In understanding how leaders can shape employees' work motivation, Chen and Kanfer (2006: 253) argued that leader behaviors such as transformational leadership should be considered as team-oriented inputs because “transformational leadership theory suggests that effective leaders motivate their group of followers by transforming the values and priorities of followers and motivating them to perform beyond their expectations.” In contrast, leader behavior in a LMX relationship between a leader and a specific subordinate should be considered as person-oriented inputs because a leader can develop different LMX relationships with different subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and thus behaviors in each relationship will differ across subordinates. Both team-oriented and person-oriented leadership inputs can have



direct effects because what a leader says or does can directly affect employee motivation (path 1a, path 2a), as well as indirectly affect on motivation because leaders can shape climate, work design, and other practices, which in turn affect employee motivation (path 1b, path 2b).

### ***Direct Effects of Team-oriented Leadership on Motivation***

Theoretically, there are many ways that leaders can directly influence individual's "can do" motivation. Self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1999). Accordingly, leaders can enhance employees' self-efficacy by providing opportunities to master tasks, being a role model for engaging in proactive behavior, verbally expressing confidence in employees that they can engage in proactive behavior, and generating positive feelings while reducing negative feelings such as anxiety. It is also important that individuals experience a sense that their proactive actions will be worthwhile, that they can impact the situation. For example, leaders can shape the perceived instrumentality of voice through how they react when an individual speaks out (Detert & Trevino, 2010). Ashford et al. (2009) proposed various ways that leaders can convey to employees that their voice can make a difference, including actively attending to the information they raise, incorporating employees' ideas into their actions or decisions, providing credible explanations as to why ideas were not used, and repeatedly communicating a strong rationale for the importance of voice.

In one of the few studies that have considered leader behavior operationalized as a team-level input, and that has also considered proactivity-oriented outcomes, Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, and Farh (2011) showed that team-level empowering leadership positively related to individuals' psychological empowerment, which in turn predicted individual innovative behavior. Psychological empowerment encompasses the concept of can do motivation because it includes as dimensions perceived competence (similar to self-efficacy) and perceived impact at work (similar to perceptions of controllability). It also includes self-determination and meaning, which relates to the idea of having an internalized reason to be proactive (see next). In another study, Chen, Farh, Campbell-Bush, Wu, and Wu (2013) showed that team-level transformational leadership positively related to individuals'

role breadth self-efficacy, which in turn predicted innovative behavior at the individual level.

Related studies considering leadership at the individual rather than the team level also demonstrate similar roles of leadership. Although these studies have operationalized leadership at the individual level, rather than considering leadership as a team-oriented influence, we report them in this section because, theoretically, we believe the effect to be a cross-level one. Thus, transformational leadership has been found to be positively related to creative self-efficacy and creativity (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009), psychological empowerment, and creativity (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; X. Zhang & Bartol, 2010), as well as to role breadth self-efficacy and more proactive behavior (Strauss et al., 2009).

Regarding a "reason to" pathway, leadership can affect individual's intrinsic motivation for proactive behavior, or their desire to engage in proactivity for its own sake because it is interesting, enjoyable, or challenging (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the current literature, most studies examining this intrinsic motivation pathway consider leadership only at the individual level. One exception is Chen et al. (2013), who reported that team-level transformational leadership positively related to individuals' intrinsic motivation, which in turn predicted individual innovative behavior. Similarly, empowering leadership assessed at the individual level has been found to be positively associated with intrinsic motivation and thus more creative performance, including idea implementation (X. Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Leadership can also potentially enhance individuals' feelings of commitment and responsibility (Detert & Burris, 2007). Studies suggest these types of outcomes shape proactivity. For example, several studies have indicated that leaders can enhance employees' affective commitment, which in turn enhances proactive behavior because higher affective commitment can lead an individual to devote more effort to pursue changes at work. Specifically, Michaelis, Stegmaier, and Sonntag (2009) reported that charismatic leadership and trust in top management can lead to higher affective commitment to change and thus more innovation implementation behavior of employees. Strauss et al. (2009) indicated that team leader transformational leadership can lead to higher team commitment and thus more team-oriented proactive behavior, whereas organizational leader transformational leadership can lead to higher organizational commitment and thus more organizationally oriented proactive behavior.

Whether commitment is the best indicator of an individual's "reason to" motivation needs further investigation. For example, Parker et al. (2006) reported that, with other reason-to indicators in the model (e.g., flexible role orientation), commitment did not predict proactivity. These scholars argued that individuals can be committed to an organization or work unit, but this could manifest itself with passive behaviors such as loyalty rather than proactivity. Chen et al. (2011) also found that empowerment leadership at the team level related to employees' affective commitment, but affective commitment only led to teamwork behavior and not innovative behavior. Graham and Van Dyne (2006) reported a similar finding. These authors suggested that strong attachment might motivate some employees to try to bring about improvement whereas others might like the organization because they like how it is, thereby emphasizing sustaining the status quo (see also Ashford & Barton, 2007).

Leadership can also build other forms of internal motivation, such as identified motivation, in which individuals internalize external requirements and incorporate them into their values or identity. Role expectations from leaders can provide a reason for an employee to be proactive because they shape employees' self-expectation and subsequent motivation and behavior through a self-fulfilling (Pygmalion) effect. For example, Scott and Bruce (1994) found role expectations for being innovative from leaders predicted individual innovation behavior. As a further example, Krause (2004) showed that influence-based leadership, such as using expert knowledge and information, granting of autonomy, and openness in decision-making, predicted employees' perceived need for change, which was associated with greater self-reported implementation of innovation.

In a similar vein, self-concept-based leadership theory (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004) suggested that leaders can shape one's relational self via personal identification, or identification with one particular other person, and can shape one's collective self via social identification, or identification with a social group. Accordingly, leaders who are characterized as encouraging change, such as those high in transformational leadership, might enhance employees' proactive behavior via an identification process. Supporting this view, transformational leadership assessed at the individual level has been found to lead to more voice via personal identification and social identification (Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010). Authentic

leadership (i.e., high in balanced information processing, authentic behavior, relational transparency, and self-awareness) assessed at the individual level can also lead to more employees' voice behavior via a personal identification process because authentic leaders are more likely to form a positive relationship with subordinates and thus generate more trust in leaders and higher work engagement (Wong, Laschinger, & Cummings, 2010).

Although a "reason to" mediating process was not measured, Griffin, Parker, and Mason (2010) showed that leader vision predicted an increase in proactivity over time for individuals high in self-efficacy. The authors argued that when leaders present a compelling vision of the future, they highlight the discrepancy between now and the future, which creates an impetus for change, or a reason to be proactive. Those with high self-efficacy respond to the discrepancy by increasing their proactivity.

Promoting the self-relevance of an issue can also increase employees' motivation to engage in thinking, which in turn will increase proactive goal regulation. Research on attitudes and persuasion indicates that individuals are more likely to devote more cognitive effort to scrutinizing presented arguments in judgment tasks when they perceive the issue at hand is relevant to themselves (Petty, Wheeler, & Tormala, 2003). In this regard, supervisors can try to increase self-relevance of issues at work to promote employees' proactive behavior for those issues. As discussed earlier, presenting a vision to employees can generate a sense of self-relevance for making the vision come true (Griffin et al., 2010), thereby prompting individuals to put in greater cognitive effort to achieving their proactive goals.

Finally, leaders can energize employees to engage in proactive behavior by activating positive feelings at work. Madjar, Oldham, and Pratt (2002) reported that support from supervisors related to employees' positive mood, which then predicted higher individual creative performance rated by supervisors. Through mood contagion effect, leaders' feelings and expression of positive emotion can also influence followers' feelings and the affective tone of teams (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005). Thus, it is likely that when leaders are in a positive mood, their subordinates will also be in a positive mood, which can prompt greater proactive behavior.

In sum, through positive leader behaviors such as providing a vision or behaving in an empowering way, leaders can boost individual-level proactivity by boosting staff confidence in themselves

and their belief they can make a difference (can do motivation), by building staff's internalized motivation behave proactively such as through self-identification processes (reason to motivation), and by cultivating experiences of positive affect and feelings of energy (energized to motivation). We have theorized these effects as team-level leadership inputs, although thus far almost all studies (with the exception of some studies by Chen and colleagues) have operationalized them as individual-level inputs.

### ***Indirect Effects of Team-oriented Leadership on Proactive Motivation***

As well as the direct effects described in the preceding text, team-oriented leadership can indirectly affect staff motivation via its effect on other team-oriented inputs such as climate, work design, and other practices.

Information obtained from interactions with leaders will shape employees' understanding and perception of the work climate. Leaders are representatives of management practices within an organization and, as such, serve as interpretive filters of events and processes that occur in the work unit (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989). Therefore leadership might have its effect on individual proactive motivation through climate. In a study of this pathway, Chen et al. (2013) showed that team-level support for innovation mediated the effect of transformational leadership on individual-level role breadth self-efficacy. In other words, although causal direction still needs testing, the findings suggest that transformational leadership boosts can do motivation because these leaders cultivate a climate that staff experience as supporting innovation. Such a finding makes sense. Indeed, it is possible that several of the direct effects of leadership reported in the previous section are mediated through team climate variables, such as a climate of psychological safety.

Leadership can also influence the extent to which there is a psychologically safe climate in which team members feel confident they can engage in potentially risky proactive behavior. In support of this process, a combined measure of transformational leadership and managerial openness had its effect on voice via psychological safety (Detert & Burris, 2007). Leaders' attributes or behaviors that are relevant to building a good relationship with employees, such as trust (Madjar & Ortiz-Walters, 2009), individual consideration (VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000), and availability (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010), all

potentially increase psychological safety (or decrease perceived costs of proactivity). Leaders' ethical behavior and promotion of justice can also promote employees' sense of safety because employees know that they will be treated fairly when they propose challenging ideas. Supporting this, Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) reported that ethical leadership was associated with follower's perception of psychological safety, and in turn, their level of voice.

Several other studies have shown how leader behavior shapes climate, although not necessarily shown a link to individual-level motivation or behavior. For example, Gonzalez-Roma, Peiro, and Tordera (2002) reported that leaders use of informing behaviors, such as communicating role expectation, predicted the strength of innovation climate perceptions, and Gil, Rico, Alcover, and Barrasa (2005) reported that change-oriented leadership predicted a positive team climate. Other studies similarly show how leadership relates to team climates likely to support proactivity (e.g., Chen, 2007; Eisenbeiss, van Knippenberg, & Boerner, 2008; D. Jung, Wu, & Chow, 2008; Sarros, Cooper, & Santora, 2008).

Leadership might also have an indirect influence on proactive motivation through work design. There is strong evidence and theory to suggest that work design shapes employees' proactive motivation. In the sphere of proactivity, most attention has been given to job autonomy because job autonomy can develop expertise (Leach, Wall, & Jackson, 2003) and facilitate learning (Daniels, Boocock, Glover, Hartley, & Holland, 2009), provide mastery experiences at work that can help to enhance employees' self-efficacy at work (Parker, 1998), and boost positive affect (e.g., Parker & Wall, 1998). Job autonomy also denotes a weak situation (Meyer, Dalal, & Hermida, 2010) that allows employees to take actions that challenge the status quo. Leaders can influence the team-level work design of employees by changing the objective characteristics of jobs for team members such as by giving the team more decision-making responsibility. Indeed, suggesting a degree of conceptual confusion between leadership and work design, some leadership styles are characterized in terms of work design. For example, empowering leadership is typically defined in terms of delegating employees' greater decision-making authority. Leaders can also influence how individuals perceive their job characteristics—regardless of their actual job characteristics—because individuals rely on cues from their social contexts to make assessments about work environments

(Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). Supporting this perspective, Griffin (1981) reported that leader behaviors changed employees' perceptions of their work after three months even without tangible changes to actual jobs. In another study, Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) reported that transformational leaders can shape employees' perceptions of core job characteristics, which in turn affects their level of citizenship behavior.

Finally, although often constrained as a result of broader organization-wide policies, leaders can sometimes shape processes and systems such as performance appraisals or reward systems that in turn affect proactivity. Leaders' justice in appraisal practices is likely to be especially important. Proactive behavior is typically not tied to formal rewards and penalty systems in organizational systems because it is self-initiated and not part of an explicit job description (Van Dyne & Le Pine, 1998). As such, leaders' justice in carrying out appraisals potentially signals to employees whether or not they will be treated fairly when pursuing risky proactive behaviors. Supervisors' procedural justice has been found to be positively related to employees' taking charge behavior, although only when taking charge was also regarded as a part of one's job role (McAllister, Kamdar, Morrison, & Turban, 2007). Leaders can also influence selection and hiring, which in turn shapes proactivity. Ashford et al. (2009) reported studies suggesting that Lincoln selected presidential rivals and actively sought their views, whereas Bush selected individuals with similar perspectives and backgrounds, potentially stifling speaking out and other such proactive behaviors.

In sum, leaders have the possibility to influence proactivity not only through what they directly say and do, but also through the climate, work design, and practices/systems that they can establish or shape. Of course, we recognize each of these elements is influenced by other forces that are often beyond the control of individual leaders, such as organizational-level structures and policies and technological constraints (Parker, Wall, & Cordery, 2001).

### ***Direct Effects of Person-oriented Leadership on Motivation***

Beyond team-level leadership, leaders can influence individual-level states and processes via *person-oriented stimuli* (also referred to by Chen & Kanfer, 2006, as discretionary stimuli). Person-oriented leadership is directed to specific team members rather than the team as a whole.

Leader-member exchange, as well as the provision of individual feedback or the establishing of "i-deals" (idiosyncratic deals), are examples of person-oriented stimuli provided by leaders (other person-oriented stimuli relevant to proactivity include, for example, individual attributes such as proactive personality<sup>3</sup>). As with team-level leadership, we recognize that person-oriented inputs from leaders can operate directly (e.g., a leader behaves in a particular way, which shapes the motivation of the employee, path 2a) or indirectly (the leader might give ~~select~~ high performers more job discretion, and this greater job autonomy motivates more proactivity, path 2b). We discuss the direct pathways here.

Leader-member exchange refers to the quality of the relationship developed between leaders and their followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Much research has investigated how high-quality relationships develop, as well as the positive outcomes of high-quality exchange for leaders, followers, work units, and organizations, including innovation outcomes.

We expect that a high-quality LMX will enhance can do, reason to, and energized to motivation for proactivity. Several studies have shown that LMX predicts innovation (Basu & Green, 1997; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Tierney et al., 1999), with these findings being explained in terms of those with quality relationships being given greater resources, decision-latitude, and autonomy, as well as the associated trust in the relationship being a resource that mitigates against image risks and threats, thereby enhancing can do motivation by reducing perceived costs of proactivity. When supervisors trust and respect an employee they are also more likely to evaluate the ideas of this individual more favorably (Zhou & Woodman, 2003), which again is likely to promote can do motivation. A good quality relationship between leaders and employees potentially enhances an individual's sense of psychological safety that they have room to deviate their work behavior from norms (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). For example, Liao, Liu, and Loi (2010) showed that a higher LMX relationship is associated with employee creativity via self-efficacy, although only when LMX differentiation is low because it is then that employees are more likely to perceive injustice in the flow of resources.

Consistent with a reason to process, Yuan and Woodman (2010) reported that higher quality LMX relationships predicted individual innovation via increasing individual's belief that innovation will enhance job performance, and via expected image

gains. LMX did not relate to expected image risks. In the same vein, Burris et al. (2008) reported that employees with poor quality LMX relationships are less likely to engage in voice because they experience detachment, and are essentially withdrawing from the organization. Interestingly, commitment did not predict voice in this study, consistent with our earlier argument that commitment may not be enough to promote voice, whereas detachment is enough to stifle voice.

Leadership studies that highlight the need for different leader behaviors for different individuals can be seen as similar to LMX studies, and are best classified as person-oriented leadership stimuli. Thus, Wang and Casimir (2007) reported that whether leaders encourage subordinates to be creative depends on leaders' trust in the reliability and loyalty of their subordinates. The authors concluded that encouraging staff creativity might expose leaders to risks, so leaders are perhaps willing to do only this if they trust their staff, consistent with a person-oriented approach.

### ***Indirect Effects of Person-oriented Leadership on Proactive Motivation***

In the same way that team-oriented leadership can indirectly influence proactivity, we propose that LMX can operate more indirectly. One possible indirect process is through i-deals, which are personalized employment conditions that individuals have negotiated. Hornung, Rousseau, and Glaser (2008) have described how supervisors make i-deals regarding employee development, flexibility, and work load reduction. By definition, these deals are with individuals rather than with the whole team. Evidence suggests that i-deals have various positive motivational and performance consequences, such as organizational commitment (Ng & Feldman, 2010), work performance and job involvement (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2009), and citizenship behavior (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010). Therefore it is reasonable to expect that leaders might promote employee proactivity through i-deals, although there are currently no studies supporting this possibility. For example, offering a developmental i-deal in which an individual can participate in more on-the-job development opportunities (Hornung et al., 2008) is likely to boost an individual's self-efficacy, as well as generate a desire to reciprocate to the supervisor.

Scott and Bruce (1994) showed that a higher quality LMX not only directly predicted innovation behavior, but also predicted a perception that there

is support from the organization for innovation and employees' perception of resources supply. Thus in this case, LMX indirectly affected individual innovation through individual-climate perceptions.

### **Leading for Proactive Capability Development**

Earlier we argued that there are many paths by which leaders' can shape their team members' proactive motivation, which in turn leads them to set and strive for proactive goals. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, individual proactivity is also potentially shaped by team members' knowledge, skills, and abilities, or their capability. In this section, we suggest that leaders can influence the proactivity of their team members through fostering the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities that are important for proactivity.<sup>4</sup> We discuss the direct effects of leadership (both team-oriented, path 3a, and person-oriented, path 4a) on individual-level capabilities, as well as the indirect effects of both types of leadership (path 3b, 4b) on individual-level capabilities. In our discussion, although we recognize them as theoretically distinct processes, we discuss team-oriented and person-oriented leadership effects together as the existing research is insufficiently well developed to consider this nuance.

### ***Leadership and Its Direct Effects on Individual Capability***

Can leadership influence individuals' knowledge and cognitive capabilities? This is a question that has had surprisingly little attention. Clearly, leaders can influence the acquisition of staff knowledge through supporting staff training and development, both in terms of formal learning and development opportunities and through on-the-job assignments and projects. However, there are other potential paths. Lord, Hannah, and Jennings (2011) argued that leaders can enhance or inhibit the development of "requisite complexity" in their staff. Requisite complexity encompasses cognitive complexity, self-complexity, affective complexity, and social complexity, and refers to "the ability of an individual to perceive and react to the internal and external organizational environment from multiple and sufficiently complexity perspectives to that the complexity of individual understanding achieves congruence with the complexity of the situation" (p. 109). Lord et al. argued two key ways that leaders enhance requisite complexity: through promoting goal structures that facilitate learning (e.g., a learning goal orientation), and by using feedback

processes that encourage creativity and invention. These possibilities are supported by DeRue and Wellman (2009), who showed that engaging in greater developmental challenges on-the-job predicted learning and skill development, but only for individuals with a learning orientation and who receive feedback from the context. Similarly, Smircich and Morgan (1982: 258) suggested that leaders can influence employees by “mobilizing meaning, articulating and defining what has previously remained implicit or unsaid, by inventing images and meanings that provide a focus for new attention, and by consolidating, confronting, or changing prevailing wisdom.”

As a further example, Dutton and colleagues (2001) identified three types of knowledge that facilitate effective issue selling to top management: relational knowledge (e.g., understanding who will be affected by the issue), normative knowledge (e.g., understanding legitimate decision making approaches in the context), and strategic knowledge (e.g. understanding the organization’s goal). These scholars argue that individuals who possess this knowledge and understanding are more likely to engage in particular issue selling “moves” (such as the way to present issues, the way to connect an issue to other issues or goals), which in turn enhance the likelihood that issue selling will be successful. These categories of knowledge are potentially important for other types of proactivity, such as taking charge and individual innovation. For example, if individuals have a good understanding as to who will be effective by their proactivity, they can then take steps to incorporate the perspectives of these individuals, enhancing the likelihood that the change will be successful. Leaders can enhance their staff’s relational, normative, and strategic knowledge directly, through their communication, as well as indirectly through work design.

Individuals’ thinking and cognition is also expanded by positive mood. In the broaden and build model, Fredrickson (2001) argued that positive affect expands thought–action repertoires, and that over the longer term, this builds enduring personal resources such as psychological resilience. As mentioned previously, positive affect can widen an individual’s perspective and increase perceived possibilities to bring about constructive changes. Because of this cognitive expansion, positive affect can also lead an individual to see more alternatives to achieve a proactive goal when he or she encounters obstacles, enhancing psychological resilience and persistency in leading proactive changes (Frese

& Fay, 2001). Therefore by creating a positive climate, in which team members experience positive feelings, leaders can potentially build the capacity of their workforce for proactivity. Studies have indicated approaches that leaders can induce subordinates’ positive feelings at work such as presenting transformational leadership behaviors (Bono, Foldes, Vinson, & Muros, 2007), supporting subordinates (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2006), and expressing positive emotion (Bono & Ilies, 2006).

We discussed earlier in the chapter how leaders can motivate greater deliberative thinking and cognitive effort by enhancing situational relevance. Leaders can potentially influence long-term thinking through processes such as vision, reinforcing long-term perspectives in decision making, and long-term goal setting.

Leaders can also actively prompt employees to generate proactive ideas by influencing employees’ perception of situations. For example, in the problem-solving context, Reiter-Palmon and Illies (2004) suggested that leaders can promote cognitive processes for creative problem solving by: (1) setting a problem-solving goal to find a construction for an ill-defined problem that usually has multiple, even competing goals, (2) providing more time, (3) creating a team with higher diversity to maximize opportunities to expose to different ideas, (4) ensuring accessibility of information, and (5) motivating the integration of new concepts. In addition, by challenging employees’ existing concepts and way of thinking (i.e., intellectual stimulation), supervisors also directly shape employees’ thinking to see different side of issues and thus more proactivity. Intellectual stimulation is one dimension of transformational leadership. As noted earlier, there is good evidence that transformational leadership is associated with proactivity, and it is possible (although currently untested) that one explanation for the association is that transformational leaders cultivate and develop the thinking skills required for proactivity. For example, Redmond et al. (1993) found that leaders can enhance employees’ creative ideas by helping an individual to find more alternative solutions and to formulate better plans for problem solving.

Leaders can also shape how the team coordinates and communicates, which in turn potentially facilitates employees proactivity because it enhances team members’ knowledge. For example, Anderson (1966) reported that leaders’ initiation of structure (i.e., establishing well-defined channels of communication, patterns of organization, and

other means of getting the job done) was positively related to student group creativity. This finding was explained in terms of the leadership style facilitating a flow of information that build individuals' knowledge-based and opportunity-recognition skill. In another study, leaders trained to pose a problem, avoid suggesting solutions, and share information and make it part of the statement of the problem are more likely to lead their teams to generate innovative and effective solutions during a team discussion than untrained leaders (Maier & McRay, 1972). This is because the trained leader behavior encourages an idea-generation process by delaying an idea-evaluation process.

### ***Leadership and Indirect Effects on Individual Capability***

Leaders can also support capability development through work design. Studies have shown a link between enhanced autonomy and cognitive development (Kohn & Schooler, 1978); the acquisition of new task knowledge (Leach et al., 2003; Wall, Jackson, & Davids, 1992); and the acquisition of broader knowledge about the organization, or "integrated understanding" (Parker & Axtell, 2001). Theoretically, for example, job autonomy promotes a deeper understanding of the task (Frese & Zapf, 1994). Similar learning and development mechanisms have been proposed for group work design. For example, it has been suggested that autonomous work group members learn from each other (Pearce & Ravlin, 1987) and, because they assume more responsibility for external coordination with others in other organizations, they also gain more understanding of the broader work process (Batt, 1999).

### **Summary**

Although considerable prior research has shown that leadership relates to proactivity, the lack of an integrating model makes it difficult to understand when and why leadership makes a difference to subordinates' proactivity. In the preceding text we have suggested a testable set of pathways by which leadership can shape individuals' proactive motivation and capability, and thereby prompt individuals to set and strive for proactive goals. An important contribution of this model is to explicitly distinguish team-oriented leadership that affects all team members from more person-oriented forms that focus on individual relationships. Most prior research linking leadership and proactivity has tended to assume leadership is a person-oriented input, whereas theoretically it is often more accurately considered as

a team-oriented input. We particularly urge more studies like that of Chen et al. (2013), which is one of the few studies to consider leadership as a team-level input that has cross-level influences on individual-level motivation and proactive behavior. It is also the case that most prior research has focused on how leadership affects employee motivation, with significantly less attention given to how leaders might build employees' capability for proactivity. A further contribution of the model is that it highlights not only the direct ways in which leaders' shape employee proactivity, but also how leaders can shape work climates, job design, performance appraisals, and other such team-level inputs, thereby indirectly influencing proactivity. Practically, our model suggests there are multiple vehicles through which leaders can seek to overcome some of the natural forces toward passivity in organizations that we identified earlier.

### **Extensions to the Model and Other Future Research Directions**

We recognize several ways that the proposed model can be developed further, including considering team-level effects, reciprocal processes, moderating pathways, and distinguishing goal generation and goal striving. We also recommend the need for research that more explicitly compares proactive behaviors relative to other behaviors; considers multiple types of leader behavior simultaneously; attends to the role of more senior leaders on individual-level proactivity; and identifies leader attributes associated with leading for proactivity and how these can be developed. We elaborate these directions next.

### ***Extensions to the Leading for Proactivity Model***

Our focus in this chapter has been on individual-level mediating processes. However, beyond the aforementioned paths, an alternative way that leadership could affect individuals' proactive motivation is through team-level proactive motivation. That is, leaders can affect team-level motivation states that, via bottom-down processes, then influence individual proactive motivation. As an example, leaders might build team identification, the degree that individuals define themselves as members of a group, which then trickles down to enhance an individual's reason to engage in team-oriented proactivity. For example, Liu and Phillips (2010) reported that, because they enhance a collective vision, transformational leaders can help to build a strong team

identity. A strong team identity is likely to motivate individuals to exert effort into finding solutions to enhance team effectiveness (Hirst, van Dick, & van Knippenberg, 2009), as well as to be willing to share knowledge with team members (Y. Liu & Phillips, 2010), which potentially builds team-member capability. No studies on proactivity have examined this type of process, although Zhou, Wang, Chen, and Shi, (2012) and Chen, Lam, and Zhong (2007) reported that team-level empowerment had a cross-level effect in predicating individual-level empowerment. Because an individual's sense of empowerment has been found to be positively related to proactive behavior as we reviewed previously, their findings therefore suggest that team-level motivation covered by the concept of empowerment (i.e., competence, impact, and self-determination and meaning) can enhance individual-level motivation and thus proactive behavior.

In addition, for proactive action to make a difference to organizations, individual proactive efforts need to be coordinated effectively. It is therefore ultimately important to move beyond considering individual-level proactivity to consider how leaders can promote proactivity at higher levels of analysis, such as team proactivity or organizational proactivity. A small number of such studies exist. For example, Williams, Parker, and Turner (2010) showed that team-level transformational leadership predicted team proactive performance (for similar studies in the innovation domain, see Burpitt & Bigoness, 1997; Krause, Gebert, & Kearney, 2007), although in a contrasting study, Wilson-Evered, Hartel, and Neale (2001) did not identify a significant relationship between transformational leadership and team innovation. Some of these higher-level studies have examined potential team-level or organizational-level mechanisms underpinning leadership styles/leaders' behavior and proactive performance, such as the mediating roles of climate for innovation (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008), favorable team norms (Williams et al., 2010), team identification and cooperation (Paulsen, Maldonado, Callan, & Ayoko, 2009), and knowledge sharing and collective efficacy (A. Y. Zhang, Tsui, & Wang, 2011). Focusing on the organizational level, Garcia-Morales, Llorens-Montes, and Verdu-Jover (2008) reported that transformational leadership at the organization level helps to build knowledge slack, absorptive capacity, and other outcomes that are positive for innovation; and Jung, Chow, and Wu (2003) reported that having a transformational CEO/president is positively associated

with an organizational climate that supports creativity and tolerates differences, which in turn predicts higher levels of organizational innovation. However, almost none of these studies have considered cross-level or individual-level processes that might underpin these pathways, such as the possibility that team leadership promotes the development of team-level proactive motivation, which in turn shapes individual-level proactive motivation, or the possibility that team leadership motivates individual proactivity while at the same time resulting in effective coordination and integration (i.e., bottom-up processes from individual proactivity to team-level proactivity). We recommend that these team-level extensions to the model be considered.

Our model also focused on causal effects flowing in one direction: from leadership to proactivity. It is also important to recognize possible reciprocal processes and positive spirals between the variables in the model. So far, we have focused on proactive performance as the ultimate outcome, and have assumed that leadership effects flow through to motivation which flows through to better performance. Nevertheless, higher performance could also trigger a change in leadership inputs (Clegg & Spencer, 2007) and thereby shape motivation and goal-regulation processes. The possibility that subordinates can obtain more resources, such as job autonomy or tolerance for deviation, from supervisors, when they have higher job performance has been discussed in LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991, 1995). Ultimately one might see positive spirals in which positive outcomes reinforce further change and development, as well as, of course, negative spirals where, for example, abusive leadership causes individuals to fear being proactive, stifling their performance, and incurring yet further abusive supervision. The model would benefit from a deeper consideration of these reciprocal processes.

Thus far, the model has focused on nonmoderated paths. For example, the model assumes a positive link from proactive goal regulation to job performance. However, not all proactivity is of equal value, and proactivity can be more or less effective from the perspective of different stakeholders. For example, studies have demonstrated that proactivity that lacks situational judgment (Chan, 2006) and is guided by non-prosocial values or high negative work affect (Grant et al., 2009) does not contribute to supervisory assessments of job performance. Other scholars have speculated about the importance for effective proactivity of goal alignment (Campbell, 2000), as well as systems thinking and



interpersonal skills (Parker et al., 2010). All of these variables potentially mitigate whether proactive goal regulation translates into job performance, or into actions that contribute to organizational goals.

Moreover, it is possible that leaders can shape these moderating processes. In other words, leaders might influence not just the occurrence of proactivity, but also its effectiveness. For example, proactive goal regulation is more likely to result in job performance when individuals direct their proactivity toward organizational ends such as efficiency rather than purely individuals' ends like career development. Leaders can potentially enhance the effectiveness of individuals' proactivity by increasing their personal-organizational fit, such as by communicating management practices and filtering information within an organization (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989), and through actively providing feedback about whether ideas fit with organizational goals (Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004). Likewise, having flexible approaches to thinking is also likely to shape the extent to which an individual's proactivity predicts job performance. For example, a manager contemplating a proactive change who adopts systems thinking principles (Checkland, 1985) will recognize that a change in one element of a system will have implications for other elements, and therefore will be more likely to recognize and seek to consider wider interests, thereby bring about more effective change. We would expect that leaders, through role modeling, encouragement, and appropriate questioning, could potentially facilitate higher levels of systems thinking (Lord et al., 2011), although such studies have yet to be conducted. We suggest this as a promising area of inquiry.

Finally, we identified proactive goal generation and proactive goal striving as two important elements of proactive goal regulation in our model, but we did not consider how leadership might influence these elements in different ways. For example, it might be that leaders need to provide inspiration to promote the setting of proactive goals, yet create a positive climate in which mistakes are tolerated in order to support striving to achieve the goal. Future developments of the model could include more detailed consideration of how leadership, motivation, and capability influence goal generation distinctly from goal striving.

### ***Comparisons of Proactive Behavior versus Other Behaviors***

One problem with the literature we have considered so far is that researchers infrequently consider

proactive outcomes alongside less proactive outcomes, making it difficult to discern what leader behaviors are uniquely or differentially important for proactivity. Yet the nature of proactivity suggests that some types of leadership might be more important for this behavior relative to others. First, proactivity is explicitly future focused and change oriented, which highlights the potential importance of leader behaviors that support this emphasis. Griffin et al. (2010) showed that leader vision predicted an increase in proactivity over time for individuals with high scores in role breadth self-efficacy, as well as an increase in "adaptivity" for individuals high in openness, but that vision was not important for predicting a growth in proficiency (core task performance). The authors explained their finding thus: "By providing a discrepant view of the future, a strong vision disturbs the equilibrium and motivates behaviors necessary for achieving a different end-state. Achieving a different end-state requires individuals to adjust well to changes initiated by others (adaptivity) and individuals to initiate changes themselves (proactivity). In contrast, vision is less important for motivating an increase in proficiency, which is likely because proficiency is neither oriented towards change nor achieving a different future" (p. 180). The suggestion therefore is that leadership that emphasizes a focus on the future is potentially more important for proactivity than non-proactive behavior.

Second, proactivity has been identified as psychologically risky, which means that leader behaviors that act to mitigate the risk are likely to be particularly important. As an illustration, Rank et al. (2009) found that active management by exception (a focus on close monitoring of mistakes) was not related to task performance, but it was negatively associated with innovation. It might be that leaders' negative behaviors are "more negative" in their effects when it comes to proactivity relative to task performance because the latter is expected and prescribed behavior, rather than more risky self-initiated behavior.

Third, although empowering leadership (and associated leader actions that encourage employee decision-making and discretion) has been shown to predict several types of performance, we expect it might be especially important for proactive behavior because empowerment builds ownership and internalization of the desire to be proactive. For example, Chen et al. (2011) showed that whereas psychological empowerment predicted innovative behavior, it did not predict team work behaviors such as helping.

Ultimately, more research is required that systematically compares the effects of leadership on different types of performance.

### ***Comparisons of Different Types of Leader Behaviors***

Another issue in the literature is that studies often include only one type of leadership, reducing insights into which type of leadership is relatively more important. Examining different leadership constructs at the same time can provide theoretical and practical implications. For example, in one study, higher quality LMX relationship predicted individual innovation, and was more important than transformational leadership (Basu & Green, 1997). Indeed, transformational leadership was negatively related when exchange quality was in the equation, leading the authors to suggest that transformational leaders might have negative features, such as squashing the desire for innovation because of a high need for approval. This finding suggests that transformational leadership has a dark side, and this negative aspect is shown when its association with other leadership constructs is controlled. Moreover, their finding raises the possibility that individual-level leadership input (i.e., LMX) is more important than the team-level leadership input (i.e., transformational leadership) in leading individual innovation. However, this speculation should be tested further because in Basu and Green's study, transformational leadership was not operationalized as a team-level input.

In a further study that also highlights the value of examining transformational leadership along with other leader behaviors, Detert and Burris (2007) found that the combination of transformational leadership and managerial openness predicted employee voice, but that openness was more consistently predictive of voice than transformational leadership. The effect of openness on voice was mediated by employee perceptions of psychological safety, and had its strongest effect for the best-performing employees. They suggesting that some transformational leaders can be both empowering and confining, and that a very vocal transformational leader might be seen as overly dominant. Altogether, these authors concluded that openness conveys a stronger signal for employees to engage in voice.

Examining different leadership constructs at the same time also can help to understand the relationship among these constructs in shaping one's proactive behavior. For example, Bettencourt (2004)

reported that both leaders' transformational leadership behaviors and contingent reward leadership behaviors can build a positive LMX relationship, and thus enhance an individual's change-oriented citizenship behavior. In this case, team-level leadership input (i.e., transformational and contingent reward leadership) influenced individual-level leadership input (i.e., LMX), which was more proximal to proactive behavior. In our proposed model, we did not discuss the relationship between team-level leadership inputs and individual-level leadership inputs, but according to Bettencourt's (2004) finding, it is possible that when a leader adopts a specific leadership style to lead a team, the adopted particular leadership style may also determine the inputs that a subordinate can receive from the leader.

### ***Skip-level Leadership and the Role of More Senior Leaders on Individual-level Proactivity***

Most research focuses on the immediate manager when examining leadership. Yet it might be important for employees to perceive support not only from their immediate supervisors, but also from more powerful individuals in the organization at higher hierarchical levels, in order to risk the engagement in proactive behaviors. In this vein, top managements' appreciative attitude toward proactive behaviors seems to be helpful: Axtell et al. (2000) found that management support facilitated the implementation of ideas over and above the positive influence of supervisor support. Further, Morrison and Phelps (1999) found that top managements' openness to change was positively related with employees' willingness to engage in taking charge behaviors. Similarly, Dutton and colleagues (1997), in a qualitative research approach based on grounded theory, explored that top management's willingness to listen to employees as well as a supportive organizational culture were positively related to employees' perception that it was favorable to engage in issue-selling behaviors. Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) also reported that top management openness can enhance speaking up among some employees.

In a qualitative study involving interviews of employees, Detert and Trevino (2010) identified ways in which "skip-level leaders" (leaders two to five levels above themselves) influenced employees' propensity to engage in voice. They showed that the cross-level nature of workflows means that employees often work closely with their most distal managers, and indeed it is often only skip-level leaders who

have the authority to authorize resources or solve problems. Through their indirect effects on structures and practices, and also more directly through the stories they tell and through their behavior (e.g., humiliating an individual on the spot), skip-level leaders can powerfully influence employees' can do motivation. These authors highlight how employees are particularly strongly inclined to "rely on general authority scripts" (p. 48) when dealing with skip-level leaders, and therefore suggest it will be especially difficult for these leaders to create perceptions that it is safe to speak up.

***Leader Attributes Associated with Leading for Proactivity and How These Might Be Developed***

A further important future direction concerns identifying which personality and contextual attributes are likely to facilitate leaders "leading for proactivity." For example, extroversion appears to reduce the likelihood of being an effective leader for proactivity (Grant, Gino, & Hofmann, 2011). In line with dominance complementarity theory (Kiesler, 1983), Grant et al. (2011) found that passive (proactive) teams achieved higher performance when leaders acted high (low) in extraversion. This is because complementarity of dominance avoids confusion and chaos that would occur when both parties in an interaction try to master the situation. Thus, if leaders are themselves dominant, as implied in extroversion, this might reduce their likelihood of leading for proactivity.

From this perspective, it is better for leaders to play a passive but supporting role to encourage, enable, and allow their subordinate to act on their initiative. This point of view is in line with the caregiving perspective in understanding the leadership process (Popper & Maysel, 2003), and in particular, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), in explaining how a caregiver can help a child to engage in exploration behavior in novel situations. In brief, attachment theory suggests that if a caregiver is available to provide appropriate support when it is needed, a child will form a secure attached relationship with the caregiver and will use the caregiver as a secure base to explore new and unfamiliar environments. This positive attachment-exploration association has been supported in child studies (see Grossmann, Grossmann, Heinz, & Zimmermann, 2008), and also adult studies (e.g., Elliot & Reis, 2003; Green & Campbell, 2000; Mikulincer, 1997). In general, these findings suggest that attachment security is a key antecedent

of exploration behavior. Because proactive behavior can be regarded as a form of exploration behavior in adulthood (Wu & Parker, 2012), we would suggest that when leaders act as warm, wise, and attentive caregivers to provide attachment security, they are more likely to cultivate their subordinate to be proactive in exploring new possibilities and leading change. This perspective identifies the importance of leaders with attributes that are more likely to form secure attached relationships with subordinates, such as having a secure attachment style, or being attentive to others problems (i.e., perspective taking) or being compassionate and willing to help (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Ashford et al. (2009) summarized several cognitive and motivational biases that reduce leaders' propensity to listen to others and encourage voice. For example, leaders have a confirmation bias (Evans, 1989), which leads them to believe that employees don't have valuable opinions, and leaders tend to have an action bias (resulting from that fact that leaders often get to their position based on advocating and action, rather than listening). It is important to investigate further what individual difference variables, or contextual variables, might reduce or mitigate such biases. As noted by Ashford et al. (2009: 188) "the factors that influence how receptive a leader is to voice are largely unexplored." We suggest that a potentially important attribute is humility, or the willingness to see one's self accurately (e.g., being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses) and to put oneself in perspective (e.g., a recognition of the "small role that one plays in a vast universe" (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005: 1331). Humility can be thought of as "that crest of human excellence between arrogance and lowliness" (p. 1331). We expect that leaders who have humility will be more likely to engage in behaviors such as empowerment, listening, and perspective taking, all of which potentially support employee proactivity. Edmondson (2003), for example, reported that nurses (who are lower status members of the team) are more likely to speak out in operating rooms if surgeons acknowledge their own limits.

There are several further directions that deserve more attention beyond those articulated in the preceding text. A nonexhaustive list includes identifying the training/developmental experiences most likely to enhance leaders' propensity to lead for proactivity; contextual influences on leaders' propensity to lead for proactivity; the identification of when leading for proactivity is most important; the possible

role of distributed leadership models in leading for proactivity (see Hunter, Thoroughgood, Myer, & Ligon, 2011, who argued, for example, that having a leader with domain-relevant expertise at the same time as having a leader with people-management expertise might be a powerful way to stimulate innovation); the need to examine leaders' "lived experience" in regard to promoting proactivity (see Ashford et al., 2009: 196); and cultural differences in leading for proactivity. A further direction is to consider not leading "for" proactivity, but leading "with" proactivity. Thus far, although some behaviors frequently engaged in by leaders (such as issue selling) have been investigated, there are likely additional behaviors that have had little systematic attention. Ashford et al. (2009) proposed the need to further leaders' "lateral voice" (voice to their peers, such as within the top management team), their "downward voice" (constructively challenging those below), and their voice to external stakeholders. We also suggest that many core aspects of management and leadership can be carried out more or less proactively, such as "scanning" one's staff to proactively identify if they are experiencing problems.

## Conclusion

Many forces act to inhibit employees' speaking out, taking charge to bring about change, introducing new ideas, and other such forms of proactive work behavior. Example forces include the hierarchical nature of organizations, the uncertainty and risk involved in being proactive, individuals' general propensity to obey authority, and an array of cognitive and motivational biases that lead those in power to disregard the views of those less powerful. We have suggested in this chapter that leaders play a potentially key role in offsetting these forces. We have argued that, through what they say and do, as well as through the practices, climate, and work designs they create, leaders can reduce some of the risks of being proactive and can increase employees' belief they can make a difference (can do motivation). They can also foster employees' internalized commitment (reason to motivation) and enhance their positive affect (energized to motivation). We have also argued that leaders can assist employees in developing the broader knowledge and particular thinking styles required for proactivity, such as by activating learning orientations that in turn stimulate employee knowledge acquisition. However, leaders must be willing to invest concerted effort into encouraging proactivity because the forces against it are pervasive. If leaders just give lip service to cultivating a supportive

climate, or preach but not actually practice behaviors like empowerment, then these changes in motivation or capability are unlikely to occur. We hope this chapter provides a helpful framework for gaining enhanced insights into how to lead for proactivity.

## Notes

1. Although creativity and individual innovation are conceptually distinct from proactivity, confusion can arise because operationally, measures of these aspects can be very similar to some forms of proactive behavior. For example, individual-level innovation and taking charge have been shown to be highly correlated (Parker & Collins, 2010). Even measures of creativity often include items that assess idea implementation. In the current chapter, therefore, we include studies that focus on individual innovation and/or creativity *if* they use measures that assess idea implementation. We exclude creativity or innovation studies that focus solely on idea generation or the production of novel ideas.
2. We recognize that leadership can influence proactive person–environment fit behavior and proactive strategic behavior (Parker & Collins, 2010), but for simplicity, we focus our model on predicting proactive work behavior.
3. Note that recent developments in LMX theory and research propose and investigate "leadership making," which is when managers are encouraged and trained to offer high-quality relationship building to all of their subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). If such an approach were to be adopted and directed toward all members of a work unit, we believe this approach is a type of team-oriented leadership, and in fact might look similar to transformational leadership.
4. Leaders can also shape team members' knowledge, skills, and abilities at the team level through, for example, selecting particular team members and not others. These team-level processes are not the focus here.

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