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Effects of Motive for Helping, Recipient's Inability to Reciprocate, and Sex on Devaluation of the Recipient's Competence

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According to an often cited dictum, if a recipient of help is unable to reciprocate, this validates the helper's claim to superior status over the recipient (Blau, 1964). Yet, not only is there scant evidence concerning this assertion, but there are grounds for proposing that it needs to be qualified by the helper's particular motivation for helping, the evaluative attribute in question, and the helper's sex. To test these views, undergraduates of both sexes were asked to imagine that during the preceding weekend they had successfully rescued a boatload of children. For half of the participants, the scenario emphasized efficacy-motivating helping, whereas for the other half, it emphasized empathy-motivated helping. Participants were then put to work on the "easier" of two "randomly assigned" word-forming tasks, whereas their same-sex partner (a confederate) worked on the "harder" task. Once subjects reached their quota they were invited to send their excess letters to the still-struggling co-worker; all did. In return, the confederate attempted successfully (reciprocation) or unsuccessfully (nonreciprocation) to share his or her earnings. As predicted, the efficacy-motivated helpers, unlike their empathy-motivated counterparts, rated themselves as more competent than, but not more sociable than, the recipient who was unable to reciprocate. Weak support was found for the prediction that these differences in perceived competence would largely apply to male helpers. Yet consistent with these differences in perceived competence was a comparable Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effect on helpers' perceptions of being more masculine than their same-sex co-worker—an effect more in evidence among the male helpers.

According to an often cited dictum, if a recipient of help from a nonintimate fails to reciprocate, this failure validates the helper's claim to superior status over the recipient (Blau, 1964). Yet there is only scant evidence bearing directly on this assertion. The present experiment, which grew out of reflections on how status relationships affect and are affected by prosocial behavior (Rosen, 1984), was designed to demonstrate that the putative causal relationship between unreciprocated help and status differentiation needs to be qualified by the helper's particular motivation for offering (even altruistic) help, by the sex of the two parties, and by the attribute dimension in question.

The rationale for these qualifications draws on two different levels of analysis, each of which has something to contribute that the other seems to ignore. One analysis is predicated mainly on an individual psychological preoccupation with the helper, especially on the helper's particular motivation for altruistic activity. (Altruistic helping is usually help given with no expectation of material rewards or social approval.) Thus Karylowski (1982) distinguishes between "endocentric" altruism, that is, doing good to feel good (which he likens to private self-awareness) and "exocentric" altruism, that is, doing good to make the recipient feel good (which closely resembles helping out of empathic concern). Unfortunately, for present purposes, this distinction, like similar distinctions, is linked to the notion of *direction of attention*, which appears to have little to say concerning the interpersonal aftermath of helping.

A case can be made for the position not only that the issue of attentional focus often tends to have been confounded with the issue of motivation or goal (see also Hoover, Wood, & Knowles, 1983), but that the self-directed version has been confined largely to morally ("superego") relevant aspects of self (e.g., Gibbons & Wicklund, 1982; Karylowski, 1982) to the exclusion of efficacy ("ego") relevant aspects of self. The work of Midlarsky (1984) constitutes an exception. It shows that helping promotes the helper's perceptions of self-efficacy. But her work does so in an absolute sense; it does not deal with the relational aspect of status, namely, with how those self-perceptions compare with the helper's perceptions of the recipient's efficacy.

The other unit of analysis is focused explicitly on the emerging status relationship or change of relationship between helper and recipient. This approach largely reflects a sociological perspective, particularly Blau's (1964). Blau not only considered at length the status implications of reciprocated versus nonreciprocated help, but was among those who went on to speculate that helpers might even prefer nonreciprocation to reciprocation, out of a desire to retain their temporarily enhanced status and ensuing power (see also Worchel, 1984). Yet the evidence is largely confined to Blau's study of peer relations among agents, mostly male, in one unit of a federal bureaucracy (Blau, 1963).

The relational aspect of status can be brought into psychological focus by considering two alternative motivations for helping, namely, efficacy-motivated helping versus empathy-motivated helping. The relevance of efficacy-motivated helping is highlighted by Kanfer's proposal that people should be trained to give help so as to enhance or at least maintain their perceptions of efficacy or control over the environment (Kanfer, 1979). The training program would begin by providing external rewards for successful helping. Such rewards would eventually give way to

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self-rewards for helping. In contrast, Feshbach's approach proposes that in the interest of promoting prosocial and cooperative behavior, individuals should be trained in cognitive-affective empathy. Namely, on witnessing a person who needs help, one should engage in (a) perspective taking, (b) affect matching (rather than merely trying to understand the person's feelings), then (c) engage in appropriate helping activity (Feshbach, 1978).

Suppose that an efficacy-motivated orientation for helping is activated by the perception of someone needing help. The proximal goal is to overcome the technical problems of rendering that help effectively; the distal goal is an enhanced level of self-efficacy. Inasmuch as this helper would wish to know how his or her self-efficacy has been changed through giving help, the conspicuous availability for social comparison purposes of the recipient of help should serve to elicit at least a momentary judgment from the efficacy-motivated altruist of being superior to, that is, more efficacious than, the recipient (see Festinger, 1954; Gruder, 1977).

By contrast, suppose that an empathy-motivated orientation for helping (in Feshbach's sense) is activated by an awareness of someone needing help. In the present case the proximal goal is one of overcoming the distress of the person in need; the distal goal, if any, might be the vicarious sharing in the felt relief of the person after help is extended successfully. It seems plausible that this orientation would promote, at least temporarily, a perceived *unit relation* (Heider, 1958) between helper and recipient, namely, perceptions of similarity to the recipient from the viewpoint of the helper (see also Gould & Sigall, 1977). One implication of this induced similarity is that it would inhibit perceptions of status inequality, of being superior to the recipient, once help is rendered.

If the recipient were to reciprocate that help shortly thereafter, then the situation would change drastically for the efficacy-motivated helper, but not for the empathy-motivated helper. In the case of the efficacy-minded helper, the reality constraints of reciprocation would serve to dispel the temporary claim of being more efficacious than the former recipient. On the other hand, reciprocation should make little difference in the case of the empathy-minded helper; it might even strengthen the perception of a unit relation. In short, this line of reasoning calls for an interaction effect of motive base for helping and the factor of reciprocation on perceived superiority over the recipient.

A second potential qualifier is sex. Several lines of research indicate that males favor equalitarian relationships less than females, and have less affinity for an empathic orientation than do females (e.g., Austin & McGinn, 1977; Hoffman, 1977). There is evidence, too, that males generally try to assert status differentials, whereas females will do so if the activities are both ego-involving and familiar (Reis & Jackson, 1981). An experiment by Wills (1983) is noteworthy in demonstrating that male participants (the sample did not include females) who are induced by the experimenter to help a target person will attribute less ability to that person than will those who are not induced to extend help, regardless of the target's task performance. These various lines of research suggest that, given same-sex recipients, the interaction effect of motive base and reciprocation will be found more dependably among male helpers than among female helpers.

A third potential qualifier is the attribute dimension in question. In particular, self-other evaluations being made with ref-

erence to an attribute that reflects on matters of competence or ability, rather than to an attribute that does not, would be more responsive to variations in motive base and reciprocation. It has been shown that repeated offers of help on a task described as indicative of intelligence and creativity rather than of mood, led male recipients to view the offers as an attempt by the male helper to demonstrate his superiority (Nadler, Fisher, & Ben-Itzhak, 1983; see also Heider, 1958; Ladieu, Hanfmann, & Dembo, 1947). In the view of the present investigators, the predictions just mentioned should hold for self-other evaluations on perceived competence, but not on perceived sociability. Two preliminary simulation studies lend some support for this expectation (Rosen, 1984).

Implicit in Blau's theorizing about the significance of nonreciprocation for status differentiation is that it occurs because of the recipient's apparent inability to reciprocate. If, however, it became evident to the helper that the recipient was quite capable of reciprocation but simply did not wish to do so, then a drastically different set of predictions would seem called for. For instance, it might engender perceptions of having been exploited (see Clark, 1983), perceptions that would hardly contribute to perceived superiority in the efficacy-motivated helper. And it might destroy the perception of a unit relation in the empathy-minded helper. One might suspect that under such circumstances, perceptions of superiority might arise with regard to sociability rather than to competence. One might also expect hostile reactions, regardless of motive base (Donnenwerth & Foa, 1974). The present experiment is restricted to nonreciprocation based on the recipient's apparent desire to reciprocate, but the inability to do so because of the objective circumstances.

The probable existence of personal moderators led to the inclusion, for exploratory purposes, of several individual difference measures that were judged to be conceptually related to some of the variables noted. The measures pertain, respectively, to "chronic" empathy, concern about being indebted to others, concern over others' attempts to reciprocate one's help, perceived masculinity, and altruism. However, inasmuch as the measures were administered at the conclusion of each experimental session, and the responses to most of them showed some systematic effects, they are considered later only with regard to whether they provide converging support.

The key predictions, in short, are as follows: (a) Motive base will interact with reciprocation such that greater superiority in perceived competence will occur following nonreciprocation than following reciprocation of efficacy-motivated helpers; in contrast, the factor of reciprocation will exert relatively little influence on perceived superiority in competence of the empathy-motivated helpers. (b) This Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effect will clearly apply to male helpers. (c) The effect will be attenuated, if evident at all, in the case of female helpers. (d) There will be no systematic effects on superiority in perceived sociability.

Method

Subjects and Procedure

Undergraduates (60 males and 60 females) were invited to participate in an experiment on "the effects of mood on word-game performance." On arriving, the participant met a co-worker (a confederate) of the same sex. They were told that each was to try forming a quota of words out of letters, and that gum balls would be awarded as symbolic earnings.

Due to "random" assignment, one worker (the true participant) would work on the "easier" task, whereas the other would work on the "harder" task, which involved a smaller number and more restricted assortment of letters. The two co-workers were then each directed to separate rooms, there to receive further instructions via intercom.

Before beginning the task proper, each worker was to read a short story in the booklet on the table. The ostensible purpose was to put the worker in a particular mood. The story was entitled, "Good Mood Condition: A Daring Rescue at Sea," and described certain events that had occurred at the weekend company picnic. In brief, participants were urged to imagine that they were instrumental in rescuing a drifting boatload of frightened children, and were then publicly praised by the grateful parents. For participants in the *efficacy* condition, emphasis was placed on the technical problems of attempting the rescue, and the satisfaction they felt in overcoming those technical problems. For participants in the *empathy* condition, the scenario dwelt on the initial fright of the children, and the satisfaction they themselves derived from being able to calm those fears. Both scenarios ended with, "Now it's Monday. Even heroes have to earn a living." Immediately thereafter, participants were told to complete a questionnaire concerning the details of the picnic.

Following this, participants began their word construction. Once the true participants announced that they had completed their quota, the experimenter remarked that they had finished well before the deadline. They were then asked whether they wished to donate their unused letters to the co-worker, to which they invariably agreed, and for which they then heard the co-worker thanking them. Shortly thereafter the co-worker, too, announced publicly that she or he had completed their quota.

The experimenter then promptly declared that the participant who had worked on the easier task had earned one small gum ball. In the *reciprocation* condition that followed, the experimenter stated that the co-worker would receive three small gum balls as pay, inasmuch as she or he had had to complete the harder task. In response, the co-worker voiced a desire to share those earnings with the participant, "without whose help the task would not have been completed on time," then asked the experimenter to give one of the three small gum balls that the co-worker had earned to the helpful worker. In the *nonreciprocation* condition, the pay was one large gum ball. Professing a desire to share it in appreciation of the participant's help, the co-worker banged appropriately, then expressed regret at being unable to break up the large ball.¹

Postexperimental questionnaires were then administered, after which participants were debriefed and awarded participation credit. The questionnaires included manipulation checks and checks on related issues, the main dependent variables, namely, the evaluation scales, a pair of rating scales bearing on preferences for (non)reciprocation from their co-worker, and lastly, several individual difference measures.

Measures of Self-Other Evaluation

Measures of the key dependent variables of self-other evaluation were based on four sets of six-item ratings made by the helper. The ratings were on (a) own competence, (b) the recipient's competence, (c) own sociability, and (d) the recipient's sociability. The items were derived from factor analyses in the two simulation studies mentioned earlier (Rosen, 1984). Each item involved a 7-point bipolar scale. The six items constituting the Competence factor were weak-strong, incapable-capable, naive-sophisticated, awkward-poised, unskilled-skilled, and incompetent-competent. The six comprising the Sociability factor were insensitive-sensitive, egotistic-altruistic, cruel-kind, not likeable-likeable, vain-modest, and unsympathetic-sympathetic.

Participants in the present experiment were first asked to rate themselves on those 12 items, then to rate the recipient on those same items. The six ratings on a given factor and target person were combined through simple summation. The four factor scores thus derived for each participant were further reduced to two *superiority* scores, in testing the present hypotheses. Namely, the recipient's competence score (as attributed by

the helper) was subtracted from the helper's self-rated competence score; likewise, the recipient's sociability score was subtracted from the helper's self-rated sociability score.

Individual Difference Measures

Five "dispositional" measures were administered after the participants had responded to items involving self-other evaluation and to the manipulation checks. One measure was the short form of the Spence-Helmreich-Stapp Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974), which was scored in the direction of perceived masculinity; the item, kind, was dropped because it also was a component of the Sociability factors. Participants were also asked to rate their partner on the same 23-item set of PAQ items. Another individual difference measure was an adaptation of the Rushton et al. Altruism scale (Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981). A third measure was the Fantasy-Empathy scale of Stotland, Mathews, Sherman, Hansson, & Richardson (1978).

A fourth was the Indebtedness scale of Greenberg and Westcott (Greenberg & Westcott, 1983), which appears to measure aversion to being a debtor. A fifth scale consisted of six items constructed ad hoc by the investigators to reflect the preference for being a creditor. The pattern of total-sample intercorrelations among the six items suggested two distinct "creditor" clusters: a four-item cluster (average $r(118) = .420$) that appeared to address satisfaction with nonreciprocation (e.g., "I don't bother keeping track of whom I've helped.") and a two-item pair ($r(118) = .315$, $p < .0005$) that appeared to capture dissatisfaction with recipients who reciprocate (e.g., "People I try to help don't know how to accept help gracefully.").

Responses to the Altruism scale and the Greenberg-Westcott scale showed no systematic effects approaching significance, nor did those scales contribute as predictors. Consequently, they are not discussed further.

Results

Manipulation Checks and Related Issues

As a check on the motive-base manipulation, participants were asked to rate, on a 7-point scale, the extent to which, in the picnic situation, the difficulties in bringing back a boatload of children (endpoint of 7) versus the difficulties of helping the children overcome their fears and anxieties (endpoint of 1) had stood out more for them. As anticipated, those in the empathy condition were significantly more likely ($M = 3.73$) than those in the efficacy condition ($M = 4.18$) to endorse the latter aspects, $F(1, 112) = 8.63$, $p < .004$, no other effects were significant. Participants were also asked to indicate the extent to which they

¹ The stratagem of allocating the more difficult vocabulary task for relatively more "pay" to the co-worker was adapted from Clark and Mills (1979, Experiment 1). If, instead, the present participants been assigned the more difficult task, and they had succeeded in completing it before the co-worker had completed the easier task, that would probably have guaranteed a judgment of superior competence, regardless of motive base and reciprocation. Our participants, like those in the Clark and Mills experiment, were also encouraged to donate their extra letters to the co-worker. One important difference concerns the nature of the incentive. They used extra points toward presumably needed course credit as the incentive and the means by which the recipient could reciprocate. We elected to go instead with gum, partly because other experiments (e.g., Morris & Rosen, 1973) had shown that participants seem to accept such symbolic pay as appropriate, and because we wanted our nonreciprocation condition (unlike theirs) to convey the explicit impression, for reasons stated earlier, that the co-worker was motivated to reciprocate but unable to do so, due to the objective nature of the pay.

were in a good mood (endpoint of 7) versus bad mood (endpoint of 1). There were no significant differences; the average participant claimed to be in a good mood ($M = 5.74$).

Regarding the manipulation of reciprocation, participants were asked to indicate the number of gum balls earned (0 to 5) that they offered their co-worker (the answer was of course "0") and the number (0 to 5) of gum balls that their co-worker had offered them. There was a highly significant effect of reciprocation, in the appropriate direction, on the second question, $F(1, 112) = 89.47, p < .0001$. Furthermore, only the factor of reciprocation exerted a significant effect on both "creditor" scores: Those who had experienced reciprocation later expressed less "chronic" satisfaction and greater "chronic" dissatisfaction than did those who had encountered nonreciprocation, $F(1, 112) = 4.24, p < .042, F(1, 112) = 5.89, p < .002$, respectively. Moreover, responses to the Fantasy-Empathy scale also showed a main effect of reciprocation, $F(1, 112) = 4.17, p < .044$, in the direction of relatively greater self-reported "chronic" empathy in the nonreciprocation condition.

To determine whether the self-efficacy induction was in actuality an induction of relative inattention to externals, participants were tested for accuracy of recall concerning four details of the picnic, each item calling for the identification of the correct alternative out of six possible alternatives. The four items were as follows: At what location did the participant and fellow employee eat their dinner? What happened while they were eating? Who noticed the problem? Who solved the problem? The correct answers, respectively, were "at the lake," "the children stranded in the lifeboat," "I (the research participant) did," "I (the research participant) did and Pat helped."

The average participant recalled correctly at least three of four details. There was, however, a significant main effect of motive base such that the efficacy-motivated participants showed more accurate recall ($M = 3.32$) than did the empathy-motivated participants ($M = 2.92$), $F(1, 112) = 7.68, p < .007$. Participants in both motive-base conditions showed over 95% correct recall on the first two items. The efficacy-motivated helper began to pull ahead on the third item but not significantly (82% vs. 72%). They did pull ahead significantly on the fourth item (60% vs. 32%), $\chi^2(1, N = 120) = 5.25, p < .025$.

Participants were also asked to rate the difficulty of their word-building task and of the co-worker's word-building task, respectively. As expected, the co-worker's task was rated as significantly more difficult than their own task, $t(112) = 22.09, p < .001$. Furthermore, they rated the extent of their co-worker's contribution to the speedy completion of their own task, and how much they themselves had contributed to the speedy completion of their partner's task. As expected, they rated their own contribution to the partner's task as far greater than the partner's contribution to their own task completion, $t(112) = 15.52, p < .001$.

Superiority in Perceived Competence

The first hypothesis calls for a Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effect such that efficacy-motivated helpers would regard themselves as more competent than their co-worker, provided that their co-worker was unable to reciprocate their help; but, if the helpers are empathy motivated, then their perceptions of superior competence should be relatively unaffected by the

factor of reciprocation. Consistent with this hypothesis, a Motive Base \times Reciprocation \times Sex analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the superiority difference scores produced a significant Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effect in the appropriate direction, $F(1, 112) = 4.26, p < .041$. Individual cell means, not only with regard to perceived superiority but also with respect to the component ratings of self and of the recipient, are shown in the upper section of Table 1.

According to the second and third hypotheses, the predicted Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effect should be particularly evident in the case of male helpers, but should be attenuated, at best, in the case of female helpers. Although the three-way interaction was nonsignificant, $F(1, 112) = 1.50, ns$, planned comparisons significantly supported the expected two-way interaction in the case of the males, $F(1, 112) = 5.42, p < .025$, and showed a nonsignificant two-way interaction in the case of the females, $F < 1.00$. The females, however, also came closest in claiming superior competence under efficacy nonreciprocation.

Conventional three-way ANOVAs were conducted, in addition, on each of the two component subscores of superior competence. No significant effects were found with respect to self-rated competence. Regarding helpers' evaluations of the recipient's competence, although the Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction was only of borderline significance, $F(1, 112) = 3.44, p < .066$, the pattern of means was consistent with the pattern obtained on the superiority scores. Namely, least competence was attributed to the co-worker in the efficacy-nonreciprocation condition, whereas greatest competence was attributed to the co-worker in the efficacy-reciprocation condition. A significant Reciprocation \times Sex interaction effect was also found, $F(1, 112) = 4.33, p < .040$, such that under nonreciprocation, males rated the co-worker least favorably, whereas females rated the co-worker most favorably. There was also a main effect of sex: Males generally rated the recipient as less competent than did females, $F(1, 112) = 13.76, p < .0003$.

Superiority in Perceived Sociability

It was hypothesized that there would be no interaction effect of motive base and reciprocation on superiority in perceived sociability. None was found. The difference scores on perceived sociability were generally quite small. In fact, ignoring signs, the average superiority score for sociability ($M = 0.87$) is significantly smaller than the average superiority score for competence ($M = 1.97$), $t(119) = 11.61, p < .001$, a finding that is consistent with findings in the preliminary simulation studies.

Three-way ANOVAs on the two components of perceived sociability yielded a Reciprocation \times Sex effect in self-rated sociability, $F(1, 112) = 5.66, p < .020$, such that females rated themselves as more sociable than did the males, but only under nonreciprocation. As for the recipient's sociability, only a main effect of sex was obtained, $F(1, 112) = 8.99, p < .005$, the females being more positively disposed toward the recipient than were the males. Generally stated, the females gave more favorable sociability ratings both to themselves and to the recipient than did males.

Although superior competence and superior sociability were only modestly correlated, $r(110) = .244, p < .008$, three-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were performed, with each

Table 1
 Mean Effects of Motive Base, Reciprocation, and Sex on Helper's Evaluations of Own Versus Recipient's Competence and Own Versus Recipient's Masculinity

Motive base and sex	Level of reciprocation					
	Nonreciprocation			Reciprocation		
	Self	Recipient	Supr.	Self	Recipient	Supr.
Perceived competence						
Efficacy						
Males	33.60	29.80	3.80	33.07	34.60	-1.53
Females	34.60	34.73	-0.13	32.60	34.13	-1.53
Empathy						
Males	34.47	32.33	2.14	34.87	32.07	2.80
Females	33.93	35.93	-2.00	33.07	34.93	-1.86
Perceived masculinity						
Efficacy						
Males	96.47	90.40	6.07	86.27	94.00	-7.73
Females	83.07	85.20	-2.13	82.67	88.87	-6.20
Empathy						
Males	93.53	92.93	0.60	92.93	90.73	2.20
Females	81.13	86.40	-5.27	85.93	89.53	-3.60

Note. Larger means under self and recipient signify perceptions of greater competence or greater masculinity. Supr. (Superiority) score signifies mean self-evaluation minus mean evaluation of recipient.

superiority measure, in turn, serving as the covariate for the other. Essentially the same significant effects were obtained on superior competence, whereas no significant effects were obtained on superior sociability.

Situational Preference for Nonreciprocation

Prior to responding to the "chronic" individual difference measures, participants rated via 7-point scales, where a 7 signified *maximum endorsement*, the extent to which they had "really wanted to help" the co-worker, and how appropriate it was for the co-worker to offer earnings to the helper. Their responses to the first question revealed a disordinal Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effect, $F(1, 112) = 8.08, p < .006$. Specifically, if they had experienced reciprocation, the efficacy-motivated helpers were less likely ($M = 5.70$) than the empathy-motivated helpers ($M = 6.40$) to report that they had wanted to give help. But, if they had experienced nonreciprocation, they were more likely ($M = 6.23$) than their empathy-motivated counterparts ($M = 5.67$) to report that they had wanted to help.

Responses to the second question yielded a significant Motive Base \times Reciprocation \times Sex interaction effect, $F(1, 112) = 4.69, p < .033$. Suffice it to say that the efficacy-motivated helpers who had experienced nonreciprocation were least likely of all to report that it was appropriate for their co-worker to attempt reciprocation.

Perceived Masculinity

There is ample reason for expecting perceived competence to be related to perceived masculinity. Accordingly, because participants had been asked to rate their same-sex co-worker on the same PAQ items as they had rated themselves, self-minus-other difference scores, that is, "superior masculinity" scores, were

constructed from these pairs of ratings, and subjected to a three-way ANOVA. (See lower section of Table 1 for cell means.)

Only one significant effect was obtained, namely, a Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction, $F(1, 112) = 4.22, p < .043$. Although no three-way interaction effect was obtained, planned comparison revealed, as in the case of perceived competence, a significant Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effect in the case of the males, $F(1, 112) = 4.48, p < .05$, and not in the case of the females, $F(1, 112) < 1.00$. Male participants in the efficacy-nonreciprocation condition were distinctly more likely than those in the efficacy-reciprocation condition to see themselves as more masculine than their co-worker; reciprocation appeared to make little difference for participants in the empathy conditions.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results make it plain that Blau overstated the case: Reciprocation, per se, plays no necessary causal role in status differentiation. Although exposure to reciprocation, as opposed to nonreciprocation, may have led the helpers in this experiment to express relatively greater general dissatisfaction with individuals who do reciprocate help, it produced no main effect on their perceptions of superiority over the co-worker they had helped. The causal role of reciprocation is more circumscribed. Its impact is qualified by a number of factors.

One important factor is the particular motivation that prompts the individual to extend help. The present experiment demonstrated that perceived superiority in competence was affected by reciprocation if the helper was efficacy motivated, not if the helper was empathy-motivated. Namely, it was only the efficacy-motivated participants who saw themselves as more competent than the worker they had helped if the latter was unable to reciprocate. Converging support for these contrasting motivational bases is found in participants' subsequent reports of whether they had

really wanted to help. In the case of the efficacy-motivated participants, those who had encountered nonreciprocation were more inclined to say that they wanted to help than did those who had experienced reciprocation. The reverse pattern was expressed by the empathy-motivated participants; those who experienced reciprocation were more likely to say that they wanted to help than did those who experienced nonreciprocation.

The nature of the evaluative dimension constitutes a further qualifier. Clear support was found for the prediction that the interactive effects of reciprocation and motive base on perceived superiority would not apply to the attribute of sociability. Moreover, consistent with findings in earlier studies, the absolute superiority (i.e., self-other difference) scores in the case of sociability were significantly smaller than the corresponding scores on competence.

Sex was proposed as a third qualifier, namely, that the interaction effects of reciprocation and motive base on perceptions of superior competence would be more applicable to males than to females. Although the planned comparisons were found to be appropriately significant in the case of the males and not of the females, the failure to obtain a significant three-way interaction effect, suggests that, at best, only weak support can be claimed for the sex-specific predictions.

However, the opportunity to construct superiority scores with regard to perceived masculinity demonstrated a close parallel between perceived superiority in competence and perceived superiority in masculinity. In contrast to the efficacy motivated who had experienced reciprocation, the efficacy-motivated participants who had experienced nonreciprocation judged themselves to be significantly more masculine than their same-sex co-worker. On the other hand, the superiority judgments of empathy-motivated participants with regard to masculinity were unaffected by the variable of reciprocation. These results, too, were relatively more applicable to male helpers.²

There are a number of additional issues that need to be addressed. One such issue has to do with the locus of changes that were induced in perceived competence. Analysis of the components of the superiority scores revealed that self-rated competence was unaffected by motive base and reciprocation. On the other hand, perceptions of the co-worker's competence showed the familiar Motive Base \times Reciprocation pattern. Although the latter results were of marginal significance, they were consistent with results obtained in the simulation studies (Rosen, 1984). A stock interpretation might be that important attributes of the self-image are relatively resistant to change. However, studies by Dovidio and Gaertner (1983) that included self-other comparisons in a prosocial context make this interpretation untenable: one study showed changes primarily in self-ratings, another showed changes primarily in ratings of the partner, and a third showed changes in both components.³ Another possibility is that the present paradigm provides ambiguous information with regard to self-efficacy, namely, the knowledge that one had completed the task unaided and was then able to help, as against the knowledge of having been given the easier task. Given such a reality constraint, a safer course of action is to devalue the recipient of help, unless the recipient reciprocates.

Another issue is the matter of differential attention. Convincing support was found for the view that the notion of efficacy-motivated altruism did not imply inattentiveness to externals. Accuracy of recall was, in fact, superior in the efficacy-motivated

than the empathy-motivated helper. The differences emerged, however, on items involving allocation of credit for the rescue, with the efficacy-motivated more accurately recalling that they played the important role but that a fellow employee had also helped. Unfortunately, because no items put the participant in a relatively minor role, it is not entirely clear as to whether the efficacy-motivated participants were attentive to these allocation-relevant items because they were motivated to be credited with success, or whether it was because the items in question were relevant to the matter of competence; perhaps both are involved. It could also be that rather than showing inaccurate memory on those items, the empathy-motivated participants preferred to adopt a more equalitarian allocation stance.

At any rate, these "recall" data strengthen the position taken earlier that social comparison processes are important to the efficacy-motivated helper in determining how the preexisting level of self-efficacy has been changed by the act of helping. But is the social comparison of the self-evaluative sort, namely, a search for information enabling an objective assessment of one's ability, typically involving "upward" comparison? Or is it of the self-enhancing sort, namely, a search for information that permits self-esteem maintenance, typically involving "downward" comparison? Wills' (1983) position is that self-enhancing social comparison is characteristic of individuals with low self-esteem, who derive comfort from finding someone even worse off. It may simply be that people with low self-esteem, like efficacy-motivated altruists, come to use downward comparison, but via different routes. Those with low self-esteem do so by searching for people who are worse off. The efficacy-motivated altruists use a more active route. By definition, of course, they help people who are worse off, but the social comparison that arises is inevitably linked to the conspicuous availability of the recipient of help, and is contingent on the proviso that the help be successful and that it not be reciprocated. Alternatively, it may be that in the efficacy-motivated altruist, one finds the exception to the proposition that self-evaluation and downward comparison are in opposition.

Up to this point, we have skirted the question of whether the predictions made and the results obtained could be more successfully encompassed within an existing theory, in particular, the theory of communal versus exchange relationships (Clark & Mills, 1979). After all, the factor of reciprocation and its contrasting evaluative effects in these two types of relationship are

² Given the evidence of Reis and Jackson (1981) that type of activity may be important for females, the question arises as to whether the tasks in the present experiment were inappropriate for the females. An independent sample of largely female undergraduates was provided with an abbreviated version of the boat task and of the word-forming task, and asked to rate each task with regard to which sex would be more familiar with it, would perform it better, and would enjoy it more. Males were given the distinct edge with regard to the boat rescue; females were given a slight edge with regard to the word forming. Inasmuch as the females in the experiment proper were told to imagine that they had succeeded in rescuing the children, and in view of the fact that the evaluations in the experiment proper were made after, and with reference to, the word-building context, it seems unlikely that task inappropriateness was a serious confound in the present experiment.

³ It is unlikely that the order in which the evaluations were made (self-evaluations followed by evaluations of the recipient) is an alternative explanation, judging from the results obtained in other studies involving self-other evaluations (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Rosen, 1984).

central to the theory. There might be a temptation, for example, to coordinate the empathic orientation to a communal orientation and the efficacy orientation to an exchange-minded orientation. Support for such a linkage might be drawn from the proposition that members of an exchange relationship are less likely to perceive themselves as a unit (Clark, 1983). Yet, the communally minded are known to prefer nonreciprocation just as our efficacy-minded helpers were shown to prefer nonreciprocation, which would make them strange bedfellows indeed. Furthermore, the key dependent variable in the communal-exchange framework is attraction to the other party, whereas the key dependent variable in the present experiment is perceived superiority in competence (a close cousin of which turns out to be superiority in masculinity). If one were to consider perceived sociability as an approximation of attraction, and that the context in which the factor of reciprocation was manipulated largely conveyed an aura conducive to an exchange relationship, then it would follow that reciprocation should have exerted a direct effect on the perceived sociability of the partner. This did not occur. At this stage of the present theory, the comparisons are premature.

A reader had raised the important question of whether the motive-base manipulation simply involved the priming of cold cognitive schemas about prosocial behavior, and had little to do with motivation. Although the design and hypotheses did not provide a direct test that systematic motivational differences were indeed induced, there are bits of data in the present experiment and elsewhere that do support the motivational premise. For instance, despite the acknowledgement by the average participant of being in a good mood state, and despite the fact that they all helped, the Motive Base \times Reciprocation interaction effects on their subsequent admissions of whether they really had wanted to help their co-worker, certainly is a statement about differential motivation.

The present theorizing was influenced, too, by experimental evidence indicating that cognition (perspective taking) alone does not directly affect helping (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978) and that high induced empathy is a source of altruistic motivation (Toi & Batson, 1982). Admittedly, the critical dependent variable in those experiments was the extent to which helping occurred, not post-helping evaluations. Yet the logic underlying the motive-base distinction could be extended to include predictions concerning the differential likelihood of helping, and in so doing, provide more direct evidence of differential motivation. For instance, it seems plausible that the efficacy motivated, unlike the empathy motivated, would be less inclined to help if the nature of the help (e.g., something that would be inconvenient for the recipient to do) bore little relevance for self-efficacy. It also seems plausible that the efficacy motivated, unlike the empathy motivated, would be less deterred from offering help by a concern for whether the person who appeared to be in distress really wished to be helped.⁴

This portrait of the efficacy-motivated altruist also has implications for current programs fostering self-efficacy training. The present results suggest that such training programs may engender *interpersonal* costs that have gone undetected heretofore. For instance, it seems plausible that the practice of such altruism may foster not only status inequalities, which imply a diminished sense of self-efficacy in the recipients of help, but also tension in the relationship of the efficacy-motivated helpers to their ben-

eficiaries (see Nadler, Fisher, & Ben-Itzhak, 1983). Anticipating such interpersonal costs, might not the prospective recipient be more receptive to help from an empathy-motivated helper?

⁴ The senior author recently discovered unexpectedly a substantial negative correlation between two conceptually relevant individual difference measures, one being the Personal Efficacy subscale of Paulhus (1983), which deals with generalized expectancies of control over one's impersonal environment; the other being the Empathic Concern subscale of Davis (1983), which deals with generalized felt concern for others' distress and misfortune, $r(98) = -.48, p < .0001$. This points to the interesting possibility of Person \times Situation experiments in the present problem area. Evidence recently reported that masculinity may *inhibit* helping in emergencies (Tice & Baumeister, 1985) points to additional such possibilities.

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