Original Papers

Marta Roczniewska *,**
Alina Kolańczyk *

Competence over Communion:
Implicit Evaluations of Personality Traits During Goal Pursuit

Abstract: *Research shows that goal-relevant objects are rated positively, which results from their functionality towards the aim. In previous studies these objects were always external to the agent. However, relevant knowledge of self is also potentially accessible during goal pursuit, as self-esteem is an indicator of aim's feasibility. In two experimental studies we tested whether goal activation affects temporal changes in automatic evaluations of personality traits related to the dimensions of agency and communion. We administered affect misattribution procedure where participants rated neutral Chinese hexagrams proceeded by words describing traits (75 ms masked presentation). The list of words comprised agentic (e.g. agile) and communal (e.g. trustworthy) traits. The rating took place twice – before and after introducing a manual task. In the first study, goal activation led to slightly more positive implicit evaluations of agentic and more negative evaluation of communal traits, which is consistent with empirical data on self-perception depending on agentic knowledge rather than communal one. In the second study we showed that goal activation led to changes only for promotion-, but not prevention-oriented individuals, which is explained by motivation strength. The results indicate that valuation of traits changes temporarily along with goal pursuit.*
Key words: *agency, communion, goal pursuit, implicit attitudes, regulatory focus*

Within a blink of an eye after perceiving an object evaluative information about it is activated (Bargh, Chaiken, Govender, & Pratto, 1992; LeDoux, 2000). This phenomenon facilitates quick and relatively effortless appraisal of the environment, which is efficient in both threatening and potentially beneficial situations (e.g., Kolańczyk, Fila-Jankowska, Pawłowska-Fusiara, & Sterczyński, 2004; LeDoux, 2000; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1992). Along with changes in one's priorities, the relevance of objects alters, as their functionality towards the goal isdifferent. This influences evaluative judgements; research shows that goal-relevant objects become more positive than goal-irrelevant objects when the goal is active (e.g., Brendl, Markman, & Messner, 2003; Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012). In previous studies objects of assessment were external to the agent, e.g. water was valued when participants were thirsty. However, relevant knowledge of self is also potentially accessible during goal pursuit, as self-esteem is deemed to facilitate attaining one's aims (Wojciszke, 2010a). In these studies we intended to observe whether facing a task affects temporal changes in the value of traits and whether the implicit re-evaluation concerns all traits or involves specific goal-related contents of self-knowledge.

The role of affect in self-regulation

Bruner (1957) argued that goal activation makes people more perceptually ready to identify goal-relevant information. It is possible under the assumption that a goal is conceptualised as a mental representation of desired end-state, which involves both a cognitive component of the knowledge about the aim, and an affective–motivational element that indicates it is valuable and worth pursuing (Aarts et al., 2005). In cognitive structures such goals are typically associated with various means that promote their attainment (see: Shah & Kruglanski, 2002). Hence, activation of a goal state targets and energises action towards the end-state and objects that enable its attainment.

* University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty in Sopot, ul. Polna 16/20, 81-745 Sopot
** mroczniewska@swps.edu.pl.

Indeed, many studies show that perceiver's need or current aim influences the accessibility of goal-relevant knowledge. Dunning and Balcetis (2013) recently described the effect of „wishful seeing" wherein people categorised ambiguous visual information in ways that aligned with their motives and desires. This phenomenon is possible on condition that the goal is current not recent (e.g., Ferguson & Bargh, 2004). Aarts, Dijksterhuis, and De Vries (2001) found that words associated with thirst quenching (e.g., *water*, *juice*) were more accessible for participants who were still thirsty compared with those who satisfied their need.

Interestingly, studies demonstrate that it is not only a matter of accessibility, but also valence ascribed to goal-relevant objects. Seibt, Häfner, and Deutsch (2007) showed that hunger had an impact on the valence attributed to food stimuli and affected approach tendencies toward them. In Szymanska and Kolańczyk's study (2002) creative participants assigned positive affect to words that could form the right answer to a given open-ended problem. Bargh and Ferguson (2004) demonstrated participants' positive implicit (but not explicit) attitudes towards letter C when experimenters administered a word-creation game wherein nouns containing this letter were given the most points. After providing participants with a detection task, we again observed that objects fulfilling task criteria were valued positively, whereas irrelevant objects were devalued (Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012). In a different study, thirsty participants devalued undrinkable liquids, e.g. shampoo (Brendl et al., 2003).

Aforementioned studies thus demonstrate a preference for objects that facilitate goal pursuit and devaluation of those hindering, or - at least - not serving its attainment. Whereas existing works only took into consideration means that were external to the agent, we predict similar effects with regard to self-related traits, which are an important part of social cognition. Since self-esteem provides information about the subject's capabilities, it has important motivational consequences as the indicator of chances for the successful goal pursuit (Crocker & Park, 2004). Therefore, we predict that traits become accessible and valued once a goal to fulfil is activated. However, we anticipate a difference in their evaluations depending on traits' relevance to the task.

The Big Two and goal pursuit

Social cognition comprises two dimensions of content - agency and communion (Wojciszke, 2005; 2010b), described in different approaches as e.g. duality of (respectively) competence vs. warmth (Fiske, Cuddy,& Glick, 2007), masculinity vs. femininity (Bem, 1981) or individualism vs. collectivism (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). The agency relates to features important in goal pursuit, like intelligence, ambition and leadership skills. The dimension of communion refers to traits that foster preservation of relations, such as being kind, communicative, or ethical. Research demonstrates that these two types of knowledge influence social cognition to a great extent, as people examine them and take them into consideration when

forming impressions (e.g., Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Ybarra, Park, Stanik, & Lee, 2012).

When pondering about the relative importance of the two contents in shaping cognitions and evaluative responses, one has to acknowledge that the answer depends on the target of social cognition – namely, whether we think about another person or the self. A considerable amount of studies shows that while another person perception is typically dominated by communal over agentic content (e.g., Fiske et al., 2007; Wojciszke, Bazinska, & Jaworski, 1998; Brambilla, Rusconi, Sacchi, & Cherubini, 2010; Ames & Bianchi, 2008), for self-evaluations the situation is reversed (Wojciszke, Baryla, Parzuchowski, Szymkow, & Abele, 2011; Wojciszke & Sobiczewska, 2013). This is consistent with theory and findings on double perspective model (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014) which refers to the fact that social behaviour includes two perspectives – that of an agent (the person who does the action) and that of a recipient (toward whom the act is directed). As a consequence, while the agent focuses on "getting things done", the recipient wants to understand the act, striving to avoid losses or obtain gains involved in the interaction. Hence, the fact that the agency is more important than communion for building self-esteem results from agentic traits playing a greater role than communal ones in goal pursuit.

Previous research thus shows a preference for objects that fulfil task criteria when a goal is active and a devaluation of objects unrelated to it. Since self-esteem is deemed to facilitate attaining one's aims (Wojciszke, 2010a), we anticipate activation of traits after goal introduction. Furthermore, stemming from the prevalence in importance of agency over communion during goal pursuit, we expect that goal activation leads to an increase in positive implicit attitudes only towards agentic traits. Since the dimension of community - somewhat important to the self because of self-reputational concerns (see: Ybarra et al., 2012; Wojciszke et al., 2011) - plays no role in goal pursuit, self-knowledge about the community should be inhibited; otherwise, it could lead to attentional overload. Hence, we anticipate devaluation of communal traits as irrelevant to the task (similarly to: Brendl et al., 2003; Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012).These assumptions were tested in two experimental studies.

Study 1

In the first experiment we assessed whether activating a goal of performing a manual task would lead to changes in traits' valence. Since agentic traits have a higher impact on goal pursuit, we expected to observe their more positive implicit evaluation, and devaluation of communal traits, since the latter do not serve the aim. Accordingly, before and after inducing a specific goal state we measured participants' automatic evaluations of words related to psychological traits.

Method

Participants. A total of 28 students (24 women, 4 men) took part in this study for course credit. Their age ranged from 18 to 55 (*M* = 27.64, *SD* = 10.33). Participants took part in the study voluntarily.

Procedure and materials. Participants were invited to the laboratory to take part in the study on human behaviour. First, we administered affect misattribution procedure (AMP) as a measure of implicit evaluations (Payne, Cheng, Govorun, & Stewart, 2005). This method relies on subjects' ratings of neutral stimuli that are preceded by words, which are suspected to elicit positive or negative affects. During this procedure the affect is misattributed onto the neutral stimulus. This allows for an implicit measurement of attitudes towards objects (in our case – personality traits). To obtain proper priming words we described the manual task to independent judges (*N* = 50) and asked them to enlist traits that could help perform the task and also those features unrelated to the task. We chose a manual dexterity task, wherein the participant's task is to construct a given shape in less than 3 minutes using domino tiles. The most frequently mentioned traits were chosen. The final list consists of agentic traits (*precise, fast, agile*) attributed spontaneously to the first category, communal traits (*communicative, honest, friendly*) attributed to the second, and neutral words. We used a list of 11 neutral words (*calendar, lamp, computer, page, chair, bill, button, tablecloth, paint, circle, semester*) derived from prior research (Pawłowska-Fusiara, 2005). As target stimuli we selected 21 Chinese hexagrams – visual stimuli evaluated as neutral on both affective (*I don't like – I like*) and cognitive (*chaotic – harmonious*) scales in previous studies (Sterczyński & Kolańczyk, 2001). We used masking, because masked priming technique reveals effects of automatic attitude activation (e.g., Draine & Greenwald, 1998).

In the affect misattribution task administered in our study, each trial started with a fixation point (500 ms), then we presented priming word (75 ms), a mask (100 ms), then a Chinese hexagram appeared and it remained on a screen until the participant rated it ("*How much do you like it?*") on a scale from -2 (*I strongly don't like it*) to +2 (*I strongly like it*). Each object appeared only once and the order of words was fully randomised for the participants. Each block was designed so that neutral words appeared between the traits in order to reduce inertial effects of the preceding stimuli. The affect misattribution procedure is depicted in Figure 1.

After filling in an unrelated questionnaire (Social Desirability Scale, Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), participants were presented with the manual task. Before participants engaged in performing it, they were asked to rate the hexagrams again (second implicit evaluations measurement). Afterwards, they completed the manual task described above. Finally, participants filled in a survey in which we tested whether they noticed the primes and guessed the experimental aim. Although a few participants mentioned "*seeing something*", none of them listed the exact words and no one discovered the real objective of the study.

**Figure 1. Affect misattribution procedure in Study 1 & 2.**
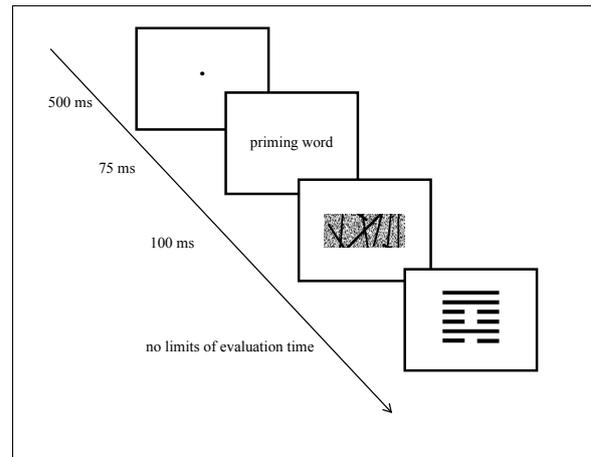
Design. The research design was 3 (Type of a priming word: agentic trait vs. communal trait vs. neutral word) x 2 (Goal status: before vs. after task introduction) and the two were within-subject variables.

Results

We conducted a repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) for hexagrams' evaluations and observed a significant interaction between priming word and goal status, $F(2,54) = 4.90$; $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .15$. Before task introduction implicit evaluations of objects differed significantly, $F(2,54) = 14.03$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .34$. A simple effects analysis (NIR tests) indicated that participants rated hexagrams preceded by neutral words (*M* = 0.28, *SD* = 0.54) significantly more negatively than those preceded by agentic traits (*M* = 0.88, *SD* = 0.69), $p < .05$. Evaluations of hexagrams preceded by neutral words were also significantly lower than those preceded by communal traits (*M* = 0.99, *SD* = 0.82), $p < .01$. Evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic and communal characteristics differed marginally ($p = .08$). After task introduction, we again observed differences in evaluations of hexagrams depending on the preceding words, $F(2,54) = 24.16$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .47$. A simple effects analysis (NIR tests) further showed that hexagrams preceded by agentic traits were assessed more positively (*M* = 0.97, *SD* = 0.59) than those preceded by communal traits (*M* = 0.76, *SD* = 0.85) and neutral words (*M* = 0.14, *SD* = 0.66), and all differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$). To observe changes in evaluations, we conducted 6 paired-samples t-tests, comparing evaluations before and after task introduction. Participants marginally increased their liking of hexagrams preceded by agentic traits, $t(27) = 1.55$; $p = .06$ (one-tailed); $d = .24$. They also exhibited a more negative evaluation of hexagrams preceded by communal traits, $t(27) = 2.46$; $p < .05$ (one-tailed); $d = .52$, and those preceded by neutral words, $t(27) = 1.87$; $p < .05$ (one-tailed); $d = .37$, after task introduction.

Figure 2.Mean implicit evaluations as a function of a priming word and goal-status condition in Study 1.
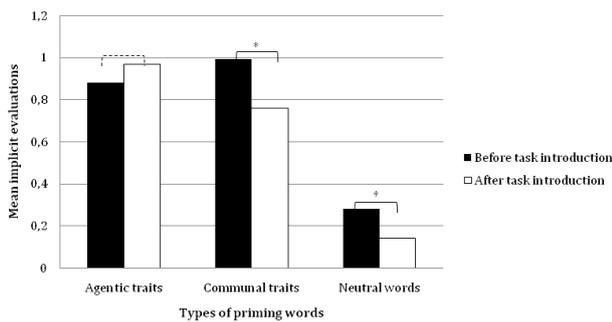
Note. Dash lines indicate trend level. Asterix indicates $p < .05$ level of significance.

Discussion

Results obtained in Study 1 confirmed our main hypothesis: individuals are sensitive to information related to self-esteem during goal pursuit. Importantly, before task introduction hexagrams preceded by neutral words were rated significantly less positively than those preceded by positive adjectives describing traits (both agentic and communal), which confirms the assumption that virtues are assessed more positively as compared to control items and demonstrates proper selection of the priming material. We observed temporal, goal-related changes in valence attributed to traits of different relation to a pursued goal. Namely, participants marginally increased their liking of hexagrams preceded by agentic traits and significantly decreased their liking of hexagrams preceded by communal traits. It is noteworthy that the evaluation did not depend on the value of the words, since hexagrams preceded byboth types of traits were rated as positive when no goal was present. In the second phase of the study after task introduction the affect attributed to objects demonstrated their functionality in the subsequent task – the prevalence of competence over warmth. We observed that after task introduction hexagrams preceded by agentic traits were rated significantly more positively than those preceded by communal ones. However, of most importance to us were the results of changes in the implicit evaluations after goal activation. Namely, participants exhibited a marginally more positive evaluation of hexagrams preceded by the agentic traits, and significantly more negative evaluation of hexagrams preceded by the objects unrelated to the task (both communal traits and neutrals words), as a consequence of their irrelevance to the goal. This confirms previous findings on the prevalence of agentic over communal information during goal pursuit (Wojciszke et al., 2011). The results show it occurs mostly through devaluation of the positive communal characteristics, which – attributed to the self and important in other contexts (see: Ybarra et al., 2012) – are irrelevant to the current aim. This demonstrates that automatic evaluations of objects depend on their meaning to a pursued goal.

However, Kolańczyk (2008) assumed the evaluations depend not only on the goal itself but also on

the subject's regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997), as it was shown numerously to determine behaviours, emotions and cognitions (e.g. Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997; Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994). In regulatory focus theory Higgins (1997) proposes that two basic human motivations - for advancement and for security– foster different modes of goal pursuit. Promotion-focused individuals are attentive to ideals; they strive to achieve positive outcomes, hence they concentrate on gains and positive aspects of the environment. Consequently, for promotion-oriented individuals positive affect is attributed to objects that fulfil task criteria (Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012). Since preventive individuals focus on losses, they try to avoid the presence of negative outcomes. They are very much concerned with oughts and responsibilities. Keeping in mind what to avoid, they assign positive affect to objects that may hinder goal pursuit (Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012).

Study 2

Previously, we observed changes in the valence of words describing one's traits, which reflected the relevance of the attributed traits to the task. In this study we sought to investigate whether this effect depends on self-regulation style. For promotion-oriented participants, we anticipate an increase in liking of the agentic traits and a decrease in liking of the communal traits after task introduction. Since prevention-oriented participants are focused on oughts and obligations, and morality is an important part of communion (Wojciszke, 2010b) we expect them to assign importance to the communal traits. Indeed, Wojdyło and Buczny (2011) demonstrated that the actual vs. ought self-discrepancy correlates positively with prevention and focus on communion, whereas negatively with orientation on agency.

Method

Participants. A total of 58 students (40 women, 18 men) took part in this study for course credit. Their age ranged from 19 to 51 ($M = 24.69$, $SD = 6.83$). Participants were invited to the laboratory and took part in the study voluntarily.

Procedure and materials. We used the same manual dexterity task, priming materials and experimental procedure as in Study 1. Participants were invited to the laboratory to take part in a study on human behaviour. They were presented with hexagrams and asked to rate them. Then, we administered Promotion Prevention Self-control Scale (Kolańczyk, Bąk & Roczniewska, 2013), the newly developed questionnaire designed to measure promotion and prevention regulatory foci. It includes an additional differentiation (within both promotion and prevention) between standards: ideals (e.g. "*Fulfilling my own aspirations and continuous development are the most important things in my life*") vs. oughts (e.g. "*I often reflect upon what I should and shouldn't do*") and self-control: intuitive/risky (e.g. "*I like taking on new challenges*") vs.

analytical/cautious (e.g. "*I usually prepare the back-up plan*"). Confirmatory factors analysis demonstrated these scales could be aggregated into two major factors: promotion focus and prevention focus. The reliability of the two scales in the present study was α = .74 for promotion and α = .81 for prevention. After filling in Promotion-Prevention Self-control Scale, participants were presented with the manual dexterity task. Before they actually executed the task, we asked them to rate the hexagrams again.

Design. The study was held in 2 (Mind-set: promotion vs. prevention) x 3 (Priming word: agentic trait vs. communal trait vs. neutral word) x 2 (Goal status: before vs. after task introduction) design. The first one was a between-subject variable, and the other two were within-subject variables.

Results

Mind-set assigning. To assign subjects to promotion- or prevention-oriented group, we calculated mean prevention and promotion scores for each participant and subtracted the prevention score from the promotion score, obtaining *mind-set* variable ($M = 0.48$, $SD = 0.75$). We conducted a median-split division ($Mdn = 0.51$) and consequently values above the median suggested promotion focus, whereas values below the median were indicative of prevention focus.

Implicit evaluations. We conducted a mixed-design analysis of variance (ANOVA) for hexagrams' evaluations and obtained a significant interaction between mind-set, priming word and goal status, $F(2,100) = 3.10$; $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .06$. The interaction between priming word and goal status was insignificant for prevention ($F < 1$), but it was significant for promotion, $F(2, 50) = 5.74$; $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .19$. Figure 3 depicts the obtained results.

Promotion-oriented participants. Before task introduction the evaluations of hexagrams preceded by objects differed significantly, $F(2,50) = 12.25$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .33$. Simple effects analysis (NIR tests) revealed that promotion-oriented participants rated hexagrams preceded by neutral words ($M = 0.36$, $SD = 0.54$) significantly more negatively than those preceded by agentic traits ($M = 0.77$, $SD = 0.66$), $p < .01$. They also assessed them significantly more negatively than hexagrams preceded by communal traits ($M = 0.99$, $SD = 0.78$), $p < .001$. Evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic and communal traits differed marginally ($p = .06$). Again, after task introduction we observed differences in evaluations of hexagrams preceded by objects, $F(2,50) = 10.39$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .29$. A simple effects analysis (NIR tests) showed that promotion-oriented participants rated hexagrams preceded by neutral words ($M = 0.28$, $SD = 0.53$) significantly more negatively than those preceded by agentic traits ($M = 0.91$, $SD = 0.87$), $p < .05$. They also assessed them more negatively than hexagrams preceded by communal traits ($M = 0.74$; $SD = 0.86$), $p < .01$. Evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic and communal traits differed marginally ($p = .08$). To observe changes in evaluations, we conducted 6 paired-samples t-tests, comparing evaluations before and after task introduction. Promotion-focused participants marginally increased their liking of hexagrams preceded by agentic traits, $t(25) = 1.55$; $p = .06$ (one-tailed); $d = .34$. They also exhibited a more negative evaluation of hexagrams preceded by communal traits, $t(25) = 2.21$; $p < .05$ (one-tailed); $d = .45$, and those preceded by neutral words, $t(25) = 1.78$; $p < .05$ (one-tailed); $d = .35$, after task introduction.

Prevention-oriented participants. There was no interaction between goal status and priming word, but only a main effect of the priming word, $F(2, 50) = 7.38$; $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .23$. Namely, hexagrams preceded by neutral objects

Figure 3. Mean implicit evaluations as a function of a priming word and goal-status condition for promotion- and prevention-oriented participants in Study 2.
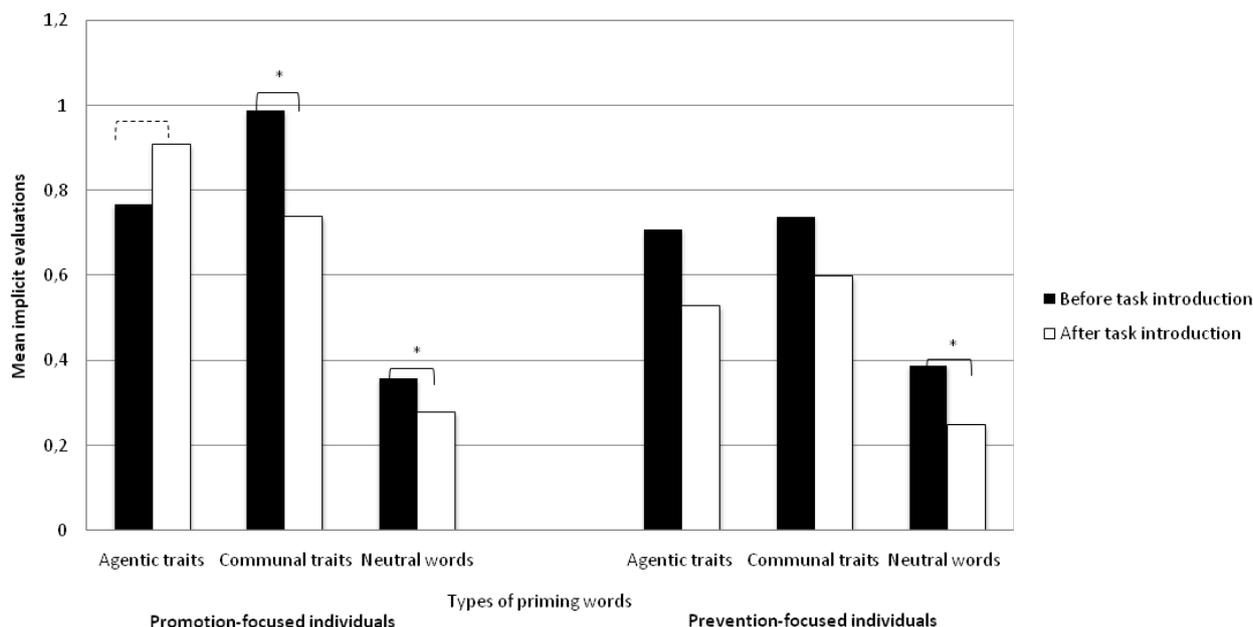
Note. Dash lines indicate trend level. Asterix indicates $p < .05$ level of significance.

were rated significantly more negatively ($M = 0.32$, $SD = 0.50$) than those preceded by agentic ($M = 0.62$, $SD = 0.67$) and communal traits ($M = 0.67$, $SD = 0.65$), $ps < .01$. Evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic and communal traits did not differ significantly from each other ($p > .05$). This pattern of results is reflected in two goal status conditions. Before task introduction the evaluations of hexagrams preceded by objects differed significantly, $F(2, 50) = 5.42$; $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .18$. Simple effects analysis (NIR tests) revealed that prevention-oriented participants rated hexagrams preceded by neutral words significantly more negatively ($M = 0.39$, $SD = 0.53$) than those preceded by agentic traits ($M = 0.71$, $SD = 0.63$), $p < .05$. They also assessed them significantly more negatively than hexagrams preceded by communal traits ($M = 0.74$, $SD = 0.68$), p < .01.The evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic and communal traits did not differ significantly ($p > .05$). Again, after task introduction we observed differences in evaluations of hexagrams preceded by objects, $F(2, 50) = 10.39$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .29$. Simple effects analysis (NIR tests) showed that prevention-oriented participants rated hexagrams preceded by neutral words ($M = 0.25$, $SD = 0.47$) significantly more negatively than those preceded by agentic traits ($M = 0.53$, $SD = 0.71$), $p < .05$. They also assessed them more negatively than hexagrams preceded by communal traits ($M = 0.60$; $SD = 0.62$), $p < .01$. The evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic and communal traits differed marginally ($p = .08$). To observe changes in evaluations, we conducted 6 paired-samples t-tests, comparing evaluations before and after task introduction. Prevention-focused participants did not change their evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic traits, $t(25) = 1.19$; $p > .05$ (one-tailed); $d = .24$. They also did not change their evaluations of hexagrams preceded by communal traits, $t(25) = 1.34$; $p > .05$ (one-tailed); $d = .25$. They only exhibited more negative implicit evaluations of hexagrams preceded by neutral words after task introduction, $t(25) = 2.06$; $p < .05$ (one-tailed); $d = .40$.

Discussion

Results obtained in Study 2 partially confirmed our hypotheses. Similarly to Study 1, we observed a marginally significant increase in positive evaluations of hexagrams preceded by agentic traits and more negative assessment of hexagrams preceded by communal traits and neutral words after task introduction. However, this effect was demonstrated only for promotion-oriented individuals. It was established previously that goal-relevant objects engage attention easily, but mostly when the aspiration to reach the goal is strong (Johnson, Chang, & Lord, 2006). Since promotion is linked to motivation strength (Kolańczyk et al., 2013), we believe that promotion-oriented individuals are more sensitive to information related to goal pursuit and more likely to use it at their advantage. Hence, we presume that self-esteem and self-knowledge might be more important throughout goal pursuit for promotion-oriented individuals. Contrary to our hypothesis, we observed that in case of prevention-oriented participants goal activation

did not affect the implicit evaluations of the personality traits – there was no significant change in their valence. We presume that since prevention is moderately linked with vigilance (Higgins, 1997) and anxiety (Kolańczyk et al., 2013), prevention-oriented participants are less hasty in affective judgments. Moreover, the evaluations of hexagrams preceded by neutral wordsare slightly devalued after task introduction, which shows that individuals inhibit these objects as cognitive noise during goal pursuit (see: Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012).

General Discussion

The present research validated what was repeatedly shown in other studies – affect is assigned to objects as a result of their functionality towards the goal, where objects helping its attainment are rated positively, and those not serving it – are devalued (e.g., Brendl et al., 2003; Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Raymond, Fenske, & Westoby, 2005; Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012). Since agentic knowledge is more important throughout goal pursuit than communal one, we observed a slight increase in the liking of competence-related traits and a decrease in the liking of communion-related traits. Interestingly, this effect was demonstrated using implicit measures, wherein participants are not requested to assess the traits themselves directly, but the measures are taken without them being aware of the subject of assessment. It allows observing the way goals automatically affect the accessibility of evaluative information about objects, which - according to Ferguson and Bargh (2004) and Kolańczyk (2008, 2009) - suggests a more low-level process of an affective self-regulation. Just like other goal-related objects, traits not only become accessible, but are also a target of valuation, which reflects their relevance to the task. In the studies described above after task introduction participants valued agentic traits significantly more than communal ones. Wojciszke and colleagues (2011) showed that self-rated agency is a strong significant predictor of self-esteem in both correlational and experimental studies; at the same time no such effect was found for communion in their studies. These observations were independent of sex or age, and the administered six different measures of self-esteem. The fact that self-esteem is founded on competence-related knowledge of self suggests agentic functions of self-esteem (Wojciszke & Sobiczewska, 2013). Under the assumption that every goal pursuit (e.g., task introduction) activates motives related to self-esteem, in our study we showed that temporal changes in the value of one's traits are more local, namely – they relate to specific contents of self-knowledge, resulting in valuation of agentic and devaluation of communal traits, as a consequence of their functionality. This validates previous findings by Wojciszke and Sobiczewska (2013) who experimentally demonstrated that while other's perceptions were influenced more globally, participant's self-esteem was affected by agentic but not communal primes. The present findings extend it by demonstrating a less deliberative mechanism of such self-regulation during goal pursuit. Interestingly, Wojciszke and Białobrzeska (in this volume)

found that the dimension of communion could become an equally significant (but not more important) predictor of self-esteem for women from collectivistic cultures or when individuals are primed with interdependence. This suggests that activating a goal involving behaviours related to communion (e.g. helping others) can lead to both dimensions gaining an equally positive implicit assessment.

Still, results of Study 2 indicate that what is important and valued depends on the mind-set. In line with expectations based on functionality, agency-over-communion effect was observed, but only for promotion-oriented participants. The relationship between promotion and motivation strength is explanatory of the fact that especially goal-related agency traits are important to promotion-focused individuals when an aim is activated, whereas the communal knowledge is devalued as useless under these circumstances. Such functionality-based changes in evaluations lead to a conclusion that for promotion-oriented individuals goal-pursuit mechanisms are more automatic than controlled – promotion-focused participants depend strongly on affect attributed to objects of different meaning to the task, which guides their automatic goal-pursuit processes. This demonstrates what was previously stated by Kolańczyk (2008): promotion-oriented individuals do not exert strong self-control that deals with monitoring; instead they "trust" well-established standards ("look for sufficient conditions") that affect automatic evaluations.

For prevention-oriented individuals there is no interaction between objects' evaluations and goal status. Both before and after task introduction participants assessed neutral items more negatively than agentic and communal traits, and the latter differed marginally. After task introduction they slightly disliked all the items, regardless of their function to the task, although the effect is significant only for neutral items. Such devaluation can be a sign of ignoring both agency- and communion-related traits during goal pursuit. On the one hand, since Wojdyło and Buczny (2011) demonstrated that the actual vs. ought self-discrepancy (source of prevention; Higgins, 1997) correlates negatively with orientation on agency, one can presume that even goal pursuit might not magnify the importance of agency-related traits for prevention-focused individuals. Furthermore, although the above discrepancy correlates with orientation on communion, communal traits do not play an important role in the task administered in both experiments, therefore we observed no increase in their liking. Presumably, such valuation might occur when the activated goal is more communal in its nature, for example involves interacting with others and therefore requires more communion- than agency-related traits.

The above presumption raises the question of the generality of the previously demonstrated agency-over-communion effect. Firstly, we showed that it is probably valid on condition a goal to be activated possesses more agentic than communal meanings (e.g. building a shape of domino tiles vs. helping others). Wojciszke and colleagues (2011) also pointed to the possibility that a person focuses on agency mostly when an action is being performed; however, when one is in deliberative mind-set and thinks about the action from a temporal perspective (e.g., plans or evaluates it), its communal content may acquire more importance. Secondly, we demonstrated that the effect occurs for certain type of people – namely those, whose motivation to pursue agentic goals is strong, like promotion-oriented individuals. For prevention-focused people, who are oriented more on communion than agency, we would expect to observe a communion-over-agency effect, but only if the goal required warmth or under the circumstances of temporal distance from it (e.g. choosing the goal to pursue or assessing the action after it is completed).

Interestingly, not only the knowledge of one's own positive traits, but also shortcomings can be beneficial to goal pursuit. The research presented in this article prompts to raise the questions of the relative importance of agentic vs. communal negative personality characteristics to goal pursuit. Firstly, positive personality traits are a clear resource; negative personality characteristics are obstacles that may hinder goal pursuit. Prevention-oriented individuals tend to monitor possible impediments (see: Roczniewska & Kolańczyk, 2012); therefore, we expect them to include such traits into their attention (in accordance with a saying "Know your enemy"). This should result in their more positive assessment once the goal is administered. For promotion-oriented individuals we anticipate an inhibition (a negative assessment), because of the salient nature of the character defects (intrusive distractors). These assumptions should be tested in future studies.

One of the limitations of the presented research is the fact that the introduction of repeated measures may have had an influence on the changes in the implicit evaluations of the objects. It would be interesting to see whether the described re-evaluations occur regardless of manual task presentation by making people undertake the implicit evaluations twice without a goal manipulation (the Solomon four group design). Moreover, the fact that taking part in the study can itself activate a goal pursuit can be a limitation of these and any of the previous studies, wherein participants are invited to the laboratory, fill in questionnaires, etc. Such situation can generally give prevalence to the dimension of agency. This could be explanatory of the fact that we observed only a slight increase in positive implicit evaluations of agentic traits.

The studies presented in this article are in line with findings which show that self-esteem is an important predictor of failure and success in goal pursuit and that agentic content is more important in this aspect. They underline that when the goal is active agentic knowledge of self becomes more valued, whereas communal one – devalued, and this pattern reflects their relative importance for attaining the aim. Notably, the results indicate that the valuation of traits changes temporarily along with goal pursuit.

References

Aarts, H., Chartrand, T. L., Custers, R., Danner, U., Dik, G., Jefferis, V. E., & Cheng, C.M. (2005). Social stereotypes and automatic goal pursuit. *Social Cognition, 23*, 465–490.

Aarts, H., Dijksterhuis, A., & De Vries, P. (2001). On the psychology of

drinking: Being thirsty and perceptually ready. *British Journal of Psychology, 92,* 631–642.

Abele, A.E., & Wojciszke, B. (2007). Agency and communion from the perspective of self versus others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93,* 751–763.

Abele, A. & Wojciszke, B. (2014). Communal and Agentic Content in Social Cognition: A Dual Perspective Model. Accepted for *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology.*

Ames, D. R., & Bianchi, E. C. (2008). The agreeableness asymmetry in first impressions: Perceiver's impulse to (mis)judge agreeableness and how it is moderated by power. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34,* 1719–1736.

Bargh, J. A., Chaiken, S., Govender, R., & Pratto, F. (1992). The generality of the automatic attitude activation effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 62,* 893–912.

Bem, S. L. (1981). Gender Schema Theory: A Cognitive Account of Sex-Typing. *Psychological Review, 88,* 354–364.

Brambilla, M., Rusconi, P., Sacchi, S., & Cherubini, P. (2010). Looking for honesty: The primary role of morality (vs. sociability and competence) in information gathering. *European Journal of Social Psychology Psychology, 41,* 135–143.

Brendl, C. M., Markman, A. B., & Messner, C. (2003). The devaluation effect: Activating a need devalues unrelated objects. *Journal of Consumer Research, 29,* 463–473.

Bruner, J. S. (1957). On perceptual readiness. *Psychological Review, 64,* 123–152.

Crocker, J., & Park, L. E. (2004). The costly pursuit of self-esteem. *Psychological Bulletin, 130,* 392–414.

Crowe, E.,& Higgins, E. T. (1997). Regulatory focus and strategic inclinations: Promotion and prevention in decision-making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 69,* 117–132.

Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. (1960). A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 24,* 349–354.

Cuddy, A. J., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2008). Warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social perception: The stereotype content model and the BIAS map. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 40,* 61–149.

Draine, S. C., & Greenwald, A. G. (1998). Replicable unconscious semantic priming. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 127,* 286–303.

Dunning, D. &Balcetis, E. (2013). Wishful Seeing. How Preferences Shape Visual Perception. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22,* 33–37.

Ferguson, M. J., &Bargh, J. A. (2004). Liking is for doing: the effects of goal pursuit on automatic evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87,* 557–572.

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Glick, P. (2007). First judge warmth, then competence: Fundamental social dimensions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 11,* 77–83.

Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review, 94,* 319–341.

Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist, 52,* 1280–1300.

Higgins, E. T., Roney, C., Crowe, E., & Hymes, C. (1994). Ideal versus ought predilections for approach and avoidance: Distinct self-regulatory systems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66,* 276–286.

Higgins, E. T., Shah, J., &Friedman, R. (1997). Emotional responses to goal attainment: Strength of regulatory focus as moderator. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72,* 515–525.

Johnson, R.E., Chang, Ch., &Lord, R.G. (2006). Moving from cognition to behavior: What the research says. *Psychological Bulletin, 132,* 381–415.

Kolańczyk, A. (2008). Wpływ samokontroli na wartościowanie treści związanych z zadaniem. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne, 14,* 201–214.

Kolańczyk, A. (2009). Procesy świadome a automatyzmy w poznaniu społecznym. In: M. Kofta, & M. Kossowska (eds.), *Psychologia poznania społecznego. Nowe idee*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN

Kolańczyk, A., Bąk, W.,& Roczniewska, M. (2013). Skala Samoregulacji Promocyjnej i Prewencyjnej (SSPP). *Psychologia Społeczna, 2,* 203–218.

Kolańczyk, A., Fila-Jankowska, A., Pawłowska-Fusiara, M., & Sterczyński, R. (2004). *Serce w rozumie. Afektywne podstawy orientacji w otoczeniu*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.

LeDoux, J.E. (2000). Emotion Circuits in the Brain. *Annual Review of Neuroscience, 23,*155–184.

Pawłowska-Fusiara, M. (2005). *Asymetria wpływu pozytywnego i negatywnego afektu na pamięć mimowolną* (Praca doktorska niepublikowana). Szkoła Wyższa Psychologii Społecznej, Warszawa.

Payne, B.K., Cheng, C.M., Govorun, O., & Stewart, B.D. (2005). An inkblot for attitudes: Affective misattribution as implicit measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89,* 277–293.

Raymond, J.E., Fenske, M.J., & Westoby, N. (2005). Emotional devaluation of distracting patterns and faces: A consequence of attentional inhibition during visual search? *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 31,* 1404–1415.

Roczniewska. M., & Kolańczyk, A. (2012).Cel uświęca środki, a niekiedy przeszkody? Preferencje zależne od nastawienia regulacyjnego. *Psychologia Społeczna, 7,* 34–47.

Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., & Fazio, R. H. (1992). On the orienting value of attitudes: Attitude accessibility as a determinant of an object's attraction of visual attention. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63,* 198–211.

Seibt, B., Häfner, M., & Deutsch, R. (2007). Prepared to eat: How immediate affective and motivational responses to food cues are influenced by food deprivation. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 37,* 359–379.

Shah, J. Y., &Kruglanski, A. W. (2002). Priming against your will: How goal pursuit is affected by accessible alternatives. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38,* 368–382.

Schwartz, S. H., & Bilsky, W. (1990). Toward a theory of the universal content and structure of values: Extensions and cross-cultural replications. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58,* 878–891.

Sterczyński, R., & Kolańczyk, A. (2001). Rola bodźca docelowego w paradygmacie wizualnego poprzedzania. *Studia Psychologiczne, 39,* 81–98.

Szymańska, B., & Kolańczyk, A. (2002). Zmiana znaczenia afektywnego pojęć w kontekście zadania. *Studia Psychologiczne, 40,* 151–160.

Wojciszke, B. (2005). Morality and competence in person and self perception. *European Review of Social Psychology, 16,* 155–188.

Wojciszke, B. (2010a). Funkcje samooceny. In: A. Kolańczyk & B. Wojciszke (red.). *Motywacje umysłu* (pp. 111–126). Sopot: Smak Słowa.

Wojciszke, B. (2010b). *Sprawczość i wspólnotowość. Podstawowe wymiary spostrzegania społecznego*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.

Wojciszke, B., Baryla, W., Parzuchowski, M., Szymkow, A., & Abele, A. E. (2011). Self-esteem is dominated by agency over communion. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 41,* 617–627.

Wojciszke, B., Bazinska, R., & Jaworski, M. (1998). On the dominance of moral categories in impression formation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 24,* 1245–1257.

Wojciszke, B., & Białobrzeska, O. (this issue). Agency versus Communion as Predictors of Self-esteem: Searching for the Role of Culture and Self-construal. *Polish Psychological Bulletin.*

Wojciszke, B. & Sobiczewska, P. (2013). Memory and Self-Esteem The Role of Agentic and Communal Content. *Social Psychology, 44,* 95–102.

Wojdyło, K. & Buczny, J. (2011). Self-Regulation, Self-Control, and The Ought Self. Measuring Ought Self-Discrepancy: A Psychometric Analysis of SkRAP [Samoregulacja i Samokontrola Powinnościowe: Analiza Psychometryczna Skali Rozbieżności Ja (SkRAP)]. *Psychologia Społeczna, 6,* 375–390.

Ybarra, O., Park, H., Stanik, C., & Lee, D. S. (2012). Self-judgment and reputation monitoring as a function of the fundamental dimensions, temporal perspective, and culture. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 42,* 200–209.