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Anna Szuster*

Self- vs. Other-Focused Altruism: Studies on Endocentric and Exocentric Prosocial Orientations

Abstract: This is both a review of previous research and a theoretical paper on altruism. It discusses one of the crucial theories of prosocial involvement: the distinction between endo- and exocentric prosocial motivation depending on the type of internal gratification for the involved individual: satisfaction of the Self vs. improving the circumstances of another person. The relevance and validity of this distinction finds support in early empirical studies. Contemporary findings suggest a more universal regulatory context of this idea, which transcends the domain of altruism and extends to the more general issues of the Self and social perception. In addition, it anticipates a number of cognitive biases consequential to the relationship between endocentric regulation and the Self. The findings support a reinterpretation of the original term “prosocial motivation” and the use of a broader interpretative construct “prosocial orientation”, understood as a complex syndrome of regulation that encompasses the processes of social perception, value judgements, and Self-regulation, both explicit and subliminal.

Keywords: cognitive biases, the Self and the beyond-Self standards, egocentric asymmetry effect, self-generalization effect, third-person effect, social categorizations, helping vs developing social behavior

August Comte coined the term “altruism,” which means the placing of others above the Self and their interests above one’s own. He defined altruism as “living for others” (Campell, 2006). This moral orientation and uncompromising collectivism expressed by Comte’s altruism was used for almost two centuries in various contexts to describe many different types of behavior and various motivations, both conscious and unconscious. As such, its original meaning was often lost. Though “good of others” remains a widely shared *diferencia specifica* of altruism, the issue of selflessness is still widely discussed (Szuster, 2016).

Altruistic behavior constitutes a significant part of human activity. Some of our acts are automatic, like affective contagion (Doherty, 1998) and affective empathy, (Hoffman, 2000; Bloom, 2016) or the involuntary consequences of mimicry that reduce Self – Other distance, increase the willingness to help or generosity in offering donations (Chartrandt & Bargh, 1999; Stel, van Baren, & Vonk, 2008; van Baaren et al., 2004; Szuster, 2012). Others are voluntary and motivated either by the idea of “doing good to feel good” or “doing good to make the other feel good” (Karyłowski, 1982). Altruism is not

limited to helping the disadvantaged. Sometimes it is defined as a motivational state with the ultimate goal to increase other person’s welfare (Batson, 2011), sometime as orientation of values which are aimed at the welfare of others (Staub, 2003). Today, altruism is used in vastly dissimilar theoretical contexts and research paradigms. It defines the selfish nature of help, e.g. reciprocal altruism (Hamilton, 1964), or improved mood (NSR model Cialdini et al., 1981), as well as thus motivated improvement of the situation of another person (Batson, 2011). Even the latest study of the neural basis of altruism has done little to alter its status as one of the most mysterious and controversial phenomena (Marsh et al., 2014).

The “many faces” of altruism justify broad definitions of the concept. We understand altruism as a dispositional willingness to respond with positive emotions to others and to treat others, including strangers, sympathetically. Such sympathy does not always translate into behavioral acts (this is the difference between the concept of “altruism” and that of “prosocial behavior”, Szuster, 2016).

The purpose of this paper is to outline the mechanisms of altruism connected with expectations of diverse types of rewards and to argue that expectations of one’s

* Warsaw University

own benefits are not the necessary condition for human altruistic behavior to occur (Szuster, 2005; Karyłowski, 1977, 1982; Reykowski, 1977, 1979). Some dispositional factors, resulting from individual personality development, yield altruistic motivations related to the expectations of positive changes in one's own situation, whereas others are associated with expecting changes in the situation of other people and external world states.

The aim of the study is to show that the regulatory consequences of these mechanisms concern the conditions and scope of involvement in doing good for others (which seems quite obvious), but above all – and less obviously – modify the functioning of the subject in areas completely unrelated to altruism. They concern the phenomena from the area of social perception, such as social categorization or perceptual biases derived from self-prototypes.

External vs. internal voluntary motivations for doing good

From the earliest research on helping behavior, altruism was often discussed in the context of a general assumption that reinforcements, as gratifications of the subject's needs, are the necessary conditions of all forms of pro-social involvement (Homans, 1961; Rosenhan, 1978). This led to the issue of the "selflessness" of altruism (cf. Cialdini & Kendrick, 1976; Batson, 1991; Hirschberger, Ein-Dor, & Almakias, 2008).

There is no doubt that every voluntary behavior is associated with expectation of a reward. The same is true of all types of altruistic activities performed for the benefit of others. However, it is important to identify the different types of the subject's "interests" and the ways in which individuals can be rewarded for supporting others.

Some altruistic motivations are associated with expectations of external rewards, either directly from beneficiaries of help or from others who approve of a particular pro-social behavior. Such rewards can be immediate or delayed (including expected posthumous salvation for living in accordance with religious teaching). The behavior displayed due to the expectation of external reinforcement was termed *pseudo-altruistic* behavior (Reykowski, 1979), and as such shall not be included in this analysis. Instead, we will focus exclusively on the behavior motivated by the anticipated internal reinforcements.

The approach presented below is compatible with the definition of altruism which defines it as an act of doing good for others with no expectations of **external reinforcements** (Berkowitz & Macaulay, 1970; Karyłowski, 1982; Szuster-Zbrojewicz, 1988; Szuster, 2005; Eisenberg, 2016). In such cases, the subject's pro-social involvement can be based on expectation of diverse types of internal reinforcements which are the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for particular types of motivation, i.e.: (1) expectation that one's own altruistic act will lead to avoidance of one's negative self-esteem or bring about a gain in self-acceptance, (2) expectation that the external world will be evolving in a positive direction (in which case it is not one's own satisfaction, but

consequences of one's contribution to the welfare of others that creates the necessary condition for helping behavior).

Theoretical context of research on internal altruistic motivations

Theoretical framework of our explorative studies on altruism was originally based on the theories developed by Berkowitz (1972), Hornstein (1978), Lerner (1980), Schwartz, Howard (1981), Reykowski (1975, 1979), Staub (1979), Karyłowski (1975, 1982), and Batson (1991, 2011). These authors emphasized the role of cognitive processes related to seeking information on the states of others. Some theories were developed in reference to the studies on dispositional complexity of the external world's cognitive representations (Bieri, 1955; Kelly, 1955). Our core research focused on the difference between the reality ("a real state") and visions of desired, better states, which presently are not within one's reach, yet their attainment can be anticipated.

In his original theory of altruism, Reykowski (1979, 1989) introduced the concept of the (verbalized) *evaluative standards* and the important distinction between the *normal vs. ideal* standards. Each category has different motivational implications. A discrepancy between real and normal (typical) states produces a motivation to restore the equilibrium (for instance *via* helping behavior), while a discrepancy between a given real state and its ideal vision can prompt the subject to act in a way that may lead to improved future states of reality.

The latter type of activity, based on the ability to generate ideals, is exclusively human. Mental representations of an ideal world can motivate behavior that benefits others, in which case self-satisfaction may occur as a consequence rather than a precondition of activity. It is vital to distinguish between expected self-contentment as a condition for altruistic behavior and satisfaction resulting from previous altruistic deeds.

The crucial distinction: endocentric vs. exocentric altruistic motivations

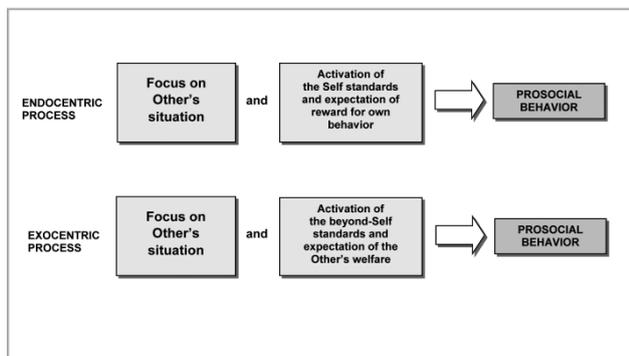
Reykowski's Regulative Theory of Personality (1975, 1979; Reykowski & Kočańska, 1980) provides a theoretical background for distinguishing between endogenous and exogenous altruism. The key assumption is that the development of the "beyond-self" structures, i.e. cognitive representations of others, leads to the growth of the autonomous regulative system, which is separate from and potentially competitive towards the self-structure (Jarymowicz, 1977). Both types of cognitive representations, which refer to the Self vs. the external world, reflect the reality, but also contain the desired states – the powerful bases of the secondary types of needs and motivations (Maslow, 1954).

The subject's aspirations and representations of desired states' of reality allow him or her to formulate the Self evaluative standards, as well as the so-called "beyond-Self" evaluative standards: mental criteria of what

is right and wrong. Differentiating between such evaluative standards allows an individual to estimate and distinguish between what is right and what is wrong for herself/himself or for others (Reykowski, 1979, 1989). Empirical studies conducted in our laboratory are based on the assumption that altruistic involvement aimed at improving somebody's state can be motivated by expectations of (1) personal satisfaction or (2) somebody else's gratification. It is manifested in various types of activities (i.e. in specific behavior), or, in broader terms, in the attitudes (interests, attention, generating ideas or preferred values) that cause the situation in the external world to improve with no any external reinforcements being expected by the person.

Endocentric altruistic motivation is based on identifying of the other person's needs and activating of the Self standards – the *ought* or the *ideal* ones (Higgins, 1987) which, in turn, inspire willingness to commit altruistic acts. Behaving in a way that is consistent with Self standards is a source of internal reinforcement in the form of self-acceptance or pride, whereas contravention of personal standards poses a risk of internal discomfort. This is an important regulatory mechanism, mainly due to the special status of the Self-schemata and the regulatory power of the egocentric motivations (Markus, 1980; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Tesser, Felson, & Suls, 2000; Leary & Tangney, 2013).

Figure 1. Endocentric vs. exocentric processes leading to altruistic behavior (Szuster, 2005)



Exocentric altruistic motivation is based on the detection of the other person's needs and activation of the beyond-Self standards. This type of motivation depends on the development of the ability for decentration, allowing attention to be shifted from Self to Others (Piaget, 1932). Equally essential for the ability to envisage ideal world states is the development of cognitive representations of the world. These "mental entities" can play a specific, autonomous and non-selfish role in altruistic behavior.

Our purpose is to argue that the above classification of altruistic motivations is of particular significance for understanding social attitudes and conditions which determine human cooperative relations. In particular, we posit that the endocentric and exocentric mechanisms have different consequences for diverse values determining the quality of relationships between people. In contrast

to the exocentric motivations, the endocentric ones have substantially different bases. The latter, due to their connection with self-esteem, are a kind of conditional ego-involvement for the benefit of others. Moreover, the Self-structure is a source of special sensitivity to one's own states, needs and aims, which are often competitive towards the person's striving to do good to others. The exocentric motivation is generated in a different regulative system (brain and mind structures): one that is associated with beyond-Self structures, which can reduce interference of the egocentric/egotic mechanisms with pro-social acts. Brain activations associated with processing information about the Self, immediate family and close friends are distinct from the areas activated during processing information about others (Acevedo, Aron, & Brown, 2012). This suggests that the underlying mechanisms of exo- and endocentric motivations are distinct.

The above approach is connected with the assumption based on the mind theories idea (Maslow, 1954; Reykowski, 1975; Epstein, 1980; Evans & Stanovich, 2013; Gawronski, Sherman, & Trope, 2014; Jarymowicz & Imbir, 2015), according to which different mind structures generate different regulative rules. In particular, it can be assumed that the reasons behind and dynamics of involvement in pro-social acts are different when they arise in the Self-structure vs. in the "beyond-Self" one.

Program of empirical studies on the endo- vs. exocentric distinction of altruistic orientations

The theoretical framework of our research is based on the "two types of altruism" concept by Jerzy Karyłowski (1982) described above. This idea integrates the other, more detailed approaches of the time that described the underlying mechanisms of human altruism or, more specifically, pro-social behavior. It reflects the poly-motivational character of the phenomenon of altruism, bringing together the affective and cognitive levels of regulation and emphasizing the specificity and relatively autonomous quality of cognitive regulation. This is consistent with the notion of duality of the human mind (e.g. Kahneman, 2011; Evans & Stanovich, 2013; Imbir & Jarymowicz, 2013; Gawronski & Trope, 2014) – the one of the most intriguing properties of human nature. Finally, it is the only view of altruism embedded in a personality context.

The elegance of the theoretical model presented a formidable challenge for the development of a measure that would distinguish between the two types of altruism with sufficient reliability and validity. The following methodological question arose: how to measure the endocentric and exocentric orientations? The techniques for measuring endocentric vs. exocentric motivation are semi-projective (Karyłowski, 1982; Szuster, 2005). These instruments involve the respondent reading descriptions of moral dilemmas faced by characters who need help; the respondent is required to select from a set of statements the ones that best describe how he or she would act. The statements are either endocentric ("I would not be able to

look at myself in the mirror if I didn't help") or exocentric ("That elderly person won't be able to do it on her own"). An index based on the relative proportions of endogenous and exogenous responses is calculated, and participants are classified into groups with the endocentric (the END groups) and exocentric orientation (the EXO groups).

The series of studies was based on the concept of the internal mechanisms of altruism mentioned above. Two main predictions were formulated. The first one concerns the Self-related egocentric mechanisms as factors interfering with pro-social acts. The second one concerns a more or less accurate perception of the external world. (1) The endocentric altruistic involvement, the Self-focused one, may result in benefits for others similar to those generated in the case of an exocentric motivation. However, the level of task performance will vary in self-deprivation context: it will decrease with the endocentric involvement and remain relatively stable in the case of exocentric involvement. (2) The exocentric altruism allows one to see and understand others' states and needs more precisely than in case of the endocentric involvement. In the latter case the truth about the situation of others is less important than one's desire to do something to reinforce one's self-esteem.

Thus, it can be expected that the domination of endo- vs. exocentric perspective has an impact on the processes of social perception. In particular, we expected that endocentric motivation would be connected with simplified social categorizations. Also, in the case of Self-focused motivation, the degree of involvement will depend on the type of Others: classified as We (the in-group members) or They (the out-group members), whereas with the exocentric involvement the importance of such divisions is decreased.

The Self-focusing (endocentric) altruism as a conditional type of pro-social involvement

Studies on the relationships between the Self-concept and the ego-involvement in various acts seem to be particularly important for understanding the mechanisms of altruistic behavior. The question concerning the relationship between the concept of *ego* (as the experiential "I", i.e. one's own preferences, motivations, aspirations) and *self* (as an object of knowledge that comprises cognitive representations and schemata based on information about one's own person) remained crucial in social and personality psychology in the second half of the 20th century (Reykowski, 1975; Markus, 1977; Epstein, 1980; Greenwald, 1980; Suls, 1982; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984). Numerous data showed that the subject's motivations depend on the primary affects, uncontrolled drives, biological and psychological homeostasis (Maslow, 1954; Reykowski, 1975), as well as on the influence of the cognitive self-schemata and social information processing (Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977; Kuiper, 1981; Markus, Smith, & Moreland, 1985; Markus & Kitayma, 1991). Human beings are very sensitive not only to gratification of the basic (biological and psychological) needs, but also to Self-evaluation and evaluative aspirations. Individual development and socialization processes lead

to the formation of expectations concerning one's own behavior. In the case of endocentric involvement, these two spheres of regulatory mechanisms can be in conflict. On the one hand pro-social involvement can bring important gratifications for once's self-esteem (or punishments in the case of a discrepancy between actual behavior and personal standards). On the other, however, such activity can be in conflict with gratifications of other types of needs. Such conflict can become particularly evident when the Self-structure is activated, as is the case with endocentric involvement. With the exocentric perspective one's personal needs, moods and aims are less clearly defined and involving, less inconsistent with the needs of others, and exert less influence on the actual course of action. Furthermore, altruistic motivation is not generated within the Self-structure, which mitigates the conflict of interests.

These expectations were verified in a series of experimental studies. At first, in each case, the endo- vs exocentric motivation was measured first, and then the self-focusing manipulations were applied. In some conditions, manipulations were aimed at changing the mood (participants were instructed to recall their own pleasant vs. unpleasant experiences – Szuster, 1994, 2005), whereas in others manipulation involved understating or emphasizing individual attributes to create a feeling of de-individuation, (e.g. assigning identification numbers to questionnaires vs. participants writing their initials themselves, informing participants that individual scores would be taken into account vs. group-wide, summary analysis only, participants being addressed individually vs. impersonally, Kobuszewska, 1989)

Finally, the various forms of prosocial attitudes were measured using the original method called "the Kindergarten" (Szuster, 2005), which was designed to measure the subject's involvement that is not limited to mere helping, but aims to improve the Other's status or quality of life. Participants are invited to take part in a discussion on a modern kindergarten, project designed by developmental psychologists. They are told that the idea behind this experimental facility is to stimulate the possibly most comprehensive development of children. First, they are requested to read a text which emphasizes how important it is to stimulate development of children's abilities (such as curiosity, imagination, creativity, sensitivity to other people, nature, and beauty). Then, participants are asked to perform a sequence of three tasks, i.e. to generate their own ideas and postulates concerning 1) kindergarten facilities and equipment, 2) teachers' competences, and 3) useful activities for attending children. Two indices of prosocial involvement are calculated: (1) the number of memorized children's abilities mentioned in the introduction to the task, and (2) the total number of postulates generated in the three tasks. The neutral conditions were compared with the ones in which self-focusing manipulations were applied.

As predicted, the results of all of the studies showed significant interactions between conditions and type of motivation. The results for the END groups varied depending on the experimental conditions of individuation

vs. deindividuation and negative vs. positive mood. The memory indices and the number of generated ideas in the END groups were higher in the conditions of individuation or positive mood induction than in the conditions of de-individuation and negative mood stimulation, and higher than in the control conditions. The EXO groups' indices did not vary as a function of the experimental condition. Moreover, in the positive mood conditions, the level of performance was higher in the END groups than in the EXO groups. Also, there were no differences between the END and EXO groups in the neutral conditions (Szuster, 1994, 2005).

These findings confirm the conditional character of endocentric-motivated prosocial involvement. Sensitivity to the needs of other people among the END participants depended on their own personal states, whereas no such tendency was manifested among the EXO participants. The results showed that positive, internal reinforcements are important endocentric involvement correlates. At the same time, the lack of differences in neutral conditions confirms the dominant role of the Self in endocentric regulation. Involvement was not manifested by declared willingness to help (with social approval) but by an indirect, uncontrolled, ecological indicator in the form of investing time, attention, ingenuity, and memory resources in a venture not related to the Self.

The Self-schema as prototype in social perception

The subject of subsequent research transcended the domain of altruism. It focused on social perception, with particular emphasis on the We-They relations and the process of social categorization in individuals with endo- vs. exocentric motivation.

There are numerous data showing that the Self schema plays a role of a reference point and prototype in social perception. It can be assumed that this refers to two facets of perception: the cognitive one and the evaluative one. The Self is often used as the basis for generating beliefs concerning other people, but also as an evaluative model for appraising them. We predicted that both aspects (the cognitive and evaluative) differentiate the endocentric and exocentric perception of others.

The self- enhancement tendency was ascribed to the endocentric altruism as its core attribute. This implies a prediction that among the END participants such tendency would lead to overestimation of those traits that bolster the positive perception of oneself. In some studies (Górecka & Szuster, 2012), the so-called third-person effect, i.e. overestimation of one's own social behavior in comparison with that of other people (Duck & Mullin, 1995; Doliński, 2000) was measured. After measuring endo- vs. exo- motivation, participants were asked to indicate how they would react when confronted with moral dilemmas, and then how other people would react in the same situations. We employed the materials used by Green and colleagues in their studies (Green et al., 2004). We found that the END participants predicted that their own behavior would be clearly more consistent with moral

standards than other people's behavior, whereas among the EXO participants this effect was found to be significantly weaker. In more general terms, it can be concluded that the revealed effect is a manifestation of universal, unknowable, self-affirmation bias, which determines the perception of self mainly in endocentric persons.

The Self schema plays a role of prototype in the perception of others, as well as in processing information about other people (Dunning & Hayes, 1996; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Krueger & Clement, 1994, 1996; Krueger, 2003). One of the manifestations of the egocentric point of view regarding the perception of others is overestimation of the degree in which one's own appraisals and beliefs are shared by other people (the "false consensus effect": Ross, Green, & House, 1977). We expected that this type of bias would be more prominent in participants classified as the END group than in those in the EXO group.

In a series of experimental studies, following initial measurement of endo- vs exocentric motivation, the false consensus effect was operationalized. For example, one study employed a computer-based procedure (Szuster, 2001, 2005). A proposed social campaign advert showing an ill child and an appeal for help in the form of joining a bone marrow donor program was displayed on the monitor. Participants assessed the significance and social import of the advert, and the efficacy of its message. Then, following a short break, they anticipated the assessments of others on the same issues. The difference between participants' own assessments and those ascribed to others was the measure of the false consensus effect. The response times to questions about the Self vs. others were also recorded. Differences between personal opinions and predictions of the opinions (more or less negative or positive) held by others were found only in group of EXO participants. Its lack in the END groups indicates the presence of the "false consensus effect". A similar pattern of results was obtained in other studies, in which the effect of false consensus emerged with respect to beliefs on the type of help offered to drug addicts and ways for overcoming social isolation of people with disabilities (Szuster, 2008).

The unconscious conviction that one's own opinions, assessments, and preferences in matters less important for the Self are shared by other people is facilitated by the Self. The indirect and automatic nature of measured effects supports the notion that the effects of referring to the Self manifested in the form of Self-generalizations or (as before) Self-affirmation, are fairly stable in the endocentric regulation.

Direct evidence that the Self is more accessible for individuals with the endocentric rather than exocentric motivation comes from the analysis of response latencies (time to answer) to questions concerning one's personal view and the anticipated views of others on a given issue (Szuster, 2001, 2005). In the END groups, the Self-related questions elicited faster responses than the Other-related questions, whereas no differences of such significance were found in the EXO groups.

The experimental studies show that in social perception the Self schema is considered to be both the

habitual reference point (Codol, 1979; Codol & Leyens, 1982; Karyłowski, 1990) and the basis for judgments about others (Fong & Markus, 1982; Markus, Smith, & Moreland, 1985). On the basis of our studies showing manifestations of the egocentric biases in the END groups in absence of such biases in the EXO ones, it can be posited that the Self also plays a role of prototype in pro-social perception. This is particularly apparent when sensitivity to problems of others is overcome by the attention to one's own needs, or when perception of one's own needs and problems is generalized and ascribed to others.

Social categorizations and the endo- vs. exocentric altruism

The basis for social behavior and social perception develops during socialization. The same is true of altruistic behavior mechanisms (Hoffman, 1990, 2000), both endo- and exocentric. In standardized interview research Karyłowski (1982) found that mothers of endocentric children were more likely to use parenting techniques such as labeling the child's behaviors, withdrawal of love and eliciting apologies and amends, whereas mothers of exocentric children were more likely to point out the consequences of the child's behavior for others. This suggests that both types of altruism have their origins in socialization processes. It also indicates that parenting styles that reinforce self- and other-related perspectives are related to endo- and exocentric dispositions, respectively.

Such training is a necessary condition for the We-concept (Jarymowicz & Szuster, 2016) to be developed and usually leads to good relations with in-group members. However, at the same time it usually remains neutral or negative in the case of relations with strangers and out-group members. The theories of social comparisons (Festinger, 1954; Suls & Miller, 1977) and social categorizations describe multiple cognitive, emotional and motivational consequences of social divisions connected with the mental We vs. They distinction (Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy 1971; Tajfel, 1981; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Kwiatkowska, 1999; Bar-Tal, 1990). Two cognitive rules have particularly important social implications here: overestimation of the distance between the in- and the out-group (relative to the distance between the out-and in-group) and the simplified view on strangers.

The first of the above implications generates the so-called "egocentric asymmetry" effect: a biased, directional overestimation of distances. The way it manifests itself is that a relationship between the same two objects is perceived differently depending on which particular object is compared to the other one. It was found that the same distance between the Self and Others is usually estimated differently, and various explanatory hypotheses have been proposed by authors (Codol, 1987; Karyłowski, 1990; Jarymowicz, Kamińska-Feldman, & Szuster, 2016; Kamińska-Feldman, 2012). The effect is associated with the belief that Others are more similar to (and less distant from) the Self than the other way round (Karyłowski,

1990). In our studies, we took into account comparisons between the in-group (We) and out-group (They). We expected that the distance between one's own group and other social categories will be more biased among the END participants than among the EXO ones. This prediction is based on the two altruisms theory and previous empirical findings. Exocentrism refers to the form of involvement whose source is activation generated by structures other than the Self. In the case of this motivation, representations of categories other than oneself acquire an autonomous, regulatory status (Reykowski & Kochońska, 1980). This makes perceiving relationships with others relatively independent from transient Self states. This description is supported by the results of our research mentioned above.

To verify this prediction we first measured the type of motivation and then the asymmetry effect. We used the measurement of the so-called Egocentric Asymmetry Effect in Self-Others Distance Ratings (Codol, Jarymowicz, Kamińska-Feldman, & Szuster-Zbrojewicz, 1989). It contains a schematic drawing, e.g. of a railway station lobby, where „you and your friends (WE) labeled with letters among other travelers (Others) labeled with numbers are waiting for a train to take you to your holiday destination". Participants are asked to estimate physical distance between members of their reference group and other people, and the other way round. Distances between individual pairs of compared objects ("we-they"; "they-we") were objectively identical. The measure of asymmetry is the arithmetic difference between the distance estimated when a member of the We category was the referent and the analogous estimate when she/he was the subject.

In one of our preliminary studies (Szuster-Zbrojewicz, 1993; Kamińska-Feldman, 1994) the END participants displayed a clear asymmetry effect in the We – They distance ratings, whereas the EXO participants estimated distances symmetrically regardless of the direction of the comparisons.

Another cognitive rule with particularly important social implications is the simplified view of strangers. The asymmetry effect patently indicates how meaningful social categorizations can be for the perception of interpersonal or intergroup relations. In another series of studies we found clear differences between the END and EXO participants with regard to the other important aspects of social categorization criteria and processes. They concerned the simplification of the image of others. Kwiatkowska (1999) has developed a method for measuring the superficiality and rash of categorization processes (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). The scenario describes a situation at an international congress with participants of various nationalities, including Russians, Gypsies, Poles, Italians, Jews, and one religious group, Jehovah's Witnesses. Participants were asked to estimate how various aspects of appearance (posture, face, gestures) can be useful for recognizing a person's social background and how quickly they would make this categorization. Two categorization indicators were therefore registered for each representative of the national and religious category. Superficiality understood as ease of use of external categories (physical appearance) and

rashness – speed of categorization. Early motivation of endo-vs exocentric was measured. The results showed that the END participants were more rash and more superficial than the EXO ones. These analyzes included a cumulated index covering all national, ethnic and religious categories. While external appearance attributes may be useful in categorizations of nationality (Italian) or ethnicity (Jewish), they are not useful for a religious affiliation with such diversity among its faithful in terms of nationality and culture (Jehovah’s Witnesses). So this category was a kind of “litmus test” of the nature of categorization processes in people differentiated by the type of pro-social motivation. Further analysis showed that this pattern of results is particularly related to Jehovah’s Witnesses category in EDO participants (Szuster, 1997, 2005). These findings confirm that the domination of categorization processes over attribution processes (Fiske, Neuberg, 1990) is typical of social perception regulated by endocentric mechanisms. In contrast, the individualized character of processing information about other people define the attributional character of social perception determined by exocentric mechanisms.

This suggests a kind of irrationality and low selectivity of categorical criteria in the END participants. It is possible that some motivational factors, rather than cognitive premises, led them to make such irrelevant categorizations. Self-dominance in endocentric regulation promotes the formation of representations of the world and other people based on generalization. Consequently, social perception is determined not so much by knowledge as by “good intentions” or by personal standards. On the basis of the main characteristics of the two types of altruism, it can be assumed that the endocentric mechanisms facilitate the category-based ways of information processing, whereas the exocentric ones help retain and include a personal perspective of the Other (Fiske & Neuberg, 1989).

Both social and psychological studies demonstrate how important We – Others categorizations are for interpersonal behavior (see: the *minimal group paradigm*: Tajfel, 1981). Even the automatic syntonic reactions (or affective empathy) are triggered by in-group members and not by out-group members (Bourgeois & Hess, 2008). Moreover, the consequences – negative ones for the beyond-We categories – are more profound when the They category is negatively evaluated.

The study by Maison (2012) demonstrated the distinction between the END and EXO participants’ reactions to other people’s states. After measuring endo vs exocentric motivation, the willingness to help those in need was recorded in an indirect manner. Participants were asked to assess a social campaign advert that associated sales of a product with donations to organizations helping (1) drug addicts (easy guilt attribution) or (2) children with cerebral palsy (no guilt attribution). Thus, two experimental conditions differed in terms of the ease of attributing the fault to the existing *status quo*. Participants’ responses to various aspects of the evaluation of the advertisement were registered in the different experimental conditions. In the END group participants’ estimations of various

aspects of advertising depended on the beneficiary: they were markedly higher in the case of beneficiaries with cerebral palsy than drug addicts. In contrast, no difference as to the beneficiary was found in the EXO group. In other words, the evaluations of the campaign ad appeared to be associated with perceived justifiability of support depending on whether or not the beneficiaries were seen as responsible for their condition.

The degree of willingness to offer help differs depending on the type of beneficiary. Whereas some people obtain help from others easily, for others getting support is much more difficult. The former find it relatively easy to win others’ support based on affective mechanisms of emotional empathy (Bloom, 2016). These states are derived from the stereotyped, universal image of children perceived as helpless. The latter belong to the group which does not elicit automatic and unconditional sympathy, and, in fact, provokes distance, emotional coldness or contempt (see Stereotype Content Model, Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). Thus, attribution of guilt related to one’s own circumstances and, as a consequence, offering or refusing help, is dependent on the category to which a given individual is assigned. The research findings confirm that categorization premises are different for endo and exocentrics (Jarymowicz & Szuster, 2014; Szuster, 2005, 1997). More generally, the implications of this result affect the way in which the world is perceived and evaluated by the END and EXO participants.

Summary: from the reflexive to the reflective altruism

Without doubt, altruism is one of the universal and potent concepts that have inspired numerous studies in psychology undertaken mainly in the 1970s and 1980s (Darley & Latane, 1968; Darley & Batson, 1973; Bar-Tal, 1976; Batson, 1987; Berkowitz & Macaulay, 1970; Cialdini Kendrick, 1976; Staub, 1974, 1975, 1979; Schwartz, 1977; Oliner & Oliner, 1994; Derlega & Grzelak, 1982; Bar-Tal, Karyłowski, Reykowski, & Staub, 1982; Reykowski, 1978, 1979; Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark 1982; Hoffman, 1975). Specific research project adopted many different theoretical frameworks, used a variety of paradigms, with both quantitative and qualitative methods well represented. To this day, their findings belong to the canon of knowledge about this area of human functioning. Today, altruism is studied primarily in the context of other, pressing issues, such as the ambivalent nature of prosocial behavior in Terror Management (Hirschberger, Ein-Dor, & Almakias, 2008), cognitive neuroscience perspective – (Marsh et al., 2014; de Vignemont & Singer, 2006), the ability of the emotion of gratitude to shape costly prosocial behavior (Bartlett & De Steno, 2006) or feeling of elevation which leads to increases in actual altruism (Schnall, Roper, & Fessler, 2010; Schnall & Roper, 2011). Altruism also inspires animal behavior studies (Trojan, 2013; Osiński, 2013). Researchers succeeded in identifying a variety of mechanisms of human pro-social involvement: from automatic responses observed in animals and homo sapiens

alike, to specifically human behavior based on deliberate thinking and voluntary choices (Szuster, 2016).

Numerous observations show that some people are capable of performing pro-social tasks regardless of their own states and needs (Hoffman, 2000; Batson, 2011). Also, the two forms of altruistic orientation bring benefits to other people and the external world (Szuster, 2005). Only the exocentric orientation, however, is due to intellectual development and the reflective thinking centered on Others (Jarymowicz & Szuster, 2014).

However, such statement leads to another important theoretical question: What are the determinants of the ability for pro-social involvement that render such involvement independent from the egocentric perspective (Jarymowicz, 1994). Our own studies (Szuster, 2005; Szuster & Rutkowska, 2008) concentrate on this particular issue and the theories explaining the role of the internal mechanisms leading to pro-social involvement without expectations of external rewards.

Based on the distinction between endocentric vs. exocentric altruism, the studies confirmed that expectation of internal reward for the Self is a necessary condition for prosocial behavior only in the case of one type of motivation – the endocentric one, whereas the exocentric orientation does not require anticipated of self-gratification. The source of internal reinforcement is anticipation of change consisting in an improvement in the situation of another person. The exocentric mechanisms are based on decentration and taking perspective of the other. If a subject is aware of what is bad and what is good for others, she/he can be motivated to engage in efforts in order to provide support for another person.

The empirical studies seem to confirm the importance and validity of differentiating between endocentric and exocentric altruism. Furthermore, they show that the regulatory significance of this differentiation goes beyond the originally hypothesized motivational quality. In addition, the scope of regulation was found to affect domains other than just altruism.

These findings justify the postulate to reformulate this concept in terms of **endo- vs. exocentric orientations**. Each orientation is characterized by the specific rules generating pro-social involvement, but also by the regulation of multiple spheres of functioning. This “regulative area” concerns social representations, evaluative standards – the Self and the beyond-Self ones, social perception, categorizations and evaluative processes. In other words, the complex syndrome of mental attributes leads to a particular type of pro-social involvement (Jarymowicz & Szuster, 2014). As we found in another series of studies, the endocentric and exocentric orientations are associated with different responses not only on the explicit, but also on the implicit level of regulation (Szuster & Karwowska, 2007; Karwowska & Szuster, 2006).

Chronic connections or lack thereof between interests of Others and those of the Self seems critical for the regulatory differentiation of these orientations. The actualization of the Self’s obligations activates the

whole Self-structure, which can generate not only the self-enhancement mechanisms, but also all other egocentric regulative rules (like the ego defense mechanisms, egocentric biases, the in-group favoritism, and so on). In such circumstances perception of Others and social categorization can be simplified or even become irrational, while pro-social involvement is seriously inhibited. Although in individuals with the endocentric orientation the pro-social involvement becomes a measure of self-esteem when the Self-standards do not allow them to ignore the needs of others, they still view the world predominantly through the lens of the Self.

The question of the direction of the relationship: whether prosocial orientations lead to different effects in perception and susceptibility to Self-activating factors or whether other factors, such as the level of assessment or cognitive complexity explain the observed correlations – remains open. It seems, however, that empirical findings lean towards the former option. It is the specifics of pro-social orientations understood not only as a complex system of attributes, but a way of functional regulation (including the regulation of emotions) with a significant role played by cognitive factors that underlies the observed relationships. This is supported by the highly diversified spectrum of dependent variables measured indirectly: from prosocial involvement, through cognitive bias, social categorization processes, including the effects of infra-humanization (Szuster, Wojnarowska, & Wieteska, 2012), to susceptibility to overt and subliminal affect with respect to simple preferential judgements (Szuster & Karwowska, 2007), as well as the criterial for passing value judgements on others (Rutkowska & Szuster, 2011). Another clue seems to be the socialization-based origin of prosocial orientations. Parental and educational influences are a vital starting point for directing attention towards the Self or the social environment (Hoffman, 2000; Karyłowski, 1982). They contribute to the formation of the type of orientation in the world that does or does not take into account other people, they induce the way others are treated: exploited for the Self’s benefit or seen as autonomous, independent entities.

The endocentric mechanisms are more universal than the exocentric ones due to the impact of socialization processes influencing individual development and dependence of individual self-esteem on social norms. The exocentric mechanisms are less frequently displayed since a subject has to be able not only to take the perspective of other people (Gelbah, Brinkwhrth, & Ming-Te Wang, 2012; Szuster, Wojnarowska, & Gniewek, 2016) but also formulate the beyond Self standards for understanding (in more or less accurate way) what is bad or good for Others. Thus, the exocentric orientation is associated with mental approximation, focus and efforts to understand other people’s perspectives. As a result, supporting Others can go a long way beyond mere restoration of the external *status quo*.

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