

## Narcissism and United States' Culture: The View From Home and Around the World

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The issue of Americans' levels of narcissism is subject to lively debate. The focus of the present research is on the perception of national character (PNC) of Americans as a group. In Study 1, American adults ( $N = 100$ ) rated Americans as significantly more narcissistic than they perceived themselves and acquaintances. In Study 2, this finding was replicated with American college students ( $N = 322$ ). PNC ratings of personality traits and externalizing behaviors revealed that Americans were perceived as disagreeable and antisocial as well. In Study 3, we examined the broader characteristics associated with PNC ratings ( $N = 183$ ). Americans rated the typical American as average on a variety of characteristics (e.g., wealth, education, health, likability) and PNC ratings of narcissism were largely unrelated to these ratings. In Study 4 ( $N = 1,202$ ) Americans rated PNCs for different prespecified groups of Americans; as expected, PNC ratings of narcissism differed by gender, age, and occupational status such that American males, younger Americans, and Americans working in high-visibility and status occupations were seen as more narcissistic. In Study 5 ( $N = 733$ ), citizens of 4 other world regions (Basque Country, China, England, Turkey) rated members of their own region as more narcissistic than they perceived themselves, but the effect sizes were smaller than those found in the case of Americans' perceptions of Americans. Additionally, members of these other regions rated Americans as more narcissistic than members of their own region. Finally, in Study 6, participants from around the world ( $N = 377$ ) rated Americans as more narcissistic, extraverted, and antagonistic than members of their own countries. We discuss the role that America's position as a global economic and military power, paired with a culture that creates and reifies celebrity figures, may play in leading to perceptions of Americans as considerably narcissistic.

*Keywords:* personality, cross-cultural, perceptions of national character

The question of American cultural narcissism emerged in the 1970s with publications such as Wolfe's (1976) essay, "The 'Me'

Decade and the Third Great Awakening," Lasch's (1979) book, *The Culture of Narcissism*, and has continued through the present

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with Twenge and Campbell's (2009) book, *The Narcissism Epidemic*. Our goal in the present research is to address empirically the issue of United States' (U.S.) cultural narcissism through an examination of perceptions of national character (PNCs); that is, how Americans as a whole are perceived in terms of narcissism and related constructs. We assess PNC ratings of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) of Americans as rated by older Americans (Study 1), American college students (Study 2), American community participants (MTurkers: Study 3 and Study 4), and citizens of an array of regions or countries (Studies 5 and 6). We also examine whether these PNC ratings vary depending on certain characteristics (i.e., age, gender, occupation; Study 4).

There is ongoing debate as to how to best conceptualize and assess narcissism (Miller et al., 2014; Pincus et al., 2009; Rosenthal & Hooley, 2010). In the current research, we focus primarily on the more grandiose components of narcissism that are found in both popular trait measures such as the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) and the psychiatric construct of NPD that is assessed and diagnosed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.; DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Throughout the article we will refer to the former as *trait narcissism* and the second as *NPD*. The traits included in both of these constructs include immodesty, self-absorption, entitlement, exploitativeness, and callousness. We do not focus on more vulnerable components of narcissism that include some of the aforementioned traits (e.g., entitlement) but also highlight characteristics of emotional fragility and interpersonal avoidance (Miller, Hoffman, et al., 2011).

### Perceptions of National Character: The Narcissism of the Typical American<sup>1</sup>

One novel approach to examining issues related to cultural narcissism is to assess via PNC ratings whether Americans as a whole are perceived of—by Americans and non-Americans alike—as narcissistic (Terracciano et al., 2005). The PNC approach examines the shared views of personality characteristics typical of citizens in a particular region or country rather than the personality traits of specific individuals within the culture (Heine, Buchtel, & Norenzayan, 2008; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2005). In a recent study (Campbell, Miller, & Buffardi, 2010), PNC ratings of Americans by Americans on the basic personality traits from the Five-Factor Model (FFM) demonstrated a strong fit with an expert-rated profile of the traits that are prototypical of NPD. In that study, explicit PNC ratings of U.S. narcissism were also collected and compared with self- and acquaintance ratings. The PNC ratings for U.S. narcissism were almost two standard deviations higher than self-ratings of narcissism across two samples. The PNC ratings for U.S. narcissism were also substantially higher than the narcissism ratings of acquaintances. Thus, Americans—at least in these initial samples—view Americans in general as substantially narcissistic, although Americans rate their own and their acquaintances' levels of narcissism as lower but still at a moderate level.

These perceptions are not limited to Americans' views of Americans. Terracciano and McCrae (2007) published PNC ratings of Americans completed by members of 48 countries on the domains and facets of the FFM. These ratings demonstrated that Americans

are generally seen by citizens of other countries as assertive, noncompliant, and immodest. The aggregate FFM PNC profile, as rated by non-Americans in the aforementioned study, is similar to the expert rated FFM profile for NPD (Lynam & Widiger, 2001). A comparison of the two FFM profiles (i.e., second-order correlation of the two profiles), FFM PNC and FFM expert-rated profile of NPD, revealed a sizable correlation between the two ( $r = .75$ ). Finally, Terracciano and McCrae also noted the significant overall profile similarity of the PNC ratings provided of Americans by Americans and non-Americans ( $r_{ICC} = .71$ ) and that, in general, “where there were notable differences, they suggested that Americans were more critical of themselves” (p. 698).

We note that there is debate regarding the validity of PNC ratings in that they do not correlate with aggregate self or acquaintance ratings of personality (Terracciano et al., 2005). Thus, we regard PNC ratings as cultural markers, and not necessarily as reflections of aggregate levels of individual personality. For example, findings indicate that PNC ratings correlate with cultural level markers of personality more strongly than do aggregate self-reports suggesting that they may provide valid information regarding cultural differences (e.g., relation between conscientiousness and accuracy of public clocks; Heine et al., 2008). Furthermore, there is growing evidence that the perception of cultural norms by individuals is important in shaping individual behavior (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010). For example, in research conducted in China, individuals who saw the typical Chinese citizen as compliant were more likely to act in a compliant manner themselves (Zou et al., 2009). Similar findings were obtained in a study of Korean and U.S. citizens, where cultural views of the individualism–collectivism dimension resulted in different notions of right versus duty violations (Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009). In sum, the PNC ratings can address important cultural phenomena, even if they do not perfectly reflect the personalities of the individuals in these cultures.

### Research Overview

Preliminary evidence suggests that Americans perceive Americans as a whole to be substantially narcissistic. Similarly, members of other cultures, in aggregate, rate the personality profile of the Americans as one that is consistent with NPD (Campbell et al., 2010). In the current set of studies, we expand the investigation of PNCs of U.S. narcissism by focusing on four main ratings of narcissism and NPD: *self-ratings* (self-reporting on the self), *acquaintance ratings* (self-reporting on a close acquaintance), *U.S. PNC ratings* (reporting on perceptions of “Americans in general”) and *home country PNC ratings* (reporting on perceptions of “[name of own country] in general”). In the case of participants from the United States, the latter two ratings are the same; home country PNC ratings are relevant to the international participants used in Studies 5 and 6. The specific studies are described briefly in the following paragraphs.

In Study 1, we test whether older, community-based Americans rate “Americans in general” (i.e., PNCs) as more narcissistic than they see themselves or acquaintances. This endeavor expands Campbell et al.'s (2010) initial findings on young people. The replication of this previous finding in an older sample is important, given that younger

<sup>1</sup> We use the term *Americans* to mean U.S. citizens.

Americans may perceive Americans as narcissistic because these respondents are, on average, more narcissistic (Foster, Campbell, & Twenge, 2003; Stinson et al., 2008); in this case, self-perception may influence other perception along the same evaluative lines (Sedikides, 2003; Sedikides & Skowronski, 1993). We hypothesized, however, that Americans would be rated as considerably narcissistic even within an older, more diverse, community sample.

In Study 2, we test the replicability of Study 1 findings and, more important, extend this line of research by examining the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of the personality traits and behaviors associated with the PNC ratings of narcissism. According to some theorists (Miller & Maples, 2011; Paulhus, 2001), narcissism is a multidimensional construct comprising primarily high levels of extraversion and low levels of agreeableness (i.e., antagonism). Given this, it is possible that the high PNC ratings of narcissism are due to Americans being perceived as considerably extraverted, considerably antagonistic, or both. In examining self-, acquaintance, and PNC ratings on the Five-Factor Model (FFM), we are also able to examine narcissism's trait correlates to better understand why Americans are perceived as considerably narcissistic. Moreover, we include an assessment of self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of externalizing behaviors that are sometimes associated with narcissism (e.g., antisocial behavior, promiscuous sex) and FFM antagonism (Hoyle, Fejfar, & Miller, 2000; Miller & Lynam, 2001).

In Study 3, we examine a broad set of characteristics associated with PNC ratings of Americans by Americans collected via an online survey platform (i.e., MTurk) to arrive at a better understanding of whom respondents bring to mind when they complete PNC ratings, with a particular focus on demographic characteristics, psychological and physical health, and likability. We also examined whether order mattered: does asking respondents to specify their exemplar in advance affect subsequent ratings? In Study 4, these same issues were tested but with participants given explicit American groups to rate that may be associated with narcissism (e.g., younger Americans, male Americans, more visible Americans).

In Study 5, we test whether the basic pattern found in the United States—with narcissism scores being lowest for self-reports, followed by acquaintance reports, and highest for the PNCs—occurs across cultures. It is possible that members of all cultures perceive the members of their own culture as more narcissistic than themselves and close acquaintances. In addition, we test whether citizens of other world regions rate Americans as more narcissistic than the citizens of their own region. To address these issues, we collected data from five regions: the Basque Country, China, Turkey, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and the United States. We selected these regions, in part, because they represent a diverse—linguistically and culturally—sample of world regions. They also vary substantially in their attitudes toward America (Pew, 2012).

In Studies 1, 2 and 5, participants completed PNC, acquaintance, and self ratings for two measures of narcissism, one that captures what is often called “trait narcissism” and the other that captures NPD as it is described in the *DSM-5*. We also included as a control a measure of avoidant personality disorder (AVPD), which is a disorder characterized by an intense fear of social criticism or rejection that results in circumscribed social networks and impaired functioning. The use of a comparison PD is important as a test of the specificity of the hypothesized effects. In particular, following previous research (Campbell et al., 2010), we expected that Americans would rate Americans as a whole

as higher in narcissism than they would rate themselves and acquaintances. However, we expected that these differences would not emerge for this alternative personality disorder (i.e., AVPD).

In Study 6, we collected data on home and U.S. PNC ratings for narcissism, an alternative personality related construct (i.e., dependent PD), and the FFM from individuals outside of North America. Respondents rated the PNCs for their own country as well as the U.S. in a within-subjects design. In addition, we examined the implications of these perceptions of Americans by testing if they are related to interest in interacting with Americans across several roles (e.g., friendship, romantic, occupational) and perceptions that America has a potentially undue amount of influence on global affairs that may be motivated, in part, by American self-interest. We used  $p$  values of  $\leq .01$  for all tests of statistical significance across the set of studies.

## Study 1

The aim of Study 1 was to test the generalizability of the Campbell et al. (2010) findings to an older, community population. Do American community members perceive both acquaintances and Americans in general as more narcissistic than they perceive themselves? And are the results distinct to narcissism or do they spill over to a comparison disorder, AVPD?

## Method

**Participants and procedure.** We tested 100 individuals at private stations in an Athens, GA, local mall in exchange for \$5. To take part, individuals had to be at least 40 years ( $M_{\text{age}} = 52.60$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 9.55$ ; 60% female; 73% Caucasian, 22% African American). Participants completed, in random order, the three following versions of each of the measures: (a) self-rating, (b) acquaintance rating, and (c) U.S. PNC rating. Across all five studies, the self-ratings used the instruments' typical instructions. The acquaintance ratings were identical to Campbell et al. (2010) and asked the rater to “Please think of a woman or man aged 18–25 whom you know well. She or he should be someone who is a native-born citizen of the U.S.” (or whichever country was being used for the acquaintance ratings; i.e., Studies 5 and 6). The PNC ratings used the stem: “We would like to learn your opinions of a group—Americans. Think about the character of Americans in general. These questions are about how you think Americans generally are—that is, how you think they have usually felt or behaved over the past several years.” The PNC descriptions varied in Studies 5 and 6 to reflect the participants' own region or country, when relevant.

### Measures.

**Narcissistic Personality Inventory-16 (NPI-16).** The NPI-16 (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006) is a shortened version of the 40-item NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988). The forced choice format was used for the NPI across all studies. The NPI is the most commonly used measure of trait narcissism and correlates strongly with *DSM-IV* ratings of NPD (Miller, Gaughan, Pryor, Kamen, & Campbell, 2009). Also, the NPI-16 correlates well with expert ratings of the traits prototypical of NPD (Miller et al., in press).

Alphas for the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of the NPI-16 were .71, .91, and .90, respectively.

**Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Personality Disorders–Personality Questionnaire (SCID-II P/Q).** The SCID-II P/Q (First, Gibbon, Spitzer, Williams, & Benjamin, 1997) is a self-report screening instrument used to assess the personality disorders (PDs) found in *DSM-IV* and 5; items are answered using a dichotomous, “yes” or “no” format. In the current study, we used only the items used to score narcissistic (SCID-II P/Q NPD: 17 items) and avoidant (SCID-II P/Q AVPD: 7 items) PDs. Alphas for the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of NPD were .76, .89, and .91, respectively. Alphas for the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of AVPD were .78, .78, and .77, respectively.

## Results

We conducted three repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to compare the means of trait narcissism (NPI-16), NPD (SCID-II P/Q NPD), and AVPD (SCID-II P/Q AVPD). We obtained significant differences for trait narcissism and NPD ( $F_s \geq 32.9$ ), but not for AVPD ( $F = 2.8$ ; see Table 1 for details). We proceeded with follow-up *t* tests. In regard to trait narcissism, PNC ratings were significantly higher than self-ratings ( $d = .87$ ).<sup>2</sup> Acquaintance ratings were also significantly greater than self-ratings ( $d = 1.14$ ), but not significantly different than PNC ratings ( $d = .20$ ). We obtained a similar pattern for NPD: PNC and acquaintance ratings were both significantly higher than self-ratings ( $d_s \geq .90$ ), but not different from one another ( $d = .22$ ). We found no significant differences for AVPD.

## Discussion

The current results demonstrate that older Americans perceive both acquaintances and Americans in general as considerably more narcissistic than themselves. As expected, this result did not generalize to an alternative form of personality disorder, AVPD. The results demonstrate that the pattern of findings first reported in Campbell et al. (2010) extends to older individuals recruited from the community. There was one substantive difference between the Campbell et al. findings and the current results. Campbell et al. reported that the PNC narcissism ratings were significantly higher than the acquaintance ratings, which did not replicate in this study.

### Study 2

The goals of Study 2 were threefold: (a) test the replicability of the existing pattern of results; (b) use self-, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of the Five-Factor Model (FFM) in an attempt to clarify these narcissism ratings; and (c) examine whether Americans’ perceive other Americans in a negative light with regard to externalizing behaviors including crime, substance use, and risky sex.

## Method

**Participants and procedure.** We tested 322 University of Georgia undergraduates who took part in exchange for research credit ( $M_{\text{age}} = 19.14$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.88$ ; 53% female; 80% Caucasian, 7% Asian, 6% African American). Participants completed, in

random order, three versions of the same scales as in Study 1 plus two scales measuring the FFM traits and externalizing behaviors. Available participants for these analyses ranged from 285 to 316.

### Measures.

**Narcissistic Personality Inventory–16 (NPI-16).** As in Study 1, we used the NPI-16. Alphas for the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of the NPI-16 were .67, .84, and .81, respectively.

**Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Personality Disorders–Personality Questionnaire (SCID-II P/Q).** As in Study 1, we used SCID-II P/Q NPD and AVPD personality scales scale. Alphas for the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of NPD were .63, .77, and .76, respectively. Alphas for the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of AVPD were .67, .71, and .71, respectively.

**Five Factor Model Rating Form (FFMRF).** The FFMRF (Mullins-Sweatt, Jamerson, Samuel, Olson, & Widiger, 2006) is a 30-item rating form for the assessment of five domains and 30 facets of the FFM. Each facet is assessed with a single item (1 = *extremely low*, 5 = *extremely high*). Domain scores are simply the sum of the six facets that comprise each domain. Internal consistencies for the self-report rating for Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness were .70, .72, .68, .65, and .80, respectively. Internal consistencies for the acquaintance ratings for Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness were .74, .70, .67, .80, and .85, respectively. Internal consistencies for the PNC ratings for Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness were .63, .65, .67, .75, and .80, respectively.

**Crime and Analogous Behavior Scale (CAB).** The CAB (Miller & Lynam, 2003) included 20 items used to derive scores on alcohol, substance use, antisocial behavior, and number of sexual partners in the past 12 months. We assessed alcohol with one question inquiring about the pattern of use over the last 12 months (1 = *less than once a month*, 8 = *almost every day, usually in large amounts*). We scored substance use as a count of the variety of drugs (e.g., marijuana, cocaine/crack) used in the past 12 months. We scored antisocial behavior as a count of the variety of 11 antisocial acts (e.g., stealing a car, intentionally hurting someone) committed in the last 12 months. The number of lifetime sexual partners was assessed with a single question; scores for this item were log-transformed prior to use.

## Results

**Narcissism (NPI), Narcissistic PD (SCID-II P/Q), and AVPD (SCID-II P/Q).** We conducted three repeated measures ANOVAs to compare scores on trait narcissism (NPI-16), NPD (SCID-II P/Q NPD), and AVPD (SCID-II P/Q AVPD; Table 2). As predicted, PNC ratings for trait narcissism were significantly higher than self-ratings ( $d = 2.12$ ) and acquaintance ratings ( $d = 1.34$ ); the acquaintance ratings were also significantly higher than the self-ratings ( $d = .46$ ).

We obtained a similar pattern for NPD: PNC and acquaintance ratings were both significantly higher than self-ratings ( $d_s = 2.23$  and .33, respectively), and the acquaintance ratings were significantly lower than PNC ( $d = -1.64$ ).

<sup>2</sup> Effect sizes (i.e., *ds*) in all studies were calculated using the pooled standard deviation.

**Table 1**  
*Self, Acquaintance, and U.S. PNC Ratings of Trait Narcissism, NPD, and a Comparison in Study 1*

Personality constructs	Self		Acquaintance		U.S. PNC		<i>F</i> ( <i>df</i> )	SA <i>d</i> [95% CI]	SP <i>d</i> [95% CI]	AP <i>d</i> [95% CI]
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Trait Narcissism	3.65 <sup>a</sup>	2.84	8.31 <sub>b</sub>	5.06	7.29 <sub>b</sub>	5.18	32.98* (1.95, 193.26)	-1.14 [-1.43, -.84]	-87 [-1.16, -.58]	.20 [-.08, .48]
Narcissistic PD	3.98 <sup>a</sup>	3.20	7.74 <sub>b</sub>	4.95	8.89 <sub>b</sub>	5.35	43.0* (1.91, 189.42)	-.90 [-1.19, -.61]	-1.11 [-1.41, -.81]	-.22 [-.50, .06]
Avoidant PD	2.47 <sup>a</sup>	2.11	2.76 <sub>a</sub>	2.18	3.10 <sub>a</sub>	2.21	2.80 (1.90, 187.66)	-.14 [-.41, .14]	-.29 [-.57, -.01]	-.15 [-.43, .12]

*Note.* Means within each row with different subscripts are significantly different at  $p \leq .01$ . PNC = perception of national character; NPD = narcissistic personality disorder; SA = comparison between self- and acquaintance ratings; SP = comparison between self- and PNC ratings; AP = comparison between acquaintance and PNC ratings. *ds*  $\geq .80$  are in bold. Trait narcissism measured with the Narcissistic Personality Inventory; Narcissistic PD measured with the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Personality Disorders–Personality Questionnaire (SCID-II P/Q); Avoidant PD measured with the SCID-II P/Q. The degrees of freedom for all of the *F* tests were calculated using the Greenhouse-Geiser correction. 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals for Cohen's *d*. \*  $p \leq .01$ .

**Table 2**  
*Self, Acquaintance, and U.S. PNC Ratings of Trait Narcissism, NPD, and a Comparison in Study 2*

Personality constructs	Self		Acquaintance		U.S. PNC		<i>F</i> ( <i>df</i> )	SA <i>d</i> [95% CI]	SP <i>d</i> [95% CI]	AP <i>d</i> [95% CI]
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Trait Narcissism	4.85 <sup>a</sup>	2.93	6.52 <sub>b</sub>	4.18	11.71 <sub>c</sub>	3.52	342.5* (1.92, 601.72)	-.46 [-.62, -.31]	-2.12 [-2.31, -1.92]	-1.34 [-1.52, -1.17]
Narcissistic PD	5.39 <sup>a</sup>	2.71	6.45 <sub>b</sub>	3.67	12.20 <sub>c</sub>	3.35	525.4* (1.87, 585.11)	-.33 [-.48, -.17]	-2.23 [-2.43, -2.03]	-1.64 [-1.82, -1.46]
Avoidant PD	2.82 <sup>a</sup>	1.89	2.70 <sub>a</sub>	2.02	3.41 <sub>b</sub>	2.01	13.6 (1.98, 621.09)	.07 [-.09, .22]	-.30 [-.46, -.14]	-.35 [-.51, -.20]

*Note.* Means within each row with different subscripts are significantly different at  $p \leq .01$ . PNC = perception of national character; NPD = narcissistic personality disorder; SA = comparison between self- and acquaintance ratings; SP = comparison between self- and PNC ratings; AP = comparison between acquaintance and PNC ratings. *ds*  $\geq .80$  are in bold. Trait narcissism measured with the Narcissistic Personality Inventory; Narcissistic PD measured with the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Personality Disorders–Personality Questionnaire (SCID-II P/Q); Avoidant PD measured with the SCID-II P/Q. The degrees of freedom for all of the *F* tests were calculated using the Greenhouse-Geiser correction. 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals for Cohen's *d*. \*  $p \leq .01$ .

For AVPD, PNC ratings were significantly higher than self-ratings ( $d = .30$ ) and acquaintance ratings ( $d = .35$ ), although the effect size for the PNC ratings versus self-ratings comparison was much smaller than was the case with trait narcissism and NPD. Self and acquaintance ratings did not differ from one another ( $d = .07$ ).

**Five factor model.** Given that narcissism is most strongly correlated with the FFM domains of extraversion (positively) and agreeableness (negatively; Campbell & Miller, 2013; Samuel & Widiger, 2008), we focus on these results in the text, although we report the data for all five domains in Table 3. We found no differences among the self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of extraversion ( $d$ s ranged from .07 to .20). We found significant differences for agreeableness such that self-ratings were significantly higher than both acquaintance ( $d = .40$ ) and PNC ( $d = 1.78$ ) ratings; acquaintance ratings were also significantly higher than PNC ratings ( $d = 1.13$ ). The difference between self and PNC ratings of Agreeableness was the largest effect size ( $d = 1.78$ ) found among the FFM domains.<sup>3</sup>

We also examined the correlations between the PNC ratings of trait narcissism and NPD with the PNC ratings of the FFM domains. PNC ratings of both trait narcissism (NPI-16) and NPD (SCID-II P/Q) were primarily related to PNC ratings of agreeableness ( $r$ s =  $-.16$  and  $-.24$ ) but not extraversion ( $r$ s =  $.11$  and  $.02$ , respectively).<sup>4</sup>

**Externalizing behaviors.** We compared self-, acquaintance, and PNC ratings on four externalizing behaviors: alcohol use, substance use, antisocial behavior, and number of sexual partners (see Table 3). We obtained significant differences for all four behaviors ( $d$ s ranged from  $-.09$  to  $-1.81$ ). Self-ratings of alcohol use were significantly lower than acquaintance ( $d = -.20$ ) and PNC ( $d = -1.11$ ) ratings; acquaintance ratings were significantly lower than PNC ratings ( $d = -.85$ ). Self- and acquaintance ratings of substance use were both significantly lower than PNC ratings ( $d$ s =  $-1.43$  and  $-1.32$ , respectively) but did not differ from one another ( $d = -.09$ ). Self-ratings of antisocial behavior were significantly lower than both acquaintance ( $d = -.25$ ) and PNC ( $d = -1.81$ ) ratings; acquaintance ratings of antisocial behavior were also significantly lower than PNC ratings ( $d = -1.62$ ). Finally, self-ratings of sexual partners were lower than acquaintance ratings ( $d = -.17$ ) and PNC ratings ( $d = -1.67$ ); acquaintance ratings were also lower than the PNC rating ( $d = -1.40$ ).

PNC ratings of trait narcissism and NPD were generally positively correlated with PNCs of externalizing behaviors, although these relations were not always statistically significant at the more conservative  $p \leq .01$  threshold (*alcohol use*: PNC trait narcissism =  $.19$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ; PNC NPD =  $.09$ , *ns*; *substance use*: PNC trait narcissism =  $.13$ , *ns*; PNC NPD =  $.20$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ; *antisocial behavior*: PNC trait narcissism =  $.12$ , *ns*; PNC NPD =  $.19$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ; *sexual partners*: PNC trait narcissism =  $.16$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ; PNC NPD =  $.18$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ).

## Discussion

The Study 2 results again replicated the findings that Americans perceive Americans and acquaintances (to a significantly lesser degree) as substantially more narcissistic than they perceive themselves. Indeed, effect sizes for the self—PNC comparisons were large (i.e.,  $d$ s  $> 2.0$ ). As with previous research, Americans do not

rate Americans in general or their acquaintances as more pathological in all ways; in particular, they did not rate Americans or their acquaintances as substantially higher in AVPD.

In Study 2, we also explored the general traits associated with narcissism via the FFM. Specifically, we tested whether these individuals were rated as both extraverted and antagonistic—the two basic personality dimensions that best characterize narcissism and NPD (Campbell & Miller, 2013; Paulhus, 2001). Although we obtained several differences for the FFM domains across the ratings, the key findings were the (a) lack of significant differences for ratings of the domain of extraversion and (b) very large differences for the domain of agreeableness. Specifically, Americans in general (and acquaintances, to a lesser extent) were seen as substantially more antagonistic than the self. This pattern of results played out similarly in the correlational analyses in which PNC ratings of narcissism and NPD were correlated with PNC ratings of agreeableness but not extraversion.

Finally, we broadened the scope of this investigation further by asking participants to rate themselves, acquaintances, and Americans in general with regard to their engagement in four specific externalizing behaviors: alcohol and substance use, antisocial behavior, and number of sexual partners. In line with the raters' judgment that Americans are more antagonistic and less conscientiousness, participants also perceived Americans as considerably more likely to engage in an array of externalizing behaviors. Over the last 12 months, Americans were rated as drinking alcohol once or twice a week, usually in large amounts, using two illegal drugs such as marijuana or cocaine, committing five or more criminal acts (e.g., stealing, fighting, breaking into a house), and having double the lifetime sexual partners (as compared with the self-ratings). The effect sizes for the comparisons of the self versus PNC ratings of externalizing behaviors were large, as were the comparisons between the acquaintance—PNC ratings. In addition, the results suggest that the extent to which Americans view the typical American as narcissistic is related to their perception that the typical American engages in a wide array of externalizing behaviors, although these relations were small.

In sum, Americans rate Americans (and their acquaintances, to a lesser degree) as having a significantly greater degree of narcissism, as judged by ratings of trait narcissism and symptoms of NPD. These ratings are not due, however, to a perception that the typical American (or acquaintance) is substantially extraverted (e.g., outgoing). Instead, the PNC ratings of the FFM traits suggest that the perception of the typical American as narcissistic is

<sup>3</sup> With regard to the remaining domains, there were significant differences for all three ( $F$ s  $\geq 61.9$ ; see Table 3). The self-ratings of Neuroticism were significantly lower than acquaintance ( $d = -.24$ ) and PNC ( $d = -1.06$ ) ratings; acquaintance rating were also significantly lower on this domain than the PNC ratings ( $d = -.70$ ). Self-ratings on Openness to Experience were significantly higher than both acquaintance ( $d = .27$ ) and PNC ratings ( $d = .65$ ); acquaintance ratings were significantly higher than the PNC ratings for Openness ( $d = .36$ ). Finally, for the domain of Conscientiousness, the self-ratings were significantly higher than the acquaintance ( $d = .54$ ) and PNC ( $d = .91$ ) ratings; acquaintance ratings were significantly higher than the PNC ratings for this domain ( $d = .27$ ).

<sup>4</sup> Although PNCs of narcissism/NPD were not related to the FFM domain of extraversion, they were correlated with the most narcissism/NPD relevant facet of Extraversion, Assertiveness ( $r$ s =  $.24$  and  $.21$ , respectively), suggesting that the narcissism PNCs are associated with heightened perceptions of agency in Americans.

**Table 3**  
*Self-, Acquaintance, and U.S. PNC Ratings of the Five-Factor Model (FFM) Domains and Externalizing Behaviors (EBs) in Study 2*

Personality and externalizing behaviors	Self		Acquaintance		U.S. PNC		<i>F</i> ( <i>df</i> )	SA <i>d</i> [95% CI]	SP <i>d</i> [95% CI]	AP <i>d</i> [95% CI]
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
<b>FFM</b>										
Neuroticism	14.89 <sub>a</sub>	3.69	15.89 <sub>b</sub>	4.50	18.70 <sub>c</sub>	3.50	107.0* (1.95, 615.46)	-.24 [- .40, -.08]	-1.06 [-1.23, -.89]	-.70 [- .86, -.54]
Extraversion	21.76	3.60	21.50	3.76	21.08	3.26	3.01 (1.99, 628.21)	.07 [- .09, .23]	.20 [.04, .35]	.12 [- .04, .35]
Openness	20.73 <sub>a</sub>	3.52	19.74 <sub>b</sub>	3.80	18.41 <sub>c</sub>	3.66	33.93* (1.89, 596.12)	.27 [.11, .43]	.65 [.49, .81]	.36 [.20, .51]
Agreeableness	21.96 <sub>a</sub>	3.23	20.41 <sub>b</sub>	4.49	15.72 <sub>c</sub>	3.76	234.0* (1.92, 603.30)	.40 [.24, .55]	1.78 [1.59, 1.96]	1.13 [.96, 1.30]
Conscientious	22.82 <sub>a</sub>	3.67	20.59 <sub>b</sub>	4.61	19.47 <sub>c</sub>	3.71	61.9* (1.99, 626.14)	.54 [.38, .69]	.91 [.74, 1.07]	.27 [.11, .42]
<b>EBs</b>										
Alcohol use	2.94 <sub>a</sub>	1.79	3.29 <sub>b</sub>	1.92	4.72 <sub>c</sub>	1.37	122.2* (1.85, 524.47)	-.20 [- .36, -.04]	-1.11 [-1.28, -.94]	-.85 [-1.02, -.68]
Substance use	.48 <sub>a</sub>	.76	.56 <sub>a</sub>	.87	2.16 <sub>b</sub>	1.49	257.7* (1.38, 432.57)	-.09 [- .25, .06]	-1.43 [-1.60, -1.25]	-1.32 [-1.49, -1.15]
Antisocial behavior	.63 <sub>a</sub>	1.03	.96 <sub>b</sub>	1.54	5.53 <sub>c</sub>	3.68	439.6* (1.25, 390.11)	-.25 [- .41, -.09]	-1.81 [-2.00, -1.62]	-1.62 [-1.80, -1.44]
Sexual partners	.67 <sub>a</sub>	.77	.81 <sub>b</sub>	.83	1.82 <sub>c</sub>	.60	291.5* (1.98, 606.70)	-.17 [- .33, -.01]	-1.67 [-1.86, -1.49]	-1.40 [-1.58, -1.23]

*Note.* Means within each row with different subscripts are significantly different at  $p \leq .01$ . PNC = perception of national character; NPD = narcissistic personality disorder; SA = comparison between self- and acquaintance ratings; SP = comparison between self- and PNC ratings; AP = comparison between acquaintance and PNC ratings. *ds*  $\geq .50$  to  $.79$  are underlined; *ds*  $\geq .80$  are in bold. Trait narcissism measured with the Narcissistic Personality Inventory; Narcissistic PD measured with the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Personality Disorders–Personality Questionnaire (SCID-II P/Q); Avoidant PD measured with the SCID-II P/Q. The degrees of freedom for all of the *F* tests were calculated using the Greenhouse-Geiser correction. 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals for Cohen's *d*.

primarily because of a belief that this person is substantially more antagonistic (e.g., immodest, self-centered, dishonest, noncompliant, callous). Consistent with literature documenting the role of trait antagonism in externalizing behaviors such as criminality, aggression, and substance use (Kotov, Gamez, Schmidt, & Watson, 2010; Jones, Miller, & Lynam, 2011), participants also perceived Americans as more likely to engage in a variety of externalizing behaviors.

### Study 3

Findings from Studies 1 and 2, along with the two studies from Campbell and colleagues (2010), make a strong case that Americans perceive Americans in general as significantly narcissistic. It is unclear, however, who American respondents are thinking about when making PNC ratings. In Study 3, we surveyed Americans and asked about the characteristics they associate with the typical American with regard to demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, religious affiliation, socioeconomic factors including education and wealth, and psychological as well as physical health. At the same time, we asked respondents to complete U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism to test whether these ratings were related to any of these aforementioned characteristics.

### Method

**Design, participants, and procedure.** Participants were 183 Americans (59% male;  $M_{age} = 31.43$ ,  $SD_{age} = 12.51$ ) recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), who were compensated \$.50 for their time. Participants were randomly assigned to complete either the PNC ratings of narcissism prior to the ratings of other individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, wealth, education) or the reverse order.

#### Measures.

**Narcissistic Personality Inventory–13 (NPI-13; Gentile et al., 2013).** U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism were based on a 13-item, forced choice version of the NPI, which is scored the same way as the NPI-40 and provides both a total score ( $\alpha = .90$ ) and three subscale scores: Leadership/Authority (4 items;  $\alpha = .78$ ), Grandiose Exhibitionism (5 items;  $\alpha = .80$ ), and Entitlement/Exploitativeness (4 items;  $\alpha = .74$ ). We used only the total score in this study.

**PNC ratings of general characteristics.** Participants were asked a series of questions about whom they think of when rating questions about “Americans in general.” These questions pertained to gender, age, marital status, religious affiliation, wealth, education, psychological and physical health, and likability. The questions included a response scale of 1 (e.g., very uneducated, very poor, very unhealthy) to 5 (e.g., very educated, very wealthy, very healthy), with the exception of gender (men = 1; women = 2), age, marital status, and religious affiliation. Participants also responded to an open ended question about the “target’s” occupation.

### Results

American targets were rated near the midpoints for education ( $M = 3.15$ ;  $SD = .74$ ), wealth ( $M = 2.91$ ;  $SD = .71$ ), physical health ( $M = 2.82$ ;  $SD = .80$ ) and psychological health ( $M = 3.07$ ;  $SD =$

.84), as well as likability ( $M = 3.35$ ;  $SD = .84$ ). The majority of targets were rated as being middle-aged ( $M = 35.42$ ;  $SD = 7.23$ ), married (67%), men (81%), living in urban areas (69%), and being affiliated with a specific religion (81%). The targets' occupations varied tremendously; some of the most common ones were office worker (29), retail or sales worker (22), business woman/man (20), factory worker (9), accountant (7), construction worker (5), and customer service worker (4).

PNC ratings of narcissism were not statistically significantly related to these characteristics including wealth ( $r = .04$ ), education ( $r = .10$ ), age ( $r = .01$ ), gender ( $r = -.11$ ) physical ( $r = -.15$ ) and psychological health ( $r = -.11$ ), as well as likability ( $r = -.09$ ). Order of scale completion (narcissism PNC first, followed by other PNC ratings vs. general PNC ratings, followed by ratings of narcissism PNC ratings) did not matter, as it was uncorrelated with PNC ratings of NPI narcissism ( $r = -.07$ ).

## Discussion

Across a variety of questions, the mean ratings of the typical American were near the scale midpoints such that Americans as a group were not seen as particularly high or low on factors such as education, wealth, physical or psychological health, or likability. Further, these factors were not reliably associated with U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism. The exemplars were largely middle-aged, married, men, with a religious affiliation, who are more likely to be living in urban areas. These ratings, again, were not correlated with PNC ratings of narcissism. Overall, these results suggest that the perception of Americans, by Americans, as narcissistic is not tied, at least explicitly, to the use of exemplars that are associated with narcissism (e.g., youth; wealth; celebrity). Of course, it is possible, even likely, that individuals may not have a consciously available exemplar when completing ratings such as these and that PNC ratings of different groups that are explicitly referenced (e.g., younger vs. older Americans; American men vs. women) might yield meaningful difference and provide some insight into why Americans are generally rated as highly narcissistic.

## Study 4

The results from the previous study suggest that the specific descriptors (e.g., younger males; wealthy actors) are not responsible for the PNC ratings of American narcissism. As noted, however, it is possible that individuals do not have specific exemplars in mind when completing PNC ratings. In Study 4, we used a between-subjects design in which participants provided PNC ratings of narcissism for specific and explicit exemplars that might be tied to the overall high scores found for Americans: gender, age, and occupation. Given extant research, we hypothesized that PNC narcissism ratings of men would be higher than women, young individuals would be rated as more narcissistic than middle-aged and older Americans, and that Americans working in high visibility occupations (actors, athletes, politicians) would be rated as more narcissistic than Americans working in lower visibility occupations (health care workers, teachers, waiters/waitresses). A comparison sample was also collected who rated Americans in general as in the previous studies.

## Method

**Design, participants, and procedure.** Participants were 1,202 Americans (60% male;  $M_{\text{age}} = 33.89$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 11.03$ ; 82% White; 10% Asian; 8% Black) recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), who were compensated \$.50 for their time. Participants were randomly assigned to complete PNC ratings of American narcissism for one of the following 12 conditions: gender (American male vs. American female), age (Americans aged 18 to 30; 31 to 50; 51 and older), occupation (American actor/actress, American athlete, American politician, American health care worker, American primary school teacher, American waiter/waitress), or general Americans. Participants also rated these individuals (within their own assigned group) on characteristics such as visibility, status, wealth, and attention seeking.

### Measures.

**Narcissistic Personality Inventory–13 (NPI-13; Gentile et al., 2013).** U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism were based on a 13-item, forced choice version of the NPI, which provides both a total score ( $\alpha = .90$ ) and three subscale scores: Leadership/Authority (4 items;  $\alpha = .78$ ), Grandiose Exhibitionism (5 items;  $\alpha = .84$ ), and Entitlement/Exploitativeness (4 items;  $\alpha = .78$ ). We used only the total score in this study.

**PNC ratings of general characteristics.** Participants were asked a series of questions about the Americans in the group for which they provided ratings including one item for each of the following qualities: visibility, status, representativeness, wealth, attention seeking, aggressiveness, trustworthiness, ethicality, tendency to act in their own self-interest, and the degree to which the participants identified with individuals in the group. These questions were answered using a response scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

## Results

Four one-way ANOVAs were run to analyze these data with Bonferroni corrections where applicable (see Table 4); a  $p$  value of  $\leq .01$  was used for all tests of significance. First, an ANOVA examining PNC ratings of narcissism for American men and women was run; men were rated as being significantly more narcissistic than women ( $d = .36$ ). Next, an ANOVA was run examining PNC ratings of narcissism across three age groups—18 to 30, 31 to 50, and 51 and older—and significant differences were found such that 18- to 30-year-old Americans were rated as more narcissistic than 30- to 50-year-olds ( $d = .50$ ) and 51 and older Americans ( $d = .71$ ). The two older groups did not differ significantly in narcissism ratings ( $d = .16$ ). Next, an ANOVA was run comparing ratings of Americans working in six occupations: athletes, actors/actresses, politicians, health care workers, primary school teachers, and waiters/waitresses. Significant differences were again found such that American actors/actresses, athletes, and politicians were all rated as more narcissistic than health care workers, primary school teachers, and waiters/waitresses ( $M d = 1.03$ ). Narcissism ratings of American athletes, actors, and politicians did not differ significantly from one another ( $M d = .14$ ) nor did the ratings of health care workers, school teachers, and wait staff differ from one another ( $M d = .17$ ). Next, we conducted an ANOVA comparing all 12 groups with a focus only on the comparisons between the general American group with the other 11 groups. The PNC ratings of Americans were significantly different

**Table 4**  
*PNC Narcissism Ratings of Americans by Gender, Age Group, and Occupational Status in Study 4*

Groups of Americans	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F				
Gender																	
<i>d</i> : Female	8.04 <sub>a</sub>	4.33	2: Females	6.49 <sub>b</sub>	4.18								6.78* (1, 203)				
Age																	
<i>d</i> : 31-50	7.93 <sub>a</sub>	4.30	3: 18-30	5.90 <sub>b</sub>	3.85	5: 51 or older	5.34 <sub>b</sub>	2.90					13.20* (2, 294)				
<i>d</i> : 51+	.50	.71															
Occupations																	
<i>d</i> : Athletes	9.23 <sub>a</sub>	4.38	6: Actors	9.25 <sub>a</sub>	4.20	7: Athletes	8.35 <sub>a</sub>	4.26	9: Healthcare workers	4.53 <sub>b</sub>	3.51	10: School teachers	4.80 <sub>b</sub>	3.41	11: Wait staff	5.44 <sub>b</sub>	3.65
<i>d</i> : Politicians	0.00																
<i>d</i> : Healthcare Workers	0.20																
<i>d</i> : School teachers	1.18																
<i>d</i> : Wait staff	1.13																
General Americans	0.94																
<i>d</i> s with General Americans and 11 groups (*Comparisons significant at $p \leq .01$ )	7.55	4.64															
	1: 0.11		2: -0.24			3: 0.08			4: -0.39		5: -0.57*		6: 0.37				
	7: 0.38		8: 0.18			9: -0.73*			10: -0.68*		11: -0.51						

*Note.* Means with different subscripts within the same row are significantly different from one another ( $p \leq .01$ ). *N*s: Males = 103; Females = 102; Age 18 to 30 = 98; Age 31 to 50 = 99; Age 51 and older = 100; Actors = 101; Athletes = 101; Healthcare Workers = 99; Politicians = 100; School Teachers = 99; Wait Staff = 97; General Americans = 104.

only from ratings of Americans 51 years and older ( $d = .57$ ), health care workers ( $d = .73$ ), and teachers ( $d = .68$ ) such that Americans were rated as more narcissistic than individuals in these three groups.

Next we examined the degree to which these mean group-level narcissism ratings, across the specific age, gender, and occupational groups, were correlated with mean ratings across the various descriptors ( $n = 11$ ). Mean level PNC narcissism ratings were significantly positively correlated with mean PNC ratings of attention seeking ( $r = .97$ ), aggressiveness ( $r = .92$ ), acting in one's own self-interest ( $r = .90$ ), and having a high visibility ( $r = .86$ ). Mean level PNC narcissism ratings were also negatively correlated with PNC ratings of the level to which the individuals in these groups were seen as ethical ( $r = -.90$ ) and trustworthy ( $r = -.88$ ). Although not significant at  $p \leq .01$ , given the limited degree of freedom for group level correlations, PNC ratings of narcissism also manifested positive relations with perceptions of status ( $r = .70$ ) and wealth ( $r = .66$ ) and negative relations with the degree to which raters identify with individuals in these groups ( $r = -.47$ ) and view these individuals as representative of Americans ( $r = -.44$ ).

**Discussion**

Counter to the results found in Study 3, the current results suggest that certain groups of Americans are seen as being significantly more narcissistic when specific and explicit exemplars are provided for raters including men, younger Americans, and individuals working in high visibility and high status occupations such as athletes, actors, and politicians. Explicit comparisons of the mean PNC narcissism rankings with a "general American group" found that the general Americans were rated as more narcissistic than older Americans (i.e., 51 and older) and individuals working in lower visibility jobs such as health care workers and primary school teachers. In addition, mean level differences in PNC narcissism ratings were correlated with a variety of variables including visibility, acting in one's own self-interest, attention seeking, and aggressiveness. We believe these results support the notion that perceptions of Americans as narcissistic are driven, at least in large part, by an availability heuristic in which certain features of some Americans (e.g., visibility, high status and wealth) drive the perception that Americans are highly self-centered, grandiose, and exploitative.

**Study 5**

Study 5 examines two questions. First, do citizens of non-U.S. regions rate the citizenry of their own region as more narcissistic than they rate themselves and acquaintances? That is, does the same pattern found in Studies 1 and 2 in a U.S. sample (and in Campbell et al., 2010) hold in different world regions? Second, do citizens of these other regions rate Americans as more narcissistic than they rate the citizens of their own region? This question is the most interesting one, because it allows us to test whether Americans' perception of Americans as narcissistic is supported by views from members of other cultural groups.

In Study 5, we collected data from five world regions including Basque Country, China, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and

the United States (We use the term region because these are not all separate countries.) These regions were chosen, in part, because they represent a diverse collection of cultures with varying attitudes toward the United States (Pew, 2012) and allow for a relatively comprehensive comparison to the U.S. PNC ratings. We included a measure of AVPD for comparison purposes.

## Method

**Design, participants, and procedure.** We used a 5 (Region: Basque Country, China, Turkey, U.K., U.S.)  $\times$  2 (Target: self-rating, acquaintance rating)  $\times$  2 (Culture: own culture, U.S. culture) between-subjects design. We counterbalanced order of presentation for Target and Culture across conditions. The outcome variable were ratings of NPI-16 narcissism, Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-4 (PDQ-4; Hyler, 1994) NPD, and PDQ-4 AVPD. The design was not fully crossed. It has an appended cell, because American participants only completed PNC ratings for the United States. Thus, our analyses focus on specified contrasts.

We tested 733 individuals who took part in exchange for research credit or financial compensation or were simply volunteers across five world regions: Basque Country ( $M_{\text{age}} = 20.25$  [ $SD = 3.65$ ]; 66% female), China ( $M_{\text{age}} = 20.55$  [ $SD = 1.28$ ]; 58% female), Turkey ( $M_{\text{age}} = 21.44$  [ $SD = 4.37$ ]; 86% female), U.K. ( $M_{\text{age}} = 20.13$  [ $SD = 1.78$ ]; 50% female), and U.S. ( $M_{\text{age}} = 18.86$  [ $SD = 1.24$ ]; 50% female).

Non-American participants completed two versions of each scale: (a) a self-rating or an acquaintance rating, and (b) a rating of their region's PNC or a rating of U.S. PNC. American participants completed two versions of each scale: (a) a self-rating or an acquaintance rating and (b) a report of U.S. PNC. We randomized the scale administration order.

**Basque country.** Participants were 166 Universidad de Deusto undergraduate volunteers. The measures were translated into Castellano and back-translated into English.

**China.** Participants were 208 Wuhan University undergraduates, who responded to advertisements posted around campus and were paid 5 Chinese Yuan (\$.80). The measures were translated into Mandarin and back-translated into English.

**Turkey.** Participants were 118 Istanbul Bilgi University undergraduates, who received extra course credit in exchange for their participation. The Turkish version of the NPI (Atay, 2009) was used; the other scales were translated into Turkish and back-translated into English.

**United Kingdom.** Participants were 120 University of Exeter undergraduate volunteers.

**United States.** Participants were 121 University of Georgia undergraduates, who took part in exchange for research credit.

### Measures.

**Narcissistic Personality Inventory-16 (NPI-16).** As in the previous studies, we used the forced choice format version of the NPI-16 (see Table 5 for coefficient alphas).

**Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-4 (PDQ-4).** The PDQ-4 (Hyler, 1994) is 99-item self-report measure of DSM-IV PDs on which items are answered using a Yes/No response format. We administered only the items for narcissistic (nine items) and avoidant (seven items) PDs.

Table 5  
*Alpha Coefficients for Study 5 Scales Across the Five Countries*

PNC: Home country as target		$\alpha$	Self as target		$\alpha$
NPI			NPI		
United States		.84	United States		.76
Basque, Spain		.80	Basque, Spain		.81
China		.77	China		.64
Turkey		.70	Turkey		.65
United Kingdom		.81	United Kingdom		.77
NPD			NPD		
United States		.64	United States		.34
Basque, Spain		.60	Basque, Spain		.59
China		.72	China		.45
Turkey		.61	Turkey		.37
United Kingdom		.67	United Kingdom		.68
AVPD			AVPD		
United States		.72	United States		.71
Basque, Spain		.72	Basque, Spain		.76
China		.70	China		.63
Turkey		.71	Turkey		.68
United Kingdom		.73	United Kingdom		.78
PNC-United States as target			Acquaintance as Target		
NPI			NPI narcissism		
United States		.84	United States		.84
Basque, Spain		.86	Basque, Spain		.85
China		.67	China		.83
Turkey		.82	Turkey		.81
United Kingdom		.88	United Kingdom		.88
NPD			NPD		
United States		.64	United States		.53
Basque, Spain		.68	Basque, Spain		.73
China		.64	China		.69
Turkey		.51	Turkey		.63
United Kingdom		.77	United Kingdom		.77
AVPD			AVPD		
United States		.72	United States		.63
Basque, Spain		.56	Basque, Spain		.69
China		.65	China		.67
Turkey		.61	Turkey		.72
United Kingdom		.47	United Kingdom		.75

Note. PNC = perception of national character; NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory; NPD = narcissistic personality disorder; AVPD = avoidant personality disorder.

## Results

**Analysis overview.** Our analyses focused on addressing two questions as to whether citizens of non-U.S. regions rate: (1) the citizenry of their own region as more narcissistic than they rate themselves and acquaintances and (2) Americans as more narcissistic than members of their own region. We also tested the replicability of the previous findings using a new sample of Americans.

To address these issues, we conducted a series of *t* tests comparing the means of the three versions (i.e., self, acquaintance, PNC) of the NPI-16, NPD, and AVPD within regions (Tables 6–8, respectively). We also calculated effect sizes for each of the comparisons using Cohen's *d*, which we report in the text while providing *t*-values in the tables.

**Do citizens rate the prototypical citizen as more narcissistic than themselves and acquaintances?**

**Trait narcissism (NPI-16).** First, we created an aggregate non-U.S. group by collapsing trait narcissism scores across all

non-U.S. regions (see Table 6). We obtained a similar pattern of results as in Studies 1 and 2. The effect sizes, however, were substantially smaller than those found in the United States: the mean PNC rating was not significantly greater than the mean acquaintance rating ( $d = .21$ ), but the mean acquaintance rating was significantly greater than the mean self-report rating ( $d = .46$ ).<sup>5</sup>

We next examined the specific contrasts within all regions. The mean trait narcissism PNC ratings for China and the United States were significantly greater than the acquaintance ratings with  $d$  effect sizes for all five regions ranging from  $-.04$  to  $.78$ , with a median of  $.24$ . Additionally, the mean acquaintance ratings for China, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States were significantly greater than the mean self-ratings with  $d$  effect sizes for all five regions ranging from  $.25$  to  $1.06$ , with a median of  $.54$ .

**Narcissistic personality disorder (PDQ-4).** Similar to the NPI ratings, we again created an aggregate region consisting of all non-U.S. regions (see Table 7). The mean non-U.S. PNC rating for NPD was significantly greater than the mean non-U.S. acquaintance rating ( $d = .33$ ), and the mean non-U.S. acquaintance NPD rating was significantly greater than the mean self-report rating ( $d = .53$ ).

Specifically, the mean PNC ratings of NPD were significantly greater than the mean acquaintance ratings of NPD in China ( $d = .45$ ) and the United States ( $d = 1.09$ ); effect sizes for the five regions ranged from  $.14$  to  $1.09$ , with a median of  $.38$ . Acquaintance means for NPD were significantly greater than self-report means for every region but Basque Country, with  $d$  effect sizes for the five regions ranging from  $.34$  to  $1.20$ , with a median of  $.58$ .

**Avoidant personality disorder (PDQ-4).** For AVPD, the PNC for the non-U.S. aggregate was higher than the mean for acquaintance ratings ( $d = .37$ ; see Table 8); we found no difference when comparing non-U.S. acquaintance rating mean with the non-U.S. self-report mean for AVPD ( $d = .02$ ).

Specifically, the PNC ratings of AVPD were larger than the mean acquaintance ratings for the United States ( $d = .65$ ) and Turkey ( $d = 1.00$ ) with effect sizes for all five regions ranging from  $-.12$  to  $1.00$ , with a median of  $.53$ . We found no mean differences when comparing self-report ratings to acquaintance ratings of AVPD across the regions. Effect sizes ranged from  $-.27$  to  $.25$ , with a median effect size of  $-.07$ .

**Summary.** In general, self-reported narcissism and NPD had the lowest means, followed by the means for acquaintance narcissism and NPD, with PNC narcissism and NPD manifesting the largest mean scores across most of the sampled cultures. This was not the case with AVPD, where the self and acquaintance ratings did not differ from one another, but were often slightly lower than the PNC ratings.

**Do non-Americans rate American citizens as more narcissistic and avoidant than the citizenry of their home region?**

**Trait narcissism (NPI-16).** First, we examined PNC scores using the non-U.S. aggregate. Overall, individuals from these other regions rated Americans as more narcissistic than the citizenry of their own home regions ( $d = .79$ ). The U.S. PNC narcissism mean, rated by the individuals of these other regions, was significantly greater than these same individuals' ratings of their own PNC for all of the regions except Turkey, with  $d$ s ranging from  $.43$  to  $1.36$ , with a median of  $.72$ . That is, citizens of most of these other

regions rate Americans in general as more narcissistic than the citizens from their own region.

**Narcissistic personality disorder (PDQ-4).** We examined the NPD PNC ratings using the non-U.S. aggregate. Overall, individuals from these other regions rated Americans as having more symptoms of NPD than the citizenry of these other regions ( $d = .22$ ). At the individual region level, the Basque Country's ( $d = .80$ ) and United Kingdom's ( $d = .57$ ) ratings of the United States PNC for NPD were significantly greater than the ratings of their own countries' PNC for NPD. There was no significant difference for Turkey, and there was a significant difference in the opposite direction for China, where the citizens of China rated Chinese citizens as having a higher number of NPD symptoms than American citizens ( $d = -.40$ ). Overall, the mean effect sizes ranged from  $-.40$  to  $.80$ , with a median effect size of  $.43$ .

**Avoidant personality disorder (PDQ-4).** First, we examined the AVPD PNC ratings using the non-U.S. aggregate. Overall, individuals from these other regions rated Americans as having substantially fewer symptoms of AVPD than the citizenry of these other regions ( $d = -.79$ ). At the individual region level, participants from China, Turkey, and the United Kingdom rated Americans as having fewer symptoms of AVPD than the citizenry of their own region; effect sizes ranged from  $-1.31$  to  $.08$  with a median of  $-1.04$ .

**Summary.** In general, persons from a variety of regions rate Americans as more narcissistic than the citizenry of their own countries, although the effects were larger for the trait measure of narcissism (NPI-16) than the measure of NPD (PDQ-4). We obtained the opposite pattern for the comparison PD such that members of the home regions were rated as having more symptoms of AVPD than Americans.

## Discussion

Study 5 addressed two primary questions. First, do citizens of non-U.S. regions rate the citizen of their own region as more narcissistic than they rate themselves and acquaintances? The answer is a qualified yes; citizens of non-U.S. regions also rate citizens of their own region as more narcissistic than acquaintances or themselves. Although this answer suggests that the pattern found for Americans is not unique to American culture, the effect sizes were much smaller in other cultures. Americans perceived considerable differences in the levels of trait narcissism and NPD when comparing Americans versus their acquaintances ( $d$ s =  $.78$  and  $1.09$ , respectively) and when comparing acquaintances to self-ratings ( $d$ s =  $1.06$  and  $1.20$ , respectively). The effect sizes for these comparisons using the United States data are substantially larger than those for the non-U.S. aggregate when comparing the means for trait narcissism and NPD found for the PNC versus acquaintance ratings ( $d$ s =  $.21$  and  $.33$ , respectively), as well as the comparison between the acquaintances versus self-ratings ( $d$ s =  $.46$  and  $.53$ ).

<sup>5</sup> Because of the number of contrasts, we did not calculate the self vs. PNC ratings in Study 5 (e.g., U.S. self-ratings on NPD vs. U.S. PNC NPD ratings) because the self-ratings were typically lower than acquaintance ratings, which were typically lower than the PNC ratings (both of these sets of contrasts are provided).

Table 6  
*Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Self-, Acquaintance, and PNC Ratings of Trait Narcissism in Study 5*

Trait Narcissism	Self		Other		Region PNC		Ratings of U.S. PNC		Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>d</i> [95% CI]
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
United States	4.33	3.29	8.36	4.22	11.31	3.85			U.S. Other–U.S. Self	5.85*	1.06 [.68, 1.44]
			8.36 <sup>a</sup>	4.22	11.34	3.41			U.S. PNC–U.S. Other	4.16*	.78 [.41, 1.14]
Basque	4.08	3.43	5.05	4.10	6.99	3.84	10.41	4.22	Basque Other–Basque Self	1.64	.25 [–.05, .56]
									Basque Ratings of U.S. PNC–Basque PNC	5.43*	.85 [.53, 1.17]
			5.63	4.26	6.20	3.25			Basque PNC–Basque Other	.71	.15 [–.29, .59]
China	4.90	2.77	6.73	4.09	8.10	3.67	10.07	2.96	China Other–China Self	3.77*	.52 [.25, .80]
									China ratings of U.S. PNC–China PNC	4.26*	.59 [.31, .87]
			6.92	3.95	8.48	3.64			China PNC–China Other	2.07*	.41 [.02, .80]
Turkey	6.14	3.00	8.03	3.99	9.27	3.31	10.80	3.79	Turkey Other–Turkey Self	2.92*	.54 [.17, .90]
									Turkey ratings of U.S. PNC–Turkey PNC	2.33	.43 [.06, .79]
			7.83	4.32	8.73	3.18			Turkey PNC–Turkey Other	1.03	.24 [–.27, .74]
United Kingdom	3.86	3.26	6.42	4.57	6.47	4.16	12.02	3.99	U.K. Other–Eng. Self	3.50*	.64 [.27, 1.01]
									U.K. ratings of US PNC–U.K. PNC	7.45*	1.36 [.96, 1.76]
			6.67	4.12	6.50	4.23			U.K. PNC–U.K. Other	–.19	–.04 [–.55, .47]
Non-U.S. Combined	4.72	3.19	6.46	4.29	7.69	3.86	10.69	3.74	Non-U.S. Other–Non-U.S. Self	5.72*	.46 [.30, .62]
									Non-U.S. Ratings of U.S. PNC–Non U.S. PNC	9.70*	.79 [.62, .95]
			6.71	4.17	7.54	3.73			Non-U.S. PNC–Non-U.S. Other	2.00	.21 [–.02, .43]

*Note.* Columns show the mean and standard deviation for self-rating (“self”), acquaintance ratings (“other”), the typical member of the participants’ own region (region perception of national character [PNC]), and the typical American (ratings of U.S. PNC). Specific contrasts are displayed at the right with *t* values and *ds*. Cohen’s *d* was calculated using the pooled standard deviation of both groups; 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals for Cohen’s *d*.

<sup>a</sup> For paired comparisons between native cultural PNC and other ratings (i.e., acquaintance), the analyses used a more limited number of participants who were in the cell in which both conditions were completed (i.e., rated own country PNC and acquaintance); because of the use of a smaller number of participants, the means differ to some degree and are noted here.

\*  $p \leq .01$ .

The second question addressed whether citizens of other regions rate American citizenry as more narcissistic than they rate the citizenry of their own region. The answer is “yes.” The U.S. PNC ratings for narcissism completed by members of these other regions were generally higher than the PNC ratings for narcissism for these same regions. The results were more complicated for ratings of PNC ratings of NPD completed by members of other regions (in relation to their own region and the United States). The PNC ratings of the U.S. NPD by citizens of the Basque Country and the United Kingdom were greater than these citizens’ ratings of their own regions’ NPD. The opposite held for China, such that Chinese participants rated Chinese citizens as having a greater number of symptoms of NPD than American citizens. (See Cai, Kwan, & Sedikides, 2012 and Kwan, Kuang, & Hui, 2009 for discussions of the high and growing levels of narcissism in China). No differences for Turkey emerged.

We included self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings of AVPD as a comparison to the two narcissism constructs. With the exception of the Basque Country, members of non-U.S. regions perceived the citizens of their own region as more avoidant than acquaintances. There were no differences between self and acquaintance ratings across the five regions for the comparison PD. The PNC AVPD ratings provided by citizens of China, Turkey, and the United Kingdom for the United States were lower than the AVPD PNC ratings provided by these same citizens. In general, Americans are viewed as less likely to experience “social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation” (APA, 2013, p. 672).

Finally, data from American undergraduates replicated the general pattern found in the previous studies in which the typical American was viewed as substantially more narcissistic

(on both measures of trait narcissism and NPD), than acquaintances who in turn were rated as more narcissistic than the self-ratings.

## Study 6

Study 6 addresses five questions. First, we test whether the pattern of results obtained in our prior studies replicate in a large and diverse international sample using a within-subjects design in which participants provide PNC ratings for both the US and their own country. Second, we test whether this finding holds across a variety of narcissism-related traits by using a multidimensional measure of narcissism that allowed us to investigate for which components of narcissism this pattern holds. This measure, the NPI-13 (Gentile et al., 2013), provides both total scores and three factor scores pertaining to Leadership/Authority, Grandiose Exhibitionism, and Entitlement/Exploitativeness. Third, we address the specificity of the hypothesized effects by using a different control personality disorder, dependent personality disorder (DPD), in order to find out if citizens of other countries perceive Americans as having an array of pathological traits or a more limited set consistent with narcissism.<sup>6</sup> Fourth, we investigate the more basic personality trait perceptions held by non-Americans by having participants rate the United States and home PNC on the domains of the FFM. These data again allow for a test of the specificity of the United States PNC ratings by examining whether Americans

<sup>6</sup> We thank an anonymous reviewer for the suggestion of using Dependent PD as a comparison PD because it is composed, in part, of traits considered to be more evaluative (i.e., agreeableness).

Table 7  
*Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Self-, Acquaintance, and PNC Ratings of NPD in Study 5*

Narcissistic PD Region	Self		Other		Region PNC		Ratings of U.S. PNC		Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>d</i> [95% CI]
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
United States	2.45	1.52	4.61	2.04	6.55	3.85			U.S. Other–U.S. Self	6.59*	1.20 [.81, 1.44]
			4.61 <sup>a</sup>	2.04	6.79	1.98			U.S. PNC–U.S. Other	6.54*	1.09 [.70, 1.14]
Basque	2.73	1.83	3.43	2.29	3.81	2.07	5.51	2.19	Basque Other–Basque Self	2.18	.34 [.03, .64]
									Basque Ratings of U.S. PNC–Basque PNC	5.14*	.80 [.48, 1.11]
			3.55	2.55	4.15	1.85			Basque PNC–Basque Other	1.27	.27 [–.17, .71]
China	2.87	1.79	3.90	2.31	4.85	2.47	3.90	2.22	China Other–China Self	3.63*	.50 [.23, .78]
									China ratings of U.S. PNC–China PNC	–2.90*	–.40 [–.68, –.13]
			3.87	2.37	4.98	2.60			China PNC–China Other	3.70*	.45 [.06, .84]
Turkey	3.47	1.65	4.59	2.14	5.44	2.08	6.02	1.84	Turkey Other–Turkey Self	3.17*	.58 [.21, .95]
									Turkey ratings of U.S. PNC–Turkey PNC	1.59	.29 [–.07, .66]
			4.40	2.01	5.20	2.23			Turkey PNC–Turkey Other	1.72	.38 [–.14, .89]
United Kingdom	2.25	1.94	4.07	2.60	4.38	2.43	5.80	2.56	U.K. Other–U.K. Self	4.31*	.79 [.42, 1.16]
									U.K. ratings of U.S. PNC–U.K. PNC	3.07*	.57 [.20, .94]
			4.17	2.41	4.48	2.06			U.K. PNC–U.K. Other	.64	.14 [–.38, .65]
Non-U.S. Combined	2.83	1.84	3.94	2.35	4.58	2.34	5.11	2.38	Non-U.S. Other–Non-U.S. Self	6.51*	.53 [.37, .69]
									Non-U.S. Ratings of U.S. PNC–Non-U.S. PNC	2.77*	.22 [.06, .38]
			3.95	2.36	4.71	2.26			Non-U.S. PNC–Non-U.S. Other	3.66*	.33 [.10, .56]

*Note.* Columns show the mean and standard deviation for self-rating (self), acquaintance ratings (other), the typical member of the participants' own region (region perception of national character [PNC]) and the typical American (ratings of U.S. PNC). Specific contrasts are displayed at the right with *t* values and *d*s.

<sup>a</sup> For paired comparisons between native cultural PNC and other ratings (i.e., acquaintance), the analyses used a more limited number of participants who were in the cell in which both conditions were completed (i.e., rated own country PNC and acquaintance); because of the use of a smaller number of participants, the means differ to some degree and are noted here. NPD = Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Cohen's *d* was calculated using the pooled standard deviation of both groups; 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals for Cohen's *d*.

\*  $p \leq .01$ .

are seen in a comprehensively unflattering and pathological light (e.g., neurotic, introverted, closed, disagreeable, and disinhibited) or whether the results vary across domains in a manner consistent with perceptions of narcissism (e.g., Americans viewed as both extraverted and disagreeable). Fifth and finally, the results from Study 5 suggest that citizens of several world regions rate Americans as significantly more narcissistic than the citizenry of these regions, but do not address the implications of these findings. In Study 6 we ask whether participants' perceptions of Americans as narcissistic affect their interest in interacting with an American on an individual level (e.g., friendship, coworker, romantic relationship) and their perceptions of America's role in global affairs.

## Method

**Design, participants, and procedure.** Participants were 377 adults (43.2% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 31.18$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 9.45$ ) recruited from MTurk and compensated \$.50. To obtain perspectives from individuals from a wide array of countries, we used a sampling strategy which made it less likely that any single country or region would make up a majority of the sample. Taking into account MTurk demographics, we first opened a study, capped at 75 participants, that was accessible to all individuals except those from North America. As expected based on the composition of MTurk users' nationalities, the vast majority of participants who responded to this initial survey were from India. We then advertised the study again excluding participants from North American and India, so as to ensure that participants from a more diverse collection of countries were included. We then combined these two data collections for the current purposes. The following describes the percentage of the sample from the various countries included: 19.6% of the sample was from India, 8.5% from the United Kingdom, 6.4% Philippines, 5.6% Pakistan, 5.0% Romania, 4.0%

Serbia, 3.7% Italy, and 2.7% Australia. The remaining countries comprised between .3 to 1.9% of the sample and included countries such as Algeria, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Jamaica, Netherlands, Paraguay, Russian Federation, and Thailand. Participants completed two versions of each scale, both a report of their own region's PNC and U.S. PNC. Administration order was randomized.

### Measures

**Narcissistic Personality Inventory–13.** (NPI-13; Gentile et al., 2013). We used a 13-item version of the NPI that provides both a total score (own country PNC:  $\alpha = .79$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .85$ ) and three subscale scores. These are Leadership/Authority (four items; own country PNC:  $\alpha = .58$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .68$ ), Grandiose Exhibitionism (five items; own country PNC:  $\alpha = .58$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .75$ ), and Entitlement/Exploitativeness (four items; own country PNC:  $\alpha = .67$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .64$ ).

**Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire–4 (PDQ-4).** The PDQ-4 (Hyler, 1994) is 99-item self-report measure of DSM-IV PDs on which items are answered using a yes or no response format. We administered only the items for DPD (own country PNC:  $\alpha = .75$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .72$ ).

**Five-Factor Model Rating Form.** (FFMRF; Mullins-Sweatt et al., 2006). The 30-item FFMRF assesses the five domains of personality from the FFM using six items per domain: Neuroticism (own country PNC:  $\alpha = .62$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .63$ ), Extraversion (own country PNC:  $\alpha = .78$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .76$ ), Openness (own country PNC:  $\alpha = .72$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .66$ ), Agreeableness (own country PNC:  $\alpha = .77$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .73$ ), and Conscientiousness (own country PNC:  $\alpha = .89$ ; U.S. PNC:  $\alpha = .81$ ).

**Individual and global perceptions of America.** Participants responded to eight items regarding individual and global perceptions of America on a 1 (*very uninterested; minimally so*) to

Table 8  
Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Self-, Acquaintance, and PNC Ratings of AVPD in Study 5

Avoidant PD Region	Self		Other		Region PNC		Ratings of U.S. PNC		Comparison	<i>t</i> value	<i>d</i> [95% CI]
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
United States	3.00	1.92	2.49	1.79	3.64	2.00			U.S. Other–U.S. Self	–1.51	–.27 [–.63, .08]
Basque	2.51	2.03	2.49 <sup>a</sup>	1.79	3.74	2.06			U.S. PNC–U.S. Other	4.33*	.65 [.28, 1.01]
			2.46	1.88	2.22	1.87	2.36	1.60	Basque Other–Basque Self	–.16	–.02 [–.33, .28]
										Basque Ratings of U.S. PNC–Basque PNC	.52
China	2.65	1.87	2.33	1.85	2.10	1.77			Basque PNC–Basque Other	–.72	–.12 [–.56, .31]
			3.13	1.97	3.74	2.05	1.42	1.58	China Other–China Self	1.81	.25 [–.02, .52]
										China ratings of U.S. PNC–China PNC	–9.14*
Turkey	2.69	1.90	3.00	2.02	3.69	1.96			China PNC–China Other	2.10	.35 [–.04, .73]
			2.56	1.95	4.15	1.96	1.83	1.56	Turkey Other–Turkey Self	–.38	–.07 [–.43, .29]
										Turkey ratings of U.S. PNC–Turkey PNC	–7.12*
United Kingdom	2.93	2.32	2.40	1.89	4.30	1.90			Turkey PNC–Turkey Other	4.54*	1.00 [.46, 1.54]
			2.50	1.94	3.22	2.05	1.78	1.39	U.K. Other–U.K. Self	–1.11	–.20 [–.56, .16]
										U.K. ratings of U.S. PNC–U.K. PNC	–4.47*
Non-U.S. Combined	2.68	2.01	2.17	1.64	3.07	1.76			U.K. PNC–U.K. Other	1.96	.53 [.01, 1.04]
			2.72	1.95	3.29	2.11	1.82	1.58	Non-U.S. Other–Non-U.S. Self	.25	.02 [–.14, .18]
										Non-U.S. Ratings of U.S. PNC–Non-U.S. PNC	–9.76*
			2.54	1.89	3.27	2.01			Non-U.S. PNC–Non-U.S. Other	3.79*	.37 [.15, .60]

Note. Columns show the mean and standard deviation for self-rating (self), acquaintance ratings (other), the typical member of the participants' own region (region perception of national character [PNC]), and the typical American (ratings of U.S. PNC). Specific contrasts are displayed at the right with *t* values and *ds*. AVPD = Avoidant Personality Disorder. Cohen's *d* was calculated using the pooled standard deviation of both groups; 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals for Cohen's *d*.

<sup>a</sup> For paired comparisons between native cultural PNC and other ratings (i.e., acquaintance), the analyses used a more limited number of participants who were in the cell in which both conditions were completed (i.e., rated own country PNC and acquaintance); because of the use of a smaller number of participants, the means differ to some degree and are noted here.

\* *p* ≤ .01.

5 scale (*very interested; very much so*). Four questions probed the participants' views of the extent to which they expected America to act in its own self-interest in general and relative to other countries, as well as how much the United States should and does play a role in global affairs. Finally, four questions asked participants about their interest, if given the chance, in having various relationships with an American, including a romantic relationship, a friendship, working with an American, and living in America.

**Results**

**Mean differences in own country and U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism, dependent PD, and FFM domains.** We conducted paired sample *t* tests comparing the PNC ratings of participants' own countries with PNCs of the United States in relation to narcissism-related traits, dependent PD symptoms, and the five domains of the FFM (see Table 9). PNC ratings of narcissism for the United States were significantly higher than the non-U.S.

Table 9  
Home and U.S. PNC Ratings of Trait Narcissism, DPD, and FFM Traits in Study 6

Personality constructs	Home PNC		U.S. PNC		<i>t</i>	<i>d</i> (95% CI)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Trait Narcissism						
NPI-13 Total	5.52	3.36	8.33	3.67	–10.73*	<b>–.80</b> [–.95, –.65]
NPI-13 L/A	1.71	1.30	2.59	1.36	–9.21*	<b>–.66</b> [–.81, –.51]
NPI-13 GE	2.00	1.61	3.30	1.65	–10.83*	<b>–.80</b> [–.95, –.65]
NPI-13 E/E	1.81	1.31	2.44	1.35	–6.67*	–.48 [–.62, –.33]
Dependent PD	3.62	2.39	3.49	2.27	0.95	.06 [–.08, .20]
Five Factor Model						
Neuroticism	17.92	3.87	16.99	3.78	3.94*	.25 [.11, .39]
Extraversion	19.78	4.54	21.51	4.33	–6.06*	–.39 [–.54, –.25]
Openness	17.96	4.40	19.20	4.16	–4.44*	–.29 [–.43, –.15]
Agreeableness	19.06	4.36	17.37	4.22	5.91*	.39 [.25, .54]
Conscientiousness	18.49	5.17	20.08	4.52	–5.12*	–.33 [–.47, –.18]

Note. L/A = Leadership/Authority; GE = Grandiose Exhibitionism; E/E = Entitlement/ Exploitativeness; DPD = Dependent Personality Disorder. *ds* ≥ .50 to .79 are underlined; *ds* ≥ .80 are in bold.

\* *p* ≤ .01.

PNCs for the narcissism total score ( $d = .80$ ), as well as for the three individual factors scores related to Leadership/Authority ( $d = .66$ ), Grandiose Exhibitionism ( $d = .80$ ), and Entitlement/Exploitativeness ( $d = .48$ ). There was no significant difference for DPD symptoms ( $d = -.06$ ), suggesting that the perception of Americans as narcissistic is not indicative of an all-encompassing perception of Americans' as more maladaptive. To explore these issues in more detail, we also compared the PNC ratings for the United States with home countries for the FFM domains. Here, again, there were statistically significant differences across all five scores such that Americans were rated as being less neurotic ( $d = -.25$ ) and agreeable ( $d = -.39$ ) and more extraverted ( $d = .39$ ), open to experience ( $d = .29$ ), and conscientious ( $d = .33$ ), although the effect sizes for these differences were smaller than those found for the narcissism scores.

Consistent with general trait correlates of narcissism, U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism were significantly associated with U.S. PNC ratings of extraversion ( $r = .20$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) and agreeableness ( $r = -.30$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ).

**Implications.** In order to examine potential implications of others perceiving citizens of the United States in the aforementioned manner, we correlated the U.S. PNC rating for narcissism with the items measuring perceptions that America plays a particularly active and potentially self-motivated role in global affairs, as well as the items that measured participants' interest in interacting with Americans (see Table 10). In general, U.S. PNC ratings manifested small positive correlations with expectations that America acts in its own self-interest and plays a large role in global affairs. These perceptions manifested smaller and nonsignificant positive correlations with questions asking about the extent to which American should play a large role in these affairs and whether they engage in more self-interested global behavior than other countries. In terms of more individual level perceptions, U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism were uncorrelated with interest in developing various types of relationships with Americans or living in the United States.

## Discussion

The results of Study 6 replicate those of Study 5 in demonstrating that persons from a wide array of other countries rate Americans as substantially more narcissistic than citizens from their own country. Importantly, the results from this study show that this finding holds across various narcissism components, as the U.S. PNC ratings of narcissism were higher for the total score as well as for all the three narcissism factors scores of Leadership/Authority, Grandiose Exhibitionism, and Entitlement/Exploitativeness. The ratings of the U.S. narcissism via PNCs are not specific to aspects of narcissism that some consider more adaptive. We obtained further evidence for the specificity of these perceptions via examinations of the findings for DPD and the FFM. Specifically, Americans were not rated as having more symptoms of the comparison disorder, DPD. Similarly, the U.S. PNC ratings for the FFM domains demonstrated a specific pattern of findings, such that Americans were seen as less neurotic and agreeable, as well as more extraverted, open, and conscientious—a pattern that is remarkably similar to the self-report correlates of grandiose narcissism (Campbell & Miller, 2013). More importantly, these results demonstrate that Americans are not rated in a broadly maladaptive

manner, given that they were perceived as more emotionally stable, extraverted, open, and conscientious—patterns inconsistent with many forms of psychopathology (e.g., Kotov et al., 2010).

The results from Study 6 also demonstrate a mixed pattern of findings with regard to possible implications of these ratings. In general, the perception of Americans as narcissistic was unrelated to individuals' willingness to engage with Americans in a variety of roles (e.g., coworker, friend, romantic partner, compatriot). There was some evidence, however, that these U.S. narcissism PNCs were correlated with the perception that America plays a large role and self-interested role in global affairs, although these relations were small in size.

## General Discussion

Across six studies, we focused on perceptions of Americans' narcissism and related traits by examining ratings of Americans by Americans and persons from other cultures. In several of the studies, we compared these PNC ratings to self and acquaintance ratings in order to provide some context for interpreting these findings. To determine the magnitude, nature, and generalizability of these effects, we tested samples of different ages and world regions, included two control personality disorders—avoidant (Studies 1, 2, and 5) and dependent (Study 6), and assessed more specific FFM-related trait (Studies 2 and 6) as well as behavioral (Study 2) level markers of narcissism. We also examined some mechanisms that might be explain these findings (Study 3 and 4) by testing whether the PNC ratings of narcissism differ according to the characteristics ascribed or provided of Americans (e.g., gender, age, occupational status). The results paint a broad portrait of the perceptions of Americans held by both American and non-Americans alike with regard to narcissism and related traits.

## Magnitude

Americans, irrespective of age or the type of sample from which they were drawn (i.e., undergraduate vs. community), rated Americans as substantially and problematically narcissistic. On average, American participants rated American citizens as significantly more narcissistic than close acquaintances and far more narcissistic than they rated themselves. Americans also rated their acquaintances as substantially more narcissistic than they rated themselves, although to a lesser degree than the PNCs in most cases. Across the studies, the PNC ratings of U.S. trait narcissism were such that over 65% of the narcissism items were endorsed in the narcissistic direction—a rating that far exceeds self-report means (Foster et al., 2003; Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008).

This pattern of findings was not limited to the use of trait measures such as the NPI, which some researchers have argued assesses "normal" narcissism (Pincus et al., 2009; cf. Miller et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2014). Instead, this pattern emerged with measures of *DSM-5* NPD as well. Americans perceived Americans as meeting criteria for substantially more symptoms of NPD than acquaintances and themselves. As with trait narcissism, Americans also perceived their acquaintances as meeting more criteria for NPD than they perceived themselves as meeting. In fact, in all three studies (Studies 1, 2, and 5) that used American samples, the mean PNC ratings for NPD were above the diagnostic

Table 10  
*U.S. PNC Ratings of Trait Narcissism and Global and Individual Implications in Study 6*

Perceptions of America's status and role in global affairs	NPI-13 Total	NPI-13 L/A	NPI-13 GE	NPI-13 E/E
How much do you expect America to act in its own self-interest?	.19*	.15*	.18*	.16*
Relative to other countries, how much do you expect America to act primarily in its own self-interest?	.11	.05	.13	.09
How much of a role do you think America should play in determining global affairs?	.04	.07	.06	-.03
How much of a role do you think America does play in determining global affairs?	.19*	.17*	.18*	.12
If given the chance, how interested would you be in the following?				
having a romantic relationship with an American	-.01	-.01	-.01	.00
having a friendship with an American	.04	.05	.07	-.02
working with Americans	-.01	.04	-.01	-.05
living in America	-.02	.03	-.01	-.07

Note. L/A = Leadership/Authority; GE = Grandiose Exhibitionism; E/E = Entitlement/ Exploitativeness.

\*  $p \leq .01$ .

threshold for this disorder, meaning that Americans in general were rated by their compatriots as meeting criteria for pathological narcissism as articulated in the *DSM-5*. This finding is all the more remarkable given the generally low prevalence rate for this disorder (Torgersen, 2013). The same was true for perceptions of Americans provided by non-American participants. The mean PNC ratings of the United States for NPD provided by citizens of other countries were also above the diagnostic threshold for all countries and regions except China.

This pattern did not hold for the comparison personality disorder—AVPD. Across the three samples, there were only small differences in ratings of AVPD such that American participants considered Americans as meeting only slightly more symptoms of this disorder than acquaintances or themselves. There were no differences in how participants perceived acquaintances or themselves with regard to AVPD. These results are consistent with those reported by Campbell and colleagues (2010), and suggest that Americans do not perceive Americans as broadly personality disordered but rather see Americans fitting a relatively specific pattern of traits and symptoms.

## Nature

To understand better why Americans and non-Americans rate the typical American as substantially narcissistic, we also examined self, acquaintance, and PNC ratings using a measure of the predominant trait model of personality—the FFM. There is a substantial literature documenting the relations between general traits and personality disorders like NPD (see Widiger & Costa, 2013, for a review), and the *DSM-5* includes an alternative conceptual and diagnostic model that recognizes the central role that basic traits play in personality disorders. From a trait perspective, narcissism is most strongly linked to traits from the domains of agreeableness (negatively) and extraversion (positively; e.g., Paulhus, 2001). This is true for both grandiose narcissism (see Campbell & Miller, 2013, for a meta-analytic review) and *DSM-5* NPD (see Samuel & Widiger, 2008, for a meta-analytic review). The relevance of these traits has also been noted in ratings provided by both clinicians (Samuel & Widiger, 2004; Thomas, Wright, Lukowitsky, Donnellan, & Hopwood, 2012) and researchers (Lynam & Widiger, 2001; Thomas et al.). By examining the self-, acquaint-

tance, and PNC ratings of the FFM, we were able to test whether the perception of Americans as highly narcissistic is tied to perceptions of Americans as low in agreeableness, high in extraversion, or both.

Across studies, the pattern was mixed. In Study 2, we found that Americans perceived Americans as a whole as disagreeable but not extraverted. This is in contrast to findings reported by Terracciano and McCrae (2007) in which FFM PNC ratings of Americans, rated by Americans and members of 48 other cultures, included both disagreeable (e.g., immodest) and extraverted (e.g., assertive) traits—the two trait domains considered to be central to NPD by academicians and clinicians (Lynam & Widiger, 2001; Samuel & Widiger, 2004; Thomas et al., 2012). In Study 6, however, the expected low agreeableness and high extraversion pattern was found. In sum, the results for low agreeableness were consistent, but the results for high extraversion were less so (although the facet of Assertiveness was elevated in Study 2, and it is the Extraversion facet most associated with narcissism/NPD; Samuel & Widiger, 2008).

In accordance with Americans' perception that Americans are generally disagreeable, Americans were also rated, by Americans, as being involved in the greater commission of various externalizing behaviors including antisocial behavior (e.g., stealing, substance use) and sociosexual behaviors (e.g., having a larger number of sexual partners). The effect sizes for these comparisons were generally in line with the narcissism findings, such that PNC ratings of Americans were the highest, followed by ratings of acquaintances, and then the self-ratings. In fact, Americans were seen as substantially antisocial such that, on average, participants reported that Americans would have engaged in five or more significantly antisocial acts (e.g., stealing, being in a physical fight, hurting someone intentionally, breaking into a house) in the last 12 months, further demonstrating that the PNC ratings of Americans were not due to the more adaptive features of narcissism.

## Generalizability

In our cross-national studies (5 and 6), we obtained several key findings on the generalizability of the perceptions of Americans by individuals from other parts of the world. There is a general pattern by which individuals from different world regions see citizens of

that geographical region as more narcissistic than they see acquaintances and themselves. Nonetheless, the effect sizes for these comparisons in other countries were much smaller than those found for the United States. Although the perception of narcissism among the general citizenry exists across regions, these perceptions were strongest for America.

Moreover, individuals from other countries also generally perceive Americans as narcissistic and, in most cases, more narcissistic than the typical citizen from their own region. For instance, the mean PNC ratings of Americans in terms of NPD from the Basque Country, Turkey, and the United Kingdom were at or above the diagnostic threshold for diagnosis of NPD (i.e., five or more symptoms). That is, individuals from these countries rate Americans as so narcissistic that most would meet criteria for this personality disorder, which generally has a low base rate in the United States and elsewhere (Stinson et al., 2008; Torgersen, 2013). Again, this is a specific finding, as citizens of other countries do not perceive Americans as having substantially elevated rates of the two comparison personality disorders, avoidant and dependent.

### Theoretical Issues, Debates, and Limitations

**PNCs and invalid stereotypes: “Kernels of truth” or markers of culture?** Given that this research relies on the validity of PNCs, it is important to address the debate surrounding this topic. McCrae, Terracciano and colleagues (McCrae & Terracciano, 2006; Terracciano et al., 2005) argued that PNCs reflect “unfounded stereotypes” as they generally do not converge with self- and informant-reported personality data. For example, Terracciano et al. (2005) compared FFM profiles derived from PNCs with FFM profiles derived from self-report and informant-report personality data across 49 cultures, and found no agreement. These authors argued that the “kernel-of-truth hypothesis does not apply to national character” and that PNCs are not “generalizations about personality traits based on accumulated observations of the people with whom they live” (Terracciano et al., p. 99). Instead, PNCs may be “social constructions . . . perpetuated by information-processing biases in attention/perception, encoding, and integration of information” that “become cultural phenomena, transmitted through media, hearsay, education, history, and jokes” (p. 99). Consistent with this idea, there was a large and consistent gap between self and PNC ratings of narcissism, NPD, and related traits; the same was true when comparing self and PNC ratings of specific behaviors (e.g., antisocial behavior, substance use).

From the perspective of the mutual constitution model of culture and psyche model (Markus & Kitayama, 2010), the discrepancies between PNC and aggregate individual data are not necessarily evidence of their invalidity. This model posits that the self develops through a symbolically mediated and ongoing interaction with other people and their social environment, thus PNCs (and even the discrepancy between the PNC and individual level personality and behavior) represent one avenue to assess this sociocultural context. In particular, according to this model, “cultural variation across selves arises from differences in the images, ideas (including beliefs, values, and stereotypes), norms, tasks, practices, and social interactions that characterize various social environments” (Markus & Kitayama, 2010, p. 421). Thus, while PNC ratings likely do reflect social constructions to an important extent, as

suggested by Terracciano and colleagues (2005), and are discrepant from aggregates of individual level data on personality and behavior, they still represent an important insight into a given area’s sociocultural context that will impact and shape the “self,” individual level identity, and behavior.

Several studies provide support for the conceptualization of the PNC ratings as representing a key facet of the sociocultural context that is related to individual level-behavior. For example, Heine et al. (2008) compared the correlations manifested by PNC ratings versus self-reported and informant-reported personality ratings of the trait conscientiousness in relation to putatively relevant indicators such as accuracy of public clocks, postal workers’ speed, life expectancy, and per capita gross domestic product. It should also be noted that only PNC ratings of conscientiousness (but not the other big five factors of personality) were positively correlated with these indicators. Heine et al. (2008) suggested that “PNCs . . . reflect the kinds of cultural differences in personality that are important for increasing intercultural understanding” (p. 312). Similarly, Ashton (2007) argued, “that it may be too early to assume that mean self-reports represent the best indicators of regional or national levels of personality characteristics” (p. 983). This author demonstrated that PNC ratings were more consistent with behavioral data (i.e., math scores) than self-report data (i.e., self-reports of math ability). In fact, self-report data may be limited by reference group effects in which individuals’ self-reports are driven, in part, by comparisons to individuals within their own group (thus an individual who is conscientious might rate him/herself as average on this trait, if embedded within a highly conscientious culture; Gebauer, Sedikides, Lüdtke, & Neberich, 2014; Gebauer, Sedikides, & Neberich, 2012). This problem may explain, in part, why self-reports are not always linked to cultural markers (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002; Heine et al., 2008). An important direction for future work will be to identify potential behavioral indicators that go along with these PNC ratings (e.g., media coverage of domestic vs. international affairs; percentage of income given in the form of charitable donations).

Another potential alternative explanation for the current findings is that they are because of a self-serving bias or better than average effect (Brown, 2012; Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Sedikides & Alicke, 2012) in which individuals are motivated to see themselves in a more positive light than others as a means of self-enhancement. This explanation cannot account for our findings across studies, however, in that acquaintances and PNC ratings were not consistently or broadly negative. Instead, acquaintances and PNC ratings, especially of Americans, were seen as narcissistic (Studies 1, 2, 5, and 6), disagreeable (Study 2 and 6), and agentic (Study 6), but not as avoidant (Studies 1, 2, and 5) or dependent (Study 6). In fact, in Study 6, although Americans were seen as disagreeable and narcissistic by non-Americans, they were also seen as having higher levels of adaptive traits such as emotional stability, openness, extraversion, and conscientiousness. Ultimately, self-enhancement motivation cannot provide an explanation for the entirety of the results reported across these studies.

**Mechanisms.** It remains unclear why Americans are perceived as narcissistic by Americans and non-Americans alike. We have argued previously that Americans and non-Americans may view Americans as narcissistic due to an availability heuristic given the visibility and salience of narcissistic information (Campbell et al., 2010). Via multiple media sources (e.g., TV, social media,

print), Americans and non-Americans are inundated with possible examples of American narcissism—whether it be politicians, actors/actresses, reality TV celebrities, athletes, and criminals. For instance, to the extent that Americans have a large social media presence, which they do (e.g., 62% of Twitter users are Americans; <https://www.sysomos.com/docs/Inside-Twitter-BySysomos.pdf>), there are ample opportunities for individuals to provide potential cues to others of their narcissism. A growing literature suggests that narcissistic individuals often take advantage of these opportunities to display these traits. For instance, narcissistic individuals are more likely to use social media platforms like Facebook (e.g., Ljepava, Orr, Locke, & Ross, 2013), tweet more frequently and have more followers on social media (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Davenport, Bergman, Bergman, & Fearington, 2014), post more “selfies” (Fox & Rooney, 2015), produce more self-promotional content on social media (Winter et al., 2014), and report being motivated to choose pictures that present the user in flattering and attractive light (Kapidzic, 2013). To the extent to which these cues, some valid (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008) and some not (Deters, Mehl, & Eid, 2014), are used as signs of narcissism, they likely lead to judgments of elevated narcissism of Americans.

Similarly, the current list of the top 100 Twitter users with the most followers (examined on January 27th, 2014) is populated with musicians (e.g., Katy Perry #1), politicians (e.g., Barack Obama #3), reality TV stars (e.g., Kim Kardashian #16), athletes (e.g., LeBron James #40), and actors/actresses (e.g., Ashton Kutcher #43). While we do not suggest that these individuals themselves are narcissistic, this list highlights the visibility of individuals working in industries thought to be associated with elevated levels of narcissism (Young & Pinsky, 2006) and the presence of these high visibility icons on social media may increase the availability of putative and real cues of narcissism (e.g., posts that seem self-promotional). Ultimately, we believe that the salience of cues used in the perception of narcissism found across various media outlets is one possible mechanism by which Americans and non-Americans have developed exaggerated perceptions of the normativeness of narcissistic traits in Americans. The availability heuristic would suggest that the large segment of the American population who fall at or below the means for narcissistic traits are much less visible and thus less salient when individuals are asked to consider a broader group of individuals. Data from Study 4 speak to this very issue in that PNC ratings of American narcissism differed when explicitly specified groups were used such that men were rated as more narcissistic than women, young Americans were rated as more narcissistic than older Americans, and individual working in high visibility, status, and attention seeking fields (e.g., actors) were rated as more narcissistic than those working in lower visibility, status, and attention seeking fields (e.g., teachers).

Campbell and colleagues (2010) stated that “when an individual observes American culture, he or she may see the most narcissistic elements as the most defining, even though the self-report data and acquaintance data suggest that this image of American culture does not accurately capture the psychology of average individuals” (p. 227). These authors also argued that some of the traits associated with American culture from its inception are those associated with narcissism; “the traits of boldness, self-confidence, and self-reliance and a focus on autonomy and independence (vs. interdependence) that have defined the character of the United States may

lend themselves to being distorted in the direction of narcissism” (p. 227). Currently, both U.S. and non-U.S. intellectuals, politicians and commentators in popular media often discuss the meanings of the concept “American Exceptionalism.”

We believe there are other factors that also might explain why the broader world views America in a narcissistic light. Being a global military and economic leader for several generations places America in a position of power and control, which may lead to perceptions that America acts in an arrogant and/or self-serving manner; America’s actions and inactions on a world stage may then be used as a way to form or reinforce beliefs about the broader citizenry of the United States. For example, Terracciano and McCrae (2007) noted that the world view of America diminished following the invasion of Iraq in 2002. In terms of ratings of PNCs, these authors found that, whereas the overall profiles were very similar, countries rated the typical American in a somewhat less favorable light after the invasion than prior to the invasion, although the differences were small. Similarly, socioeconomic status, of which Americans tend to be relatively high (e.g., the United States is ranked first in total GDP and fourteenth in GDP per capita; Central Intelligence Agency, 2014), is generally associated with selfish behavior at an individual level (Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2015; Piff, 2014) and it is possible that individuals’ perceptions of these individual-level relations are generalized to cultural-level relations.

While the aforementioned reasons provide possible mechanisms for why Americans are perceived as narcissistic, it is notable that this perceptual process was also found in other world regions such that participants rated citizens of their own region as more narcissistic than an acquaintance or themselves, although the effect size for these comparisons were substantially larger for the U.S. PNC. This potentially implicates a broader personality perception process in which individuals are prone to view others (e.g., acquaintances; fellow citizens) in a more negative light, in this case, more narcissistic, than themselves. The self-other knowledge asymmetry model (Vazire, 2010) proposes that some personality traits are better understood by self than others, and vice versa, and that “others” demonstrate improved accuracy for more evaluative traits like agreeableness/antagonism. If traits of agreeableness/antagonism, which are a major component of narcissism, are highly evaluative, individuals might be motivated to perceive others as less agreeable—and more narcissistic—than the self.

## Implications

The implications—at both the individual and global level—of these perceptions of narcissism require further investigation. Like other stereotypes, we believe these PNC ratings matter; Martin et al. (2014) suggest that “irrespective of whether people endorse stereotypes, their knowledge of them has profound implications for their thoughts and behavior (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg, 1998; Fiske, 1998)” (p. 1777). Data from Study 6 provided the first examination of this issue. At the individual level, perceptions of American as being narcissistic were unrelated to individuals from other countries’ willingness to interact with Americans in a variety of roles. That is, the extent to which one viewed Americans as narcissistic was unrelated to individuals’ willingness to be friends with, work with, or romantically partner with these individuals. Conversely, the PNC ratings

were associated with perceptions that America, as a broader entity, plays a large and somewhat self-interested role in global affairs; these effects were relatively small however. It is likely that the implications of these perceptions of Americans are complicated by the multifaceted nature of narcissism, which may have both attracting and repelling features. For instance, the data suggest that individuals initially like narcissistic individuals but come to dislike them with greater exposure (Paulhus, 1998). We believe that these opposing forces are likely understandable via the joint roles of extraversion/agency and disagreeableness/low communion that characterizes grandiose narcissism. Narcissistic individuals dress in fashionable and “flashy” clothes, move in confident ways, are assertive, and say funny things and these behaviors often lead to them being rated as more popular (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2010; Kufner, Nestler, & Back, 2013) and attractive (Holtzman & Strube, 2010). At the same time, this relation between narcissism and popularity is weakened due to narcissistic individuals’ use of aggressive, antagonistic behavior (Kufner et al.). Thus, understanding the implications of these perceptions is complicated by the factors that can encourage both approach and avoidance behavior in others toward individuals who are narcissistic (or perceived as narcissistic). To understand the potential interpersonal costs and benefits of these perceptions, one may also need to take into account situational variability. For instance, the appeal of narcissistic individuals depends on situational demands (Kwan, John, Kenny, Bond, & Robins, 2004; Kwan, John, Robins, & Kuang, 2008). Narcissistic individuals with some desirable qualities (e.g., competence or wealth) may be liked by their peers or subordinates in competitive environments, whereas narcissistic individuals with little to offer may be particularly disliked. Future research should examine whether there is a similar parallel with regard to the values of PNC ratings of narcissism across cultures.

Another implication suggested by our data, is that individuals may be less likely to believe in America as broader global entity as there is a perception that its motivations may be driven by self-interest. It is possible that the perception of Americans as highly narcissistic is also related to the decline found in the extent to which Americans trust others and their confidence in larger institutions (e.g., banks, government; Twenge, Campbell, & Carter, 2014). To the extent that Americans feel increasingly isolated, cynical, and/or divorced from a sense of shared responsibility and community, one might expect higher rates of psychological distress and dissatisfaction, as well as a sense of isolation and alienation. Similarly, on an individual level, if Americans perceive others as narcissistic (e.g., exploitativeness, self-absorbed, entitled), these beliefs could serve as an implicit or explicit justification for engaging in similar behaviors out of a fear that they might be deprived of access to desired goods. For example, in commons dilemmas competing with narcissistic individuals leads all participants to become increasingly narcissistic (Campbell, Bush, Brunell, & Shelton, 2005). Taking this idea of the commons dilemma to an international perspective, the perception of America and Americans as being narcissistic could affect individuals and governments willingness to collaborate on topics of shared importance that demand shared sacrifice (e.g., climate change, natural resource regulation). This possibility, however, remains speculative.

Findings as to how beliefs about members of one culture affect interactions with people from different cultures provide possible implications for the present findings. For instance, when commu-

nicating with someone from another cultural group, people tend to utilize stereotypical knowledge as opposed to individuating information (Chaiken & Trope, 1999). This suggests that if an individual from another country were to interact with an American, his or her expectations for heightened narcissism on the part of the American might influence both communication toward and perception of the American and provide little opportunity for disconfirmation. Indeed, implicitly held stereotypes about another cultural group have been shown to relate to an increased likelihood of rating a member of that cultural group in a negative and stereotype-consistent manner after a laboratory based interaction (Amodio & Devine, 2006). Subsequent research could further our understanding of the specific intercultural consequences of PNC by investigating the impact of perceiving American’s as narcissistic on subsequent evaluative judgments and intergroup behavior when interacting with Americans.

### Future Directions

There are several promising directions for future research. For instance, it would be helpful to examine the explicit behavioral cues individuals use and their validity to predict American narcissism. Similarly, studies may use priming techniques to test whether exposure to various forms of media (e.g., reading Facebook or Twitter, watching reality TV, reading celebrity-based magazines, and websites) results in greater PNC ratings of narcissism. This would help test our hypothesis that these ratings are driven, in part, by the influence of the visibility and availability of (putative) narcissistic exemplars that hold sway when rating Americans.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate where and when such perceptions of Americans originate. For example, would the view of Americans as narcissistic be observed in younger children and adolescents in the United States, as well as outside of the United States? Similarly, it will be helpful to seek a better understanding of where most non-Americans are most exposed to American culture and whether these perceptions of narcissism are moderated by the types of exposure experienced (e.g., exposure via the media, exposure via having traveled to the United States; extent of real world, person-to-person interaction with Americans). Finally, it would be useful to link cross-cultural PNCs of narcissism in a large sample of cultures with cultural markers that are theoretically related to narcissism (e.g., plastic surgery, reality TV, short-term relationships, materialism and consumer culture; Cisek et al., 2014; Sedikides, Cisek, & Hart, 2011; Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

It would also be both theoretically interesting and practically useful to test strategies for reducing these perceptions, which are largely at odds with the self-ratings presented here and results on mean levels of narcissism and NPD in the United States. The interpersonal literature provides relevant cues for doing so. The negative consequences of narcissism are mitigated by the activation of communal traits via images of individuals in caregiving contexts (e.g., Finkel, Campbell, Buffardi, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2009; Hepper et al., 2014). Applying the communal trait activation to the cultural context would mean increasing the salience of communal behaviors on the part of Americans (e.g., charitable work by high visibility Americans; American foreign aid), perhaps through various forms of media, as well as political and corporate action.

## Conclusions

Americans and non-Americans alike perceive other Americans as highly narcissistic. This finding does not simply reflect perceptions of higher levels of agentic traits but instead reflects the belief that the typical American is grandiose, callous, and self-centered. Although an inflated view of narcissism of a typical member of one's culture is shared across a diverse set of regions and cultures, the effects are generally smaller in other regions of the world. The current studies should be viewed as a starting point for these lines of research as these data establish a potentially important international phenomenon across multiple samples. Future work is needed to help delineate the mechanisms and consequences of these phenomena.

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