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Re-assessing communal narcissism: the narcissistic sanctity and heroism concept

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ABSTRACT

We propose a new conceptualization of communal narcissism, the Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Concept (NSHC). We define narcissistic sanctity as a biased sense of exceptional warmth and morality, and narcissistic heroism as a heightened sense of self-importance in improving the social world. Drawing on 11 samples ($N = 5606$; 56 % women; Polish general population), we validated the NSHC, using circumplex models and peer-rating data. Sanctity reflects a communal orientation, as evidenced in relation to narcissistic grandiosity, narcissistic antagonism, personality correlates, and overrating on communal (but not agentic) traits. Heroism reflects a communal and agentic orientation, as evidenced in relation to narcissistic grandiosity, narcissistic antagonism, personality correlates, and overrating on agentic and communal traits. The NSHC has theoretical and empirical promise.

1. Introduction

Narcissism is one of the most theoretically complex phenomena in psychology, exhibiting several forms (Sedikides, 2021). Yet, some aspects are common to all forms. These aspects include a sense of exceptionalism, that is, an inflated perception of self-importance and specialness, and a propensity for social selfishness, wherein individuals prioritize their own interests over relational or collective ones (Sedikides, 2021).

Various forms of narcissism manifest additional aspects. For example, one agency-focused conception (The Narcissistic Spectrum Model; Krizan & Herlache, 2018) suggests that grandiose narcissism is marked by extraversion, dominance, and manipulativeness, whereas vulnerable narcissism is marked by introversion, worry, and defensiveness, forming a narcissistic spectrum from vulnerability to grandiosity (also see: Miller et al., 2021; Rogoza et al., 2019). Another conception suggests that grandiose narcissism can be further subdivided into communal and agentic forms, each exhibiting different domains of self-

enhancement (Gebauer & Sedikides, 2018a,b). That it, communal narcissism reflects inflated self-views in the communal domain (e.g., warmth, morality), whereas agentic narcissism reflects inflated self-views in the agentic domain (e.g., competence, intelligence).

Three scales purport to assess communal aspects of narcissism: the Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement subscale of the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI; Pincus et al., 2009), the Communal Narcissism Inventory (CNI; Gebauer et al., 2012), and selected subscales of the Domain-Specific Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (D-NARQ; Grosz et al., 2022). All exhibit predictive utility, but none is free of limitations, both conceptual and psychometric. We will discuss these measures and their limitations in the next section.

In response to these limitations, we propose a new conceptualization of communal narcissism, grounded in theoretical advances (Back et al., 2013; Sedikides, 2021). We label this conceptualization the Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Concept. We will discuss it after the section describing the limitations of existing measures.

1.1. Existing measures of communal narcissism

1.1.1. Pathological narcissism inventory

The PNI (Pincus et al., 2009) is used primarily in clinical contexts (Cain et al., 2008) and focuses on assessment of pathological narcissism (Dashineau et al., 2019). In doing so, the inventory pursues a distinction between two ways in which narcissism may be made manifest: grandiosity (e.g., hubris, exhibitionism) and vulnerability (e.g., resentment, defensiveness).One of the dimensions contributing to grandiose narcissism is self-enhancement via self-sacrifice. This dimension is assessed with the Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement subscale of the PNI. Examination of items that comprise this subscale indicates that they encompass aspects of communal narcissism (Gebauer et al., 2018a; Rogoza & Fatfouta, 2019). For example, one items suggests that helping others proves that one is a good person; another item suggests that sacrifices for others show the extent to which one is a good person. Regardless, the items are limited in at least two ways. First, they are confined to the domain of interpersonal functioning and do not measure the broader range of aspects that may reflect communion. Second, they do not incorporate or measure the distinction between communion and agency in narcissism.

1.1.2. Communal narcissism inventory

In contrast to the PNI, the CNI focuses directly on the distinction between communion and agency. The CNI is based on the agency-communion model, according to which grandiose agentic narcissists express their exceptionalism and social selfishness in the agentic domain, whereas grandiose communal narcissists express these aspects in the communal domain (Gebauer et al., 2012). Accordingly, some items were designed to capture portrayals of oneself in favorable light within the communal domain—encompassing both prosocial orientation (e.g., "I am the most helpful person") and aspirations to improve the social world (e.g., "In the future I will be well known of my good deeds").

Factor analyses of the CNI reveal that, as expected, responses are linked to both communion and agency. Items clustered, respectively, around two factors: present-oriented inflated self-views and future-oriented fantasies of societal improvement (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016). This two-factor conclusion was supported via additional research examining (1) nomological networks indicative of communion (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness) and agency (Extraversion, Openness), (2) overclaiming one's knowledge and overrating one's qualities in the communal and agentic domains, and (3) interpersonal circumplex projections (Gebauer et al., 2012). Communal narcissists convey their self-views by overestimating their altruism relative to objective indicators, asserting moral superiority, and believing in their ability to effect positive change in the world, with no gender differences observed (Gebauer et al., 2012). These self-perception are illusory: communal narcissists are perceived by others as lacking in communal aspects (Gebauer et al., 2012) and communal narcissists' self-views are unassociated with prosocial behavior (Nehrlich et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2018).

Despite its successes, the CNI may have limitations. In particular, it treats communal narcissism as a unitary construct. Some individuals high in communal narcissism might be genuinely motivated by a desire to make meaningful contributions to society and positively influence others' lives. However, communal narcissism may be expressed also through self-aggrandizing beliefs about possessing elevated levels of prosocial traits, such as empathy, humility, and trustworthiness, rather than through corresponding behaviors.

1.1.3. Domain-specific narcissistic admiration and rivalry questionnaire

According to the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Concept (Back et al., 2013), grandiose narcissism comprises two core dimensions. These are admiration (self-promotion via positive views of one's effectiveness) and rivalry (self-protection via devaluation of others). These two dimensions are assessed by the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry

Questionnaire (NARQ; Back et al., 2013). Admiration is high on agency, and rivalry is low on communion.

The D-NARQ (Grosz et al., 2022) is grounded in Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Concept (Back et al., 2013). However, it combines the admiration-rivalry distinction with the agency-communion one. Agentic admiration is expressed via inflated beliefs in one's intellectual skills (e. g., "I am a genius"), whereas agentic rivalry is conveyed via beliefs that derogate others' intellectual skills (e.g., "Most people are stupid"). Communal admiration reflects inflated beliefs in one's moral and social qualities (e.g., "I am extraordinarily helpful"), whereas communal rivalry reflects beliefs derogating others' moral and social qualities (e.g., "Most people are reckless egoists"). The D-NARQ demonstrated some support for validity through modest nomological associations with other narcissism scales and a tendency toward overrating on domain-specific traits (Grosz et al., 2022).

At the same time, though, the empirical evidence surrounding the D-NARQ presents a largely unclear picture of variables underlying narcissism. For example, communal admiration correlated highly positively with the CNI, but communal rivalry only correlated moderately with the CNI (Grosz et al., 2022). Moreover, the correlation between communal admiration and communal rivalry was lower ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$) than the correlation between agentic admiration and agentic rivalry ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.001$; Grosz et al., 2022). These patterns were unexpected and may suggest that the D-NARQ does not fully distinguish between communal and agentic forms of grandiose narcissism.

1.2. The narcissistic sanctity and heroism concept

Most of the communal narcissism research (Gebauer et al., 2012; Nehrlich et al., 2019; Zdunek et al., 2022) used the CNI in juxtaposition to the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979), but some used it in juxtaposition to the NARQ (Leniarska et al., 2023; Nowak et al., 2022). In these studies, communal narcissism has been treated as a unitary construct. This practice raises the issue of the extent to which CNI-based communal narcissism remains conceptually and psychometrically parallel to agentic narcissism assessed by NARQ (again, comprising agentic admiration and low-communion rivalry).

To address this problem, in this article we introduce the Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Concept. This conception views narcissistic thoughts and behaviors as reflecting various combinations of potency on the underlying dimensions of agency and communion. Some constructs may largely reflect agency (dominance, power, control), other constructs may largely reflect communion (friendliness, warmth, love), but still other constructs (heroism) may reflect a combination of them. This view may be most easily understood through the application of circumplex models, which are organized by two orthogonal axes, one corresponding to agency (also labelled as dominance, power, or control) and another to communion (also labelled as friendliness, warmth, or love). The models depict personality traits, behaviors, or values (Horowitz et al., 2006; Strus & Cieciuch, 2017; Wiggins & Trobst, 1997) on the field defined by the agency and communion dimensions.

Indeed, to fully capture communal narcissism, our analyses employ three circumplexes: Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC; Wiggins & Trobts, 1997), Interpersonal Problems (Horowitz et al., 2006), and Circumplex of Personality Metatraits (CPM; Strus & Cieciuch, 2017). The CPM is based on two higher-order Big-Five factors (Alpha/Stability and Beta/Plasticity) rather than on agency and communion. However, the CPM has already been used to examine the nomological network of various narcissism forms (Rogoza et al., 2019). This classification is congruent with the Narcissistic Spectrum Model (Krizan & Herlache, 2018), so that agentic grandiose forms are located next to communal grandiose narcissism (Rogoza et al., 2019).

The distinction between the admiration and rivalry forms of agentic narcissism is clear in the placement of rivalry within the circumplex space (Fig. 1). Communal narcissism (CNI-based) is located between two adjacent octants, representing high warmth–no agency and high
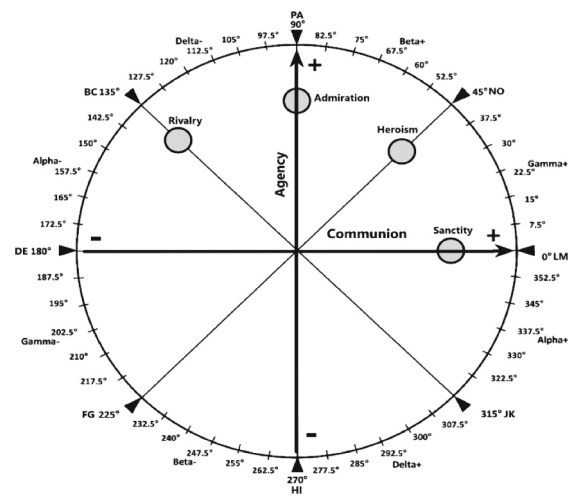
Note. Interpersonal Circumplex: PA = Assured-Dominant; BC = Arrogant-Calculating; DE = Cold-Hearted; FG = Aloof-Introverted; HI = Unassured-Submissive; JK = Unassuming-Ingenuous; LM = Warm-Agreeable; NO = Gregarious-Extraverted.

Fig. 1. Hypothesized Locations of Narcissism Forms on the Interpersonal Circumplex and the Circumplex of Personality Metatraits.

warmth–moderate agency. Mirroring the dimensionality of agentic narcissism, we expected communal narcissism to similarly have two forms. Fig. 1 represents their predicted location on two adjacent octants, next to agentic forms. Thus, we proposed two forms within communal narcissism, intended to capture purely communal and mixed communal-agentic aspects. We expected that communal narcissists, as grandiose ones, are preoccupied with being recognized by others for extremely positive communal achievements.

We capitalized on the CPM to test the validity of the Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Concept. We anticipated that one form of communal narcissism would be located between Alpha-Plus/Stability (counterpart of communion) and Gamma-Plus/Integration within the CPM model, and therefore would be primarily characterized by low Neuroticism, high Agreeableness, and high Conscientiousness, and secondarily by high Openness and Extraversion (Strus & Cieciuch, 2017). This location corresponds to the warm-agreeable interpersonal orientation within the IPC (Wiggins & Trobst, 1997) and overly nurturant orientation in Interpersonal Problems Circumplex (Horowitz et al., 2006). Given that we expected this form to represent exceptionalism, we labelled it as narcissistic sanctity (shortened to "sanctity"). It reflects self-enhancing beliefs about possessing elevated levels of pro-social traits (e.g., empathy, modesty, trustworthiness). Thus, these narcissistic individuals see themselves as especially virtuous or even saintly, which resembles traditional, religious-based, meanings of sainthood. Given that sanctity is conceptualized as communal rather than agentic, it aligns with beliefs that do not necessitate action. Accordingly, sanctity is intended to function as a primarily passive orientation.

We assigned the other form of communal narcissism the location between Gamma-Plus/Integration and Beta-Plus/Plasticity (a counterpart of agency), characterized by a similar personality profile to sanctity, but with a stronger importance of Extraversion and Openness, and a lower importance of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness (Strus & Cieciuch, 2017). This location corresponds to gregarious-extraverted interpersonal behavior within the IPC (Wiggins & Trobst, 1997) and intrusive behavior in the Interpersonal Problems Circumplex (Horowitz et al., 2006). Therefore, we label this form as narcissistic heroism (shortened to "heroism"). These individuals view themselves as central to the communal domain, believing that their elevated social engagement meaningfully improves it—at times perceiving themselves as akin to superheroes. This form might be manifested in diverse ways, its

central feature is the desire to make a meaningful contribution to the society and to positively impact others' lives. These beliefs may be reflected in an inflated sense of one's ability to de-escalate interpersonal conflict, provide support when needed, or protect others from harm. Accordingly, heroism is conceptualized as an active orientation.

Unlike the Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement subscale, both proposed forms of communal narcissism contain grandiose beliefs that refer both to exceptionalism and social selfishness. Unlike the CNI, these beliefs do not extend into future-oriented fantasies and are based on the perceived importance of one's actions for others. These beliefs resemble those constituting admiration and rivalry, as they contain both self-views and expecting recognition from others. As illustrated in Fig. 1, admiration is thought to reflect positive self-beliefs that are largely focused on agency and are devoid of communal content. In comparison, rivalry is thought to combine elements of agentic self-promotion with other-derogation. Further, sanctity is thought to reflect positive self-beliefs that are largely focused on communion and are relatively devoid of agentic content. Lastly, heroism is thought to combine elements of agentic and communal self-promotion, without other-derogation. Therefore, all four forms align to circumplex models and comprise a grandiose narcissism spectrum.

1.3. Overview

We aimed to create and validate the Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Concept along with the NSHQ. We derived our hypotheses from Circumplex models (Fig. 1). We divided the validation process into six parts and structured the manuscript accordingly. First, we developed the NSHQ to measure aspects of communal narcissism that we theorized about. Second, we examined the degree to which the NSHQ overlaps with the CNI. Third, we tested if the NSHQ provides reliable scores and, drawing on the assumption that communal narcissism is a stable trait, whether these scores remain stable over time. Fourth, we examined gender differences in NSHQ to check for congruency between traditional female (communal) and male (agentic) roles and the agentic and communal narcissistic expression assessed by both instruments. Fifth, we assessed criterion validity for both NSHQ subscales, analyzing them in the network of previously established constructs: various narcissism measures, Big Five personality traits, and Big Two domains of agency and communion. Lastly, we compared self- and other-reported agency and communion traits to find out how sanctity and heroism are linked to

overrating those aspects. Our research is based on a broader project [MASKED], from which we drew 11 distinct samples. In Table 1, we present a summary of them, including the psychological instruments used in each sample.

2. Method

2.1. Transparency and openness

We followed accepted reporting standards for transparency and openness (Kazak, 2018). In the manuscript and Supplemental Materials, we report how we determined our sample sizes, all data exclusions (if any), all measures, and all preregistrations, datasets, codes, and stimulus materials. All studies were approved by the Ethics Committee of the first author's institution (KEiB 10/2018). The link for the broader project preregistration, on which the current research was based, is: https://osf.io/xe24z/?view_only=081390c7e0644a1eb86d46b66af11689. Data, codes, additional analyses, and materials can be found at: https://osf.io/24gw3/?view_only=44d3d602864e4155bd5dc1c8399bdeea.

2.2. Samples and procedures

We present in Table 1 an overview of each sample: size, descriptive statistics for demographic variables, measures, data collection procedure. We recruited eight of the 11 samples via the Ariadna Research Panel (https://www.ariadna.com), which includes over 100,000 preregistered users. Except for Sample 5 (persons in romantic relationships), initial characteristics of each sample—prior to data cleaning—were representative of the population in terms of gender, age, educational attainment, and city population size. In Sample 7, we recruited snowball participants via Facebook. We pooled Samples 2 and 10 from undergraduate student populations across departments and modes of study at [MASKED] Universities. These participants provided paper–pencil data, with a fixed scale order.

When feasible, we relied on large sample sizes to increase the probability of valid parameter estimation in our models (Wolf et al., 2013) or predetermined their size by a priori power analyses. We remunerated online participants with points (used to obtain rewards in the Ariadna loyalty program), and students with partial course credit. We did not remunerate participants from Sample 7. Additionally, in the online studies (except for Sample 7), we collected data in two sessions, with a one-week gap between them, to reduce fatigue and common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In the online samples, participants were excluded if the average response per item was less than two seconds, exceeded three standard deviations above the mean response time, or if they failed more than one out of three attention checks (e.g., "This item is designed to check your attention. Please mark 2"). In Sample 2, all observations with incomplete data on any measure were excluded.

2.3. Instruments

Participants responded to multiple questionnaires (see Table 1; see also Supplemental Materials). In all online studies, we randomized for each participant the scale presentation order. Given the large number of constructs and measures used, we present construct labels and abbreviations in the main text, with full instrument details in Supplemental Materials.

2.4. Statistical analyses

To develop the scales for assessing narcissistic sanctity and narcissistic heroism, we relied on Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Exploratory Structural Equations Modeling (ESEM; Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009). For the ESEM analyses, we used Mplus 7.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2014). For the rest of factor analyses, we relied on the "lavaan" package ((v. 0.6–15; Rosseel, 2012) in R (v. 4.3.0). To test the robustness of the scale structures derived from such analyses, we used

Table 1
Descriptive characteristics of each sample.

Sample	N	% men	Age M (SD)	Source	Population	Specific aim	Measures
1A	426	47.18	47.09 (15.19)	Online panel	National	Item selection	NSHQ (22 items), BFI-2,
1B	310	46.77	48.84 (14.86)			Relationship with Big 5 and other narcissism forms	NARQ, CNI, NPI-13, FFNI, HSNS, NGS, NVS, SSSE
2	169 (67 pairs)	17.16	20.91 (3.22)	Paper-pencil	Undergraduate students	self-report and peer-report	NSHQ, NARQ, Agency and Communion,
3	709	44.43	45.18 (15.29)	Online panel	National		NSHQ, NARQ, CNI
4	445	30.79	40.01 (13.95)	Online panel	Adults in romantic relationships		NSHQ, NARQ, CNI
5	394	53.3	30.46 (6.34)	Online panel	National		NSHQ, NARQ, CNI
6	884	46.49	46.44 (15.76)	Online panel	National	Circumplex analyses	NSHQ, NARQ, CNI CPM-Q-SF, IPC, IIP-SC
7	214	40.19	31.15 (10.64)	Online – snowballed	Convenience		NSHQ, NARQ
8	625	48.16	31.0 (5.29)	Online panel	National		NSHQ, NARQ
9	706	45.33	30.28 (6.10)	Online panel	National		NSHQ, NARQ, CNI
10	315	28.67	20.17 (2.27)	Paper-pencil	Undergraduate students		NSHQ, NARQ
11	755	44.00	45.83 (14.98)	Online panel	National		NSHQ, NARQ
Total	5606	43.02	38.15 (14.97)				

Note. BFI-2 = Big Five Inventory-2; CNI = Communal Narcissism Inventory; CPM-Q-SF = Circumplex of Personality Metatraits Questionnaire-Short Form; IIP-SC = Inventory of Interpersonal Problems- Short Circumplex form; IPC = International Personality Item Pool-Interpersonal Circumplex; FFI = Five Factor Narcissistic Inventory; HNS = Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale; NARQ = Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire; NPI-13 = Narcissistic Personality Inventory-13; NGS = Narcissistic Grandiosity Scale; NVS = Narcissistic Vulnerability Scale; NSHQ = Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Questionnaire; SSSE = Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement.

Multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MGCFA) comparing the structure across samples and genders (Chen, 2007). In addition, to enhance confidence in our results, we examined all models using the Robust Maximum Likelihood (MLR) estimator accounting for potential deviations from normality and small sample sizes (Yuan & Bentler, 2000). When evaluating models' fit to the data we relied on standard recommendations (Brown, 2015; Byrne, 1994): Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.90, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) < 0.08. In evaluating models' fit difference in MGCFA we relied on used Chen's (2007) criteria: ΔCFI = 0.01 and ΔRMSEA = 0.015.

To establish criterion validity, we examined the relations of sanctity and heroism with several variables. We followed a standard approach to testing hypotheses about these associations. First, we examined zero-order correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) to assess preliminary associations. We then entered the data into 2-step hierarchical multiple regression analyses first entering sanctity and heroism, then admiration and rivalry. We did so, because we had two main goals: (1) to show that sanctity and heroism predict outcome variable in expected ways, independently from each other: (2) to show that sanctity and heroism have their unique predictive utility also after controlling for agentic forms of narcissism. Moreover, we tested differences between dependent correlation coefficients via a one-tailed Steiger's z (1980) for dependent variables. This method mitigates the perils of partialling (Lynam et al., 2006), which could arise when addressing questions about the predictive utility of two highly correlated phenomena, that is, sanctity and heroism.

Further, we aimed to place the sanctity and heroism subscales in the relevant nomological network formed by circumplex models. We modeled how the subscale results fit into the corresponding circumplex model using a 3-step process (Rogoza et al., 2021). First, we tested whether the circumplex model fits the data (i.e., whether each trait's distance from the circumplex center is equal, and whether the traits are evenly spaced) via Structural Equation Modeling (Grassi et al., 2010). Given biased estimations of RMSEA in analyses of circumplex data, we used RMSEA > 0.13 as an indicator of poor model fit (Gurtman & Pincus, 2003) but followed the remaining criteria of model's fit as indicated above. After establishing an acceptable fit, we mapped external variables (i.e., narcissism forms) onto the circumplex, using the Structural Summary Method (Gurtman & Pincus, 2003; Zimmermann & Wright, 2017). We evaluated four estimates of it: (1) model fit ($R^2 > 0.80$) to establish whether correlations between projected narcissism forms and eight aspects of the criterium are sinusoidal; (2) elevation, to establish the average correlation between projected narcissism form and eight aspects of the criterion; (3) amplitude, to establish the magnitude of peak correlation (in reference to elevation) within the circumplex; and (4) angular displacement, to establish the location within the circumplex, in which the peak correlation was estimated. Lastly, we used orthogonal Procrustes rotation in Orthosim 2.1 software (Barrett, 2013) to test the fit between observed and theoretical configurations. We employed a congruence value of > 0.90 as the significance threshold. In Step 1, we tested the assumed circumplex structure of the predictors via Structural Equation Modeling. In Step 2, we projected the outcome onto the circumplex via the Structural Summary Method using the "circumplex" package (Girard et al., 2025) in R. Finally, in Step 3, we compared the empirical position of the projection onto the circumplex with the theoretical position, as hypothesized, via the Procrustes rotation.

3. Results

3.1. Development of the narcissistic sanctity and heroism questionnaire

We developed the 10-item NSHQ, comprising the sanctity and heroism subscales, five items each (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*; Table 2). We administered the NSHQ to all samples except Sample 1A. We formulated sanctity items (e.g., "Everyone knows that I am a

Table 2

Standardized factor loadings of the narcissistic sanctity and heroism questionnaire (Sample 1A, N = 426).

Item Content[a]	Sanctity	Heroism
I have a unique gift for understanding others.	0.67	0.09
I am a modest person even though I do many good things for others.	0.60	0.13
I am able to de-escalate conflicts in every group I am part of.	0.60	0.16
Everyone knows that I am a completely trustworthy person.	0.62	0.04
I can understand everyone in every situation.	0.86	−0.27
Lots of people admire me for what I do for them.	0.10	0.69
No one but me can deal with threats to my surroundings.	0.04	0.71
When it comes to doing something for other people, I'm better and more effective than anyone else.	−0.08	0.82
I am universally respected for my heroic and steadfast fight against evil.	0.12	0.70
Thanks to me, the world is more just.	−0.04	0.75

Note. Cross-loadings targeted to be zero are greyed. NSHQ = Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Questionnaire. The latent correlation between factors was high (0.74).

[a] English translation of items was slightly modified following Reviewers' suggestions. However, this updated translation does not differ substantially from the initial version.

completely trustworthy person") as reflecting high levels of communal self-enhancement, without agentic self-enhancement. Heroism items were formulated (e.g., "Thanks to me, the world is more just") as reflecting both agentic self-enhancement and communal self-enhancement. In aim to differentiate between narcissistic and non-narcissistic people, we needed to ask about unrealistically positive self-beliefs, also because communal traits are validated rather trough subjective, not objective standards (Abele & Wojciszke, 2008).

Members of the research team generated 22 items likely to implicate sanctity (i.e., overly positive self-view on possessing desirable communal traits) or heroism (i.e., overly positive self-view of one's importance in improving the social world) and evaluated them both individually and via discussion as candidates for inclusion. We used data from Sample 1A to reduce the original item pool. First, based on CFA results, we removed redundant items (determined via residuals that were highly [$r > 0.40$] correlated) and those items with weak (< 0.40) standardized factor loadings from the item set. Applying these criteria produced 16 candidate items. Second, we conducted ESEM (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009) with a targeted rotation (Marsh et al., 2014) on the responses to these remaining items. We examined the results to identify items that loaded insufficiently (< 0.50) on a given factor or that loaded on more than one factor (cross-loadings > 0.20). We applied these steps iteratively, starting with items with the lowest loading and the highest cross-loading. After excluding an item, we recalculated the results and decided on another exclusion. We continued this process until we reached a final 10-item set. We present factor loadings from the final model in Table 2.

We compared the theoretical two-factor solution with a more parsimonious, single-factor one. The single-factor model did not fit the data well in comparison to the hypothesized two-factor solution, $\chi2(35)$ $= 159.76, p < 0.001$, CFI $= 0.885$, RMSEA $= 0.091$ [.081, 0.103], SRMR $= 0.073$. The two-factor model was a good fit, $\chi(234) = 59.78, p = 0.004$, CFI $= 0.976$, RMSEA $= 0.042$ [.028, 0.056], SRMR $= 0.042$. We replicated such a fit for the 10-item NSHQ throughout all samples (all CFIs > 0.9; eight out of 11 RMSEA < 0.08; Table S1). We tested measurement invariance of the NSHQ in 11 samples using MGCFA (Cieciuch et al., 2019), finding partial scalar invariance (Table S1). Thus, we were able to compare scores of the NSHQ across all studies and employ a meta-analytical approach to demonstrate correlational patterns, compare effect sizes, and examine gender differences.

3.2. Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and temporal stability

In Table 3, we report average scores and standard deviations of sanctity, heroism, admiration, and rivalry across all samples. The NSHQ indicated good internal consistencies, both for sanctity and heroism, being comparable to those of admiration and rivalry. The test–retest indicated high 3-month temporal stability of sanctity and heroism, being comparable to those of admiration and rivalry (Table 3). Therefore, in terms of psychometric qualities, the NSHQ is comparable to the NARQ.

3.3. Gender differences

Gender differences are important to validate the NSHQ, because such differences may map on to communal narcissism. That is, female traits are seen as communal, and male traits as agentic (Eagly et al., 2020). Hence, we expected gender differences consistent with narcissistic expressions of agency and communion, that is, higher levels of sanctity among women (as compared to men), higher levels of admiration and rivalry among men (as compared to women), and no gender differences for heroism, in line with its mixed communal-agentic nature. The NSHQ had scalar invariance across genders (Supplemental Materials, Table S2), so we could compare the scores across genders. The results supported these hypotheses (Tables S3 and S4). Sanctity was higher among women ($d = -0.11$), admiration and rivalry were higher among men ($d = 0.08$ and 0.33, respectively) with no gender differences for heroism emerged ($d = 0.02$). As a reminder, Gebauer et al. (2012) reported no gender differences in the CNI. They interpreted this null finding by referring to the mixed nature of communal narcissism – being both agentic and communal. Our fourfold model provides a more refined picture: sanctity (purely communal) aligns with a traditional female social role, whereas admiration (purely agentic) and rivalry (low communal) align with a traditional male social role. Although heroism is expressed comparably by men and women, the manner in which it is enacted may differ across genders.

3.4. Self-other agreement on the narcissistic sanctity and heroism questionnaire

Narcissistic thoughts can be manifested in narcissistic behaviors (Back et al., 2013; Gebauer et al., 2012), so that others should correctly recognize communal narcissists as holding communal self-beliefs. Accordingly, there should be some degree of convergence between self- and other-perceptions of narcissism due to the behavioral expression of the trait. Indeed, there are low to moderate levels of self-other agreement across the NARQ subscales (Back et al., 2013). Gebauer

et al. (2012) did not test self-other agreement in the CNI. Therefore, it is not clear if we should expect self-other agreement for sanctity and heroism. We tested (Sample 2) the congruence of self-reports and peer-reports on measures assessing sanctity and heroism as well as admiration and rivalry. The results replicated Back et al.'s (2013) finding that self-other correlations are low-to-moderate: admiration $r = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$; rivalry $r = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$; sanctity $r = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$; heroism $r = 0.22$, $p = 0.036$. These correlations support the convergent validity of narcissism-relevant self-ratings.

3.5. Relations with other forms of narcissism

As new concepts, sanctity and heroism ought to be examined in the backdrop of existing measures of narcissism. We took a special interest in differentiating the NSHQ from the CNI, an established measure of communal narcissism. Further, using the Sample 1B data, to assure that it is a measure of narcissistic grandiosity, we examined correlations between the NSHQ and a variety of narcissism measures.

3.5.1. Differentiating between the NSHQ and communal narcissism inventory

To ascertain that the NSHQ does not overlap with the CNI, we tested their mutual relations on item level (via ESEM) and the correlational pattern of their composite scores. We conducted a more detailed investigation of the relations between the NSHQ and the CNI through item-level ESEM (Table 4). In modeling these relations (Fig. S1), the NSHQ was represented as a two-factor model with five items per factor. The CNI was represented in a bi-factor model (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016), allowing for general and specific communal factors. We tested between-scale independence: We set the NSHQ items to not load on the CNI, whereas we set the CNI items to not load on the NSHQ (Supplemental Materials, Fig. S1). This model fit the data well ($\chi2[205] = 304.71$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.042 [.032, 0.052], SRMR = 0.02). However, the fit was not perfect: Cross-loadings of three items (i.e., NSHQ4, NSHQ17, CNI10) were higher than desired (> 0.20), suggesting that they have content overlapping across constructs. Nonetheless, when taken as a whole, the results indicate that the communal forms of narcissism assessed by the NSHQ differ from present-oriented and future-oriented forms assessed by the CNI.

To examine relations between composite score from the NSHQ and the CNI, we calculated zero-order correlations between the two—both their global scores and two factors—in seven samples. Table 5 contains meta-analytic results (see Supplemental Materials, Tables S5 and S6, for similar analyses for admiration and rivalry). Correlations were high, which we expected, given the communal focus of both questionnaires.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics of narcissistic forms across all samples.

Sample	Sanctity			Heroism			Admiration			Rivalry		
	M	SD	A	M	SD	α	M	SD	A	M	SD	α
1	3.92	0.72	0.82	3.23	0.82	0.87	3.34	0.77	0.86	2.78	0.88	0.90
2	3.91	0.85	0.70	2.68	0.82	0.71	3.40	0.88	0.74	2.54	0.83	0.80
3	3.92	0.94	0.83	2.99	1.06	0.90	3.11	0.94	0.88	2.31	0.97	0.90
4	4.13	0.88	0.83	3.21	1.02	0.88	3.15	0.88	0.86	2.32	0.84	0.86
5												
Wave 1	3.96	0.74	0.84	3.29	0.90	0.90	3.11	1.03	0.84	2.95	1.03	0.78
Wave 2	3.90	0.69	0.79	3.34	0.83	0.80	3.09	1.00	0.85	3.03	0.97	0.76
Test-retest	$r_{tt} = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$			$r_{tt} = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$			$r_{tt} = 0.69$, $p < 0.001$			$r_{tt} = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$		
6	3.78	0.76	0.79	2.90	0.90	0.91	3.05	0.97	0.81	3.19	0.99	0.82
7	4.00	0.78	0.68	2.71	0.86	0.77	3.25	0.87	0.83	2.31	0.88	0.80
8	4.12	0.90	0.79	3.00	1.07	0.87	2.74	1.20	0.77	2.36	1.14	0.67
9	3.74	0.89	0.81	3.02	1.05	0.89	3.24	0.91	0.88	2.79	1.00	0.90
10	3.60	0.81	0.79	3.48	0.81	0.81	3.40	0.88	0.83	2.54	0.84	0.79
11	3.96	0.74	0.84	3.29	0.90	0.86	3.12	1.03	0.85	2.95	1.03	0.81
Total	3.82	0.85	0.80	3.17	0.95	0.84	3.19	0.96	0.83	2.80	1.02	0.82

Note. In Sample 5, we tested stability after a three-month delay.

Table 4

Standardized factor loadings of the narcissistic sanctity and heroism questionnaire and the communal narcissism inventory.

	Sanctity	Heroism	CNI general	CNI present	CNI future
NSHQ1 I have a unique gift for understanding others.	0.58	0.11	0.09	0.13	0.05
NSHQ2 I am a modest person even though I do many good things for others.	0.65	0.15	−0.03	−0.13	−0.00
NSHQ3 I am able to de-escalate conflicts in every group I am part of.	0.63	0.14	0.03	−0.03	0.03
NSHQ4 Everyone knows that I am a completely trustworthy person.	0.32	0.30	0.06	0.25	−0.26
NSHQ10 I can understand everyone in every situation.	0.71	−0.13	0.07	0.03	−0.09
NSHQ13 Lots of people admire me for what I do for them.	0.05	0.79	0.02	−0.06	−0.04
NSHQ14 No one but me can deal with threats to my surroundings.	0.13	0.56	0.05	−0.01	0.02
NSHQ16 When it comes to doing something for other people, I'm better and more effective than anyone else.	0.04	0.63	0.09	−0.07	0.02
NSHQ17 I am universally respected for my heroic and steadfast fight against evil.	0.25	0.54	0.06	−0.03	0.13
NSHQ20 Thanks to me, the world is more just.	0.03	0.63	0.01	0.09	0.15
CNI1 I am the most helpful person I know.	−0.04	0.06	0.77	0.07	−0.01
CNI3 I am the best friend someone can have.	0.14	−0.13	0.63	0.33	0.02
CNI6 I am the most caring person in my social surroundings.	0.04	−0.01	0.88	−0.28	−0.07
CNI8 I greatly enrich others' lives.	0.07	0.02	0.53	0.22	0.35
CNI10 I am an amazing listener.	0.24	−0.29	0.52	0.27	−0.04
CNI12 I have a very positive influence on others.	0.07	0.08	0.56	0.28	0.04
CNI13 I am generally the most understanding person.	0.00	0.02	0.63	0.17	−0.03
CNI15 I am extraordinarily trustworthy.	−0.18	0.03	0.73	0.45	−0.14
CNI2 I am going to bring peace and justice to the world.	−0.03	0.05	0.54	−0.01	0.62
CNI4 I will be well known for the good deeds I will have done.	−0.08	0.14	0.48	0.08	0.56
CNI5 I am (going to be) the best parent on this planet.	−0.09	−0.05	0.68	−0.07	0.05
CNI7 In the future, I will be well known for solving the world's problems.	0.05	−0.06	0.47	0.00	0.76
CNI9 I will bring freedom to the people.	0.04	−0.01	0.48	0.02	0.73
CNI11 I will be able to solve world poverty.	−0.01	−0.00	0.50	−0.10	0.71

Table 4 (*continued*)

	Sanctity	Heroism	CNI general	CNI present	CNI future
CNI14 I'll make the world a much more beautiful place.	−0.16	0.10	0.54	0.08	0.58
CNI16 I will be famous for increasing people's well-being.	−0.01	0.05	0.47	−0.01	0.66

Note. Cross-loadings targeted to be 0 are greyed. CNI = Communal Narcissism Inventory; NSHQ = Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Questionnaire. NSHQ item numbers are consistent with the initial pool (22) used in factor analyses.

Table 5

Zero-order relations between different communal narcissism forms (meta-analytic coefficients with 95 % CI, Based on Samples 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9; N = 3445).

	Sanctity	Heroism	CNI global	CNI future	CNI present
NSHQ global	0.93* [.92,.93]	0.90* [.93,.94]	0.73* [.71,.74]	0.63* [.61,.65]	0.62* [.69,.72]
Sanctity		0.72* [.71,.73]	0.65* [.63,.67]	0.53* [.51,.55]	0.67* [.65,.69]
Heroism			0.70* [.68,.71]	0.65* [.63,.67]	0.64* [.62,.66]
CNI global				0.93* [.93,.94]	0.91* [.90,.91]
CNI future					0.69* [.67,.71]

Note. CNI = Communal Narcissism Inventory; NSHQ = Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Questionnaire. *p < 0.01.

However, correlations between the individual scales of the NSHQ and the individual scales of the CNI were lower than the correlation between the global indices, suggesting that the individual subscales capture distinct but overlapping aspects of communal narcissism.

3.5.2. Sanctity and heroism in the context of existing narcissism measures

To find out whether communal narcissism assessed by the NSHQ is located on the grandiose pole of the narcissistic spectrum, supplementing agentic forms, we analyzed correlations of the NSHQ with other measures of narcissism. We expected a positive relation of the NSHQ with measures of narcissistic grandiosity, a weak negative or null relation with narcissistic vulnerability, and a negative relation with narcissistic antagonism. Indeed, both the NSHQ and CNI scores evinced similar patterns of correlations across other measures of grandiosity.

However, a different results pattern emerged for narcissistic vulnerability and antagonism. The NSHQ correlated negatively (albeit weakly) with all three measures thought to reflect narcissistic vulnerability, but the CNI did not. The CNI correlated positively with rivalry, but the NSHQ did not. This can be attributed to the NSHQ comprising two subscales (i.e., sanctity and heroism, correlated with antagonism in opposite directions), whereas two factors within the CNI did not indicate such opposite patterns of correlations. Of note, we observed opposite directions of correlations with antagonism for sanctity and heroism as well as for admiration and rivalry, consistent with previous findings (Back et al., 2013). Moreover, both the Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement subscale and CNI-future subscale showed weak positive correlations with certain measures of vulnerability. This suggests that these two subscales into vulnerability-related content despite their intended focus on grandiosity.

Our conceptualization also suggests that heroism has a larger agentic component than sanctity, but sanctity is less antagonistic than heroism. Indeed, sanctity correlates equally strongly as heroism with communal grandiosity measures, but also negatively with narcissistic antagonism. In comparison, heroism correlates strongly with agentic grandiosity measures, and is uncorrelated with antagonism. Although sanctity shows a negative association with narcissistic vulnerability, heroism

shows no significant association (Table 6). Thus, our findings indicate that sanctity is purely communal, whereas heroism is a mixture of agentic and communal grandiosity.

3.6. Personality correlates of narcissistic sanctity and heroism: insight from big five personality

To further examine whether sanctity and heroism are two distinct forms of communal narcissism, we tested if sanctity and heroism differentially predicted Big Five personality traits (McCrae & John, 1992), reasoning that traits might serve as an indicators of agency and communion (Gebauer et al., 2012). We started by comparing personality profiles of sanctity and heroism with other measures of communal narcissism, that is, the Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement subscale (Rogoza & Fatfouta, 2019) and the CNI (Gebauer et al., 2012).

We report the associations between communal narcissism indicators and Big Five Personality in Fig. 2. Results showed that the global NSHQ resembled the personality profile of the CNI, yet the CNI was more convergent with heroism alone than with global NSHQ. Moreover, results for sanctity and heroism were different from each other (except for extraversion; see Table S10 for *z*-tests), indicating unique patterns of personality correlates. Therefore, among all other existing measures of communal narcissism, the NSHQ and CNI are most similar, albeit still distinct. Moreover, sanctity resembled a present-oriented factor, whereas heroism resembled a future-oriented factor, as expected. However, sanctity indicated more communal orientation than CNI-present: a stronger relation with agreeableness, openness, and extraversion, and a negative relation with neuroticism. Heroism, as compared to CNI-future, was also more communal and more grandiose (see also Table S7 for multiple regression analysis of sanctity, heroism, admiration, and rivalry). Hence, the pattern of correlations for sanctity and heroism is consistent with hypotheses, and distinct from other assessed forms of communal narcissism, supporting the validity of treating sanctity and heroism as distinct subdimensions of communal narcissism.

3.7. Personality correlates of narcissistic sanctity and heroism: insight from circumplex model

We used circumplex models for further verification of the notion that sanctity and heroism represent a distinct combination of agency and communion, and to locate it alongside admiration and rivalry, being forms of agentic grandiose narcissism. Therefore, we aimed to examine: (1) the placement of sanctity and heroism within circumplexes, differentiating them from admiration and rivalry; and (2) sanctity and heroism's overlap with the CNI. We depict expected locations of the forms in Fig. 1.

We used personality metatraits (Strus & Cieciuch, 2021) measured in Sample 6. Participant's results fitted to the circumplex model χ^2 [24] = 305.93, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.115[.104, 0.127]), which enabled us to project their narcissism scores onto it. We present in Fig. 3 the location of sanctity, heroism, admiration, rivalry, and CNI within the personality metatraits circumplex space (see Supplementary Table S8 for more details). Sanctity and heroism had different locations than admiration and rivalry, indicating that they represent different aspects of personality. Both were located close to the Gamma Plus metatrait, admiration was closer to Delta Minus, and rivalry was between Alpha Minus and Gamma Minus, as expected. The future-oriented CNI subscale was located between Beta plus and Delta Minus, revealing an agentic profile of personality, overlapping with admiration. Accordingly, the NSHQ provides a more complementary assessment to the NARQ than does the CNI.

3.8. Narcissistic sanctity, heroism, and nomological network of agency and communion: interpersonal circumplex models

Next, to directly refer to agency and communion in establishing validity criteria for sanctity and heroism, we relied on two circumplex measures based on agency and communion (Sample 6): International Personality Item Pool – Interpersonal Circumplex (IPIP-IPC; Markey & Markey, 2009), and Inventory of Interpersonal Problems—Short Circumplex Form (IIP-SC; Soldz et al., 1995). Responses to the IIP-SC,

Table 6

Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and correlation coefficients between studied narcissism aspects (Sample 1B, N = 310).

Variable	M	SD	A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communal Grandiosity										
1. NSH total	3.6	0.7	0.88							
2. Sanctity [NSHQ]	4.0	0.7	0.82	0.89**						
3. Heroism [NSHQ]	3.2	0.8	0.85	0.90**	0.60**					
4. Communal Narcissism [CNI]	3.3	0.8	0.93	0.65**	0.52**	0.63**				
5. Communal Narcissism − future [CNI]	2.8	1.0	0.89	0.53**	0.32**	0.60**	0.91**			
6. Communal Narcissism − present [CNI]	3.8	0.8	0.88	0.62**	0.61**	0.49**	0.85**	0.56**		
7. Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement [SSSE]	3.7	0.8	0.84	0.47**	0.42**	0.42**	0.53**	0.39**	0.57**	
Agentic Grandiosity										
6. Admiration [NARQ]	3.3	0.8	0.85	0.51**	0.35**	0.56**	0.49**	0.46**	0.40**	0.39**
7. Narcissistic Extraversion [FFNI]	2.8	0.6	0.89	0.33**	0.19**	0.40**	0.41**	0.47**	0.26**	0.34**
8. Leadership/Authority [NPI]	0.2	0.3	0.75	0.18**	0.04	0.27**	0.22**	0.26**	0.13*	0.14*
9. Grandiose Exhibitionism [NPI]	0.2	0.3	0.62	0.20**	0.06	0.28**	0.18**	0.19**	0.14**	0.12*
10. Narcissistic Grandiosity [NGS]	3.4	1.2	0.93	0.34**	0.15*	0.44**	0.40**	0.47**	0.25**	0.23**
Antagonism										
11. Rivalry [NARQ]	2.7	0.8	0.87	−0.02	−0.21**	0.15*	0.12*	0.24**	−0.04	0.08
12. Self-centered Antagonism [FFNI]	2.5	0.5	0.92	0.13*	−0.08	0.29**	0.26**	0.39**	0.07	0.18**
13. Exploitativeness/Entitlement [NPI]	0.2	0.3	0.63	−0.01	−0.13*	0.10	0.04	0.09	−0.03	−0.03
Vulnerability										
14. Narcissistic Neuroticism [FFNI]	3.1	0.6	0.85	−0.13*	−0.12	−0.11	−0.07	−0.07	−0.04	0.14*
15. Vulnerable Narcissism [HSNS]	2.8	0.5	0.76	−0.13*	−0.21**	−0.03	0.03	0.15*	−0.08	0.06
16. Narcissistic Vulnerability [NVS]	3.4	1.0	0.83	−0.13*	−0.24**	0<.01	−0.02	0.10	−0.10	0.05

Note. CNI = Communal Narcissism Inventory; FFNI = Five-Factor Narcissism Inventory; HSNS = Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale; NGS = Narcissistic Grandiosity Scale; NVS = Narcissistic Vulnerability Scale; NARQ = Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Scale; NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory; NSHQ = Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Questionnaire. NPI was coded dichotomously (0/1); thus, *M* represents the percent of diagnostic items.

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.
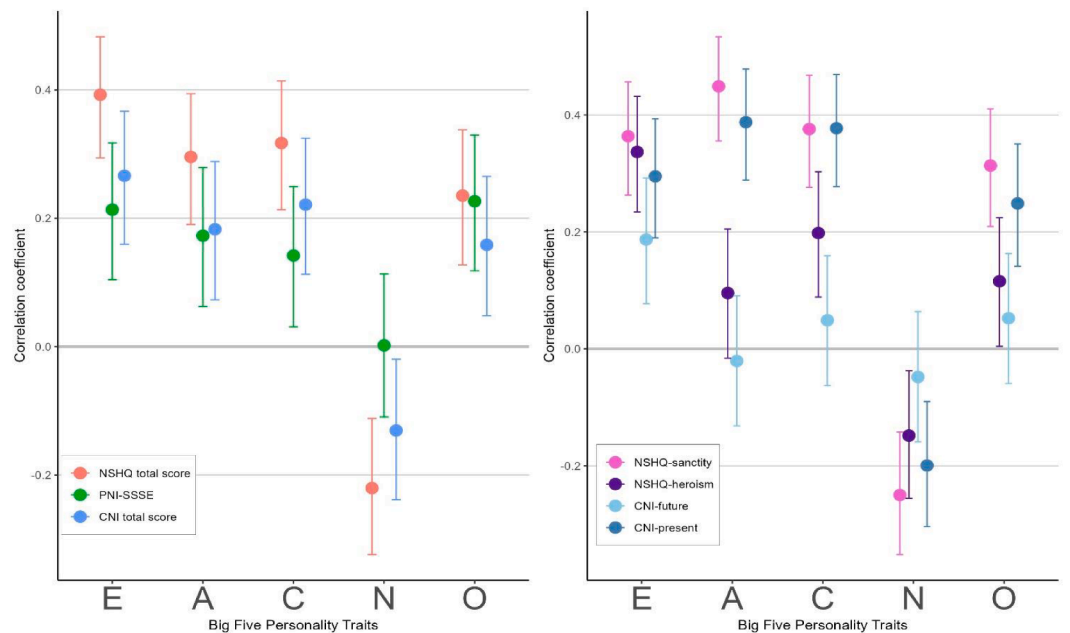
Note. CNI = Communal Narcissism Inventory; NSHQ = Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Questionnaire; PNI-SSSE = Pathological Narcissism Inventory Self-sacrificing Self-Enhancement, *r*-Pearson correlations.

Fig. 2. Personality Correlates (Big Five Personality Traits) of Communal Narcissism Measures.
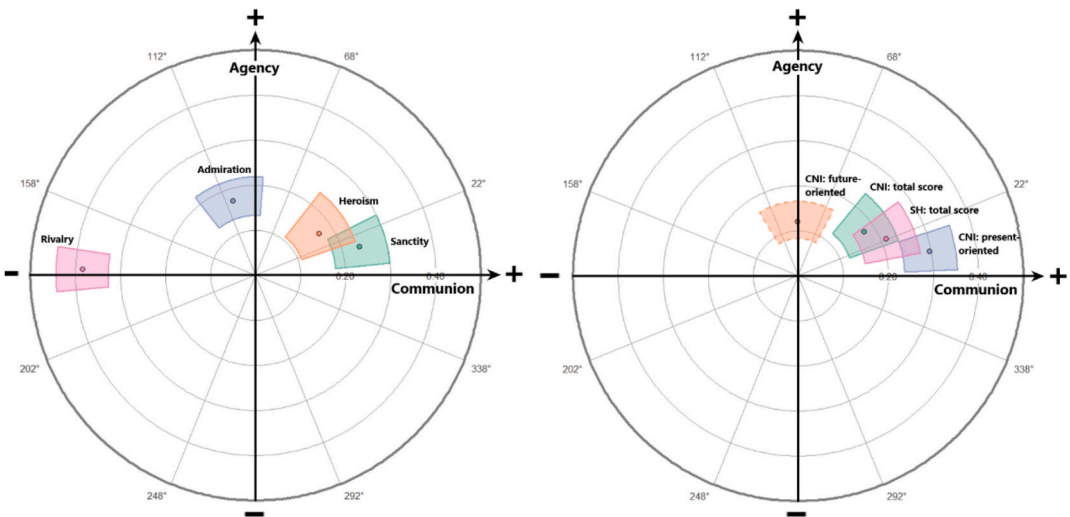

Fig. 3. Narcissism Forms Projected on Circumplex of Personality Metatraits.

$(\chi^2[24] = 400.18$, CFI $= 0.92$, RMSEA $= 0.133[.122, 0.145])$ fitted well to the circumplex model. The IPIP-IPC analysis, however, yielded a quasi-circumplex structure $(\chi^2[24] = 476.0$, CFI $= 0.84$, RMSEA $= 0.146$ [.135, 0.158]). Relaxing constraints of communalities in the model (Rogoza et al., 2019) provided a better fit $(\chi^2[17] = 273.99$, CFI $= 0.91$, RMSEA $= 0.131[.117, 0.145])$.

Acknowledging that such results might influence the correlation pattern for IPC, we projected narcissism forms on the circumplex (Figs. 4 and 5; for details, see Supplementary Table S8). The results largely resembled those of personality metatraits. Sanctity and heroism were linked to communion stronger than admiration or rivalry. Moreover, the future-oriented subscale of CNI again overlapped with admiration, whereas the NSHQ complemented the narcissistic spectrum in expected way.

3.9. Self-others agreement: sanctity, heroism, and overrating on agency and communion

Given that forms of grandiose narcissism do not uniformly involve overrating on specific traits (Gebauer & Sedikides, 2018b), we examined overrating of various traits reflecting agency and/or communion as well as the link between the magnitude of such overrating and sanctity/ heroism. To this end, we used Sample 2, where we compared self-reported agency and communion with peer reports.

Results from zero-order analyses (Supplemental Materials, Table S9) showed that sanctity was correlated with overrating one's competence (but not assertiveness), morality, and warmth. In contrast, heroism was correlated with overrating one's agency traits (competence and assertiveness), but not communal ones. Further, in regression analyses (Table 7), sanctity was uniquely correlated with overrating one's
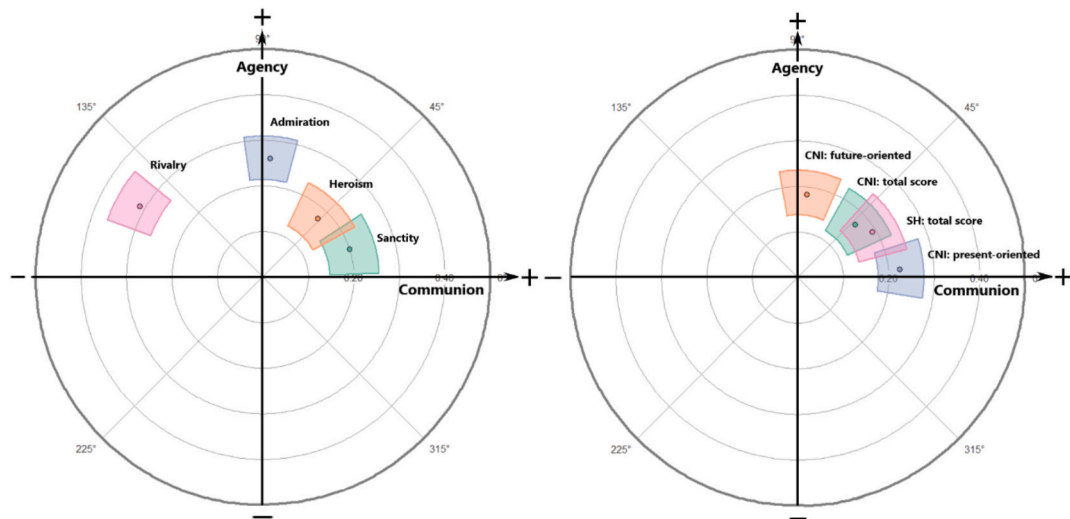
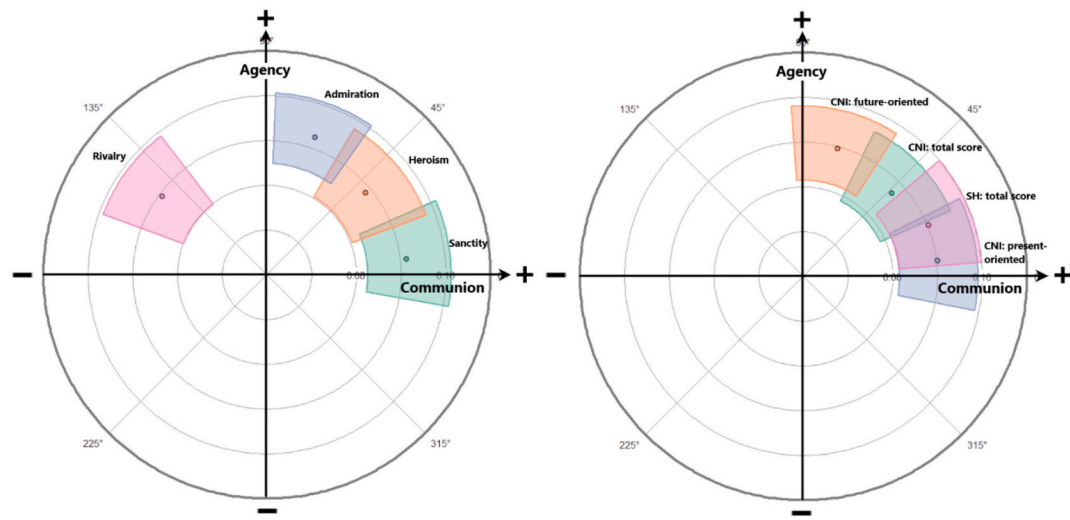**Fig. 4.** Narcissism Forms Projected on Interpersonal Circumplex.

Fig. 5. Narcissism Forms Projected on Interpersonal Problems Circumplex.

Table 7
Narcissistic dimensions as predictors (β) of overrating: multiple regression analyses (Sample 2, N = 169).

	Overrating			
	Agency		Communion	
	C	**A**	**M**	**W**
Step 1 R^2	0.11**	0.02	0.08**	0.13**
Sanctity	0.05	−0.01	0.32**	0.38**
Heroism	0.30**	0.16	−0.11	−0.05
Step 2 ΔR^2	0.03*	0.05*	0.04*	0.03
Sanctity	0.06	0.01	0.28**	0.39**
Heroism	0.17	0.01	−0.05	−0.15
Admiration	0.18*	0.22*	0.04	0.19*
Rivalry	0.06	0.08	−0.23**	0<.01
Total R^2	0.14**	0.07*	0.12**	0.16**

Note. C = competence; A = assertiveness; M = morality; W = warmth. * $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.

morality and warmth, even controlling for admiration and rivalry. In contrast, heroism was correlated with overrating one's agentic traits, but the relation disappeared when admiration was controlled for. Admiration was correlated with overrating one's agentic traits (i.e., competence and assertiveness), and rivalry was correlated with underrating one's morality. The results support the validity of the NSHQ as a measure of communal grandiose narcissism, complementing the NARQ as a measure of agentic grandiose narcissism.

4. Discussion

The construct of communal narcissism seems to be well-established (Gebauer et al., 2012; Gebauer & Sedikides, 2018,a,b; Grosz et al., 2022; Pincus et al., 2009). However, existing data challenge a clear distinction between agentic and communal grandiose narcissism (Sedikides, 2021). Although communal narcissists are theorized to self-enhance in the communal domain, CNI-based communal narcissism is not purely communal. CNI-narcissists self-enhance both on the communal and agentic domain, and are perceived as low on communion; also, women are no more communally narcissistic than men (Gebauer et al., 2012). Thus, existing measures of communal narcissism do not allow researchers to fully differentiate between communal (CNI-based) and agentic (both NPI-based and NARQ-based) narcissism.

We expected that communal narcissism is an extension of the grandiose pole of the narcissistic spectrum and, as such, it would be consistent with circumplex models based on agency and communion

(Horowitz et al., 2006). Therefore, we divided communal narcissism in a way similar to the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Concept (Back et al., 2013). Narcissistic sanctity reflects the self-enhancing beliefs that one possesses high levels of positive socially-oriented traits, such as modesty, empathy, or trustworthiness. Colloquially, such individuals see themselves as saints. In contrast, narcissistic heroism characterizes individuals who see themselves as highly important in the communal domain, because their relatively high level of activity and engagement in the social domain is effective, making this domain a better place. Moreover, they show little interest in others' perspectives on what constitutes a 'better' society, rendering their prosocial engagement selectively self-directed. Colloquially, such individuals see themselves as superheroes.

Results from 11 samples indicated that the NSHQ is a psychometrically sound and valid measure. The reliability and temporal stability of the sanctity and heroism subscales was good and fully comparable to those assessed by the NARQ. The model's fit of a two-factor solution was good and replicable across samples and age groups. Moreover, both subscales: (1) reflect the constructs targeted during development with respect to the psychological dimensions of agency and communion; (2) differ from each other in the degree to which they reflect these dimensions; (3) are unique in that they are not redundant to other measures of general grandiose narcissism (the NARQ) or other measures of narcissism that are grounded in communal ideas (CNI, Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement subscale). We summarize and evaluate our results in Table 8.

Our work addresses previously observed methodological and conceptual problems with homogenously assessed communal narcissism. Former studies yielded a difference between self-reported and actual communal orientation (Nehrlich et al., 2019) or yielded inconsistent findings regarding self-enhancement (Leniarska et al., 2023; Nowak et al., 2022). The current results suggest that such inconsistencies can be resolved via consideration of different forms of grandiose communal narcissism.

Our research indicates that the future-oriented aspect of communal narcissism overlaps with narcissistic admiration. Therefore, in the studies relying on comparisons between agentic and communal narcissism, we could observe artificial effects (Leniarska et al., 2023; Nowak et al., 2022), which would lead to false conclusions about a "communal mask" of communal narcissists, seeing them as very similar to agentic ones (Fatfouta & Schröder-Abé, 2018). Our work allows the distinction between purely agentic (i.e., admiration) and purely communal (i.e., sanctity) self-enhancement. Communal narcissists do have their own way to self-protect (i.e., heroism), which is specific for the communal domain. Not only do they derogate others, but they also manifest their superiority and social selfishness in improving the world. Thus, we maintain that the Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Concept is a useful contribution to understanding communal narcissism as a true counterpart of agentic narcissism. Thanks to that, communal narcissism could be successfully integrated in existing models of narcissistic personality (e.g., the Narcissistic Spectrum Model, Krizan & Herlache, 2018).

The Narcissistic Sanctity and Heroism Concept is intended to complement the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Concept. Back and colleagues (2013) appeared to design the NARQ as a potential replacement for the NPI. In terms of psychometric properties—such as factorial stability, replicability, brevity, and reliability—the NHSQ demonstrates superiority over the CNI. However, just as the NARQ has not fully supplanted the NPI in the literature, we do not expect the NSHQ to replace the CNI entirely. When researchers opt to use the NPI, the CNI may be the most suitable counterpart, given its validation against the NPI and its demonstrated utility in that context. In contrast, when the NARQ is employed, including the CNI may introduce conceptual ambiguity or lead to inconclusive findings.

We validated the NHSQ against the NARQ, positioning it as an ideal complement for a nuanced examination of grandiose narcissism, particularly in non-clinical contexts. The use of the NPI in cross-cultural

Table 8
Expected and detected relations between narcissistic dimensions and outcome variables.

	NSHQ		NARQ	
	Sanctity	Heroism	Admiration	Rivalry
Interrelations Between Narcissism Forms				
Heroism	+ [.72]			
Admiration	0/+ [.48]	+ [.65]		
Rivalry	− [.07]	0/- [.30]	+ [.53]	
Present-oriented factor (CNI)	+ [.67]	+ [.64]	0[.50]	− [.12]
Future-oriented factor (CNI)	+ [.53]	+ [.65]	0/+ [.51]	− [.28]
Self-Other Agreement				
Congruence	High [.50]	Low [.22]	High [.50]	Low [.43]
Relations with Other Measures of Narcissism				
Agentic Grandiosity (NPI)	0 [ns]	+ [.28]	+ [.50]	0[.12]
Agentic Grandiosity (NGS)	0 [.15]	+ [.43]	+ [.59]	0[.32]
Vulnerability (HSNS)	0 [-0.21]	0[ns]	0/- [.09]	+ [.50]
Vulnerability (NVS)	0[-0.24]	0[ns]	0/- [-0.04]	+ [.44]
Communal grandiosity (CNI)	+ [.52]	+ [.63]	0/+ [.49]	− [.12]
Communal pathological grandiosity (SSSE)	0/+ [.42]	+ [.44]	0 [.39]	− [.08]
Agentic Extraversion (FFNI)	0/+ [.19]	+ [.40]	++ [.68]	0/+ [.34]
Narcissistic Neuroticism (FFNI)	0[ns]	0[ns]	0/- [-0.28]	0/+ [.17]
Self-centered antagonism (FFNI)	0[ns]	+ [.29]	+ [.48]	+ [.58]
Nomological Network				
Personality traits				
Agreeableness	+ [.49]	+ [.13]	0/- [ns]	−-[-0.59]
Conscientiousness	+ [.40]	+ [.22]	0/+ [.18]	− [-0.22]
Extraversion	+ [.36]	+ [.35]	+ [.53]	0/- [-0.14]
Openness	0/+ [.34]	+ [.17]	+ [.23]	0/- [-0.23]
Neuroticism	− [-0.26]	0/- [-0.14]	− [-0.22]	+ [.28]
Big Two				
Stability	+ [.54]	0/+ [.27]	0/- [.21]	− [-0.18]
Plasticity	0/+ [.43]	+ [.43]	+ [.48]	0/+ [.05]
Warmth (Love)	+ [.25]	+ [.16]	0/+ [.03]	− [.12]
Dominance	0/+ [-0.13]	+ [.20]	+ [.17]	0/+ [.52]
Overrated agency	0/+[ns]	+[ns]	+ [.20]	0/+[ns]
Overrated communion	+ [.34]	+[ns]	0[ns]	−-[-0.12]

Note. We indicate expected relations with pluses and minuses. + = positive relation; − = negative relation; 0 = no relation. We report detected links in the brackets. We present zero-order correlations. CNI = Communal Narcissism Inventory; FFNI = Five-Factor Narcissistic Inventory; HSNS = Hypersensitive Narcissistic Scale; NGS = Narcissistic Grandiosity Scale; NVS = Narcissistic Vulnerability Scale; NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory; SSSE = Self-Sacrificing Self-Enhancement.

research has been shown to be problematic (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2019), and it is therefore not recommended for studies involving non-Western samples or large cross-cultural comparisons. Given that the NARQ remains the only suitable measure of agentic narcissism in such contexts, the NHSQ emerges as the only validated instrument currently available for assessing communal narcissism outside Western cultural settings (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024).

4.1. Limitations and further directions

We used a multi-method approach across studies, relying on both self-reports and peer-reports. Although the results offered compelling

evidence for sanctity and heroism, further research is warranted. First, we based our studies on circumplex models, which impose a specific structural organization of interpersonal behaviors on the basis of agency and communion. Therefore, our hypothesized two forms of communal narcissism were informed much more by other interpersonal behaviors than by the theory of communal narcissism. Clearly, more thought needs to be given as to how these perspectives might be integrated.

Second, Gebauer et al. (2012) detected patterns in self-views that were organized temporally. Our model is based on biased convictions about the communal and agentic domains and their influence on the self, without considering the distinction between present-oriented and future-oriented thoughts. Future theory and research should explore ways to integrate these two conceptions.

Third, the pattern of results we obtained across studies was consistent, but not perfectly clear. As summarized in Table 8, not all our hypotheses were confirmed. For instance, heroism was unrelated to overrating in the communal domain, and its relation with agentic overrating vanished after controlling for admiration. The reasons could be both methodological (i.e., measurement) and conceptual (e.g., problems with adapting the agency-communion distinction to each phenomenon). Our work is intended to introduce and validate a new assessment of communal narcissism, yet we did not include real-life scenarios nor test behavioral consequences of sanctity and heroism either. Such testing is necessary to further validate the constructs. Methods testing our hypotheses in naturalistic settings and via ecological momentary assessments would be a welcome addition to the literature. Lastly, we examined narcissistic beliefs in the social domain, which are regulated by cultural norms. Cultural context may shape narcissistic self-views (but see Sedikides et al., 2024).

4.2. Limitations on generality

We validated our model in the general population, being diversified in terms of age, gender, and education. However, our findings cannot be generalized to younger participants (non-adults) and to clinical population, as we did not included criteria for personality disorders. We collected data in Poland, a country characterized by relatively low levels of narcissism (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024). Although we tested the validity of the NSHQ systematically only Polish samples, newest findings indicate that the NSHQ is applicable to other cultures (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2024).

5. Conclusion

We extended communal narcissism theory by identifying and validating two distinct subtypes, narcissistic sanctity and narcissistic heroism. Sanctity reflects communion, whereas heroism reflects both agency and communion. The assessment we developed better reflects the complexity of communal narcissism than alternative assessments. We hope that use of the NSHQ will catalyze future studies in a manner similar to how narcissistic admiration and rivalry helped in addressing issues related to unitary thinking about agentic grandiose narcissism. Such improved measurement will allow researchers to more clearly distinguish agentic and communal narcissistic motivation expressed through behaviors. This knowledge might be particularly useful in the communal domain, explaining social phenomena like helping, making moral decisions, or functioning in romantic relationships.

6. Author note

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Magdalena Żemojtel-Piotrowska: Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization. **Jarosław Piotrowski:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Artur Sawicki:** Writing – original draft, Visualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation. **John J. Skowronski:** Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Peter K. Jonason:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Conceptualization. **Jan Cieciuch:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Włodzimierz Strus:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Constantine Sedikides:** Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Methodology, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

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

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2025.104651.

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