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Stoeber, J. (2014). How other-oriented perfectionism differs from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 36(2), 329-338. DOI: 10.1007/s10862-013-9397-7

How Other-Oriented Perfectionism Differs from Self-Oriented
and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism

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Abstract

Over the past 20 years we have gained a comprehensive understanding of self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism, but our understanding of other-oriented perfectionism (OOP)—and how it differs from the other two forms of perfectionism—is still underdeveloped. Two studies with university students are presented examining OOP's relationships with social goals, the dark triad, the HEXACO personality dimensions, and altruism. OOP showed unique positive relationships with narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy and unique negative relationships with nurturance, intimacy, and social development goals. Furthermore it showed unique relationships with social dominance goals (positive) and emotionality, agreeableness, and altruism (negative) dependent on the OOP measure used. The findings suggest that OOP is a “dark” form of perfectionism associated with antisocial and narcissistic personality characteristics.

Keywords: perfectionism; social goals; dark triad; HEXACO; narcissism; Machiavellianism; psychopathy; agreeableness; emotionality; altruism

Introduction

Perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by striving for flawlessness and setting exceedingly high standards of performance accompanied by overly critical evaluations of one's behavior (Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990). However, perfectionism has different aspects and is best conceptualized as a multidimensional personality trait. Moreover, there are different forms of perfectionism, each with different characteristics (see Enns & Cox, 2002, for a review).

Regarding multidimensional conceptualizations of perfectionism, one of the most influential and widely researched models is Hewitt and Flett's (1991) model of perfectionism. With the recognition that perfectionism has personal and social aspects, the model and associated measure—the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004)—differentiate three forms of perfectionism: self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism. Self-oriented perfectionism comprises internally motivated beliefs that striving for perfection and being perfect are important. Self-oriented perfectionists have exceedingly high personal standards, strive for perfection, expect to be perfect, and are highly self-critical if they fail to meet these expectations. In contrast, other-oriented perfectionism comprises internally motivated beliefs that it is important for others to strive for perfection and be perfect. Other-oriented perfectionists expect others to be perfect, and are highly critical of others who fail to meet these expectations. Finally, socially prescribed perfectionism comprises externally motivated beliefs that striving for perfection and being perfect are important to others. Socially prescribed perfectionists believe that others expect them to be perfect, and that others will be highly critical of them if they fail to meet these expectations (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004).

With the introduction of other-oriented perfectionism, Hewitt and Flett (1990, 1991) made an important addition to the perfectionism literature proposing that there is a form of perfectionism that is not focused on the self and on how others regard the self, but focused on others and how others fare in comparison to the standards one has for them. Yet, other-oriented perfectionism never received the attention that the other two forms of perfectionism received, even though it plays a key role in dyadic perfectionism in the form of spouse- and partner-oriented perfectionism (i.e., other-oriented perfectionism directed towards one's spouse or romantic partner; e.g., Habke, Hewitt, & Flett, 1999; Haring, Hewitt, & Flett, 2003; Stoeber, 2012). Moreover, other-oriented perfectionism has been suggested as a defining component of “narcissistic perfectionism,” a higher-order form of perfectionism combining other-oriented

perfectionism, narcissistic grandiosity, and narcissistic entitlement (Nealis, Sherry, MacNeil, Stewart, & Sherry, 2013). Correspondingly, a recent review discussing the role of multidimensional perfectionism in personality disorders argued that other-oriented perfectionism is the form of perfectionism that is prominent in narcissistic personality disorder (Ayearst, Flett, & Hewitt, 2012). Hence it is important that we gain a better understanding of other-oriented perfectionism and how it differs from the other two forms of perfectionism.

Other-Oriented Perfectionism: Open Questions

Why do we, despite over 20 years of research following Hewitt and Flett's (1991) model of perfectionism, still have a limited understanding of other-oriented perfectionism and an even more limited understanding of how it differs from other forms of perfectionism? In my view, there are two main reasons. First, many studies investigating multidimensional perfectionism following Hewitt and Flett's (1991) model focused on self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism and included only measures of these two forms, ignoring other-oriented perfectionism (e.g., Dunkley, Blankstein, Masheb, & Grilo, 2006; Powers, Koestner, & Topciu, 2005; Stoeber, Feast, & Hayward, 2009). This goes in particular for studies with children and adolescents where nearly all studies have ignored other-oriented perfectionism (e.g., Damian, Stoeber, Negru, & Băban, 2013; Hewitt et al., 2002; McCreary, Joiner, Schmidt, & Ialongo, 2004). This is because the Child-Adolescent Perfectionism Scale, a widely-used measure of multidimensional perfectionism in children and adolescents (Flett, Hewitt, Boucher, Davidson, & Munro, 2000), contains scales for self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism, but none for other-oriented perfectionism. Furthermore, the other two widely-used multidimensional perfectionism scales—the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Frost et al., 1990) and the revised Almost Perfect Scale (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001)—do not include scales to measure other-oriented perfectionism. Only Hill et al.'s (2004) Perfectionism Inventory does, but this scale is not frequently used compared to the other scales. Hence the majority of studies on multidimensional perfectionism have ignored other-oriented perfectionism.

Second, studies that did include other-oriented perfectionism often failed to find unique characteristics of other-oriented perfectionism that were not shared by self-oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism, or both. For example, when reviewing the many studies they conducted on the three forms of perfectionism, Hewitt and Flett (2004) found individuals high in other-oriented perfectionism to be antisocial, angry/hostile, and passive-aggressive and to show higher levels of narcissism, dominance, authoritarianism, and desire for control and lower levels of agreeableness and warmth than people low in other-oriented perfectionism. However, when regarding the correlations of other-oriented perfectionism that they used as a basis for this characterization, many of these characteristics were shared by the other two forms of perfectionism (see Hewitt & Flett, 2004, for details).

One reason why other-oriented perfectionism rarely showed unique correlations different from the two other forms may be that there is substantial overlap between the three forms of perfectionism. Other-oriented perfectionism has shown correlations of around .40 with the other two forms of perfectionism, particularly with self-oriented perfectionism (e.g., Childs & Stoeber, 2010; Flett, Besser, Davis, & Hewitt, 2003). Consequently, unique correlations of other-oriented perfectionism may only emerge if the overlap with the other two forms of perfectionism is controlled for, for example, by computing partial correlations or multiple regressions. Yet, very few studies investigating the three forms of perfectionism have controlled for their overlap when examining their correlations and, in doing so, found other-oriented perfectionism to show unique relationships not shared by the other two forms. For example, a study investigating social problem solving ability (Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, Solnik, & Van Brunschot, 1996) computed

partial correlations and found other-oriented perfectionism to show positive correlations with self-reported social problem solving ability whereas self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism showed negative or nonsignificant correlations. Another study investigating perfectionism and burnout at the workplace (Childs & Stoeber, 2010) computed multiple regressions and found other-oriented perfectionism to show a negative regression weight in the prediction of exhaustion whereas self-oriented perfectionism showed a nonsignificant regression weight and socially prescribed perfectionism a positive regression weight. Consequently, when investigating other-oriented perfectionism and how it differs from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism, it is important to go beyond bivariate correlations and conduct analyses that control for the overlap between the three forms of perfectionism.

The Present Study

Against this background, the aim of the present study was to further investigate how other-oriented perfectionism differs from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism by examining other-oriented perfectionism's relationships with social goals, the dark triad, the HEXACO personality dimensions, and altruism and employ multiple regression analyses controlling for the overlap between the three forms of perfectionism to explore which relationships are unique for other-oriented perfectionism.

Goals are relatively stable representation of future states people aspire to achieve, located at a middle level between enduring motives and concrete action plans, and have been described as the “doing side of personality” (Cantor, 1990). The reason for examining social goals was that other-oriented perfectionism is directed at other people, and social goals are goals in which other people play a central role. Moreover, so far only one study has investigated multidimensional perfectionism and social goals (Shim & Fletcher, 2012), but did not include any measure of other-oriented perfectionism. Instead Shim and Fletcher investigated perfectionist personal standards (which are closely related to self-oriented perfectionism) and perfectionist concern over mistakes (which are closely related to socially prescribed perfectionism). Results showed that—once the overlap between the two aspects of perfectionism was controlled for—personal standards and concern over mistakes showed unique correlations with social goals. Whereas personal standards were positively correlated with nurturance goals and intimacy goals, concern over mistakes was positively correlated with dominance goals and demonstration–approach goals (demonstrating social desirability and gaining positive judgments from others), suggesting that different forms of perfectionism are associated with different social goals.

The “dark triad” is a term coined by Paulhus and Williams (2002) to describe three related, but distinct personality traits that are socially aversive and comprise socially malevolent characteristics associated with tendencies toward aggressiveness, duplicity, and emotional coldness: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and (subclinical) psychopathy. The reason for including the dark triad in the present study was that, in previous studies investigating how the three forms of perfectionism were related to the Big Five model of personality (see John & Srivastava, 1999, for a review), other-oriented perfectionism showed significant negative correlations with agreeableness that were not shared by self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism (e.g., Hewitt & Flett, 2004; Hill, McIntire, & Bacharach, 1997; Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 2007). Like other-oriented perfectionism, all three traits of the dark triad have shown significant negative correlations with agreeableness (e.g., Jacobwitz & Egan, 2006; Jonason & McCain, 2012). Hence it could be expected that other-oriented perfectionism would also show unique positive relationships with narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Previous research on other-oriented perfectionism and the dark triad, however, has produced mixed findings because other-oriented perfectionism has shown consistent positive correlations with narcissism (e.g., Hewitt &

Flett, 2004; Nathanson, Paulhus, & Williams, 2006) but not Machiavellianism and psychopathy (e.g., Nathanson et al., 2006; Sherry, Hewitt, Besser, Flett, & Klein, 2006). Therefore further research was needed to examine whether other-oriented perfectionism is positively correlated with all three personality traits of the dark triad.

The HEXACO model (Ashton et al., 2004; Ashton, Lee, & Son, 2000) is a structural model of personality comprising six dimensions: honesty-humility (H), emotionality (E), extraversion (X), agreeableness (A), conscientiousness (C), and openness to experience (O). The reason the HEXACO model was included in the present study was that—differently from the Big Five model of personality—it comprises not one, but two personality dimensions capturing prosocial versus antisocial aspects of personality: honesty-humility and agreeableness. Honesty-humility differentiates people who are sincere, honest, faithful, loyal, modest, unassuming, and fair-minded from those who are sly, greedy, pretentious, hypocritical, boastful, and pompous. In comparison, agreeableness differentiates people who are patient, tolerant, peaceful, mild, agreeable, lenient, and gentle from those who are ill-tempered, quarrelsome, stubborn, and choleric (Ashton & Lee, 2007). In addition, the HEXACO model comprises a further interpersonal trait called “altruism” that Lee and Ashton (2006) regard as an interstitial facet (because it loads across the dimensions of honesty-humility, agreeableness, and emotionality) which may constitute another personality characteristic that could differentiate other-oriented perfectionism from other forms of perfectionism. Whereas there have been a number of studies investigating how the three forms of perfectionism of Hewitt and Flett’s model relate to the dimensions of the Big Five model (e.g., Hewitt & Flett, 2004; Hill et al., 1997; Rice et al., 2007), no study so far has investigated how the three relate to the personality dimensions of the HEXACO model and altruism. Hence, the present study aimed to provide a first investigation of whether other-oriented perfectionism would show unique correlations with the HEXACO model’s interpersonal traits not included in the Big Five model: honesty-humility and altruism.

Method

Procedure

Two studies were posted on the Research Participation Scheme (RPS) website of the School of Psychology at my university. Study 1 was entitled “Personal and interpersonal expectations and social goals” and comprised measures of the three forms of perfectionism, social goals, and the dark triad. Study 2 was entitled “Personality and personal expectations: Self and others” and comprised measures of the three forms of perfectionism and the HEXACO personality dimensions including altruism. Participants who agreed to participate in the studies were directed to the School’s secure Qualtrics® website where they completed all measures online. In return for participation, students received RPS credits or participated in a raffle for £50 (~US \$80). The study was approved by the relevant ethics committee and followed the British Psychological Society’s (2009) code of ethics and conduct.

Participants

Overall 338 students (64 male, 274 female) completed Study 1, and 326 (53 male, 273 female) completed Study 2. Because the studies were posted in the same academic term, the samples were not independent and 262 students (48 male, 214 female) participated in both studies. The participants of Study 1 had a mean age of 19.8 years ($SD = 4.1$; range: 17-50 years), and the participants of Study 2 a mean age of 19.9 years ($SD = 4.4$; range: 17-50 years).

Measures

Perfectionism. To measure the three forms of perfectionism, I used the 45-item MPS

(Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004)¹ capturing self-oriented perfectionism (15 items; e.g., “I demand nothing less than perfection of myself”), socially prescribed perfectionism (15 items; e.g., “People expect nothing less than perfection from me”), and other-oriented perfectionism (15 items; e.g., “If I ask someone to do something, I expect it to be done flawlessly”). Because other-oriented perfectionism was the focus of the present research, I further included the other-oriented perfectionism scale published by Hewitt and Flett (1990). This scale—consecutively referred to as the “1990 scale”—is comprised of 8 items (see Appendix) that I interspersed between the 45 items of the MPS. All items were presented with the standard instruction of the MPS (“Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal characteristics and traits...”), and participants responded to the items on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Social goals. To measure social goals, I used the same measures that Shim and Fletcher (2012) used examining social content and social achievement goals. To measure social content goals, I used the items they adapted from Jarvinen and Nicholls (1996). The item section began with the word stem “When I’m with people my own age, I like it when...” followed by 28 items capturing nurturance (5 items; e.g., “I can make them feel good”), intimacy (6 items; e.g., “They tell me about their feelings”), status (6 items; e.g., “They like me better than anyone else”), leadership (5 items; e.g., “They say I’m the boss”), and dominance (6 items; e.g., “I make them do what I want”) goals. To measure social achievement goals, I used the 18 items they adapted from Ryan and Shim (2008) capturing social development (6 items; e.g., “It is important to me to learn more about other students and what they are like”), social demonstration–approach (6 items; e.g., “It is important to me that other students think I am popular”), and social demonstration–avoidance (6 items; e.g., “It is important to me that I don’t embarrass myself around my friends”) goals. Items were presented with an instruction informing participants about the content of the items (“Listed below are a number of statements concerning social goals...”), and participants responded to all items on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Dark triad. To measure the dark triad personality traits, I used the 12-item Dirty Dozen scale (Jonason & Webster, 2010) capturing narcissism (4 items; e.g., “I tend to want others to admire me”), Machiavellianism (4 items; e.g., “I tend to manipulate others to get my way”), and psychopathy (4 items; e.g., “I tend to lack remorse”). The Dirty Dozen was chosen because it is a concise measure of the dark triad that has shown good reliability and validity (e.g., Jonason & McCain, 2012; Jonason & Webster, 2010). Participants responded to all items on a scale from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 9 (*agree strongly*).

HEXACO and altruism. To measure the HEXACO personality dimensions, I used the 100-item HEXACO Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-PI-R; Lee & Ashton, 2004; revised version: Lee & Ashton, 2006, n.d.) capturing each of the six HEXACO dimensions with 16 items (e.g., honesty-humility: “I am an ordinary person who is no better than others”). In addition, the 100-item version contains a 4-item scale capturing altruism (e.g., “I have sympathy for people who are less fortunate than me”). Items were presented with the HEXACO-PI-R standard instruction (“On the following pages you will find a series of statements about you...”), and participants responded to all items on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Preliminary Analyses

Scale scores were computed by averaging responses across items. Because multivariate outliers can severely distort the results of correlation analyses, the scores were examined for multivariate outliers (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In Study 1, 8 participants (2 male, 6 female) showed a Mahalanobis distance larger than the critical value of $\chi^2(15) = 37.70, p < .001$

and were excluded from the further analyses. In Study 2, 5 participants (3 male, 2 female) showed a Mahalanobis distance larger than the critical value of $\chi^2(11) = 31.26$, $p < .001$ and were excluded. With this, the final sample comprised $N = 330$ (62 male, 268 female) participants in Study 1, and $N = 321$ (50 male, 271 female) in Study 2. Next, I examined whether the variance-covariance matrices of male and female participants differed by computing Box's M tests with gender as between-participants factor. Because Box's M is highly sensitive to even minor differences (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), it is tested against a $p < .001$ significance level. In both studies, Box's M was nonsignificant (Study 1: Box's $M = 142.36$, $F[120, 39177] = 1.08$, $p = .263$; Study 2: Box's $M = 71.69$, $F[66, 24858] = 1.00$, $p = .485$). Consequently, all analyses were collapsed across gender. Finally, I examined the scores' reliability (internal consistency) by computing Cronbach's alphas. All scores displayed satisfactory reliability (alphas $> .70$).

Results

Bivariate Correlations

First, I examined the bivariate correlations between the three forms of perfectionism (see Table 1). As expected, the scores of the two measures of other-oriented perfectionism—the MPS scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) and the 1990 scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1990)—showed large-sized positive correlations as would be expected from scales intended to capture the same construct, even though the size of the correlations (.52 in Study 1; .58 in Study 2) suggested that the scales tap somewhat different aspects of the construct. In line with previous findings, other-oriented perfectionism showed significant overlap with both self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism ($.19 \leq rs \leq .53$) with the exception of other-oriented perfectionism measured with the 1990 scale and self-oriented perfectionism in Study 1 (see again Table 1). Consequently, the bivariate correlations that other-oriented perfectionism showed with social goals, the dark triad, HEXACO, and altruism (see Table 2, Bivariate correlations) may not reveal the unique relationships of the three forms of perfectionism. Hence, I further analyzed the relationships using multiple regression analyses.

Regression Analyses

To examine what unique relationships other-oriented perfectionism would show once the overlap with the other forms of perfectionism was controlled for, two sets of multiple regressions were computed: one set including other-oriented perfectionism measured with the MPS (see Table 2, Regression 1) and another set including other-oriented perfectionism measured with the 1990 scale (see Table 2, Regression 2).

Results showed that other-oriented perfectionism displayed unique relationships with both social goals and personality traits. Regarding social content goals, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with nurturance and intimacy goals. Regarding social achievement goals, it showed unique negative relationships with development goals. Moreover, it showed the exact opposite pattern of relationships of self-oriented perfectionism which showed unique positive correlations with nurturance, intimacy, and development goals. Furthermore, other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique positive relationship with dominance, but only when measured with the 1990 scale. When measured with the 1990 scale, the positive relationship was shared by socially prescribed perfectionism.

Regarding the dark triad, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with all three traits—narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy—regardless of what scale it was measured with. Moreover, other-oriented perfectionism showed the exact opposite pattern of relationships of self-oriented perfectionism with Machiavellianism and

psychopathy but only when measured with the MPS scale. Note that self-oriented perfectionism showed no significant bivariate correlations with the two traits, suggesting that the significant positive correlation between self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism measured with the MPS (see Table 1, Study 2) suppressed the negative relationships of self-oriented perfectionism with Machiavellianism and psychopathy (cf. Smith, Ager, & Williams, 1992).

Regarding the HEXACO personality dimensions and altruism, other-oriented perfectionism showed three unique relationships, but all these relationships were dependent on what scale was used to measure the construct. Other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with agreeableness when the MPS was used to measure other-oriented perfection, whereas it showed unique negative relationships with emotionality and altruism when the 1990 scale was used. When the MPS was used, socially prescribed perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with altruism. Note that self-oriented perfectionism showed a unique positive relationship with altruism regardless what scale was used to measure other-oriented perfectionism, indicating that altruism is a personality facet that differentiates self-oriented perfectionism from the other two forms of perfectionism. In contrast, honesty-humility—the personality dimension that is unique to the HEXACO model of personality—did not differentiate other-oriented perfectionism from the other two forms of perfectionism, because the negative relationships other-oriented perfectionism showed with honesty-humility were shared by socially prescribed perfectionism.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate how other-oriented perfectionism differed from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism examining social goals, the dark triad, the dimensions of the HEXACO model of personality, and altruism. To this aim, the study examined the unique relationships of other-oriented perfectionism using multiple regression analyses controlling for the substantial overlap between the three forms of perfectionism. In addition, because the study focused on other-oriented perfectionism, it included two measures of other-oriented perfectionism to provide for a broader assessment of the construct: the other-oriented perfectionism subscale of the MPS (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004) and the other-oriented perfectionism scale Hewitt and Flett published in 1990 (the “1990 scale”).

Regarding social goals, the regression analyses found that other-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with nurturance goals, intimacy goals, and social development goals, indicating that people high in other-oriented perfectionism are less interested in helping and supporting others and making others happy (nurturance) than people low in other-oriented perfectionism. In addition, they are less interested in getting to know others, getting along with others, and gaining a better understanding of others’ feelings (intimacy, social development). Moreover, the unique relationships that other-oriented perfectionism showed with nurturance, intimacy, and social development goals had the opposite sign of those of self-oriented perfectionism—which showed unique positive relationships with nurturance, intimacy, and social development goals—indicating that prosocial goals are dynamic personality variables that clearly differentiate other-oriented perfectionism from self-oriented perfectionism. Furthermore, other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique positive relationship with social dominance goals, but only when measured with the 1990 scale, suggesting that the scale—while showing significant convergence with the MPS subscale—captures aspects of other-oriented perfectionism not captured by the MPS.

Regarding the dark triad, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive correlations with all three personality traits of the dark triad—narcissism, Machiavellianism, and (subclinical) psychopathy—regardless of what scale was used to measure other-oriented

perfectionism. The finding indicates that people high in other-oriented perfectionism seek more admiration from others, have a greater sense of entitlement, and are more exploitative, manipulative, callous, and insensitive than people low in other-oriented perfectionism. Moreover, the finding indicates that these characteristics are unique for other-oriented perfectionism.

Regarding the HEXACO personality dimensions and altruism, the results were not as clear-cut as those with the social goals and the dark triad because the two measures of other-oriented perfectionism showed different unique relationships. When measured with the MPS, other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with agreeableness corroborating previous findings that people high in other-oriented perfectionism show lower agreeableness (or higher social antagonism) than people low in other-oriented perfectionism, and that this is a unique characteristic of other-oriented perfectionism (e.g., Hewitt & Flett, 2004; Hill et al., 1997; Rice et al., 2007). When measured with the 1990 scale, other-oriented perfectionism showed a small negative correlation with agreeableness, but this relationship became nonsignificant in the multiple regressions when the overlap with the other forms of perfectionism was controlled for. Instead, other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with emotionality, suggesting that people high in other-oriented perfectionism are less emotional. The finding dovetails with other-oriented perfectionism's positive relationships with psychopathy which has been associated with reduced emotionality (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Moreover, other-oriented perfectionism measured with the 1990 scale showed a unique negative relationship with altruism, indicating that people high in other-oriented perfectionism are less sympathetic and more hard-hearted towards those who are weak or in need of help than people low in other-oriented perfectionism. This characterization however holds only for those high in other-oriented perfectionism as operationalized in the 1990 scale because other-oriented perfectionism measured with the MPS did not show any significant relationships with altruism.

With this, the present findings corroborate previous findings that show other-oriented perfectionism to be a form of perfectionism positively associated with narcissism and social antagonism (e.g., Hewitt & Flett, 2004). Moreover, they imply that other-oriented perfectionism is also positively associated with Machiavellianism and subclinical psychopathy. Furthermore, other-oriented perfectionism was found to show positive associations with reduced interest in prosocial goals such as nurturance and intimacy goals as well as goals aimed at developing closer relationships with others and a deeper understanding of others. Finally, and most importantly, the present findings suggest that these associations are unique for other-oriented perfectionism and are not shared by other forms of perfectionism such as self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism.

The present findings indicate that other-oriented perfectionism should not be considered a positive form of perfectionism, even though factor analyses typically place other-oriented perfectionism on a higher-order perfectionism factor combining aspects of perfectionism that have been associated with positive characteristics, processes, and outcomes (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). As a consequence, this factor has been labeled "positive striving perfectionism" (Frost, Heimberg, Holt, Mattia, & Neubauer, 1993) and considered to represent "good perfectionism" (Bieling, Israeli, & Antony, 2004). In contrast, the present findings indicate that other-oriented perfectionism is a form of perfectionism negatively associated with prosocial goals and prosocial personality traits and positively associated with personality traits—narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy—that indicate a low regard of others. Furthermore, the present study found that other-oriented perfectionism showed no positive relationships with conscientiousness once the overlap with the other forms of perfectionism was controlled for. Therefore, other-oriented perfectionism should also not be considered part of "conscientious perfectionism" as Hill et al.

(2004) suggested based on the results of their factor analyses combining other-oriented perfectionism with aspects of perfectionism that are closely linked to conscientiousness such as self-oriented perfectionism and perfectionist personal standards (Hewitt & Flett, 2004; Rice et al., 2007). Instead, other-oriented perfectionism appears to be an ambivalent form of perfectionism associated with high self-regard but low regard for others. Consequently, if we consider other-oriented perfectionism as part of a higher-order factor of perfectionism, it makes more sense to consider it forming part of “narcissistic perfectionism” (a higher-order form of perfectionism combining other-oriented perfectionism and narcissistic traits; Nealis et al., 2013) rather than positive striving perfectionism or conscientious perfectionism.

The present study has a number of limitations. First, except for the analyses regarding narcissism and agreeableness that previous research found other-oriented perfectionism to show unique relationships with, all analyses were exploratory. Hence, the finding that other-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with prosocial goals, emotionality, and altruism and unique positive relationships with social dominance goals, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy need to be replicated in future research before firmer conclusions can be drawn. Second, the findings regarding the dark triad—narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy—were limited because the brief measure I used captured each personality trait with only four items. Whereas the measure has demonstrated good reliability and validity, recent research indicates that there is important variance in the dark triad related to interpersonal antagonism and disinhibition that the brief measure does not capture (Miller et al., 2012; see also Jonason & Luévano, 2013). Hence future research may profit from reinvestigating the relationships of other-oriented perfectionism with the dark triad using multi-faceted measures of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (cf. Paulhus & Williams, 2002). In addition future studies may consider taking on board recent developments in narcissism research differentiating agentic narcissism from communal narcissism (Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplanken, & Maio, 2012) to explore the relationships of other-oriented perfectionism with these different types of narcissism.

Finally, it is unclear what to make of the differences the two measures of other-oriented perfectionism showed in the present study and how to interpret the relatively low intercorrelations of the two measures (see Table 1) considering that both are supposed to capture the same construct. From the correlations and regression coefficients displayed in Table 2, it appears as if the 1990 scale captures a “nastier, colder form of other-oriented perfectionism”² showing larger negative correlations with prosocial goals and larger positive correlations with the dark triad compared to other-oriented perfectionism measured with the MPS. Moreover, it showed a unique positive relationship with social dominance goals and unique negative relationships with emotionality and altruism that the MPS measure did not show, but failed to show the unique negative relationship with agreeableness that the MPS measure showed (and that is well-established in the previous literature). Consequently, further research is needed on the convergent and divergent validity of the two measures including further measures of other-oriented perfectionism such as the High Standards for Others subscale of the Perfectionism Inventory (Hill et al., 2004) to establish that the 1990 scale is a valid measure of other-oriented perfectionism that can be used as an indicator of narcissistic perfectionism (Nealis et al., 2013).

Despite these limitations, the findings from the present study—representing the first systematic investigation with a focus on other-oriented perfectionism—make a significant contribution to our understanding of other-oriented perfectionism and how it differs from other forms of perfectionism. Other-oriented perfectionism is a form of perfectionism often neglected and disregarded by research on multidimensional perfectionism. Moreover, previous studies often failed to demonstrate the unique contribution other-oriented perfectionism makes to the

study of perfectionism. In contrast, the present findings indicate that other-oriented perfectionism is a form of perfectionism that shows a unique profile of associations with social goals and personality traits suggesting that it is a form of perfectionism with a “dark” side linked to antisocial and antagonistic motivations and characteristics. Other-oriented perfectionism is an important aspect of multidimensional perfectionism because it is the form of perfectionism that plays a central role in dyadic perfectionism, represents a defining component of narcissistic perfectionism, and is prominent in narcissistic personality disorder. Hence, I hope that the present study not only provides a better understanding of other-oriented perfectionism and its unique characteristics, but will also inspire further studies investigating what it means when people’s perfectionistic expectations are not self-focused, but focused on others.

Footnotes

¹Note that the 2004 version of the MPS is the same as the 1991 version except for a minor variation in Item 3 of the other-oriented perfectionism subscale (1991: “It is not important that the people close to me are successful,” reverse-scored; 2004: “It is not important that the people I am close to are successful,” reverse-scored). In the present study, I used the 2004 version.

²I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for making this suggestion.

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Table 1

Bivariate Correlations: Intercorrelations

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Self-oriented perfectionism (SOP)		.46***	.38***	.19***
2. Socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP)	.50***		.53***	.50***
3. Other-oriented perfectionism (OOP)	.37***	.42***		.58***
4. Other-oriented perfectionism, 1990 scale (OOP-90)	.07	.38***	.52***	

Note. Study 1: $N = 330$ (correlations below the diagonal); Study 2: $N = 321$ (correlations above diagonal). SOP, SPP, and OOP were measured with the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004). OOP-90 was measured with the scale published in Hewitt and Flett's (1990); see Appendix.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Bivariate Correlations and Multiple Regression Analyses: Social Goals, the Dark Triad, HEXACO, and Altruism

Variable	Bivariate correlations				Regression 1			Regression 2		
	SOP	SPP	OOP	OOP-90	SOP	SPP	OOP	SOP	SPP	OOP-90
<i>Study 1</i>										
Social goals										
Social content goals										
Nurturance	.21***	-.04	-.19***	-.41***	.37***	-.11	-.28***	.24***	.00	-.42***
Intimacy	.15**	-.06	-.13*	-.38***	.28***	-.13	-.18**	.18**	.00	-.40***
Status	.13*	.16**	.01	.02	.08	.15*	-.08	.06	.15*	-.04
Leadership	.20***	.28***	.29***	.31***	.04	.17**	.20***	.13*	.12	.25***
Dominance	.04	.25***	.29***	.55***	-.17*	.22***	.26***	-.03	.06	.53***
Social achievement goals										
Development	.37***	.10	-.03	-.20***	.46***	-.05	-.18**	.38***	.00	-.22***
Demonstration–approach	.07	.28***	.19***	.38***	-.11	.29***	.11	-.04	.18**	.31***
Demonstration–avoidance	.19***	.20***	.07	.14*	.13*	.15*	-.04	.14*	.10	.10
Dark triad										
Narcissism	.08	.17**	.20***	.26***	-.04	.11	.17**	.03	.06	.23***
Machiavellianism	.00	.12*	.21***	.27***	-.13*	.09	.22***	-.04	.04	.26***
Psychopathy	-.09	.08	.12*	.35***	-.20***	.12	.14*	-.11	.00	.36***

[Table 2, continued]

Study 2

HEXACO

Honesty-humility	-.11	-.31***	-.34***	-.39***	.09	-.22***	-.25***	.03	-.17**	-.31***
Emotionality	.18**	.11	.15**	-.11	.15*	-.02	.10	.16*	.14*	-.21**
Extraversion	.11	-.16**	.13*	-.08	.18**	-.38***	.27***	.23***	-.27***	.01
Agreeableness	-.08	-.17**	-.30***	-.16**	.05	-.03	-.30***	-.01	-.11	-.11
Conscientiousness	.64***	.05	.12*	-.10	.79***	-.30***	-.02	.78***	-.25***	-.12*
Openness to experience	-.04	-.13*	-.10	-.15**	.04	-.12	-.05	-.02	-.08	-.11
Altruism	.15**	-.13*	-.05	-.29***	.27***	-.24***	-.03	.25***	-.10	-.29***

Note. Study 1: $N = 330$; Study 2: $N = 321$. SOP = self-oriented perfectionism, SPP = socially prescribed perfectionism, OOP = other oriented perfectionism (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004); OOP-90 = other-oriented perfectionism, 1990 scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1990). Regression 1 = standardized regression weights from the multiple regression with SOP, SPP, and OOP as predictors; Regression 2 = standardized regression weights from the multiple regression with SOP, SPP, and OOP-90 as predictors.

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

Appendix

Other-Oriented Perfectionism, 1990 Scale (OOP-90; Hewitt & Flett, 1990): Items

1. If I do not set very high standards for people I know, they are likely to end up second-rate people.
2. I think less of people I know if they make mistakes.
3. If someone I know cannot do something really well, they shouldn't do it at all.
4. I cannot help getting upset if someone I know makes mistakes.
5. It is shameful for people that I know to display weakness or foolish behavior.
6. An average performance by someone I know is unsatisfactory.
7. When someone I know fails at something important, it means they are probably less of a person.
8. If I scold others for their failure to live up to expectations, it will help them in the future.