WORKPLACE COURAGE: REVIEW, SYNTHESIS, AND FUTURE AGENDA FOR A COMPLEX CONSTRUCT

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The goal of this review is to organize, synthesize, and critically appraise the literature on courage—a concept as old as the written word—to create a common base for the study of "workplace courage." To situate what follows, we begin with a brief review of the diverse foundational and current courage literature. We then use the literature and our critique to suggest a grounded working definition for the workplace courage construct, to discuss the overlap between workplace courage and many related organizational phenomenon and constructs, and to review four main approaches to the study of workplace courage. We next review the "perspective problem" in the study of courage (and related constructs), proposing a path forward that involves explicit researcher acknowledgement of the appropriate perspective(s) based on theoretical interests, as well as research attention to the causes and consequences of (dis)agreement in perspective itself. We conclude by outlining additional focused opportunities—such as those involving the role of gender, emotions, and time—to advance understanding of workplace courage.

INTRODUCTION

The nature and importance of "courage" has been debated and discussed for at least 2,500 years. Plato, for example, described courage as one of four cardinal virtues (along with justice, wisdom, and moderation; Lee, 2003). Courage has even been called the most important virtue, because without it there will be many failures to enact other virtues (Scarre, 2010). Addressing a gross injustice perpetuated by someone in power, for example, may require a courageous act. Thus, the importance of courage in lay understanding of virtuous human action is pervasive throughout recorded history. As Worline (2004) noted, courage appears prominently in the stories and mythology transmitted intergenerationally in most cultures. This ubiquity is evident in modern humanities scholarship and popular press writing,

where one can find books on the "courage to" do just about anything imaginable, including to change, act, heal, try, be, follow, teach, love, create, and compete. Indeed, as of this writing, a Google query of "courage" returns 193 million hits, and the same on Google Scholar produces nearly 1.4 million hits.

Likewise, courage seems to be quite important and relevant in modern workplaces. Courage is commonly listed by management writers as a virtue, attribute, trait, or behavior needed for effective leadership (e.g., Amos & Klimoski, 2014; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; DePree, 1997; Hackman, 2002; Hill, 2006; Hornstein, 1986; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Spreitzer, McCall, & Mahoney, 1997; Terry, 1993). Some call courage an "executive virtue" (Harris, 1999, p. 32) and link it theoretically to models of management decision making, while others discuss how courage might be necessary to increase whistleblowing (Faunce, Bolsin, & Chan, 2004), to keep workplaces safe (Geller, 2009), to prevent complicity in immoral actions such as torture (Mohr, 2009), or to deal successfully with fear during negotiations (Brooks & Schweitzer, 2011) and the challenges facing entrepreneurs (Deniz, Boz, & Ertosun, 2011). Some have proposed assessments to help organizations plot their current status en route to becoming low fear, high courage (and presumably high performing) environments (Kilmann, O'Hara, &

Strauss, 2010). Others have issued more general calls for courageous action, exhorting leaders, for instance, to follow their own path, act morally, and be authentic (Deresciewicz, 2014). Similarly, even management's most well-respected scholars celebrate its importance in general terms. Pfeffer (1998, p. 305), for example, argued that "achieving profits through people thus often comes down to courage."

There is now also a growing body of scholarly literature focused specifically on courage within workplaces or by workers of various types, which we classify as "workplace courage" in subsequent sections. This includes qualitative analyses of courage episodes from numerous organizational contexts (e.g., Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014; Koerner, 2014; Schilpzand, Hekman, & Mitchell, 2015; Worline, 2004) as well as studies focusing on specific contexts, roles, and issues. Steinfeldt (2015), for example, identified courage as a critical factor in the professional development and performance of the coaches he interviewed. The management literature now also includes explanations of efforts to measure (e.g., Sekerka, Bagozzi, & Charnigo, 2009) and outline the antecedents of (Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007; Simola, 2015) courage in workplaces and, to a lesser extent, to empirically document specific outcomes associated with leadership courage (Palanski, Cullen, Gentry, & Nichols, 2014).

Considering this, it would seem that workplace courage should be a clearly defined, cleanly operationalized construct with robust findings, implications, and applications in organizational science. For example, we might expect to have clear answers to relatively basic questions such as: What are the most common types of workplace courage, and how frequently are such behaviors exhibited? What are the antecedents and outcomes of workplace courage? Can workplace courage be stimulated or developed? In fact, we lack complete or convincing answers to these, and other, basic questions. In part, this is due to the relative dearth of empirical literature directly addressing courage in modern work environments. For example, on the same day in 2016 that a Google Scholar search produced 1.4 million hits for the word "courage," it produced only 113 hits for "*organizational* courage", 58 for "*workplace* courage", and 50 for "courage *at work*". In contrast, that search produced 38,400 hits for "organizational justice", 3,240 for "workplace justice", and 2,130 for "justice at work". Whether courage is more important to the workplace than justice or other virtues is a matter for philosophy or subsequent research, but that it has been significantly less studied by management scholars is a fact.

Beyond the limited empirical base on workplace courage, our understanding of courage in workplaces is hampered by the disparate, unorganized, and unsystematic nature of much of the more general courage literature that does exist. For example, as scholars in different disciplines have worked on "physical", "moral", "psychological", "vital", and other types of courage, they have largely neglected consideration of what is common across these types, including what (if anything) should be considered the core definition of all types of workplace courage. Other core challenges, such as how the perspective of the person evaluating courage matters and how to measure courage validly, have also not been addressed comprehensively or compellingly in the general courage literature.

The goal of this review, therefore, is to organize, synthesize, and critically appraise the relevant literature in service of our over-arching purpose of moving the field toward a shared understanding of what workplace courage is and how it can be most effectively theorized and empirically studied going forward. Our identification of themes, gaps, problems, and possibilities derives from an extensive review of the courage concept and literature across many social science and humanities domains, with specific grounding in our systematic review of approximately 100 theoretical and empirical pieces that seemed most foundational and relevant (based on their implicit or explicit ties to the earliest great thinkers on courage and/or their citation patterns) to a social scientific concept of courage. Because our perspective is that understanding of workplace courage will advance most steadily by broadening it from its historical status as the realm of normative philosophy to a place where it is grounded firmly in social science, broadly, and organizational science, specifically, we also draw on foundational ideas about construct definition, valid and reliable measurement, and related epistemological concepts to organize our review and suggestions.

To facilitate the development of workplace courage as a social science construct, we proceed as follows. In the first section, we provide a brief chronological review of the courage literature across many time periods and domains, outline the types of behaviors said to represent courage, and summarize the antecedents and outcomes of courage proposed across this literature. In the second section, we suggest a working definition of workplace courage – namely, **a work domain-relevant act done for a worthy cause despite significant risks perceivable in the moment to the actor** – using extant literature and logic to ground the

facets included and excluded from this definition. We then begin to situate workplace courage in its nomological network, describing the overlap between workplace courage and several broader and narrower organizational constructs. We next review and critique four primary approaches to the empirical study of workplace courage, and then describe the "perspective problem" (i.e., the challenges associated with various individuals – such as the actor versus the target or observers – differentially evaluating the risk and/or worth of the same act) and how researchers might deal most constructively with this issue. Our third major section describes additional opportunities for future theory and research on workplace courage beyond the core issues discussed in prior sections. We outline an agenda that includes studying potential moderators of workplace courage, empirically mapping the nomological network of workplace courage, focusing on the role of specific factors such as gender, emotions, and the impact of time, and, finally, possible approaches to interventions aimed at increasing workplace courage.

To foreshadow the core points of view that emerge from the review and synthesis that follows, and that are the underpinning of all suggested areas for future research, we note here our three main conclusions. First, scholars must agree on and work from the same definition of the construct of workplace courage. Building a common, cumulative scientific base of understanding, be it of the antecedents of courageous acts at work or their consequences, requires this foundation. Second, courage scholars must address measurement challenges that currently plague research in this area, from the tendency of qualitative researchers to work from participants' lay theories of courage in ways that make comparison and accumulation difficult, to quantitative researchers use of measures that lack validity of one or more types. Until such issues are resolved, careful mapping of the nomological network of workplace courage at the level of operationalization will remain impossible. How, for example, workplace courage overlaps with prosocial rule breaking, positive or constructive deviance, voice, risk-taking, internal social activism, or tempered radicalism cannot be established without valid assessments. Third, we suggest that courage researchers must not just acknowledge the variability in perspectives on the same act, but explicitly consider the implications of this reality for their theorizing and measurement. This does not mean there is a simple resolution for the likely lack of interrater reliability across raters. Indeed, because the actor and different observers may simply disagree on

an act's riskiness and/or worthiness – the core components of workplace courage – lack of convergence among raters is likely to be common and systematic. Thus, as it should be for all such constructs (of which there are many in organizational behavior), the path forward involves carefully choosing the appropriate perspective(s) to focus on given one's theoretical interests. Further, given the likely prevalence of inter-rater divergence in perspective, studying the causes and consequences of (dis)agreement itself is likely to be a fruitful area of inquiry in its own right.

To clarify some boundaries for our review before proceeding, we note that our focus is on courage as a single episode or act. This is consistent with the foundational thinkers, who used specific acts to explore the concept of courage, and with the dominant approach to courage found in the social sciences and in current management research (e.g., there is an episodic focus in about two-thirds of the courage literature we reviewed). Our episodic focus means we largely exclude two types of courage literature from further analysis. First, we do not delve deeply into studies of extended acts as examples of courage or into investigations of courage as a virtue on continued display. For instance, we do not focus on "courageous resistance", the "voluntarily selfless behavior in which there is significantly high risk or cost to the actor and possibly to the actor's family and associates, the actor makes a conscious decision to act, and the behavior is sustained over time" (Shepela et al., 1999, p. 787). Prolonged forms of resistance or challenge – be it Holocaust rescuing (Fagin-Jones & Midlarsky, 2007), extended public whistleblowing (Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2009), or social movement protesting (Tarrow, Tilly, McAdam, 2001) – may be seen as consisting of many specific acts, any of which might be judged as being courageous, but there are also likely differences between an act undertaken on one occasion, and one that must be reaffirmed continuously. Second, our focus on acts means we do not cover in detail those works that treat courage primarily or exclusively as a trait. Only a very small percentage (about 5%) of the works we reviewed directly address courage as the disposition of valor (e.g., Hannah, Sweeney, & Lester, 2007; Sosik et al., 2012) or try to measure the trait-like propensity for courageous action (e.g., Cougle & Hawkins, 2013; Fagin-Jones & Midlarsky, 2007). Others have a somewhat dispositional nature to them when addressing courage from a "virtue" vantage point. At present, we concur with Rate et al.'s (2007, p. 84) conclusion that there seems to be "limited transferability between a 'courageous act' and a 'courageous actor'." To the

extent such overlap does exist, we suggest that attributions related to dispositional courage are largely grounded in the specific prior instances of courageous action that are our focus here. (It would be odd, after all, to label someone a "courageous person", if one could not point to specific courageous acts that led to this supposed disposition.)

THE COURAGE CONCEPT: A BRIEF TUTORIAL

General history of courage

From Plato (Cooper & Hutchinson, 1997), Aristotle (Lee, 2003), and Mencius (Lau, 2003) in the BC era to the early 20th century examinations by philosophers and psychologists (e.g., Lord, 1918; Tillich, 1952) to current research (e.g., Koerner, 2014), courage has been praised and dissected. Setting the tone for most subsequent philosophical investigations is Plato's (b. circa 427 BC, d. circa 348 BC) *Laches* (Cooper & Hutchinson, 1997), an entire dialogue devoted to describing and defining courage, mostly in military settings. Plato's efforts were foundational to the work of his pupil, Aristotle (b. 384 BC, d. 322 BC), whose *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 1985) is also focused on battle. For Aristotle, there were virtues of thought (developed through education) and virtues of character (moral virtues developed through habit). Importantly, Aristotle deemed courage a moral virtue of habit, which speaks to courage both as a specific act and as something developable through behavior practice. He reasoned that courage was the mean between two extremes, lying between cowardice and rashness.

Not long after Aristotle engaged the complexities of courage, Chinese philosopher Mencius (b. circa 372, d. circa 289 BC) made several arguments suggesting ways in which courage might manifest beyond the physical dangers of the battlefield. The question of level of courage surfaces in Mencius' work, where he sorts through various types of courage and classifies the amount of each type that might be the most desirable to have. It is through Mencius' vivid examples of types of courage that one can see the primary differentiation between Mencius and Aristotle: Mencius' exemplars of great courage are people whose resilient and determined pursuit of goals is distinctly ethical or political, not militaristic (Ivanhoe, 2002). However, perseverance – often in the face of death – and the habitual nature of courage combine in both philosophers' works to paint a picture of courage as a virtue that anyone might work towards or develop. Through sensitivity to threats of many kinds and behavioral reinforcement, both

thought that even the least warrior-like may become courageous (Ivanhoe, 2002).

Western philosophers of the Middle Ages took their inspiration from the Aristotelian framework, augmenting ancient ideas with further clarification and extension of the risks beyond death or bodily harm. Saint Thomas Aquinas (b. 1225, d. 1274), for example, suggested that courage should include patience, which is "a useful way of differentiating courage from rashness" (Putman, 2010, p. 16). David Hume (b. 1711, d. 1776) subsequently observed that the spirit of courage is contagious, spreading from the actor to observers and giving the latter the encouragement and confidence to act similarly. Then, with the development of the English novel as a book form in particular (circa 1719), authors' thematic inclusion of courage brought examples and hypotheticals to a larger audience, again bringing in different types of behaviors in the face of even more various risks. As a new and more literal interpretation of daily reality, the novel developed because of, and catered to, a growing middle class of increasingly literate people (Watt, 1957). In short, the advent of novels, mass pressing of all varieties of books, and a burgeoning reading audience helped expand courage as a subject matter (as well as expand the notion of courage), giving writers the opportunity to write about more common people rather than just warriors or royalty. For instance, Daniel Defoe wrote of a young man in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) whose courageous encounters may have happened to anyone, rather than only those engaged in battle. Likewise, other early novels such as Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) and Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818) expanded the role of courageous actor to female protagonists, telling the stories of heroines with the moral courage to abide by their own standards, unmarred by others encouraging them to compromise. Around the same time, even the famed military philosopher and strategist, Carl Von Clausewitz, allowed for the distinction between courage in the face of physical danger and that involving moral or societal risks (a "*courage d'esprit*"; Von Ghyczy, von Oetinger, & Bassford, 2001, p. 56).

An expansion in the types of courage recognized and initial attempts at classifications of courage (e.g., moral and psychological in addition to physical) paralleled the acknowledgement that men and women could act courageously in all walks of life. This endeavor began in the 1700s and has continued since. Indeed, with the development of the middle class (and expansion of the upper class) in western

Europe it became possible to take unpopular stands or speak up at the risk of social standing, but perhaps without fear of death. As Miller (2002, p. 263) noted:

> It is only when people can rely on not being killed or beaten for voicing unpopular opinions that physical fears can be separated from fears of rejection, ridicule, and disgrace. No need to call Socrates physically courageous during the retreat at Delium and morally courageous while in prison resisting temptations to connive with what he considered to be ignoble and unjust opportunities to escape. Plain courage would do in both cases, for in both instances he exposed himself to physical extinction.

By specifying the significance of various non-physical risks (beyond the social and political risks pointed out by Mencius) that could also be accepted in pursuit of "worthy purposes", these first writings from the 18th and 19th centuries involving different types of courage formed the basis for most modern theorizing and empirical research. For instance, it set the stage for a focus on moral courage (e.g., Kidder, 2005; Miller, 2002; Rossouw, 2002; Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007; Sidgwick, 1981), sometimes known as civil courage (Greitemeyer, Osswald, Fischer, & Frey, 2007; Osswald, Greitemeyer, Fischer, & Frey, 2010), a categorization of courage research that has gained some momentum recently in response to increased attention more generally to ethical issues and lapses in contemporary society (e.g., as noted in Lester, Vogelsang, Hannah, & Kimmey, 2010). Among early descriptions, moral courage was seen as a willingness to risk social rebuke or humiliation (e.g., Sidgwick, 1981). It referred to obligation to do one's duty despite societal risks and was illustrated by such behaviors as engaging in romantic relationships despite the disapproval of others (Stendhal, 1991; cited in Miller, 2002), whereas later iterations described it as having the "resolve to act even when it is not comfortable or self-serving to do so" (Rossouw, 2002, p. 414). To a lesser extent, psychological courage, relevant to addressing phobias or taking on a personally challenging task to make oneself a better person or worker, also gained relevancy as people began to investigate how individuals might thrive in complex social orders (Putman, 1997).

Additional insights relevant to contemporary study of courage have come from many other realms over the past 40 years, including developmental psychology (e.g., Bronstein, Fox, Kamon, & Knolls, 2007; Evans & White, 1981; Gibbs et al., 1986; Szagun, 1992; Szagun & Schäuble, 1997), clinical psychology (e.g., Cougle & Hawkins, 2013; Nili,

Goldberg, Weizman, & Dudai, 2010), general psychology (e.g., Pury, 2010; Rachman, 1978), and occupational studies largely based in the fields of military and medicine, but also extending to areas such as academia and politics (e.g., Adler & Hansen, 2012; Cox et al., 1983; Reardon, 2007; Shelp, 1984). Whereas developmental psychologists focused on increasingly sophisticated conceptions of courage as children age (toward a more "mentalistic understanding of courage"; Szagun & Schäuble, 1997, p. 291), clinical psychologists focused primarily on interventions that lead to the courage to confront personal phobias or enact other approach behaviors (e.g., Cougle & Hawkins, 2013; Nili et al., 2010).

In the realm of general psychology, research has led to insights into how individuals conceptualize their own courage given the context of the actor's personal limitations (*personal courage*) versus how people in general (*general courage*) would be expected to evaluate and act in a given situation (Pury, Kowalski, & Spearman, 2007). Further work highlights the alignment of courage with values (Pury & Kowalski, 2007) and how courage attributions are affected by an act's outcome (Pury & Hensel, 2010). Breeden (2012) examined *accolade courage*, or how individuals attribute courage to others (Pury & Starkey, 2010). In contrast with accolade courage, *process courage* has been used to describe the way in which an individual goes about choosing and executing risky action for a valued goal (Pury & Starkey, 2010). Pury, Britt, Zinzow, and Raymond (2014a) showed that psychological and moral courage, typically studied distinctly, can occur simultaneously in what they label *blended courage*.[1] Others (e.g., Rate, Clarke, Lindsay, and Sternberg, 2007) have focused on identifying a modern implicit theory of courage, a topic to which we return in a subsequent section.

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[1] The notion of blended courage is consistent with our choice to not further separate our review by proposed types of courage. We concur with Pury et al. (2014a) and others that such formal classifications and distinctions may miss the "real-life" issue at hand or be misleading or harmful (e.g., Greitemeyer et al., 2006; Olsthoorn, 2007). Further, the factors identified as relevant to one type of courage are often implicated in other types as well. For example, a morally courageous action may require some sort of anger or indignation (e.g., Batson et al., 2007; Stein, 1975), but so too might a physically courageous act (Miller, 2002). Similarly, a "felt responsibility" can drive nearly any type of courageous act (Berry, 2004; Kendall, 2006). Hence, from here on, we treat all classifications as simply "courage" in an effort to consolidate the general literature into a digestible form for building the construct of workplace courage.

Turning to studies of courage in particular settings or in particular types of work, it is notable that after the proliferation (from the 18th through the mid-20th centuries) of courage conceptualization beyond its long-standing grounding on the battlefield, Rachman and colleagues brought the study of courage full circle by conducting rigorous studies of various tasks done by those in military service. Rachman's empirical focus was the intersection of fear, argued in classical work to be requisite for courage, and courageous action. In multiple studies, he and colleagues strove to demonstrate that training could in fact produce courageous behavior, or at least reduce fear in subjects (Cox, Hallam, O'Connor, & Rachman, 1983; Hallam & Rachman, 1980; Rachman, 2010). Beyond the military, Shelp (1984, p. 355) laid theoretical groundwork for the study of courage in the medical field, arguing that action (and inaction) on the part of physicians contributes to the "moral community". Many other calls for courage in the medical field followed, such as calls for the courage to blow the whistle (Faunce et al., 2004), be noncompliant in torture (Mohr, 2009), and increase the quality of a health care system (Daly, Jackson, Mannix, Davidson, & Hutchinson, 2014; Oakley, 2015).

In the early 2000s, Worline (2004) analyzed 201 stories shared by employees and managers in high-tech organizations. Defining courage as "the constructive opposition of individuation and involvement when social life is under duress" (Worline, 2004, p. 237), she delineated the essence of the construct, including its emotional resonance whereby courage –and the narratives created following courageous acts – inspires and moves others to do the same or at least perceive an opportunity for change (Quinn & Worline, 2008; Worline, 2004). Worline (2012) subsequently noted that assessing duress or remedy, which are judgments relevant to the attribution of an act as courageous, can be made not only by individuals, but also by society or even historical interpretation.

More generally, moral courage has received the most attention by management scholars in the first decades of the 21st century. Researchers have investigated it as part of a managerial competency framework (Crossan, Byrne, Seijts, Reno, Monzani, & Gandz, forthcoming; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014; Sekerka et al., 2009), an executive leadership foundation (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009; Sosik, Gentry, & Chun, 2012; Khelil et al., 2016), a corporate competition metric (Graafland, 2010), an identity process (Simola, 2015), and have attempted to tackle the complex,

paradoxical tension courage represents between the individual and organization (Simola, 2016). Two recent empirical management papers have focused explicitly on accounts of "workplace" courage. Based on qualitative analysis of the accounts of 89 business professionals, Koerner (2014) offered a theoretical account focused on the identity tensions that precipitated many courageous acts; workplace courage, she argued, "helps individuals to minimize incongruities between their self- and social identities" (Koerner, 2014, p. 63). Likewise, Schilpzand et al. (2015) proposed an inductively-derived model of workplace courage based on their 94 interviews with various types of employees who witnessed or undertook courageous actions. Their model includes a two-stage process of felt responsibility (e.g., the obligation to help someone) followed by perceived autonomy (i.e., the perception one can help someone).

As this brief, chronological review of the courage concept illustrates, the path from ancient philosophy to modern social science has been long and anything but straightforward. It reveals, however, many of the complexities still facing current researchers and provides a historical foundation for our subsequent discussion of the route forward for the workplace courage construct.

Behavioral manifestations of courage

The authors of two recent workplace courage papers classified qualitative courage stories into four categories: Koerner (2014) labeled her stories as those pertaining to a) endurance of identity, b) reaction to harm to identity, c) opposition to powerful individuals or organizations, and d) creation through seizing opportunities; Schilpzand et al. (2015) suggested a) standing up to authority, b) uncovering mistakes, c) structuring uncertainty, and d) protecting those in need as a way to distinguish courage acts. In a theory piece, Cavanagh and Moberg (1999) also attempted to classify organizational courage behaviors, focusing on two primary objectives – organizational citizenship behaviors and reforming one's organization – and further subdividing those categories by type of risk involved (physical, economic, and social). As illustrated by the differences in just these papers' categorizations, there is no generally agreed upon, or widely used, taxonomy of the types of behaviors that are routinely called courageous. We therefore qualitatively reviewed and synthesized the behaviors identified as courage acts across the entire literature set we reviewed (i.e., works on courage more generally and workplace-related courage

specifically). Through this iterative process, we distilled three general types of behavior mentioned repeatedly as reflective of courage. As described below and illustrated in Table 1, these categories reflect actions that involve *risk of life or limb*, *opposing or branching out from the status quo*, and *psychological courage / the courage to be*. We present these categories not as a definitive guide to classification of all courage research or one likely to perfectly mirror the domain of workplace-related courage behaviors, but as a synthesis to guide future research.

First, and perhaps most obvious is the courage to risk life or limb for a worthy purpose, with risk here being overwhelmingly physical. Risking physical danger was the primary focus of the earliest courage work (e.g., Aristotle, 1985; Clausewitz & Graham, 1873), with heroism in war (Wansink, Payne, & van Ittersum, 2008), or other life-saving efforts or volunteering at risk of health (Becker & Eagly, 2004) being the foremost recent examples. More specifically, behaviors such as bomb disposal (e.g., Cox et al., 1983; Hallam & Rachman, 1980) or fighting in World War II (Rachman, 1984) have been covered in social science research, as have civilian rescue efforts during war (Fagin-Jones & Midlarsky, 2007) and the actions of the passengers on Flight 93 on September 11, 2001 (Quinn & Worline, 2008). The actions of firefighters, police officers, and many others dealing with angry or mentally ill customers also involve physical risks undertaken for worthy causes. While not specifically focused on courage, many introductions to organizational behavior articles likewise remind us of the physical risks employees sometimes accept on behalf of others or their organization (e.g., English & Sutton, 2000; Glazer & Glazer, 1999; Olsthoorn, 2007; Pury, 2008).

Mencius, as mentioned above, was one of the first to describe a different type of courage, noting that when one stands in opposition to someone or something, he or she may risk social or political capital (not just, or only, physical harm). And, indeed, throughout the ages standing in opposition to or otherwise challenging the status quo (e.g., Miller, 2002; Daly et al., 2014) as well as certain types of highly proactive acts, especially taking responsibility for something particularly difficult yet worthy, appears as a second broad type of courage behavior. Von Clausewitz, for instance, characterized non-physical courage as a struggle between responsibility to an external power and one's conscience, which illustrates well the foundation of this category of courageous behaviors (Von Ghyczy et al., 2001). In work organizations, specific actions such as taking initiative to challenge powerful individuals in one's organization in order to remedy a problematic situation (Koerner, 2014) or confronting one's peers if they commit an unethical act or are

TABLE 1
Types of Commonly Described Courage Across All Literatures

Risk of Life or Limb	Opposing or Branching Out from the Status Quo	Psychological Courage/the Courage to Be
Examples	Examples	Examples
Plato and Aristotle on warriors and battles (Aristotle, 1985; Cooper & Hutchinson, 1997)	Mencius on ethical or political stands (Ivanhoe, 2002; Lau, 2003)	Ending destructive psychological states (Putman, 1997)
Bomb disposal, parajumpers (Cox et al., 1983; Hallam & Rachman, 1980; Rachman, 1984)	Moral courage in the 18th, 19th centuries (Miller, 2002)	Taking on intra-psychic risks and challenges (Deresciewicz, 2014)
Very risky life-saving actions (Becker & Eagly, 2004; Fagin-Jones & Midlarsky, 2007; Quinn & Worline, 2008)	Courage by medical professionals (Daly et al., 2014)	Addressing internal phobias perhaps not readily apparent to observers (Cougle & Hawkins, 2013)
Heroism in war (Wansink et al., 2008)	Challenging powerful individuals (Koerner, 2014)	Hope in the face of terminal illness or a debilitating condition (Kendall, 2006; Marshall, 2002)
	Challenging unethical or abusive behavior of peers or one's institution (Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Baratz & Reingold, 2013)	
	Whistleblowing about unethical or illegal behavior (Shepela et al., 1999)	
	Taking the lead on unpopular actions (Gentry et al., 2013; Palanski et al., 2014; Sosik et al., 2012)	

abusive to another person (Hannah & Avolio, 2010) are risky because they directly confront those with either formal power (Magee & Galinsky, 2008) or informal status or ability to socially sanction the confronter (e.g., Dutton, Ashford, Lawrence, & Miner-Rubino, 2002). Expressing moral or ethical views despite possible sanctions by leaders of one's institution (Baratz & Reingold, 2013; Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Meyerson & Scully, 1995) can be considered courageous, as can even suggestions for change to processes or products when they are interpreted as direct confrontation or insubordination (Burris, 2012; Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño, & Edmondson, 2009). Other actions, such as taking the lead on unpopular though necessary actions (Gentry et al., 2013; Palanski et al., 2014; Sosik et al., 2012), might be considered courageous behavior in some work contexts today, while more extreme behaviors, such as external whistleblowing or otherwise formally protesting unethical acts also fall under the category of courageous challenges to the status quo (Miceli & Near, 1992; Shepela et al., 1999). Note that courageous oppositional behaviors need not always reflect "action" in the usual sense; some choices to not act can still be courageous (Shelp, 1984). Refusing to participate in immoral action sanctioned by a group or organization can take courage without any explicit action, as can defying an unethical order. For instance, Mohr (2009) emphatically called for nurses not to be complicit in torture, which might be considered inaction yet still courageous.

Perhaps less obvious at first glance, psychological courage – or the courage "to be" – is another category of courageous behavior appearing in various forms in the literature, particularly in the writings of philosophers and psychologists in the 20th century. Tillich (1952), for example, described the essence of courage as an individual embracing the anxiety of non-existence or nothingness and carrying on in life. The courage to be largely involves facing intra-psychic risks and challenges, as demonstrated in the literature with examples such as the courage to follow one's own path or to otherwise be authentic to oneself (Deresciewicz, 2014). In the realm of psychological or vital courage, addressing phobias or mental health challenges, as well as something as mundane as asking someone out on a date might be considered the courage to be (Cougle & Hawkins, 2013). Courage in the face of cancer (Kendall, 2006), dealing with aphasia (Marshall, 2002), or ending controlling, destructive psychological states, addictions or harmful habits, or irrational anxieties (Putman, 1997) are other examples of behaviors where the act may be deemed courageous because it involves dealing with a psychological hardship or risk.

Antecedents and outcomes of courage

Existing courage research does not often focus empirically on antecedents or outcomes of courage, leading to a relatively thin body of evidence in this nascent social science literature. Antecedent claims are sometimes based on limited data or theorized about indirectly, but relatively few papers provide convincing evidence or explanations of the processes by which courage acts unfold, or the mechanisms that translate an opportunity to act into an act. Likewise, statements about the outcomes of courageous actions are also mostly theoretical or based in anecdotal or qualitative evidence. With this caveat, we synthesize suggested antecedents and outcomes below as a starting point for future systematic study.

Antecedents. The antecedents of courage can broadly be categorized as reflecting either individual-level factors, such as one's self-efficacy or confidence, emotional state, and personal convictions or felt responsibility, or contextual factors, such as the existence of supportive norms or role models.

Self-efficacy, or confidence in one's ability to act, is among the most commonly proposed individual-level antecedents of courageous action (e.g., Goud, 2005; Hannah et al., 2007; Lester et al., 2010; May, Luth, & Schwoerer, 2014; Pury et al., 2007; Rachman, 1984, 2010; Schilpzand et al., 2015; Spreitzer et al., 1997; Worline, 2012). There may also be a certain group of people in the population less susceptible to the physiological stress of acting courageously, making them more likely to act (Rachman, 1984, 2010). Others suggest that personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, or core self-evaluation (Hannah et al., 2007; Osswald et al., 2010; Sekerka, McCarthy, & Bagozzi, 2011; Shepela et al., 1999) may be directly related to courageous action. Additionally, state hope, resiliency, and positivity (Geller, 2009; Hannah et al., 2007; Kendall, 2006; Lester et al., 2010; Saleh & Brockopp, 2001; Steinfeldt, 2015), behavioral integrity (Palanski et al., 2014), trait empathy (Fagin-Jones & Midlarsky, 2007; Gibbs et al., 1986; Osswald et al., 2010; Shepela et al., 1999), mindfulness and social connectedness (Kohlenberg et al., 2015), and a propensity to have a moral mindset (Hutchinson, Jackson, Daly, & Usher, 2015b) have all been suggested as positive correlates of courageous action. Conversely, internal locus of control (mentioned by Shepela et al., 1999; and Sosik et al.,

2012) was found to be negatively correlated with moral courage rating in studies conducted by Gibbs et al. (1986).

Emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, and regret are also frequently proposed as key primers for courageous action. For instance, anger, a strong approach-oriented emotion (Stemmler, Aue, & Wacker, 2007), has been found to increase the likelihood of courageous action (see also Gamson, 1992). Anger at injustice, unfairness, or violations of human rights may give a person the impetus to act courageously (e.g., DeCelles, Sonenshein, & King, working paper; Folger, 1987; Osswald et al., 2010; Greitemeyer et al., 2006). In addition to in-the-moment anger or fear, anticipation of such emotions or even others like regret might also spur courageous action (e.g., Edwards, Lawrence, & Ashkanasy, 2013; Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007). It may be that anger or anticipatory regret (e.g., Gilbert et al., 2004; Zeelenberg, 1999) helps overcome several primary obstacles to courageous action, such as fear, unwillingness to risk disruption to the status quo, and lack of awareness of possible alternatives (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989).

Threats to an individual's values or convictions may provide the necessary propulsion for courageous action (Glazer and Glazer, 1999; Ohnishi, Hayama, Asai, & Kosugi, 2008; Schilpzand et al., 2015; Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1998), and violations of particular values (such as duty, selflessness, integrity, honor, valor, loyalty, independence, and life) may be more likely to result in courageous action (Hannah et al., 2007). Whether this is equally true across different types of individuals is currently unknown, but having high ethical standards (e.g., Faunce et al., 2004; Pury et al., 2014b) and higher awareness of and felt responsibility about threats to collective well-being (Schilpzand et al., 2015; Simola, 2015) have been proposed as relevant individual predictors of conviction-driven courageous action. Factors such as one's level of commitment to the organization where a values violation occurs may also affect, independently or interactively, how one responds (Goud, 2005).

Several situational or contextual factors have also been proposed as antecedents to courageous action. Hernandez (2008, p. 125) noted that "contextual support, which creates a sense of mission and purpose, engenders the sense of personal obligation posited to drive courageous action." This is consistent with Rachman's (1978) findings about the powerful effect of group morals, and Sekerka et al.'s (2011) claim that an organization's climate can be a powerful force toward or against moral courage. The power of context is also suggested by researchers' finding that "salient prosocial norms fostered moral courage"; specifically, that "subjects for whom prosocial norms were activated intervened more often against discrimination than did subjects for whom no prosocial norms were made salient (Osswald et al., 2010, p. 156). Kilmann et al. (2010) argued that adaptable or mission-oriented organizational climates may be more conducive to courage, whereas turbulent or hostile environments may reduce it.

Having a role model and observing someone relevant demonstrating courageous behavior have also been described as enabling courageous action in others (e.g., Goud, 2005; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Hutchinson, et al., 2015b). Research showing that having a courageous leader was the most critical determinant of a soldier's own ability to cope under fire suggests that "courageous behavior is promoted by courageous models" (Rachman, 1978, p. 243). Encouragement or support from others seems to increase the likelihood of courageous action by lowering the risks, especially the potential social stigma, of acting (Pury et al., 2014a; 2014b).

Outcomes. To help direct future research, we group below the types of courage outcomes experienced primarily by the actor versus by others, as well as by whether those outcomes are largely positive or negative. We further distinguish outcomes of courage acts by whether they are likely to be more direct or proximal versus more indirect or distal.

While many courage acts can primarily or solely affect others and/or a collective (e.g., an organization), this need not be mutually exclusive from the actor obtaining direct personal benefit or harm (Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Kreps & Monin, 2011; Shelp, 1984). For example, acting courageously may result in the actor experiencing peace of mind, lack of regret, or a heightened sense of integrity (Finfgeld, 1998; Ryan, Oestreich, & Orr, 1996). It may allow individuals to adopt and enact new identities that reduce friction between aspects of one's self and social identities (Koerner, 2014). On the negative side, one can be physically harmed, psychologically shamed, or fired on the spot for engaging in courageous behavior (e.g., Detert & Trevino, 2010; Koerner, 2014; Miceli et al., 2009; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003).

Courageous actors may also experience various indirect or longer term benefits, such as being seen as having higher managerial and executive potential (Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2009; Sosik, 2006; Spreitzer et al., 1997) or actually being higher performers (Palanski et al., 2014). Observers of their

acts may also judge courageous actors as more capable (Kilmann et al., 2010) and having a better executive image (Palanski et al., 2014). A courageous act may bolster the actor's sense of individual agency, self-confidence, and self-respect (Boyd & Ross, 1994; Castro, 2006; Evans & White, 1981; Lester et al., 2010). Conversely, there can be negative indirect or longer term outcomes for those who show courage. For instance, while observers acknowledge that peer reporters (of unethical behavior) are highly ethical, they also tend to evaluate them as unlikeable (Treviño & Victor, 1992; see also Monin, Sawyer, & Marquez, 2008 for related work on the rejection of moral rebels). Beyond being disliked by peers, Schilpzand et al. (2015) found "harm to the actor" was reported in 60 percent of courage incidents involving confronting one's supervisor and in 26 percent of all other acts reported.

Perhaps because courage is generally other focused (for example, Koerner [2014, p. 82] found that "in 80 percent of the accounts, the courageous act was intended to benefit others, rather than just the courageous actor"), there are many theoretical and anecdotal claims that courage will be good, in general ways, for business or society (Deresciewicz, 2014; May et al., 2014). This may be because it solves problems, fosters innovation and creativity, creates positive social change, increases citizenship behaviors, and creates competitive advantage (Berson, Nemanich, Waldman, Galvin, & Keller, 2006; Gentile, 2011; Hernandez, 2008; Howard, Farr, Grandey, & Gutworth, 2016; Lester et al., 2010; Vuori & Huy, 2016; Worline, Wrzesniewski, & Rafaeli, 2002), or because courageous action may lead to higher ethical standards, more ethical behavior, and ethical leadership in organizations (Berson et al., 2006; Daly et al., 2014; Faunce et al., 2004; Gentile, 2011; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Hernandez, 2008; Hutchinson et al., 2015a; Kendall, 2006; Lester et al., 2010; Sekerka et al., 2009; Shepela et al., 1999; Vuori & Huy, 2016; Worline et al., 2002).

Indirect outcomes for organizations could involve the contagious nature of courage (Pury & Lopez, 2010; Rachman, 2004), awakening of a sense of possibility (Quinn & Worline, 2008) or inspiration to act (Biswas-Diener, 2012; Bocchiaro, Zimbardo, & Van Lange, 2012; Schilpzand et al., 2015) in others. As reported by Putman (2010, p. 16), these ideas have a long lineage: Hume, writing in the 18th century, noted that "observing courage tends to cause it to spread among the observers" and that "the spirit of that act (through what is called sympathy) can increase the level of bravery in those around that

individual." Consistent with this, Worline (2004) suggested that well-articulated stories of workplace courage inspire others to make changes and act similarly. In this regard, inspiration (Smith, 2014) or elevation (Haidt, 2002) can be the outcome of one courageous act and the antecedent of others.

Summary

In this section, we reviewed the general courage literature as a foundation for what follows regarding our more specific interest in workplace courage. As is evident, despite the breadth and age of the courage discussion, there is as yet no compelling evidence regarding core issues like appropriate definitions or the value of making distinctions among types of courage. Similarly, numerous antecedents and outcomes of courage have been proposed, but few could be said to have been demonstrated in valid and reliable ways across multiple studies. Further, only some courage types and their accompanying behavioral examples in the literature seem clearly relevant in today's work contexts. Thus, in the next section, we turn our focus specifically to workplace courage, starting at the ground floor of social science—construct definition—to begin building a stronger base for future work.

DEFINING AND STUDYING WORKPLACE COURAGE

Workplace Courage: A Proposed Definition

Good constructs are a foundation of good social science, and good definitions are the foundation of good constructs. Definitions are central to construct clarity because, as conceptual abstractions of phenomena that cannot be directly observed, constructs can only be clearly understood through the use of precise language that clarifies parsimoniously, and without tautology, the essential meaning of the phenomenon being described (MacCorquodale & Meehl, 1948; Suddaby, 2010). Good construct definitions are the starting point for knowledge advancement, because without them the kind of valid measurement necessary for comparing and contrasting results—in short, for accumulating knowledge—is severely hampered (Locke, 2007; Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks, 1995). Unfortunately, despite being discussed for millennia, there remains confusion about the definition of courage and, based in this, lack of clear agreement on a definition of workplace courage more specifically. Thus, we believe the

path forward for the workplace courage construct is to start with its definition.

To begin with the conclusion of our extensive review of the courage and related literatures, we suggest that the term "workplace courage" be defined as "a work-domain-relevant act done for a worthy cause despite significant risks perceivable in the moment to the actor." Like numerous other organizational constructs (e.g., organizational citizenship, Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; constructive deviance, Vadera, Pratt, & Mishra, 2013), workplace courage is an "umbrella" or "higher-order" construct that will encompass many specific behaviors. Also like other common constructs in the organizational sciences (e.g., justice, Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; extra-role behavior, Morrison, 1994), workplace courage is an inherently perceptual construct—an attribution ascribed to an act by either the actor or others (more on this below). Stated another way, workplace courage is socially constructed; it does not exist as a fact across all time and places to be discovered but, rather, is an attribution made about specific acts occurring in a specific time and place (Hannah et al., 2007; Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014; Lester et al., 2010; Miller, 2002; Schilpzand et al., 2015). The meaning of both "risk" (i.e., the nature of threats to physical, psychological, economic, and social well-being) and "worthy cause" are tethered to the general societal and institutional norms of a time as well as to contemporary variation. Importantly, this does not mean that context changes the definition of workplace courage. It means, instead, that the likelihood a given act is seen as reflecting a construct's core components—in this case risky, worthy, and work-domain relevant—can differ across time and place (Galperin, 2012). What is seen at IBM as workplace courage today versus 100 years ago likely differs, as might what is seen as workplace courage today at IBM versus Google.

Of the three essential components of workplace courage, "work domain relevant" is the most straightforward and requires the least situating in prior literature or logic. It is unlikely to be contentious to assert that not all forms of courage are equally relevant to organizational researchers, and that many proposed forms of courage (e.g., battling severe illness, overcoming spider or bat phobias) are not inherently work-domain relevant. Thus, noteworthy here is simply that work-domain relevant is a less restrictive qualification than one that requires the action to take place *in* the workplace. For instance, someone who confronts a coworker outside the office about behavior that is detrimental to the company may be engaging in workplace courage, as may someone who reports illegal or unethical behavior to external authorities in an offsite meeting. Being "work-domain relevant" speaks to the relevance of an act to a workplace and its stakeholders, not to the physical location of its occurrence.

The other suggested core components of the workplace courage construct involve the riskiness and worthiness of an act. These components are central to recent definitions of "workplace courage" and other descriptions of courage applied to workplaces. Koerner (2014), for instance, followed the lead of Goud (2005) in describing courage as acting intentionally in the face of risks, threats, or obstacles in the pursuit of morally worthy goals. Similarly, Schilpzand et al. (2015, p. 54) defined workplace courage as "voluntarily pursuing a socially worthy goal despite the risk that accompanies and the fear produced by a challenging event." Indeed, as explained below, a preponderance of the definitions of courage we uncovered consider the riskiness and worthiness of an act to be requisite. In contrast, there is significant divergence as to the other components suggested by Koerner, Schilpzand and colleagues, Goud and others. Specifically, there is neither theoretical nor empirical convergence on the following as requisite additional components of the construct of workplace courage: a) the presence of recognized fear, b) conscious deliberation/decision-making, and c) volition/free choice. Thus, as explained below via our review of prior definitions of courage, we consider the most parsimonious definition of workplace courage to include only the components of risk, worthiness, and work-domain relevance. Other components, we suggest, are more likely indicative of *how* courageous an act is judged to be, not *whether* the act represents the construct.

Risk. Nearly all works on courage, from Aristotle's musings to current work in psychology and organizational studies, cite risk as a prominent and necessary component of courage. Indeed, an act's riskiness—be it physical, social, occupational/economic, or psychological—is included in the definition of courage in 100% of the articles we reviewed. (See Table 2 for a chronologically ordered sample of definitions from the broader set reviewed.) Among the limited works that empirically explore the importance of this criterion, Greitemeyer et al. (2006) differentiated civil courage from helping behavior by manipulating the extent of the threat or risk in vignettes, including one in which the offender in the vignette (the target of the courageous action) appeared threatening. Results showed a positive relationship between the level of perceived threat and

TABLE 2
Sample Courage Definitions

Author	Year	Label	Definition
Deutsch	1961	Social courage	An action for a worthy objective that takes place in a context of overt or covert social intimidation, despite the need for some degree of group relationship
Evans and White	1981	Courage (bravery)	Three important, empirical attributional dimensions: (a) the fear level of the person making the attribution; (b) the perceived fear level of the attributee; and (c) salient features of the situation
Rachman	1984	Courage	Fearlessness, or, the occurrence of perseverance despite fear
Shelp	1984	Courage	The disposition to voluntarily act, perhaps fearfully, in a dangerous circumstance, where the relevant risks are reasonably appraised, in an effort to obtain or preserve some perceived good for oneself or others recognizing that the desired perceived good may not be realized
Szagun	1992	Courage	Overcoming fear, taking a subjective risk, and having an awareness of the risk, and deliberate action
Putman	1997	Psychological courage	The strength to confront and work through destructive habits; irrational anxieties, and psychological servitude problems, involving facing deep-seated fear of psychological instability
Shepela et al.	1999	Courageous resistance	Voluntarily selfless behavior in which there is significantly high risk or cost to the actor and possibly to the actor's family and associates, the actor makes a conscious decision to act, and the behavior is sustained over time
Cavanagh and Moberg	1999	Organizational courage	An act whereby a person strives to achieve some unambiguous moral good, and in the process is in significant personal danger
Harris	2001	Courage	An action directed toward some good which is respected in the community
May, Chan, Hodges, and Avolio	2003	Moral courage	The fortitude to convert moral intentions into actions despite pressures from either inside or outside of the organization to do otherwise
Goud	2005	Courage	An action that includes fear (of danger or risk), appropriate action, and purpose
Rate et al.	2007	Courage	A (a) willful, intentional act, (b) executed after mindful deliberation, (c) involving objective substantial risk to the actor, (d) primarily motivated to bring about a noble good or worthy end, (e) despite, perhaps, the presence of the emotion of fear
Sekerka and Bagozzi	2007	Moral courage	The ability to use inner principles to do what is good for others, regardless of threat to self, as a matter of practice, involving the conscious reflection on one's desires to act, or the lack of such a desire thereof, as one moves toward engagement
Woodard and Pury	2007	Courage	The voluntary willingness to act, with or without varying levels of fear, in response to a threat to achieve an important, perhaps moral, outcome or goal
Pury	2008	Courage	The intentional pursuit of a worthy goal despite the perception of personal threat and uncertain outcome
Hannah et al.	2009	Subjective courage	With perception of risk, which elicits a psychological and/or physiological fear response and, despite this

TABLE 2
(Continued)

Author	Year	Label	Definition
			response, an actor performs in the face of fear to achieve a designated purpose
Osswald, Greitemeyer, Fischer, and Frey	2009	Moral or civil courage	Prosocial behavior with high social costs and no (or rare) direct rewards for the actor
Kilmann et al.	2010	Courage	An act that includes five essential properties: (1) free choice in deciding whether to act (versus being coerced); (2) significant risk of being harmed; (3) assessment that the risk is reasonable and the contemplated act is considered justifiable (not foolhardy); (4) pursuit of worthy aims; and (5) proceeding with mindful action despite fear
Worline	2012	Courage	A pattern of constructive opposition, in which an individual stands against social forces in order to remedy duress in the organization
Harbour and Kisfalvi	2014	Moral courage	A positive and ethical response to a risky or difficult situation in which there is an interplay between organizational and personal interests
Schilpzand, Hekman, and Mitchell	2015	Workplace courage	Voluntarily pursuing a socially worthy goal despite the risk that accompanies and the fear produced by a challenging event
Simola	2016	Moral courage	Despite the substantial and often realized risks of reproach and rebuff by others, an individual freely chooses to voice ethical concerns, and does so not simply for some type of perceived personal benefit, but rather in an effort to respond to apprehensions that could also negatively impact a range of other stakeholders

the classification of an act as courage, a finding the authors corroborated in subsequent studies using essay analysis and intervention experiments.

We concur that action undertaken despite perceivable risk or threat to the actor is foundational to workplace courage. Modern workplaces present numerous types of risk to those who might undertake action for a worthy cause. Specifically, the fundamental nature of nearly all workplaces as formal and informal hierarchies, with multiple types of interpersonal relationships and need for identity-related behaviors, means that employees can put at stake their economic, social, psychological, or physical well-being through certain types of action (May 1994; Schilpzand, 2008; Woodard & Pury, 2007). For instance, workplace acts sometimes described as courageous—such as publicly challenging bosses or reporting on illegal or immoral behavior occurring inside an organization—are risky because they court negative career consequences, loss of relationships, loss of autonomy or privacy, and even physical harm (Dutton, Ashford, O'neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997; Milliken et al., 2003; NBES, 2013; Rowe, Wilcox, & Gadlin, 2009).

What seems most unique about modern workplace courage (as opposed to forms of courage described throughout much of human history) is the degree to which the risk of a courageous act likely involves putting one's economic well-being and professional standing at risk by angering those with more power in legally sanctioned formal hierarchies (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Despite longstanding claims that organizations are becoming more democratic, the dream of candid communication and action free from obstruction by power and hierarchy (Slater & Bennis, 1964) remains far from reality. Most organizations retain a hierarchical form, and the associated rules and norms create strong pressures to obey those in authority. In the United States, for example, the vast majority of employees remain "wage dependent" rather than owners with control over their economic outcomes (Perrow, 1991), and fewer than 7 percent of private sector workers today have their employment rights protected collectively by a union (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). While the First Amendment of the United States allows freedom of speech "on the street", including the ability to criticize even the

U.S. President, such protections largely end at the workplace door. In a world of employment-at-will, criticizing the actions of a superior at work remains a risky behavior that could get one fired (Barry, 2007). It is not surprising, then, that even amidst some movement toward flatter organizations in recent decades, most organizations remain reasonably steep hierarchies where the majority of employees understand the risks of challenging or defying the status quo (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Edmondson, 2012; Milliken et al., 2003; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991).

In sum, humans are well attuned to who has power and to the risks of challenging those above them in authority structures (Anderson & Brion, 2014; Boehm, 1999; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Indeed, few employees need to be reminded more than once that "the duty to obey is inherent in the very concept of authority" (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; p. 53). Organizational leaders often react strongly negatively to challenges to their authority precisely because this authority forms the basis for bureaucratic forms of organizing (Weinstein, 1979). This, argued Worline (2004), is why undertaking the risk involved in defying expectations for conformity is at the heart of a courageous act. Authority structures create the stage for "crimes of obedience" to be sure (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989), but for those willing to accept the risks of a competing duty—to disobey or disagree with unethical, illegal, immoral, or ineffective directives—they also set the stage for the courage of disobedience.

The prominence of interpersonal relationships in organizational life creates another significant type of risk for acts that challenge the status quo. Because many adults spend the majority of their waking hours in workplaces, the need for social acceptance looms large. The idea that social consequences present a real risk that individuals generally seek to avoid rests "on the assumption that the need for some degree of group relationship and contact is a necessary attribute of the more-or-less normal personality in our culture" (Deutsch, 1961, p. 52). Being ostracized completely by a group represents a form of social death and is considered one of the risks humans most seek to avoid (Williams, 2007). Thus, to go against the views of colleagues and friends at work by speaking out, disagreeing with the status quo, or otherwise pursuing a worthy cause that courts social disapproval can involve sufficient risk to make it an act of workplace courage. Indeed, employee work behavior is influenced heavily not just by the rules and expectations of the

formal power hierarchy, but also by the shared norms and values that constitute an organization's social control system (i.e., its culture). As noted by O'Reilly and Chatman (1996), control comes from the knowledge that people who matter to us are paying attention to what we are doing and that they will criticize us for violating expectations. Bosses obviously have this type of control (formal control), but peers also hold social sanction power. Barker (1993), for instance, revealed how concertive control—that is, the social control exerted by peers—created an even stronger "iron cage" after workers had switched from the control of traditional management to self-managing teams. Under such tight social control, it can take significant courage to contradict peer beliefs and behavior norms (e.g., unchecked racist or sexist language, low quality work), perhaps nearly as much in some cases as it would to break free from the total control exerted within a cult (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996, p. 167): "Even if an individual should have questions about the wisdom of a given norm, it becomes very difficult to alter because noncompliance may result in sanctions from one's friends."

To suggest that economic and social risks loom large in modern organizations is not to say that physical and psychological risks are not present in today's workplaces. Though relatively few of today's occupations include routine physical risk as part of expected in-role tasks (e.g., as in firefighting, police work, or war journalism), numerous other jobs do indeed present physical risks. For example, stepping in front of a combative or violent customer to protect other customers involves physical risk for a waiter, as it does for the manager who intervenes in similar situations in a store, restaurant, or bar to protect her employees. And bystanders often tell ombudspeople that their fear of physical retaliation was a reason for their silence or inaction (Rowe et al., 2009). Employees also face threats to their psychological health should they undertake certain workplace acts. For instance, confronting fears of flying, public speaking, or other phobias may be done for the good of one's coworkers, clients, or other beneficiaries of an organization's goal accomplishment (rather than just personal or family reasons). This said, whereas physical and psychological risks dominate the early courage literature and literatures on courage in non-work domains, more recent, workplace-relevant treatments point predominantly to the economic/ career and social risks of courageous action.

Worthy cause. We likewise concur with most prior literature that an action must be undertaken for

a worthy cause to potentially constitute workplace courage.[2] Some descriptions of courage emphasize the importance of worth prominently. Daniel Putman, for example, proposed that for an act to count as courageous, the agent needs to believe it to be morally worthy, and not merely good for her (even if that belief should be mistaken). "Though not sufficient for courage," he wrote, "confidence in the worth of the cause is a necessary condition of courage" (Putman, 2001, p. 464). In contrast, actions undertaken for purely self-serving reasons, such as daredevil stunts or low-odds betting of other people's money for personal gain, may fit the risky component of courage but would not represent courage according to nearly all philosophical and lay perspectives (Howard & Alipour, 2014; Pury et al., 2007; Rate et al., 2007). This insistence that an act should be good for others, or something broader than self-interest, to deserve the courage label has ancient roots. Mencius, for instance, argued that acts of "great courage" required concern for the good of society or many people.

Our review also suggests that the worthiness dimension is also closely linked with the different types of courage that have been described. For instance, moral courage has been viewed as a willingness to risk social rebuke, humiliation, or other types of harm to do what is right or good for others according to some ethical system or principles (e.g., Rossouw, 2002; Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007; Sidgwick, 1981). Thus, to say an act is morally courageous usually means that the act is deemed to be undertaken for, or promote, a morally worthy cause (e.g., Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007). Similarly, in acts of social courage, the worthy cause is often pursuit of some social or societal good (e.g., Deutsch, 1961). Others have not linked the notion of courage type to the nature of an act's worthiness, but instead argued more generically that, like the other cardinal virtues, an act is worthy if it promotes humans' "self-realization in accordance with reason" (Pieper, 1966, p. 125).

As regards workplace courage, we suggest the meaning of "worthiness" is broader than strict deontological notions of something "ethical" or "moral." The actions seen as worthy in a workplace context because they promote the "actual good of man" (Pieper, 1966, p. 125) are likely wide-ranging in type, especially given the human tendency to prioritize in-group members (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and to consider pursuit of their own organizations' best interests (even at others' expense) a worthy end (Hornstein, 1986). Indeed, courageous acts often inherently involve a conflict of opinion about whose interests matter most, or when individual interests should or should not be subjugated in the interest of "the organization" (Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014). This suggests that workplace courage judgments may reflect not just "hypernorms" but also "reference group norms" (Warren, 2003), where the latter involves judgments about goodness or worthiness for certain stakeholders within an organization, or the organization itself, rather than all people or society as a whole.[3]

Consideration of both hypernorms and local (organizational) reference group norms makes workplace courage particularly interesting and complicated relative to the classical study of general courage. Organizations need some degree of conformity and respect for hierarchy and rules (Lauman, Siegel, & Hodge, 1970; Magee & Galinsky, 2008) to effectively pursue shared objectives, yet they also need people willing to challenge that conformity and power, which complicates the notion of worth within contemporary organizations (e.g., Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Shepela et al., 1999). As Walton (1986, p. 43) noted, courage "is sometimes in conformity to duty, sometimes in acts beyond duty." Thus, while accepting physical risk to prevent harm to a coworker or whistleblowing about embezzlement are more clearly morally good causes, or ethical things to do, actions like challenging the status quo to save jobs, adopting truly novel practices to increase the chance of organizational survival or success despite angering

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[2] Notably, among the few works that do not include worthy cause in the definition are clinical studies involving brain scans used to isolate the risk component of courage (e.g., Nili et al., 2010) or studies that have been critiqued as actually assessing "risk-taking" more so than courage (e.g., see Howard & Alipour's 2014 critique of Norton & Weiss, 2009). In the workplace domain, some activities are assumed to be workplace courage—for example, mentoring (English & Sutton, 2000) or business risk-taking (Wagner & Disparte, 2016)—without particular explanation of why such activities reflect "worthiness" as commonly understood in the courage literature.

[3] Note that linking worthiness judgments to hypernorms or reference group norms rather than only to ethical or moral criterion still suggests a problem with considering purely self-interested or self-serving acts to be worthy in the sense involved in courage judgments. For example, we would be unlikely to equate the act of taking a new job as courageous if explained as done "despite its challenges solely to make more money to buy a vacation home." In contrast, we might do so if the act was understood instead to be "because the organization really needed me in that role despite the inconvenience to myself."

one's current clients or owners, or starting a new business or business lines to better serve some human desire in a profitable manner are also likely to be seen as worthy causes. Similarly, workplace courage acts that are more psychological in nature, such as confronting and working through things like destructive work habits, irrational anxieties, and psychological servitude (Putman 1997), may also be considered worthy despite not having a moral or ethical purpose in the strict sense. Facing deep-seated fear of psychological instability, with the goal of perceived normality, peace of mind, self-respect, or preventing harm to the self, can lead to acts deemed worthy and courageous while being quite low in their moral nature or intensity (Jones, 1991).

In sum, while many workplace actions might be deemed morally good in a consequentialist sense, we believe the qualifier "morally" is more restrictive than necessary for defining workplace courage (Pury et al., 2014a). Further, because traditionally defined types of courage—e.g., moral, social, physical, psychological—separate acts by the reason an act is worthy and/or risky, these distinctions appear superfluous to a parsimonious definition of the broad concept of workplace courage.

Fear. Whether an actor's fear is central to the definition of courage has been debated since Aristotle identified courageous people as those who faced fear of death directly and without trepidation (Ross, 1954). As Walton later summarized this viewpoint, the epitome of a courageous actor is "one who acts to fulfil a noble end in the face of truly fearful danger, yet moderates his fear appropriately to the danger of the situation" (1986, p. 57). This insistence on the centrality of fear remained pervasive among philosophers and the earliest social scientists considering courage. Lord's (1918, p. 30) definition of courage, for example, is based almost entirely on the overriding of fear:

> When we speak of the brave man who is fearless, we mean the man who, though afraid, overcomes his fear. Courage would, then, have to be measured not only in terms of the strength of instinct overcoming fear, but in terms of the strength of the fear instinct that is overcome. Terribly afraid, but going ahead nevertheless, means more courage than somewhat afraid of the dangers involved and violent anger overwhelming fear. To be well aware of the danger, and shaking with terror and yet going on all the same, or all the more—that, indeed, is courage.

In the latter half of the 20th century, military-based studies by Rachman focused directly on the intersection of fear and courageous action. In multiple studies, he and colleagues strove to deduce whether training could in fact produce courageous behavior, or at least reduce fear in subjects (O'Connor, Hallam, & Rachman, 1985; Rachman, 1983). Noting social scientists' seemingly imbalanced interest in fear over courage, Rachman (2010) set out to examine how courageous actors overcame their fear to act effectively in dangerous situations. Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC) soldiers and those undergoing skydiving instruction were recruited for several studies in the 1970s and 1980s. Special training was discovered to be the significant determinant of successful action despite fear (Cox et al., 1983; Hallam & Rachman, 1980), implying that one might work to act courageously more often, a notion that aligns with Aristotle's "virtue of habit" definition.

Rachman and colleagues also focused directly on the physiology of courage. For instance, Cox et al. (1983) compared two groups of RAOC operators—one highly decorated, the other comprised of equally qualified but non-decorated men—during auditory tasking involving identification of tones and electroshock punishments for incorrect answers. The decorated subjects maintained a comparatively low cardiac rate, implying a physiological control of fear. Follow-up studies involving more RAOC personnel and some paratroopers replicated the result, again finding lower cardiac activity under stress among decorated operators (McMillan & Rachman, 1988; O'Connor et al., 1985).

Important though these findings are, they do not establish that fear is foundational to *all* acts deemed to be courageous. In fact, they clearly show that some people engage in courageous acts despite showing no signs of fear. These are among the reasons why there is less support today for including fear in the definition of courage. While approximately one quarter of the works we reviewed include fear as a requisite aspect of a courageous act and an additional 10% suggest it as a likely possibility, our analysis reveals that nearly all of those works either originated from or heavily cite military studies (e.g., reserving the "true courage" label for those who act "despite the presence of subjective fear and psychophysiological disturbances"; Rachman, 1978, p. 25) or developmental psychology work (e.g., Evans & White, 1981; Szagun & Schäuble, 1997) that focuses on children's evaluation of physically threatening situations.

The perspective that fear may be superfluous to the definition of workplace courage was put succinctly by Howard and Alipour (2014, p. 450), who noted that psychologists have increasingly transitioned

from including fear in the definition to assertions that "any emotion [fear or otherwise] may or may not be present in any action." This is consistent with the conclusion that "although fear is often present in the initial stages of a courageous act, the emotion of fear is not, as such, an essential characteristic of the courageous act" (Walton, 1986, p. 82). The complexity of the role of emotions like fear is illustrated in a study by Nili et al. (2010) in which self-reported fear and somatic arousal were measured in subjects asked to reach maximal proximity to a snake while overcoming fear to the best of their ability. The authors (2010, p. 956) found that "either high somatic arousal accompanied by low subjective fear or high subjective fear accompanied by low somatic arousal were accompanied by decisions" to act. This result is consistent with accumulating research suggesting no necessary one-to-one correspondence between outward expression or reporting of conscious fear and automatic physiological changes during a dangerous situation. As described by LeDoux (2015, p. 41), this is because fear and anxiety are "descriptions of conscious experiences that people have when threatened by present or anticipated events," and these are distinct from survival-driven physiological responses stemming from humans' (and other animals') "defensive system." This further complicates the matter, as it suggests actors could be automatically acting "as if afraid" in the eyes of others while not consciously perceiving themselves to be "fearful."

In sum, the experience of fear and its role in courage is still debated, but fear is increasingly absent in theoretical accounts and empirically driven definitions of courage (e.g., see Rate, 2010 and Rate et al., 2007). At minimum, significantly more research seems warranted before suggesting that fear be included as a necessary component of workplace courage, and the onus should be on demonstrating its centrality to courage. Thus, we eschew fear as a requisite component of workplace courage.

Deliberative, carefully reasoned decision-making. In many works, a risk undertaken for a worthy cause is said to be courageous only when the actor consciously deliberated and intentionally chose the act (e.g., Kilmann et al., 2010; Rate et al., 2007; Shepela et al., 1999). Pausing to think about possible behavior (Sekerka et al., 2011; Worline, 2012) might allow potential actors to make a more accurate assessment of risk involved (Pury et al., 2014b), helping to clarify whether a possible response is closer to courage or foolhardiness (e.g., in the Aristotelian sense; Lee, 2003). Approximately half of the works reviewed included some notion of deliberativeness or intentionality as a component of a courageous act. Thus, according to some definitions, instantaneous or instinctual actions (i.e., those that lack deliberation) would not be considered courage no matter how risky and worthy (e.g., Graafland, 2010). For instance, the spontaneous act of jumping in to defend one's team when it is being unfairly criticized would be disqualified as courage if the actor had not consciously recognized and weighed potential risks before speaking. However, our review reveals that such sentiments seem to be almost exclusively theoretically derived from classical philosophy (and the subsequent history of that and related fields that discount reflexive actions) rather than other theoretical and empirical bases that give more credence to automatic or intuitive action.

In light of the mixed theoretical views and absence of empirical evidence, we suggest at this point that rather than foundational to the definition of workplace courage, the degree of deliberation, conscious reflection, or recognition of all considerations prior to action may be better viewed as a moderator of how much courage is attributed to risky, worthy acts. Just as we suspect soldiers and police officers would be deemed courageous by nearly all despite lack of careful consideration or study prior to stepping in the line of fire, so too might be an employee's decision to speak up to her difficult boss about his rude or incorrect comment instantaneously and without contemplation of the act's risks or worthiness. Although the reactionary and (consciously) "thoughtless" nature of such action disqualifies her behavior from being courageous in some historic and current views (e.g., Hannah et al., 2007; Kohlenberg et al., 2015; Lester et al., 2010; Schilpzand et al., 2015; Sekerka et al., 2009), we think this incorrectly eliminates many heroic acts (e.g., spontaneous physical or verbal defense of others) from such a designation, both inside and beyond workplaces. To exclude such acts from the courage construct would also be inconsistent with a significant body of modern science that has clearly demonstrated that much of what is considered to be moral, worthy, or otherwise virtuous follows an "act first, rationalize later" pattern (Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley, & Cohen, 2001; Haidt, 2008). We should allow, it seems, the possibility that virtuous behavior can be automatic.

In addition, whether due to their intense focus on different aspects of the situation or internal motivations or callings (more on these later), some actors will deny having thought about an act's riskiness, likelihood of success, etc. prior to action while

nonetheless being able to subsequently recognize these aspects upon reflection or prompting by another. Thus, we suggest that *perceivable* rather than actually perceived may be the appropriate standard for the risk criterion. "Perceivable in the moment" also eliminates those acts where no typical actor would have perceived (via conscious or via automatic brain processes) there to be risk present even though it objectively was. For instance, strongly criticizing a boss' interpersonal behavior or business judgment to one's team in private (to show support or respect for the team) is unlikely to be deemed courageous, even if it were to lead to firing when the boss found out because a team member secretly taped the speaker's remarks. Assuming such taping was a completely unexpected behavior, the act might have carried actual risk despite none being meaningfully perceivable in the moment to the actor.

Volition / free choice. More than one third of the works we reviewed include the notion that an act must be freely chosen to be courageous. According to some definitions, mostly resting on classical foundations, coerced action or action taken under significant pressure is not courage (e.g., Graafland, 2010; Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014; Rate et al., 2007; Sekerka et al., 2011). As an example, this suggests that if a manager confronts a client who is abusing her staff only because her own boss threatens to fire her if she doesn't, the worthy act she has undertaken would not be deemed as courageous no matter how risky she still considered the act. Scarre, however, presented the counter-argument (2010, p. 33–34) in noting that courage is often attributed to people who do bold deeds under the compulsion of masters or leaders: "Plausibly, standing up firmly to the enemy in spite of one's fear manifests courage, irrespective of whether there are stiff penalties for retreating."

We find ourselves in agreement with Scarre's conclusion (2010, p. 40): "where autonomy is trammeled, it can be hard to decide whether, or to what degree, an agent is being courageous," and thus again land at the tentative conclusion that the level of volition likely moderates *how* courageous worthy, risky acts should be deemed to be rather than *whether* they should be considered courageous.

The Nomological Network of Workplace Courage

As a first step toward construct clarity (Suddaby, 2010), we began by systematically reviewing extant literature to propose a parsimonious definition of the workplace courage construct. Another foundational step involves specifying expected relationships

between the focal construct (workplace courage) and other constructs—that is, outlining the construct's nomological network (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Schwab, 1980). As noted, workplace courage is a broad, umbrella construct that can be represented by many types of behavior. It will thus overlap to a greater or lesser extent with other broader constructs, such as extra-role behavior (Van Dyne et al., 1995) or citizenship behavior (Smith et al., 1983), as well as with narrower constructs, such as task revision (Staw & Boettger, 1990) or issue selling (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). While a complete conceptual mapping of these expected construct relationships goes beyond our capacity and focus here, we illustrate the beginnings of this process below, and in Figure 1, for several broader and narrower constructs. The Appendix contains a longer list of constructs whose relation to workplace courage should also be specified in future work.

Broader related constructs. Positive or constructive deviance has been defined as intentional behavior that departs from the norm of a referent group in honorable ways (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004; Warren, 2003). Assuming that such behaviors are noticeable, and that norms are generally enforced via various sanctions, there appears to be high overlap between behavioral acts deemed positive or constructive deviance and workplace courage (see Figure 1). For example, ignoring a boss' directives in order to improve work procedures is likely to be deemed both positive deviance and workplace courage. Similarly, there is high conceptual overlap between workplace courage and prosocial rule breaking, with the latter defined as the intentional violation of a formal policy, regulation, or prohibition with the primary intention of promoting the welfare of the organization or one of its stakeholder (s) (Morrison, 2006). Again, presuming that the prosocial rule breaking acts are noticeable, and rules are enforced, such acts are likely to also represent workplace courage.

In contrast, other broad constructs are less conceptually overlapping with workplace courage as defined here. For example, proactive work behavior describes any type of anticipatory employee action taken to impact oneself and/or the environment (Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008). This definition suggests that most proactive behaviors will be considered worthy acts, but many will not be considered risky. For instance, taking the initiative to understand why defect levels are higher or sales levels lower than desired are worthy acts, but not likely to be considered risky. Other types of courage not directly relevant to the work domain are also only

minimally conceptually overlapping with workplace courage. Overcoming certain phobias (e.g., spiders) or medical challenges may reflect personal courage, determination, or fortitude (e.g., Kendall, 2006) but not be directly relevant to the work-domain.[4]

Narrower related constructs. Whistleblowing refers to challenging, prohibitive behavioral acts (Van Dyne et al., 1995) that involve the reporting of illegal, unethical, or highly illegitimate behavior to authorities (Near & Miceli, 1985). Especially when confined to reporting to authorities outside the organization in which the offense has taken place, whistleblowing seems to be highly overlapping with the definition of workplace courage as a risky, worthy, work-domain-relevant action. Improvement-oriented voice refers to verbal behavior that constructively challenges the status quo with the intent to improve rather than merely criticize a situation (Detert & Burris, 2007; Van Dyne et al., 1995). Like whistleblowing, voice is a challenging behavior, which means it is change oriented and has the potential to damage relationships (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). However, it has also been classified as less risky than acts like whistleblowing or principled organizational dissent (Graham, 1986) because it is seen as promotive rather than prohibitive (Van Dyne et al., 1995). The construct of voice thus seems to be partially overlapping with the construct of workplace courage. For example, when voice involves explicitly disagreeing with others, especially those with more power than the speaker, or clearly critiquing the prized ideas or programs of others (Detert & Edmondson, 2011), voice likely reflects workplace courage. In contrast, other suggestions related to new products, processes, or opportunities to learn may have little risk and thus not reflect workplace courage. Recent narrower distinctions among types of voice, such as that between promotive voice and riskier prohibitive voice (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012), may prove useful for understanding the types of voice that conceptually do and do not generally reflect workplace courage.
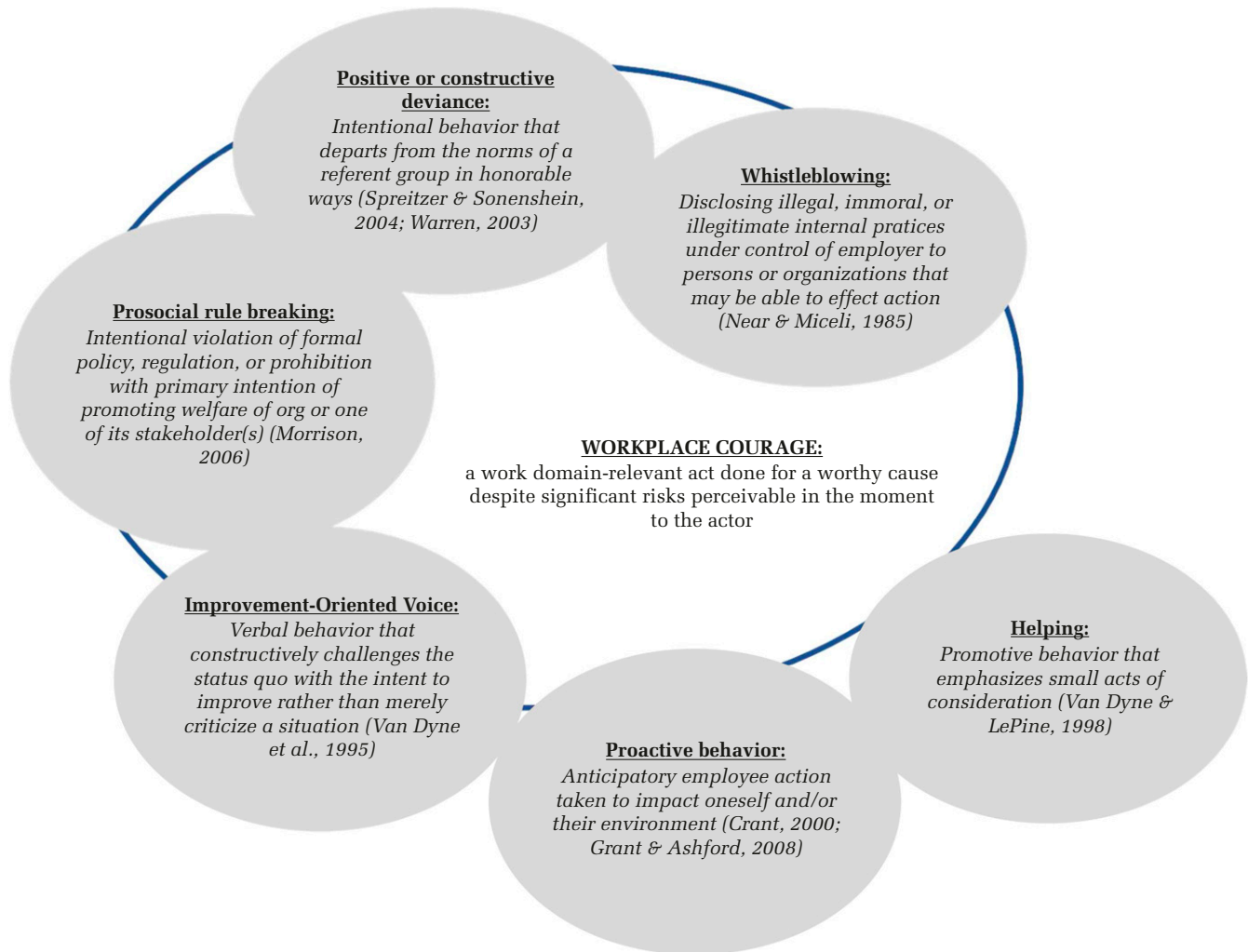
Many other organizational constructs overlap little with the conceptual definition of workplace courage. Helping, for example, describes promotive behavior that emphasizes small acts of consideration (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). While affiliative in nature (Van Dyne et al., 1995) and thus likely to meet the worthy cause criterion, acts like getting involved to benefit one's work group or helping others learn about the group's work are unlikely to involve potential risk or harm to the actor and are thus seldom likely to reflect workplace courage.

The Appendix provides construct names and definitions for other organizational behavior and organizational theory constructs, along with our estimate of how overlapping each is with workplace courage as defined here. For instance, we see relatively high overlap between workplace courage and constructs like issue selling (Dutton & Ashford, 1993), tempered radicalism (Meyerson & Scully, 1995), and internal social movement activism (Soule, 2012; Zald & Berger, 1978) because these constructs describe behaviors that are generally challenging and often even confrontational in nature. For example, actively promoting gender equality, same sex partner benefits, or other similar issues to a largely heterosexual, male-dominated management team (Briscoe & Safford, 2008; Creed & Scully, 2011), or promoting a primary orientation geared towards sustainability in a for-profit public company (Battilana et al., 2009) all likely reflect acts of workplace courage. Unconventional leader behavior (Conger & Kanungo, 1994) and necessary evils (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005), in contrast, describe workplace-domain acts that sometimes, but not always (e.g., when unconventional leader behavior is self- rather than other-serving, or when necessary evils involve little risk for the actor), reflect both a worthy cause and perceived risk or harm.

Beyond being foundational to establishing the validity of the workplace courage construct, we believe that future theory and research that focuses on relationships between related constructs and workplace courage offers opportunities to advance

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[4] Many examples of fortitude or personal courage—such as going through cancer treatment (e.g., Isaksen & Gjengedal, 2000; Seibaek, Delmar, & Hounsgaard, forthcoming)—are certainly virtuous but not unambiguously courage if "risky" is a required component of courage. It seems obvious at first glance that there is much "risk" involved, but closer examination can reveal that the risk is already there, regardless of the choice to act. Depending on the interpretation of risk, the inclusion of "the courage to hope" (Kendall, 2006) in times of crisis or dire circumstances may or may not be counted as courage. We have encountered automatic negative reaction to the suggestion that perseverance in the face of dire illness or, in the workplace in the face of bankruptcy is not courage in the strict sense. This averse intuitional response evoked in many demonstrates that some people's lay theory of courage is clearly very generic, tending to include all "positive virtue" with attribution of courage, as opposed to having clearly identified what component factors comprise and are requisite for a behavior to be courage. This notion that in lay perception courage is often conflated with simply being virtuous should be explored further in future research.

FIGURE 1
Theoretical Overlap Between Workplace Courage and Some Related Constructs

Positive or constructive deviance:
Intentional behavior that departs from the norms of a referent group in honorable ways (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004; Warren, 2003)

Whistleblowing:
Disclosing illegal, immoral, or illegitimate internal pratices under control of employer to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action (Near & Miceli, 1985)

Prosocial rule breaking:
Intentional violation of formal policy, regulation, or prohibition with primary intention of promoting welfare of org or one of its stakeholder(s) (Morrison, 2006)

WORKPLACE COURAGE:
a work domain-relevant act done for a worthy cause despite significant risks perceivable in the moment to the actor

Improvement-Oriented Voice:
Verbal behavior that constructively challenges the status quo with the intent to improve rather than merely criticize a situation (Van Dyne et al., 1995)

Helping:
Promotive behavior that emphasizes small acts of consideration (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998)

Proactive behavior:
Anticipatory employee action taken to impact oneself and/or their environment (Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008)

understanding that does not occur when constructs are studied in isolation. Research may reveal that the courageous instances of behaviors representing two distinct constructs actually have more in common (e.g., as regards antecedents or outcomes) than different types of acts comprising a single construct. For example, the riskier types of prosocial rule breaking, constructive deviance, and voice may have more in common with each other than with less risky forms of themselves. Additionally, the lens of courage may help advance work within specific related domains. For example, perhaps it will be found that antecedents and outcomes differ fundamentally for voice acts that are workplace courage versus those that are not. In short, an explicit focus on workplace courage may allow many

questions to be answered regarding the nature of related existing organizational constructs and the similarities and differences between them.

Studying Workplace Courage: Four Approaches

Beyond the conceptual and definitional problems covered above, courage research suffers from a variety of measurement problems and challenges. Indeed, the lack of valid measurement to date is perhaps the "most imposing barrier" (Howard et al., 2016, p. 2) to be overcome. In this section, therefore, we move from our stance as "umbrella advocates" (Hirsch & Levin, 1999) trying to decipher the general meaning of the workplace courage construct to a concern with the methods utilized to study this

complex construct. While we do not wish to be seen as "validity police" (Hirsch & Levin, 1999, p. 199), we do believe that progress requires significantly more attention be paid to how workplace courage is operationalized and studied in future work. Thus, while suggesting that research on workplace courage will benefit from more positivist treatment, we acknowledge the value of both positivist and constructionist treatments and the myriad approaches in the "swollen middle" of that continuum (Arino, LeBaron, & Milliken, 2016, p. 110). Toward that end, we review four general approaches to the study of courage, illustrating each using prior research and outlining the pros, cons, and next steps for each approach.

Respondent-defined courage acts. Due perhaps to the construct's inherent complexity and the nascent stage of social science inquiry on courage, approaches that focus on understanding respondents' implicit theory of courage have been most prevalent. This approach is common in qualitative studies, where respondents are asked to report on one or more specific instances that represent what they consider a courageous act done either by themselves or someone else (Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014; Hornstein, 1986; Koerner, 2014; Pury & Hensel, 2010; Pury & Kowalski, 2007; Schilpzand et al., 2015). Resulting narratives are then parsed for understanding of the reasons for, and process by which an individual chooses and executes, a courageous act, and to what end (Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014; Koerner, 2014; Pury et al., 2014a; Pury & Starkey, 2010; Schilpzand et al., 2015). For instance, Pury et al. (2014a) interviewed active-duty US Army personnel about the process of seeking mental health care in an environment with heightened stigma and were able to distill both ethical and psychological factors underpinning the decisions. Similarly, in the realm of workplace courage, the qualitative approach undertaken by Koerner (2014) allowed her to focus in depth on the identity-related aspects of courageous acts as defined by respondents. Schilpzand and colleagues' (2015) qualitative study likewise focused on detailed analysis of 161 total stories from 94 military officers and executives from a wide range of contexts. In each of these studies, stories are included for analysis as long as they represent courage according to the (potentially idiosyncratic) implicit definition of each respondent.

Quantitative approaches have also been used to study respondents' implicit theories of a courage act. Numerous researchers have investigated how conceptions of courage change throughout childhood into early adulthood (e.g., Evans & White, 1981; Gibbs et al., 1986; Szagun, 1992; Szagun & Schäuble, 1997).

For instance, Szagun (1992) found that 5- to 6-year-olds' prototype of courage was performing a risky action while experiencing no fear, whereas by age 8, *overcoming* fear to undertaking a risky action had become the prototype, and by age 11, most thought the risk-taking needed to be deliberate to deserve recognition as courageous. Additionally, whereas the youngest children (5- and 6-year-olds) rated actions involving physical risks as most courageous, older children rated psychological and social risks—especially morally good risks—as most courageous. This pattern of results was supported by a subsequent study that also included a group of 21-year-olds. The younger groups of children again predominantly viewed courageous activity in terms of physical risk-taking, while the older groups focused on psychological risk-taking and, increasingly, demonstrated a broader, more cognitive understanding of courage (Szagun & Schäuble, 1997).

Rate et al. (2007) have also done systematic quantitative work to identify a modern implicit theory of a courage act. Acknowledging the socially constructed nature of courage, the authors used inductive methods (e.g., free-listing and vignette-rating exercises) with military academy cadets and undergraduates to identify three implicit foundations for the construct of a courage act: risk, affectation (for instance, fear), and motivation. The subdimension of risk assesses whether the risk was physical or non-physical/social, while the subdimension of affectation includes both other-focused or self-focused emotion, and the dimension of motivation classifies acts into those requiring perseverance and those involving personal responsibility.

While much has been learned by focusing on respondents' implicit theories of courageous acts, there are several limitations associated with this approach. Qualitatively, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to meaningfully aggregate and cumulate findings when there is no assurance that the stories upon which findings are based represent a similar conception of a courage act. For instance, some respondents' "courage" stories undoubtedly include components that are superfluous to the proposed definition here, such as highly fear laden and deliberative. Others' stories are likely deficient in regard to a core definition, such as stories about helping others that seem to reflect a worthy cause but involve no discernible risk to the actor. Thus, we urge those who wish to use qualitative methods to explore workplace courage to shift from an etic to an emic approach (Pike, 1966) by focusing respondents on the reporting of stories that meet the construct's

core definition (e.g., "Tell me about a work-related instance where someone undertook an act for a worthy cause despite significant risk to him/herself") rather than on stories of "workplace courage" itself (e.g., "Tell me about an instance of workplace courage") (see Bickhoff, Levett-Jones, & Sinclair, 2016 for a positive step in this direction). Additionally, we urge qualitative researchers to set aside from their analysis those stories that do not conform to the core definitional requirements of workplace courage. While hypothesis testing, or even comparison across multiple studies, may not be high priorities for qualitative researchers, the failure to document how multiple qualitative examples reflect the same underlying phenomenon significantly reduces the impact such qualitative research can have on others who are concerned with standard operationalization (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998; Schwab, 1980; Suddaby, 2010) or, for that matter, anyone trying to validly accumulate findings.

Distancing ourselves as researchers from respondents' implicit theories of courage may also help us avoid potential logical inconsistencies not readily apparent to our non-scientist subjects. For instance, following the Pury et al. (2007) finding that study participants rated successful actions higher in courage than failed actions, Pury and Hensel (2010) noted after a follow-up study that success of action might also be part of the definition of courage, or at least people's implicit theory of courage. "Courage," they concluded, "is not about simply taking risks in pursuit of a noble goal, but rather about taking risks and achieving that noble goal" (Pury & Hensel, 2010, p. 71). This conclusion was reached despite failed acts also being seen by respondents as quite courageous on average and only about one point less courageous than successful acts. Beyond the empirics themselves suggesting that outcomes likely moderate the level of, rather than define, an act's courage, there is a larger "logical problem" inherent in defining a construct by its outcomes (van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013, p. 14). In short, researchers will not be able to validly study the outcomes of courage if we accept an implicit theory-based definition of courage that includes only successful acts. This has been usefully stated by Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004, p. 833; see also Pears, 2004, regarding positive outcomes versus processes or intentions) in describing positive deviance as behavior with "honorable intentions, independent of outcomes," and noting further that "positive intentions do not always lead to positive outcomes... There is a long intellectual tradition of understanding noteworthy behaviors independent of outcomes (e.g., Kant)."

Behavior-focused measures and the need for a taxonomy. To move forward in accumulating comparable knowledge about workplace courage, a behavioral taxonomy evaluated systematically across contexts seems necessary. In essence, this assertion acknowledges that before attempting to develop general courage measures that can be used in more typical antecedent or outcome studies (where the dependent variable is *how much* workplace courage is exhibited), it may be necessary to begin with studies that focus on establishing *which* behaviors are widely acknowledged to reflect the construct (DeRue & Morgeson, 2005; Pearce & Amato, 1980). In a taxonomic effort for workplace courage, the focus would be on capturing the widest possible range of potentially courageous behaviors and then asking respondents to rate "how much courage this action takes in your context." Such efforts represent a middle stage between defining the workplace courage construct and operationalizing it in a content valid manner.

To date, we are not aware of any such systematic efforts to capture the entire possible range of workplace courage acts. Howard et al. (2016) recently presented the Workplace Social Courage Scale (WSCS), which focuses only on worthy behaviors also likely to entail *social* risks in work contexts (e.g., "even if my coworkers could think less of me, I'd lead a project with a chance of failure", "although my coworker may become offended, I would suggest to him/her better ways to do things"). Spreitzer et al. (1997) used items from a much longer survey capturing leadership characteristics to create two subscale measures of the courage to "take a stand" and to "take risks." While the measure is work-domain specific, incorporates the notion of worthiness to some degree, and involves risk without explicitly requiring fear, the relatively narrow focus on going against the grain in a business sense implicitly leaves out many other types of workplace courage such as speaking up against racist or sexist remarks or whistleblowing. More broadly, Schilpzand's (2008) Personal Courage Scale (PCS) attempts to measure "physical", "social", and "entrepreneurial" courage (sample behaviors, respectively, are "I would do what I could to save a stranger's life, even if I were to risk an injury to myself", "I am likely to remain silent about a peer's ethics violation", and "in the workplace, I pursue promising new ideas, even though they may not work out" (Schilpzand, 2008, p. 69). Unfortunately (as explained elsewhere in this review),

some of the items in the PCS include wording related to the actor's fear and an act's outcomes, and numerous other work-domain-relevant acts likely to present economic/career risks are not included. In sum, existing treatments focus on subsets of potentially courageous workplace acts without direct consideration of what has been excluded or the possibility that such acts occur but are not recognized as courageous across most or all contexts.

Philosophically, the need to understand what acts are agreed to *be* courageous in a given context before trying to predict or increase courage seems to reflect the rationale behind Kilmann et al.'s (2010) Organizational Courage Assessment (OCA). While there is presently no publicly available information about the items used in the OCA, nor the measure's psychometric properties, what seems noteworthy is the authors' direct acknowledgment of the importance of context in assessing workplace courage. Specifically, the authors note that one must consider both the frequency of potentially courageous acts actually performed in an organization *and* the degree to which such acts are deemed to be courage because of the risks actors face in that context. Organizations where many risky acts are nonetheless performed are called "courageous"; organizations where the same acts are done without any sense of risk or fear are called "quantum", a nod to their "healthy/ supportive culture" where "many acts of courage are not even necessary" (Kilmann et al., 2010, p. 16). Making this distinction at the level of specific behaviors is also necessary because, as Howard et al. (2016) rightly noted, "a participant may work in a threatening environment and most any social behavior would incur risk, whereas a different participant may work in a relaxing environment and social risks are mostly nonexistent." Rather than skirting this reality by asking participants to rate questions "based on how [they] would act in a workplace after working there for five years" (p. 6), and hence seeming to capture one's own (espoused) trait-like propensity to act courageously rather than actual frequency of workplace courage acts, we suggest more work is needed to understand what behaviors *are* widely viewed as workplace courage.

A taxonomic effort will be complicated, of course, by the reality that some behaviors are likely to be deemed courageous in nearly all work domains (e.g., facing death to save innocent others), whereas the attribution assigned to many other acts—that is, whether they are deemed risky and worthy—likely depends to some degree on actors' and observers' embeddedness in specific contexts (Lester et al.,

2010; Rachman, 1978). The embedded nature of courage attributions has been broadly mentioned in the courage literature, but mostly ignored theoretically or empirically. This limitation must be addressed squarely in any taxonomic effort because workplace courage acts do not have objective properties but rather are judged to be courage admist "the contextual surround from which various actions emerge and the social relationships that such actions cement" (Deutsch, 1961; Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1998, p. 122). For example, an organization's formal structures and rules impact both the frequency of certain behaviors and their likely evaluation as more or less risky and worthy when they do occur (Cleary & Horsfall, 2013), as do the informal social patterns that affect buy-in or rejection of a behavior (Geller, 2009; Hannah et al., 2007; Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007). Even subtle ambient stimuli that reinforce an authority structure—such as a CEO's picture in the hallway, diplomas in offices, or expensive clothes—send signals that lead to a stronger or weaker "pattern of behavior marked by automatic, unquestioning obedience" (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989, p. 138). In short, organizations are rife with contextual influences that tend to suppress learning, innovation, and open communication (Detert & Burris, 2016) and that, in turn, create the context in which many such behaviors might be deemed as courageous in light of a "stifling background" (Worline, 2012, p. 309). Attending to these features of context, rather than leaving them "unrecognized and underappreciated" as is too often the case in management research (Cappelli & Sherer, 1991; Johns, 2006, p. 389), will be crucial to the creation of a valid and useful workplace courage taxonomy.

In sum, the development of a comprehensive behavioral taxonomy seems an unavoidable next step in the maturation of the workplace courage construct. This will include capturing the entire array of potential workplace courage acts, including the "stop doing" or "challenge existing things" types as well as those that are "start doing" in nature (e.g., entrepreneurial acts) (Hardy, 2016), as well as types of apparent "inaction" such as defiance of unethical orders from above. While undoubtedly time consuming and likely to slow attempts to draw broader conclusions based on variance studies, to proceed with predictive studies without this preliminary work seems likely to lead to unsatisfying ends. Understanding of the full range of behaviors agreed to represent workplace courage acts across a broad array of contexts will serve not just as a foundation for future scientific efforts but also as a guide for intervention efforts because managers

will want and need to know the specific behaviors they are trying to increase.

A general "workplace courage" measure. In contrast to measures that assess specific workplace behaviors, a general workplace courage measure would operationalize the core definitional components of the construct without specifying detailed behavioral examples (e.g., "puts self at significant risk for a worthy cause at work" rather than "defies the boss's instructions about cutbacks or speed ups on behalf of others in the organization"). A "direct measure" of general courage would ask respondents to report on the frequency of courage itself (e.g., "shows courage at work", "acts courageously around the boss"), whereas an "indirect measure" would ask how frequently respondents undertake acts that meet the core criteria of courage as defined by researchers (e.g., worthy, risky, work-domain acts) without explicitly referencing "courage" (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Given the likelihood that respondents will bring excess or deficient understanding of the term "courage" itself (as indicated by implicit theories of courage research), we favor the indirect measure approach. This is consistent with the dominant approach taken in organizational justice research, where measures ask about fairness criteria such as consistency and lack of bias rather than "fairness" itself (Colquitt, 2001).

The most obvious strength of a general measure of workplace courage is that it is best suited for typical variance studies across numerous contexts (e.g., predicting the antecedents or outcomes of workplace courage frequency in larger, broader samples). However, evidence from research on similar types of constructs suggests reason to suspect that whatever is gleaned from a general workplace courage measure will not be highly related to the frequency of more specific behavioral acts. For example, Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken (1981) found less than a 30 percent overlap between ratings of the frequency of 20 specific altruistic behaviors and a global altruism rating for the same person. An additional limitation of this most general approach is that the information produced is not directly actionable. An organization using this type of measure would only know its members engage in more or fewer acts of workplace courage, but need other types of evidence to understand more specifically what behaviors are (or are not) being displayed.

To date, there are no validated general workplace courage measures. There are generic courage measures that utilize this approach, but they are neither directly relevant nor on solid psychometric grounds

in their own right. For example, the 12-item Courage Measure (CM) proposed by Norton and Weiss (2009) suffers from its near total exclusion of worthiness as an important criterion (e.g., a typical item is "even if something scares me, I will not back down"), prompting others to suggest it should more rightfully be considered a scale for assessing the "propensity to act despite fear." As Howard and Alipour (2014, p. 449) noted, there are "theoretical concerns stemming from the operational definition of courage used during its creation," such that the CM "may not actually measure courage."

Behavioral capture measures. A final approach to assessing courage involves direct observation or objective capture of behaviors deemed to be courage. The general courage literature contains several examples of this approach, most notably McMillan and Rachman's (1988) studies of the psychological and physiological changes captured in military personnel undertaking high-stress activities like jumping from an airplane and studies targeting approach behavior by phobic individuals. An example of the latter comes from Norton and Weiss' (2009) use of "behavioral approach tests" to study, for instance, subjects actually moving their hand closer to a spider despite their strong spider fear.

There are several challenges associated with applying this approach to the study of workplace courage. First, existing behavioral approaches use a definition of courage that focuses heavily on the existence of fear, such that courage can be objectively defined as having occurred, and thus also be measurable, using assessments of subject fear. If, as we have argued, workplace courage need not be accompanied by a recognized or measurable fear level, nor be planned well in advance, it will be significantly harder to define a priori the conditions under which workplace courage acts can be expected to occur and thus "objectively" observed or captured. These challenges might be addressed via long-term ethnographic observation or via methods that capture both behavior and the attributions of risk and worth associated with those behaviors. Second, given the potentially very real consequences associated with the risks of courage acts, it will require significant care to conceive opportunities to trigger and then capture workplace courage acts in actual work settings within the confines of professional ethics and institutional review board standards. Conversely, creating sufficient realism as regards the actual risk of many workplace courage acts in experimental settings provides external validity challenges. Whereas spider fear may be largely the same

anywhere, the risks associated with challenging a boss or confronting a popular long-time co-worker are significantly harder to simulate in a lab.

Summary. Despite its philosophical discussion across the ages, the social scientific base on courage remains in a nascent empirical stage, and this is even more true for workplace courage specifically. Thus, it seems likely that work in all empirical traditions is still needed (Edmondson & McManus, 2007), from qualitative work that carefully captures and analyzes only those stories meeting a common definition, to taxonomic work outlining the broad array of specific behaviors representing the construct, to the development of valid survey or behavioral capture measures most amenable to use as independent or dependent variables in traditional variance explaining studies. While workplace courage researchers may find inspiration and insight from prior general courage measurement efforts (e.g., Schmidt & Koselka, 2000; Woodard, 2004; Woodard & Pury, 2007), we found no instruments that seem free of construct contamination or deficiency or other causes for concern.

Multiple Perspectives on Workplace Courage

The perspective problem. Beyond the difficulty that context presents for measuring courage (e.g., what's widely seen as courageous at IBM may not be at Google, or vice versa), differences in the perspectives of an actor, the target(s) of that act, and other observers in the same context also present challenges (Neville, 2002; Pury, Starkey, Kulik, Skjerning, & Sullivan, 2015). For example, if John speaks up about his boss Jane's behavior, he as the subordinate who challenges his boss's ethics or interpersonal behavior will make a self-determination as to whether his behavior was a courage act. Numerous types of others—such as John's coworkers, subordinates, superiors, or clients—may directly observe or hear about John's behavior and decide whether it represents, to them, an act of workplace courage. Among the most theoretically interesting and practically important others are the specific *targets* of the act (in this example, Jane), because they determine many of the outcomes of the act, such as whether change occurs or consequences befall the actor. For instance, Jane may consider John's challenge courageous and/or may label it something else (such as insubordination or disrespectful, uninformed input). Although courage from the actor's perspective (called personal courage; Pury et al., 2007) has most often been the focal point of research, the attribution of an act as courageous by others

(called accolade courage; Breeden, 2012; Pury & Starkey, 2010) has also received attention.

Different evaluations of the same act, which might be random but more likely represent systematic, predictable patterns, can be considered the *perspective problem*. This problem, or challenge, has been long recognized—Evans and White (1981, p. 419), for example, noted that "courage could be attributed to a person who is not in fact afraid," and Worline (2004) noted that the bombings in Oklahoma City and of the NY Twin Trade Towers can be seen by many as horrific terrorism but by others as courageous heroism—but mostly ignored empirically. Indeed, while about half of all works we reviewed allude to the perspective issue (usually regarding disagreement on acts' worthiness), only a small fraction of those attempt to disentangle this issue in any detail. For instance, the analyses of qualitative courage stories presented in recent papers in *Academy of Management Journal* (Koerner, 2014) and *Organization Science* (Schilpzand et al., 2015) treat all stories as similar, despite the authors noting that some stories involved the teller as the courageous actor whereas others were told by an observer. A few scholars have recently begun to address the "eye of the beholder" issue more directly (e.g., Pury et al., 2015). Harbour and Kisfalvi (2014), for example, found that while people's lay theories of the definition of courage may be largely similar, their agreement on the courage of a particular act can vary widely.

This perspective problem, while vexing, is not unique to the courage construct. Nearly all social science constructs that involve attributions of value, rather than rating of objective properties or features, must deal with this reality. For instance, an environment's "psychological safety" and the "citizenship" of an organizational behavior are attributions rather than objective facts (Edmondson, 1999; Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989). What constitutes in- versus extra-role behavior is also often seen differently among employees and between employees and their supervisors (Morrison, 1994). Similarly, perspectives often differ on whether speech acts by employees represent improvement-oriented voice or whining or complaining (Burris, Detert, & Romney, 2013), just as there is likely disagreement about how fair things are in organizations (Luo, 2005) or how helpful (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) or altruistic (Rushton et al., 1981) people are. Even those who agree that whistleblowing has occurred may disagree strongly about whether it was a positive act (Near & Miceli, 1995), as may those who acknowledge a rule has been broken (Morrison, 2006). These differences in perspective may result from predictable features associated with roles (Katz &

Kahn, 1978), attributes of the raters, and time frame (Van Dyne et al., 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Linking theory and choice of perspective(s). We do not see the issue of differing perspectives as central to the validity of the workplace courage *construct* because disagreements between raters of an act's courage do not change the definition as defined by social scientists (Van Dyne et al., 1995). Rather, multiple—sometimes widely varying—perspectives affect the types of reliability that can or cannot be expected at the level of *measurement*. To state our expectation succinctly: at the individual level of measurement, reliability should be expected; between individuals, there may or may not be high inter-rater reliability on measures of workplace courage. For instance, if John is asked to rate multiple questions, each worded slightly differently, about the frequency with which he engages in risky, worthy, work-domain acts, internal consistency should be high in a strong measure of workplace courage. Conversely, John's ratings of those same acts may differ substantially from the ratings provided by his peers, subordinates, or bosses. While many reasons beyond random error may explain a lack of measurement convergence across individuals, they do not invalidate the construct.

The possibility that perspectives may differ on workplace courage acts does suggest, however, that it is imperative for researchers to explicitly choose the relevant perspective(s), given their theoretical interests (Burris et al., 2013; Morrison, 1994). For example, theory should guide the choice of perspective(s) to prioritize when considering specific antecedents or outcomes of workplace courage. As others have noted in studying similar constructs where rater disagreement is likely high, self-reports are likely most valuable for understanding the psychological, dispositional, or motivational forces leading an individual to act (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). For instance, focusing on the actor's perspective likely makes most sense when seeking to understand if factors like conscientiousness, openness to experience, trait empathy, or general self-efficacy robustly predict more frequent workplace courage (Fagin-Jones & Midlarsky, 2007; Gibbs et al., 1986; Goud, 2005; Hannah et al., 2007; Osswald et al., 2010; Pury et al., 2007; Rachman, 1984, 2010; Schilpzand et al., 2015; Sekerka et al., 2011; Shepela et al., 1999). The actor's own perspective may also be most useful for understanding the positive psychological benefits associated with acting courageously (Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng, & Tag, 1997; Morrison, 2006). Feelings of authenticity, integrity, lack of regret, peace of mind, and self-confidence (Castro, 2006;

Evans & White, 1981; Finfgeld, 1998; Gray, 2010; Lester et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 1996; Woodard, 2010), for example, are likely most associated with the actor's own perspective on the act's courageousness.

Conversely, given the importance of others' perceptions in determining employees' social (e.g., status) and economic (e.g., pay and promotion opportunities, involuntary termination) outcomes in organizations (Burris et al., 2013; Van Dyne et al., 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), a focus on peer or boss ratings may be most appropriate when theorizing many social and economic outcomes associated with workplace courage acts. For example, focusing on the perspective of peers or a boss is likely most logical when considering how actors might be made to feel stupid or embarrassed for sharing ideas with others (e.g., Milliken et al., 2003), be isolated for raising unethical issues (Treviño & Victor, 1992), or be fired, blackballed, or otherwise harmed for speaking up the wrong way or to the wrong people (e.g., Detert & Trevino, 2010; Meyerson & Scully, 1995; Miceli et al., 2009; Schilpzand et al., 2015). Others' perspectives are also seemingly most relevant for linking courageous action to performance evaluations (Palanski et al., 2014) or assessments of managerial and executive potential (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Sosik, 2006; Spreitzer et al., 1997). In addition, understanding how followers might be moved to stewardship (Hernandez, 2008) or to act courageously themselves (Pury & Lopez, 2010; Quinn & Worline, 2008; Rachman, 2004) would seem to require prioritizing the perspective of those followers.

Focusing on (dis)agreement in perspective. Beyond investigating what behaviors might be viewed differently and the contexts that reveal such differences, there are also many questions that might be asked about the intra-psychic reasons underlying these revealed differences in perspective on workplace courage. As Scarre (2010, p. 36) outlined:

> It is often noted that third-person ascriptions of courage ("Smith behaved bravely") are much more common than their first-person equivalents ("I behaved bravely"). Furthermore, third-person citations of an agent's courage are often strikingly out of step with the agent's first-person reports: "I didn't see myself as brave; I did what I did out of love/a sense of duty/ commitment to my principles/unwillingness to let those bad people get away with it." It is not clear that such disavowals of courage should invariably be put down to self-underestimation or the virtue of modesty.

Thus, researchers might explore the specific factors—such as modesty, felt responsibility, or relative lack of awareness of or concern about types of

risk—that can lead an actor to deny the psychological experience of courage while other observers (including researchers) conclude a worthy, risky act has occurred (Finfgeld, 1998; Scarre, 2010; Simola, 2015). One particular line of such inquiry involves the "humility effect" or "courage blindness" as reasons why actors often under-ascribe courage to themselves relative to the attributions made by others (Biswas-Diener, 2012; Breeden, 2012; Pury et al., 2007).

The projection literature is likely helpful in this endeavor, pointing as it does to limitations on empathic understanding of actor's perspective (e.g., Campbell, O'Brien, Van Boven, Schwarz, & Ubel, 2014). Specifically, such research has consistently demonstrated that humans often project their own feelings to fill in informational gaps about another's thoughts, feelings, or intentions (Van Boven, Loewenstein, & Dunning, 2005). Thus, we might expect that observers of someone "disagreeing with the boss in public" may label the act as courageous because *they* perceive the public disagreement as risky action for a worthy cause, independent of the actor's own experience of that perceivable risk and worthiness. Researchers might also explore how role occupancy affects the tendency to see things similarly or differently. For example, we might expect systematic differences in courage attributions between people occupying different roles, as is the case for multiple perspectives on constructs like voice (Burris et al., 2013; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), altruism (Rushton et al., 1981), and leader–member exchange quality (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Managers, for example, may be more likely than non-managers to see giving difficult feedback or making significant financial bets simply part of their job rather than risky behaviors meriting a courage attribution. Yet, role equivalence alone is unlikely to be sufficient for understanding divergent perspectives. For instance, while some peers may ascribe the same level of courage to an act as the actor does because their shared role leads to equivalent conclusions about an act's risk and worthiness, others may ascribe less courage to a peer's act because doing so lessens the guilt or shame they would otherwise feel for not undertaking the act themselves (Monin et al., 2008; Treviño & Victor, 1992).

Once researchers have mapped various types of consistent discrepancies between self- and other-attributed courage, and outlined the reasons for them, those differences can be studied as a cause of other phenomena. No one, to our knowledge, has begun to explore the potential consequences of disagreements about the courageous nature of a workplace act, though research has shown the negative consequences associated with employees' overestimating their voice relative to their boss' perspective (Burris, et al., 2013).

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES MOVING FORWARD

In the prior section, "Defining Courage and Studying Worplace Courage," we addressed the core challenges and opportunities in moving the workplace courage construct forward—settling on a parsimonious definition, specifying conceptual overlaps with related constructs, and improving measurement and the way multiple perspectives on courage are addressed. Here we briefly discuss some additional opportunities for research, again reviewing extant literature where relevant.

Understanding Moderators of the Level of an Act's Courage

We suggested in the prior section that rather than being requisite components of a workplace courage act, the factors of deliberation, volition, and conscious fear may instead be found in future research to moderate how courageous an act is seen as being. The notion that courage may be attenuated or accented in degree is not new (Scarre, 2010; Walton, 1986)—it can be traced back to the Aristotelian notion of courage being the mean between the extremes of being rash and being cowardly (Lee, 2003). We expect two forms of moderation for workplace courage will be identified in future research: in some cases, moderation likely occurs between an act and its perceived degree of risk, worth, or work-domain relevance (i.e., first-stage moderation, such as with level of fear or deliberation); in others, it likely occurs between an act's level of perceived risk, worth, or work-domain relevance and the courage attributed to it (i.e., second-stage moderation, such as with level of volition). In what follows, we briefly outline the rationale for several possible moderators (while also acknowledging that many other may be identified in future research), focusing on their likely amplification or muting of the risk and worth components of workplace courage.

The level of deliberation, fear, and volition, as discussed previously, are commonly mentioned as core considerations of a courage act. We suggest each will be found to be second-stage moderators that amplify or attenuate how risk or worthiness assessments convert to courage attribution. Increased

deliberation and awareness of fear seem likely to augment the attribution of courage for a given level of risk because they indicate fuller understanding on the part of the actor as to just how much was at stake or how difficult the act was. Action lacking full volition—that is, taken under some degree of coercion—might instead attenuate the link between an act's worthiness and the courage attributed to it. While an action taken under external pressure might be still be considered worthy and courageous, such as when a manager is forced to fire some of her beloved employees to save the whole company, the level of courage attributed to this act may be seen as lower because it was not taken wholly of the manager's own free will.

Other factors beyond deliberation, volition, and presence of fear may be found to be affect how much risk or worthiness a given act is accorded (i.e., be first stage moderators). An act's perceived riskiness (and, hence, courageousness) may be affected by the target's power. Take, for instance, the act of confronting a racist or homophobic comment at work. If the target being confronted (the one who made the comment) is a peer or subordinate, the risks to the actor for speaking up are likely primarily social. If the target is, instead, a boss or skip-level leader, the risks of confrontation now become potentially economic as well. It may also be seen as more worthy to confront the same behavior in those with more power. Tempered radicals (Meyerson & Scully, 1995) and issue sellers (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 1997), for example, understand the importance of targeting those who can actually bring about change lest their actions not be ultimately futile.

Contextual factors—both individual and organizational—may also be important moderators (Simola, 2015). Risk perceptions in a given action opportunity can be affected by domain-specific self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Reese, & Adams, 1982). Rachman (1983) and McMillan and Rachman (1988) have shown this to be the case for particularly high-risk situations—paratroopers, for example, became less fearful and more able to act skillfully despite fear following the right training regimen. Thus, individual efficacy likely affects courage attributions of the same act via its moderation of risk assessment. Imagine, for example, that general managers John and Jane each spend their day giving a challenging presentation to their CEO, announcing a change in policy to angry suppliers, and telling several employees that they will be let go due to continued poor performance. Lacking experience and training, John considers each of these behaviors risky and worthy, and hence courageous.

Jane, in contrast, has had extensive training and practice engaging in each of these behaviors, and thus sees them as worthy, but perhaps fails to see any of them as risky and, thus, not courage acts.

Alternatively, John and Jane may do the same things and make different courage attributions because they feel they have significantly more or less to lose via these actions (i.e., because the acts are more or less risky to each). John, for instance, may be a single father with sole financial responsibility for his three kids. He may have few friends outside work, and thus also be highly concerned about his social connections at work. And, being relatively new to the company and at present only a moderate performer, he may lack status (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972) or idiosyncrasy credits (Hollander, 1958) that would make his challenging actions less risky. Jane, in contrast, may be nearing retirement and already financially well-off. Due to this, plus her status and unique skills, she may be well aware that the organization needs her far more than she needs it (Emerson, 1962). She may also have little social identity invested at work, and thus care little about social norms or potentially upsetting those she confronts (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

The concept of moral intensity (Jones, 1991) provides another useful starting point for considering first-stage moderation between an act and its worthiness. Rather than debating whether an act is morally worthy, as opposed to just worthy, and hence courage or not courage, it may be more useful to consider how the moral intensity of an act affects its level of perceived worthiness. For instance, challenging a boss' decision with greater magnitude of consequences (e.g., one that would negatively affect many rather than a few employees) may be deemed more worthy, as may trying to prevent a decision that would be more concentrated in its negative effect (e.g., preventing layoffs for 10 rather than a small pay cut for 1,000). Due to humans' tendency to have more concern for those in closer physical proximity (Jones, 1991) or those deemed more like themselves (Batson, Chao, & Givens, 2009; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), acting to prevent harm to peers or subordinates in one's own office may be deemed more worthy than acting to prevent the same harm to organizational members half way around the world. And acting to prevent economic loss for "unsuspecting retirees" is likely to be perceived as more worthy than preventing the same loss for middle-aged working adults, because the victim (or moral patient; Gray, Young, & Waytz, 2012) is clearer in the former case.

The designation of an act as in-role versus extra-role behavior (Van Dyne et al., 1995) could be another second-stage moderator of courage. Police officers and firefighters face manifest physical risk every day; wait staff and bank tellers do not. Indeed, for the former but not the latter, facing physical risk is seen as an in-role job task, part of the job description. Due both to the effects of training and occupational socialization (Breeden, 2012; Frese, 1982; Rachman, 1983), behaviors seen as part of "just doing my job" seem less likely to be described by role incumbents as courageous, even if admittedly quite risky and worthy. Breeden (2012) also found that military service personnel were less likely than civilians to call acts by others courageous, a finding explained as the "professional attitude" adopted by members of some professions (see also Rachman, 2010). A related, and potentially more interesting, question for future research involves exploration of whether those who routinely fail to undertake actions seemingly within their role set (e.g., managers not going to bat for or having honest performance conversations with subordinates, or failing to confront abusive customers) are inert because they have a different view of those acts' riskiness or worthiness or because they have distorted the degree to which such behaviors are obligatory in-role versus optional extra-role behaviors. And what about behaviors that are widely agreed to be technically in-role, yet nonetheless rarely done? For example, might challenging a boss' ethical violations be widely seen as courageous despite being formally in-role in any company with an ethics code? Relatedly, what courageous behaviors are most likely to be punished, formally or informally, despite technically being in-role?

Empirically Mapping the Nomological Network of Workplace Courage

Workplace courage is a broad, umbrella construct that can be represented by many specific behaviors. At the construct level, it thus overlaps with many broad and narrow organizational behavior constructs (see Figure 1 and the Appendix) that should be studied simultaneously in future research. Also, despite our focus on courage acts for the reasons noted at the outset, research might also focus on the notion of a courageous disposition. Questions here involve not just whether a courageous disposition can be defined and operationalized in a way that is truly distinct from the performance of specific courage acts and thus predictive without being tautological, but also to what extent such a disposition is

innate versus the product of prior courage acts and to what extent being labeled a courageous person actually motivates subsequent courageous action (Finfgeld, 1998). Similarly, research might explore how other individual differences such as resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000), grit (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), and risk-taking propensity (Brockhaus, 1980) relate to the frequency or types of workplace courage acts performed by an individual.

It is also necessary to consider how workplace courage relates to cowardice, as the absence of courage in a potential situation is simply that and not automatically cowardice. At present, limited empirical work speaks to the notion of cowardice, or gutlessness, and its specific relationship with courage (e.g., Chhim, 2012; Mareš, 2016; Koerner, 2014; for theoretical discussions of cowardice, in the Aristotelian manner, see Kidder, 2005; Olsthoorn, 2007; Pianalto, 2012; Rate & Sternberg, 2007; Tuffs, 2016; Yang, Milliren, & Blagen, 2009). We speculate that research will identify a negative, though not particularly strong, relationship between courage and cowardice in specific situations because it is easy to envision cases where inaction is so normative that action would be called courage but silence or passivity would go unremarked.

Ultimately, productive mapping of the nomological network of workplace courage rests on better measurement. This must start with significant improvements in courage measurement, as discussed in the prior section, "Studying Workplace Courage: Four Approaches." Construct validity, after all, reflects the correspondence between a variable's definition and its operationalization. However, sound understanding of the relationship between two different constructs depends on the quality of *both* constructs' measurement (Schwab, 1980), and in our review for this paper we were reminded that some operationalizations of related constructs also diverge at times from their own definitions. In short, establishing "construct to construct" relationships will remain challenging unless measurement improvements are made in multiple domains. For instance, voice is defined as the constructive expression of challenge with intent to improve rather than merely criticize the situation (Van Dyne et al., 1995). At the construct level, this describes behaviors likely to be worthy and risky. In the most common measure (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998), though, some behaviors reflect these dimensions (e.g., "communicate opinions about work issues to others in the group even if opinion is different and others disagree"), whereas others (e.g., "speak up and encourage others to get involved in issues that affect the group") seem

relatively devoid of risk (Burris 2012; Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). While such choices might reflect the desire to capture behaviors that are more mundane and less dramatic than others (like whistleblowing), such that they "occur more commonly in organizational settings" (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998, p. 109), they also complicate efforts to validly assess the overlap between workplace voice and courage.

Considering the Role of Gender in Workplace Courage

Historically, women have been largely excluded from courage consideration due to the emphasis on battlefield and other forms of physical courage and, undoubtedly, to the biases of the mostly male author set (Jablin, 2006; Miller, 2002). This neglect is starting to be remedied by current courage scholarship, though there are many gender-based questions to be considered in the study of workplace courage. For example, do men and women engage in courageous behaviors at different levels of frequency? If so, which workplace acts, specifically, and why? Becker and Eagly (2004) found that Carnegie heroes (persons recognized for performing extraordinary acts of heroism in civilian life in the United States and Canada) were mostly men, which could be related to men's tendency to take more risks, or to differential opportunities to undertake them. Women, on the other hand, were said to have more empathic tendencies, which might explain their finding that the "heroes in the other classes of actions that we examined were at least as likely to be women as men and in most cases more likely to be women" (p. 173). This latter finding is consistent with research suggesting that relational concerns are a greater motivator for women (Becker & Eagly, 2004; Pury et al., 2007; Simola, 2015), in which case we might expect to see courage more often from women in response to interpersonal abuse or injustice toward others.

Beyond gender of the actor, Simola (2015) posed two other important questions about gender. First, is there a tendency for males and females to perceive the same workplace acts differently (e.g., Walston & Jackson, 2006)? For instance, if women are indeed more relational and empathic, on average, do they therefore also rate the acts of others that challenge interpersonal injustices as more courageous than men do? And, second, do observers rate the same act done by a male and a female to be differentially courageous? As much research has now documented, the same behaviors that lead to commendation and advancement for men

can lead to opposite outcomes for women (e.g., Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989). In relation to courage, Evans and White (1981) found differences in the courage attributed to males versus females undertaking the same act. However, more research is needed. This should include consideration of possible interaction effects, such as between the gender of the observer and the actor. Are men, for example, more or less willing to call the same act done by a man courageous than if done by a woman? And how might gender affect courage attributions differentially when the issue itself is seen to have a gendered nature, such as speaking out against objectification of women or gender inequity at work?

Explicating the Role of Specific Emotions Prior to, During, and After Workplace Courage Acts

In contrast to historical views, most scholars today would likely acknowledge that courage is "a good deal more complicated" than "cool" assessment of risk and worth and rational decision-making (Evans & White, 1981, p. 424). That said, significant work is needed to better integrate understanding of discrete, universal emotions and various emotional processes into workplace courage research. For example, while fear and anxiety clearly help explain inactivity and withdrawal from courage opportunities, other emotions like anger (Batson et al., 2007; Geddes & Callister, 2007) or anticipatory regret (e.g., Zeelenberg, 1999) may activate approach in such situations (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Kish-Gephart et al. (2009) have suggested different conditions under which anger might prevail over fear, and vice versa, during opportunities to speak up to work authorities and Decelles and colleagues (working paper) name anger as a mobilizing factor in opposing institutions responsible for various transgressions. More such research is needed in actual work contexts (see Lerner & Keltner, 2001 for an experimental study involving both anger and fear).

It may be useful to consider how specific emotions are more or less relevant at three time points in potential courage situations: pre-act, during an act itself, and post-act. For example, the roles played by anger may be largely as a preact motivator to act despite risk (DeCelles et al., working paper; Halmburger, Baumert, & Schmitt, 2015) or to feel more certain about one's appraisal of a situation pre-action (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Anger as an impetus to action may come from violations of or threats to one's personal or social identities or to the security of one's in-group (Batson et al., 2009). Similarly, empathic anger has

been positively connected to prosocial desires that could include courageous action (Osswald et al., 2010; Vitaglione & Barnett, 2003). And while pre-act fear is generally seen as a barrier to courage, it may actually be less destructive to an act's successful completion than fear that arises during an act that cannot be sufficiently overcome in real time. Anticipated emotions—what we expect to feel in a future situation (e.g., Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; van der Pligt, Zeelenberg, van Dijk, de Vries, & Richard, 1997)—may also help determine action or inaction. For example, anticipated regret for inaction (e.g., failing to confront or report peers who are shirking or stealing) could stimulate courageous action (as in whistleblowing; Fredin, 2011), while anticipated guilt (e.g., getting peers in trouble) might further suppress it.

After a courageous act, actors might feel proud and relieved, or possibly guilty, sad, or angry. Whereas the former feelings might result simply from "taking the action", the latter likely depend on how the act was received by others. Researchers might also study what, specifically, individuals say they feel regret about. In general, research has found that over time, people are more likely to regret inaction than action (irrespective of outcomes and despite usually predicting the opposite; e.g., Anderson, 2003; Fredin, 2011), and other research suggests that some individuals likely experience regret about *how* they acted even as they remain proud *that* they acted (Burris, 2012; Grant, 2013). Another question is when the regret associated with inaction in one courage opportunity becomes the stimulus for future action versus perhaps (along with emotions like fear and sadness) further fostering a sense of helplessness. In contrast, emotions' researchers might study how workplace courage in one instance becomes the impetus for similar actions by others via emotional contagion (Pury & Lopez, 2010; Quinn & Worline, 2008; Rachman, 2004) or social contagion (Degoey, 2000).

Research employing a contagion perspective could include understanding how emotions themselves might spread during or shortly after an act among those who witness or hear about a courageous act, as well as how those emotions do or do not translate into other acts of courageous behavior (Elfenbein, 2014; Kilmann et al., 2010; Schoenewolf, 1990). For example, courageous actors' "challenge to unjust authority may lead others to aspire to similarly brave deeds when opportunity arises" (Bocchiaro et al., 2012, p. 45). Similar inspiration effects in work contexts have also been noted by Schilpzand et al. (2015) and Biswas-Diener (2012). Researchers might explore

whether the effects of inspiration, for example, likely to spread only to one's in-group (e.g., Van Der Schalk et al., 2011) or even more broadly via storytelling (Worline et al., 2002). Theory on emotional contagion may be helpful for sorting out these possibilities, starting with the question of whether the emotion associated with courageous action or the behavior itself is most likely to spread among observers (Elfenbein, 2014).

Careful attention to emotions is also likely to help researchers understand why multiple perspectives on a courageous act may or may not converge. Insight is likely to come from theory and research on emotional projection (Kawada, Oettingen, Gollwitzer, & Bargh, 2004; Maner et al., 2005) or signaling processes (Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, & Damen, 2009). For example, imagine that Kate (actor) speaks up to her boss (target), with a coworker (Jake) watching. If Jake feels afraid while watching, and thus codes this act as risky, he may assume Kate also acted despite her fear and recognition of risk, and thus call Kate's act courageous whether or not she actually experienced the situation this way. Specific questions for future research include when, and for whom, this type of straightforward emotional projection (Feshbach & Singer, 1957) is likely to prevail versus the more mature or sophisticated ability to perceive the actor's emotions as proposed by Evans and White (1981). Researchers might also consider how observers' courage attributions are driven by their tendency to focus on the actor's versus target's emotions during an act. If Jack, for example, focuses more on Kate, he may recognize through her voice, body language, and words that she is not scared at all; in contrast, if he focuses on the boss, he may see signs of anger and then, through complementary projection (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1963; Maner et al., 2005), assume the boss' anger must be causing Kate to sense risk and feel afraid.

Theorizing the Role of Time in Workplace Courage Attributions

To our knowledge, there is no work that directly addresses the passage of time as it pertains to the rating of an act as courageous, be it by the actor, the target, or other observers. However, it is well documented that perceptions of oneself can change significantly over time to the point where one might even eventually evaluate a past event as if in the third person (Libby & Eibach, 2002). For instance, an employee who initially categorizes an act as non-courageous in-role behavior may eventually converge toward others' assessment of

it as extra role and courageous after his employer's repeated psychological contract breaches (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). Or, perhaps that same employee, through later discussions with observers, might come to recognize the perceivable risk that others noticed and point out.

There are, in sum, various reasons to expect perceptions related to the riskiness, worthiness, and courage of an act might change in somewhat predictable ways over time. For example, outcomes that manifest much later may alter the perception of either the actor or others of whether or how courageous an act was. Do actors or observers, for instance, no longer view a bold entrepreneurial act as courageous if it fails in a couple years? Or do views of an act change if the actor has suffered a lot, or benefitted a lot, from taking that action? While such changes would not be reasons to consider outcomes as part of the definition of workplace courage, they do explain why forms of reliability may decrease with time. More generally, how time tends to increase or decrease misalignment in perspective among various judges merits exploration, as this would benefit understanding of workplace courage and likely shed light on the role that time plays in assessments of related constructs. For example, does a whistleblower's perception of her courage stay stable as she goes through months or years of struggle, while those around her become more or less likely to share her perception? Or vice-versa? A more specific question involves how time might change targets' perception of acts, especially those that are initially difficult to swallow. For instance, when a boss tells a well-liked subordinate that he is not ready for or does not deserve a raise or a promotion, the subordinate's initial anger and disappointment may cloud his ability to see the boss' act as courageous. Over time, though, this subordinate may come to see how risky and worthy it was for the boss to give him this honest feedback (e.g., see Tangney et al., 1996). If such changes in perspective do occur, are they powerful enough to impact individual behavior or an organization's culture in detectable ways?

Explicit attention to different timeframes may also help researchers better theorize and study which consequences of courage are more likely to occur in the immediate aftermath of a courageous act versus which are more likely to materialize over time. Simola (2016, p. 1) recently theorized that many organizations first "suffer stagnation or decline rather than growth and vitality following acts of moral courage." For example, organizations may first experience higher turnover—whether because courageous actors

get forced out or choose to leave following their acts that challenge or defy the status quo—before eventually addressing the issues raised by those who left and thus improving (Chaleff, 2009).

And, of course, if a behavior once labeled courageous became sufficiently frequent over time that it was now deemed normative rather than highly risky, it would likely cease to be seen as courageous by most. Said Montaigne: "No matter how great it may be, no recomposes is allotted to any virtue which has passed into custom: I doubt we would ever call it great once it was usual" (cited in Miller, 2002, p. 70). This paradox, which can arise when any historical act is interpreted using current legal or ethical norms (e.g., anachronisms in historical studies; Sewell, 2005), makes the impact of time on workplace courage a rich and complex realm for research and one with the potential to contribute to deeper understanding of the roles of individual perspective and social construction in social science.

Understanding Plausible Approaches to Intervention

There is no shortage of ideas for how to develop or stimulate courage: more than three quarters of the works we reviewed alluded to interventions in some way. However, only a small number go beyond brief ideas and encouragement of future research to actually detail specific methods or processes for developing courage. Here, therefore, we briefly suggest how insights from learning theory, cognitive behavioral theory, exposure therapy, and other relevant literatures might be used to develop and carry out theory-driven intervention-based research programs on workplace courage.

Training is the most prominently mentioned form of intervention in the courage literature. Many training suggestions focus on reducing fear or creating action despite fear. Exposure therapy is a classic approach to alleviating strong fear reactions and increasing the desired behavior over time (Nili et al., 2010; Rachman, 1983). To a lesser or greater extent, exposure approaches rest on the notion of behavior priming. In one study, Cougle and Hawkins (2013) tried to prime courage in those with high spider fear and found that courage decreased in those with low self-reported courageous disposition and failed to increase in those who reported being dispositionally oriented toward courageous action. The authors interpreted these non-intuitive findings using the active self-perspective on priming (Wheeler, DeMarree, & Petty, 2007), noting that a prime that contradicts

a person's self-image (i.e., encouraging courage in those not so disposed) may actually suppress the intended effect of the prime. Another proposed approach for stimulating courage is cognitive behavioral therapy (Pury, 2008; Steinfeldt, 2015), wherein individuals are taught to identify, question, and replace limiting thought patterns with more helpful or accurate ones (Beck, 1979). Proponents of both exposure and cognitive behavioral therapies note the importance of creating safe spaces in which to conduct this emotionally and physically exhausting work (Gillham & Seligman, 1999; Goud, 2005).

Training might instead focus on helping people achieve heightened competence and self-efficacy around the particular skills needed to be competently courageous at work (Bandura, 1977; Hallam & Rachman, 1980; Pury et al., 2014b), such as keeping emotional composure during difficult conversations and being persuasive when issue selling. This is, in essence, the theoretical rational behind most suggestions for courses or workshops (Kilmann et al., 2010; May et al., 2014; Pury et al., 2014b) with the use of specific tools like simulations or role play exercises (Faunce et al., 2004; Harbour & Kisfalvi, 2014; Meyerson, 2008; Osswald et al., 2010; Pury, 2008; Sosik et al., 2012), and suggestions to pair individuals with role models and mentors (English & Sutton, 2000; Lester et al., 2010; Shelp, 1984; Simola, 2015; Steinfeldt, 2015). Whether these approaches can actually increase the size of individuals' "courage muscle" (Chaleff, 2009, p. 22)—that is, make them more ready to successfully face the courage opportunities that come their way at work—is currently an open empirical question.

Because workplace courage acts usually involve targets with the power to economically or socially sanction the actor, no training can eliminate all risk (Nielsen, 1998). Thus, training may be designed to focus on countervailing reasons or triggers to act despite risk. Koerner (2014, p. 87) suggested that the "distress that often triggers courageous behavior alerts individuals to conflicting demands associated with two or more valued self or social identities", perhaps making them more likely to act. This notion is similar to suggestions to increase people's awareness of their core values (Hannah et al., 2007; Hill, 2006; Kohlenberg et al., 2015; Sekerka et al., 2009, 2011) or personal introspection and discovery (Gilat, 2015). Similarly, methods that prime anger by having individuals recall prior experiences with value violations or identity threats might be used to stimulate more courageous action (e.g., Pury, Lopez, & Key-Roberts, 2010; Tamir, Mitchell, & Gross, 2008).

Ideas for specific studies may be sharpened by looking to other recent identity-based interventions (e.g., Petriglieri, 2011; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005), or those focused on increasing individuals' ethical self-regulation (Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007) and decision making (such as the quasi-experiment that May et al. [2014] conducted with MBA students). Other suggestions for stimulating courage include perspective-taking exercises that heighten concern for others (Williams, 2012) and encouraging people to focus their own crucible moments (Hannah & Avolio, 2010).

Finally, it merits mentioning that it may be worth considering whether to advise organizational leaders to invest resources in interventions aimed at increasing the frequency of courage acts and/or in efforts to significantly reduce the degree to which desired behaviors are seen as courageous. Questions here abound and seem readily amenable to quasi-experimental field designs. For example, is it easier and more cost effective to teach employees to show courage by "challenging the boss despite risk" or to teach bosses how to welcome and respond better to challenges such that offering them is not seen by most as risky and, hence, courageous? In theory, leaders should be open to either approach because a majority of acts deemed by many to be courage in their current context are likely precisely the types of behaviors that leaders espouse wanting because they are important to learning, innovation, and individual justice, dignity, and well-being (Simola, 2015). These observations remind us of other important questions, such as whether high performing organizations are those in which there are relatively more instances of courage behavior (from the perspective of insiders) or instead those where insiders say that many behaviors deemed courage in other contexts are commonplace but not courageous because they carry little risk internally (Kilmann et al., 2010). If the latter, do the courage attributions made in high performing organizations involve only specific types of issues?

CONCLUSION

Our primary objective via the review and appraisal provided in this paper is to accelerate understanding of workplace courage, which we suggested be defined as "a work-domain-relevant act done for a worthy cause despite significant risks perceivable in the moment to the actor." We argued that this development requires continued shifting from thinking about courage as a general concept best understood through the lens of normative philosophy to viewing workplace

courage as a specific construct to be studied using the best theories and empirical tools from across the sciences. Beyond the many specific areas and questions highlighted for future research, we emphasized the need for scholars to work from a common definition of workplace courage, such that the construct's nomological network, antecedents, and outcomes can be validly assessed and compared in a cumulative fashion. We noted that achieving these aims will require better measurement of workplace courage and more attention to the roles of context and rater perspective (in both theory and measurement).

For those not interested in focusing on the workplace courage construct specifically, we hope that many ideas covered here also prove useful for advancing other theory and research. As briefly reviewed (see section "The Nomological Network of Workplace Courage," Figure 1, and the Appendix), there are many related organizational constructs that likely share antecedents or outcomes with workplace courage. And as questions related to the roles of emotions, gender, perspective, context, and others posed here begin to be answered in the study of workplace courage, there are likely to be insights applicable across many of these related areas of study. Research on courage may also provide a connecting bridge between more micro- and macro-oriented organizational scholars. For example, social movement activism, a phenomenon mostly studied by organizational theorists (e.g., Battilana et al., 2009; Ganz, 2009; Kellogg, 2012; Pascale, Sternin, & Sternin, 2010), clearly includes instances of work-domain-relevant courage of interest to more micro scholars interested in how individuals promote internal change via prosocial rule breaking, tempered radicalism, or voice. And insights related to highly competent displays of courage, of interest to those who explore acts of internal issue selling, change championing, and the like, seem clearly relevant to social movement scholars interested in movement leaders' message framing (Battilana et al., 2009, 2010; Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, & Alexander, 2010). As these examples illustrate, approaching these constructs via "lumping" rather than "splitting" may lead to novel insights (Fiske, 2006; Vadera et al., 2013).

Explicitly acknowledging and addressing the "perspective problem" would also provide insights to many other organizational literatures. Careful theoretical and empirical attention to how actors, targets, and other observers perceive and evaluate the same behavior stands to benefit those interested in all sorts of workplace relationships and behaviors. Whistleblowing, for example, is a behavior often viewed in distinctly different terms—the actor views it positively, those implicated view it extremely negatively, and some observers laud it while others condemn it. Similarly, prosocial deviance or rule breaking is unlikely to be viewed in the same way by those who engage in it versus those above or around them. And even evaluations of a leader's behavior or the quality of a leader–follower relationship (Gerstner & Day, 1997) are unlikely to be highly consensual. Thus, further understanding of the bases for alignment or misalignment of courage perceptions, and the outcomes associated with convergence or divergence in perspectives, is likely to be useful to researchers of many other attribution-driven phenomenon. Conversely, insights from those literatures about the theoretical reasons to focus on a given perspective, or how to fruitfully capture and analyze multiple perspectives simultaneously, will aid workplace courage researchers.

The study of distinct workplace courage acts (or events: Morgeson, Mitchell, & Liu, 2015) should also provide insights not likely to come from the study of many higher-frequency behavior flows. Most organizational behavior research presumes, often implicitly, that the positive behaviors under examination (such as leader acts of consideration or task structuring, or coworker helping) happen frequently, are relatively homogeneous, and not of particularly high impact on each occurrence. We expect, for instance, that most acts of helping are basically the same, and that more helping is better than less helping, and thus study helping as an aggregate of undifferentiated behavior rather than as specific episodes worthy of individual attention. In contrast, because workplace courage acts likely occur with much lower frequency but with significantly higher salience and potential impact, the understanding derived from their study will likely contribute to other literatures—such as crisis management (James & Wooten, 2012; Pearson & Clair, 1998), safety incidents (Christian, Bradley, Wallace, & Burke, 2009; Murphy & Conner, 2012; Zacharatos, Barling, & Iverson, 2005), abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007), and workplace violence (Neuman & Baron, 1998)—where assumptions related to undifferentiated, high-frequency behavior are also inappropriate.

In conclusion, the study of workplace courage presents numerous challenges but, we believe, even greater opportunities. We live in a world filled with rampant cynicism about organizations' effectiveness (e.g., Hagel, Brown, & Davison, 2009; Pink, 2001) and business leaders' trustworthiness (e.g., Gallup Incorporated, 2016; Thompson, 2012). In this environment, where work is often seen as the place where

people pursue self-interests (including self-protection) rather than collective purposes, and where interpersonal abuse, injustice, and law-breaking are still too often tolerated as means to an end, insights into when workplace courage happens, why, and how it might be fostered and appreciated are as important as ever.

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APPENDIX
Estimated Overlap of Additional Related Constructs with Workplace Courage (WC)

Construct	Definition	Overlap with WC
Whistleblowing	When a current or former organization member discloses illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employer to persons or organizations who may be able to effect action (Near & Miceli, 1985)	High
Positive or constructive deviance	Voluntary behavior that violates significant norms to enhance the well-being of the organization or its stakeholders (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004; Warren, 2003)	High
Prosocial rule breaking	Any instance where an employee intentionally violates a formal organizational policy, regulation, or prohibition with the primary intention of promoting the welfare of the organization or one of its stakeholders (Morrison, 2006)	High
Unethical pro-organizational behavior	Unethical behaviors conducted to benefit the organization or its agents (Umphress and Bingham, 2011)	High
Institutional activism	Affecting change (from changing organizational norms to policy reform) from within organizations and institutions (Banaszak, 2005; Santoro & McGuire, 1997; Tilly, 1978)	High
Improvement-oriented voice	Verbal behavior that is improvement-oriented and directed to a specific target who holds power inside the organization in question (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003)	Medium
Intrepreneurial behavior	Initiating changes that contribute to transforming existing, or creating new, institutions (DiMaggio, 1988)	Medium
Proactive work behavior	Anticipatory action that employees take to impact themselves and or their environments. (Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008)	Medium
Social movement activism	Collective action that seeks to remedy or alter some problematic situation or issue (Benford & Snow, 2000)	Medium

APPENDIX
(Continued)

Construct	Definition	Overlap with WC
Taking charge	Voluntary and constructive efforts, by individual employees, to effect organizationally functional change with respect to how work is executed within the contexts of their jobs, work units, or organizations (Morrison & Phelps, 1999)	Medium
Tempered radicalism	Identification with and commitment to one's organization while also being committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of one's organization (Meyerson & Scully, 1995)	Medium
Extra-role behavior	Positive and discretionary action 1) not specified in advance by role prescriptions, 2) not recognized by formal reward systems, and 3) not a source of punitive consequences when not performed by job incumbents (Van Dyne et al., 1995)	Medium
Task revision	Actions taken to correct a faulty procedure, inaccurate job description, or dysfunctional role expectation (Staw & Boettger, 1990)	Medium
Improvement-oriented voice	Verbal behavior that constructively challenges the status quo with the intent to improve rather than merely criticize a situation (Van Dyne et al., 1995)	Medium
Necessary evils	Work-related tasks in which an individual must, as a part of his or her job, perform an act that causes emotional or physical harm to another human being in the service of achieving some perceived greater good (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005)	Medium
Issue selling	Voluntary, discretionary behaviors organizational members use to influence the organizational agenda by getting those above them to pay attention to an issue (Dutton & Ashford 1993)	Medium–low
Unconventional leader behavior	Leader's behavior that is perceived as novel and surprising by followers (Conger & Kanungo, 1994)	Medium–low
Interpersonal helping	Behaviors directed at others in the organization that go beyond one's immediate role requirements (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002)	Low
Organizational citizenship behaviors	Individual contributions in the workplace that go beyond role requirements and contractually obligated achievements (Smith et al., 1983)	Low
Helping	Promotive behavior that emphasizes small acts of consideration (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998)	Low