

SITAR

**SOCIETY FOR INTERPERSONAL THEORY AND RESEARCH**

SITAR NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2010

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
MARC FOURNIER**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UNWILY: CONSTRUCTING A BALANCED MEASURE OF INTERPERSONAL ADJECTIVES** 2

**WHAT WE THINK WE DO (TO EACH OTHER): HOW THE SAME RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITY PROFILES** 3

**GRADUATE STUDENT CORNER** 4

**INTRODUCING THE GUEST SPEAKERS FOR SITAR'S 13TH ANNUAL MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA** 6



It is with great enthusiasm that I look forward to our thirteenth annual meeting, which will be held at the Radisson-Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia on June 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. Patrick Markey will host the meeting, while Martin Grosse Holtforth will serve as program chair. Patrick is currently in the midst of making all of the necessary arrangements, and I am grateful to him for all the work he is doing to ensure that our next annual meeting will be a success. The call for submissions, registration form, and hotel information are enclosed with this newsletter.

One of the primary goals of this year's meeting is to celebrate and reflect upon the forthcoming

publication of the *Handbook of Interpersonal Psychology: Theory, Research, Assessment, and Therapeutic Interventions*. Our colleagues Len Horowitz and Steve Strack have worked tirelessly to edit the volume, which John Wiley & Sons is scheduled to publish later this year in paper and electronic form. Many of us participated in the eighteen-month process during which the vision, scope, and content of the Handbook were defined. Len and Steve consulted the SITAR membership to help define the range of topics that such a volume could reasonably cover, to suggest chapter topics and potential chapter authors, and, finally, to rank order the topics in terms of their perceived importance to the discipline. Invitations were then extended to prospective chapter contributors, and the result is a 34-chapter volume that maps the

domain of interpersonal theory and contemporary research.

The Handbook is divided into six parts. In Part I, *Theoretical Perspectives*, chapter contributors of differing theoretical allegiances (e.g., evolutionary, psychodynamic, attachment) discuss how biological, developmental, and contextual factors have contributed to our understanding of the full spectrum of normal and maladaptive interpersonal behavior. In Part II, *Basic Interpersonal Processes and Mechanisms*, chapter contributors discuss the range of basic processes and mechanisms upon which day-to-day interpersonal transactions are predicated, including interpersonal complementarity, person perception, and empathic accuracy. In Part III, *Personality and Interpersonal Interactions*,

(continued on page 8)

**MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR SITAR'S 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA**

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- The call for submissions for SITAR's next meeting is now available online and is included with this newsletter.
- Drs. Robert McCrae and John Clarkin will be featured panelists at SITAR's next annual meeting.
- The Jerry S. Wiggins Student Award for Outstanding Interpersonal Research will again be awarded at the upcoming meeting. Details about the award are included in this newsletter.



The Liberty Bell  
Photo by Tony the Misfit available under a creative-commons attribution license

SITAR's thirteenth annual meeting will be held at the Radisson-Warwick Hotel located in the heart of Philadelphia. Guests can stay at the Warwick

(US\$149/night). Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Plaza Warwick Hotel was originally constructed in

1926. This historic yet modern downtown Philadelphia hotel is located just off the world renowned Rittenhouse Square, the city's most prestigious residential, commercial and business district. For more information about the conference and instructions about how to register please visit [www.sitarsociety.org](http://www.sitarsociety.org).

Famous as the birthplace of liberty Philadelphia offers both historical landmarks and a rich collection of cultural, culinary, and artistic attractions. Following is a listing of various activi-

ties and attractions which can be experienced in Philadelphia.

*Independence Hall* was constructed between

1732 and 1756 to house the provincial government of Pennsylvania. The building served as (continued on page 10)



Independence Hall  
Photo by gezelle available under a creative-commons attribution license

# THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UNWILY: CONSTRUCTING A BALANCED MEASURE OF INTERPERSONAL ADJECTIVES

NICOLE ETHIER, PAMELA SADLER, & ERIK WOODY



As is well-known, interpersonal theorists such as Carson (1969), Kiesler (1983) and Wiggins (1982) argued that the most important variations in interpersonal style can be captured by two underlying dimensions, dominance and friendliness. These two features of personality are theorized to be orthogonal, portrayed on the vertical and horizontal axes of a Cartesian plane, which can be further divided into eight “pie-shaped” octants, shown in Figure 1. Although there are several different measures of interpersonal style, Wiggins’ *Revised Interpersonal Adjectives Scale* (IAS-R; Wiggins, Trapnell & Phillips, 1988) is considered to be the gold standard because of its excellent psychometric properties. For instance, the IAS-R clearly has

two factors, and has nearly perfect circumplex structure. For an interpersonal scale to show good circumplex structure, the sum of the items for each of the subscales should correlate in ways that are consistent with interpersonal theory assumptions. As an example, subscales that are theoretically located at opposite ends of the same dimension (such as dominance and submissiveness) should correlate negatively. Subscales that are located at right angles to each other on the circumplex (such as dominance and friendliness) should correlate zero. Furthermore, adjacent subscales should correlate mildly positively, and subscales that are adjacent to the polar opposite of any particular subscale should correlate mildly negatively.

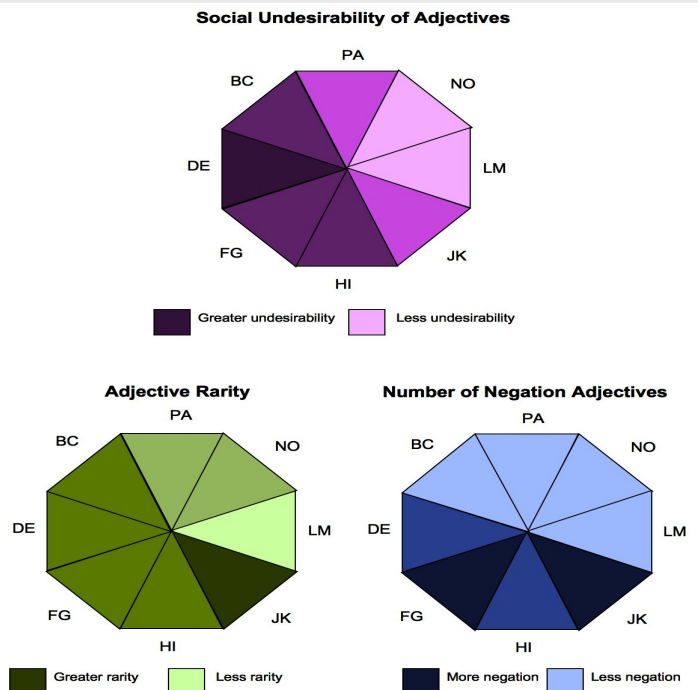
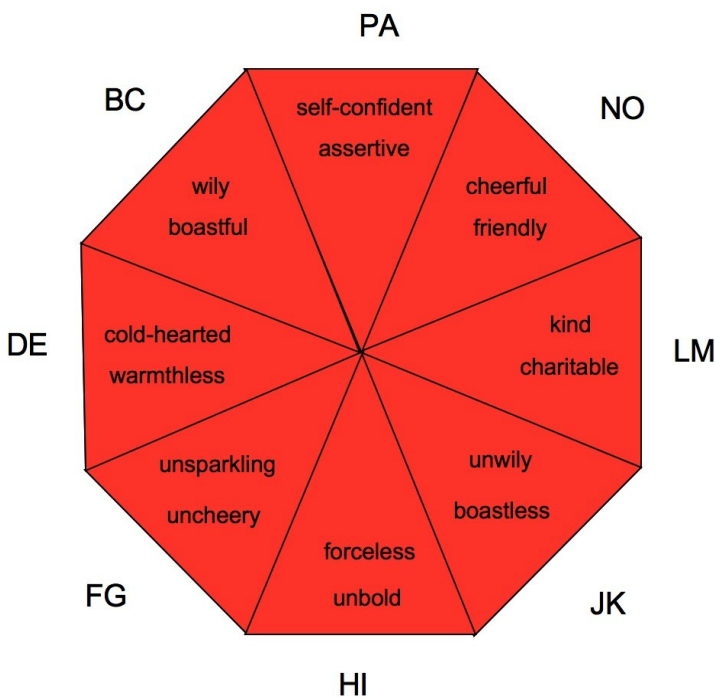
Despite its excellent circumplex structure, the IAS-R has some key shortcomings. First, the subscales appear to be conflated with social desirability, with a disproportionately high number of socially undesirable words on the left side of the circumplex compared to the right side. To measure the social desirability of the IAS-R words, we had four independent coders provide social desirability ratings of all 64 IAS-R items and computed the mean rating for each item. These mean ratings were then aver-

aged within each of the eight octants. Based on this coding, it became clear that the dominant (PA) and friendly (LM) subscales had high social desirability ratings, consisting of mostly desirable items (e.g., self-assured, kind), whereas the submissive (HI) and hostile (DE) subscales had much lower social desirability ratings, consisting of mostly undesirable items (e.g., forceless, cruel). This imbalance in social desirability is depicted in the purple circumplex in Figure 2. Thus, the pattern of correlations between the eight subscales of the IAS-R may, at least in part, be produced by social desirability rather than interpersonal style (Jackson & Helmes, 1979).

A second shortcoming of the IAS-R is the inclusion of odd and unfamiliar words, some of which are rarely, if ever, used by the average person to describe people’s personalities. To assess the unfamiliarity of the adjectives within each octant of the IAS-R, we consulted word frequency tables published by Thorndike and Lorge (1944) and took the average frequency for the words in each octant. Notably, many of (continued on page 5)

Figure 1. The Interpersonal Circumplex with Sample IAS-R Words

Figure 2. Depiction of IAS-R Problems



## WHAT WE THINK WE DO (TO EACH OTHER): HOW THE SAME RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITY PROFILES

LARA K. KAMMRATH



People's knowledge about relational behavior includes beliefs about how various social behaviors are likely to impact others. These beliefs are known as *if-then behavior schemas* (Baldwin, 1997;

Fehr, Baldwin, Collins, Patterson, & Benditt, 1999). An understanding of warm and cold behavior, for example, likely includes the information that, in most situations, a particular interaction partner likes the former more than the latter.

When an individual consistently approaches interpersonal situations in a particular way (e.g., warmly, coldly, assertively, or submissively) it's tempting to assume that he or she does so in full awareness of how these behaviors affect others (e.g., "She knows her harsh criticism devastates her employees, but does it anyway"). This view, however, assumes that the person's schema for the behavior(s) in question are unbiased by the personality dispositions that give rise to his or her characteristic behavioral trends.

Findings from a recent series of studies in my lab suggest that a person's schemas about relational behavior are systematically biased by the person's own *if-then personality profile*; that is, his or her distinctive way of responding to the social behavior of others (c.f., Mischel, 2004; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). In other words, if your coldness doesn't bother me very much, I may expect that my coldness doesn't really bother you. If your assertiveness doesn't threaten my confidence, I may expect that my assertiveness doesn't make you feel especially threatened either.

In social psychology we know a great deal about how the average person responds to behaviors that vary in communion or agency – interaction partners generally prefer warm behavior to cold behavior (Kelley, 1950), and they enjoy being accommodated more than being dominated (Rusbult, Kumashiro, Coolsen, & Kirchner, 2004). Nevertheless, individuals differ in their sensitivity to partner behaviors that vary along these dimensions. In my research I tested the hypothesis that people who experience strong (or weak) responses to behaviors that vary along the dimensions of communion or agency expect others to experience similarly strong (or weak) responses to those same kinds of behaviors.

What personality traits influence sensitivity to these two dimensions? I hypothesized that trait communion is associated with individual differences in warm-cold sensitivity, and that trait agency is associated with individual differences in assertive-submissive sensitivity.

In recent work with Abigail Scholer, I found that people high in trait communion experience interpersonal warmth as more rewarding, and interpersonal coldness as more punishing, than do people low in trait communion (Kammrath & Scholer, 2010). In other words, highly communal people experience a more extreme *if-then profile* in response to the warmth-coldness of others. Building on this research, I hypothesized that high communal people are likely to have more extreme *if-then schemas* for how their own warm and cold behaviors will impact their interaction partners.

I hypothesized a similar connection between *if-then* profiles and *if-then* schemas for the domain of agency. In the pursuit of instrumental outcomes, a person with low trait agency is highly dependent on whether or not an interaction partner asserts an opposing preference. If the partner asserts, the low agency person yields. This is very different from the experience of a highly agentic person. If an interaction partner asserts an opposing preference, the agentic person does not simply fold; rather, she negotiates (Sadler & Woody, 2003). In other words, low agentic people experience a more extreme *if-then* profile in response to the assertiveness and submissiveness of others. As a result, these people are likely to have more extreme *if-then* schemas for how their own assertive and submissive behaviors will impact their interaction partners.

In two initial studies I tested these hypotheses using scenario designs. In Study 1, participants were given an academic and a romantic joint decision-making scenario, and were asked to generate their own examples of warm, cold, assertive, and submissive behavior for each scenario. After generating examples of each behavior, participants predicted how they thought an interaction partner would react to the behavior. In Study 2, participants were shown the same scenarios, but this time they were provided with scripted behaviors of each type (warm, cold, assertive, submissive). Data from both studies confirmed the hypotheses. People who were high in trait communion expected others to respond more strongly to behaviors that varied in warmth-coldness than did people who were low in trait

(continued on page 7)



Photo by thelastminute available under a creative-commons attribution license.

**"In evaluating individuals whose personality traits differ markedly from our own, it is important to consider whether these individuals view their own behavior through the lens of a different meaning system than that which we use to judge them."**

## GRADUATE STUDENT CORNER: INTRODUCTION TO NIH FELLOWSHIP GRANTS

AIDAN G. C. WRIGHT



I want to take this newsletter's Graduate Student Corner to share some of my recent experiences chasing grant funding for a research

proposal. Although my experience is limited, I believe that much of what I went through will generalize to other students seeking research funds. My hope is that you will benefit from learning about the grant-writing process, including some of the potential problems and pitfalls, and that this may increase your chances of success. To augment my own experiences, I asked a number of student colleagues to share with me their own stories about the grant-funding process. I am writing this column on the heels of having submitted a Ruth L. Kirshstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) that went through two rounds of reviews at the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). My nose has stopped bleeding, and the ego bruises are beginning to heal. I think I am ready to start talking about what I went through.

Before I get into the heart of the column I'd like to begin with a question: Why bother applying for a grant at all? There are certainly reasons *not* to apply for funding. Writing a grant is time consuming. To place this into context, from the time of my first submission (12/2008) until the time it might be funded (6/2010) will be 18 months. In the time it takes to submit a proposal to NRSA, an industrious student could write two journal articles—and that is just for the first submission of a grant. With time being such

a precious commodity to students, what are the positives in the equation? For starters, there are some extrinsic rewards. Colleges and universities (i.e., your dean, department chair, and advisor) love people who get grants. It was clear to me from the start of this process that my department would appreciate it if I found funding to cover my tuition, stipend, and fringe benefits. What I did not realize is that, for big grants (this doesn't apply to the small training grants like the NRSA or NSF fellowships) the university gets a percentage of indirect costs (usually ranging from 40-60% on the dollar) for the grant. This means that, if a researcher is awarded \$1,000,000 in direct costs, the university could receive as much as \$600,000 in *additional funds* for overhead expenses. Therefore, it makes financial sense that universities recruit and support people who have successfully obtained grant funding. This bias is not limited to universities. Review committees of grant proposals prefer a track record of funding, and one aspect judged in the grant review process is whether the investigator has previously been funded and has shown the ability to successfully complete a project. At the same time, students are expected to be new to the game. Applying for funding now is a good way to get into the grant system when your novice status is less of an issue.

As for intrinsic reasons to apply for a grant, the primary one is that you essentially become self-employed. Obtaining funding buys the time you might have spent on assistantships, doing work for others. Instead of dividing your time between teaching duties and grading exams, you can now spend the majority of your time focusing

on your research and publications.

How does one put a successful proposal together? Presumably, your research interests and desire to spend undivided attention on them are enough to get (and keep) you motivated. The first place to start is to identify funding agencies that give grants in your research area. For the purposes of this column, I will describe the process for the U.S. NIH NRSA fellowship. Once you identify candidate agencies, you want to find resources that explain what the agencies and their review committees look for when determining who to fund. The stated goal of the NRSA (and many similar funding sources) is to train the next generation of researchers. Therefore, in addition to crafting an innovative research proposal, you need to put together a well-reasoned training plan with suitable and concrete objectives. It is important to make an argument for how this fellowship will provide you with training experiences that would otherwise be unavailable to your career development without the agency's funding. Remember, funding buys your time, so you need to make an argument for what you intend to do with that time.

Before we get to the criteria and the review process, it is important to consider the writing process. Like tax forms, grant applications come with lots of instructions and fine print. You will be asked to describe your proposed research in enough detail that reviewers will clearly understand what you are planning to do. You will also be told that you have strict page and/or

(continued on page 9)



Photo by austineven available under a creative-commons attribution license.

**“Applying for funding now is a good way to get into the grant system when your novice status is less of an issue.”**

# THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UNWILY: CONSTRUCTING A BALANCED MEASURE OF INTERPERSONAL ADJECTIVES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

the words in the IAS-R had a frequency of zero, given that they are not recognized as words in the English language (e.g., boastless, unsparkling). The resulting average word frequencies across the IAS-R octants were quite discrepant, with more common words used to describe the friendly (LM), dominant (PA), and friendly-dominant (NO) subscales compared to the others. In addition, many of the terms are tautological opposites or negation adjectives (e.g., crafty, uncrafty, forceful, forceless), which may encourage certain response sets that make the items more negatively correlated with each other than they would otherwise be, thus contributing artificially to a circumplex structure. The presence of unfamiliar and negation adjectives across the circumplex subscales is depicted in Figure 2, in green and blue (respectively).

Accordingly, the current study investigated the hypothesis that the circumplex structure of the IAS-R is, in part, an artifact of the scale construction. We devised an updated version of the IAS-R, which employs all new adjectives, totaling 64 items (eight adjectives per octant). The resulting scale is completely balanced in social desirability, with four desirable words and four undesirable words in each octant-level subscale. In devising this measure, we avoided tautological opposites (e.g., wily vs. unwily) and unfamiliar terms (e.g., boastless). Figure 3 depicts our complete scale, with socially desirable words

shown in pink boxes and socially undesirable words shown in yellow boxes. One hundred and twenty subjects completed an online questionnaire that included our new 64-item measure, the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999) and several other scales.

We aimed to investigate three research questions: (1) Are the subscales of the balanced interpersonal adjectives scale internally consistent? (2) Can the resulting scale be characterized by two orthogonal factors, as would be predicted by interpersonal theory? (3) Does our new measure correlate in expected ways with other well-established personality measures?

To address our first research question, we computed the internal consistency of the items within each subscale. Cronbach's alpha ranged from moderate to high across the eight octants, with an average internal consistency of .71. The smallest alpha was for the dominant (PA) subscale ( $\alpha = .63$ ) and the largest alpha was for the hostile-submissive (FG) subscale ( $\alpha = .80$ ). Thus, we can conclude that the subscales' internal consistencies are in the acceptable range.

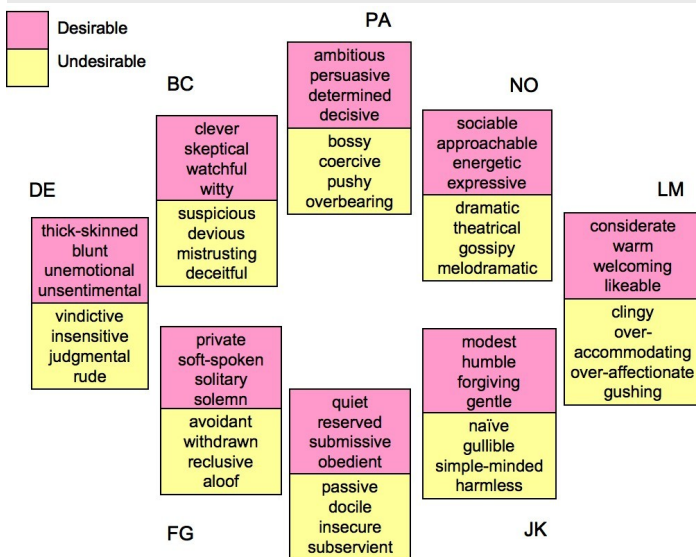
To demonstrate that our measure has the expected structure that would be predicted by interpersonal theory, we attempted to show that it can be characterized by two orthogonal factors, similar to the structure of the IAS-R. To investigate this possibility, we

conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the 64 items, using principal axis factoring with a varimax rotation. Three clear factors emerged with eigenvalues of 10.3, 7.7, and 6.2. Sample items for each factor are shown in Table 1. Items with strong positive loadings on the first factor were mainly located in the hostile-dominant (BC) octant, whereas items with strong negative loadings came from the friendly submissive (JK) octant. Thus, the first factor seemed to be tapping one of the diagonals of the interpersonal circumplex (i.e., agreeable to disagreeable), which we label "disagreeableness." Regarding the second factor, items with strong positive loadings were mainly located in the hostile-submissive (FG) octant, and items with strong negative loadings were from the friendly-dominant (NO) octant. Accordingly, we called this factor "introverted," which is the second diagonal of the interpersonal circumplex (i.e., extraverted to introverted). To summarize, the first two factors that emerged from our exploratory factor analysis are consistent with interpersonal theory. However, instead of representing the two main axes of dominance and affiliation, our items loaded on the diagonal axes of extraversion and agreeableness.

In addition to these two factors, a third factor emerged. The words that loaded positively on the third factor were adjectives denoting strong emotion, such as "gushing" and "melodramatic." Likewise, sample items with negative loadings on this factor were "unemotional" and "thick-skinned." Thus, this third factor appeared to be measuring individual differences in emotionality.

In sum, based on exploratory factor analysis we determined that our balanced measure does not produce the same two-factored solution that we see with the IAS-R. Instead, we would conclude that there are three, rather than two, factors that characterize the interpersonal space. In order to explore what these three factors might be tapping, we computed factor scores for each of the (continued on page 6)

Figure 3. Circumplex Depiction of Balanced Interpersonal Adjectives



conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the 64 items, using principal axis factoring with a varimax rotation. Three clear factors emerged with eigenvalues of 10.3, 7.7, and 6.2. Sample items for each factor are shown

Table 1. Rotated Factor Loadings of Sample Items based on 3-Factored Solution

	Factor 1 "Disagreeable"	Factor 2 "Introverted"	Factor 3 "Emotional"
suspicious (.50)		avoidant (.62)	gushing (.55)
devious (.63)		quiet (.77)	melodramatic (.68)
deceitful (.54)		private (.55)	theatrical (.56)
gentle (-.67)		sociable (-.63)	clingy (.54)
forgiving (-.58)		expressive (-.53)	unemotional (-.27)

Note: Proportions of variance were .14 for Factor 1, .12 for Factor 2 and .09 for Factor 3

## INTRODUCING THE GUEST SPEAKERS FOR SITAR'S 13TH ANNUAL MEETING: DRs. JOHN F. CLARKIN & ROBERT R. MCCRAE



Dr. John F. Clarkin is a Clinical Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry and Co-Director of the Personality Disorders Institute at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University. He is on the Research Faculty at the Columbia Psychoanalytic Institute and is the past-president of the international Society for Psychotherapy Research. Dr. Clarkin's research activities focus on the phenomenology of the personality disorders and the treatment of patients with borderline personality disorder and bipolar disorder.



Dr. Robert R. McCrae has a longstanding interest in personality structure, assessment, and development. He received his doctorate in Personality Psychology from Boston University and spent most of his career as an intramural researcher at the National Institute on Aging. With Paul T. Costa, Jr., he is author of *Personality in Adulthood: A Five-Factor Theory Perspective* and of the forthcoming *NEO Personality Inventory-3*.

## THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UNWILY: CONSTRUCTING A BALANCED MEASURE OF INTERPERSONAL ADJECTIVES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

three factors and examined their correlations with three of the Big Five: Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Neuroticism. We hypothesized that Factor 1 would have a strong negative relation with Agreeableness. Likewise, we expected that Factor 2 would show a strong negative relation with Extraversion. Finally, we expected that Factor 3 would correlate positively with Neuroticism. The results of these correlation analyses are shown in Table 2. Here we see that our hypotheses about the direction and strength of these correlations were supported, shown in bold along the main diagonal of the table. The correlation between Factor 1 and Agreeableness was  $-.80, p < .001$  and the relationship between Factor 2 and Extraversion was  $-.84, p < .001$ . These findings strongly support the notion that the first two factors of our measure are indeed tapping the two diagonal axes in the circumplex. In addition, the third factor was positively correlated with Neuroticism,  $r = .50, p < .001$ , suggesting that these items are tapping emotional instability.

On the basis of these results, we infer that the unbalanced nature of the IAS-R may inadvertently distort the structure of the interpersonal space, concealing a third factor that may have important interpersonal implications. Indeed, our new measure using inter-

personal adjectives that are balanced on social desirability and avoiding the use of unfamiliar or opposite terms suggests that the interpersonal domain is three-dimensional, mapping onto three, rather than two, of the Big Five: Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Neuroticism. Notably, other research has also suggested the importance of a three-dimensional interpersonal space—for example, Schutz's (1966) "Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation" (FIRO), which posits that interpersonal behaviour is the result of three factors: Control, Inclusion, and Affection. Furthermore, it makes sense that Neuroticism would have a strong social component, given that many people experience anxiety during social interactions, which surely affects their interpersonal style in important ways.

To conclude, our research suggests that Wiggins obtained an impressive circumplex structure for the IAS-R through a process that favoured the inclusion of many unusual words and tautological opposites, as well as a heavy imbalance in social desirability across the octants. Ever since Timothy Leary sketched the two-dimensional circumplex on a napkin around 1950 (reproduced in Wiggins, 1996, p. 224), interpersonal researchers have assumed that this is the correct structure for

their measures. Instead, our findings suggest that three factors may better capture people's interpersonal worlds.

### References

- Carson, R. C. (1969). *Interaction concepts of personality*. Oxford: Aldine.
- Jackson, D. N., & Helmes, E. (1979). Personality structure and the circumplex. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 2278-2285.
- John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 102-138). New York: Guilford.
- Kiesler, D. J. (1983). The 1982 interpersonal circle: A taxonomy for complementarity in human transactions. *Psychological Review*, 90, 185-214.
- Schutz, W. C. (1966). *The interpersonal underworld*. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books.
- Thorndike, E. L., & Lorge, I. (1944). *The teacher's word book of 30,000 words*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Wiggins, J. S. (1982). Circumplex models of interpersonal behavior in clinical psychology. In P. C. Kendall & J. N. Butcher (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in clinical psychology* (pp. 183-221). New York: Wiley.
- Wiggins, J. S., Trapnell, P., & Phillips, N. (1988). Psychometric and geometric characteristics of the Revised Interpersonal Adjectives Scale (IAS-R). *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 23, 517-530.

Table 2. Correlations between Three Factors and Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism

	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Neuroticism
Factor 1	<b>-.80**</b>	-.01	.08
Factor 2	-.01	<b>-.84**</b>	.36**
Factor 3	.05	.09	<b>.50**</b>

\*\*  $p < .001$

**WHAT WE THINK WE DO (TO EACH OTHER): HOW THE SAME RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITY PROFILES**

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

communion. People who were low in trait agency expected others to respond more strongly to behaviors that varied in assertive-unassertiveness than did people who were high in trait agency.

In a third study I investigated people's experiences in face-to-face dyadic interactions. A sample of executive MBA students who were enrolled in a negotiations course engaged in six face-to-face dyadic negotiations over a period of two months, each with a different partner. At the end of each negotiation, participants indicated how warmly and assertively they had behaved, and how satisfied they thought their interaction partner was with how they had been treated. Participants also answered questions about their assessments of how favorable they thought the deal outcome was to each party, and how satisfied they personally felt with aspects of the interaction.

As in the previous studies, high trait communion participants inferred that their own warm and cold behaviors had stronger effects on their interaction partner than did low trait communion participants, and, similarly, low trait agency participants inferred that their own submissive and assertive behaviors had stronger effects on their interaction partner than did high trait agency participants. These perceptions were not always justified. As shown in Figure 1, the relational cost of behavioral coldness was not as high as high communal participants thought. Likewise, the relational cost of behavioral assertiveness was not as high as low agentic participants thought (but also not as low as high agentic participants believed).

Looking at the data more closely, I was able to investigate mechanisms for the observed effects of interpersonal traits on interpersonal schemas. As shown in Figure 2, the effects of trait communion were explained by *personal feelings* about warm and cold behavior: People who were high in trait communion were strongly and

personally affected by the level of warmth they perceived in the interaction, and they projected their own feelings when inferring how the partner must feel. People who were low in trait communion were not as affected by the level of warmth in the interaction, and they projected these milder reactions onto the partner when reporting how they thought the partner felt.

The effects of trait agency were explained by *inferences about instrumental outcomes*: People who were low in trait agency thought that their own acts of assertion harmed their partner's outcome, and that their own outcome was harmed by the partner's assertiveness (see Figure 3). As a result, they expected the negotiation partner to be dissatisfied with them when they acted more assertively. On the other hand, people who were high in trait agency saw no association between one person's assertiveness and the other person's outcome. As a result, they did not expect the other person to be unhappy when they had acted assertively.

Of key interest, in this study it was possible to directly model and compare an individual's if-then schema and his or her if-then profile in each domain, using saved random slopes from multi-level models. The results indicated strong associations between profiles and schemas.

In evaluating individuals whose personality traits differ markedly from our own, it is important to consider whether these individuals view their own behavior through the lens of a different meaning system than that which we use to judge them. The set of studies described in this article suggest that people's meaning systems for behavior—their *if-then behavior schemas*—are systematically influenced by their own personality configurations. As a result, it is not only possible, but also quite likely, that individuals who score extremely high or low on trait agency or trait communion will see their own behavior in a different light than how it is seen by others. (continued on page 8)

Figure 1. The effects of trait communion and trait agency on relational inferences in negotiations

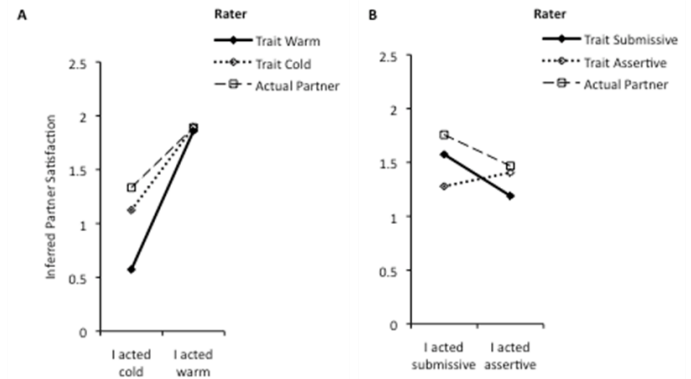


Figure 2. Mediation model for Trait X Behavior effects on relational inferences in negotiations

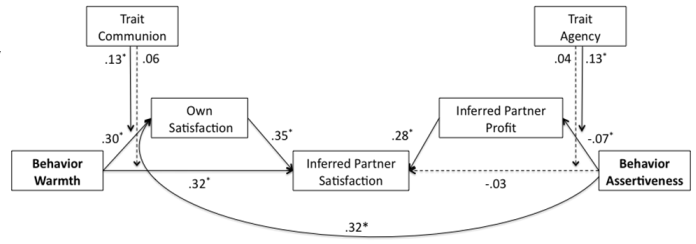
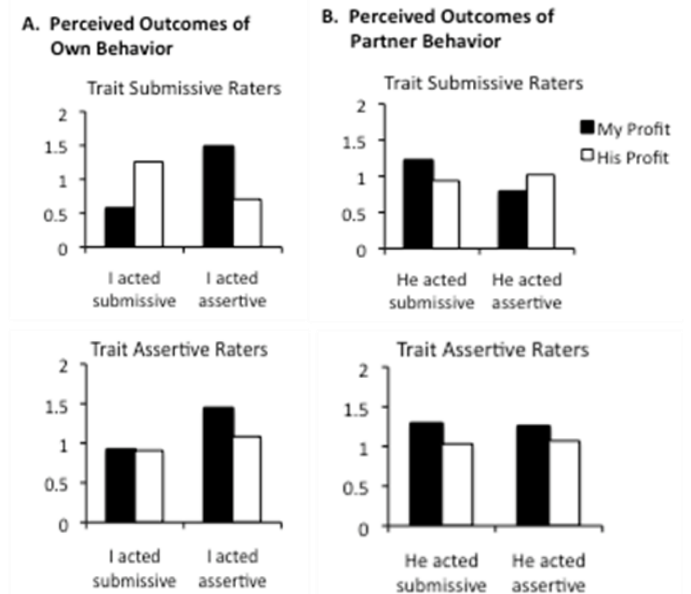


Figure 3. Trait agency and perceived instrumental outcomes for assertive and submissive behaviors in negotiations



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

chapter contributors discuss the importance of stable individual differences variable (e.g., Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy) to interpersonal functioning. In Part IV, *Assessment of Interpersonal Characteristics*, chapter contributors discuss a broad array of instruments that have been developed to assess the interpersonal dimensions of personality and related constructs, including interpersonal problems, competencies, values, and goals. In Part V, *Psychopathology and Health*, chapter contributors discuss the interpersonal aspects of psychiatric classification and the contribution of interpersonal factors to personality disorders, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, trauma disorders, and coronary heart disease. In Part VI, *Interpersonal Therapeutic Interventions*, chapter contributors discuss the factors that contribute to a successful therapeutic alliance, the factors that account for when strains or ruptures occur in therapy, and how the alliance can, in turn, be repaired once such a strain or rupture has occurred. In the Handbook's final chapter, *Summary, Perspective, and Future Directions*, Len and Steve offer a synthesis of the themes presented by the contributors, a perspective of the discipline as it has emerged over the last sixty years, and a sense of the direction that the discipline should take in the years to come. It is their hope, as I suspect it is the hope of us all, that the Handbook will help to define and shape the field of interpersonal psychology as it continues to evolve in the next decade.

Much remains to be done. The Handbook is still in the production phase, and changes in format are bound to occur between now and the time that the Handbook would go to print. Nevertheless, we hope that SITAR's 2010 meeting can serve as an opportunity to commemorate this important moment in the history of our discipline. To this end, I will be dedicating the inaugural President's Symposium to the forthcoming

publication of this volume. Entitled *The Handbook of Interpersonal Psychology: Celebration and Reflection*, the Symposium will consist of two panelists (two prominent scholars who contributed to the Handbook) and two discussants (Len and Steve, who served as editors). Panelists and discussants will be given extended opportunities to present their ideas and, as such, the Symposium will take the place of our two keynote addresses.

Panelists have been selected to represent the intellectual breadth of the Handbook and the SITAR membership. Speaking on the topic of personality and interpersonal functioning will be Robert R. McCrae. One of the leading authorities on the five-factor model of personality, McCrae has authored or co-authored nearly 300 books, book chapters, and journal articles in addition to having co-authored the *Revised NEO-Personality Inventory* with his long-time collaborator, Paul Costa. Speaking on the topic of personality disorders and interpersonal functioning will be John F. Clarkin. Currently the Co-Director of the Personality Disorders Institute at New York Presbyterian Hospital, and Clinical Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry at Cornell University, Clarkin is the co-author (alongside Frank E. Yeomans and Otto F. Kernberg) of *Psychotherapy for Borderline Personality: Focusing on Object Relations*, which outlines the process of transference-focused psychotherapy for borderline personality disorder.

Given the extraordinary amount of work that Len and Steve have invested in bringing the Handbook together, it seems to me that they are uniquely positioned to reflect on the current status of the field. Len and Steve will thus serve as Symposium discussants, and I

hope that they will share with us some of the lessons they have learned from their vantage point as Handbook editors. It is my belief that the Symposium will give rise to an engaging discussion concerning the current status of interpersonal psychology, the meta-theoretical assumptions that define our collective sense of identity, and the visions we each have for the future of our discipline.

With our thirteenth annual meeting now only a few months away, it is time for us to think about what our own contributions to the meeting might be. I urge you to submit your very best work, and to extend invitations to those colleagues whose work would be of interest to the interpersonal community. Encourage your students to attend, and suggest that they present either a poster or paper presentation. Students will once again have the opportunity to apply for the *Jerry S. Wiggins Student Award for Outstanding Interpersonal Research*, which was awarded for the first time last year in memory of our dear colleague and friend. Details on how to apply for the award are enclosed with this newsletter.

As we have done at previous meetings, we will be setting up a display table upon which to showcase your most recent manuscripts, be they in progress, in press, or newly published. Please plan to bring copies of your recent work for us to set out on display. If you cannot attend this year's meeting, then please send any work that you would like to have placed on the display table to either Steve Strack or me no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>.

See you in Philadelphia!

## WHAT WE THINK WE DO (TO EACH OTHER): HOW THE SAME RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITY PROFILES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

### References

- Baldwin, M. W. (1997). Relational schemas as a source of if-then self-inference procedures. *Review of General Psychology, 1*, 326-335.
- Fehr, B., Baldwin, M., Collins, L., Patterson, S., & Benditt, R. (1999). Anger in close relationships: An interpersonal script analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*, 299-312.
- Kammrath, L.K., & Scholer, A.A. (2010). The high-maintenance perceiver: How highly communal and agreeable people judge positive and negative relational acts. *Unpublished manuscript*.
- Kelley, H.H. (1950). The warm-cold variable in first impressions of persons. *Journal of Personality, 18*, 431-439.
- Mischel, W. (2004). Toward and integrative science of the person. *Annual Review of Psychology, 55*, 1-22.
- Mischel, W., & Shoda, Y. (1995). A cognitive-affective system theory of personality: Reconceptualizing situations, dispositions, dynamics, and invariance in personality structure. *Psychological Review, 102*, 246-268.
- Rusbult, C. E., Kumashiro, M., Coolsen, M. K., & Kirchner, J. L. (2004). Interdependence, closeness, and relationships. In D. J. Mashek & A. P. Aron (Eds.), *Handbook of closeness and intimacy* (pp. 137-161). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sadler, P., & Woody, E. (2003). Is who you are who you're talking to? Interpersonal style and complementarity in mixed-sex interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 80-95.

## GRADUATE STUDENT CORNER: INTRODUCTION TO NIH FELLOWSHIP GRANTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

word limitations. Although page limits can feel confining, the final product (with supporting documents) can be close to 100 pages long! The instructions for putting a grant proposal together will say something like, “the paperwork burden is 20hrs.” Some have stated that this estimate is a “cruel joke.” In fact, deciphering the 175 pages of instructions takes longer. Probably the best approach is to find a friendly colleague who has lots of grant-writing experience, and ask him or her to let you use one of their recent proposals as a model for your own submission. If you are lucky enough to have several colleagues with grant-writing experience, I recommend getting as many examples as you can to see how different people approach the same task.

This brings me to another point: Good grantsmanship is not the same as writing a thesis or journal article. It requires a different touch because your audience is a handful of established scientists who will be reading your proposal—probably very quickly—along with several others, and some of these folks may have never heard of the constructs you are writing about or working with. Your job is to write very clearly for someone new to your topic area, and to be authoritative in expounding your rationale, research plan, and methodology.

When writing your proposal keep in mind the criteria and priorities for the funding agency. Many times these criteria can be found in the description of the call for funding. For the NRSA, reviewers will consider the following five areas: (1) Fellowship Applicant; (2) Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants; (3) Research Training Plan; (4) Training Potential; (5) Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training. I will briefly explain what NRSA looks for in each of the categories:

**1. Fellowship Applicant.** Reviewers want to be convinced that you are capable of, and committed to, a research career. They will review your scholarly progress and read up to 5 letters of recommendation. Remember to get letter writers who will sing your praises and explain any inconsistencies in your training background.

**2. Sponsors.** Put together a thoughtful and appropriate mentoring team, which consists of 1-2 sponsors, but also may include consultants. This group should fit with your proposal's objectives, but also consist of successful and seasoned researchers. Your mentoring team can be your opportunity to gain exposure to, and receive training from, other leading researchers in your field over the course of the

fellowship. Remember to be concrete about what you will do with each!

**3. Research Training Plan.** The research proposed should ideally be innovative and impactful. Despite the stated emphasis on training, failing to articulate how your work is new and important can potentially sink your proposal. Be thoughtful, and make an argument for a project that would be difficult to accomplish without this funding. Be prepared for feedback from the agency that you are being too ambitious. I know many people who have received this feedback. If you are criticized for being too ambitious, not to worry, this is your license to cut back on some goals—the committee wants you to be successful, not exhausted.

**4. Training Potential.** What is evaluated here is whether your training plan (e.g., mentoring, courses, exposure to new methods, etc.) is worthwhile and will help you develop into a successful and independent researcher. Again, it is important to be concrete, but also to argue that these experiences will go beyond what is otherwise available to you.

**5. Institutional Environment.** NIH will be assessing whether the institution you are training at can provide the resources and opportunities that you will need to accomplish your stated goals. Here, and throughout the proposal, do not be shy or stingy with praise. Take the approach of pointing out all of the positive qualities of the institution.

At NIH your proposal will be reviewed by 3 people and discussed in a scientific review group (SRG). In the SRG, the primary reviewer of your grant will speak about it, and the other two will be allowed to chime in if they have anything to add. Based on the appraisal, proposals are assigned a score of 1 to 9, with 1 being the best. These basic scores are later transformed into percentile scores, with 1% being the best. To obtain the percentile score your proposal will be rated on each of the five domains described above, and the average score across domains becomes the overall percentile score. This score becomes your “impact/priority score,” which is the primary determinant of whether your proposal will actually be funded. Because the amount of funds available for each granting cycle varies from year-to-year, and because the number of

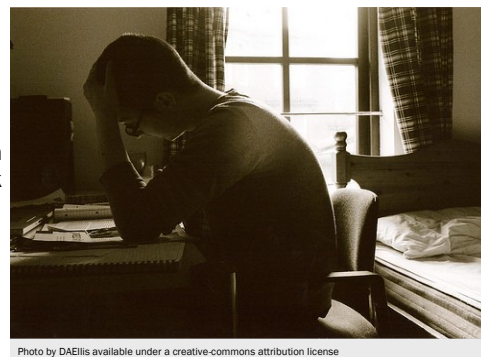


Photo by DAEllis available under a creative-commons attribution license

proposals also vary, the granting agency will determine, for your particular pool of applications, the “funding line,” which is a percentile cut-off above which you are likely to get funded, and if you are below the cut-off you are not likely to get funded. For the NRSA, the cut-off has been hovering around 15%, although it is important to remember that this changes from round to round.

Some parting thoughts and suggestions:

1. Start early, this process will take longer than you expect.

2. Ask others for help early and often. Start by asking for examples of grant proposals from other students that you know. Don't forget that this is a piece of their time and effort they are sharing with you, so remember to respect the proposal and at least buy them coffee in return. Do not be intimidated to approach faculty as well.

3. Read all of the fine print in the grant application. The details can and do change, sometimes just prior to submission deadlines, so bookmark the website of the grant you are pursuing and check it often.

4. Contact the program officer of the institute you expect your grant to go to and set up a phone meeting to introduce yourself, and to have them tell you what to expect. This is not the time to be shy.

5. Expect rejection. Even if you know someone who was funded on the first round, expect that you will not. Think of it like a manuscript submission; a revise and resubmit is a successful submission.

At the time of this writing, my grant is being considered for funding. Although it received good marks from reviewers on the second time through, it awaits the approval of those who have the “power of the pen.” Keep your fingers crossed for me, and I wish you the best of luck with your own proposal.

## Society for Interpersonal Theory and Research

Web site: [www.sitarociety.org](http://www.sitarociety.org)

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

#### Past President

Pamela Sadler, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
Waterloo, ON N2L 3C5  
[psadler@wlu.ca](mailto:psadler@wlu.ca)

#### President

Marc A. Fournier, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
University of Toronto  
Scarborough  
1265 Military Trail  
Toronto, ON M1C 1A4  
[fournier@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:fournier@utsc.utoronto.ca)

#### President-Elect

Martin Grosse Holtforth, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
University of Zurich  
Binzmuehlester. 14/19  
8050 Zurich, Switzerland  
[martin.grosse-holtforth@psychologie.uzh.ch](mailto:martin.grosse-holtforth@psychologie.uzh.ch)

#### Vice President

Patrick Markey, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
Villanova University  
Villanova, PA 19085  
[patrick.markey@villanova.edu](mailto:patrick.markey@villanova.edu)

#### Executive Officer

Stephen Strack, Ph.D.  
VA Ambulatory Care Center  
351 East Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
[snstrack@aol.com](mailto:snstrack@aol.com)

#### Members-at-Large

Emily Ansell, Ph.D.  
Yale University  
[emily.ansell@yale.com](mailto:emily.ansell@yale.com)

Lynne Henderson, Ph.D.  
Stanford University  
[lynne@psych.stanford.edu](mailto:lynne@psych.stanford.edu)

Sandro M. Sodano, Ph.D.  
University at Buffalo-SUNY  
[smsodano@buffalo.edu](mailto:smsodano@buffalo.edu)

#### Graduate Student Representative

Aidan G. C. Wright  
Pennsylvania State University  
[aidan@psu.edu](mailto:aidan@psu.edu)

#### Newsletter

Editor: Patrick Markey, Ph.D.  
[patrick.markey@villanova.edu](mailto:patrick.markey@villanova.edu)  
Associate Editor: Emily Ansell, Ph.D.  
[emily.ansell@yale.com](mailto:emily.ansell@yale.com)

### SITAR: MISSION, AIMS, AND ACTIVITIES

The Society is an international, multidisciplinary, scientific association devoted to interpersonal theory and research. By encouraging systematic theory and empirical research, it seeks to clarify the processes and mechanisms of interpersonal interactions that explain interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomena of normal and abnormal psychology.

The goals of the Society are (1) to encourage the development of this research, (2) to foster the communication, understanding, and application of research findings, and (3) to enhance the scientific and social value of this research.

The activities of the Society include: (1) regular meetings for the communication of current research ideas, methods, and findings; (2) discussion of work in progress; (3) maintenance of an inventory of data and data-gathering resources available for use by members of the Society; and (4) facilitation of collaborative research.

**Society for Interpersonal Theory and Research**  
2020 Fremont Avenue  
South Pasadena, CA 91031-0608  
Phone / FAX: 626-441-0614  
Listserve: [sitar-l@venus.vcu.edu](mailto:sitar-l@venus.vcu.edu)

## MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR SITAR'S 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



The Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Photo by Max Buten available under a creative-commons attribution license

the location for the great debates leading to the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

*The Reading Terminal Market* was originally created so farmers could sell their produce in the middle of East Market Street. It is currently a bustling market selling a

variety of products, antiques and food. Of particular interest to visitors are the Amish and Mennonite vendors.

*The Philadelphia Museum of Art* is dramatically located on a hill at the end of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It currently exhibits works from the Middle Ages to Modern period containing over 225,000 pieces of art.

*Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site* was once the most famous and expensive prison in the world, but stands today in ruin, a haunting world of crumbling cellblocks and empty guard towers. Tours today include the cellblocks, solitary punishment cells, Al Capone's Cell, and Death Row

*The Betsy Ross House* is a museum located in the historic Georgian-style home where the first American flag was

made and pays tribute to the creator of the Stars and Stripes.

*The Franklin Institute Science Museum* serves to inspire an understanding of and passion for science. Its permanent and interactive attractions explore science in disciplines ranging from sports to space.



The Betsy Ross House  
Photo by Elisabeth Baker available under a creative-commons attribution license