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Differentiating leader hubris and narcissism on the basis of power

Sarosh Asad
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

Eugene Sadler-Smith
Surrey Business School, University of Surrey, Surrey, UK

Abstract
Hubris and narcissism overlap, and although extant research explores relationships between them in terms of characteristics, attributes, and behaviours, we take a different view by analysing their differences in relation to power and leadership. Drawing on a psychology of power perspective, we argue that narcissistic and hubristic leaders relate to and are covetous of power for fundamentally different reasons. Using the metaphor of intoxication, hubrists are intoxicated with positional power and prior success, but for narcissists, power facilitates self-intoxication and represents a means of maintaining a grandiose self-view. Unbridled hubris and narcissism (i.e. searching for and facilitated by unfettered power) have important ramifications for leadership research and practice. Leadership discourse, preoccupied with and predicated on positive aspects of leadership, should assess these two potent aspects of leadership because misuse of power by hubristic and narcissistic leaders can create conditions for, or directly bring about, destructive and sometimes catastrophic unintended outcomes for organizations and society.

Keywords
Hubris, narcissism, power, leadership, intoxication of power, intoxication of self

Introduction

Both hubris and narcissism have recently garnered considerable attention in leadership research (Den Hartog et al., 2018; Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006; Sadler-Smith, 2016).

Corresponding author:
Sarosh Asad, Department of Management, Society and Communication, Copenhagen Business School, Dalgas Have 15 A, 2V.086, 2000 Frederiksberg, Denmark.
Email: sas.msc@cbs.dk

They both occupy the darker side of leadership and lead to pernicious effects and potentially destructive outcomes (Judge et al., 2009; Padilla et al., 2007; Picone et al., 2014; Sadler-Smith, 2019a; Tourish, 2013). Hubristic and narcissistic leadership interrelate and influence a multitude of strategic outcomes, including risk-taking, innovation and acquisition expenditures in a similar manner (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007, 2011; Malmendier and Tate, 2008). Extant research explores relationships between hubris and narcissism in terms of characteristics, attributes and behaviours (Sadler-Smith et al., 2017; Tang et al., 2018), but we use a different perspective by differentiating hubristic and narcissistic leadership on the basis of power, arguing that such leaderships are associated with power and influence but in fundamentally different ways. Metaphorically, hubrists are intoxicated with positional power and prior success, but for narcissists, power facilitates self-intoxication.

At the individual level, narcissism is a personality trait characterised by an inflated self-view, grandiosity, self-absorption, vanity, low empathy and an incessant need for adulation and power (Campbell et al., 2011; Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006). Narcissists use power and positions of authority to maintain a deep-seated grandiose image of themselves, and by doing so, they emerge as prototypical leaders (Nevicka et al., 2011a). However, when they attain significant power and influence, they commonly fail to deliver as effective leaders (Grijalva et al., 2015). A position of power contributes to elevated self-confidence, creates opportunities of self-enhancement and exhibitionism and instils a sense of superiority among narcissists, affording them an ideal apparatus with which to reinforce an inflated self-view (Brunell et al., 2008). Although power draws narcissistic individuals to leadership positions (Glad, 2002), evidence suggests that as power holders, such individuals behave dysfunctionally, which jeopardises their positions of power (Post, 1993).

Hubris is a grandiose sense of self, characterised by disrespectful attitudes toward others and a misperception of one's place in the world (Petit and Bollaert, 2012). We use Petit and Bollaert's (2012) description of hubris because they recognise that although hubrists share grandiosity with narcissists, hubris is more than a manifestation of pathological narcissism; it is an acquired condition triggered by accession to a position of significant power, amplified by overestimations of one's abilities based on prior success and facilitated by lack of constraints regarding how a leader exercises power (Owen, 2008; Owen and Davidson, 2009). Thus, hubris is a reactive disorder that is more state-like than trait-like (Berglas, 2014). Hubristic leaders' behaviours are influenced by power in maladaptive and unproductive ways, and such behaviours accordingly create conditions for, and increase the likelihood of, negative unintended consequences to emerge from their actions (Sadler-Smith, 2019a).

A number of researchers of business ethics, corporate governance, leadership studies, and related fields have turned their attention to hubris and narcissism (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Park et al., 2018; Ronay et al., 2019); the current appeal of these two phenomena is attributed partly to their potency and prevalence in contemporary corporate and political contexts (Owen, 2018). Researchers have pointed out how many of today's leaders epitomise narcissism in their personalities (Campbell and Campbell, 2009) and are hubristic regarding their leadership behaviours (Owen, 2018), that society appears to be becoming more narcissistic (Lasch, 1979; Twenge and Foster, 2010), and that there appears to be a hubris 'epidemic' among leaders (Garrard, 2018), thus making both hubris and narcissism timely topics for leadership researchers to investigate jointly. Many recent and notorious corporate scandals were precipitated by CEOs who exhibited hubris and/or narcissism (e.g. Elizabeth Holmes at Theranos, Martin Winterkorn at Volkswagen, Lay and Skilling at Enron, Calisto Tanzi at Parmalat, Dick Fuld at Lehman Brothers, Jan Carlzon at SAS Airlines, and Carlos

Ghosn at Nissan). Such scandals sparked intense interest in and concern for how these attributes among leaders could be among the antecedents of corporate fraud (Cohen et al., 2010; Rijsenbilt and Commandeur, 2013), unethical conduct (Eckhaus and Sheaffer, 2018), environmental degradations (Ladd, 2012), various destructive leadership behaviours (Braun et al., 2018; Stein, 2013) and wider moral and unintended negative consequences (Sadler-Smith, 2019a). Yet, to date, the relationship between power, hubris and narcissism in a leadership context is elusive.

Leaders have disproportionate power in comparison to followers, given their control over information and other valued resources (Anderson and Brion, 2014; Van Vugt, 2006). How they wield power has significant implications for organizational decision-making, goal-attainment and leadership effectiveness (Flynn et al., 2011; Maner and Mead, 2010; Sloof and von Siemens, 2019). Power is integral to leadership (Goodwin, 2003), situated at the core of the strategic choices leaders make (Child, 1972). Power leads to changes in behaviours (Guinote, 2017). For example, it increases leaders' action orientation and makes them behave more selfishly, more distant from others and more prone to use power to violate social norms in ways detrimental to the common good, and it buffers them from guilt when norms are violated (Sturm and Monzani, 2018). Given the fundamental importance of power in social affairs (Russell, 1938), it is surprising that the properties and outcomes of power, especially in relation to leadership, have become topics only recently in management and organizational studies (Firth and Carroll, 2016; Sturm and Antonakis, 2015). We focus on the dynamics of power to assess disparities between hubristic and narcissistic leadership, the contribution of which lies in exploring relationships between hubristic and narcissistic leaders and power and the implications for leadership practice, especially in a post-truth, populist era in which hubris and narcissism are common in political and business leadership (Lozada, 2018).

In the following sections, we outline the respective meanings of hubris and narcissism in a leadership context, discussing how hubristic and narcissistic leadership overlap and are theoretically separable. We use a reflexive lens to assess how hubristic and narcissistic leaders link to power and use the metaphors of the intoxication of power and the intoxication of self, respectively, to do so. We discuss implications of narcissistic and hubristic leadership in research and practice, responding to calls for more research that assesses relationships between hubris and narcissism (Sadler-Smith et al., 2017) and examining power dynamics within leadership discourse (Collinson, 2014; Firth and Carroll, 2016).

Background

Both hubris and narcissism have roots in ancient Greek mythology, and both figure in the *Metamorphoses*, a collection of Greek myths retold by the Roman poet Ovid (43BC to 18AD/2004). The most famous hubrist, and certainly the one referred to most frequently by management researchers, is Icarus (Petit and Bollaert, 2012). In Ovid's retelling of this pre-Hellenic myth in Book 8 of *Metamorphoses*, the son, Icarus, becomes recklessly overconfident in his new-found ability to fly, using wings made from wax and feathers by his father, the master craftsman, Daedalus. The father's entreaties to his son to exercise caution by not flying too high or too low are ignored and results in Icarus's drowning (Sadler-Smith, 2019b). Similarly, the term narcissism was popularised after the legend of another mythological figure, the beautiful youth Narcissus (*Metamorphoses*, Book 3). Narcissus' phobic

infatuation with his own reflection in a pool leads him to an untimely and tragic end, and thus narcissism is commonly construed as self-love in its raw description.

Following these classical accounts, narcissism and hubris have been the subject of inquiry for numerous studies in the social sciences and are a recurrent topic of interest in the popular press. However, they are often confused (Bouras, 2018; Hiller and Hambrick, 2005). Part of the confusion has stemmed from significant overlaps in their respective attributes. Both have the potential to create conditions for or directly bring about catastrophic outcomes in organizations and society, and thus deeper understanding is needed into these types of leadership. We consider conceptualisations of narcissism and hubris in a leadership context, discussing their theoretical disentanglement by focusing on their link with power and influence.

Narcissism and leadership

Researchers have long acknowledged the link between narcissism and leadership (Freud, 1950; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1985). Several attributes exist in both narcissists and leaders, such as self-confidence, extraversion, charisma, attractiveness, energy, skilled oration, grandiose belief systems and strong visions (Campbell et al., 2011), and it is thus likely for narcissists to emerge as leaders and secure top positions in organizations (Brunell et al., 2008; Judge et al., 2006). Narcissism represents a vital component of leadership (Deluga, 1997; Kets de Vries, 2004) and is even considered necessary to the role (Maccoby, 2000). However, narcissism has a pejorative undertone when used to describe leaders; it is part of the dark personality trait triad, along with Machiavellianism and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams, 2002), and thus it links with various counterproductive workplace behaviours (Cohen, 2016; Grijalva and Newman, 2015; Penny and Spector, 2002).

In the protracted typological development of narcissism, a distinct categorical divide exists between two strands—clinical, commonly labelled narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) (Kohut, 1968), and its personality trait variant, known as grandiose narcissism (Miller et al., 2011; Reina et al., 2014). The former relates to a personality disorder, originally included in the third version of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III), and that retained a position in its latest version (DSM-V) published in 2013 by the American Psychological Association. Its diagnosis includes fantasies of unlimited success of power, a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, excessive arrogance, envy and lack of empathy. However, the DSM classification system has increasingly been criticised due to its narrow framework, which does not adequately capture the vulnerable aspect of pathological narcissism and thus leads to inaccurate diagnoses (Pincus, 2013).

Overuse of the term narcissism by clinical theoreticians and researchers in social psychology has contributed to confusion regarding its meaning, but the predominant view of narcissism in industrial-organizational psychology refers to grandiose narcissism as a personality trait that ranges from very high to very low, measurable quantitatively through psychometrically validated scales (Ames et al., 2006; Emmons, 1987; Raskin and Terry, 1988). Grandiose narcissism has contributed greatly to the theoretical development of the concept of narcissism in management and organizational studies and has been a focal dimension of research when assessing the relationship between narcissism and leadership (South et al., 2011). Campbell et al. (2011) describe a CEO with grandiose narcissism as 'someone who is (over)confident, extraverted, high in self-esteem, dominant, attention-seeking, interpersonally skilled and charming, but also unwilling to take criticism,

aggressive, high in psychological entitlement, lacking in true empathy, interpersonally exploitative and grandiose or even haughty' (p. 270). The intensity of such characteristics and the ability to self-regulate distinguish normal or grandiose narcissism from the pathological form of NPD (Pincus and Roche, 2011; Post, 1997).

Whereas narcissistic leaders are inherently arrogant, self-centred, manipulative and egocentric (Emmons, 1987; Morf and Rhodewalt, 2001), they have been linked to a variety of positive organizational outcomes (Judge et al., 2009). For example, a high level of narcissism in organizational leaders positively relates to charisma, the fusion of which leads to an inspiring, bold and visionary leadership (Maccoby, 2000). Imbued with supreme confidence and willingness to take higher risks, narcissistic leaders proactively engage in the internationalization of business activities (Oesterle et al., 2016). When confronted with ego-threatening situations and negative feedback, narcissistic leaders respond with superior performance and creative solutions to reinforce their grandiose self-view (Nevicka et al., 2016). In the same vein, they are not quelled by weak performance and lead their firms to recover faster post-economic crisis by undertaking substantial organization-wide change (Patel and Cooper, 2014). Finally, having narcissistic individuals at the head of an organization is especially successful when the external environment is characterised by change and technological discontinuities, and thus requires confident, bold, risk-taking, proactive leaders (Engelen et al., 2016; Gerstner et al., 2013). Such a context is conducive to greater visibility and public attention, which attracts a narcissistic CEO to invest in high-risk projects in the likelihood or hope of propelling the organization toward radical change, growth and innovation (Wales et al., 2013).

Over the years, narcissism has been much discussed in the leadership and organization literature, contested and scrutinised regarding its nature, relevance, and influence so much so that it suffers from what Collinson (2014: 34) refers to as over-dichotomization of an influential idea. This tendency was inevitable, given the complex and nebulous nature of narcissism (Pulver, 1970). However, to gain a richer understanding of narcissism in leadership, there is a need to move away from restrictive binary typologies of dark versus bright, constructive versus reactive, healthy versus unhealthy and productive versus destructive aspects of narcissism, and instead assess its relationship with power and how it manifests across contexts.

Hubris and leadership

Although hubris has been significant in human affairs since Classical times, its conceptualisation achieved prominence in academic research during the 1980s. Roll's (1986) hubris hypothesis of corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&As) proposes CEO hubris as an explanation for unattributable losses that occurred among shareholders after an acquisition's announcement. One reason is that the degree of an acquiring CEO's hubris (i.e. unwarranted over-confidence) relates positively to the bid premium for a target firm and negatively to subsequent performance after an M&A (Hayward and Hambrick, 1997). Hubristic CEOs believe that their estimate of the value of potential synergies from an M&A is accurate and that they know better than the market. Thus, they make excessively high bids for target firms and subsequently incur losses (Aktas et al., 2009; Roll, 1986). An example of when disastrous results exposed misuse of power of a hubristic CEO is Royal Bank of Scotland under its former CEO, Fred Goodwin, who purchased Dutch bank ABN Amro for an immensely inflated figure of £49 billion (Collinson, 2012; Zeitoun et al., 2019).

The purchase was a contributory factor in RBS's failure during the 2008 crash and subsequent bailing-out by U.K. taxpayers at an estimated cost of £45.5 billion.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the study of CEO hubris was a topic primarily among behavioural finance researchers who tested and extended Roll's (1986) hubris hypothesis (Picone et al., 2014; Sadler-Smith, 2016). Several strategic management and entrepreneurship researchers subsequently began to focus on the significance of CEO hubris to firms' strategic choices and entrepreneurs' business-venture decisions (Hayward et al., 2006; Haynes et al., 2015; Hiller and Hambrick, 2005). In strategic management, overly confident managers who believe that they have more control over important external factors than their counterparts at rival firms are likely to undertake higher-risk strategic actions (Li and Tang, 2010). Entrepreneurs' hubristic overconfidence and rampant ambition often lead them to be wrong but rarely in doubt about their venture decisions (Hayward et al., 2006).

Using a psychiatric perspective, Owen and Davidson (2009) proposed hubris syndrome (HS) as an 'acquired personality disorder' (p. 1396), but nuanced this framing in relation to the syndrome's onset and abatement. Development of the syndrome relates to length of time in power, recent successes and lack of restraints on leader behaviours, leading Owen and Davidson (2009) to describe it as a disorder of leadership position rather than a disorder of the person. They propose that HS is not a personality disorder, but instead has an environmental onset as a response to stress or threat, and is, therefore, better characterised as an 'adjustment disorder' (p. 1404). They hypothesise that as an acquired disorder, the syndrome remits once power is lost, and thus, as a reactive condition or adjustment disorder that is determined environmentally, it abates in response to diminution of environmental factors that brought it on.

Quintessentially, hubristic leaders become intoxicated with power and prior successes, and thus they become overconfident in their abilities, overestimate the probability of further successful outcomes, simultaneously underestimate what can go wrong, are contemptuous toward and disparage the advice and criticism of others, and create conditions that invite or give rise to negative unintended consequences (Sadler-Smith, 2019a). While researchers have intensely debated on the dark and bright sides of narcissism, hubris is typically discussed in terms of dysfunctional excess of some leader attributes (e.g. confidence), which places it firmly on the dark and destructive side of leadership (Tourish, 2019). Only recently was it dichotomised into positive versus negative types, or as having dark and bright sides (Zeitoun et al., 2019). More empirical evidence is, therefore, needed to identify situations where leader's hubris can lead to beneficial outcomes.

Relationship between hubristic and narcissistic leaders

Hubris's and narcissism's respective attributes overlap, and narcissism is considered to be a contributory factor in the development of hubris (Picone et al., 2014). Further, hubris and narcissism can coexist, although the precise nature of their interrelationship or co-occurrence has not yet been determined, but anecdotal evidence points to co-occurrence of hubristic and narcissistic leadership (Sadler-Smith, 2019a). Seven of 14 defining symptoms of HS are shared with NPD, five are unique, and the remainder are shared with other personality disorders (Owen and Davidson, 2009; Zeitoun et al., 2019). HS and NPD share a psychiatric classification of exaggerated sense of oneself and overconfidence, and they each have unique criteria that distinguish them. Table 1 shows the overlap between diagnostic criteria of HS and NPD and criteria unique to each.

Table 1. Overlap between proposed hubris syndrome (HS) criteria and narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) (Owen and Davidson, 2009; Reynolds and Lejuez, 2011).

Overlap between HS and NPD	Unique to HS	Unique to NPD
A narcissistic propensity to see their world primarily as an arena in which to exercise power and seek glory (HS1 and NPD6)	An identification with the nation, or organization to the extent that the individual regards his/her outlook and interests as identical (HS5)	Requires excessive admiration (NPD 4)
A predisposition to take actions which seem likely to cast the individual in a good light—i.e. in order to enhance image (HS2 and NPD 1)	A tendency to speak in the third person or use the royal 'we' (HS6)	Has a sense of entitlement, i.e. unreasonable expectations of especially favourable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations (NPD 5)
A disproportionate concern with image and presentation (HS3 and NPD 3)	An unshakable belief that in the 'court' of history they will be vindicated (HS10)	Lacks empathy: Is unwilling to recognise or identify with the feelings and need of others (NPD 7)
A messianic manner of talking about current activities and a tendency to exaltation (HS4& NPD 2)	Restlessness, recklessness and impulsiveness (HS12)	Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her (NPD 8)
Excessive confidence in the individual's own judgement and contempt for the advice or criticism of others (HS7 and NPD 9)	A tendency to allow their 'broad vision', about the moral rectitude of a proposed course, to obviate the need to consider practicality (HS13)	
Exaggerated self-belief, bordering on a sense of omnipotence, in what they personally can achieve (HS8 and NPD 1and 2)		
A belief that rather than being accountable to the mundane court of colleagues or public opinion, the court to which they answer is history or God (HS9 and NPD 3)		

Strategic leadership, entrepreneurship, finance and accounting researchers have studied manifestations of CEO hubris and narcissism, examining how narcissistic and hubristic CEOs influence strategic outcomes and corporate performance. Although few studies assess the influence of CEO narcissism and hubris in juxtaposition (cf., Tang et al., 2018), several report similar results regarding how hubristic and narcissistic CEOs influence firm outcomes (see Table 2). Such effects are magnified by the significant levels of power and managerial discretion that CEOs possess (Rijsenbilt and Commandeur, 2013; Park et al., 2018) and are exacerbated when CEO power is subject to insufficient constraints or governance structures that place too much control in a CEO's position (Li and Tang, 2010).

Table 2. Examples of strategic outcomes propelled by Hubristic and Narcissistic CEOs.

Outcome of interest	CEO Hubris			CEO Narcissism		
	Study	Method and sample	Findings	Study	Method and sample	Findings
Firm performance	Park et al. (2018)	164 Largest firms listed on the Korea Stock Exchange (KOSPI 200) for the years 2001–2008; Data gathered from archive sources	CEO hubris has a negative effect on firm financial performance, which is exacerbated by CEO power and mitigated by board vigilance	Patel and Cooper (2014)	Sample of 392 CEOs of manufacturing firms between 2007 and 2010; Archival financial data and unobtrusive measure of narcissism	Narcissistic CEOs lead to performance declines (at the onset of the crisis period) and performance gains (in the post crisis period)
Acquisition premiums	Hayward and Hambrick (1997)	106 Transactions by publicly traded firms in 1989 and 1992; Financial data through archives and CEO hubris through unobtrusive indicators	Hubristic CEOs pay great premiums for large acquisitions	Ham et al. (2018)	S&P 500 companies, Archival financial data and CEO Signature size as measure of narcissism	Narcissistic CEOs overinvest in R&D and M&A expenditures
Firm risk taking	Li and Tang (2010)	Survey Data from 2790 CEOs of manufacturing firms in China	CEO hubris positively impact firm risk taking which is strengthened by managerial discretion	Chatterjee and Hambrick, (2011)	152 CEOs of 134 publicly owned U.S. companies from 1992 to 2006; unobtrusive measure of narcissism	Narcissistic CEOs engage in risk taking especially when social praise is likely.
Innovation	Arena et al. (2018)	134 UK firms; Secondary data as proxy for CEO hubris	CEO hubris engagement increases green innovative projects	Zhang et al. (2017)	Two empirical studies: Longitudinal of 63 CEOs and cross-sectional of 143 CEOs; self report measures of narcissism	CEO narcissism interact with CEO humility to positively impact innovation
	Tang et al. (2015a)	Cross-sectional survey data and longitudinal archival data	CEO hubris positively impact innovation	Gerstner et al. (2013)	78 CEOs for 33 pharmaceutical companies in 1980 to 2008; unobtrusive measure of narcissism	Narcissistic CEOs aggressively pursue technological discontinuity especially when audience engagement is high

(continued)

Table 2. Continued

Outcome of interest	CEO Hubris			CEO Narcissism		
	Study	Method and sample	Findings	Study	Method and sample	Findings
Corporate fraud	Cormier et al. (2016)	Financial misreporting cases filed between 1995 and 2009 among Canadian publicly-traded firms	More firms under hubristic CEOs are accused of financial misreporting	Olsen and Stekelberg (2015)	panel of CEOs of Fortune 500 companies (1992 to 2009); unobtrusive measure of narcissism	More firms under narcissistic CEOs engage in corporate tax shelters
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	Tang et al. (2015b)	S&P 1500 index firms for 2001–2010; CSR measure from KLD database and CEO hubris through unobtrusive indicators	CEO hubris reduces participation in CSR and leads to increased participation in socially irresponsible ones	Petrenko et al. (2016)	All S&P 500 firms between 1997 and 2012; financial and corporate data from compustat, CSR from KLD database	Narcissistic CEOs positively impact CSR

CEO hubris and narcissism have been found to influence innovation; overconfidence and an insatiable need for audience approval lead CEOs to adopt technological shifts and pursue highly innovative projects (Arena et al., 2018; Gerstner et al., 2013; Tang et al., 2015a; Zhang et al., 2017). Narcissistic and hubristic CEOs pursue similar investment policies such that they overinvest in R&D and M&A (Ham et al., 2018) (cf., Roll's (1986) hubris hypothesis) and are prone to taking higher risks (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2011; Li and Tang, 2010). They also engage in fraudulent practices of financial misreporting and tax sheltering (Cormier et al., 2016; Olsen and Stekelberg, 2015), believing they are above the law. However, CEO narcissism and hubris appear to have different influences on corporate social responsibility (CSR). Narcissistic CEOs engage more in CSR to replenish their narcissistic supply (Petrenko et al., 2016), but hubristic CEOs appear to dilute engagement in CSR (Tang et al., 2015b).

Despite many parallels between hubristic and narcissistic leadership, as noted above, it is a common misconception that hubris is indistinguishable from narcissism (Bouras, 2018). In contrast to narcissism, which is a stable character trait, hubris is a personality change that emerges in response to combinations of personal dispositions, such as over-confidence, antecedents, such as prior successes and external stimuli, such as substantial and unfettered power; it 'remits when power fades' (Picone et al., 2014: 450). A key distinction between a narcissistic and hubristic leader is that the former derives power from being the centre of attention and makes decisions that are singularly focused on enhancing positive-self-image. Unlike their narcissistic counterpart who has a penchant for self-aggrandisement, a hubristic leader does not need 'a stage to shine' (Nevicka et al., 2011b: 910) and does not seek opportunities for garnering attention purely to bolster self-image and self-esteem.

The relationships between hubristic and narcissistic leadership can be summarised as: (1) Narcissists and hubrists are overconfident (Ronay et al., 2019). Narcissists are prone to making more favourable assessments of their decision-making accuracy and regard their knowledge and capabilities as higher than others' (Campbell et al., 2004; Paulhus et al., 2003). Hubristic executives are overconfident in their financial estimates during M&As (Roll, 1986); (2) Narcissism is trait-like and hubris is state-like. Narcissism is an enduring trait that emerges before adulthood, and hubris emerges under environmental conditions (e.g. stressful or threatening situations), given personal dispositions (Owen and Davidson, 2009); (3) Narcissism represents a character disorder, whereas HS is a reactive or adjustment disorder (Berglas, 2014; Owen and Davidson, 2009); (4) Hubris and narcissism both associate with power but in a distinct way. Narcissistic leaders reflect a preoccupation with fantasies of personal power to garner the approval and admiration of others and bolster and enhance ego. Hubrists exercise power to achieve overly ambitious goals, both personal and organizational (Brown and Zeigler-Hill, 2004; McClelland and Burnham, 2008; Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006).

The complex relationship between hubristic and narcissistic leadership and power are potential sources of destructive leader behaviours, which might lead to deleterious outcomes (Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns and Schilling, 2013) and thus present significant hazards to individuals and organizations. Even if excessive narcissism leads to or coexists with hubris and shares some of its features (e.g. a grandiose sense of one's abilities, overconfidence), especially under unfettered power, hubristic and narcissistic leadership should be treated as distinct phenomena (Bouras, 2018). We examine relationships among hubristic leadership, narcissistic leadership and power using an intoxication metaphor.

Perspectives on power, hubris and narcissism

Like leadership, power is pervasive in and perennially relevant to human affairs and might represent the fundamental force in social relationships (Russell, 1938; Sturm and Antonakis, 2015). Power and leadership go hand in hand and, therefore, understanding of leadership cannot be advanced without drawing upon a theory of power (Firth and Carroll, 2016). Power entails having discretion and a means to enforce will over other entities, such as people, processes, and organizations (Sturm and Antonakis, 2015). Means of enforcing one's will can be innate, acquired through training or expertise or structural (Sturm and Monzani, 2018). Power can be further conceptualised in terms of asymmetric control over information and valued organizational resources (Magee and Galinsky, 2008), coupled with the possibility of corruption (Sturm and Antonakis, 2015).

In an authoritative review of power and from a psychological perspective, Keltner et al. (2003) argue that power influences individual behaviours; it changes people (Guinote, 2017: 357) and thus naturally influences leadership behaviours. Individual and personality differences, such as personal sense of power, stable trait dominance, and motivation to acquire power, explain why some individuals are able to ascend to powerful positions (Galinsky et al., 2015) and how they maintain and lose both position and power (Anderson and Brion, 2014). We build on a psychology of power perspective (Anderson and Brion, 2014; Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner et al., 2003), as it offers the necessary context to explain how psychologically rooted concepts of hubris and narcissism relate to power and influence in a conceptually distinct way.

Metaphor is powerful in leadership studies (Collinson, 2012), and the link between hubristic leaders and power can be explained in various ways, including an intoxication metaphor. For narcissistic leaders, intoxication lies in reaffirming grandiose sense of self, whereas for hubristic leaders, the hazard lies in the intoxicating effects that power and success have over decision-making (e.g. by disposing them to recklessness and irrational exuberance). In both cases, use and misuse of power can influence organizations in destructive and often unintended ways. By adopting this perspective, we aim for a more reflexive view on hubris, narcissism and power in leadership discourse and scholarship.

Hubris and the intoxication of power

Hubris researchers have drawn attention to problems that arise when unfettered positional power, combined with recent successes, leads to irrational exuberance, irresponsibility, recklessness, and ultimately hubristic incompetence, and even corruption (Nell and Semmler, 2009; Owen, 2008). They frame relationships among hubris, power and destructive outcomes that ensue from them in terms of the intoxicating effects of power (Garrard and Robinson, 2016). Attributions to the intoxication of power traces to writings of 19th-century English historian, politician and writer Lord Acton (1834–1902), who warned about the corrupting effects power can have among religious leaders and heads of state. Acton's historical instincts and rectitude caused him to despise despots, captured in his aphorism, 'Power tends to corrupt; and absolute power corrupts absolutely' which was written in 1887 in a letter to historian Mandell Creighton, rebutting the latter's assertion that kings and popes should be given the benefit of the doubt and judged differently from other men. Acton was a severe arbiter, and to him, it was a cardinal error not to expect exemplary standards of behaviour from those who hold ultimate power and the highest offices of state; far from

tolerating and excusing delinquent leaders, he would prefer to 'hang them higher [than common criminals]' (Hill, 2000: 300).

Philosopher Bertrand Russell's allusions to the intoxication of power are often cited in relation to the dangers of hubris (Garrard and Robinson, 2016). Close reading of Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (1946/2009) reveals this danger to be a reference, in a chapter on Dewey, to the Ancient Greeks' dread of hubris and the danger of insolence toward the Universe leading men to think of themselves as 'almost a God' (p. 737), and concomitantly in an appeal to inculcating the virtue of humility as a necessary counterbalance to hubris. Russell then states that when this check on pride (i.e. humility) is removed, 'a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness—the intoxication with power', which he considers presciently to be the 'greatest danger of our time', with the potential to contribute to 'vast social disaster' (Russell, 1946/2009: 737). Although Russell appears to make only one specific reference to hubris in this work, and since he does not claim directly that hubris is the intoxication with power, given the contiguity of hubris and intoxication in this extract, it is reasonable to claim hubris as 'the intoxication of power' as hubris researchers have chosen to do (Garrard and Robinson, 2016; Owen, 2007, 2008).

Although Acton's and Russell's dicta are potent, the precise nature of relationships among hubris, power and corruption remains unclear (Blaug, 2016). Aside from views from venerable historians and philosophers, other evidence in the behavioural sciences is lacking for hubris as the intoxication of power and the negative consequences assumed to emanate from the actions of intoxicated hubristic leaders. Various laboratory studies assess psychological and social factors that govern relationships among power, confidence, and decision-making. In a series of experimental studies that use student samples and non-workplace participants, Fast et al. (2012) demonstrate that the psychological experience of power leads to overconfidence regarding the accuracy of decision-making (referred to as 'over-precision') and their findings are contrary to the view that overconfidence is merely an individual difference. Also evident is that a sense of power harms performance on tasks that require precision and deliberation, and left unchecked, it hinders performance on some tasks and results in harmful consequences. Fast et al. (2012) cite safety-critical tasks, such as those involved in the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, as particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of over-precision (see also Ladd, 2012). This finding is especially pertinent since overconfident people acquire high-power roles (Anderson and Brion, 2014) and have higher self-concept consistency (Kraus et al., 2011). Intoxication from power magnifies egocentricity, self-absorption, conceit and arrogance, and leads to prioritizing emotions, goals and actions, lowering of empathy and objectifying lower-power members of a group (Keltner et al., 2010). From a neurobiological viewpoint, reduced empathy might be the result of lowered 'mirroring' activity (i.e. reciprocal activation akin to a vicarious experience and implicating mirror neurons) in the motor cortex (Galinsky et al., 2006; Hogeveen et al., 2014).

Other laboratory studies' findings corroborate relationships between hubristic characteristics (e.g. overconfidence, overambition, and contempt for advice and criticism) and power, which explains why powerful people commonly exhibit hubristic overconfidence and incompetence, and are prone to unethical behaviours. Subjective sense of power leads individuals to discount advice from both experts and novices on the basis that they know best (Roll, 1986; Tost et al., 2012). The psychological experience of power elevates decision-makers' confidence and amplifies tendencies for individuals to overweight their own initial assessments while discounting the advice of others (See et al., 2011). The experience of power leads

to an illusion of personal control even over outcomes that are uncontrollable or unrelated to the power the individual possesses (Fast et al., 2009). Self-perceived lack of competence among power holders elicits defensive aggression because power holders are motivated to protect not only their powerbase but their egos. Power holders thus have increased rather than decreased vulnerability to perceived psychological threats, but they respond unpredictably and belligerently (Fast and Chen, 2009). A sense of power increases leaders' optimism in the perception of risk and increases their propensity to engage in risky behaviours, which might bring about negative unintended consequences (Anderson and Galinsky, 2006). Regarding moral behaviours and specifically moral hypocrisy, high-power individuals impose stricter moral standards on others than those they themselves practise (Lammers et al., 2010). An implication from research is that power undermines leaders' sense of morality (Akstinaite et al., 2019). Moral hypocrisy might also relate to moral identity in that the psychological experience of power decreases moral awareness among those with weak moral identities and vice versa (DeCelles et al., 2012). Leader character strengths, such as prudence and fairness (Crossan et al., 2013), might inoculate leaders against moral hypocrisy. In combination, these factors suggest that hubristic individuals who are elevated to positions of power and have weak moral identities are not only disposed to reckless overconfidence but inclined to unethical behaviours and therefore create conditions for, and may ultimately precipitate, unintended and/or unethical negative outcomes (Akstinaite et al., 2019; Sadler-Smith, 2019a).

There are numerous examples of unintended negative consequences that occur when powerful leaders are overconfident. Examples include AOL's CEO Steve Case's orchestration of the disastrous $350 billion merger deal with Time Warner (Fast et al., 2012) and the collective overconfidence in the technology and systems that contributed to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (Ladd, 2012). There is no direct evidence to suggest that either of these cases were solely due to unethical CEO behaviours, but there are other examples from corporate leadership that associates hubris with being destructive and unethical (e.g. Jeffery Skilling and Kenneth Lay at Enron; Eckhaus and Sheaffer, 2018). Questions remain in real-world contexts regarding whether hubristic individuals are drawn to the intoxicating effects of power and/or are more likely to obtain high-power positions, or whether the experience of the intoxicant creates hubristic overconfidence beyond pre-existing individual dispositions.

Narcissism and the intoxication of self

Pursuit of power is a strategic phenomenon (Malhotra and Gino, 2011), and why and how narcissistic individuals pursue power is strategically different from hubristic leaders. Narcissists' relationship to power is distinct in that in comparison to hubristic leaders, they are not intoxicated by power but fantasise about obtaining power to construct a reality that reiterates and reinforces their grandiose personal image (Glad, 2002). In this intrapersonal dynamic, the centrality of power is overshadowed by the centrality of self (Post, 1993). Power—formal or informal—empowers narcissistic individuals to indulge in the superiority of their existence, garner admiration and replenish their narcissistic supply (Kernberg, 1979). Individuals with narcissistic personality characteristics are likely to strive for a position of power because power vested in leadership positions conveniently serves as a quick and effective route for such individuals to gratify their need for attention (Kets de Vries and Miller, 1985; Morf and Rhodewalt, 2001). An intense need for self-enhancement and

acclaim by others principally motivates narcissistic individuals to strive for glory and power (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002). From this vantage, leadership positions imbued with opportunities that come with substantial power allow emergence of narcissistic individuals and 'provide them with an alluring stage from which they can show off their superiority to others' (Nevicka et al., 2011b: 910).

Narcissists are likely to achieve power for several reasons. They have traits and skills that expedite their progression into positions of leadership; narcissistic leaders often emanate charisma in their personalities and use superficial magnetic charm, eloquent oration and overwhelming confidence to appeal to followers (Deluga, 1997). This charismatic influence is exercised even in the absence of formally designated power positions, since narcissistic individuals are capable of alluring followers with bold and strong visions. Emmons (1987) identifies need for authority, entitlement, superiority and self-admiration as core features of narcissism, all of which are gratified by attaining positions of significant power. In the right circumstances, such powerful individuals can lead followers and their organizations to successful outcomes. They assertively communicate a larger-than-life vision, inspiring followers to believe in their vision of change and identify with them (Kets de Vries, 2004).

However, narcissistic leaders are prone to abusing power at group and organizational levels, at the heart of which lies self-intoxication (Padilla et al., 2007; Rosenthal and Pittinsky, 2006; Sankowsky, 1995). Abuse of power, with or without overt intention, occurs when narcissistic leaders take actions for their personal objectives, use impression management to enhance personal image and disguise ineptitude, regardless of the influence their decisions have on followers and organizations (Higgs, 2009). Being skilful with rhetoric, narcissistic leaders take advantage of the power that comes with symbolic status, abusing followers' belief systems and psychological wellbeing during the process (Sankowsky, 1995). They react with aggressive behaviours towards their followers when provoked, when their egos are bruised, or when their self-beliefs are not met (Kernis and Sun, 1994; Wisse and Sleebos, 2016).

A series of experimental studies have shown how high levels of narcissism in leaders can lead to the exploitation of group members. For example, Nevicka et al. (2011a) found that narcissistic leaders exploit their power by inhibiting exchanges of unshared information, which results in substandard decision-making. In another laboratory study, Campbell et al. (2005) accentuated the social costs of narcissism by showing that narcissistic individuals readily allocated more resources to themselves for their short-term gain by sacrificing long-term benefits of the group. Narcissistic leaders may also promote inequality in the group by favouring and rewarding narcissistic employees, who are more likely to ingratiate themselves as compared to less narcissistic employees (Den Hartog et al., 2018). They also tend to derogate their followers and react to any criticism with contempt. Followers with low self-esteem may especially suffer abusive supervision at the hands of narcissistic leaders (Nevicka et al., 2018).

Narcissistic leaders also misuse power on an organizational level. Believing in their self-entitlement and superiority, narcissistic CEOs overvalue their contributions to the organization and expect greater compensation in comparison to non-narcissistic CEOs, inducing executive turnover and resulting in negative firm performance (O'Reilly et al., 2014). Moreover, they espouse the identity of their respective organizations, and in doing so, they undermine and exploit an organization's goals. These actions accentuate the paradoxical nature of narcissism, since intuitively it is desirable for members to identify strongly

with their organizations. Galvin et al. (2015) explain this anomaly using the term narcissistic organizational identification, which signifies how 'the individual sees his/her identity as central to the identity of the organization, with the result that the individual perceives the organization's identity as being secondary and subsumed within the individual's identity' (p. 164). Furthermore, narcissistic CEOs do not heed objective assessments of their own performance, leading to continuation of aggressive investments and gross miscalculations of project risk (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2011). In an interesting study about the role of gender differences in the impact of CEO narcissism on organizational practices, Ingersoll et al. (2017) found that male narcissistic CEOs are more likely, than their female counterparts, to exploit their power by engaging in unethical behaviours and putting their organizations in unnecessary risks.

To summarise these points, the relationship between narcissism and power differs from hubris because a narcissistic leader's focus is always the self, resulting in potentially destructive outcomes for both leader and organization. Narcissistic leaders with their inflated self-view, extraversion and persuasive charm may easily ascend to positions of power, but they are likely to abuse power due to their self-intoxication. They prioritise personal agendas, resist feedback that challenges their self-concept and they seek evaluations and environments that confirm their self-beliefs and discount and avoid those that do not. A heightened sense of personal power leads narcissistic CEOs to undermine the interests of an organization by engaging in self-serving behaviours, conflating their own identities with the organization's and making the existence of the organization 'all about *me*!' (Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Pullen and Rhodes, 2008).

Summary, conclusions and implications

A common misconception in management and organizational studies is that hubris is indistinguishable from narcissism, but we propose that hubristic and narcissistic leaderships are conceptually and behaviourally distinct. Notwithstanding various shared behavioural attributes between them, hubris and narcissism differ principally in terms of their relationship with power and its misuse by hubristic and narcissistic individuals. We offer a new perspective on the relationship between hubris and narcissism by decoupling them through a focus on power. We propose that while hubristic leaders are intoxicated with power, narcissistic leaders long for power to reinforce their grandiose self-view.

Narcissism and more recently hubris have been studied with great diligence, and with both having been shown to influence decision-making, strategic outcomes and organizational performance, it has been thus far unclear how they relate to each other and to power and influence. It is important to understand how hubristic and narcissistic leadership are linked to power because powerful hubristic and narcissistic leaders can have significant consequences for organizational outcomes. They make self-centred, greedy, high-risk, and even reckless decisions, especially if an executive team or board is weak. Detrimental influences of such leaders can be averted by the presence of a strong executive team and outside directors and by promoting distributed and shared models of leadership. Calls for post-heroic leadership (Grint, 2010) and critiques of and warnings against 'excessive positivity' in leadership studies (Alvesson and Einola, 2019: 383) can help to focus attention on the problem.

Implications for research

In this article, we have explored how hubristic and narcissistic leaders differ in ways they relate to and wield power. Power achievement and accumulation is the ultimate goal for hubristic leaders, but narcissists use power to construct a reality aligned with their self-centred and flamboyant persona. Framing the relationship between hubris and narcissistic leaders using power offers new directions with which to distinguish similarities and differences between these two types of leaders. In the specification of HS (Owen and Davidson, 2009), hubris and narcissism broadly overlap, examples of which are cited frequently regarding leaders who are incontrovertibly both hubristic and narcissistic, such as Donald Trump (Owen, 2018). However, the topic has progressed to a stage at which anecdote and informal diagnoses are insufficient, and scientific studies are required that can quantify the nature and extent of overlap between hubris and narcissism. Future research should refine their dynamic relationship by theoretically and empirically investigating their link in other contexts and exploring related issues such as how hubrists and narcissists behave at different levels of power. To the extent that leadership is essentially a relational phenomenon (Sadler-Smith, 2019a), research should assess how the extent and nature of their power exploitations change when such leaders form strong relationships with followers, the nature of the social exchanges and what happens when followers are hubristic and/or narcissistic as well, how organizations deal with stable and unstable power relations, and what mediates and moderates hubrists' and narcissists' relationships with power. Given that extant research is dominated by cross-sectional designs, longitudinal perspectives on how such leaders attain, exercise and lose power is an important area to explore as are processual studies of the temporal trajectories of narcissistic and hubristic leadership. In the current leadership climate, it is also worth speculating on serious implications for organizations and institutions if leaders are simultaneously both narcissistic and hubristic.

Implications for practice

In contemporary leadership, politics and corporate governance are replete with leaders who exhibit hubris and/or narcissism. Thus, it is important for managers, executive teams and board members to understand how powerful positions nurture narcissistic and hubristic leaders and how such leaders use and misuse their positions. We show that narcissistic and hubristic leaders are covetous of power for different reasons, and this distinction is important to assessing the influences they have on governance and policy-making in organizations. They exercise power in ways that are both prolific and hazardous to organizations and their members. In contexts in which task complexity is high, dominant logic is absent and bold actions are needed, hubristic and narcissistic leaders might excel. However, the effects of their dysfunctional behaviours might result in executive turnover, bad corporate image and lack of succession planning, among other damaging consequences.

Irrespective of the causes and characteristics of either of these types of leadership, they both have the potential to create conditions for, or to directly bring about, catastrophic unintended outcomes for organizations and wider society. Independent effects of narcissism and hubris are prolific and contextually contingent, but the fusion of narcissism, hubris and power is unlikely to lead to positive consequences. For this reason, it is important that leadership discourse, often preoccupied with and predicated on positive aspects of leadership, must assess jointly these two potent aspects of leadership. We acknowledge that in

making this suggestion, significant challenges are presented to both current and future generations of managers and leaders, and to those responsible for their education, training and development.

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Author biographies

Sarosh Asad is a PhD Fellow at the Department of Management, Society and Communication at Copenhagen Business School. Her research interests can be found in, and at the intersection of, strategic management and leadership. Her PhD work focuses on the impact of narcissistic leaders on strategic outcomes.

Eugene Sadler-Smith is Professor of Organizational Behaviour, Surrey Business School, University of Surrey, UK. His research interests are intuition (in decision making) and hubris (in leadership). He is the author of numerous articles and a number of books including *Learning and Development for Managers* (Blackwell, 2006), *Inside Intuition* (Routledge, 2008), *The Intuitive Mind: Profiting from the Power of Your Sixth Sense* (Wiley, 2010) and *Hubristic Leadership* (SAGE, 2019).