

**Society for
Interpersonal
Theory and
Research**

SITAR Newsletter

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President's Message Kenneth Locke



Following in the footsteps of our first ten meetings, our 11th annual meeting in

Tempe in May regaled attendees with a heady feast of intellectually stimulating presentations and engaging social interactions. The presentations covered a diversity of topics, ranging from those elucidating prototypical SITAR concerns, such as adherence to interpersonal complementarity and circumplex structure, to those linking interpersonal theory and research, to evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, and behavioral medicine. My thanks to Terry Tracey for managing the on-site arrangements and to

each of you who attended and helped make the meeting a success. If you missed the meeting, you can torment yourself with what you let slip through your fingers (and also view materials from some of the presentations) by visiting our website (www.sitarsociety.org) and clicking on the Conference link.

At the annual meeting we also installed our new officers. I had the honor of passing the very official "President of SITAR Gavel" to our new President, Pam Sadler. I am confident that Pam, with her incomparable clarity of thought and sense of responsibility, will provide SITAR with stellar leadership over the next year. Marc Fournier, in turn, assumed the position of President-Elect, while Martin Grosse-Holtforth and Patrick Markey both

bravely volunteered to be candidates for Vice President. Finally, Terry Tracey was sent into the pasture (or, more accurately, bolted out the gate). These changes will be noted in the next SITAR newsletter, when the results of the election for Vice President are known and a new member-at-large has been selected.

In reflecting on these transitions, I feel like I am not only literally passing the gavel to Pam, but also figuratively "passing a torch to a new generation" of SITAR members. Unless our indefatigable Executive Officer, Steve Strack, someday deigns to be our President, I may be the last President from the "first generation" of SITAR members (i.e., those who have been

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Patrick Markey Appointed SITAR Newsletter Editor

The Executive Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Patrick Markey, Ph.D., as the next official editor of the SITAR Newsletter. His duties will begin with Volume 9, Issue 1, which is scheduled to appear in October 2008. He will replace Pam Sadler, who served as the SITAR newsletter editor from October 2004 until June 2008.

Patrick Markey graduated from the University of California at Riverside in



2002. Since then he has worked at both Rutgers University (with his wife and frequent coauthor) and Villanova University. He currently serves as a Member-at-Large of the Executive Council and is an associate editor for the *Journal of Personality*. Patrick's research focuses on how behavioral tendencies develop and are expressed within social relationships. The behavioral tendencies that Patrick

has examined range from fairly mundane interpersonal behaviors (e.g., acting warmly during an interaction) to behaviors of real-life importance (e.g., unhealthy dieting, civic behavior, sexual promiscuity, personality judgment, interpersonal aggression after playing violent video games, etc.).

SITAR members are encouraged to contact Patrick with their ideas and suggestions for upcoming newsletters. He may be reached via e-mail at patrick.markey@villanova.edu.

Individual Variation in Interpersonal Adherence and Complementarity

by Aidan G.C. Wright¹, Jessica E. Rohlfling², Aaron L. Pincus¹, and Terrence J.G. Tracey²

The interpersonal circumplex (IPC) has been widely used to model the relationship between interpersonal variables by aggregating individual responses, thus representing the structure of the interpersonal field across many individuals. The validity of a circumplex representation of interpersonal traits (Gurtman & Pincus, 2000), behaviors (Moskowitz, 1994), and problems (Alden, Wiggins, & Pincus, 1990) has received strong empirical support; therefore it seems plausible that people's mental representations or cognitive schemas of the relations between these variables should also be well described by the IPC. Moreover, many theorists have asserted that people have a need to maintain a "congruency" among various salient aspects of themselves, such as their cognitions, feelings, and behaviors (Secord & Backman, 1961, 1965; Carson, 1969). However, this implicit assumption involved in interpreting the structure of the IPC – that individuals also organize their thinking about the relationships between interpersonal variables in the same manner as they exhibit them – has rarely been examined.

If an individual does not "adhere" to the normative circumplex structure in his or her mental representation of the relationship between interpersonal behaviors, she or he may have an alternative, possibly unique structure, calling into question the person's responses to, and the interpretation of, standard IPC questionnaires. Individual deviation from the IPC structure might complicate interpretation of responses on the measures we currently use to assess interpersonal functioning (e.g., IAS-R, Wiggins, 1995; IIPC, Alden et al., 1990) and may present difficulties when attempting to relate them to interpersonal criteria, as the IPC structure may not be a valid representation for some individuals.

In addition, the basic give-and-take of the interpersonal transaction cycle

(Kiesler, 1983) would presumably be contingent on the interactants' understanding of the relationship between interpersonal behaviors. Theorists dating back to Sullivan (1953) have discussed the quality of an interpersonal interaction as being reliant on an



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individual's ability to accurately encode and respond to another. Kiesler (1983) elaborated on Sullivan's and others' work (e.g., Carson, 1969) by formally articulating the steps in the interpersonal transaction cycle. In so doing, he described both the overt (behavioral) and covert (mental) aspects of interpersonal exchanges. Taking two hypothetical individuals, person A and person B, the full transaction was delineated as follows. Person A expresses a behavior toward B, who then encodes and interprets A's behavior. Person B then chooses a response from a range of possible responses, which B then expresses toward A. Person A encodes B's behavior, and the cycle continues.

The relationship between the overt sequences in this cycle has been studied under the rubric of interpersonal complementarity. The most widely studied model was provided by Carson (1969) and holds that behaviors are complementary when they are reciprocally dominant but equivalently warm. Furthermore, complementary transactions lead to more stability, positive relating, and mutually satisfying interpersonal outcomes. Although there has been relatively strong support for this construct (e.g., Tracey, 2005), some have criticized

the often equivocal results (Orford, 1986). Given that the covert aspects of the interpersonal transaction cycle rely on the interactants' understanding of how interpersonal behaviors relate to each other, it stands to reason that this cycle might be at the mercy of an individual's cognitive adherence to the IPC model. That is to say, if an individual struggles to understand the normative relationship between behaviors, instead operating under an alternative cognitive model of interpersonal behaviors, he

or she may, as a consequence, respond in a less complementary fashion when choosing the overt behaviors to enact in a transaction. Overt complementarity (OC) is therefore contingent on covert complementarity (CC). An individual's CC in a situation will contain the effects of the understanding of which behaviors the other person is pulling for (i.e., adherence), but also, whether or not the individual is willing to respond in

that fashion. CC is presumed to primarily influenced by interpersonal motivations (e.g., Horowitz et al., 2006).

"Individual deviation from the IPC structure might complicate interpretation of responses on the measures we currently use to assess interpersonal functioning..."

Through two studies, we investigated cognitive adherence to the IPC and the relationship between an individual's level of adherence and the interpersonal transaction cycle. Study 1 examined whether individuals' cognitive structure of interpersonal behavior adheres to the normative IPC. Specifically, do individuals understand interpersonal behaviors to be related in the way the IPC dictates? Study 2 extended this investigation by sampling participants' level of adherence prior to placing them in an interpersonal transaction paradigm that measured both the overt and covert steps of the transaction cycle. To our knowledge this is the first time the covert aspects of the cycle have directly been sampled in this way.

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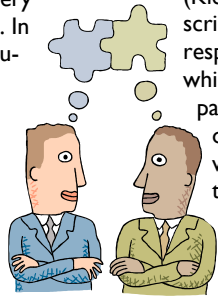
Wright et al. (continued)

Study 1

In both studies, adherence was assessed using the Paired Interpersonal Questionnaire (PIQ), which consisted of one adjective representing each of the 8 octants that was matched with each other item to form 28 adjective pairs. These pairs were then randomly arranged and the participants were asked to respond to the perceived similarity of the adjectives using a 6 point scale rating from 1 = very dissimilar to 6 = very similar. In the first study 189 college students completed the PIQ.

The structures of the responses of each individual were then examined using constrained Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) which yielded a correlation of the fit of each person's ratings to a circumplex. Lower scores indicate lower adherence, and the opposite is true for high scores.

The average correlation of each individual's data to the circumplex model (r_c) was moderate (.76); however there was a great deal of variance in this correlation across individuals, indicating that many individuals' perceptions were not well described by the IPC model. Further unconstrained MDS analysis was conducted on the data from the 20 worst fit individuals, yielding no common structure that fit this group well, such that there did not appear to be any alternative structures used consistently by low adherers in thinking



about interpersonal data. Interestingly, some individuals do not think in terms of the normative structure and organize interpersonal behaviors in an alternative and possibly idiosyncratic fashion.

Study 2

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of adherence on the interpersonal transaction cycle. Participants ($N = 305$) completed the PIQ measure described above in addition to viewing two videos of an individual, which they were supposed to imagine interacting with. They then completed the IMI-C (Kiesler, 1993) and gave a written description of how they would behave in response to the individual in the video, which were used as measures of the participants' covert reaction and overt behaviors respectively. The written responses were coded using the ICRS (Strong, 1985). Scores for both covert and overt complementarity were calculated. Overt complementarity was defined as the Euclidian distance on the interpersonal plane between the ICRS coding of the participant's described behavior and the behavior that would define perfect complementarity in relation to the videotaped actor's displayed behavior, based on Carson's (1969) model. Covert complementarity was defined as the Euclidian distance between the participants' described behavior and the behavior that would define perfect complementarity given the participant's covert encoding of the videotape's displayed behavior on the IMI-C. By measuring covert complementarity in this fashion, accuracy in the encoding of the videotaped behav-



ior is controlled for, but the choice of response behavior is retained. Adherence need not be related to accuracy of encoding others' behavior as it is a direct measure of the individual's cognitive schema of the relationships between interpersonal variables.

CC was a strong predictor of OC at the zero-order level ($r = .62$). Additionally, results from hierarchical regression analyses indicated that although adherence was not directly related to OC at the zero-order level, when CC was included in the model, adherence significantly predicted variance in OC ($r_p = .13$). Finally, adherence and CC interacted in predicting OC, with those individuals high in adherence exhibiting a significantly stronger relationship between CC and OC (see Figure).

Discussion

The results of these studies indicate that there is significant variation in cognitive adherence to the IPC even though the normative structure fits the circumplex model. Additionally, adherence moderates the interpersonal transaction cycle and predicts OC above and beyond CC. Specifically, Study 1 results indicate that many individuals do use the IPC in making judgments about interpersonal behaviors, but there is also evidence of a good deal of variance in the extent to which this applies to individuals. There did not appear to be any common structure adopted by those individuals who do not use the IPC structure in their thinking, only that they differed from the normative circumplex. While it is clear that individuals with low adherence do not think about interpersonal behaviors the same way as most individuals do, it is less clear how this individual variation impacts these individuals. It is possible that alternative, non-normative structures could be found in samples with a higher degree of psychopathology. These were both samples of college students. Individuals with personality disorders might offer an ideal population for investigating patterned non-normative cognitive schemas of interpersonal behaviors that are shared within a defined group (e.g., narcissistic personality disorder patients). Diagnostic groups who show a particular pattern of interpersonal behavior in interactions may show similar cognitive schemas of interpersonal variables informing their behavior. Study 2 begins investigation into this issue by studying the effect of adherence on the interpersonal transaction cycle.

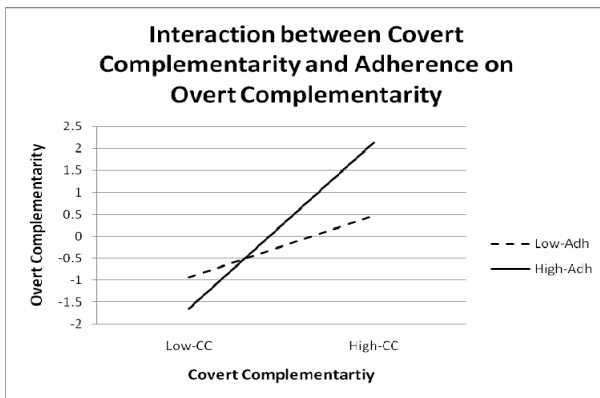


Figure. Note. Higher scores indicate greater complementarity. Overt complementarity scores are standardized. Low-CC and High-CC correspond to two standard deviations below and above the congruence mean respectively. Low-Adh and High-Adh correspond to two standard deviations below and above the Adherence mean respectively.

Scenes From SITAR's Eleventh Annual Meeting in Tempe, May 17-18, 2008



Changing of the guard made explicit with signs from Steve Strack at the business meeting. From left: Marc Fournier, Pam Sadler, Ken Locke, and a "moo-ing" Terry Tracey.



Many thanks to our conference organizers. From left: Amanda Hardy, Terry Tracey, Jessica Rohlfing, Tim Hess, and Dominic Prime.



Ken Locke passes the gavel to new President, Pam Sadler



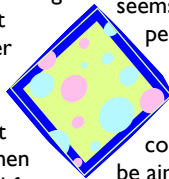
Ken Locke (left) and Mark Lukowitsky (right) discussing poster with Tim Hess.



Graduate students after lunch. From left: Cathy Longa, Vicki Burns, Ana Chapman, Joey Cheng, Nicole Ethier, and Susanna Gehring Reimer

Wright et al. (continued)

To understand the results of Study 2, the relationship between overt and covert complementarity deserves some comment. The interpersonal transaction cycle is not a fixed action pattern (Pincus, 1994). Although interpersonal behaviors "pull" for certain responses, they by no means lock the other into reciprocating with that response. Behavioral responses in interpersonal exchanges will be contingent on motivations (Horowitz et al., 2006), among other things, affecting the covert choice of which behavior to offer in response. These are captured in our measurement of CC. Although adherence did not directly predict OC, it did so when the effect for CC was accounted for. Therefore, when the relatively strong effects of influences such as motivation to behave in a certain way are partialled out, an individual's mental representation of interpersonal behaviors becomes a significant predictor of his or her OC. Furthermore, as can be seen in the Figure, when individuals chose to exhibit high complementarity (i.e., high CC), they were better able to do so when they had high adherence.



And conversely, when they chose not to complement the other (i.e., low CC), they were better able to break complementarity if they were adherent.

In conclusion, the measurement of adherence offers a significant advance in the methodology available to the study of interpersonal behavior, and has been shown to affect the most basic of the interpersonal assumptions. In particular, cognitive adherence to IPC structure seems to serve as a "calibrator" for interpersonal behavior in interactions.

Those who are higher in adherence are significantly better at providing the complementary or non-complementary response they seem to be aiming for, whereas those who lack in adherence do so less well. Finally, cognitive adherence to circumplex structure holds the potential to be an interesting avenue for modeling alternative, but shared, structures in specific populations such as personality disorder patients.

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Graduate Student Corner



Lindsay Ayearst

Greetings SITAR members! I hope the summer is providing you with the opportunity to recharge and be productive. An important part of getting recharged for me is attending our annual meeting, where ideas are shared, innovative research is presented, and collaboration efforts are discussed. This year's conference was no exception, and I returned home with feedback on existing research I have done as well as ideas for improving projects I am currently working on; and most importantly, it fueled my fire to keep me motivated and excited about our field.

I feel that this year's conference was especially noteworthy because it was the first time (to my knowledge) that graduate-student attendance out-numbered that of faculty and professionals. Over 50% of the conference attendees this year were graduate students, and many of those students were there on their own accord (i.e., without their faculty supervisors being present)! There were students from the University of British Columbia, Pennsylvania State, and Florida, all of whom were there without their supervisors, suggesting that SITAR and the study of interpersonal theory and research is important to them, and not just because it is important to their supervisors! In addition, many of the students in attendance are students who have attended the meeting in previous years, demonstrating their dedication to the society. Seeing such a strong graduate student turnout speaks to a very promising future for the society.

Given the strong support that students have shown to SITAR over the years, the role of graduate students in the society became an important part of the discussions during the Executive Council (EC) meetings that took place both before and after the conference. A number of ways to expand student participation in the society and also further support them were discussed. In particular, it was decided that an award, perhaps in honor of Dr. Jerry Wiggins, should be created. This award would be given annually to the best student (paper or poster) presentation at the conference. Details are still being



worked out about the logistics of this award. For example, it is undecided whether or not this award should have a monetary value (either reimbursement for the cost of registration, or perhaps free registration to next year's conference) or if it should simply be an acknowledgement of excellence that can be listed on the recipient's CV. Who would judge the award, and when and how it would be awarded, are also still under discussion. This award would not require nominations; all first authored student presentations would be eligible.

Another idea for increasing the level of support and involvement of students was to allow students to be part of the various sub-committees of the society, or perhaps form their own student sub-committee. Some of the issues raised were that the society might be too small to create another committee just for students, so it may be more beneficial to have students join existing committees (e.g., newsletter committee, membership committee, website committee, and so forth).

Student involvement was also discussed with respect to the position of Graduate Student Representative on the EC. This is a position I have been honored to hold for a number of years. Nonetheless, I believe that being a part of the EC of an international society at such an early stage in one's career is an experience and opportunity that should be shared. Discussions are underway about the nomination process that should be involved, as well as setting a term length for the position. For example, the student could be appointed by the existing graduate student membership, or perhaps be nominated during the annual business meeting. The term of the position has yet to be discussed, but I believe that some end point should be in place so that others can also enjoy the benefits and opportunities that the position provides.

Last, but certainly not least, the suggestion of providing half-day or full-day workshops on the day prior to the conference was discussed. Workshops could focus on teaching specific data-analytic approaches (e.g., event-contingent sampling methods often demonstrated in Dr. Moskowitz's and Dr. Fournier's work, or Dr. Gurtman's and Dr. Pincus's structural summary method), or demonstrating the use of the various interpersonal measurement tools (such as the IAS, IASR-B5, IIP-C, IMI, SAS-B, SAS-C). Per-

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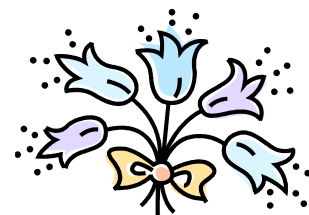
President's Message (cont.)

dutifully attending every SITAR conference since its genesis). Yet, as one generation passes and another arises, SITAR – for the moment – continues. But what defines continuity?

Our mission statement expresses one definition of SITAR: "an international, multidisciplinary, scientific association devoted to interpersonal theory and research..." Yet, many other societies with many thousands of members could fit under this broad umbrella. Moreover, I suspect that a minority of our continuing members became interested in SITAR simply by reading our mission statement or meeting announcements. Instead, perhaps most of us initially became involved with SITAR through our personal or professional affiliations with existing members, and subsequently became committed to the organization as much because of our shared interest in interpersonal theory and research as because of our shared enjoyment of, respect for, and loyalty, to our fellow SITARians.

Although certain topics have been "prototypical" foci of SITAR members, the scope of theory and research that theoretically define this organization have proven impossible to define by any fixed set of "necessary and sufficient" conditions. And that is good. SITAR needs no further definition than the skeletal framework traced by its mission statement. What enables scientific progress is openness to evidence-based revision, rather than ongoing deference to any particular tradition, including the circumplex tradition. That is why I see the continuity of SITAR not in particular models or methods or questions, but in the slowly shifting menagerie of members and their interrelationships which collectively constitute the society and complete its fluid definition.

Finally, my last words as President: I thank my successor, Pam Sadler, for being such a conscientious and capable editor of our newsletter over the past four years!



Mental Representations and Interpersonal Adjustment

by Mark Lukowitsky and Aaron Pincus, Pennsylvania State University

Mental representations are the templates that structure how one thinks and feels about oneself and others. They are believed to serve as heuristic guides that organize experience, modulate affect, and provide direction for future behavior (Blatt, Auerbach, & Levy, 1997). Contemporary psychoanalytic theory integrates classical psychoanalysis with cognitive developmental theories, including object relations theory and attachment theory, and has had much to say about mental representations and their importance for understanding personality development, psychopathology, and the therapeutic process. An important assertion is that mental representations derive from early interactions with primary caregivers, and continue to develop and evolve through interpersonal interactions throughout the life cycle (Bornstein, 1993).

Attachment theory has conceptualized mental representations in terms of internal working models (IWMs; Bowlby, 1969) of self and others. It suggests that repeated transactions between an infant and caregiver, in the context of either a secure or insecure attachment relationship, allow infants to develop schematic representations of self and others which serve to develop expectations about interpersonal relationships. Although Bowlby and his contemporaries have largely focused on the infant-caregiver relationship and the development of IWMs, attachment theory also posits that IWMs serve as templates that not only influence infant behavior, but also interpersonal behavior in adolescence and adulthood (Hazan & Shaver 1987). Adult attachment researchers hypothesize that these early attachment bonds serve as a heuristic that allows adults to feel secure vs. insecure in current interpersonal relationships.

Object relations theory conceptualizes mental representations in terms of cognitive-affective schemas (Blatt, 1995) or internal object relations (Kernberg, 2005) of self and others. Like attachment theory, it also empha-

sizes the importance of early interpersonal relations in the development of mental representations. Specifically, the theory suggests that repeated interpersonal transactions with caregivers eventually become internalized representations of self and other which help to



Mark Lukowitsky

Aaron L. Pincus

organize and influence subsequent personality development and interpersonal relationships throughout the life cycle.

Despite the interpersonal origins of mental representations and their strong subsequent impact on future

relationships, interpersonal theory has not traditionally articulated the inner workings of the mind as mental representations, and has typically focused more attention on the observable behaviors between two proximal individuals. However, there has been a shift in the interpersonal tradition, and interpersonal theorists have begun to more fully articulate an intrapsychic interpersonal world by integrating concepts from both attachment theory and object relations theories (Benjamin, 2003; Horowitz, 2004; Pincus, 2005).

Few studies have assessed mental representations from a contemporary psychoanalytic viewpoint in order to make predictions about current interpersonal adjustment. Thus, the goal of the current study was to empirically examine the association between self and object (parental) representations and current interpersonal adjustment.

We had several hypotheses for our study: (1) self and parental object representations would have interpersonal qualities, (2) parental and self representations would predict interpersonal adjustment, (3) more mature, integrated, and complex object representations would be associated with greater interpersonal adjustment, and (4) adult attachment would mediate the relationship between parental and self representations and interpersonal adjustment (given that parental object representations serve as the building block for the development of representations of self and other and that adult attachment guides current proximal interpersonal transactions). Importantly, this study took a multi-method approach by incor-

porating a projective measure to assess self and object representations as well as self report measures of interpersonal adjustment. Thus any associations between mental representations and interpersonal adjustment cannot be explained by common method variance.

To assess self and object representations, 110 undergraduate students were given a pencil and three blank pieces of paper that included the instructions to "Describe your mother," "Describe your father," and "Describe your self." Participants were given 5 minutes to complete each description. These spontaneous written descriptions were then coded for self and object representations following the procedures described in the manuals for the Assessment of Self Descriptions (ASD; Blatt, Bers, & Schaeffer, 1993), and Assessment of Qualitative and Structural Dimensions of Object Representations (AOR; Blatt, Chevron, Quinlan, Schaffer, & Wein, 1992), respectively. In order to make predictions from these measures, we used the Communion, Agency, and Structure factors of the AOR (Heck & Pincus, 2001). We also conducted our own factor analysis on the ASD and found a three-factor solution that described Quality of Self and Relationships, Developmental Level, and Unidimensionality of Experience. Participants also completed the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR; Brennan, Clark, Shaver, 1998) questionnaire in order to assess dimensions of adult attachment, and the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems – Circumplex Scales (IIP-C; Alden, Wiggins, & Pincus, 1990) in order to assess current interpersonal adjustment.

We first evaluated associations between the AOR, ASD, and interpersonal problems using the structural summary method for circumplex data (Gurtman & Balakrishnan, 1998). All factor profiles exhibited acceptable to very good R^2 values (.76 to .96), except the parental Structural factors, a result that is consistent with Heck and Pincus (2001) who found that the Structural variables are a third factor that do not contain interpersonal qualities associated with agency and communion. The amplitudes associated with the factors ranged from .09 to .14, and though they were modest, they may be considered ade-

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Lukowitsky and Pincus (continued)

quate given the heteromethod approach. All AOR and ASD factors with the exception of maternal Agency and Unidimensionality of Experience exhibited negative elevation, suggesting that in this sample of adjusted college students, object representations are generally associated with interpersonal adjustment.

Rather than examining the angular displacement associated with the

peak shifts of the curve, we evaluated the displacement associated with the trough of the curve in order to describe the types of problems that are mitigated by object representations in our sample of adjusted college students. The trough associated with maternal Communion fell in the DE octant, suggesting that maternal Communion mitigates problems associated with being too cold. The paternal Communion trough fell in the JK octant, and the paternal Agency trough fell in the FG octant, suggesting that agentic and communal paternal representations mitigate submissive bandwidth problems. Given that maternal Agency was associated with interpersonal distress, we interpreted the peak displacement which fell in the JK octant as suggesting that an agentic maternal representation is associated with promoting friendly-submissive compliance. Turning to the self descriptions, we found that, not surprisingly, the Quality of Self and Relationships factor mitigated problems with being socially avoidant (FG). The trough associated with Developmental Level fell in the BC octant, indi-

cating that an integrated and conceptually complex self representation protects against hostile-dominant problems. Finally, the peak for Unidimensionality of Experience fell in the DE octant, suggesting that a narrowness of experience is associated with a lack of communal qualities.

Next, we used regression techniques to predict interpersonal adjustment

(elevation) from the AOR factors. We controlled for sex by entering it into the first step of the model, though there were no significant sex differences. As hypothe-

sized, results suggested that parental representations predict interpersonal adjustment. Specifically, maternal Communion and paternal Agency predicted interpersonal adjustment, and maternal Agency marginally predicted interpersonal distress. Research in social role theory and gender prescriptions suggests that, despite some improvements, gender stereotypes of communal and agentic attributes persist, and people tend to disapprove of both men and women who violate gender role stereotypes (Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Riggs, 1997). Our results seem to support these areas of research by suggesting that a parental object representation that conforms to gender stereotypes (i.e., high maternal Communion and high paternal Agency) is associated with interpersonal adjustment, and parental object representations that go against gender stereotypes (i.e. high paternal Communion and high maternal Agency) are either unrelated to interpersonal adjustment or associated with marginal interpersonal distress.

“...maternal Communion and paternal Agency predicted interpersonal adjustment, and maternal Agency marginally predicted interpersonal distress.”

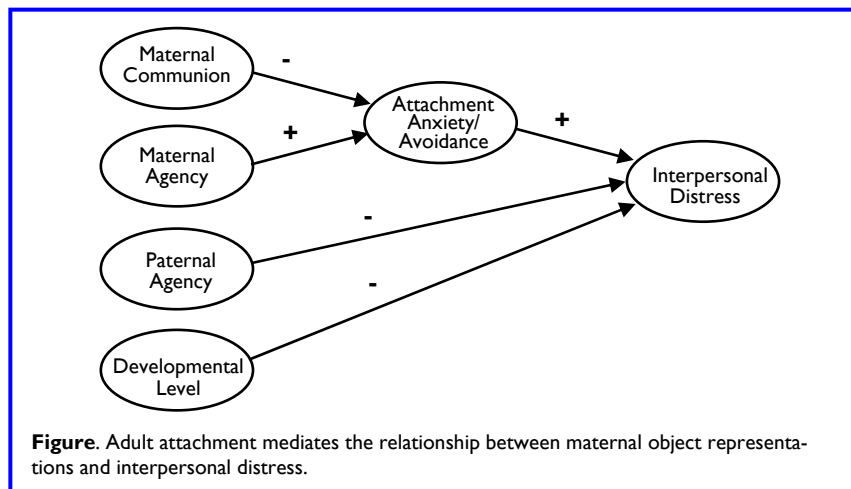
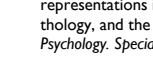
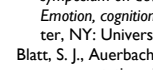
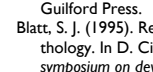
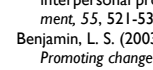
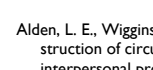
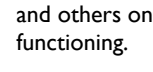
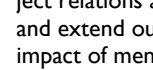
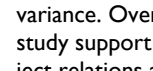
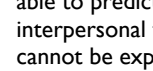
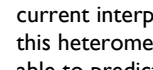
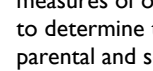
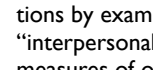
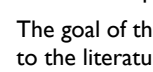
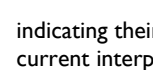
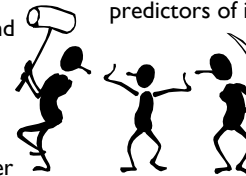


Figure. Adult attachment mediates the relationship between maternal object representations and interpersonal distress.

We predicted that self representations would also predict interpersonal adjustment. Regressions using the ASD did not support this hypothesis. However, we found that the Developmental Level factor of the ASD was associated with interpersonal adjustment. We therefore tested a full model that included the significant predictors from the self and parental representation models, and found that together they predicted 17% of the variance in interpersonal adjustment. To test our mediation hypothesis, we added the factors from the self report measure of adult attachment to the model. Results suggested that both Attachment Avoidance and Attachment Anxiety predicted interpersonal distress. Importantly, our results suggested that after adding the adult attachment variables to the model, the maternal Communion and Agency object representation factors were no longer significant predictors of interpersonal adjustment, thereby indicating a mediation effect (see Figure). However, paternal Agency and Developmental Level were still significant predictors, indicating their unique importance in current interpersonal adjustment.

The goal of the present study was to add to the literature on mental representations by examining the “interpersonalness” of two projective measures of object representation and to determine the relationship between parental and self representations and current interpersonal adjustment. Using this heteromethod procedure, we were able to predict 17% of the variance in interpersonal functioning, a result that cannot be explained by common method variance. Overall, the results of this study support major contemporary object relations and attachment theories, and extend our understanding of the impact of mental representations of self and others on current interpersonal functioning.

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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.

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Personal and Professional Announcements

Daniel Leising and his wife Christine happily announce the birth of their second son, Constantin, who was born on March 8, 2008, at six minutes past midnight.



Constantin Leising



Lindsay Ayearst recently received a Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology (CCDP) Certificate of Teaching Excellence Award.

Marc Fournier was granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at the University of Toronto Scarborough, which takes effect on July 1, 2008.

Debbie Moskowitz received the Canadian Psychological Association's (CPA) Award for Significant Contributions to Canadian Psychology. This award recognizes her research in the area of interpersonal behavior as well as her service as Clinical Program Director at McGill University, which resulted in significant improvements to training opportunities for graduate students.

David Zuroff received the 2008 Canadian Psychological Association's (CPA) Award for Distinguished Contributions to Education and Training in Psychology. This award recognizes his teaching of undergraduate students and the training, supervision and mentoring of graduate students and young researchers. The award also acknowledges the accomplishments of his graduate students as scientist-practitioners.

Graduate Student Corner (continued)

haps these workshops could be provided free of charge (with the exception of the expense involved in attending the conference for an extra day). They might also be videotaped and then sold for profit on the SITAR website (with possibly some proceeds going to presenters who generously donated their time and expertise).

Other exciting discussions focused on how to bring the measures we use to clinicians. Ideas about conducting online "webinars" were discussed, as well as creating updated software packages for some of the more popular measures. All of these suggested ideas are still open for discussion and we welcome any feedback or suggestions from you!

I'd like to conclude by stating that, although there have been concerns about the future of the society given our small size, this year's conference certainly provided a strong sense of hope for the future. SITAR is still thriving, I believe, and this is in large part due to our strong graduate student support!

Congratulations!