Adolescent Communal Narcissism and Peer Perceptions

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Abstract

Objective: The present study extended recent work on communal narcissism to a sample of at-risk adolescents. Although narcissism is widely considered an agentic personality construct, Gebauer and colleagues (Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplanken, & Maio, 2012) demonstrated the existence and utility of a communal narcissism construct in adults. The extent to which this variant of narcissism applies to adolescents is not yet known. Because communal narcissism (e.g., feeling that one is the most helpful, is a great influence on others, will bring about world peace) may actually be aversive to others, we investigated the associated self- and peer perceptions of adolescent communal narcissism.
Method: Participants were 136 adolescents (104 males, 32 females; 52.2% White, 42.2% Black, 5.6% Other) aged 16–19, who were attending a 22-week residential program together. Participants completed self-report measures of narcissism and interpersonal behavior, as well as a peer nomination procedure.
Results: Self-reported communal narcissism was significantly related to self-reported pro-social behavior but was associated with peer-reported aggression, similar to the findings for nonpathological narcissism, which is considered agentic.
Conclusions: Adolescent communal narcissism appears to be tied to negative peer perceptions. The implications for understanding the interpersonal consequences of adolescent grandiosity in communal domains are discussed.

Keywords: Narcissism, adolescent

According to Gebauer and colleagues (2012), narcissism can be expressed in agentic or communal ways, which reflect the avenues through which one seeks to achieve narcissistic self-fulfillment. Traditionally, agentic narcissism has been the exclusive focus of research. Individuals with high levels of agentic narcissism are preoccupied with self-enhancement in domains that afford them a sense of superiority and individual success (e.g., intelligence, competence, leadership). Notably, Gebauer and colleagues (2012) proposed a different variant of narcissism (i.e., communal narcissism) that is focused on grandiose self-views in communal domains, such as agreeableness, interpersonal warmth, and conscientiousness. Through such a self-perception, individuals with high communal narcissism may achieve narcissistic goals (e.g., esteem, power, admiration) by means of being viewed as superior on communal attributes, including helpfulness and other affiliative behaviors (Gebauer et al., 2012). The few studies on communal narcissism to date have supported its distinction from agentic narcissism (Giacomin & Jordan 2015; Luo, Cai, Sedikides, & Song, 2014). More specifically, individuals who endorse agentic narcissism may present themselves as having a supreme belief in their ability to lead others, whereas communal narcissism may portray a unique belief in their ability to bring about harmony and to benefit

others (Luo et al., 2014). This construct has not been directly examined in adolescents.

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the concept of communal narcissism can be extended to an adolescent sample. In part, the investigation considered how communal narcissism relates to more traditional, agentic conceptualizations of narcissism and other indicators of self-perception. Furthermore, because communal narcissism involves an orientation toward one's relationships with, and concern for, others, this study examined both self- and peer-reported aggressive and pro-social behaviors as a function of communal narcissism.

Dimensions of Narcissism

To date, a robust literature has defined and measured narcissism in somewhat different ways, although an agentic orientation has been central to these various conceptualizations. For example, much of the empirical research on narcissism has used the

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Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) and its derivatives, including the Narcissistic Personality Inventory for Children (NPIC; Barry, Frick, & Killian, 2003), which has been used extensively with at-risk adolescents (e.g., Barry, Grafeman, Adler, & Pickard, 2007; Barry & Kauten, 2014; Barry, Loflin, & Doucette, 2015; Barry & Wallace, 2010; Golmaryami & Barry, 2010). The dimension of narcissism measured by the NPI and NPIC is often referred to as normal or nonpathological (Miller & Campbell, 2011), is prototypical of agentic narcissism, and focuses on feelings of superiority, vanity, a perceived penchant for leadership, and a willingness to exploit others. Nonpathological narcissism is associated with aggression in adolescents (e.g., Barry et al., 2007; Kauten, Barry, & Leachman, 2013; Washburn, McMahon, King, Reinecke, & Silver, 2004), and the NPI has been the basis for extant comparisons between agentic and communal narcissism in adults (Gebauer et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014).

A more recent body of research has delineated two aspects of so-called pathological narcissism: grandiose and vulnerable. Grandiose narcissism includes fantasies of one's superiority and a tendency to self-enhance through both exploitative and helpful means, whereas vulnerable narcissism involves a sense of self contingent on appraisals of others, feelings of shame, and devaluing others while seeking approval from them (Pincus et al., 2009; Zeigler-Hill, Clark, & Pickard, 2008). Although these dimensions have not been the focus of investigations regarding an agentic-communal model of narcissism, it appears to include aspects of both (e.g., devaluing others and exploitativeness for agentic; self-sacrificing self-enhancement for communal). Communal narcissism, assessed by the Communal Narcissism Inventory (CNI; Gebauer et al., 2012), differs from these other dimensions of narcissism, given its emphasis on communal qualities (e.g., being exceptionally helpful, friendly, and capable of solving societal problems), yet it shares the sense of superiority and arrogance conveyed by nonpathological narcissism and the motive to be regarded as superior marked by grandiose narcissism.

Because narcissism has been typically connected to grandiose self-views on agentic characteristics (e.g., intelligence, leadership ability, attractiveness, extraversion; Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002; Krizan & Bushman, 2011), a tendency to take credit and deflect blame in agentic domains (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998), and a tendency to self-enhance and seek admiration, particularly in agentic domains (Back, Küfner, Dufner, Gerlach, & Rathmann, 2013), self-promotion concerning communal qualities is, at first glance, incongruent with narcissism. An agentic orientation has been considered a means to getting ahead of others, whereas a communal orientation helps one get along with others (Hogan, 1982). However, recent investigations of communal narcissism suggest that narcissism can be expressed through an emphasis on qualities that are more other-oriented but that also have self-serving motives at their core (Gebauer et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014).

Despite theoretical differences, agentic and communal narcissism have shown a moderate interrelation and remarkable convergence in terms of their associations with other personality characteristics (e.g., positive relations with openness, extraversion, and arrogance; negative relations with neuroticism; Gebauer et al., 2012), as well as self-esteem and satisfaction (Zemojtel-Piotrowska, Piotrowski, & Maltby, in press). The one exception to this convergence is that agentic narcissism has shown a negative relation to self-reported agreeableness, whereas communal narcissism has been positively related to agreeableness (Gebauer et al., 2012), as might be expected. Moreover, an agency-communion model of narcissism is supported by findings that agentic and communal narcissism share core self-motives (i.e., power, self-esteem grandiosity, entitlement) but are tied to different ways of expressing and attaining a sense of superiority (Luo et al., 2014). Therefore, agentic and communal narcissism should not be considered ends on a continuum of self-aggrandizement. Instead, it appears that narcissism across both agentic and communal domains shares an underlying theme of grandiosity, as well as power- or status-seeking motives (Gebauer et al., 2012; Giacomin & Jordan, 2015), and it is plausible that someone could exude narcissism in both agentic and communal domains. Although these forms of narcissism may be theoretically tied to different behaviors (e.g., aggression for agentic narcissism; pro-social behavior for communal narcissism), each also stands to have negative consequences in peer relationships. In general, individuals high in narcissism typically have unstable relationships (Back, Schmuckle, & Egloff, 2010) and quickly develop negative reputations (Paulhus, 1998a) due to their maladaptive personality traits, consequences that may also extend to communal narcissism, despite a desire to be seen as helpful.

Individuals with a communal orientation may be drawn to pro-social behavior because it allows them to express positive connectedness to others (Gebauer, Sedikides, Lüdtke, & Neberich, 2014). However, when a communal orientation includes narcissism, pro-social behavior may be simply a conduit through which one obtains positive reflections of oneself. That is, pro-social behavior for someone high in communal narcissism may take on a decidedly self-serving form. The social motives perspective described by Gebauer and colleagues (2014) sheds light on how narcissism and a communal orientation can coexist and even facilitate reaching one's social goals. In short, someone who endorses communal ideals to the point of being narcissistic (e.g., being the "most" helpful person, confidence in one's unique ability and motivation to solve entrenched social problems) may do so as a way to gain admiration and power while also (seemingly) conforming to social norms and values. Admiration has long been considered a social goal of individuals with narcissistic characteristics (Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991), and the work of Gebauer and colleagues (2014) indicates that individuals high in communal narcissism may seek and claim positive regard from others by being helpful or supportive, rather than through aggression or exploitation. The extent to which this manifestation of narcissism applies to adolescents is not yet known.

The strength of the connection between communal narcissism and pro-social behavior, especially self-reported pro-social behavior, may vary according to whether the behavior is self-serving or more altruistic in nature. There are also likely differences in how someone with communal narcissism reports his or her helpfulness and how that individual is viewed by peers of relatively equal status. That is, an individual who makes a point to convey a strong sense of his or her helpfulness probably reports engaging in pro-social behavior for other-oriented/altruistic reasons, yet actually engages in egoistic pro-social behaviors (e.g., helping for recognition or attention) and may not be recognized by peers as particularly pro-social. Indeed, narcissism, particularly the self-sacrificing self-enhancement element of grandiose narcissism, has been positively correlated with self-reported pro-social behavior (Kauten & Barry, 2014, 2016). Furthermore, in their investigation of correlates of different pro-social motives in adolescents, Eberly-Lewis and Coetzee (2015) suggested that helpful behaviors may, in part, represent efforts at positive impression management, as opposed to more genuine motives, in a developmental period marked by a focus on peer approval. However, being overly concerned with interpersonal admiration, as is characteristic of narcissism (Brummelman, Thomaes, & Sedikides, 2016; Raskin et al., 1991), may be problematic for peer relationships, even if one attempts to be kind toward peers.

Taken further, communal narcissism insofar as it represents a belief that one is supremely kind and helpful could generate peer antagonism and conflict. It may be particularly disagreeable to peers in its apparent insincerity or focus on positive impression management. Gebauer and colleagues (2012, Study 5) demonstrated that communal narcissism was connected to low self-other agreement, as self-reported communal narcissism was associated with *lower* peer reports of communal characteristics. Thus, individuals who tout themselves as exceptionally helpful and admirable may be perceived by peers in the opposite fashion.

Communal Narcissism and Adolescence

Adolescence may provide a particularly useful developmental context in which to consider the implications of communal narcissism. Just like the communal narcissism paradox that involves feelings of superiority in conjunction with an orientation toward communal goals or qualities, adolescents as a group are thought to be self-centered, even though they also highly value close relationships with others, exhibit concern for others, and endorse a willingness to help them (Kanacri, Pastorelli, Eisenberg, Zuffiano, & Caprara, 2013). Indeed, it has been argued that narcissistic adolescents may be particularly likely to view helping others as a useful way to enhance one's superiority or to gain admiration (Eberly-Lewis & Coetzee, 2015; Kauten & Barry, 2016). An expression of grandiosity in the communal domain may be a sign of such an interpersonal style.

It stands to reason that, like the emerging evidence in adults, adolescents may show meaningful individual differences on communal narcissism. However, communal narcissism may have particularly important implications for peer interactions during adolescence. Valuing and endorsing the attributes (e.g., helping others, trustworthiness, support of others) underlying a communal orientation may take root in childhood. However, grandiose expressions of one's communal qualities may be quite limited in children, as reflections on one's status relative to others and the importance of such comparisons may be relatively less common prior to adolescence and adulthood. There is an expectation, though, that many individuals grow to exude a sense of omnipotence, self-centeredness, or superiority during adolescence as they strive toward separation and individuation (Hill & Lapsley, 2011). Nevertheless, as peer interactions and perceptions become more important in adolescence, attempts to stand out as superior to others in communal domains may be easily recognized by peers and viewed unfavorably based on the seeming contradiction between endorsing a communal orientation and arrogance regarding the exceptionalism of that orientation. Thus, it is possible that the negative social and behavioral implications of communal narcissism may become evident during adolescence and sustained into adulthood. As with adults (Gebauer et al., 2012), adolescents may view their peers who exhibit communal narcissism as actually low on communal behaviors.

By means of comparison, agentic narcissism in adolescents has been shown to generate negative peer appraisals in the form of higher peer reports of relational aggression (Golmaryami & Barry, 2010), hostility, competitiveness, likelihood of engaging in future delinquency, and manipulativeness (Grafeman, Barry, Marcus, & Leachman, 2015). This negative peer perception may also hold for communal narcissism, particularly in light of the seeming contradiction of presenting oneself as concerned for others while also engaging in self-aggrandizement. Thus, even if one portrays a motivation to reach communal goals, a sense of superiority about one's capacity to do so could still generate peer conflict. Correspondingly, individuals with high communal narcissism are likely to report low levels of aggression, but they may be perceived by peers as relatively more aggressive and less helpful than self-reports would indicate. Moreover, communal narcissism, based on its superiority motives, may be viewed negatively by same-aged peers in ways similar to agentic narcissism (e.g., Grafeman et al., 2015; Golmaryami & Barry, 2010), despite a self-presentation of being interested in the welfare of others.

Self-reports of communal narcissism may be tied to self-presentation motives captured, in part, by socially desirable responding. Work by Paulhus (e.g., Paulhus, 1998a; Paulhus & John, 1998) has described two dimensions of socially desirable responding that reflect agentic versus communal self-presentations. Specifically, self-deceptive enhancement involves socially desirable responding that is thought to be unintentional, highly grandiose, and focused on agentic qualities, whereas impression management is intended to elicit favorable views

from others, particularly through self-reported adherence to communal ideals, including agreeableness and nurturance of others (see Paulhus & John, 1998). Previous evidence indicates that nonpathological and vulnerable dimensions of narcissism are negatively associated with socially desirable response tendencies in adolescents, including impression management (Barry, Lui, & Anderson, in press). However, such a pattern may not hold for communal narcissism, as it does not include outward expressions of exploitation or overt attempts at dominance. Instead, communal narcissism may be tied to intentional efforts to hold fast to a self-presentation that is thought, perhaps erroneously, to be regarded favorably by others (i.e., impression management).

It is also possible that adolescents with communal narcissistic tendencies self-enhance to the point that they essentially believe their own hype. However, such an unintentional self-enhancing presentation has not shown a relation with agentic narcissism in adolescents (Barry et al., in press). Individuals with high levels of communal narcissism with their supposed other-oriented behaviors and efforts at impression management may feel that they have harmonious relationships with peers. Thus, the connection between adolescent communal narcissism and self-perceived peer status and peer conflict, as well as the association between communal narcissism and presumed intentional (i.e., more communal) and unintentional (i.e., more agentic) forms of socially desirable responding were also investigated in this study.

The present study utilized a sample of adolescents from a residential program for two primary reasons: (a) Similar samples have been utilized in many of the growing, yet still relatively sparse, number of studies on adolescent agentic narcissism, allowing for a more direct comparison of findings in this particular study with those for agentic narcissism across similar samples; and (b) the residential setting provides the opportunity for peer-referenced assessments that are based on close interactions among adolescent peers over the course of several weeks.

Hypotheses

Communal narcissism was expected to be positively correlated with nonpathological (agentic) narcissism, based on the findings of Gebauer and colleagues (2012) in adults, and with grandiose narcissism based on shared features of grandiose motives among these dimensions (Hypothesis 1). It was hypothesized that communal narcissism would be associated with positive self-perceptions and negative peer perceptions across a number of domains. Specifically, communal narcissism was expected to be positively associated with self-esteem and self-reported pro-social behavior but negatively correlated with self-reported aggression (Hypothesis 2). In contrast to previous findings concerning negative associations between socially desirable response tendencies and nonpathological as well as vulnerable narcissism (Barry et al., in press), communal narcissism was expected to be positively related to both the impression

management and self-deceptive enhancement aspects of social desirability (Hypothesis 3). It was also hypothesized that communal narcissism would be negatively related to self-reported peer conflict and limited peer status (Hypothesis 4).

Regarding peer perceptions, communal narcissism was expected to be negatively correlated with peer-reported pro-social behavior (Hypothesis 5). Furthermore, communal narcissism was expected to be associated with inflated self-perceptions of pro-social behavior relative to peer-reported pro-social behavior (Hypothesis 6) and with underreporting of aggression relative to peer reports (Hypothesis 7). Beyond these general hypotheses, specific forms of pro-social behavior and peer perceptions of more specific characteristics were also explored in relation to communal narcissism (e.g., whether communal narcissism is differentially related to egoistic vs. altruistic motives of pro-social behavior).

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 136 adolescents aged 16–19 (104 males, 32 females) attending a voluntary residential program for adolescents who had dropped out of school. The gender distribution was representative of this program. Youth attending this program reportedly dropped out of school for various reasons but are not involved in the legal system during program enrollment. Youth attending the program are organized into same-sex platoons consisting of approximately 20–30 individuals with whom they live and attend all program activities, including classes. A slight majority of the participants (52.2%) were White, whereas 42.2% were Black, and the remaining 5.6% of the participants reported being from a different ethnic/racial background.

Measures

Communal Narcissism Inventory (CNI). The CNI (Gebauer et al., 2012) consists of 16 items (e.g., "I'm the most helpful person I know") on which respondents indicate their level of disagreement/agreement on a 7-point scale. As described above, Gebauer and colleagues (2012) demonstrated the validity and utility of the CNI through a series of studies that supported an association between CNI scores and a communal orientation but also grandiose motives in the communal arena. In the present study, the CNI had good internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$).

Narcissistic Personality Inventory for Children (NPIC). The NPIC (Barry et al., 2003) is a 40-item inventory that was developed directly from the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988), which has been widely used with adults to assess nonpathological narcissism (Miller & Campbell, 2011). For the NPIC, the wording of NPI items was simplified and made more developmentally appropriate. The NPI has traditionally been used to reflect an agentic conceptualization of

narcissism. Respondents choose one of two statements for each item (e.g., "I want to control other people" vs. "I'm not really interested in controlling others") and then select the chosen statement as "*sort of true*" or "*really true*." Items are scored on a 0 to 3 scale. In the present sample, the NPIC demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$).

Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI). The PNI (Pincus et al., 2009) consists of 52 items with responses made on a 5-point scale ranging from *Not at all like me* to *Very much like me*. The PNI consists of two broad scales: Grandiose (e.g., "I can usually talk my way out of anything") and Vulnerable (e.g., "When others don't notice me, I start to feel worthless"). The PNI has been previously used with adolescents, with grandiose and vulnerable narcissism demonstrating a significant interrelation but divergence in their associations with aggression, self-esteem, and depressive symptoms (e.g., Barry et al., 2015). The internal consistencies were good for both Grandiose Narcissism ($\alpha = .90$) and Vulnerable Narcissism ($\alpha = .96$) in the present sample.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The RSES (Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item self-report measure of global self-esteem that has been widely used in research with adolescents and adults. Respondents indicate their level of agreement with items (e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself") on a 4-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. In the present study, the RSES demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$).

Peer Conflict Scale (PCS). The PCS (Marsee et al., 2011) is a 40-item self-report measure of aggression that includes different forms (i.e., overt and relational) and functions (i.e., reactive and proactive). Responses to items (e.g., "I start fights to get what I want") are made on a 4-point scale ranging from *Not at all true* to *Definitely true*. Internal consistency of the overall aggression score in the present sample was good ($\alpha = .93$).

Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM). The PTM (Carlo & Randall, 2002) is a 23-item self-report measure of pro-social behavior. Responses are made to items on a scale ranging from 1 (*does not describe me at all*) to 5 (*describes me greatly*). In the present sample, three items were excluded due to content (e.g., "I believe that donating goods or money works best when it is tax-deductible") that was likely not relevant to many of the participants in the present adolescent sample. Total score internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .88$). The PTM includes six subscales based on the context/motive involved in pro-social behavior. Those subscales include Public (e.g., "I can help others best when people are watching me"; $\alpha = .78$), Emotional (e.g., "I tend to help others particularly when they are emotionally distressed"; $\alpha = .75$), Altruistic (e.g., "I think that one of the best things about helping others is that it makes me look good," reverse scored; $\alpha = .80$), Dire (e.g., "I tend to help people who are in a real crisis or need"; $\alpha = .73$), Compliant (e.g., "When people ask me to help them, I don't hesitate"; $\alpha = .73$), and

Anonymous (e.g., "I think that helping others without them knowing is the best type of situation"; $\alpha = .75$) dimensions. For total score calculation and analyses involving the total PTM score, the Altruistic items are scored in the direction in which they are worded (i.e., self-serving). However, for the purposes of subscale analyses, the items on this subscale were reverse scored such that higher scores would indicate more altruistic helping motives.

Personality Inventory for Youth (PIY). The 12-item Limited Peer Status and 11-item Peer Conflict subscales of the PIY (Lachar & Gruber, 1995) were used in the present study. The former (e.g., "I am very popular with other kids," reverse scored) evaluates self-perceived rejection by peers, whereas the latter (e.g., "Other kids are often angry with me") assesses engagement in conflict with peers. All items are presented in a *True/False* format. Cronbach's alphas for the internal consistencies of these scales in the present study were .71 and .62, respectively.

Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR). The BIDR (Paulhus, 1998b) consists of 40 items, comprising two subscales, Self-Deceptive Enhancement (e.g., "I am fully in control of my own fate"), which assesses apparently unintentional and more agentic positively biased self-views, and Impression Management (e.g., "I never take things that don't belong to me"), which involves intentional attempts to influence the perceptions of others in a positive way, particularly through self-presentation of positive communal qualities (Paulhus, 1998a; Paulhus & John, 1998). Item responses are made on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not true*) to 7 (*very true*). The BIDR is scored such that socially desirable responding is indicated by a response of 6 or 7 on an item (Paulhus, 1998b). The internal consistencies of scores on Self-Deceptive Enhancement and Impression Management were modest ($\alpha = .56$ and .69, respectively).

Peer Nominations. In this peer nomination procedure (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), participants were asked to nominate up to three members of their platoon (see Participants section) on each of 15 items concerning behaviors (e.g., hitting others, helping others) and characteristics (e.g., leadership, loneliness). Nominations on each item were z-scored within each platoon. This approach also allows for the creation of aggression (seven items) and pro-social behavior (four items) composites. These composites were calculated by summing the z-scored items within each composite, followed by z-scoring the resulting composite. Cronbach's alpha for the internal consistency of the aggression composite was .93, whereas Cronbach's alpha for the pro-social composite was .75.

Procedure

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the university through which data were collected. The director

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Self-Report Variables

Variable (Possible Range)	M	SD	Range	Skew
Communal narcissism (0–96)	59.48	17.20	1–96	−.04
Nonpathological narcissism (0–120)	53.01	19.58	14–120	.27
Grandiose narcissism (0–5)	2.18	1.09	0–4.74	.12
Vulnerable narcissism (0–5)	1.60	1.07	0–5	.84
Self-esteem (0–30)	19.80	5.25	7–30	−.09
Self-reported aggression (0–120)	16.54	16.13	0–80	1.72
Self-reported pro-social (1–5)	2.92	.70	1–5	.08
Limited peer status (0–12)	7.22	2.89	1–12	−.46
Peer conflict (0–11)	6.96	2.44	1–11	−.33
Deceptive self-enhancement (0–20)	6.68	3.57	0–17	.21
Impression management (0–20)	4.71	3.24	0–15	.47

Note. Scores for grandiose narcissism, vulnerable narcissism, and pro-social behavior are based on mean item ratings.

of the residential program, who serves as guardian *ad litem* for youth during their program enrollment, provided written informed consent for participants to be approached about the study. Adolescents enrolled in the residential program were then given the opportunity to accept or decline participation through a written assent/consent procedure. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and adolescents' status in the program was not impacted by their participation or refusal to participate. Self-report questionnaires were administered through the secure online survey program Qualtrics near the beginning of the program. Sessions were conducted in a classroom setting over four 45-minute sessions as part of a larger research project. Approximately 20 weeks into the 22-week program, the peer nomination procedure was conducted following a separate assent/consent process. The sample represents individuals who agreed to participate and provided complete self-report and peer report data (i.e., 74.7% of the program enrollment at the time of data collection).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the main self-report variables in this study. The distributions of these variables all appeared approximately normal, with the exception of self-reported aggression, which was positively skewed, as might be expected in a non-adjudicated sample of youth. The associations of gender and ethnicity with the narcissism dimensions were also examined. Males tended to score higher than females on nonpathological narcissism, $t(134) = 2.05$, $p = .04$ (males: $M = 54.98$, $SD = 19.10$; females: $M = 46.88$, $SD = 20.18$). Given the low percentage of participants who were not either White or Black, ethnicity was dichotomized as White or Nonwhite. Nonwhite participants tended to score higher than White participants on nonpathological narcissism, $t(134) = 3.82$, $p < .01$ (Nonwhite: $M = 59.41$, $SD = 20.05$; White: $M = 47.14$, $SD = 17.30$), and self-esteem $t(134) = 1.99$, $p = .049$ (Nonwhite: $M = 20.72$, $SD = .63$; White: $M = 18.95$, $SD = .63$),

consistent with prior adolescent research (Pickard, Barry, Wallace, & Zeigler-Hill, 2013).

Correlational Analyses

Table 2 displays the interrelations among narcissism variables and self-esteem. Grandiose and vulnerable narcissism were highly interrelated, and grandiose narcissism was also significantly related to nonpathological narcissism. Self-esteem was only significantly associated with nonpathological narcissism. These relations parallel previous findings with a sample of adolescent males (e.g., Barry et al., 2015). Communal narcissism was significantly related, albeit weakly, to nonpathological narcissism, in partial support of Hypothesis 1. Contrary to Hypothesis 2, communal narcissism was not correlated with self-esteem.

Correlations between narcissism measures and self-reports of peer relationships, socially desirable responding, aggression, and pro-social behavior are shown in Table 3. As hypothesized, communal narcissism was positively correlated with self-reported pro-social behavior, in partial support of Hypothesis 2, whereas the other indices of narcissism were all positively related to self-reported aggression. Nonpathological narcissism and grandiose narcissism also each demonstrated positive associations with self-reported pro-social behavior. Communal narcissism was significantly positively correlated with Self-Deceptive Enhancement and Impression Management, as hypothesized (Hypothesis 3). Hypothesis 4 was not supported in that communal narcissism was not correlated with self-reported peer conflict or limited peer status.

Examination of subscales of the PTM revealed that communal narcissism was related to only certain forms of self-reported pro-social behavior. More specifically, it was negatively correlated with the Altruistic subscale and was positively associated with the Anonymous and Dire subscales of the PTM. However, these correlations were relatively weak in magnitude (see Table 3). Nonpathological narcissism demonstrated a negative correlation with altruistic pro-social behavior and a positive relation with public pro-social behavior. Grandiose and vulnerable narcissism each were related to dire and emotional pro-social behavior, with grandiose narcissism also showing a small, significant relation with public pro-social behavior.

Descriptive statistics for each peer nomination item are shown in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, most of the peer nomination items were positively skewed, suggesting that a relatively

Table 2 Correlations Among Indices of Narcissism and Self–Esteem

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Communal narcissism	—	.19*	.12	.01	.02
2. Nonpathological narcissism		—	.25**	.06	.37***
3. Grandiose narcissism			—	.78***	.06
4. Vulnerable narcissism				—	−.17
5. Self-esteem					—

Note. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 3 Correlations of Narcissism With Perceived Peer Relationships, Socially Desirable Responding, Self-Reported Aggression, and Self-Reported Pro-Social Behavior

	Communal Narcissism	Nonpathological Narcissism	Grandiose Narcissism	Vulnerable Narcissism
Limited peer status	.17	.13	.35***	.22*
Peer conflict	−.13	−.01	−.05	−.24**
Self-deceptive enhancement	.22*	.14	.25**	.08
Impression management	.21*	−.16	−.14	−.12
Self-reported aggression	−.06	.18*	.49***	.58***
Self-reported pro-social behavior	.22*	.19*	.23**	.14
Public pro-social	.10	.35***	.17*	.01
Emotional -ro-social	.08	.19*	.25**	.19*
Altruistic pro-social	−.19*	−.35***	−.07	−.02
Dire pro-social	.20*	.08	.27**	.19*
Compliant pro-social	.17	−.09	.12	.03
Anonymous pro-social	.18*	−.04	.12	.10

Note. Pro-social behavior = overall score on the Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM). The subsequent six rows pertain to PTM subscales. Correlations between PTM subscales ranged from $r = .05$ (Altruistic and Compliant) to $r = .66$ (Emotional and Dire) and $r = −.67$ (Public and Altruistic).
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

low number of participants were recognized by peers as clearly demonstrating the behaviors being evaluated. Correlations between dimensions of narcissism and peer-nominated attributes are shown in Table 5. Communal narcissism was significantly correlated with peer nominations on five out of seven items that assessed different forms of aggression (rs = .18–.29). In contrast to Hypothesis 5, communal narcissism was not related to any peer-reported pro-social behaviors and demonstrated a significant, but relatively weak, correlation with peer-reported loneliness. A similar pattern was evident for nonpathological narcissism in that scores on that dimension were significantly associated with the same five aggressive behaviors (rs = .23–.31) but with no other peer ratings. Grandiose and vulnerable narcissism were not associated with the peer-nominated items.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Peer Nomination Items

	M	SD	Range	Skew
Is a leader	.06	1.02	−.92–3.14	1.44
Does nice things	.07	1.04	−1.42–3.08	.77
Helps others	.01	1.00	−1.41–3.12	.89
Cheers up others	.11	1.02	−1.31–3.28	.64
Is happy	.02	1.01	−1.45–3.59	1.21
Hits others	.05	1.05	−1.00–4.53	2.16
Calls others names	.02	1.04	−1.02–4.38	1.80
Starts fights	.03	1.05	−.78–4.30	1.92
Gets even with others	−.03	.99	−1.14–3.62	1.15
Gets others to stop liking others	−.03	.99	−1.08–3.86	1.48
Ignores others	−.04	.94	−1.06–3.75	1.31
Excludes others	.00	1.03	−1.18–3.47	1.50
Plays alone	−.02	.97	−.98–4.77	2.48
Seems sad	−.01	.99	−.87–4.71	2.54
Seems lonely	−.04	.96	−.90–4.20	1.93

Note. Scores are based on z-scores on each peer nomination item at the platoon (i.e., classroom) level.

Analyses of Perceptual Bias

Nonpathological narcissism was negatively related to the composite of peer-reported pro-social behavior ($r = −.25$, $p = .004$). Both communal narcissism ($r = .25$, $p = .004$) and nonpathological narcissism ($r = .26$, $p = .002$) were positively correlated with the composite of peer-reported aggression items. To evaluate the relations of narcissism with perceptual bias in pro-social behavior and aggression, we utilized the procedure described by John and Robins (1994). Specifically, we regressed the peer–pro-social behavior composite onto self-reported pro-social behavior from the PTM and then used the standardized residual as the indicator of perceptual bias of pro-social behavior, with positive values indicating higher self-ratings than peer ratings. The same procedure was followed for aggression.

Perceptual bias in pro-social behavior was positively correlated with communal narcissism ($r = .22$, $p = .009$) and with grandiose narcissism ($r = .24$, $p = .005$), such that adolescents who self-reported higher communal and grandiose narcissism tended to also attribute more pro-social behavior to themselves than did their peers. This finding supports Hypothesis 6. Perceptual bias in aggression was positively correlated with grandiose ($r = .49$, $p < .001$) and vulnerable ($r = .59$, $p < .001$) narcissism. Thus, Hypothesis 7 was not supported. Interestingly, these effects were such that individuals with grandiose and vulnerable narcissism tended to self-report higher aggression than what was reflected in peer nominations.

DISCUSSION

The present study was the first known investigation of the relations of communal narcissism with self- and peer perceptions of aggression and pro-social behavior in adolescents. Results support the relative independence of communal narcissism from agentic expressions of narcissism in adolescents and the aversive

Table 5 Correlations Between Narcissism and Peer-Reported Behaviors

	Communal Narcissism	Nonpathological Narcissism	Grandiose Narcissism	Vulnerable Narcissism
Is a leader	.03	−.06	.05	.02
Does nice things	−.08	−.39***	−.14	−.07
Helps others	.01	−.27**	−.03	−.03
Cheers up others	.03	−.06	.09	.09
Is happy	.14	−.04	−.04	−.04
Hits others	.25**	.27**	−.05	−.11
Calls others names	.24**	.31***	−.04	−.06
Starts fights	.16	.23**	.00	−.06
Gets even with others	.24**	.23**	−.07	−.03
Gets others to stop liking others	.29**	.12	−.04	.01
Ignores others	.09	.07	.02	.07
Excludes others	.18*	.26**	−.05	−.10
Plays alone	.04	.03	.03	.01
Seems sad	.14	−.13	.09	.15
Seems lonely	.18*	−.13	−.03	.03

Note. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

interpersonal style tied to adolescent communal narcissism. Perhaps the most notable finding in the present study was the stark contrast between the attributes conveyed in self-ratings of communal narcissism (e.g., helpfulness) and peer perceptions of individuals who rated themselves relatively higher on communal narcissism (e.g., aggressiveness). Moreover, communal narcissism was positively related to self-reported, but not peer-reported, pro-social behaviors. It was also associated with perceptual bias on pro-social behavior.

Contrary to research with adults (e.g., Gebauer et al., 2012), communal narcissism was not correlated with self-esteem in this study. Although communal narcissism is positively correlated with self-esteem in adults, the lack of association in the present sample could signal a developmental difference such that adolescents with communal narcissism may portray themselves as helpful and concerned for others but actually lack a particularly secure or positive view of themselves. In this way, communal narcissism can be conceptualized as an attempt to gain favor from others in the absence of a truly positive self-view. Adults who present themselves as high in communion may more easily integrate that attribute into a generally favorable self-view.

Communal narcissism was positively related to apparent attempts at positive impression management and with self-reported pro-social behavior in emergency situations or in anonymous forms. These results indicate that individuals scoring high on communal narcissism make concerted attempts to portray themselves favorably and may do so, for example, by reporting engaging in pro-social behavior without concern for getting credit and being dependable for helping in emergency situations. The veracity of such portrayals is certainly open to question, as communal narcissism was *negatively* associated with self-reported altruistic pro-social behavior, which is arguably the most self-sacrificing form of pro-social behavior assessed in this study.

Overall, the present findings indicate that even though adolescents with high levels of communal narcissism might make efforts to present themselves as quite helpful and other-oriented in certain contexts, this portrayal did not translate to peer perceptions. More specifically, communal narcissism was significantly associated with an array of peer-reported aggressive behaviors. These peer reports involved direct, overt expressions of aggression (e.g., hitting others, calling others names), as well as more indirect, relational forms of aggression (e.g., excluding others, discontinuing friendships with others). At face value, these behaviors are in direct contrast to the images portrayed by individuals high in communal narcissism (e.g., a desire to help others, being the best friend someone could have). Potential explanations for these findings include a possible, however not yet tested, tendency toward behavioral reactivity to interpersonal threats in the communal domain (Gebauer et al., 2012) or the aversiveness to peers of an individual who simultaneously expresses being other-oriented while also superior to others. Regarding the former, to the extent that one experiences conflict with others or is not recognized as being a particularly valuable friend or helper, aggression, including that directed toward the social status of others, may be used to establish superiority. Prior work points to aggression as a strategy associated with agentic narcissism following ego threats (e.g., Barry, Chaplin, & Grafeman, 2006; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Thomaes, Bushman, Stegge, & Olthof, 2008). Communal narcissism might denote a similar interpersonal response to such threats. For the latter, it is possible that adolescents view peers who express what might be seen as an inconsistent or hypocritical communalism mixed with self-aggrandizement in a negative light.

In many ways, the pattern of correlates for peer reports was similar for communal and nonpathological narcissism in the present study. As noted above, nonpathological narcissism, as assessed by the NPI (and its downward developmental

extension, the NPIC), is most closely connected to conceptualizations of agentic narcissism from past research. Despite similar peer perspectives for communal and nonpathological narcissism, these two measures of narcissism were only weakly correlated. Thus, it appears that despite some similarities between constructs in being driven by self-serving motives (Luo et al., 2014) and peer perceptions, adolescents who endorse communal narcissism do not necessarily also endorse the individualistic sense of superiority characterized by nonpathological (i.e., more agentic) narcissism.

In contrast, the grandiose and vulnerable dimensions of pathological narcissism, which also appear to involve agentic narcissism, were connected to more negative self- than peer perceptions regarding aggression. These findings may point to more subtle forms of peer manipulation to accomplish social goals, or they may indicate that individuals who endorse features of pathological narcissism wish to portray themselves as generally dominant over, and antagonistic toward, others when, in fact, they are not perceived as such. The positive association between grandiose narcissism and self-deceptive enhancement is consistent with this latter possibility and with the notion that self-deceptive enhancement is focused on agentic self-presentations (Paulhus & John, 1998). Grandiose narcissism followed the same pattern as communal narcissism in regard to inflated self-perceptions of pro-social behavior. This finding is not surprising from the standpoint that both dimensions involve arrogance and grandiose self-views in one's willingness to sacrifice for others.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Several limitations must be considered regarding the present study. First, the nature of the sample and its uneven gender distribution potentially limit the generalizability of the findings to adolescents in general. Although the response rate was good (74.7% of those invited to participate), it still only represents a subset of individuals in the residential program and a specific subset of adolescents in this age group. The current at-risk sample had some notable strengths in that much of the research on more traditional conceptualizations of adolescent narcissism has been conducted with similar samples, which provides a foundation with which the results for communal narcissism can be compared. Moreover, the residential setting afforded a unique opportunity for peers to interact closely over an extended period of time and thus for those perceptions to inform peer reports on the variables of interest. The sample size was adequate to detect small effects as significant, yet the size was still relatively small. Therefore, larger, more diverse, and more representative samples (e.g., community) are needed to provide further understanding of the behavioral and social factors associated with communal narcissism in adolescents, as the findings in this initial study may apply only to our particular at-risk sample. Cultural context may also play a role in the relative value of agentic

and communal orientations and grandiosity in these domains (Gebauer et al., 2014).

In addition, although the peer nomination procedure provided crucial insight into peer perceptions of behavior as a function of communal narcissism, the method used in the present study did not account for nonindependence of ratings, as participants served as both perceivers and potential targets of nominations. More complex approaches, such as a round-robin design, are needed to fully account for potential dyadic effects in how adolescent narcissism is perceived by peers. Already, such designs have shown a connection between nonpathological narcissism and peer perceptions of antagonism and behavioral problems in adolescents (Grafeman et al., 2015), as well as general correspondence between self- and peer ratings of characteristics of pathological narcissism in adults (Lukowitsky & Pincus, 2013). Thus, the investigation of communal narcissism in adolescents should be extended to include such methodological alternatives and more varied samples. Alternatively, procedures that allow for unlimited nominations might yield different results as a function of narcissism and may be useful strategies for future research. It should also be noted that each of the correlates of communal narcissism in this study were necessarily tied to the perspectives of self and peer informants, which, although useful, are limited in the information that they provide relative to strategies such as direct observation or more objective indicators of aggression or pro-social behavior. These assessment approaches may prove useful in future studies on adolescent communal narcissism.

Based on the present results, even though adolescents with high levels of communal narcissism portray themselves as highly agreeable and possessing interpersonal warmth, they appear to engage in quite different behavior, according to peers. In a similar vein, for these same individuals, peers did not report observing particularly pro-social behavior. Thus, the negative peer perceptions previously attributed to agentic narcissism (Grafeman et al., 2015; Lukowitsky & Pincus, 2013) seem to extend to communal narcissism in terms of aggressiveness. A common thread between these personality constructs involves grandiose self-views in the pursuit of attaining perceived superiority and self-esteem regulation. The range of social consequences of self-superiority in various domains deserves further attention in adolescents.

The antagonism associated with adolescent communal narcissism could be bidirectional in that communal narcissism conveys a sense of connection to others, but the simultaneous engagement in self-aggrandizement in communal pursuits could signal disdain or disregard for others. In other words, for someone endorsing communal narcissism, others may be viewed as inferior pawns necessary to achieve one's ostentatious goals. The initial research on communal narcissism points to a relatively unconsidered form of maladaptive self-perception that may be evident prior to adulthood. Thus, further investigation is needed to help determine *why* communal narcissism might be tied to negative peer evaluations and on the factors involved in

the development and maintenance of a purported concern for others that is ultimately self-serving and grandiose.

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