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**Research Report**

SOEP-IS 2013 - Proposal for the addition of the short version of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ-S) into the SOEP Innovation Sample

SOEP Survey Papers, No. 1088

**Provided in Cooperation with:**

German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin)

*Suggested Citation:* Küfner, Albrecht; Hutteman, Roos; Back, Mitja (2022) : SOEP-IS 2013 - Proposal for the addition of the short version of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ-S) into the SOEP Innovation Sample, SOEP Survey Papers, No. 1088, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW), Berlin

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/253413>

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# 1088<sup>2022</sup>

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Albrecht C. P. Küfner, Roos Hutteman, Mitja D. Back. 2022. SOEP-IS 2013 – Proposal for the addition of the short version of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ-S) into the SOEP Innovation Sample. SOEP Survey Papers 1088: Series H. Berlin: DIW/SOEP



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ISSN: 2193-5580 (online)

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# **SOEP-IS 2013 – Proposal for the addition of the short version of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ-S) into the SOEP Innovation Sample**

**Module Title in SOEP Documentation: Narcissistic  
Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ-S)**

**Albrecht C. P. Kүfner, Roos Hutteman, Mitja D. Back**

# **Proposal for the addition of the short version of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ-S) into the SOEP Innovation Sample (SOEP-IS)**

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## **Background and Scientific Rationale**

Narcissism - interindividual differences in feelings of grandiosity, striving for others admiration paired with a lack of interest in others, a strong sense of entitlement, as well as agentic and antagonistic behaviors - encompasses socially relevant personality characteristics not adequately captured by broad personality factors such as the Big Five. Narcissism is a complex personality trait that receives an increasing amount of attention in psychological and sociological research (Campbell & Miller, 2011; Miller, Hoffman, et al., 2011). Reasons for this growing fascination are twofold: First narcissism is thought to be on the rise in Western cultures – it is assumed that over the generations people in our societies become more and more narcissistic (e.g., Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge et al., 2008), a contention that is controversially debated (see Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2010). Second, narcissism has been found to have a negative long-term impact on important outcome measures including intrapersonal adjustment (e.g., a decreasing satisfaction with one's social and occupational environment; Bosson et al., 2008; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Pincus et al., 2009), interpersonal adjustment (e.g., more conflict within and a lower stability of social relationships; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Campbell, Brunell, & Finkel, 2006; Campbell & Campbell, 2009) and institutional outcomes (e.g., poor management ratings, high-risk decisions and fluctuating leadership performance; Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008; Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006; Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), while at the same time it increases people's initial access to resources on all three levels (e.g., having a higher initial self-esteem, being more popular initially, more frequently being chosen as a leader in the job; Back et al., 2010; Brunell et al., 2008; Campbell et al., 2002; Küfner et al., in press; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Paulhus, 1998).

This paradoxical pattern of narcissistic processes potentially induces a collective downward spiral resulting in an ill-calibrated allocation of resources within society, business and social relationships (i.e. giving most to those that produce negative results). Whereas the more straightforward social, economic and societal effects of broad personality factors such as cognitive skills and the Big Five are increasingly understood (e.g., Almlund et al., 2011; Roberts et al., 2007), very little is still known about the complex consequences of narcissism. In sum, for understanding the wide-ranging effects of personality differences in our society, it is central to understand the variability, determinants, and consequential outcomes of narcissism.

Despite the prominence and importance of narcissism, our current knowledge about this trait is limited in several ways. First, research on narcissism is almost exclusively based on a flawed assessment tool, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979). The NPI is unrelated to theoretical models of narcissism, has an uneven representation of narcissistic content (favoring the dominant, agentic aspects, and neglecting the uncommunal, antagonistic aspects), an unstable factor structure, and unacceptably low reliabilities of narcissistic facets (Ackerman et al., 2011; Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009; Brown, & Tamborski, 2011; Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004; Rosenthal & Hooley, 2010). Second, our knowledge about the distribution, structure and the nomological network of narcissism (its relations to other individual differences variables) is mostly based on unrepresentative convenience samples with a very restricted range with respect to most socio-economic variables. Third, for the same reason representative insights regarding the associations of gender, age, education, occupational status, and income with narcissism as well as their moderating influence on the consequences of narcissism are still lacking. Fourth, whereas age-cohort differences have been the topic of debates about the narcissism epidemic (see above), systematic longitudinal studies on the determinants of stability and change (mean-level and rank-order) in narcissism have not yet been put forward. And most importantly, fifth, there is urgent need for representative insights on the wide range of the above described consequential intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional outcomes related to narcissism.

To summarize, prior research on narcissism suffers from an unsatisfactory assessment, unrepresentative convenience samples, a lack of longitudinal data, and limited outcome measures. Including the NARQ-S into the SOEP Innovation Sample (SOEP-IS) offers the unique opportunity to overcome these limitations. It promises to shed light on a variety of focal research questions with wide-ranging implications on individual, social, and societal levels.

### **Proposed Innovation and Research Questions**

We propose to include the short version of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ-S) into the SOEP-IS. The NARQ is a questionnaire we have developed in cooperation with Michael Dufner and John Rauthmann (Humboldt-University Berlin), Tanja Gerlach (University of Darmstadt), and Jaap Denissen (Tilburg University). The NARQ is based on the idea that narcissism can be decomposed into two positively correlated dimensions: Admiration and Rivalry. These dimensions each encompass different cognitive, affective-motivational, and behavioral facets and result from two distinct interpersonal strategies: the tendency to approach social admiration by means of self-promotion (assertive self-enhancement) and the tendency to prevent social failure by self-defense (antagonistic self-protection). Both dimensions share the overarching goal to maintain a grandiose self. We have validated the NARQ within an ongoing project on the longitudinal social consequences of narcissism funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG; BA 3731/6-1). Across seven studies, we were able to show that (a) the NARQ including its short 6-item version follows the proposed two-dimensional multifaceted structure and has very good internal consistencies and

short-term stabilities, (b) narcissistic admiration and rivalry have meaningful and unique nomological networks, and (c) both dimensions clearly outperform the NPI in the prediction of relationship conflict, interpersonal perceptions during social interactions, and observed actual behavior. Specifically both narcissistic dimensions explain some of the previously found paradoxical relations of narcissism and other personality characteristics and interpersonal outcomes. A revision of the manuscript where we present these results is currently prepared for publication in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. The NARQ also exists in an English, Dutch, and Chinese version and is already applied by a variety of research groups in the US and Europe.

By inclusion of the NARQ-S into the SOEP-IS four multi-disciplinary research domains can be investigated including topics that are central for understanding narcissism, its determinants, developmental course and wide-ranging effects (see Table 1 for an overview).

- First, we aim at a systematic analysis of the distribution of narcissistic admiration and rivalry in a representative sample. This will allow us (a) to provide initial differentiated norm values, (b) examine the stability of the NARQ-S factor structure and reliability across socio-demographic and socio-economic variables and (c) investigate narcissism differences depending on age, gender, partnership-status, nationality, religion, education, and residence.
- Second, a differentiated view on narcissisms nomological network can be realized by analyzing correlations between narcissism with other personality measures (e.g., Big Five, life goals, risk-aversion) as well as potential socio-demographic and socio-economic moderators on these relations.
- Third, the longitudinal nature of the SOEP-IS would allow us to examine the long-term stability as well as mean-level and rank-order changes in narcissism within a representative sample. Individual differences in change can moreover be related to specific life-events (e.g., birth of a child, divorce, job promotion) allowing for important initial insights into the development and maintenance of narcissism. Reciprocal effects of personality and life events have been found for example for childbirth (e.g., Hutteman, Bleidorn, Penke, & Denissen, in press) also using SOEP data (e.g., Hutteman et al., 2012; Specht, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2011). They have, however, not yet been examined for narcissism. It, thus, remains an open question how narcissism predicts (selection effects) and can be changed by (socialization effects) important life events.
- Fourth, an assessment of the NARQ-S within the SOEP-IS allows for fine-grained analyses of the predictive validity of narcissism. Specifically, this enables the determination of the effects of narcissistic admiration and rivalry on levels and changes in intrapersonal indicators (explicit and implicit self-esteem, satisfaction with life, affective well-being, health indicators), interpersonal indicators (personal networks, i.e. partnership, friends, children; perceived loneliness), and institutional/societal indicators (leadership status, political interest, membership in organizations, earnings, donations, thoughts of entitlement). In addition, in contrast to commonly used unrepresentative convenience samples the SOEP-IS allows to investigate effects across the entire range of narcissism in the population. As a result, it can be examined

whether gender, age, education and other socio-economic variables moderate effect of narcissism on these consequential outcomes. Moreover, with its rationale of obtaining data of a complete households, SOEP-IS is able to discover intergenerational effects as well as effects within romantic relationships. By then including the NARQ-S in subsequent innovation samples it will, moreover, be possible to look at the reciprocal effects of changes in these outcomes on the development of narcissism (see Topic 3).

Table 1.

*Topics and exemplary research questions that can be tackled by inclusion of the NARQ-S into the SOEP-IS along with other included SOEP measures.*

<b>Research domain</b>	<b>Exemplary research topics</b>	<b>included SOEP measures</b>
1. Descriptives, structure, and socio-economic correlates of narcissism	Cohort effects; Gender effects; Mapping narcissism: differences between regions in Germany	Age, sex, employment and occupational status, education: highest attained qualification income, marital status, country of birth, residence: region
2. Nomological network of narcissism	Narcissism and other personality traits; socio-demographic and socio-economic moderators	Big Five, risk aversion, impulsivity, life goals, trust
3. Stability and change in narcissism	Long-term stability and change (mean-level and rank-order); Individual differences in change; Narcissism and life-events: selection and socialization effects	birth of a child, employment status and contract, marriage, moved in with partner, separation of partner, job change
4. Consequential outcomes of narcissism	Effects of narcissism on intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional outcomes (level and change); socio-demographic and socio-economic moderators	<i>intrapersonal outcomes:</i> explicit and implicit self-esteem, general satisfaction with life, affective well-being, health indicators (mental health, psychiatric problems)  <i>interpersonal outcomes:</i> childcare, number of friends, friendship networks, relationship to relatives, marital status, social environment (DRM), effects <i>within</i> households  <i>institutional outcomes:</i> leadership status, political orientations, membership in organizations, employment status, earnings, donations, entitlement

All of these research questions pertain to important unresolved issues in narcissism research. Moreover, they promise to reveal meaningful effects on individual, social and societal outcome measures that are not captured by other personality measures.



## **Methodological Details**

The methodological design for including the NARQ-S into the SOEP-IS should adhere to the general computer-assisted personal interviews used in all the SOEP data-collection schemes. The sample size should thus be big, but of course as representative as possible. For longitudinal analyses it is important to include the SOEP subsamples I and E and the ongoing samples where personality questionnaires are included. In order to obtain the desired representative sample, random sampling is preferred. Data can be collected using the usual computer-assisted personal interviews. Narcissism can be assumed to be as stable/susceptible to change as other personality traits, but reliable empirical insights into the mean-level and rank-order stability as well as the reciprocal effects with life-events are still missing. Therefore, a repetition of the survey every second year would be a desired mode of data collection. Please let us emphasize that with two to three minutes the NARQ-S with its six items is a very short and easily processed questionnaire that gives highly valuable insights into the effects of this important personality trait on intrapersonal, interpersonal and societal outcomes.

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## Annex I

### *NARQ-items and instruction – German version*

Beurteilen Sie bitte, wie sehr die folgenden Aussagen auf Sie zutreffen.

Ihnen steht dazu ein sechstufiges Antwortformat zur Verfügung (von 1 = "trifft überhaupt nicht zu" bis 6 = "trifft vollkommen zu")

	trifft über- haupt nicht zu					trifft voll- kommen zu
1. Ich reagiere genervt, wenn eine andere Person mir die Schau stiehlt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Ich habe es verdient, als große Persönlichkeit angesehen zu werden.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Ich will, dass meine Konkurrenten scheitern.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Ich ziehe viel Kraft daraus, eine ganz besondere Person zu sein.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Mit meinen besonderen Beiträgen schaffe ich es, im Mittelpunkt zu stehen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Die meisten Menschen sind ziemliche Versager.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Annex II

### *NARQ-items and instruction – English version*

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you using a response format ranging from “1 = not agree at all” to “6 = agree completely”.)

	not agree at all					agree com- pletely
1. I react annoyed if another person steals the show from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I deserve to be seen as a great personality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I want my rivals to fail.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Being a very special person gives me a lot of strength.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I manage to be the center of attention with my outstanding contributions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Most people are somehow losers.	1	2	3	4	5	6