CHAPTER 2

Prosocial Behavior, Solidarity, and Framing Processes

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There is no shortage of theories of prosocial behavior. Sociology, psychology, and economics are blessed with many such theories. When one looks at all three fields, one is struck by confusion. How do the various theories add up? Do they rival each other? Do they complement each other? Are they simply incompatible? Can one simply ignore some of them? These questions are not easy to answer because variables in these theories are often different, at least in name. For example, the dependent variable is given many names and it is not immediately obvious what the differences, if any, are. The terms prosocial behavior and helping behavior are most often used in psychology. In sociology, the term solidarity or solidary behavior is most often used; and in economics we find the terms cooperation and cooperative behavior. At times, the term altruism is used in all three fields. Do all these terms refer to the same thing? The independent variables are even more diverse and difficult to compare. Thus, there is a discount factor in "super games," there are value orientations, we have prosocial personality traits, we have internalized norms, culturally induced trust, and institutionalized solidarity. What are we to make of this multitude of concepts?

One way to go about answering these questions is to develop a classification of the kinds of prosocial behavior that gives place to the various psychological, sociological, and economic theories. Order can be created in this way because of the identification of possible dimensions of prosocial behavior (for example, along the lines of extrinsic versus intrinsic motives, or of personal or social norms). The disadvantage of this approach is that it does not provide the theory that would allow us to judge the importance of dimensions or the interrelation between dimensions. For example, why is it important to distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for prosocial behavior? Can intrinsic motivation be stabilized by extrinsic rewards or is it crowded out (see Frey and Jegen, 2001)? In order to deal with such questions, it is necessary to take a closer look at the mechanisms that generate various forms of prosocial behavior.

It is my aim here to uncover some of these mechanisms, using theory that was developed earlier (see Lindenberg, 1998, 2001a, 2003). I will argue that the particular form of prosocial behavior (say, cooperation, altruism, or both; see below) and its relationship to motives depends on the combination of a "frame" and a particular mental model of the relationship. I will use the term prosocial behavior, as this is the most general term for behavior assumed to be intentionally beneficial to others (not necessarily without self-interest) and involving some sacrifice. Other concepts, such as solidary behavior, cooperation, and so forth were defined or explicated on this basis. It is not long ago that a perceptive observer stated that "the trend in recent research is toward explaining self-interested sources of cooperation" (Yamagishi, 1995, p. 315). Surely, much research of this sort is still being conducted. However, owing to the results of this research, and aided by developments in evolutionary psychology, the cutting edge has moved on to the question of when and how the same individual is governed by very different sets of motives, and under what conditions these different sets of motives lead to prosocial behavior. At the very least, then, one would expect a description of mechanisms of prosocial behavior to account for the observation that (at least at present) makes research into prosocial behavior interesting in the first place. One reason is that prosocial behavior varies situationally within the *same* individual. Even though personality traits and value orientations make a person disposed to act more or less prosocially, situational factors can override even stable dispositions or interact with stable dispositions (see Ligthart, 1995). What is more, it is not merely behavior that varies situationally for the same person; the *core motivations to act vary situationally within the same individual* (see for example Ross and Nisbett, 1991; Smeesters, Warlop, Van Avermaet, Corneille, and Yzerbyt, 2003; Van Lange, 2000). In fact, a theory of prosocial behavior would have to account for the possibility that each of us is to some degree a Jekyll and Hyde. How is it possible that the same individual's behavior can be determined by such different sets of motivations, and how can the particular situation in which the individual is placed play such an important role in bringing out either Jekyll or Hyde? The answer to this question should be a theory of action rather than a list of motives. Important strides have been made in the literature in this direction. As some of these are discussed in Chapter 1 in this book and in Lindenberg (1998), I will not go into a review of the literature here. Suffice it to say that none of the existing approaches are quite satisfactory with regard to the situational influence. The approach taken here was made possible by an advance in psychology in which processes of cognition and processes of motivation were linked (see Gollwitzer and Bargh, 1996). The core idea in this research was that cognitions are strongly affected by goals (see Kruglanski, 1996) and that thus

reflective and emotional processes strongly interact in bringing about social behavior of any kind (see Strack and Deutsch, 2004). I will briefly summarize the major building blocks of the theory of prosocial behavior that can be erected on the basis of this research.

Building Blocks of the Theory

The building blocks of the theory are based on the following guiding ideas: In any action situation, the individual's attention is selective, which implies that certain aspects of the situation are pushed into the foreground and others into the background, and the individual becomes more sensitive to changes in certain situational clues, less sensitive to others. At the same time, certain concepts become highly accessible, others are inhibited; certain emotions are aroused; and so forth.

These cognitive processes are linked to motivation by the fact that they are largely governed by overriding goals. Goals together with the cognitive processes they engender are here called "frames." For example, the goal to make a profit in a particular situation steers the cognition of this situation by making certain features (the opportunities to make a profit) more salient and making other features (for example, concern for the well-being of the other) less salient, making the individual particularly sensitive to changes in the opportunities to make a profit and by activating certain concepts that belong to making a profit. There are a few overriding frames that need to be identified.

Behavior toward others is generally guided by a mental model of a particular *relationship* with the other. This mental model is part of the framing process but can be the result of prior cognitive processes that were set in motion by an overriding goal. For example, if the overriding goal is to act appropriately, the mental model must answer the question: What is appropriate in this situation? It thus provides specific information relevant to the goal pursuit in social situations. For example, it contains information on the expectations the other is likely to have in such a relationship. There are a small number of basic social relationships (with their mental models) and they need to be identified as well.

The particular form of prosocial behavior (say, cooperation or altruism, or both; see below) and its relationship to motives depend on the combination of the frame and the mental model of the relationship. For example, in a fundraising gathering at a local school, people frame the situation, say, as "instrumental" in the sense that the gathering is seen as a means for reaching a common goal (that the school can build a special room for pupils to get together socially). The perceived relationship between the people gathered there is, for example, one of "people who share a common interest." Everyone throws money into a basket that is passed around several times during

the evening (each time presumably for a different part of the room to be built). The combination of "instrumental frame" and "common goal relationship" makes it likely that giving is seen as an act of cooperation. Watchful eyes follow the basket and what people put in it. Everyone is likely to give what he or she thinks the others are giving. Contrast this with a slightly different situation in which the people gathered are told that the school needs a room for the social activities of pupils and that all present are asked, according to their ability, to help the school build such a room. As a sign of gratitude to each "helper," a roster of contributions will be made public. Now the situation is framed as "helping" and the relationship among those gathered is still one of people with a common interest, but it has been changed by the emphasis on differences in ability to help the school. Rich people are now expected to give more than poor (and this difference shows up in the public roster of contributions). The change in the relationship is also likely to add status considerations to the motive to help a good cause. But notice that this combination of helping and status considerations is specific to the situation (helping the school). Even genetically generous people are unlikely in this situation to slip money to poorer people to enable them to give more and thus show up better in the public roster.

The most important factors influencing cognitive processes are goals, and what influences goals and mental models in a given action situation are: (a) elements of the *social context*, such as social aspects (such as interdependencies, status differences), institutional elements (such as legal restrictions and norms), cultural elements (such as religious belief systems, the general level of trust in strangers); and (b) relatively stable traits and skills of the person. A sketch of the combination of these building blocks can be seen in Figure 2.1.
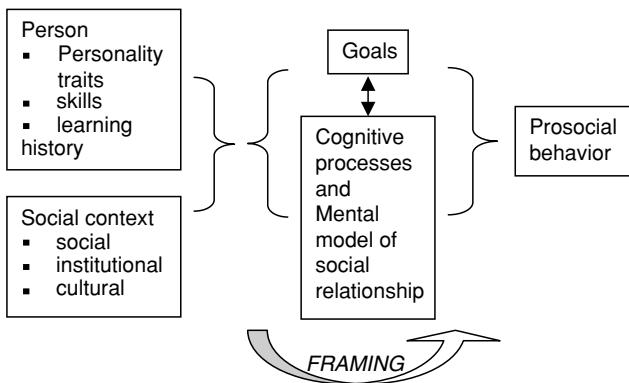

FIGURE 2.1. Determinants of Prosocial Behavior From a Framing Perspective

Kinds of Prosocial Behavior and Kinds of Relationships

Below I will elaborate and combine these various building blocks. I will start at the dependent variable (prosocial behavior) and work backward. Being task or outcome interdependent, or both (i.e., having functional interdependencies or, more generally, joint production) is likely to lead to the development of relationships that require prosocial behavior (see Lindenberg, 1997). There are at least five kinds of prosocial behavior (see Lindenberg, 1998). They have been described in Chapter 1 and are only listed here: cooperation, fairness, altruism, trustworthiness (i.e., refraining from breaking promises), and being considerate. They all refer to behavior that benefits others but is, at least at the moment it is performed, socially accepted as entailing some form of sacrifice. Thus, for example, a situation in which a person exchanges a thing with another person to their mutual benefit is excluded, except in cases where time renders the benefit to one conditional on the other's keeping a promise. In Chapter 1 various relationships were distinguished and it was argued that prosocial behavior is embedded in social relationships. Different relationships require different combinations of kinds of prosocial behavior. *Solidarity* relationships are likely to involve all five kinds of prosocial behavior. Strong solidarity relationships (such as close friendships) involve much higher expected sacrifices than weak solidarity relationships (such as a relationship between neighbors), and the two also differ in distributional norms (equality versus equity). But failure to behave prosocially in all five kinds of sacrifice situations (if and when they occur) is likely to be interpreted as a lack of solidarity in both strong and weak solidarity relationships. An *opportunistic* relationship does not involve any prosocial behavior. A *status* relationship is asymmetric, which means that it may involve different forms of prosocial behavior acting "down" and acting "up," for example, trustworthiness and being considerate from below and a modicum of altruism from above. Authority relationships can vary a great deal in this respect and it might be useful to use the prosocial expectations in order to distinguish them. For example, in Western societies, authority relationships seem to have the tendency to become symmetrical with regard to the prosocial behavior that is expected from the person below and the one above. This, in turn, is likely to give rise to considerable changes in the way employment relations are governed and to make fairness a central element in authority relations (see Lindenberg, 1993; Mühlau and Lindenberg, 2003; Wittek, 1999). There are probably relationships that hover between opportunism and weak solidarity simply because they are specific and unlikely to last long enough to cover more situations and develop into a solidarity or authority relation. Nevertheless, for the specific situation, there may be too much interdependence for sheer

opportunism. The example given above of fund raising in a school is such a case. Here, people are gathered for a specific common purpose that requires cooperation to reach the common goal, nothing more, nothing less. Other situations may create relations that focus on fairness or showing trustworthiness (by abstaining from breach temptation). In any case, it seems useful for the researcher to determine for any particular kind of explanatory problem what relations are likely to prevail in these situations and what forms of prosocial behavior are likely to "belong" to these relations. Before relations influence behavior, they must be cognitively represented in the actors involved. As argued above, this cognitive representation can be analyzed in term of mental models.

Mental Models of Relationships

What Is a Mental Model of a Relationship?

The most basic connotation of "mental model" is some kind of mental representation that guides reasoning and action. One of the major functions of mental models is to allow the individual to *answer questions* about relevant aspects in his or her physical and social world, be these aspects simple objects, like chairs, or complex processes like the political system of the United States. A subcategory of mental models is *prototypes*. They capture the exemplary version of the phenomenon and can, therefore, be used to answer questions about it. For example, the prototype of a relationship can be used to answer the question "If this is a friendship relationship, what should I do?" Such a prototype may be taken to consist of five minimal elements: (1) there is a set of rules about one's own and the other's behavior; (2) there are expectations about the other's behavior based on these rules; (3) there are the other's surmised expectations; (4) there are normative expectations about one's own behavior; and (5) there is co-orientation about the expectations (Scheff, 1967), meaning that each partner in a relationship assumes that the other uses the same mental model. For example, the mental model of a friendship relationship could look like this: *Rules of friendship (or rule heuristics)*: "Friends are equals; friends don't do anything that would increase the social difference between them" (this also implies fairness); "Friends don't harm each other" (this also implies trustworthiness and being considerate); "Friends help each other in need." *Expectation about other's behavior*: "The other is my friend and thus he will behave according to the rules of friendship." *Expectations from the other*: "The other is my friend and he expects me to act according to the rules of friendship." *Normative expectations about own behavior*: "I am his friend and I ought to behave according to the rules

of friendship." *Co-orientation*: "The other is my friend and therefore uses the same rules and expectations I do." The mental model of a relationship is thus more than just a social norm about how to behave. Some authors speak of "relational schemas" (see, for example, Baldwin, 1992) to indicate expectations of interactive sequences; other authors speak of "heuristics" (see, for example, De Dreu and Boles, 1998; Simon, 1957) to indicate maxims that should be followed in a relationship (such as "Be fair" or "Your gain is my loss"). The prototype of a relationship includes such schemas and heuristics but also other kinds of information. It minimally also includes descriptive and normative expectations and co-orientation. A person is said to create or learn mental models of virtually all relevant aspects of his or her physical and social world, including social relationships.

Mental Models and Frames

How does a mental model relate to behavior? As we will see, in order to relate mental models to behavior, more cognitive aspects have to be considered than are normally considered in the social sciences. People do not simply "conform" to the normative expectations contained in a mental model of a relationship. There must be a link to the goal pursuit of the individual, to the aspects to which the individual pays attention, to memories that are activated, and so forth. Goals and cognitive processes are linked, and this insight may be one of the most important advances in cognitive and motivational psychology in the past 20 years. For example, if a person is determined to make a profit in a particular interaction (the goal), he or she will "frame" the situation in such a way that the elements that are relevant for making a profit become salient as well. How does it work? Because framing is so central to the argument presented here, I will go into it in some detail.

A Theory of Goal-Framing

Basic Mechanisms

The basic mechanism of the motivational-cognitive aspects of behavior (and a fortiori also prosocial behavior) consists of a number of interrelated processes. First, *people's perception of a situation is selective*. People focus on some aspects and not on others. Which aspects they focus on depends mainly on the major goal they are pursuing at this moment. For example, if a person buys a rare second-hand book that she wants to read, she focuses on aspects that have to do with reading the book, such as the attractiveness of its cover and layout,

how thick it is, how lucky she is to have found it now that she is going on vacation and has time to read, and so forth. If a person buys the same book as a book salesman with the aim of selling it, he focuses on other aspects, such as the likely demand for the book, its physical condition as this may affect demand, the possible profit given its present price, and so forth.

Second, whereas selective attention almost seems trivial, it is not trivial in its consequences. To focus on certain aspects also means that *other aspects are cognitively pushed into the background.* This is more than a metaphor. What happens is that certain chunks of stored knowledge, certain categories and attitudes, become more easily accessible and thereby influence the person's information processing (see Higgins and Brendl, 1995). At the same time, aspects that have been pushed into the background may be inhibited, thus creating a double selective effect (see Bodenhousen and Macrae, 1998; Houghton and Tipper, 1996). When we say that a person has a certain *frame,* therefore, we mean more than just selective attention. We also mean that, compared to a person with another frame, this person's cognitive processes are guided by a goal so that the person thinks of certain things more readily, is more sensitive to certain kinds of information, perceives certain alternatives more readily than others, and assigns different weights to certain aspects. For example, when the person who bought the second-hand book in order to read it leaves the bookshop and is asked to sell it right then and there for 50% more than she paid just a minute ago, she will in all likelihood decline. Using the book to make profit is not an alien idea to her, but, at that moment, this idea is pushed into the background and is thus cognitively not readily available. By contrast, the bookseller who bought the book in order to sell it again will quickly consider this a good deal and sell it or ask for a higher price (see Braspenning, 1992, for experimental evidence). They thus react very differently to seemingly the same opportunity.

Third, *goals are part of the frame*, especially goals that draw on particular patterns of attitudes, expectations, and behavioral repertoires (see Gollwitzer and Moskowitz, 1996; Kruglanski, 1996). In the literature, we find mainly three groups of goals that have been studied with regard to their effect on cognitive processes (see also Dunning, 2001). For one, there are approach/avoidance-related goals, such as gain- and loss-related goals (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984); self-enhancement and self-defense (Baumeister, 1996; Tesser, 1988). Then, there are goals concerning reflective versus intuitive processing, such as deliberative versus implemental goals (Gollwitzer and Bayer, 1999), accuracy goals (Stapel, Koomen, and Zeelenberg, 1998), epistemic goals (Ford and Kruglanski, 1995), and performance versus learning goals (Grant and Dweck, 2003). Finally, there are goals about self-concern and other-concern, such as the goal to act cooperatively and

the goal to act competitively. For the topic of prosocial behavior, the latter is the most relevant. For example, the goal to act cooperatively and the goal to act competitively activate very different patterns of attitudes, expectations, and behavioral repertoires (see Carnevale and Lawler, 1986; De Dreu and Boles, 1998; Stapel and Koomen, 2005). However, as we will see, a dimension related to the reflective/intuitive distinction is also very important for the treatment of prosocial behavior: short-term versus long(er)-term orientation. Behaving prosocially because it feels good right now will draw on different attitudes, expectations, and aspects of the situation than behaving prosocially because that may pay off in the future. In all cases, it is goals that, via frames, link the individual to a situation and give it a particular meaning. The fact that goals heavily influence cognitive processes links motivation and cognition. *Goals can thus not be represented as ordered preferences (as is done in the literature on multiple selves), since goals influence the situationally activated preferences, expectations, and selection from the behavioral repertoire.*

Fourth, in every situation, *there are goals that are pushed into the background* by the overriding goal that dominates the framing process. For example, when the overriding goal is to act cooperatively, the goals that have to do with guarding one's resources, such as money, are pushed into the background. We simply do not pay close attention to cost aspects when the overriding goal is to act cooperatively. Even though the goals in the background are inhibited (see Houghton and Tipper, 1996), this does not mean that they lose all influence on behavior. Their influence has become indirect and therefore much weaker than it would have been if the goal had been in the foreground. For example, in a supermarket, the overriding goal might be "to be a smart consumer" (such a consumer compares prices and is alert to special offers). In such a situation, small differences in price can have a large effect on behavior. By contrast, when the overriding goal is to act cooperatively, the differences in costs play a much smaller role. But even though relative price effects emanating from the background goals are "muffled," they are still there and they increase as the costs of acting cooperatively increase. This explicit attention to the cognitive aspects distinguishes this theory from other multiple goal or dual concern theories (see Chapter 1) and it is especially the role of the background goals that is an important distinguishing feature of this framing approach compared to other framing-like approaches, be they related to the idea of gain and loss perception (e.g., Kahneman and Tversky, 1984), to the mobilization of scripts and schemas (e.g., Abelson, 1981), or to the idea of goal priming (Shah and Kruglanski, 2003). The following sections deal with how this interaction between background and foreground goals in the process of framing works.

Interaction Between Background and Foreground Goals

The influence of background goals on choice exerts itself in two ways: (a) background goals influence the ordering of alternatives, and (b) background goals influence the strength of the frame. Let us take these in order. When the overriding goal is to act cooperatively and attention to monetary costs is the most important goal in the background, then the behavioral alternatives perceived will be ordered from the most cooperative to the least cooperative. There are, however, many ways in which one may be less than fully cooperative. The background goal (in our example "to guard one's monetary resources") shows up in the way in which alternatives are set up: "less cooperative" must go together with "cheaper." There is no use in choosing less cooperative alternatives that are even more expensive than the most cooperative one if the background goal is to guard one's monetary resources. The difference can be seen immediately if one imagines that the most important goal in the background was "to damage the other as a competitor." In that case, the alternatives in the cooperative frame would still decrease in cooperativeness but they would not necessarily get cheaper. Rather, they would become more damaging for the other as a competitor.

The other way in which background goals influence choice is *via the strength of the frame*. Think of the strength of the frame in terms of the strength with which the overriding goal determines choice. Choice is here conceived of as a distribution of choice probabilities over the alternatives (see Lindenberg, 1988; Steglich, 2003). The stronger the frame, the higher the chances of the "best" alternative being chosen (i.e., the more skewed the distribution in favor of the "best" alternative). As the strength of the frame decreases, the individual still defines the situation in terms of the overriding goal, but the choice probabilities shift toward a more equal distribution. In this way, the chances of the second- and third-best alternatives being selected increase. This implies that *the weaker the strength of the frame, the more the choice reflects the strongest background goal*. Take our example again. As the cost of being cooperative increases, the chances of an alternative being chosen that is less than fully cooperative but cheaper increase. Note that there is no adding or subtracting of utilities involved. Thus, there is no need for a "numeraire" (i.e., no measure in which both the overriding goal and the strongest background goal can be expressed) and no shadow pricing has to be assumed. The effect is solely produced by the relative weight of the foreground and background goals.

When a background goal becomes so strong that all alternatives tend to become equally (un)attractive, the frame is likely to switch, so that the strongest background goal becomes the new frame and the previously dominant goal merges into the background. For example, when being cooperative becomes increasingly incompatible with the

background goal "to guard one's (financial) resources," then it is likely that the goal "to guard one's recourses" becomes the new dominant goal and "to be cooperative" is pushed into the background, with all the cognitive consequences of such a shift, such as a change in the aspects that are considered, the accessibility of memory and knowledge chunks, the ordering of alternatives, and so forth (see Steglich, 2003 for empirical evidence).

Goals in the background can also increase the strength of the frame. For example, the goal to guard one's social capital is likely to increase the overriding goal in our example ("to act cooperatively") because it is compatible with its realization. However, unlike the strongest incompatible goal in the background, compatible goals in the background do not influence the ordering of alternatives. Rather, by increasing the strength of the frame, they increase the likelihood of the alternative that is "best" in terms of the frame being chosen. In the extreme case of very high frame strength, the choice of the "best" alternative is so certain that, subjectively, there is no "choice": There is only one course of action and that can easily become a habit in which case activation of the goal directly also activates a particular kind of action (see Aarts and Dijksterhuis, 2000). For example, when going to work, people may not think about whether to take the car or the train (even though the train would be the second-best alternative), but take for granted that the car is *the* way to go to work. But this can also occur without habituation. For example, when confronted with extreme alternatives (say, "your money or your life"), people may perceive the situation as "having no choice." This mechanism has important consequences for the effect of information on choice. Individuals are not very sensitive to information on background goals, and when strength of the frame is high, they are even deaf to positive information on the second-best alternative since the highly skewed probability distribution over alternatives makes only one alternative cognitively salient. For prosocial behavior, this means that it is possible that, when norms are concrete (i.e., prescribe a particular action) and the strength of a "normative frame" (see below) is high, there is likely to be a kind of mechanical *conformism* toward all normatively prescribed behavior, including prosocial behavior.

Core Motivations: Master Frames and Their A Priori Strength

Before prosocial behavior can be linked explicitly to framing, it must be known, what frames? There are, of course, many frames and it would not do to try to list them. Because it is goals that determine most of what a frame is like, the question is thus: What kind of goals?

As mentioned above, the most relevant goals for the social sciences have to do with self versus other, and short term versus long term. Clearly, we are looking for (a) overriding goals that (b) characterize a basic direction of action and leave ample room for considerable differences in lower-order goals. To use a negative example: power (or control) is sometimes mentioned as such an overriding goal. However, it does not by itself give action a basic direction. An increase in power for someone who is cooperatively oriented means an increase in socially responsible behavior, whereas an increase in power for someone who is orientated toward personal gain means an increase in selfish behavior (see Chen, Lee-Chai, and Bargh, 2001). Approach and avoidance and its related responses are also basic and very important for information processing and behavior (see for example Epstein, 1993; Gollwitzer and Bayer, 1999) but by themselves not tied to either pole of the dimensions that are crucial for the analysis of social behavior—self-other directedness and short- or long-term orientation. Three goals that can be considered both overriding and basic for the direction of action have been suggested, and it is worthwhile to take a brief look at them (see Lindenberg, 2001a, for more detail). I call the frames of which they are a part "master frames." Such frames can be taken to be core motivations in the sense introduced in the beginning of this chapter.

Human beings are assumed to strive for improvement of their current condition. This assumption has already guided the work of Adam Smith and David Hume and has, in more recent times, become quite prominent (see, for example, Frank, 1992; Scitovsky, 1976). Improving one's condition as a general striving also renders reference points and social comparison important for the study of motivation and cognition (Kahneman, 1992; Kahneman and Tversky, 1984). There are roughly two kinds of improvement: short-term and longer-term improvement, and it is possible to distinguish between overriding goals for improvement in the short term and improvement in the longer term. Millar and Tesser (1992) make a related distinction between "instrumental" and "hedonic" goals. For the short term, a general goal is the wish "to feel better right now." It is directed at the emotional state of the self in the widest sense of the word. This holds not only for positive and negative bodily states (such as excitement, hunger, thirst, or pain) but also for positive and negative psychic states such as a sense of loss, angst, affection, and situational status. The frame that goes along with this goal may be called the *hedonic frame*.

With regard to the longer term, a general goal is the wish "to improve one's resources," material or immaterial (such as money, competence, contacts, and general status). The frame that belongs to this goal can be called the *gain frame*. Such a frame is directly tied to the self, but it is removed from direct emotional involvement in the sense

that resources must be used before they have any hedonic effect. By contrast, the experience of loss of resources (and the goal of loss avoidance) is likely to be directly tied to emotions and thus will more likely trigger a hedonic frame, instantly shorting the time horizon.

A third general goal (only seemingly unrelated to improvement) is the wish "to act appropriately," which belongs to a frame that may be called a *normative frame.* In such a frame, hedonic and gain-related goals are, if at all present, in the background. The universal ability of perspective taking (see Tomasello, 1999) in conjunction with universal epistemic goals is probably at the root of the ability to take on the point of view of the *group* and pursue the goal "to act appropriately" according to the group. This phenomenon is by now empirically well established (see Caporael, Dawes, Orbell, and Van de Kragt, 1989; Hogg, 2001; Kollock, 1997; Terry and Hogg, 2001) and quite essential to understanding the power of framing effects. Other-directedness in this sense relates not to another person per se but to the group as a whole or to a person as a member of the group. The prosocial behavior generated by a strong normative frame appears subjectively as a matter of course; it is a matter of doing the *right* thing rather than the efficient (gain) or the friendly (hedonic) thing (see Nunner-Winkler, 1997; Van Lange, 2000).

Even though socialization is likely to foster this ability, we should not equate normative framing with the traditional concept of internalization. Internalization has to do with a stable change in preferences, whereas the goal "to act appropriately" is a situational goal with the help of which certain preferences may be activated. Parents clearly have a regulatory interest in such a goal and are likely to push it during socializing their child. Quite generally, parents take an interest in having their children follow norms even when nobody is watching. Their socializing efforts are thus likely to make social rewards systematically dependent on the goal "to act appropriately" rather than on the goal "to act in order to get the social rewards" or the goal "to avoid negative sanctions" since the latter would not work when nobody is watching. Thus, improvement in social approval and avoiding social disapproval are likely to be important elements in the background, but they are not related to the framed goal itself. In fact, these background goals may be the most important stabilizers of a normative frame (see Lindenberg, 2001a). Social rewards for prosocial behavior are rarely forthcoming if others see this behavior as motivated by the desire to get social approval or avoid disapproval. Thus, when people pursue social approval and avoidance of disapproval as the explicit goal (within a hedonic frame), it is likely to be seen socially as a lack of intrinsic interest in moral behavior and thus not rewarded or may be even punished. The goal "to act appropriately" is only indirectly tied to improvement and is likely to be tied to emotions only negatively,

namely when norms are transgressed (guilt and shame, see Eisenberg, 2000). It clearly distinguishes itself from a hedonic goal (through effortful control) and from a gain-related goal (through the group-related other-directedness).

A Priori Strength of Frames

A plausible assumption is that what is directly tied to both, emotions and the self, is, ceteris paribus, stronger in determining behavior than what is only related to the self and not directly to emotions, which, in turn, is stronger than what is directly related to neither emotions nor self. When this assumption is applied to the three frames, we get an a priori ordering of strength of the goals and thus of the frames. One goal is stronger than another if, in direct competition between the goals to structure the situation, it becomes the foreground goal and the other is pushed into the background. The hedonic goal is directly linked to emotions and the self, and it can thus be assumed to be a priori stronger than the other two goals. This means that unless there are special supports for the other two goals, the hedonic goal will be the dominant frame. The gain goal is directly tied to the self but generally not tied to strong emotions. As such, it is a priori stronger than the normative goal. In order to reverse this a priori pecking order between potential master frames, there must be special stabilizers that increase the strength of the gain or the normative frame. For example, strong shared and institutionalized religious beliefs in a group of individuals may create such consistently high amounts of social disapproval for nonconforming behavior that the normative frame cannot be displaced by a hedonic or gain frame. Notice that in this case, it is not a fear of sanctions that leads to the prosocial behavior. Rather, the sanctions (in the cognitive background) stabilize (and thereby strengthen) the normative frame, within which there is no weighing of the costs of benefits of norm-conforming behavior (see Steglich, 2003 for empirical evidence).

Goal-Framing, Mental Models, and Prosocial Behavior

What can we learn from the above about prosocial behavior? What hypotheses can be derived? For a framing point of view, it is important for the understanding of prosocial behavior to know which overriding goals are in the foreground (as core motivation) and which are in the background. In principle, all three overriding goals can generate prosocial behavior, at times even a dynamic change of what is in the foreground and what is in the background, as we will see. I concentrate below on the

differences between the core motivations (master frames) with regard to prosocial behavior, along the lines summarized in Table 2.1.

In a *normative* frame, an individual's main goal is to act appropriately. The answer to the question "What is appropriate?" comes to a large extent from the mental model of the relationship and it includes information about what kind of prosocial behavior is appropriate. Take a friendship relationship as an example. A close friendship is a strong solidary relationship. Thus, the mental image of a close friendship contains all five kinds of prosocial behavior, and in a normative frame, the individual will attempt to act appropriately with regard to all five kinds of prosocial behavior. Hedonic and gain goals are pushed into the cognitive background, and this means that the opportunity costs of behaving according to the relational expectations are also pushed into the background. It can, therefore, be expected that the stronger the normative frame, the lower the costs for each of these kinds of behavior and the rewards for nonconforming behavior are perceived to be, and thus the less behavior is affected by cost considerations. However, prosocial behavior in a normative frame is all the more sensitive to the clarity of the mental image concerning the relation and the norms. In fact, in an ongoing solidary (and surely also in a "modern" authority) relationship, prosocial behavior sends a "relational signal" to the other indicating that I, the sender, am in a normative frame and have solidarity in my mental model of our relationship (see Lindenberg, 2000). Because a normative frame is precarious, it is important for others to know whether a person acts prosocially because he or she is in a normative frame or because, for example, he or she is acting strategically from within a gain frame (see Mühlau and Lindenberg, 2003).

Because the normative frame is very much dependent on strong supports for its stability, it can only withstand the onslaught of gain and hedonic goals if it is well stabilized by factors like common interest,

TABLE 2.1. Differences in prosocial behavior for different master frames.

Master frame	Need for social stabilization of the frame	Act prosocially when....	Sensitive to disturbance by...
Normative frame	high	it is appropriate	relational uncertainty and vague norms
Gain frame	medium	it is efficient	costs and low degree of monitoring
Hedonic frame	low	it feels good	own moods and unfriendliness of others

widely shared consensus about the importance of acting appropriately, and clear social sanctions (like strong social disapproval). Such a frame particularly needs to be supplied with information from mental models about expectations and norms. When relationships become confused and norms vague, normative frames are in danger of being displaced, changing the conditions for the occurrence of prosocial behavior considerably. Generally, it can be said that whatever lowers the workings of relational signaling lowers the likelihood of prosocial behavior generated by a normative frame.

Two examples will illustrate the point. Take the way a professor deals with her secretary in the pool of secretaries. General expectations in the modern university in the Netherlands press for equality among all members of the university community. Hierarchy should not be used conspicuously. However, hierarchy has not vanished. In all likelihood, there is relational confusion for professors in dealing with secretaries, leaning toward equality when things are relaxed and pulling rank when time pressure is high. What is a need situation in a weak solidary relationship (requiring prosocial behavior on the part of the secretary and appropriate gratitude on the part of the professor) is a legitimate demand in an authority relationship. This, however, creates relational uncertainty in both the professor and the secretary. Vague norms also make it difficult to act appropriately. For example, when the dress code for a particular private occasion is not clear, what should one wear? There are two ways to go about this (short of inquiring about the dress code). One possibility is to argue, "If they don't take the trouble to make the dress code clear, I can wear what I want." There is no attempt at prosocial behavior because the norm is vague. Another possibility is to use "smart norms" (i.e., higher-order [abstract] norms) about relationships. For example, such a higher-order norm might be to behave in such a way that one will not offend the other's feeling (be considerate). Now one would have to figure out what kind of dress would be inoffensive for the hosts no matter what. Such abstract "smart norms" appear to be on the increase as many social norms become more vague (see Nunner-Winkler, 2000). More serious examples of relational confusion (which hampers the workings of relational signals) can be found in Wittek's study of a paper factory (Wittek, 1999).

For reasons of space, I cannot go into how the framing process is affected by the goals in the background, but it is obvious that this makes a big difference. For example, when a person is in a normative frame, the fear of social disapproval may be in the background, supporting the normative frame (see Steglich, 2003). When fear of social disapproval is in the foreground (for example, in a hedonic frame), it is a different matter because now the mental model contains such elements as the likelihood that one is being observed, and one of the behavioral alternatives is to cheat or sneak (for a discussion on how

different background goals influence intrinsic versus extrinsic behavior, see Lindenberg, 2001b, see also Karr and Meijs, this volume).

In a *gain* frame, the individual's main goal is to improve his or her resources (such as money, general status, or opportunities). As a core motivation, a gain frame is virtually identical to what is generally assumed about self-interest. People act prosocially if it is an efficient means toward increasing gain: if it "pays." Contrary to a normative frame, a gain frame is very sensitive to relative cost issues. If the relative cost of prosocial behavior rises, other alternatives to the same aim (gain) may take over. A low degree of visibility of sacrifice (i.e., little monitoring) lowers the possible gain from making a sacrifice for prosocial behavior, and it lowers the cost of failing to make sacrifices, thus making prosocial behavior less likely. This idea is behind the principle-agent theory of cooperation in economics (see Milgrom and Roberts, 1992).

Notice that mental images of relations play a role in a gain frame, too. Of course, in an opportunistic relationship, there are no prosocial expectations. However, business relations may be oriented toward keeping a win/win relation going, and that is likely to be interpreted as some form of a common good situation that requires cooperation. Game theorists have shown that there are situations in which a gain frame can generate prosocial behavior, at least in the sense of cooperative behavior. The relationship must then be longer term and the discounting influence of time on the value of the relationship to the participants must be modest, or there must be possibilities for sanctions (for example, through reputation damage) in the future (see Buskens, 2002). In analyses by game theorists, the nature of the relationship is often not worked out even though the examples often point to relations of weak solidarity (for example, longer-term business partners). For example, Uzzi (1997) identified weak solidarity relationships among many representatives of buyers and suppliers in the New York apparel industry. The question is whether weak solidarity can be sustained within a gain frame (and, thus, whether it can be investigated using a theory that only acknowledges a gain frame). In weak solidarity, all five kinds of prosocial behavior are expected and the question is whether this is possible within a gain frame. Can weak solidarity be sustained with relational signals that convey efficiency as the overriding goal? It does not seem likely, but so far game theorists have not dealt seriously with this question because (mental models of) relationships have not been considered part of the game except in terms of payoffs (see reviews by Camerer, 2003, and Rabin, 1998). Theories of social preferences (see for example Charness and Rabin, 2002; Fehr and Fischbacher, 2002) go a long way in the right direction but so far lack any consideration of the situational influence on the "selection" of preferences due to the effect of goals on cognitive processes. Going a step further, Bowles (1998) presents varied and convincing evidence

that the social (including cultural and institutional) context matters for preferences *and* psychological processes. However, he refrains from offering an explanation of how this may work.

A *hedonic* frame can also be the source of prosocial behavior. Take, for example, empathy or love, both of which can create strong emotions, which, in turn, can bring about a hedonic frame when another person is in distress. An individual in a hedonic frame would then act prosocially in order to feel better (see Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, and Neuberg, 1997). However, because a hedonic frame is tied to feelings here and now, it is also fickle. Changes in mood have a considerable influence on prosocial behavior. A small change can have a large effect. Especially important is behavior of others that makes one feel bad and renders prosocial behavior unlikely, and often even increases antisocial responses. Take irritability or general unfriendliness: These quickly reduce the willingness of others to behave prosocially. Because a hedonic frame needs no extra support, social situations degenerate to being dominated by hedonic frames if normative and gain frames lose their supports. This also affects our view of institutions. They do not just regulate behavior by incentives but also regulate the stability of normative and gain frames each in their "proper" situation (see Lindenberg, 1992).

Conclusion

It was argued that a major issue regarding the explanation of prosocial behavior is whether prosocial behavior can emanate from very different core motivations, even in the same individual. If so, what are these core motivations? How can a theory of action deal with them? And, finally, how can differences in the occurrence of prosocial behavior be explained on the basis of different core motivations?

The answers to these questions were sought mainly in the theory of goal framing and of mental models of relationships. Framing is a process that can create integrated patterns of goal pursuit, with selective attention to certain features of the situation, with sensitivity to certain information, and with the activation of certain chunks of memory and knowledge. It is a combined cognitive-motivational process that creates core motivations. In an action situation, this process is fed by the mental model of the social relationship the actor perceives or intends to have with the other actor(s). This mental model also contains information about the kinds of prosocial behavior expected within such a relationship. Different kinds of relationship may require different kinds of prosocial behavior.

Three different master frames were identified that represent different core motivations: a *normative* frame (with the goal "to act appropriately"), a *gain* frame (with the goal "to increase one's resources"),

and a *hedonic* frame (with the goal "to feel better"). Prosocial behavior can occur in each of these frames, but the conditions that affect its occurrence are very different in each of them. For example, a normative frame is the most precarious and needs more social support for its stability than the other frames. In addition, the likelihood of prosocial behavior occurring in a normative frame is likely to decrease rapidly with relational confusion and vague norms even if the frame itself is stable. Prosocial behavior in a gain frame is very sensitive to the influence of relative costs of such behavior in comparison to the costs of other alternatives leading to the same goal (gain). In a hedonic frame, the occurrence of prosocial behavior reacts strongly to changes in moods and to the atmosphere of the situation in terms of friendliness. Aspects of the situation (such as social, institutional, and cultural factors) and of the person (such as personality traits and skills) strongly influence the kind of master frame and the kind of relational mental model that are operative in a given situation. These links were not discussed in detail here, but they will ultimately be the major test of the usefulness of this approach to the study of prosocial behavior, and other chapters in this book take a more thorough look at its potential for explaining prosocial behavior.

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