

Moral Actor, Selfish Agent

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People are motivated to behave selfishly while appearing moral. This tension gives rise to 2 divergently motivated selves. The actor—the watched self—tends to be moral; the agent—the self as executor—tends to be selfish. Three studies present direct evidence of the actor's and agent's distinct motives. To recruit the self-as-actor, we asked people to rate the importance of various goals. To recruit the self-as-agent, we asked people to describe their goals verbally. In Study 1, actors claimed their goals were equally about helping the self and others (viz., moral); agents claimed their goals were primarily about helping the self (viz., selfish). This disparity was evident in both individualist and collectivist cultures, attesting to the universality of the selfish agent. Study 2 compared actors' and agents' motives to those of people role-playing highly prosocial or selfish exemplars. In content (Study 2a) and in the impressions they made on an outside observer (Study 2b), actors' motives were similar to those of the prosocial role-players, whereas agents' motives were similar to those of the selfish role-players. Study 3 accounted for the difference between the actor and agent: Participants claimed that their agent's motives were the more realistic and that their actor's motives were the more idealistic. The selfish agent/moral actor duality may account for why implicit and explicit measures of the same construct diverge, and why feeling watched brings out the better angels of human nature.

Keywords: moral motivation, agent, actor, prosociality, selfishness

Why do people do nice things for each other? Perhaps seeing another person's hardship draws feelings of empathy and genuine desires to relieve the difficulty. Alternatively—and more cynically—helping others may benefit the helper, particularly when other people are aware of the good deed. People value generosity in others. Thus, *appearing* to be prosocial builds a positive reputation, which, in turn, confers social and material gains.

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates debated Glaucon (Plato's brother) on the underlying motivation behind prosociality and virtue. Glaucon posited that stripping away reputational forces—by wearing a ring that renders its bearer invisible—would turn a virtuous man into a scoundrel. With reference to this thought experiment, Glaucon defended the cynical proposal—that behind all virtuous behavior is the singular, self-interested motivation to *appear* virtuous to others. In this article, we present evidence that humans have a dualistic motivational system that is consistent with Glaucon's

proposition. Specifically, people have (at least) two selves: an agent—the executor of action—and an actor—the watched self (McAdams, 2013). The actor tends to be moral; the agent tends to be unabashedly selfish.

Prosociality and Selfishness as Two Adaptive Functions

Are people fundamentally selfish? To Freud, the selfish id was the mind's dominant force. The more widely accepted Adlerian view is that self-interest and social-interest are each fundamental human motives (Haidt, 2007). People pursue both self-image and compassionate goals (Crocker, Olivier, & Nuer, 2009), and have both egoistic and moralistic self-enhancing biases (Paulhus & John, 1998). Selfish and prosocial goals serve their respective purposes, leading people to transition flexibly between the two. This turns social life into something like a theatrical play (Goffman, 1959). When people feel watched—on stage—they take on the role of the moral actor. Yet, when the curtain falls and the stage lights dim, the selfish agent takes over.

From an evolutionary perspective, this “moral masquerade” (Batson, 2008) may solve an adaptive challenge. When resources are finite, a social problem emerges. On the one hand, behaving selfishly garners the maximum resources for an individual. On the other hand, behaving morally secures inclusion in groups, making generosity worth its costs (Millet & DeWitte, 2007). Group membership is valuable to the individual because harmonious groups outcompete discordant groups and lone individuals for finite resources. Thus, both selfishness and generosity—or, to be precise, the *appearance* of generosity—serve the individual's interests

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(Haidt, 2012). By this reasoning, evolution may have selected for both selfish behavior (maximizing individual resources) and prosocial appearance (maximizing group inclusion).

Following Haidt (2012), we define morality as an evolved mechanism that promotes and maintains the group's wellbeing. Morality entails those "interlocking sets of values, practices, institutions, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible" (Haidt, 2012, p. 70). We define *moral motivation* in terms of the relative balance of self- and social-interest. A morally motivated person has prosocial motives that are of equal or greater concern to the individual as his/her self-interest. In this definition, moral motivation entails *balancing* and *coordinating* self-interest with the interests of others—not the *subjugation* of self-interest (Frimer, Walker, Dunlop, Lee, & Riches, 2011). *Selfishness* is the dominance of self-interest over the interests of others. Immorality and selfishness are not the same insofar as selfishness does not necessarily imply harm to others, for example.

Indirect Evidence of the Dualistic Motives

Past research inferred the nature of human motivation through behavioral observation. In the Dictator Game, one person is assigned to unilaterally divide a set amount of money between the self and another. When played anonymously, dictators typically favor the self in the distribution (Engel, 2011). Yet, subtly making people feel watched increases generosity (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007), perhaps by activating the moral actor. Rendering the game entirely anonymous decreases giving to virtually zero (Hoffman, McCabe, & Smith, 1996), perhaps by de-activating the actor.

The selfish agent and moral actor can both attend the same situation, resulting in hypocrisy (Batson, Kobrynowicz, Dinnerstein, Kampf, & Wilson, 1997). Batson and colleagues (1997) asked participants to decide whether they or another person should receive a single valuable reward. Most individuals kept the reward for themselves. In a subsequent study, people had the option of using a moral procedure (e.g., flip a coin) to decide fairly. Most did. However, when the result was unfavorable to the self, most people ignored the coin toss and kept the reward anyway. One interpretation of this finding is that the moral procedure was the work of the actor, and the disingenuous task assignment the work of the agent. Consistent with this interpretation, situating people in front of a mirror for the task assignment eliminated the hypocrisy, perhaps because doing so recruited the actor to both tasks (Batson, Thompson, Seuferling, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999).

More Directly Observing the Dualistic Motives

The goal of this article is to provide more direct evidence of the divergent motives of the two selves. Should the duality be evident in personality assessments? Some skeptics doubt the validity of accessing psychological functions through self-reports. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) argued that people have little insight about the causes of their behavior: "Introspection cannot provide a direct pipeline to these mental processes" (Wilson & Dunn, 2004, p. 493).

While acknowledging the limitations of people's insight into their own behavior, we suggest that their self-reports can still lend important insights into their mental processes. Individuals have a

great deal of self-knowledge: No one has observed a person's thoughts, behavior, and emotions more than the person him/herself. When it comes to summarizing a person's own overall nature (as prosocial or selfish), we suggest that people are ready and able to report accurately. The challenge for researchers is to recruit the right self for the job. We suggest that the means of assessment profoundly influences the impression that emerges because it determines which self responds.

Past research has relied heavily on one form of assessment: self-reported, explicit ratings based on inventories. Completing an inventory asks the respondent to take an observer's perspective upon the self (see Table 1), effectively asking, "What do you look like to others?" Imagining watching a video of oneself driving a car, playing basketball, or speaking to a friend is an experience as the self-as-actor (McAdams, 2013). Rating the importance of various goals also recruits the self-as-actor. Motivated to maintain a moral reputation, the self-as-actor is infused with prosocial, culturally vetted scripts.

Another way of accessing motivation is by asking people questions about their lives. Open-ended verbal responses (e.g., narratives or implicit measures) require the respondent to produce ideas, recall details, reflect upon the significance of concrete events, imagine a future, and narrate a coherent story. In effect, prompts to narrate ask respondents, "What is it like to be you?" Imagining actually driving a car, playing basketball, or speaking to a friend is an experience as the self-as-agent (McAdams, 2013). Asking people to tell about their lives also recruits the self-as-agent. Motivated by survival, the self-as-agent is selfish in nature.

The Dual Selves

The *agent-actor* distinction implies a dissociated self (Gebauer, Gritz, Hofmann, & Sedikides, 2012). Inventories and narratives access different motivational systems (McClelland, 1980). For this reason, individual differences in the themes that emerge from implicit verbal responses only weakly predict individual differences in analogous scores on explicit, rated inventories. Furthermore, these two motivational systems govern different classes of social behavior (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989). The selfish agent/moral actor duality may explain why implicit and explicit measures diverge—each measure recruits a different self, and each self has its own set of characteristic motives and functions. Taken together, this leads to the prediction that frames the current research: Inventory ratings, which recruit the self-as-actor, will yield moral impressions, whereas narrated descriptions, which recruit the self-as-agent, will yield the impression of selfishness.

The agent is the default self (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002; Higgins, 1987; Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009; Schle-

Table 1
Features of the Self-as-Actor and Self-as-Agent

Function	Type of self	
	Actor	Agent
Tends to be . . .	Moral	Selfish
Activation frequency	Infrequent	Frequent
Perceived as . . .	Idealistic	Realistic
Recruited through . . .	Inventory ratings	Narrative descriptions

gel, Hicks, King, & Arndt, 2011).¹ In everyday life, people more often experience themselves as the executor of action (agent) than as someone being seen (actor). This difference in frequency of activation will lead people to experience the self-as-agent's deeds as a more true or accurate representation of the self than the deeds of the self-as-actor. However, this perception does not imply that the agent is "truer" than the actor in any more general sense.

We see the agent and actor as equally important aspects of human functioning, each tasked with different adaptive functions. The actor internalizes and presents socially accepted norms about living in harmony with others. People will thus account for the moral self-attributions that the actor makes as ideals—as yet unrealized hopes. In sum, we propose that individuals see the selfish agent as the more real—and the moral actor as the more ideal—of the two selves.

The Selfish Agent as a Cross-Cultural Universal

We maintain that the agent's selfishness is a universal feature of human nature, not merely an element of a particular time or culture. The individual self is motivationally more important than the collective/relational self to people of myriad cultures (Gaertner et al., 2012). Selfishness secures the required resources for individual survival, a task of critical importance to survival and reproduction. In comparison, prosocial behavior is of secondary importance to survival because it does not guarantee that the individual's immediate survival needs are met.

The agent's universal selfishness notwithstanding, culture may moderate the *degree* to which the agent is selfish. Cultures differ systematically along an individualist–collectivist continuum (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In individualistic cultures (e.g., the United States, Canada, Western Europe), the primary consideration is the individual person. Individualists are motivated to achieve objectives as a means to an end of excelling beyond others. As the means and the ends of individualists' goals both advance the self, we predict that individualists' agents will be primarily selfish. In collectivist cultures (e.g., Japan, India, China), the primary consideration is the collective group. Collectivists also try to get ahead, but do so for the purposes of fitting in. Collectivists' goals coordinate concerns for the self and others; compared to individualists, their agents come closer to balancing self- and social-interest (viz., are more moral). In summary, we posit that culture can tune up or tune down—but not turn off—the agent's selfishness.

The agent–actor distinction may help explain why collectivists' agents are less selfish than those of individualists. Collectivists more often attend to the perspectives of others than individualists do (Heine & Buchtel, 2009). This enhanced attention to how one appears to others may activate the self-as-actor more often in collectivists, increasing the frequency with which they transition between actor and (default) agent. These transitions are psychologically uncomfortable if the agent and actor have different motives. Discrepancies between one's own selves can produce feelings of disappointment or frustration (Higgins, 1987). To avoid this discomfort, collectivists' agents and their actions may have equilibrated with their actors by becoming more prosocial.

The Present Studies

Three studies test whether the actor and agent have different social motives. Specifically, we predict that the actor, recruited by a self-report goal-rating inventory, is moral. Furthermore, we predict that the agent, recruited by a narrative goal description task, is selfish. In Study 1, participants rated and described their goals, then, for each measure, indicated the degree to which their goals help themselves and others. We predicted that participants would report that their rated goals are moral and their described goals are selfish; moreover, attesting to the cultural universality of this effect, we predicted that the same pattern would be evident in individualists and collectivists alike. Study 2 tested the generalizability of the moral actor and selfish agent by comparing actors' and agents' motives to those of people role-playing highly prosocial or selfish exemplars. We predicted that the goal content (Study 2a) and third party impressions (Study 2b) of actors would be motivationally similar to those of the prosocial role-players, whereas agents' motives would be similar to those of the selfish role-players. Study 3 investigated the mechanism responsible for the divergent impressions. We predicted that people would see their own agent as more realistic and less idealistic than their actor.

Study 1: Self-Summarized Duality

In Study 1, Americans (individualists) and Indians (collectivists) either rated or described their goals. To directly compare the motives of the actor (ratings) and agent (descriptions), we asked participants to summarize the self-promoting and other-promoting nature of their goals. We predicted that, for both individualists and collectivists, actors' goals would seem moral (similarly prosocial and self-promoting) and agents' goals would seem selfish. Additionally, we predicted that collectivists' agents would be less selfish than those of individualists.

Method

Participants. Participants were either individualists (viz., from the United States) or collectivists (viz., from India) recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk website—each received \$0.70 for participating. The individualist sample ($N = 155$) was 34 years of age ($SD = 12$), was 54% female, was 74% Caucasian, had 4.1 years of post-secondary education ($SD = 3.0$), and had a median household income between \$40,000 and \$50,000. The collectivist sample ($N = 156$) was 33 years of age ($SD = 11$), was 34% female, had 7.9 years of post-secondary education ($SD = 2.7$), and had a median household income between \$50,000 and \$75,000.

Procedure. In a mixed design, we randomly assigned participants to rate the importance of several goals (*actor condition*) or to describe their goals in an open-ended fashion (*agent condition*). After completing the goal task, participants completed the dependent measures: *helping-self* and *helping-others* (within-subjects).

Actor condition. Participants responded to two subscales of Kasser and Ryan's (1996) Aspiration Index. The instructions read, "How important is each of the following goals to you?" The

¹ Our definition of the self-as-agent is most similar to the actual self, or that which is expressed to others in everyday life, in this literature.

inventory included 10 prosocial and 10 self-promoting goals; the rating scale was anchored at 1 (*not at all*), 4 (*moderately*), and 7 (*extremely*). Prosocial goals included “to help others in need,” “to improve something for future generations,” and “to make sacrifices for the sake of others’ happiness.” Self-promoting goals included “to be financially successful,” “to have my name known by many people,” and “to have executive authority over others.”

Agent condition. The measure prompted people to “describe four of your most important goals. Include in your description of each: (a) What the goal is, (b) What will have to happen for the goal to come about, and (c) Why the goal is important to you.” We tailored the instructions to closely mirror those in the *actor condition*—the prompt included asking the participant why the goal is important, just as the rating condition prompt did. Four textboxes appeared below. Individualists wrote 208 words ($SD = 61$), and collectivists wrote 182 words ($SD = 67$) in the four goals combined.

Helping-self and helping-others. On a subsequent page, the participants were asked to summarize the degree to which their goals were “about helping myself” and “about helping others” on independent 100-point slider scales, each anchored at 0 (*not at all*), 50 (*somewhat*), and 100 (*totally*). To remind participants of their goals, the survey reproduced the goals that participants described (verbatim) or rated (organized by Likert increment) above the scales.

Results

Cross-cultural moderation. A 2 (culture: individualists, collectivists) \times 2 (type-of-self: agent, actor) \times 2 (recipient: self, others) mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA), predicting motivation level, yielded a three-way interaction, $F(1, 307) = 44.62, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .13$, indicating that culture moderates the disparity between the nature of the agent and actor.

Individualists. The left panel of [Figure 1](#) shows the summary scores of how much individualists saw their goals as helping themselves and others, for both the actor (ratings) and agent

(descriptions). Agents saw their goals as selfish—much more about helping the self than others, $t(61) = -14.33, p < .001, d = -3.06$. In contrast, actors saw their goals as moral—equally about helping the self and others, $t(92) = 1.36, p = .18, d = 0.23$.

A 2 (type-of-self) \times 2 (recipient) mixed model ANOVA, predicting motivation level, yielded an interaction, $F(1, 153) = 113.67, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .43$. The model also yielded a qualified main effect for type-of-self, $F(1, 153) = 11.10, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ (actors claimed to be more motivated than agents), and a qualified main effect for recipient, $F(1, 153) = 77.80, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .34$ (both actors and agents summarized their goals as helping the self more than others.)

To test whether agents’ self-summaries are grounded in the nature of the goals themselves, we content analyzed the goals for the density of prosocial words (see the [Appendix](#)) using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software (Pennebaker, Booth, & Francis, 2007). Prosocial word density predicted motives to help others, $r(60) = .31, p = .01$, but was unrelated to motives to help the self, $r(60) = .17, p = .19$.

Individual differences. We investigated how the outcome measures related to demographic variables (see [Table 2](#)). Females were less selfish than males, especially as agents. Age and education also predicted moral motivation whereas household income did not.

Collectivists. The right panel of [Figure 1](#) shows the motives of collectivists’ actors and agents. Replicating a finding for individualists, collectivist agents perceived their goals as selfish, $t(71) = -2.61, p = .01, d = -0.49$. Moreover, collectivist actors saw their goals as moral, $t(87) = 0.45, p = .66, d = 0.07$.

A 2 (type-of-self) \times 2 (recipient) mixed model ANOVA, predicting motivation level, yielded an interaction, $F(1, 154) = 3.57, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = .02$. The model also yielded a qualified main effect for type-of-self, $F(1, 154) = 7.77, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .05$ (actors claimed to be more motivated than agents), and a qualified main effect for recipient, $F(1, 154) = 6.95, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .04$ (both actors and agents summarized their goals as helping the self more

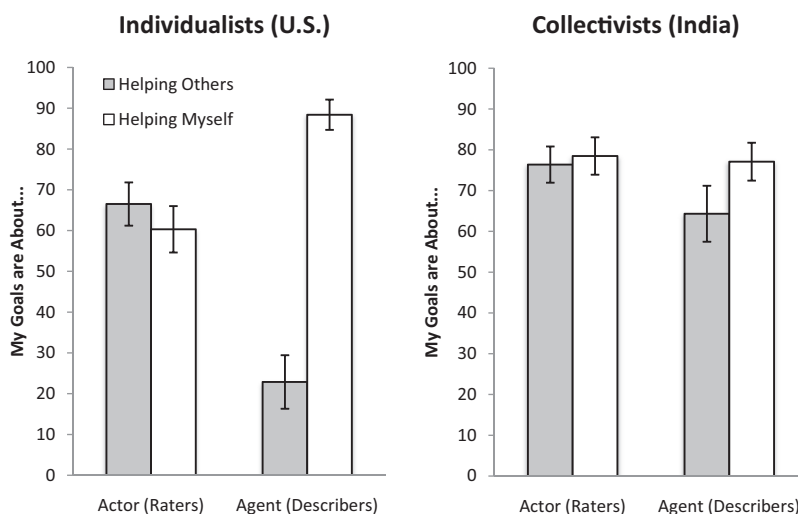


Figure 1. Self-summaries of the prosocial and self-promoting nature of one’s goals, either in the role of the actor (goal rating task) or agent (goal describing task; Study 1). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Table 2
Correlations Between Motives and Demographics in the U.S. Sample (Study 1)

Self	Motive	Gender (female = 1, male = 0)	Education (years)	Age (years)	Household income
Actor (ratings; $N = 93$)	Helping others	.18	.21*	.11	-.01
	Helping myself	-.13	.11	-.21*	.14
Agent (descriptions; $N = 62$)	Helping others	.27*	.22	.28*	.10
	Helping myself	-.12	-.17	-.25*	-.02

* $p < .05$.

than others). We content analyzed the goals and again found that prosocial word density predicted self-summaries of helping others, $r(68) = .28$, $p = .02$, but was unrelated to self-summaries of helping the self, $r(68) = .03$, $p = .81$.

Mediation. Collectivists' goals were denser with prosocial words, $M = 3.07\%$ ($SD = 2.53\%$) than individualists' goals, $M = 1.75\%$ ($SD = 1.79\%$), $t(309) = 5.31$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.60$. We tested whether prosocial word density mediated the cultural difference in the degree to which the agent is about helping others, using Preacher and Hayes's (2008) bootstrapping procedure. The mediation path was significant, $B = 6.97$, $SE = 2.45$, 95% CI [2.82, 12.83], meaning that collectivist agents claim to be more prosocial than individualist agents because their described goals are richer with prosocial words.

Discussion

Two measures that appear to access the same construct yielded vastly different impressions of moral motives. After rating the importance of various goals (self-as-actor) or verbally describing their goals (self-as-agent), participants summarized the social nature of their goals. Actors claimed their motives were moral. Agents, by contrast, claimed to be selfish.

The agent's task involved an explicit self-summary of its earlier implicit verbal response (i.e., goal descriptions). A benefit to this approach is that these self-summaries permitted direct comparisons between agents and actors. Did this benefit come at the expense of confusing the nature of the data (as explicit, implicit, or both)? We suggest that people's self-summaries comprise a valid explicit summary of their implicit motives. Reports of implicit goal motives are based in the actual goal content: Prosocial word density predicted prosocial self-summary scores in both the collectivist and individualist samples, and it explained the self-summary differences between the cultures.

Aside from recruiting the agent or the actor, are the two tasks meaningfully different in some other way? Perhaps the rating task is abstract and the describing task concrete, leading respondents to construe their goals at different levels (e.g., Liberman & Trope, 1998). This construal level account does not seem likely insofar as the describing task not only included concrete/proximal prompts ("what" and "how" questions) but also abstract/distal ("why") prompts, just as the rating task did. Moreover, in a follow-up study, we found no evidence that raters and describers were operating in different construal levels following the tasks. After completing the rating or describing task, a sample of 82 MTurkers completed the Global Concerns Measure, a validated measure of global versus concrete construal level (Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006). Raters' global thinking ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 2.13$)

did not differ from describers' global thinking ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 2.01$), $t(80) = 0.08$, $p = .93$, $d = 0.02$.

The nature of the agent was selfish among individualists and collectivists, lending support for the universality of the divided self. We maintain that agent selfishness is a fundamental feature of human nature, one that culture can tune up or tune down, but not turn off. These results suggest that collectivists are more morally motivated than individualists vis-à-vis balancing self- and other-interest. That collectivists have a fuller moral toolkit resonates with findings from moral foundations theory (MFT; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Graham et al., 2011); collectivists² rely on moral foundations that individualists do not, giving them a strategic advantage (Haidt, 2012). However, this does not necessarily imply that collectivists grant consideration to both ingroup and outgroup members alike, or that they are more moral in other regards (e.g., in terms of principled reasoning, self-control, and empathy). Moreover, motivation to help others may often come at the expense of other virtues, such as personal accountability and individual initiative.

The rating and describing tasks, while appearing to measure the same construct, rendered vastly different impressions. In Study 2, we investigated how these impressions compare with people's conceptions of highly prosocial and selfish exemplars. In all subsequent studies, we capitalized on the more pronounced differences between agents and actors in individualists to investigate the nuances of these two selves.

Study 2: Content Analysis of the Duality

We tested whether the agent's selfishness and actor's morality are generalizable phenomena. Using content analyses (Study 2a) and the impressions of outside observers (Study 2b), we compared the agent's and actor's motives to those of people role-playing prosocial and selfish exemplars.

Study 2a

In Study 2a, we randomly assigned participants to either (a) represent their goals normally, (b) role-play someone who is highly prosocial, or (c) role-play someone who is highly selfish. Participants then indicated the motives of their agent (goal description task) and actor (goal rating task).

² According to MFT, these differences exist between individualist and collectivist cultures, and within cultures between political liberals and conservatives.

Method

Participants. The individualist sample was recruited in the same way as in Study 1. The participants were 137 Americans, were 36 years of age ($SD = 12$), were 51% female, were 72% Caucasian, had 4.0 years of post-secondary education ($SD = 2.5$), and had a median income between \$30,000 and \$40,000. Each received \$0.75 for participating.

Procedure. In a 3×2 mixed design, we randomly assigned participants to role-play as someone who is either highly prosocial or highly selfish, or to respond as themselves (between-subjects). Participants then represented their motivation as the agent and actor (by describing and rating their own goals, respectively; within-subjects), with the measure order counterbalanced between subjects.

Experimental conditions.

Prosocial role-play. Participants role-played a highly prosocial exemplar. Accompanying a clip art image of a yellow, haloed emoticon were the following instructions:

Think of someone who is or was extraordinarily prosocial. That is, they are/were consistently helpful, kind, altruistic, or generous toward others. As a result of this person's actions, children were fed, sick people were healed, disadvantaged people gained opportunity, or injustice was righted. What is the first name and last initial of this prosocial person?

After providing a name and advancing, participants were instructed, "When answering the following questions, play the role of <name>.³ Answer all the questions as if you were <name>. Make up any details that you need to."

Selfish role-play. The selfish role-play condition was identical to the prosocial role-play condition with two exceptions. First, the emoticon was red and horned. Second, the first three sentences of the instructions read as follows:

Think of someone who is or was extraordinarily selfish. That is, they are/were consistently greedy, power-hungry, materialistic, or full of themselves. As a result of this person's actions, they made money, achieved work objectives, received recognition, or gained social status.

Self. Participants in this condition received no role-play instructions, leaving them to respond as themselves.

Actor task. Participants completed the same 10-item prosocial ($\alpha = .93$) and 10-item self-promotion ($\alpha = .96$) subscales from the Aspiration Index as in Study 1. They did not complete the helping-self or helping-others measure.

Agent task. Participants completed the same goal descriptions as in Study 1. They did not complete the helping-self or helping-others measure.

Results

Actor. The left panel of Figure 2 displays the actors' prosocial goal ratings (on the Aspiration Index) for the self and the two role-played exemplars. Self-attributions varied across conditions, one-way ANOVA, $F(2, 136) = 86.96, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .57$. Planned contrasts revealed that the self condition had higher prosocial goal ratings than the selfish role-play condition, $t(88) = 8.00, p < .001, d = 1.68$, and lower prosocial goal ratings than the prosocial role-play condition, $t(91) = -4.97, p < .001, d = -1.03$. The

average prosocial ratings in the self condition were 71% of the distance from the selfish to the prosocial role-players' self-attributions.

The order of task completion did not alter the pattern of findings. A 3 (persona) $\times 2$ (order) between-subjects ANOVA yielded neither a main effect for order, $F(1, 131) = 0.10, p = .93, \eta_p^2 < .01$, nor an interaction, $F(2, 131) = 0.61, p = .54, \eta_p^2 < .01$.

Agent. We content analyzed each written goal (see Study 1 for procedural details) and found that the density of prosocial words varied across conditions, $F(2, 136) = 26.72, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .29$ (right panel of Figure 2). Goal descriptions in the self condition had lower prosocial word densities than the goal descriptions of prosocial role-players, $t(91) = 5.76, p < .001, d = -1.20$. However, prosocial word density did not differ between goal descriptions of the self and the selfish role-players, $t(88) = -0.53, p = .60, d = -0.16$.

The order of task completion did not substantially alter the pattern of findings. A 3 (persona) $\times 2$ (order) between-subjects ANOVA did not yield an interaction, $F(2, 131) = 0.37, p = .70, \eta_p^2 < .01$. The model did yield a marginal main effect for order, $F(1, 131) = 3.22, p = .08, \eta_p^2 = .02$, with people who had rated their goals prior to describing them producing more prosocial words in their goal descriptions.

Study 2b

Study 2b tested whether the agent and actor seem different to an outside observer. A naïve third party reviewed the data from each participant in Study 2a and made first impression judgments about how prosocial each seemed based on their rated and described goals. We predicted that actors would yield more prosocial impressions than agents would. To rule out the possibility that this disparity was solely attributable to some feature of the different measures/interfaces, we tested whether this disparity generalized to impressions of the selfish and prosocial role-players. Our prediction was that the disparity would be uniquely strong for the self.

Method

Procedure. A male research assistant—blind to the theory, predictions, and study design—reviewed both the goal ratings and descriptions from each subject in Study 2a. The instructions were to "form an intuitive impression of each person. Listen to your gut. Avoid dissecting and analyzing their responses." The judge rated how prosocial⁴ each subject seemed—twice: (a) once based on subjects' goal ratings, and (b) once based on their goal descriptions. The rating scale was anchored at 1 (*not at all*), 4 (*moderately*), and 7 (*extremely*).

To reduce drift, we had the coder review each subject's rated and described goals at the same time. To maintain independence of the judgments, we led the coder to believe that the ratings and descriptions were from two different subjects, randomly selected for comparison. A second research assistant judged a randomly selected 25% of the subjects. Interrater reliability was nearly perfect, $r_{ratings} = .93, r_{descriptions} = .86$.

³ The provided name appeared in place of <name>.

⁴ In the instructions to the judge, we defined prosocial as "the person voluntarily behaves in ways that he/she intends will benefit *another* person."

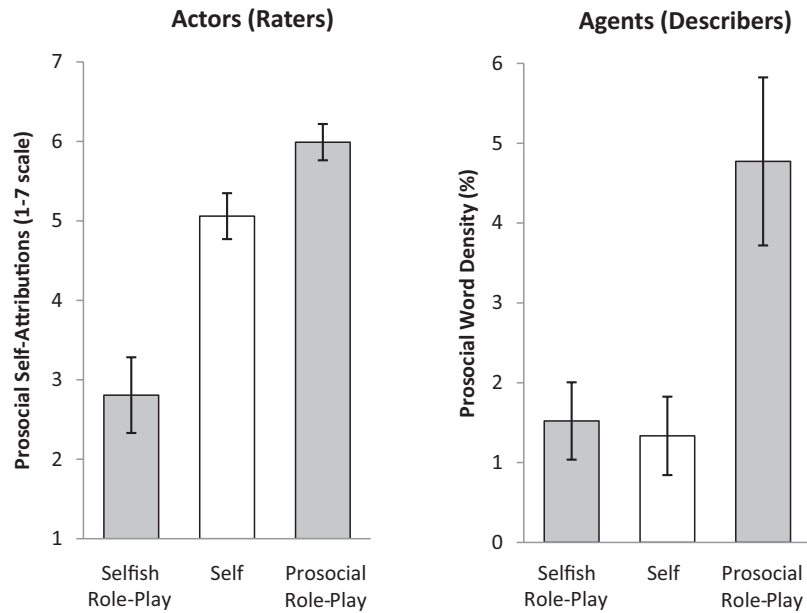


Figure 2. Ratings and word density in goal descriptions of the self and two role-played exemplars (Study 2a). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Results

Figure 3 displays the impressions of each persona based on goal ratings and descriptions. A 3 (persona: selfish role-play, self, prosocial role-play) \times 2 (type-of-self: actor, agent) mixed model ANOVA yielded a main effect for persona, $F(2, 134) = 108.70$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .62$, indicating that the judge thought the prosocial role-players were more prosocial than the self, which was more prosocial than the selfish role-players (confirming the manipulation from Study 2a). A main effect for type-of-self, $F(1, 134) = 102.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .43$, indicated the judge formed more prosocial impressions of actors than agents for each of the three personas.

Most critical to the present study, the model yielded a Persona \times Type-of-Self interaction, $F(2, 134) = 18.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$, meaning that the disparity between impressions formed of actors and agents varied across the personas. Among the three personas, the largest disparity between actor- and agent-based impressions was for the self, evidenced by the largest effect size (see Figure 3). As a conservative test of the elevated actor-agent disparity within the self, we tested whether the self's disparity was larger than that of the next largest disparity. Indeed it was. A 2 (persona: selfish role-play, self) \times 2 (type-of-self: actor, agent) mixed model ANOVA yielded an interaction, $F(1, 88) = 11.20$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$.

Discussion

When in the mindset of the self-as-actor, participants responding as their normal selves gave the impression that they are closer in nature to role-played prosocial exemplars than they are to role-played selfish exemplars. Yet, when these same people were in the mindset of the self-as-agent, they used prosocial words just as rarely as role-played selfish exemplars did. These results help

explain why actors and agents offered such disparate self-summaries in Study 1. Prosocial concepts are less activated in the agent, relative to the actor. People readily self-attribute prosocial goals if explicitly prompted to do so (viz., asked to rate prosocial goals); yet, in the absence of an explicit prompt, people do not spontaneously produce prosocial words when describing their goals.

To illustrate, consider some of the goals participants described. A typical goal description in the self condition was as follows:

My second goal is to decide what career I want, and go to graduate school in that field. To do this I need to evaluate my interests, and look for graduate programs that are right for me. This is important because I want to feel like I have meaningful and interesting work that fulfills me.

None of the words in this goal matched the items in the prosocial LIWC dictionary, and any prosocial theme is not made explicit. The tone of the self's goal is about promoting self-interest, just as it is in the following selfish role-player's goal:

To apply my talent and skills in a profession where my passion is most strong. Will have to work extremely hard and demonstrate to others my abilities to succeed. It is a life blood, a reason to live, as a matter of speaking.

The self and selfish goals are similarly devoid of prosocial words, unlike a typical goal of the prosocial role-player (10.3% prosocial words, italicized):

I want all children to have shelter from the elements. I need people to *help* by *donating* money, time, and resources to building shelters and *helping* relocate children who need *help*. Children are our future and they are mostly *helpless*, especially the young ones. We need to *help* them and *care* for them. No child should be left outside in extreme weather—whether extreme heat or intense cold.

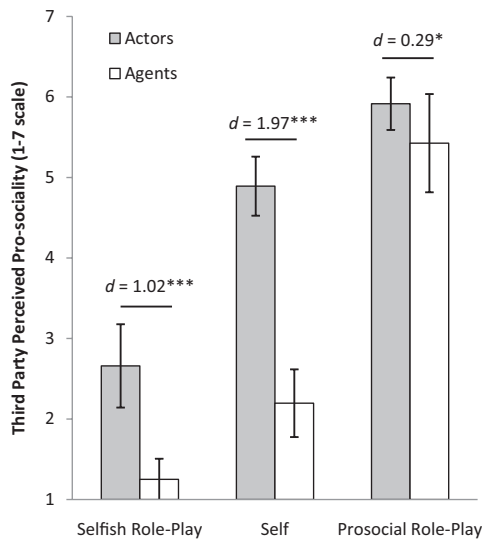


Figure 3. Third-party observer impressions of the prosociality of actors and agents of the self and two role-plays, as inferred from reviewing subjects' goal ratings and goal descriptions (Study 2b). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. * $p = .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Study 2b compared third party impressions of the actor and agent and found that the self has uniquely inconsistent motives. A naïve coder reviewed and evaluated the prosociality of people from Study 2a, based on their goal ratings and, independently, from their goal descriptions. A second coder judged a randomly chosen selection of participants and formed highly similar impressions. According to the coder, subjects in Study 2a gave disparate impressions of themselves in response to the two measures. People in the self condition seemed far more prosocial (by approximately 2 SD s) when rating goals on a closed-ended scale than when spontaneously describing goals. This disparity was uniquely strong for the self, compared to the selfish and prosocial role-plays, suggesting that the disparity between ratings and descriptions is not merely attributable to a methodological artefact.

Is the self no different from the selfish exemplar? The equal paucity of prosocial words in the self and selfish exemplar conditions does not imply that the goals produced are equal in all ways. Indeed, an informal review of the goals gave the impression that the selfish role-players' goals tended to connote elements of arrogance and aggression. These differences notwithstanding, the self and selfish role-players only rarely produced prosocial words in describing their goals. In contrast, the prosociality of goal ratings in the self condition more closely mapped on to levels of the prosocial role-players.

Agents and actors yielded pronounced differences between their self-perceptions (Study 1), in content (Study 2a), and in third party impressions (Study 2b). As agents, people exude selfishness. As actors, people exude morality. Participants rendered these divergent self-portrayals minutes apart, one after another. The tasks did not make explicit the meaning of their responses (Study 2a did not include the summary task). Had participants become explicitly aware of the self-discrepancy, they may have taken steps to reduce it. We tested this hypothesis directly in Study 3.

Study 3: Mechanism

The purpose of Study 3 is to account for the differences between the actor and agent. We suggest that perceptions of idealism versus realism mediate the difference. In the eyes of the person reporting their goals, their agent seems more real, whereas the actor seems more ideal (Higgins, 1987). Insofar as the proposed mediator can be manipulated experimentally, we established mediation by experimentally determining a causal chain (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). Study 3a also tested whether idealistic and realistic⁵ mindsets alter the moral nature of the agent and actor, respectively. Study 3b provided a more controlled test of the latter causal link: that priming idealism makes described goals more prosocial.

Study 3a

This study had two components. First, we tested whether people perceive their own agents' motives as more realistic and less idealistic than their actors' motives. Second, we tested whether self-priming idealism (by rating goals and summarizing their social and personal significance) makes agents more prosocial. Complementarily, we tested whether self-priming realism (by describing goals and summarizing their social and personal significance) makes actors less prosocial.

Method

Participants. An American sample ($N = 107$) was recruited in the same way as in Study 2a. Participants were 32 years of age ($SD = 12$), were 58% female, were 82% Caucasian, had 4.1 years of post-secondary education ($SD = 2.8$), and had a median income between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Each received \$0.80 for participating.

Procedure. In a 2 (condition: primed, unprimed; between-subjects) \times 2 (type-of-self: actor, agent; within-subjects) mixed model design, participants both rated and described their goals. The order of tasks (viz., rate, describe) was counterbalanced between subjects. The first task served as a prime for the second. For example, for participants who rated then described their goals, their rated goals belonged to the rated-unprimed condition, and their described goals belonged in the described-primed condition. Immediately after completing each goal task (viz., before completing the second task), participants were reminded of their goals (see Study 1) and completed the mediator measures (summary measures of how realistic and idealistic their goals are) and the dependent measures (how much their goals are about helping the self and others).

Mediator: Realism and idealism. Participants indicated the perceived veracity of two statements, each on an independent slider scale anchored at 0 (*not at all true*), 50 (*sort of true*), and 100 (*totally true*). The two mediators measured perceived *realism* ("These really are my goals") and *idealism* ("These are more so goals that I hope to pursue but haven't yet much"). As the rating paradigm allowed participants to indicate that some goals are not important to them (whereas the describing paradigm prompted only for important goals), we slightly adjusted the instructions to focus participants' attention only on rated goals that they consider important. For the evaluation of rated goals, the instructions read, "Answer the following regarding the goals that you indicated are important to you." When evaluating their described goals, this sentence was omitted.

⁵ We use the terms "real" and "actual" interchangeably.

Dependent measure: Helping others and the self. This measure was identical to that of Study 1.

Results

Agents seem real, actors seem ideal. For each participant, we created a realism disparity score as follows: $\text{disparity}_{\text{realism}} = \text{realism}_{\text{agent}} - \text{realism}_{\text{actor}}$. The left bar in Figure 4 shows that participants perceived their agents' descriptions to be more realistic than their actors' ratings, $t(105) = 6.39, p < .001, d = 0.60$.⁶ We created analogous idealism disparity scores. The right bar of Figure 4 shows that participants judged their actors' ratings to be more idealistic than their agents' descriptions, $t(105) = -3.14, p = .002, d = -0.30$.

Analyzing the raw scores (rather than disparity scores) yielded the same conclusion. Descriptions were judged to be more realistic ($M = 94, SD = 11$) than ratings were ($M = 83, SD = 19$), $t(106) = 6.23, p < .001, d = 0.71$. Descriptions were judged to be less idealistic ($M = 46, SD = 28$) than ratings were ($M = 55, SD = 26$), $t(106) = -3.12, p = .002, d = -0.32$. A 2 (mediator: realism, idealism) \times 2 (type-of-self) within-subjects ANOVA yielded an interaction, $F(1, 106) = 34.80, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .25$.

Realism/idealism changes goal motives.

Idealism makes agents more moral. We tested whether idealism makes agents more moral by comparing the goals that people described before or after self-priming idealism (by rating their goals and summarizing their social significance). Summary scores indicate that idealism nearly eliminated the selfish tendency (see the left panel of Figure 5). Unprimed, agents reported that their goals more help the self than others, $t(45) = -9.19, p < .001, d = 2.22$ (replicating a finding from Study 1). After self-priming idealism, agents claimed that their goals only slightly favored the self over others, $t(60) = -2.81, p = .007, d = 0.61$ —a 73% reduction of the

selfishness effect size. A 2 (condition) \times 2 (recipient) mixed model ANOVA yielded the predicted interaction, $F(1, 105) = 20.58, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .16$, meaning that priming idealism made agents more moral.

Analysis of the goal text itself (see Study 1 for procedural details) mirrored this trend. Unprimed, agents' goals had $M_{\text{unprimed}} = 1.15\%$ ($SD = 1.25\%$) prosocial word density, replicating a finding from Study 2a. Idealistically primed agents' goals doubled their density of prosocial words to $M_{\text{primed}} = 2.32\%$ ($SD = 2.02\%$), $t(105) = 3.32, p = .001, d = 0.67$.

Realism makes actors selfish. We tested whether self-priming realism makes actors more selfish by comparing the goals that people rated before or after self-priming realism (by describing their goals and summarizing their social and personal significance). Summary scores indicated that realism made goals more selfish (see the right panel of Figure 5). Unprimed, goal raters showed a marginally significant self-promoting bias, $t(60) = -1.77, p = .08, d = 0.38$. After self-priming realism, goal raters claimed that their goals were more selfish, $t(45) = -4.68, p < .001, d = 1.15$ —a tripling of the self-promoting bias. A 2 (condition) \times 2 (recipient) mixed model ANOVA yielded the predicted interaction, $F(1, 105) = 6.71, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$, meaning that priming realism increased selfishness in actors.

Analysis of the Aspiration Index scores mirrored this trend. Realism decreased prosocial goal endorsements from $M_{\text{unprimed}} = 4.88$ ($SD = 1.17$) to $M_{\text{primed}} = 4.32$ ($SD = 1.36$), $t(105) = -2.27, p = .03, d = -0.44$. Self-promoting goal endorsements were unaffected by priming, $t(105) = -0.12, p = .91$.

Discussion

Study 3a found that people view their agent's described goals as more realistic than their actor's rated goals. The opposite was the case for idealism. Rated goals seem more to capture people's unrealized hopes for the future, which tended to benefit both the self and others (i.e., be more moral). These results support the first of two parts of an account of why goal ratings and goal descriptions yield disparate impressions.

The second part of the account involves testing whether an idealistic mindset makes agents more prosocial, and a realistic mindset makes actors more selfish. Study 3a provided initial support for this hypothesis by comparing the goals that people described before and after an idealism prime, and vice versa for ratings. After an idealism prime, agents became more moral; after a realism prime, actors became more selfish.

This result could be the product of the intended primes. An alternative interpretation is that the task caused participants to experience self-discrepancy, yielding motives aimed at reducing the uncomfortable awareness of one's self-contradictory nature (Higgins, 1987). For example, having described selfish goals, people may rate their goals as more selfish than they actually think of them to avoid a self-contradiction. Should this be the case, it would limit the internal validity of the present test vis-à-vis the idealism–realism prime. However, the results would then support the claim that participants per-

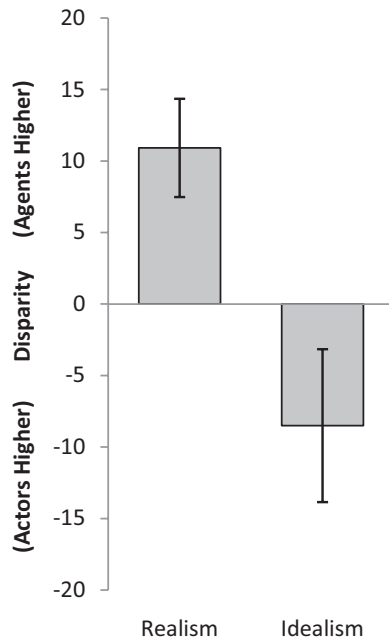


Figure 4. Agents' motives seem more realistic and less idealistic than actors' motives to the people that produce them (Study 3a). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

⁶ For the sake of concision, we omitted from analyses two similar questions, which yielded similar results: "I am actually pursuing these goals," and "I made concrete gains toward these goals this week."

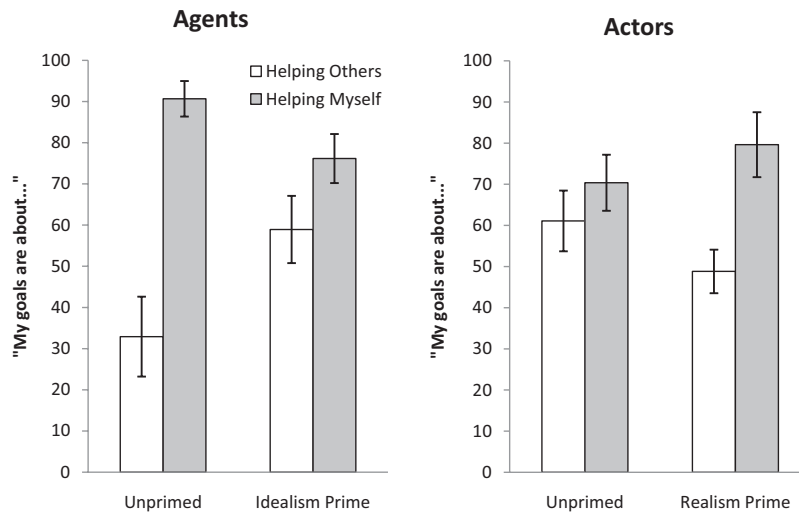


Figure 5. Self-priming idealism (by rating goals first) makes agents more moral (left panel). Self-priming realism (by describing goals first) makes actors less prosocial (right panel; Study 3a). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

ceive the rating and goal tasks as conceptually parallel, and that the actor's and agent's motives are indeed mutually contradictory.

Study 3b

The goal of this study was to replicate the priming effects found in Study 3a with a more internally valid methodology, one free of self-consistency press. The study design was similar to that of Study 1. Participants described⁷ their goals and then provided a summary of how much their goals were about helping the self and others. We manipulated idealism by asking participants to suspend reality and describe their wished-for goals. We predicted that idealism would increase prosociality and decrease self-promotion.

Method

Participants. The sample was recruited in the same way as in Studies 2a and 3a. The participants were 81 Americans, were 32 years of age ($SD = 11$), were 36% female, were 78% Caucasian, had 3.5 years of post-secondary education ($SD = 2.3$), and had a median income between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Each received \$0.60 for participating.

Procedure. In the *control condition*, participants described three important goals. The initial instructions read, "The task is to describe your goals." In the *idealism condition*, the initial instructions read as follows:

The task is to think about and describe the goals that you hope to pursue—in the future. For the time being, put aside what you actually are pursuing. Take a moment to reflect on the goals that you wish for. Be as optimistic as possible.

Participants then described three goals (in response to the same prompts as in Study 1) and completed summary measures of how much their goals were about helping others and helping the self (see Study 1 for details). Finally, participants completed a manipulation check.⁸

Manipulation check. Participants viewed their three goals and answered two questions on a slider scale anchored at 0 (*not at all true*), 50 (*sort of true*), and 100 (*totally true*). The realism item stated, "These really are my goals." The idealism item stated, "These are more so goals that I hope to pursue but haven't yet much."

Results

Manipulation check. Both idealism and realism varied between conditions, as predicted. Participants in the idealism condition claimed that their goals were more idealistic ($M = 70$, $SD = 29$) than in the control condition ($M = 34$, $SD = 28$), $t(79) = 5.75$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.28$. Moreover, the idealism condition produced goals that participants claimed were less realistic ($M = 85$, $SD = 19$) than in the control condition ($M = 97$, $SD = 7$), $t(79) = -3.59$, $p = .001$, $d = -0.81$.

Effect of idealism on agents' goals. Idealistic agents summarized their goals as more helpful to others ($M = 29$, $SD = 29$) than control agents did ($M = 20$, $SD = 28$), $t(79) = 1.46$, $p = .08$, $d = 0.33$. Idealism made goal summaries less about helping the self ($M = 85$, $SD = 15$) than in the control condition ($M = 93$, $SD = 9$), $t(79) = -2.61$, $p = .005$, $d = -0.65$. A 2 (condition: control, idealism) \times 2 (recipient: self, other) mixed model ANOVA yielded the predicted interaction, $F(1, 79) = 4.06$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$.⁹

⁷ An analogous study testing the effects of idealism on actor prosociality did not yield confirming results. This may be because the same manipulation was less efficacious on goal ratings compared to goal descriptions.

⁸ We excluded from analysis a third (*realism*) condition because it failed to pass the manipulation check. In fact, perceived realism of goals was higher in the control condition ($M = 97$, $SD = 7$) than in the realism condition ($M = 92$, $SD = 12$), $t(76) = 2.03$, $p = .05$, $d = -0.46$.

⁹ The manipulation did not significantly influence the content of goals, as measured by a computerized content analysis. Idealism non-significantly increased prosocial content from 0.81% ($SD = 0.79\%$) to 1.00% ($SD = 1.17\%$). The effect ($d = 0.19$, $p = .41$) was in the predicted direction.

Discussion

Study 3b provides clearer evidence that idealism makes agents more prosocial. Because participants did not provide a self-representation (as in Study 3a) prior to completing the dependent measures, self-consistency drives cannot explain the prosocial shift resulting from the idealism manipulation. The results of Study 3b are considerably weaker than those of the analogous test in Study 3a (the interaction effect size was diminished by ~70%). This may be because asking participants to become idealistic with a short set of instructions has a weaker effect than immersion in one's own personal idealism. Nonetheless, in concert with Study 3a, the results suggest that the realism–idealism distinction does help explain why the agent is selfish and the actor moral.

General Discussion

The motivation to behave selfishly while appearing moral gave rise to two, divergently motivated selves. The actor—the watched self—tends to be moral; the agent—the self as executor—tends to be selfish. Each self serves its own adaptive function: The actor helps people maintain inclusion in groups, whereas the agent attends to basic survival needs. Three studies support the thesis that the actor is moral and the agent is selfish. In Study 1, actors claimed their goals were equally about helping the self and others (viz., moral); agents claimed their goals were primarily about helping the self (viz., selfish). This disparity was evident in both individualist and collectivist cultures, albeit more so among individualists. Study 2 compared actors and agents' motives to those of people role-playing highly prosocial or selfish exemplars. In content and in the impression they made upon an outside observer, actors' motives were similar to those of the prosocial role-players, whereas agents' motives were similar to those of the selfish role-players. In Study 3, participants claimed that their agent's motives were the more realistic and their actor's motives the more idealistic of the two. When asked to take on an idealistic mindset, agents became more moral; a realistic mindset made the actor more selfish.

Is the agent's selfishness a universal feature of human nature, sourced to evolutionary selection processes (Dawkins, 2006) or a cultural artifact (Miller, 1999)? The results from Study 1 suggest that both may be the case: The agent's selfishness is evident in both individualist and collectivist cultures, suggesting that the selfish agent is a human universal. However, the agent's selfishness was more pronounced in individualists. We suggest that the smaller disparity between the selves of collectivists is due to their tendency to attend to others' perspectives (Heine & Buchtel, 2009). Collectivists more often recall memories of themselves from a third-person perspective than do individualists (Cohen & Gunz, 2002), and they outperform individualists on visual perspective-taking tasks (Wu & Keysar, 2007). This perspective taking activates the (moral) self-as-actor. Increasingly aware of the disparity between the motives of their agents and actors, collectivists experience more discomfort. To reduce this discomfort, collectivists' agents may have become more prosocially motivated.

Limitations

Study 3 presented confirming evidence that people experience their agents' motives as more realistic and their actors' motives as more

idealistic, supporting the first of two causal links in our proposed mediation model. Support for the second link—that idealism/realism influences the moral quality of the selves—was less conclusive. Specifically, the evidence was prone to alternative explanations (e.g., self-discrepancy in Study 3a) or simply weak (in Study 3b). Interpreted together, however, we suggest that the evidence is generally supportive of the proposed model.

Future Directions

When people feel observed by others, moral behavior follows: People are increasingly likely to honor their commitments (Batson et al., 1997) and behave generously (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). These prosocial acts could be purely strategic. Watched people may behave morally to avoid the negative repercussions associated with misbehavior and getting caught red-handed. The present research raises the possibility of a “deeper” mechanism—feeling watched de-activates the self-as-agent and/or activates the self-as-actor. Alternatively, feeling watched could raise the moral quality of the agent. Future research should investigate whether feeling watched recruits the self-as-actor and/or makes the self-as-agent more prosocial.

This article presented evidence of the different moral natures of the agent and actor, and accounted for the difference as perceived realism and idealism, respectively. Additional factors may also differentiate the two selves (e.g., recognition vs. recall; semantic memory vs. episodic memory; intuitive vs. deliberative processing). Future research should further examine other differences between the two selves.

The present research focused solely on differences between the selves without attending to behavioral consequences. For example, do people who have relatively prosocial agents also choose helping careers, volunteer, and give to charity? Future research should investigate whether individual differences in the prosociality of described goals (and other verbal responses) predict prosocial behaviors.

Conclusion

When in the executor self-as-agent mindset, people claim to be selfish and experience this nature as reflective of reality. When viewing themselves from an outsider's perspective (the self-as-actor), people claim to be moral and experience this nature as reflective of their ideals. Are they correct? Is the selfish agent the “true” self and the moral actor a “false” self? We suggest not. Rather than thinking about selves as true or false, we prefer to think about their social functions. Following others (e.g., Haidt, 2012; McAdams, 2013), we suggest that the actor and the agent each perform adaptive personal and social functions. The selfish agent is for survival. The moral actor is for fitting in and making social life possible. When public goods are on the line, the task for civil society is to recruit moral actors.

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(Appendix follows)

Appendix

Prosocial Words Dictionary

Development and Validation

To measure the density of prosocial words in any text, we developed a new dictionary for Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), which entails 146 words and word stems. To test the convergent validity of the new dictionary, we compared LIWC coding to an existing set of human-coded transcripts. Frimer, Walker, Dunlop, Lee, and Riches (2011) interviewed moral exemplars and comparison participants about major life events, and they micro-analytically human-coded every instance of agentic and communal (prosocial) language. We applied the new computer method to these same transcripts. Demonstrating convergent validity, LIWC and the human subjective coding converged on the relative frequency of prosocial words, $r(48) = .67, p < .001$.

As a further content validation, we asked 43 MTurkers to describe three or four prosocial goals and three or four self-promoting goals. Content analysis of the goal text revealed that prosocial goal prompts yielded over 10 times higher prosocial word density ($M = 10.7\%$, $SD = 13.8\%$) than self-promoting goal prompts did ($M = 1.0\%$, $SD = 3.9\%$), $t(295) = 8.36, p < .001, d = 0.96$.

The Dictionary Items

abus*, accepting, accomodat*, affect*, agreeable*, aid*, altruis*, appreciat*, approachable, assist*, benefit*, benevolen*, bigot*, bio-

divers*, care, caring, charit*, collective*, commun*, compassion*, compliment, concern*, confide, conscien*, conservation*, considerate, contribut*, cooperat*, cope*, coping, courteous*, courtesy, cruel*, defend*, dependab*, dignity, discriminat*, disease*, dishonest*, divers*, donat*, earth, ecolog*, education*, egalitar*, empath*, empower*, encourag*, environment*, equal*, ethic*, everybod*, everyone*, facilitat*, fair*, forgiv*, freed*, genero*, gentle*, genuin*, giv*, goodhearted*, greater good, guard*, harm*, harmon*, help*, helpful*, honest*, honorable, honourable, hospit*, human*, hurt*, impartial*, injust*, inspiring, integrat*, integrity, interact*, invit*, involv*, irresponsib*, justice, kids, kindness, listen*, loyal*, moral*, NGO*, nice*, non-judgmental, non-profit*, not-for-profit*, nurtur*, peace*, philanthrop*, pollution, poor*, poverty, prais*, prejud*, protect*, reciproc*, relia*, rely, relied, respectful*, responsib*, responsiv*, righteous*, rights, role model*, sacrific*, selfless*, sensitiv*, serv*, share*, shari*, shield*, sincer*, societ*, solidarit*, suffer*, support*, sustainab*, sympath*, taught, teach*, team*, tender*, the people, therap*, thoughtful*, tolera*, trust*, tutor*, underst*, unfair*, universal*, unprejudiced, upright, violen*, virtuous*, volunteer*, wound*.

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