A General Framework for Studying of Social Behavior: Interpersonal Theory of Personality

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Interpersonal Theory of Personality

• **Assumption I: Focus/Emphasis** – The most important expressions of personality (and psychopathology) occur in phenomena involving more than one person (i.e., interpersonal situations).
  
  – Interpersonal situations occur between proximal interactants and within the minds of those interactants via the capacity for perception, mental representation, etc.

• **Assumption II: Structure** – Agency and Communion (Dominance and Affiliation) provide an integrative meta-structure for conceptualizing interpersonal situations.

• **Assumption III: Dynamics/Process** – Transactional social behavior serves goal pursuit/regulatory functions, and normative patterns (e.g., complementarity) can be considered a common baseline for the field regulatory pulls and invitations of interpersonal behavior.

The Interpersonal Transaction Cycle

- Person A's Overt Behavior
- Person A's Covert Impact
- Person B's Covert Impact
- Person B's Overt Behavior

Perceptual Influences

Motivational Influences

Contextual Effects
Personality is Patterns of Interpersonal Transactions over Time

- Person A
- Person B

Interpersonal Behavior

Time
The Interpersonal Transaction Cycle

Person A's Overt Behavior

Person A's Covert Impact

Person B's Covert Impact

Person B's Overt Behavior

Perceptual Influences

Complementarity

Motivational Influences

Contextual Effects
Complementarity Principle:

Equivalence (sameness) on Affiliation

Reciprocity (oppositeness) on Dominance

↑ Complementarity = PA, Satisfaction, Stability

↓ Complementarity = NA, Frustration, Renegotiation

Interpersonal Dispositions
Dispositional Measures

- Interpersonal Adjective Scales (Wiggins, 1979, 1995)
- Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (Alden et al., 1990)
- Circumplex Scales of Interpersonal Values (Locke, 2000)
- Circumplex Scales of Interpersonal Efficacy (Locke & Sadler, 2007)
- Inventory of Interpersonal Strengths (Hatcher & Rogers, 2009, 2012)
- Interpersonal Sensitivities Circumplex (Hopwood et al., 2011)
- NEO-IPC Scales (Traupman et al., 2009)
Dispositional Profiles: Interpersonal Traits

- Assured-Dominant
- Extraversion
- Cold-Quarrelsome
- Dominance
- Warm-Agreeable
- Affiliation
- Unassured-Submissive
- Agreeableness

Costa & McCrae, 1989 - JPSP
Figure 6. Self-report profiles of interpersonal problems across attachment groups.

Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991 - JPSP
Dispositional Profiles: Personality Disorders

Pincus & Wiggins, 1989 - JPD
Clarifying Heterogeneous Diagnoses: BPD

A. 

B. 

Wright, Hallquist, et al., 2013 - JPD
Interpersonal Variability and Signatures
Interpersonal Variability

The coordinate, vector length, indicates the overall extremity of behavior. The vector in Figure 1 represents interpersonal behavior of moderate extremity whose overall style falls in the dominant–agreeable quadrant.

Spin was defined as the variability (standard deviation) of the angular coordinate about the individual’s mean value for \( \theta \).

Pulse was defined as the variability (standard deviation) of the extremity coordinate about the individual’s mean value of \( r \).

Figure 2 uses vectors from three social interactions to illustrate, in a simplified manner, patterns of behavior corresponding to low spin and low pulse (upper left panel), low spin and high pulse (upper right panel), high spin and low pulse (lower left panel), and high spin and high pulse (lower right panel). Variability in vector length (short, medium, and long) implies high pulse, whereas variability in angular displacement (behaviors falling in different quadrants of the circumplex) implies high spin.

Predicting Intraindividual Variability

Trait Influences

Five-factor traits are related to mean levels of interpersonal circumplex traits and behaviors. Extraversion and Agreeableness are the two traits from the five-factor model that identify the interpersonal plane of personality, but Neuroticism also has interpersonal correlates (Gilbert & Allan, 1994; McCrae & Costa, 1989; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990). Cóte and Moskowitz (1998) examined the relations of these traits with interpersonal behaviors during social interactions. The trait of Extraversion was related to agreeable behaviors. Five-factor Agreeableness was correlated, in a negative direction, with quarrelsome behaviors. Neuroticism was associated with submissive behavior and negatively related to agreeable behavior. Given these findings relating traits to mean levels of behavior, it was necessary to examine the relation of personality traits with flux, pulse, and spin in interpersonal behavior, controlling for the relations between these traits and mean level on the social behavior. This would indicate that trait variables not only predict mean levels in interpersonal behavior but also predict variability in social behavior.

It was also expected that examination of the correlations with Neuroticism and with Extraversion would clarify the adaptive significance of variability. In the present study, scores on Neuroticism were used as an indicator of the possibility of problems with poor adjustment, such as vulnerability to psychopathology (Costa & Widiger, 1994) and vulnerability to stress (Bolger & Schilling,

\[ \text{Figure 2. Representations of combinations of pulse and spin using vectors from three events: low spin and low pulse (upper left panel), low spin and high pulse (upper right panel), high spin and low pulse (lower left panel), and high spin and high pulse (lower right panel).} \]
Daily Variability in Interpersonal Behavior

100-Day Daily Diary Study of Individuals with Personality Disorders
Relevant Dynamic Constructs

• Rigidity vs. Flexibility

• Instability vs. Stability

• Extremity vs. Moderation

• Match vs. Mismatch to Situation
Much of the research on self–other convergence has indicated greater self–other convergence for Extraversion than for Agreeableness. Because previous findings have consistently indicated that these coefficients tend to be small (Funder & Colvin, 1988), there was modest to moderate agreement across perceivers and perceptions of the person that these coefficients tend to be small (Funder & Colvin, 1988).

Thus, there was modest to moderate agreement across perceivers. The existence of individual differences in perceptions of the perceived person has some influence on perceptions of the perceived person. The perception of the same person in different events. There were two sources of influence on the perceptions of the person that these coefficients tend to be small (Funder & Colvin, 1988).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Perceiver Report</th>
<th>Perceived Person Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency across vignettes</td>
<td>6.22 ± 3.42</td>
<td>6.22 ± 3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion across vignettes</td>
<td>6.14 ± 2.88</td>
<td>6.14 ± 2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency across exercises</td>
<td>7.41 ± 2.33</td>
<td>7.41 ± 2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion across exercises</td>
<td>7.24 ± 1.09</td>
<td>7.24 ± 1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social behavior and social perception variables</td>
<td></td>
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Note. Study 2
Interpersonal Signatures

Neuroticism $r = .31$
Depression $r = .29$

Self Esteem $r = .43$

Fournier et al., 2008 – JPSP; Fournier et al., 2009 - JRP
Interpersonal Signatures in BPD

20 Day EMA Study – BPD vs. Control Group

- Perceptions of Quarrelsomeness
- Negative Affect
- Quarrelsome Behavior
- BPD +
- BPD & CON =

Sadikaj et al., 2013 – J of Abnormal Psych.
Interpersonal Transactions
Drilling Down into Continuous Momentary Interpersonal Behavior

A new method...

Pamela Sadler
Wilfrid Laurier University
Observer Coding of Momentary Interpersonal Behavior

- Observer uses joystick to continuously rate the target’s behaviors (e.g., for 10 minutes of interaction)

- \((10\text{mins}) \times (60\text{secs}) \times (\text{twice/sec}) = 1200 \text{ data points}\)
Dual Axis Rating and Media Annotation (DARMA)
The Dharma Wheel
Dual Axis Rating and Media Annotation (DARMA)
Normative and Atypical Patterns

• Complementarity is normative (Sadler et al., 2009 – JPSP):
  – M Affiliation Cross-corr. = .52
  – M Dominance Cross-corr. = -.43

• However, what are the individual differences, contextual features, and interactions (i.e., person-x-situation) that lead to dyadic differences in complementarity?

• Are there consistent patterns of deviation from complementarity that reflect psychopathology?
Current Directions

• Study of interpersonal and affective dynamics in patients and partners (R01MH056888; Pilkonis)

  – 3 groups of ~50 couples each (Total N = ~300):
    • Borderline personality disorder
    • Any (other) personality disorder
    • General psychiatric patient (i.e., non-PD)

  – 3 Major Assessment Levels:
    • Dispositional (i.e., psychiatric interview, self-report)
    • 21-Day Dyadic EMA (yoked smartphone design)
    • Video-taped interactions (Gottman tasks, psychophys)
Summary

• Contemporary Interpersonal Theory
  – Is broad and integrative
  – Highly parsimonious (i.e., low dimensionality)
  – Articulates both structure and processes
  – Applicable to both normative and pathological range of functioning
  – Many available tools and techniques
FIN.

Society for Interpersonal Theory and Research (SITAR):
http://sitarsoociety.weebly.com