

# Examining the Interpersonal Content of the MMPI-2



PA

JK

LM

DE

Lindsay E. Ayearst

BC

York University

HI

# Purpose

- To explore the extent to which a selection of scales on the MMPI-2 are able to measure interpersonal behaviours

# Why?

- Current methods for establishing interpersonal characterizations of a given MMPI profile are flawed
- Has been suggested that the assessment of constructs such as DOM and LOV can be done more effectively by single MMPI-2 scales than by combinations of clinical scales
- Identifying MMPI-2 scales that accurately assess interpersonal behaviours would assist psychologists in applying the insights of interpersonal theory and research to MMPI-2 interpretation

# Method

- Undergraduate students in psychology at York University, Toronto, Canada  
( N = 423)
- 74.7% female; ages 18-53 (mean age = 20.36, SD = 3.86)
- Demographics, IASR-B5, IIP-C, MMPI-2

# Procedure

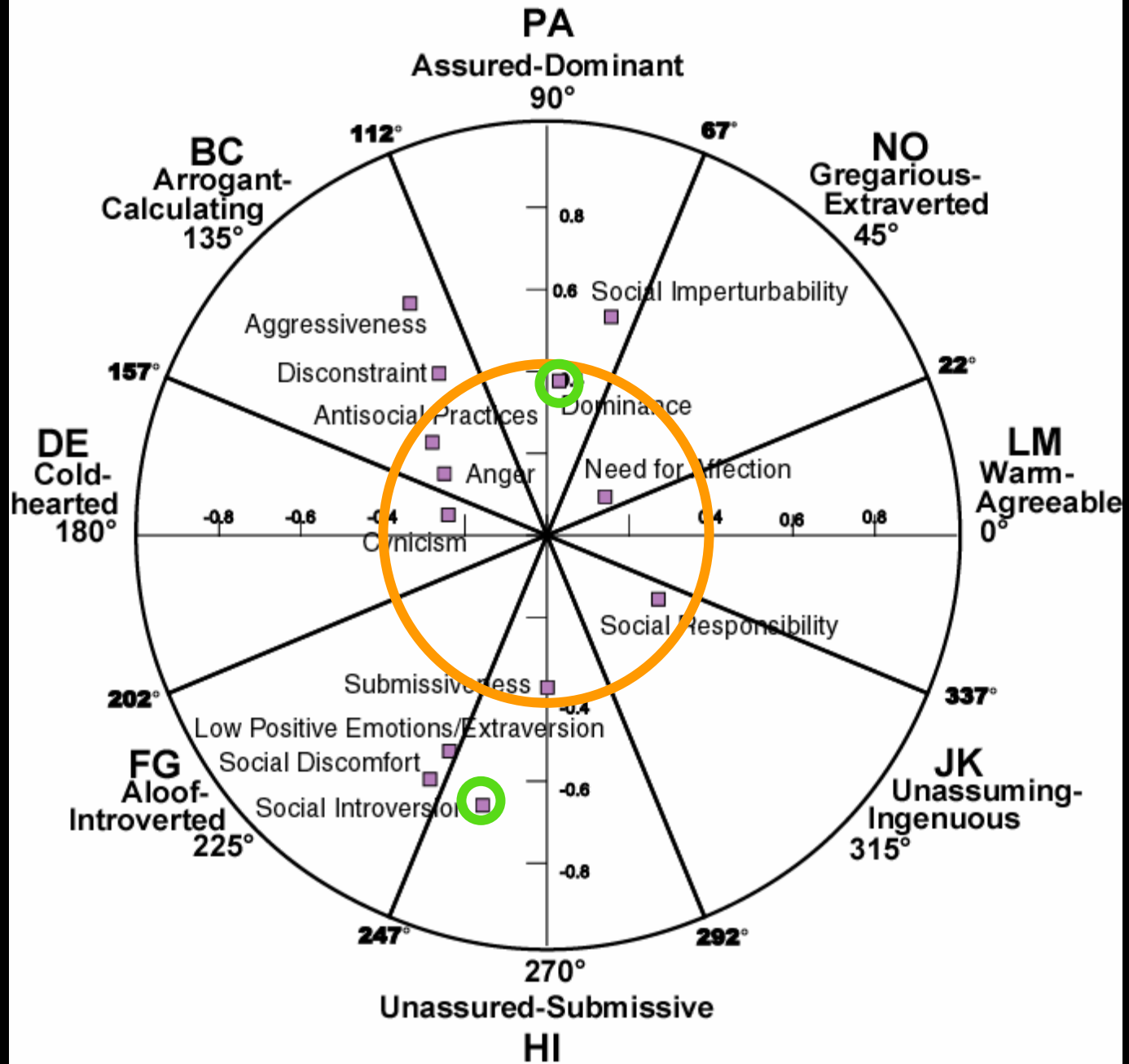
- Selected a variety of scales that seemed interpersonal in nature for further investigation (N =13)
- Correlated each of these scales with, and projected them onto, the IASR-B5 and IIP-C

# MMPI-2 Scales & their predicted placement in circumplex space

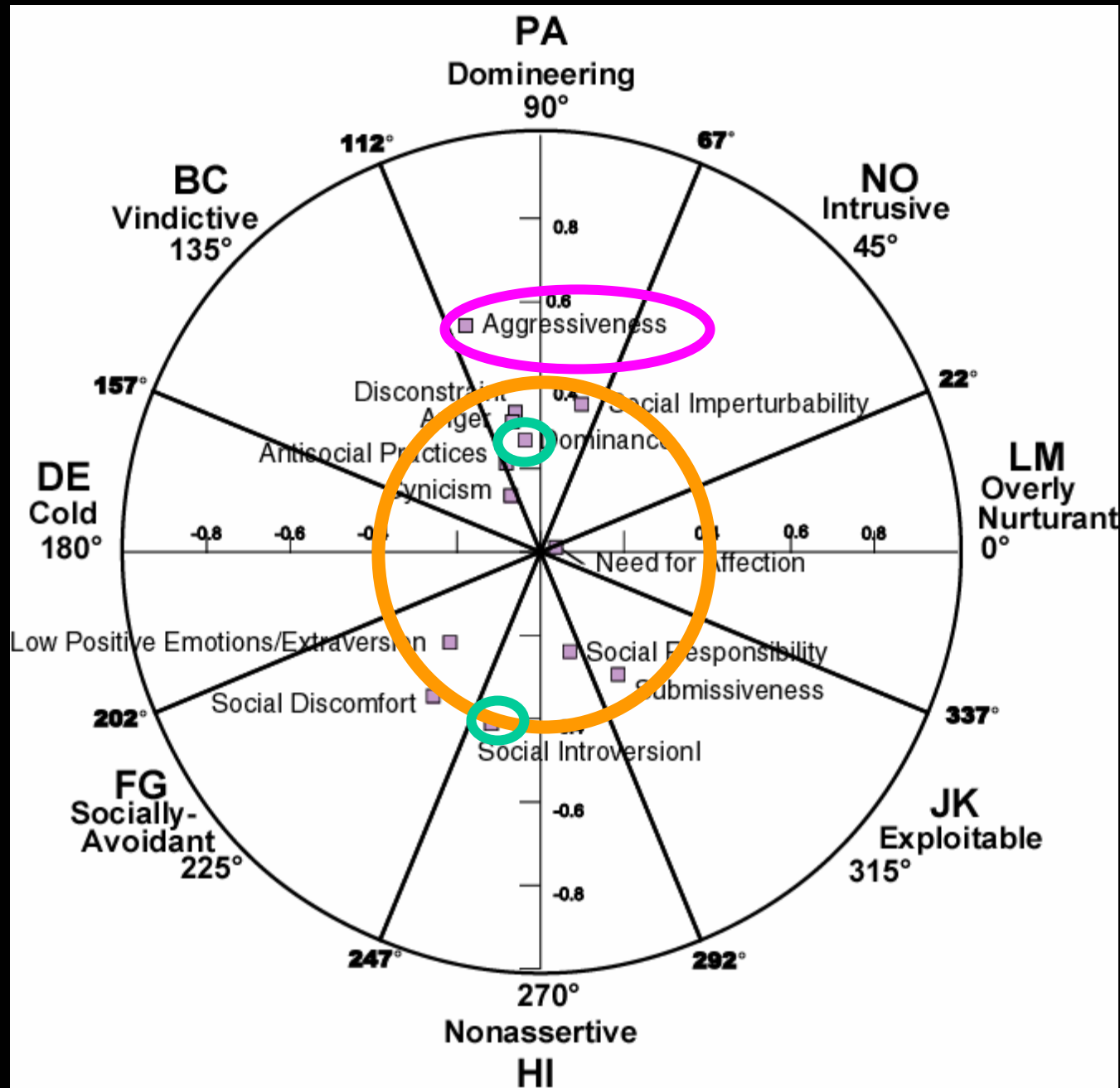
- Social Imperturbability Scale (BC)
- Need for Affection Scale (JK)
- Social Introversion (FG)
- Cynicism Scale (BC)
- Antisocial Practices Scale (BC)
- Anger Scale (BC/DE)
- Submissiveness Scale (HI)
- Social Discomfort Scale (FG)

# MMPI-2 Scales & their predicted placement in circumplex space

- Dominance Scale (PA)
- Social Responsibility Scale (JK/LM)
- Low Positive Emotionality/Extraversion (FG)
- Low Aggressiveness (LM/JK)
- Disconstraint Scale (PA/BC)



Selected MMPI-2 Scales Projected onto the IAS circumplex



MMPI-2 scales on IIP-C.

# Summary of Results

- Majority of scales had a stronger association with the cold side of the circle
- Majority of scales were located close to the vertical axis (as opposed to the circumference of the circle)
- MMPI-2 “interpersonal” scales were unable to effectively assess Nurturance

# Summary of Results

- Spread of variables along the dominance-submission axis was more even indicating that the selected scales were able to assess this dimension
- Aggressiveness scale was the best predictor of interpersonal dominance
- Social Introversion was best predictor of interpersonal submissiveness

# Accuracy of Predictions

- Need for Affection – **NO** not **JK**
- Social Imperturbability – **PA** not **BC**
- Social Introversion – **HI** not **FG**
- Social Discomfort – **FG** as predicted
- Cynicism – **BC** as predicted
- Antisocial Practices – **BC** as predicted
- Anger – **BC/DE (IAS)** – **PA (IIP-C)**
- Dominance – **PA** as predicted
- Social Responsibility – **JK/LM (IAS)** – **HI (IIP-C)**
- Submissiveness – **HI (IAS)** – **JK (IIP-C)**

# Summary

- MMPI-2 scales had more in common with the content that was measured by the IASR-B5 than with the IIP-C
- Few of the “interpersonal” scales from the MMPI-2 were found to be well associated with the interpersonal dimensions of DOM and LOV
- Only 5 of 13 scales achieved moderate associations with the IASR-B5. Only 3 of 13 scales achieved moderate associations with the IIP-C

# Conclusion

- Results revealed that the “interpersonal” scales of the MMPI-2 are not always measuring what one assumes, or do so more poorly than expected.
- Don’t judge a scale by its name!