



Narcissism through the lens of performative self-elevation

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Narcissism
Psychopathy
Self-esteem
Insecurity
Self-elevation
Pain

ABSTRACT

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is conceptualized as excessive self-love and divided into subtypes known as grandiose and vulnerable narcissism. Psychopathy is also characterized by a grandiose sense of self. Here, we aim to refine the understanding of how these conditions relate. We developed a scale to assess performative self-elevation (FLEX), designed to probe insecurity driven self-conceptualizations that manifest as impression management lead to self-elevating tendencies. We correlated the FLEX scale with commonly used measures to investigate social desirability, self-esteem, and psychopathy in a high-powered sample of participants. We find that FLEX correlates highly with narcissism, but not psychopathy. We conclude that narcissism corresponds most closely to vulnerable narcissism and is characterized by self-elevating behaviors that are well captured by FLEX.

1. Introduction

We are interested in the nature of narcissism. Narcissism is a personality disorder that is conceptualized as excessive self-love and manifests as a grandiose sense of self-importance, entitlement, and superiority (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Auerbach, 1993; Freud, 1914).

More recently, two subtypes of narcissism have been distinguished. “Vulnerable narcissism” characterized by low self-esteem, anxiety about attachments and extreme sensitivity to criticism and “grandiose narcissism”, which manifests as high self-esteem, self-aggrandizement and self-importance (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003; Rohmann, Neumann, Herberich, & Bierhoff, 2012; Wink, 1991). This distinction has shown itself to be fruitful - vulnerable narcissism is associated with low self-esteem, life-satisfaction, and interdependent self-construct. Conversely, grandiose narcissism is associated with high self-esteem and life-satisfaction and an independent self-construct (Rohmann, Hanke, & Bierhoff, 2019; Rose, 2002). These differential attitudes also present behaviorally. Both grandiose and vulnerable narcissists have a tendency to deliberately induce jealousy in their romantic partners, but for different reasons - a vulnerable narcissist is motivated by insecurities and seeks reassurance to compensate for low self-esteem whereas a grandiose narcissist induces jealousy primarily to gain power and control in the relationship (Tortoriello, Hart, Richardson, & Tullett, 2017).

Considering differential underlying motivations opens up a broader perspective. Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is often

conceptualized as part of a constellation of “dark” personalities and traits such as manipulateness and psychopathy (Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Anderson & Kiehl, 2014). This raises the possibility that these conditions are more closely related than previously believed. It is important to recognize that there is considerable overlap in how these disorders manifest behaviorally and emotionally. For instance, a narcissist may manipulate others to increase their status (Vaknin, 2019), and they may exhibit low empathy for others. However, such behavior exhibited by a narcissist might be due to a focus on protection of self-worth, even though these traits are primarily associated with psychopathy. Moreover, vulnerable - but not grandiose - narcissists experience emotional dysregulation and false attribution of hostile disposition (Hansen-Brown & Freis, 2019; Zhang, Luo, Zhao, Zhang, & Wang, 2017).

Grandiose narcissism seems to resemble psychopathy in many respects, which raises the possibility that the tessellation of these conditions could be improved. It appears to be the case that grandiose narcissism might be better understood as a manifestation of psychopathy. This notion is supported by the finding that individuals who strongly exhibit psychopathic traits also tend to have a grandiose sense of self-worth (Gustafson & Ritzer, 1995; Miller, Sleep, Crowe, & Lynam, 2020). Conversely, vulnerable narcissism might be better conceived of as “narcissism proper” or “primary narcissism”.

Thus, in this research, we aim to further refine the distinction between vulnerable and grandiose narcissism. First, we note that the distinction between vulnerable and grandiose narcissism resulted from

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statistical – not conceptual – considerations, namely the low internal consistency of commonly used narcissism scales (Wink, 1991). One problem with such an approach is that all of these measures derive from direct self-reports. This is problematic because it is unclear what features of the condition are primary and which are simply behavioral adaptations. Someone who expects special favors from others or wants others to admire them, as narcissists are known to do, could exhibit such behaviors because they genuinely feel special and superior. Conversely, manifesting such an attitude could be a behavioral adaptation to compensate for insecurities related to a perceived inferiority by the individual. Here, we aim to improve on the current state of the literature by assessing self-elevative behavioral tendencies directly. Whereas the distinction between vulnerable and grandiose narcissists on the basis of self-esteem is compelling, many measures of self-esteem are not unproblematic psychometrically. In addition, they are possibly contaminated by considerations of social desirability (Falkenbach, Howe, & Falki, 2013). Thus, we attempt to account for such tendencies in this research as well.

We predict that – in order to compensate for the perceived internally low status – a vulnerable narcissist would profess higher appreciation of taste markers to gain perceived social status (Rodger, 2014). In contrast, a grandiose narcissist would not do this, as from their perspective, there is nothing to compensate for. Thus, revealing such preferences should allow us to differentiate between these two possibilities, beyond direct self-report.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Study participants were adults speaking English fluently that were recruited through the NYU “SONA” System. Study participation was compensated with class credit. All participants ($N = 310$) gave informed consent and received debriefing. We used data from 270 participants (87 %) for the analyses presented in this study. Data from the remaining participants were discarded for a variety of reasons, importantly failure to complete the task and failure to comply with study instructions. The median age of participants whose data were used in further analysis was 20 years old and the gender composition was 39% male, 63% female; one participant did not disclose a gender.

2.2. Measures

We used the following six measures and one task in the study reported here.

2.2.1. Rosenberg’s Self-esteem Scale (RSES)*

This self-report scale, one of the most widely used measures for global self-esteem in psychological research (Sinclair et al., 2010), consists of ten Likert items. Half of the items are positively worded (e.g. “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”), while the other half are negatively worded (e.g. “I feel I do not have much to be proud of”) and reverse scored. This scale is considered reliable – at a reproducibility of 92%. It is also considered to be valid, as it correlates with the *Leary cScale of being gloomy and disappointed* as well as depressive affect, as laid out in *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image* (Rosenberg, 1965).

2.2.2. Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (LSRP)*

This self-report scale was designed to identify psychopathic traits in a nonclinical population with 26 Likert items (Levenson, Kiehl, & Fitzpatrick, 1995). The underlying factor structure of this scale distinguishes primary (16 items) from secondary psychopathy (ten items). The LSRP primary psychopathy scale has been shown to have good reliability ($\alpha = 0.82$) and the secondary scale has shown good reliability given its brevity ($\alpha = 0.63$). The LSRP also has validity, as it correlates with other scales predicting psychopathic traits, including the *Sensation Seeking*

Scale (SSS, Zuckerman, Kolin, Price, & Zoob, 1964) and the *Stress Reaction and Harm Avoidance*: subscales of the *Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ, Tellegen, 1982).

2.2.3. The Dark Triad Dirty Dozen*

This self-report scale was designed to measure “dark triad” traits with a brief scale (Jonason & Webster, 2010), and we will refer to it as “DD” from now on. It contains 12 Likert items which consists of the four items which loaded most strongly on narcissism (NPI, Raskin & Terry, 1988), Machiavellianism (*Match IV*, Christie & Geis, 1970), and psychopathy (*Self-Report Psychopathy Scale-III*, Paulhus, Hemphill, & Hare, 2012), respectively. DD has good internal consistency overall ($\alpha = 0.83$), as well as good internal consistency for each subscale: narcissism ($\alpha = 0.79$), Machiavellianism ($\alpha = 0.72$), psychopathy ($\alpha = 0.63$). Additionally, DD showed a consistent pattern of convergent and discriminant validity – for instance, it correlates well with the 12-item *Aggression Questionnaire* (Buss & Perry, 1992) and not with the *Label Self-Esteem Scale* (Dykman, 1998).

2.2.4. Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960)

This 33-item, true-false, self-report scale was created to measure tendencies of giving socially desirable answers in questionnaires. It has shown good internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.88$) and test-retest consistency ($r = 0.89$). Additionally, the scale was shown to be valid as it correlates with other social desirability scales, including the *Edwards Social Desirability Scale* ($r = 0.35$). For the purpose of this study, we used an 18-items subset that seemed most relevant to the current study and least dated, which we will term “SDS”.

2.2.5. Authentic vs. Artificial Appearance Scale (AAAS)

We designed an instrument to assess whether participants prefer real or perceived gains to their quality of life or social standing. In the AAAS, we elicited responses to forced choice questions (e.g. “Would you rather receive an award for work that you are not proud of or do work that you are proud of but that goes unrecognized?”). This measure was inspired by social comparison theory (Wheeler, 1991) and includes eight scenarios from a wide range of social settings. See Appendix A for the items we used.

2.2.6. Performative Refinement to soothe Insecurities about Sophistication (PRISN) Scale

We developed an instrument to measure performative refinement to soothe deep seated insecurities about one’s cultural sophistication, a specific kind of self-elevation tendency. It consists of relevant items taken from other scales as well as items we created de novo to probe for cultural self-elevation tendencies. We incorporated a total of 23 items from previously developed scales, each with good reliability scores when compared to the IPIP (Goldberg, 1992). Specifically, we used the following source-scales: four items from the Values in Action scale (VIA; du Plessis & de Bruin, 2015; $\alpha = 0.80$), eight items from the NEO-PI-R (Costa Jr. & McCrae, 1992; $\alpha = 0.94$), seven items from the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1988; $\alpha = 0.96$, $\alpha = 0.99$), three items from the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI; Hogan & Hogan, 1992; $\alpha = 0.87$, $\alpha = 0.87$, $\alpha = 0.86$), and one item from the Self-Consciousness scale (Buss, 1980; $\alpha = 0.97$, $\alpha = 0.89$). These items consist of statements regarding how the participant feels about art (e.g. “I crave the experience of great art”), how they feel about themselves (e.g. “I just know I will be successful”) and how they feel about other people (e.g. “I worry what other people think of me”). We created an additional 29 items along similar lines (e.g. “It is important for me to be seen with elite groups”), including some items regarding attitudes and activities other than visual art (e.g. “I have a rich vocabulary”; “I go to the ballet”). All 52 statements were presented as five-point Likert items (1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree a little, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree a little, 5 = Agree strongly.). Seven of the 52 items (statements such as “I feel insecure”, “I

Demographic Information

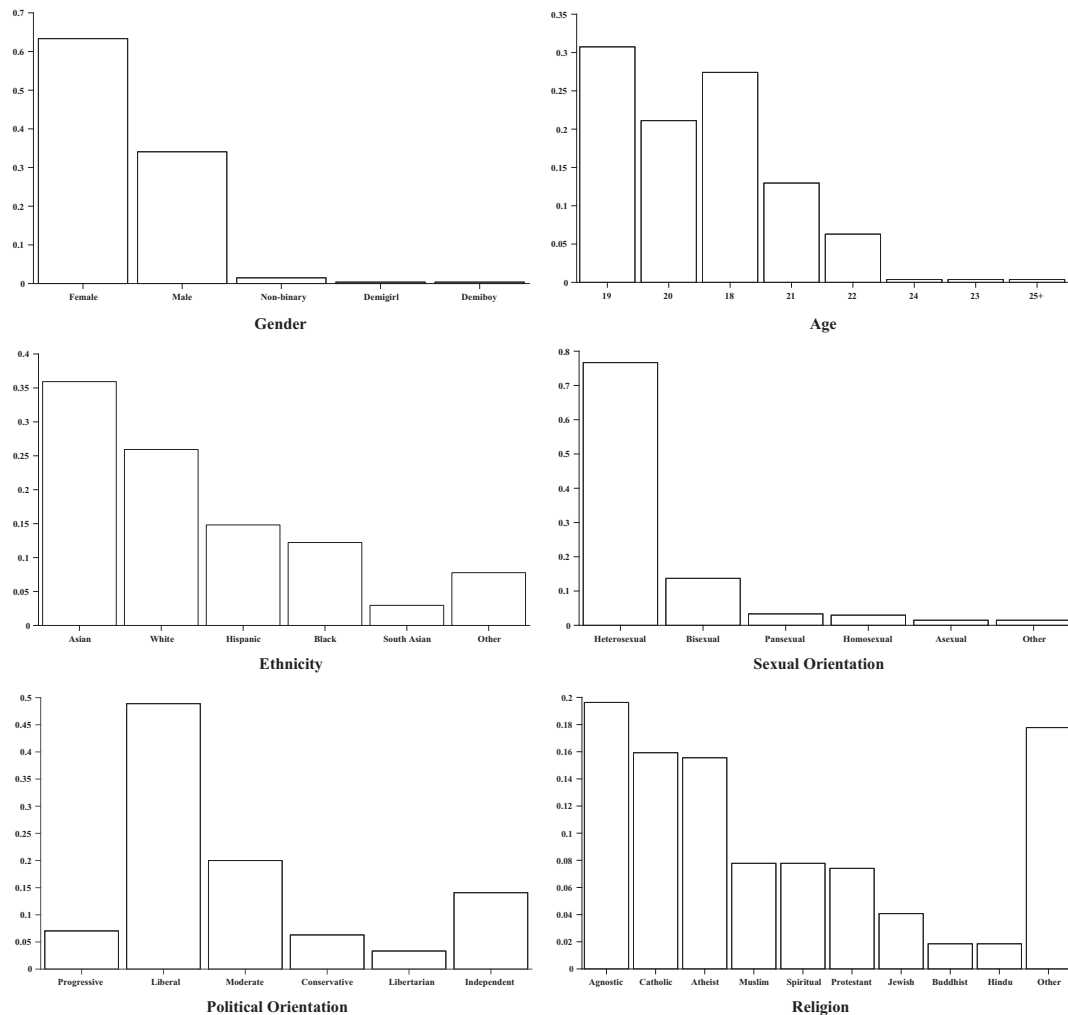


Fig. 1. Bar graph representing proportions of demographic information for 270 NYU undergraduate participants. Bar height represents proportion.

sometimes feel like a fraud”, or “I worry what other people think of me”) were used to assess insecurity. See Appendix A for the items we used in this scale.

2.2.7. Moral dilemmas

We asked participants to make binary choices in five moral dilemmas. In each of these, the choice was either between a utilitarian choice (saving many people) versus a self-serving choice (saving yourself or people close to you). We crossed each scenario with five levels (saving [5 10 20 40 80] people) of utilitarianism each, yielding 25 distinct trials. For instance, in one scenario the participant was confronted with a scenario where there are 2 burning buildings, one containing their best friend and the other containing a large number of strangers and they have to pick which of the two fires to extinguish, if there is only one hose available. We assessed both which choice was made as well as how guilty making this choice made participants feel. Some of these scenarios originate from the literature on moral cognition such as the Trolley problem (Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley, & Cohen, 2001), others were created de novo by the researchers to tap similar moral qualities without the confound of familiarity.

*We decided to present these three scales (RSES, LSRP, and DD) with a five-point Likert scale, to prevent response polarization. The specific implementation that we used for these questionnaires is as follows: 1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree a little, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 =

Agree a little, 5 = Agree strongly.

2.3. Task and study design

Participants were seated comfortably at a normal viewing distance from a computer screen. They first completed a training session in which they responded to mock questions that were not used in the study in order to familiarize themselves with the question and answer format for each question type. For instance, we asked them to respond to the statement “I am creative” using a Likert response format to familiarize them with the general format of Likert items. Each participant responded to a total of 163 trials drawn from the six measures and the moral dilemma task described above, interleaved randomly. The sequence of presentation was uniquely generated for each participant to prevent order effects. To also prevent carryover effects, we used a distractor task where we asked participants to judge the quality of a piece of art between each question, alternating art and personality questions throughout. We ended the study with a demographic questionnaire where we assessed self-identity in terms of age, ethnicity, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religious affiliation. See Fig. 1 for a composition of our participant pool in these dimensions. This study - including all measures and tasks we used - was approved by the NYU Institutional Review Board (UCHAIS).

Table 1
Internal validity of PRISN facets.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Social Dominance Motivation	3.67	0.74	1.00	0.28*	0.28*	0.43*	0.00	0.15	0.05	0.01	0.06	0.06
2. Performative Self-Elevation	2.87	0.41		1.00	0.23	0.32*	-0.32	0.37*	0.04	0.05	0.30*	0.12
3. Explicit Impression Management	3.08	0.45			1.00	0.42*	-0.07	0.11	-0.03	0.13	0.06	-0.03
4. Need for Social Validation	3.38	0.59				1.00	-0.01	0.26	0.18	0.22	0.04	0.24
5. Live Impression Management	3.30	1.09					1.00	0.04	0.02	-0.14	0.04	0.08
6. Art Appreciation	3.50	0.53						1.00	-0.02	0.21	0.26	0.13
7. Art Engagement	2.77	0.40							1.00	0.08	0.05	0.02
8. Self-Deception	3.61	1.09								1.00	0.02	0.05
9. Cultural Engagement	2.04	0.76									1.00	-0.05
10. Neutral Statements	3.93	1.02										1.00

* $p < 1e-5$.

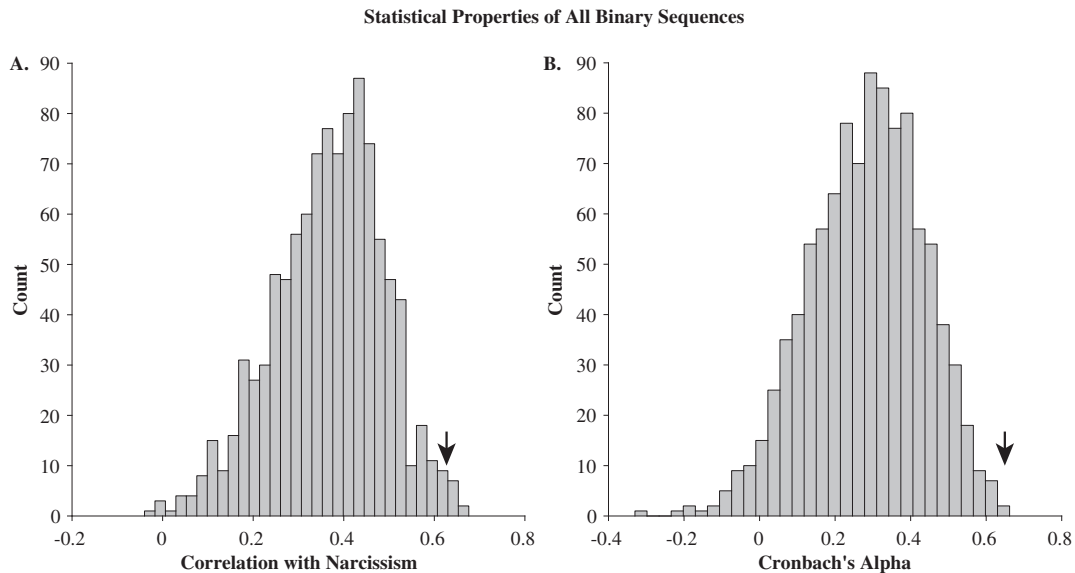


Fig. 2. Omniverse histograms of all 1024 binary sequences of PRISN. A: Correlation between binary sequences and narcissism. B: Cronbach's Alpha. Arrows indicate where FLEX falls in this histogram. It is the only binary sequence in the far-right tail of both distributions.

2.4. Data analysis

All data were analyzed using MATLAB (Natick, MA). Specifically, we performed an omniverse analysis to assess the internal structure of the PRISN scale. In the omniverse analysis, we used all 1024 binary sequences of the ten facets of PRISN to assess which had the highest internal consistency and at the same time a high correlation with the external criterion - narcissism to identify the performative self-Elevation index (FLEX) subfactor. We then correlated FLEX scores with the other measures in our study to validate the construct. To correct for multiple comparisons and maintain a conservatively low false discovery rate at high power, we set alpha to $1e-5$.

3. Results

We correlated all ten facets of PRISN (need for social validation, self-deception, self-elevation behaviors, etc.) with each other, see Table 1.

As you can see, there is a cluster of four facets that seem to correlate strongly with each other. These facets make up a factor which we call FLEX.

We assessed the internal consistency and correlation with an external criterion - narcissism - of FLEX with an Omniverse analysis. Specifically, we calculated internal consistency and correlation for each possible binary sequence of PRISN. We display the histogram of these metrics in Fig. 2.

As shown, determining FLEX as the relevant subfactor is not arbitrary

- the binary sequence corresponding to FLEX is the only one out of 1024, where both internal consistency and correlation with narcissism is jointly high.

This yields a four item FLEX scale, see Fig. 3.

Whereas the internal consistency of FLEX might appear somewhat low in absolute terms, it is actually rather high, considering the fact that this is an extremely brief, four-item scale, which will lend itself to rapid deployment (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr., 2003; Kline, 2000). To assess the validity of FLEX, we correlated it with the other measures in our study, see Table 2 for results.

Additionally, FLEX correlates highly and specifically with another measure which has been validated to measure narcissism reliably. Importantly, it does not correlate significantly with several measures of psychopathy. Conversely, different measures of psychopathy correlate very highly with each other, see Fig. 4.

This suggests that - allowing for the reliabilities involved - our FLEX measure effectively measures an identical construct to narcissism, albeit a different aspect of narcissism. The narcissism measures of the Dirty Dozen scale we used do not mention anything about self-elevation or social dominance motivations, they simply ask for attitudes, e.g. whether one deserves special favors or is a special person. Note that the difference between the correlation of 0.67 between LSRP and Dirty Dozen Psychopathy and the correlation between Dirty Dozen Narcissism and FLEX of 0.63 is not statistically significant. Note also that the correlation structure of the table is overall plausible. For instance, insecurity is significantly and negatively correlated with self-esteem, but

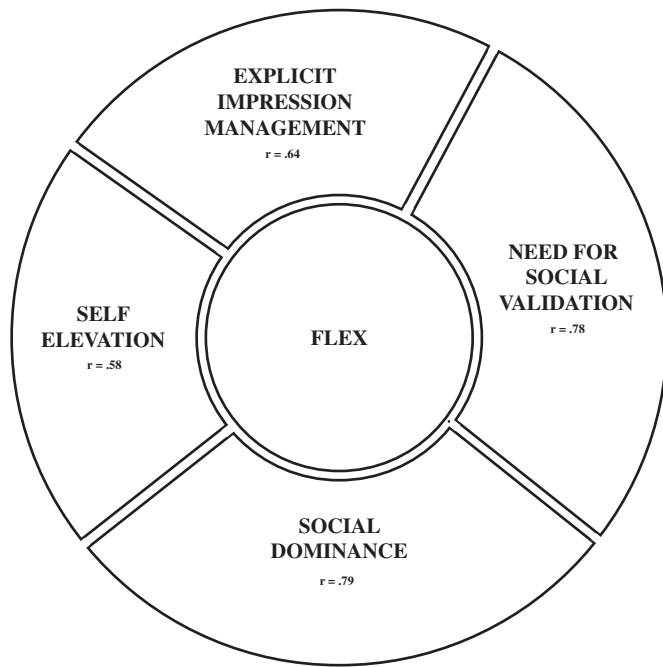


Fig. 3. FLEX and its components. Center: FLEX. Wedges: Components of FLEX - width represents the correlation between FLEX and any given component.

significantly and positively with guilt as evoked by the moral dilemmas. Conversely – and highlighting the difference between vulnerable narcissism and psychopathy – LSRP scores are negatively and significantly correlated with moral guilt. Reinforcing our notion that narcissism is born of insecurity and is linked to self-elevating behavior, both narcissism and FLEX also significantly correlate with insecurity.

Finally, it is reasonable that AAAS correlate negatively and significantly with LSRP and manipulateness and that people who are exhibiting high levels of FLEX are willing to be manipulative.

4. Discussion

Here, we show a strong correlation between FLEX - a component of PRISN - and narcissism. This correlation is surprising as it is born of insecurities and is not better explained by socially desirable behavior. It suggests that narcissism is better understood as a compensatory adaptation to overcome and cover up negative self-worth, instead of genuine grandiosity and grandeur. The overall pattern of our results supports this interpretation, as guilt is evoked differentially by moral dilemmas – individuals scoring high on measures of psychopathy exhibit low guilt whereas insecure individuals exhibit high guilt.

This research has several limitations. First, we developed two of the six scales used here de novo, so it is important to validate them in other - more diverse - participant populations (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Similarly, we take these correlations at a snapshot in time - it would be more compelling to show how an increase in FLEX follows the development of insecurities over time, establishing that it is indeed a coping behavior and does not occur coincidentally. Third, the RSES scale we deployed - while widely used - does seem rather dated at this point. It

Table 2
FLEX validity correlation results.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. FLEX	12.99	1.57	1.00	0.63*	0.38*	0.13	0.22	0.35*	0.11	-0.17	-0.19	-0.10	-0.11
2. Narcissism	3.43	0.73		1.00	0.50*	0.24	0.35*	0.51*	-0.03	-0.29*	-0.21	-0.07	-0.06
3. Insecurity	3.46	0.55			1.00	0.18	0.20	0.24	-0.36*	-0.39*	-0.08	0.18	-0.02
4. Psychopathy	2.62	0.82				1.00	0.67*	0.47*	-0.23	0.31*	-0.14	-0.17	-0.12
5. LSRP	2.54	0.51					1.00	0.59*	-0.21	-0.26	-0.30*	-0.30*	-0.11
6. Manipulateness	2.80	0.83						1.00	-0.03	-0.35*	-0.30*	-0.18	-0.07
7. RSES	3.23	0.74							1.00	0.28*	0.03	-0.16	-0.05
8. Marlowe-Crowne	38.68	15.58								1.00	0.17	-0.07	0.05
9. AAAS	6.48	1.31									1.00	0.05	0.01
10. Moral Guilt	0.65	0.23										1.00	0.13
11. Utilitarianism	1.36	0.39											1.00

* p < 1e-5.

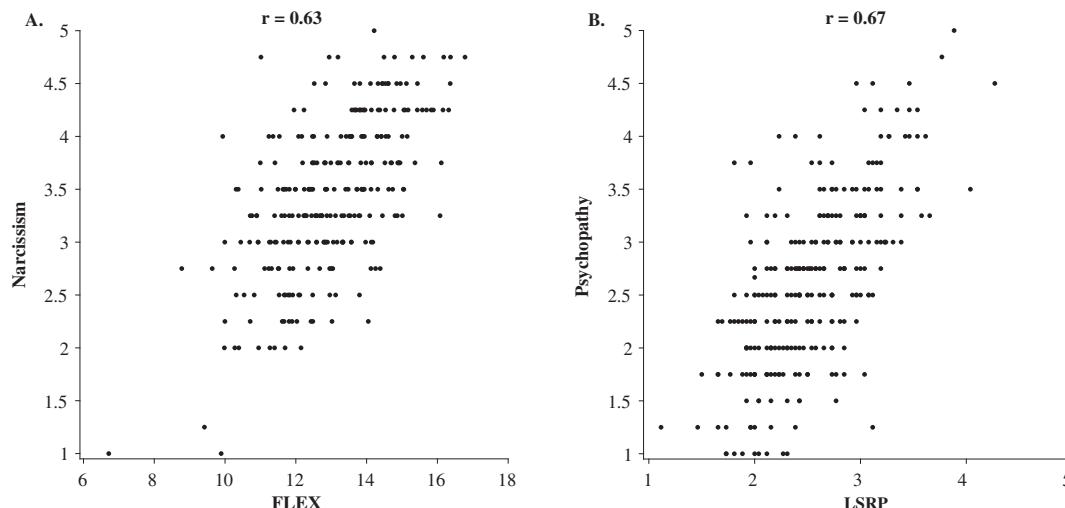


Fig. 4. The highest correlations in our study. A: FLEX vs. Narcissism. B: LSRP vs. Dirty Dozen Psychopathy. Dots represent participants.

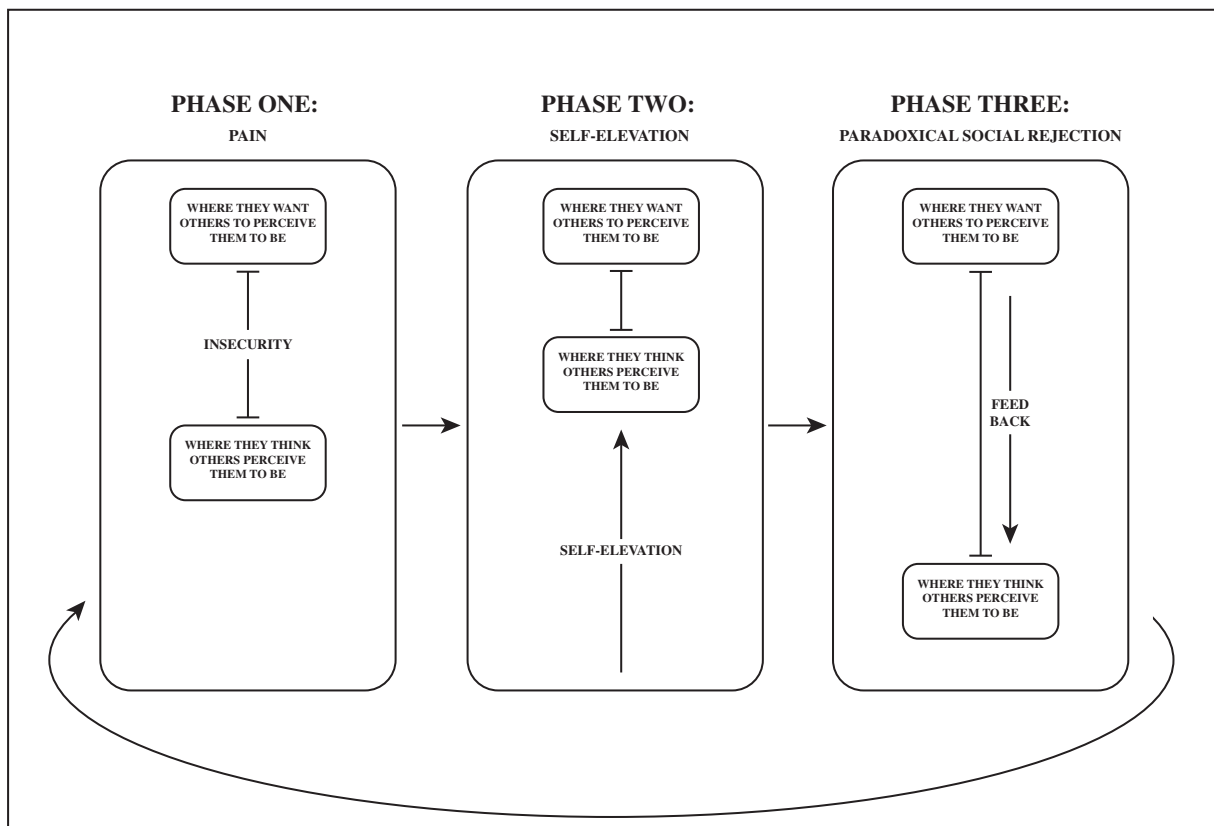


Fig. 5. The self-elevation cascade. Phase One: There is a gap between how the individual wants others to perceive them, and how they think they are currently perceived, which is experienced as insecurity, which causes pain. Phase Two: To reduce the pain quickly the individual engages in self-elevating behavior, which raises the way how they think others perceive them, moving it closer to the aspirational state. Phase Three: However, this behavior leads to a repellent effects - others de facto think less of the person than before, which - if communicated to the person by feedback increases the insecurities and the pain, leading to the last step of the cascade: The now increased gap and insecurity will be felt even more acutely, which makes future self-elevating behavior even more likely.

would increase our confidence in these findings if they were replicated with more contemporary measures of self-esteem. Fourth, whereas this study was not designed to ascertain the source of narcissism, it would be interesting to investigate what predisposes an individual to both insecurities and self-elevating tendencies. We observe that not everyone who experiences severe insecurities does develop a self-elevating coping style. Different coping styles are conceivable, for instance, one could engage in strategic self-depreciation to lower expectations.

Finally, there are psychometric limitations. The narcissism scale we used contains only four items from the Dirty Dozen Scale, so we have only a relatively coarse metric for narcissism. To address concerns regarding using such a brief narcissism scale, future research should employ a more differentiated narcissism scale, although our results are so robust that we are confident that they will replicate with other narcissism scales.

Despite these limitations of the current study, we believe that our pattern of findings suggests an interesting relationship between narcissism and psychopathy, that has not been fully appreciated in the existing literature. Specifically, we posit that what was previously seen as grandiose narcissism is actually better understood as one behavioral manifestation of psychopathy. Individuals with psychopathic traits tend to genuinely believe in their own grandiosity (Hare, 1999; Hare & Neumann, 2006) and do not present with any hint of insecurities (Kiehl, 2015). In contrast, narcissism per se might be inherently vulnerable – characterized by insecurities and self-elevating behavior – in nature.

To validate such an understanding of the relationship between narcissism and psychopathy, it is important to recognize that the interpretation of behavior is inherently ambiguous. Motivations and intentions matter. So how would one distinguish which of the two

conditions drives any given behavior? Psychopaths are known to be motivated by a desire to attain power (Hare, 1999). In contrast, narcissism manifests as a desire to pursue status (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2019). Of course, power and status are often correlated in the real world, which is presumably why this issue has been conflated in the existing literature on narcissism. One could design a study that juxtaposes power seeking and status seeking motivations explicitly, for instance by creating an instrument with items that force a choice between outcomes that entail high status/visibility but no real power (e.g. being head of state) vs. relative obscurity but a high-powered position (e.g. prime minister).

We predict that both psychopathic and narcissistic individuals will score high on classic measures of narcissism, but that individuals high on psychopathic traits will prefer outcomes conferring power, whereas individuals high on narcissistic traits will prefer outcomes conferring status.

Shifting the lens from psychopathy back to vulnerable narcissism, one remaining issue pertains to the motivations for self-elevating behavior specifically. It has been observed that the prevalence of narcissistic behaviors seem to be on the rise (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2016; Dingfelder, 2011). An increase in such behaviors – specifically self-elevation – makes sense within the framework we propose here, as engaging with social media inherently inflicts constant social comparison and appraisal, which could exacerbate insecurities about self-worth (Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles, & Franz, 2015). Thus – in turn – the FLEX framework could also illuminate the rise in narcissistic behaviors, see Fig. 5

5. Conclusion

We conclude that grandiose narcissism is better understood as one manifestation of the high self-regard exhibited by a related condition - psychopathy. Conversely, vulnerable narcissism actually is narcissism proper, a behavioral adaptation to cope with and to mitigate the suffering imposed by insecurities about oneself.

Author statement

This study was not pre-registered with or without an analysis plan in an independent, institutional registry.

Data sharing

Upon publication of this paper, data will become publicly available.

Funding source

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our research assistants for obtaining the data: Zhou Fang, Ana Patricia Aguirre, Alexis Egazarian, Megan Cheung, Christall Pierre and Caroline Myers.

Appendix A

Authentic vs. Artificial Appearance Scale (AAAS)

Would you rather...

- 1) Receive an award for work that you're not proud of
Or
Do work that you are proud of, but goes unrecognized.
- 2) Be at a VIP event with celebrities that you don't really respect
Or
Be with people that you respect but are nobodies.
- 3) Pretend to be interested in something even though you're not, in order to fit in
Or
Explore your genuine interests, even if others think they are strange.
- 4) Pretend to know more about subjects than you actually do in order to impress a date
Or
Admit your lack of knowledge on some subjects even if you know that people might judge you.
- 5) Increase your IQ by 15 points but have no one recognize that
Or
Have everyone think that your IQ increased by 15 points even if it didn't.
- 6) Have an apartment that is half the size of your current one but twice the size of those of your friends
Or
Have an apartment that is twice the size of your current one but half the size of those of your friends.

- 7) Buy a laptop that you can afford but that is not as nice as that of your friends
Or
Buy a laptop that you cannot afford but that is the same one as that of your friends.
- 8) Donate money anonymously for disaster relief
Or
Post a donation link for disaster relief to your social media account.

Performative Refinement to soothe Insecurities about Sophistication (PRISN) Scale

- 1) I crave the experience of great art
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 2) I feel it is important to live in a world of beauty
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 3) I experience deep emotions when I see beautiful things
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 4) I fail to notice beauty until others comment on it
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 5) I believe in the importance of art
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 6) I do not like art
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 7) I do not enjoy going to art museums
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 8) I am likely to show off if I get the chance
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 9) I am not always honest with myself
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree

- 5 Completely Agree
- 10) I put on a show to impress people
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 11) I always admit when I make a mistake
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 12) I see beauty in things that others might not notice
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 13) I worry what other people think of me
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 14) I have a rich vocabulary
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 15) I just know that I will be successful
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 16) I feel threatened easily
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 17) I love to read challenging material
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 18) I know that my decisions are usually correct
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 19) I need the approval of others
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 20) I know the answers to many questions
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 21) I feel comfortable with myself
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 22) I am not concerned with making a good impression
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 23) I have exquisite taste
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 24) Image is very important to me
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 25) It matters to me that people think that I know what I'm talking about
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 26) I strive to be the best in all areas
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 27) My friends and I are always up to date on the latest trends
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 28) It matters to me that I am seen at important events
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 29) It matters that I am seen with important people
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 30) I sometimes feel like I am the only civilized person among brutes
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
- 5 Completely Agree
- 31) I am ignorant about art
- 1 Completely Disagree
- 2 Somewhat Disagree
- 3 Neutral

- 4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 32) I am supremely able to recognize famous art
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 33) I know more about art than most people
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 34) I know more about art than my friends
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 35) I go to art galleries
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 36) I go to wine tastings
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 37) I go to the theatre
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 38) I go to the ballet
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 39) Who you surround yourself with is a reflection of who you are
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 40) It is important for me to be seen with elite groups
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 41) I pride myself in my refined tastes
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 42) I like knowing more than other people
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
- 4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 43) It is important for me to be an expert in many areas
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 44) I sometimes feel inadequate and make up for it by pretending to be better than I am
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 45) I sometimes feel like a fraud
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 46) I feel the need to compensate for my lack of knowledge
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 47) I sometimes pretend to know more about subjects than I actually do
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 48) I like feeling important
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 49) I like feeling impressive
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 50) I feel insecure
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 51) I don't care what people think of me
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree
- 52) Image is very important to me
1 Completely Disagree
2 Somewhat Disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat Agree
5 Completely Agree

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