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Research**

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President's Message **Kenneth Locke**

My personal experience has been that the interpersonal stances of agency and communion collectively facilitate the most engaging and fulfilling professional interactions. I find it enlivening to be with colleagues who express their ideas passionately, who articulate their concerns (and even criticisms of me) confidently, and who are present in their interactions fully. Agency can generate vibrancy. I also find it comforting to be with colleagues who share my interests and aims, who value my ideas and opinions, and who embrace me as both a professional and a person. Communion can create safety.

But agency and communion

work best together. Agency that is not mitigated by communion—for example, offering criticism without compassion—can undermine and silence. Likewise, communion that is not alloyed with agency—for example, only comforting and never challenging—can fail to stimulate or provoke. Fortunately, the colleagues I have spent time with at SITAR have embodied, both individually and collectively, an exquisite blend of agency and communion, and in so doing have created an environment



that is simultaneously supportive and stimulating.

I have been fortunate enough to collaborate on projects with two SITAR members: Len Horowitz and Pam Sadler. Collaboration, which involves individuals applying their respective strengths in the service of a shared goal, is intrinsically both agentic and communal. For me, Len and Pam epitomize how to effectively integrate those qualities: Both were consistently kind and caring, yet were never shy about pointing out my myriad mistakes and providing suggestions for improvements.

[continued on page 6]

Now is the Time to Make Your Reservations for SITAR's 11th Annual Meeting in Tempe, AZ

The 11th annual SITAR meeting will be held in Tempe, Arizona on May 17-18, 2008. Tempe is a city abutting Phoenix and the home of Arizona State University, the largest university in the country. We will be meeting in the ASU Memorial Union (newly redone).

We have arranged accommodations at the Twin Palms Hotel, which is on the south side of campus and very close (1/4 mile walk) to the Memorial Union. The Twin Palms (<http://www.twinpalmsotel.com>) is a



newly redecorated hotel and we have 40 rooms reserved. The room rate is very reasonable at US\$72.00 per night for either single or double. Reserve your room either by using the web site or calling (1-800-367-0835 or 480-967-9431). Make sure to include "SITAR" to get the special rate. **Please Note:** The hotel rooms will only be held until about three weeks before the first day of the conference, so make your reservations as soon as possible.

The hotel is about 5 miles from Phoenix Sky Harbor airport (PHX) and it has a shuttle to and from the airport. (Also, a cab ride is short and cheap).

Night life occurs on Mill Avenue which is north of campus. It is about a 1-mile walk away; for those more sedentary types, the hotel will shuttle back and forth to Mill Avenue.

Group Dinner: We will have our group dinner Saturday evening at the House of Tricks (<http://www.houseoftricks.com>), a very nice place with great food. It is off of Mill Avenue (approximately 1 mile away).

Predicting Interpersonal Rigidity and Oscillation: Flux and Spin as Tests of Construct Validity*

by Thane M. Erickson, Michelle G. Newman, and Aaron L. Pincus

When describing optimal functioning, people often employ the metaphor of flexibility. For instance, physiologists characterize healthy hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis functioning as the flexible mobilization of bodily resources to cope with stressors, contrasting with both systemic hyper-responsivity and rigid lack of reactivity. Political scientists speak of the benefits of avoiding the extremes of both unchanging, reified bureaucracy and rapidly changing, unstable political systems. Dance instructors equate desirable movement to a lithe steadiness without the aesthetic blunders of either stiffness or uncontrolled motion (both of which characterize my own dancing). In the interpersonal domain, Leary (1957) similarly depicted well-adjusted individuals as flexibly responsive to social interactions with a range of appropriate behaviors; less adjusted persons show restricted variability of social behavior across interactions (*interpersonal rigidity*) or else excessive variability (*unstable oscillation*).

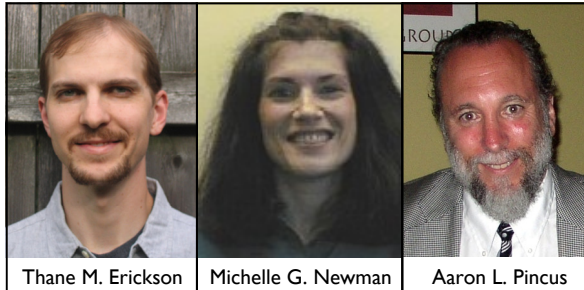
According to Leary's formulation of rigidity, upheld by subsequent interpersonal theorists (e.g., Carson, 1969; Kiesler, 1996; Tracey, 2005), the maladjusted individual "...tends to overdevelop a narrow range of one or two interpersonal responses. These are expressed intensely and often, whether appropriate to the situation or not" (Leary, 1957, p. 126). In contrast, oscillation implies inordinate reactivity to interpersonal stimuli in "...an intense attempt to adjust to all aspects of the presented environment," which may include "...marked cyclical swings of mood or action" (Leary, p. 121, 243).

The intuitive plausibility of these constructs has fostered attempts to operationalize them. Rigidity was first operationalized on the interpersonal circum-

plex (IPC) as vector length (VL), or distance of a dominance/affiliation (x, y) coordinate point from the origin (mathematically equivalent to *amplitude* in the structural summary method for circumplex data; Gurtman

by high spin frequently shifts between classes of social behavior (e.g., from dominance to affiliation to submission). Moskowitz and Zuroff found, for instance, that spin and some forms of flux exhibited positive associations with Neuroticism, suggestive of the maladaptive oscillation described by Leary (1957). Importantly, these authors thus validated a means for measuring cross-situational variability of interpersonal behavior.

In summary, extant research has not tested IPC indices (particularly those purported to measure rigidity/flexibility) in relation to broad cross-situational variability, the purpose of the present studies. We examined variability of both social behavior and perceptions, including the latter with the assumption that covert rigidity of perceptions may explain overt behavioral rigidity (Pincus, 1994). Predictors included BIC scores, VL scores on the



Thane M. Erickson Michelle G. Newman Aaron L. Pincus

& Pincus, 2003). However, whereas rigidity was traditionally defined as restricted cross-situational behavior, VL is typically calculated on global measures of traits/problems, leaving construct validity unknown. With the Battery of Interpersonal Capabilities (BIC) Paulhus and Martin (1987) operationalized interpersonal flexibility, the inverse of rigidity, as one's perceived capability of exhibiting the full range of IPC behaviors (e.g., "How capable are you of being *dominant* when the situation requires it?"). However, as with VL, it remains unclear whether this index actually measures variability across social situations.

In contrast to the rigidity construct, oscillation has received less attention. However, Moskowitz & Zuroff (2004, 2005b) recently developed and examined three mathematical indices of variability of social behavior across interactions, relevant to oscillation: *flux*, variability (standard deviation; SD) about mean levels of dominant, submissive, agreeable, or quarrelsome behaviors (as well as on the two superordinate IPC dimensions of dominance and affiliation), *pulse* or SD about mean extremity (VL) scores, and *spin* or circular SD about the mean angular coordinate (see figure). An individual high in dominance flux might show highly dominant behavior in one situation, but not another. A high-pulse individual would intermittently present high intensity (extreme) behavior. An individual characterized

"In summary, extant research has not tested IPC indices (particularly those purported to measure rigidity/flexibility) in relation to broad cross-situational variability, the purpose of the present studies."

Interpersonal Adjective Scales (IAS; Wiggins, 1995) and Inventory of Interpersonal Problems-Circumplex scales (IIP-C; Alden, Wiggins, & Pincus, 1990), and IIP-C overall mean ("elevation") scores as a measure of interpersonal distress. We employed as criterion variables flux (on both IPC dimensions) and spin as non-redundant forms of broad variability across IPC space, with spin most relevant to the notion of rigidity (i.e., restricted range of IPC octants). Flux and spin scores were calculated for social perceptions and behaviors in response to standard written interpersonal scenarios (Study 1) and daily social interactions for one week (Study 2), with all data collected via internet. Results here were first presented at the recent SITAR conference in Madison.

[continued on page 3]

* Author Note: This research was supported by the Penn State University Research and Graduate Student Organization. Correspondence concerning this article may be addressed to Thane Erickson, University of Michigan Depression Center, Rachel Upjohn Building, 4250 Plymouth Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5766. E-mail: thane@med.umich.edu.

Erickson et al. (continued)

Study 1

We created interpersonal stimuli and responses based on items from the Check List of Interpersonal Transactions (Kiesler, 1987). Stimuli represented descriptions of a target others' behavior for each octant at two intensity levels, as well as for interactions with both a friend and an authority figure, to sample behavior broadly. Participants reported their most likely reaction to each behavior, choosing from 16 possible behavioral responses (8 octants × 2 intensity levels). Participants also rated their social perceptions of the target's hypothetical behavior using the Interpersonal Grid (Moskowitz & Zuroff, 2005a). We utilized structural equation modeling to model latent variables with dual indicators for several constructs (e.g., VL, dominance flux with both friend and authority figure, etc.) and to permit

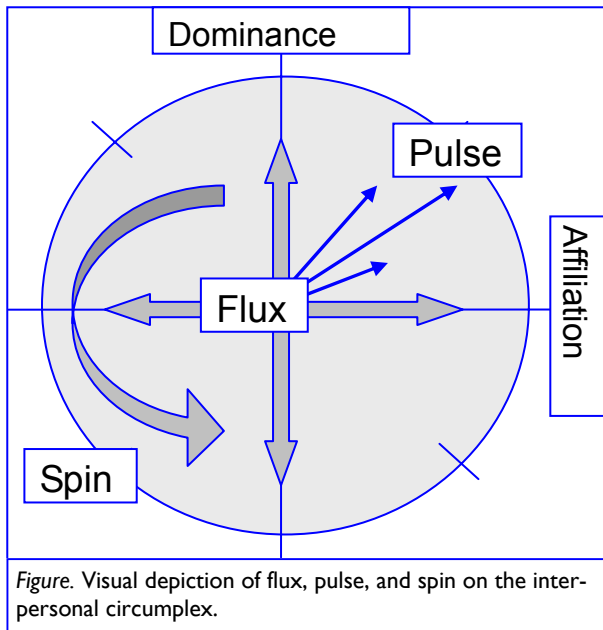


Figure. Visual depiction of flux, pulse, and spin on the interpersonal circumplex.

tests of the cognitive mediation of IPC indices on behavioral variability. We do not here report details of our measurement model tests. Students ($N = 288$) completed the aforementioned personality measures and responses to stimuli.

VL and the BIC did not predict flux or spin of behavior. Against expectations, VL positively predicted flux of perceptions for both dominance and affiliation dimensions, suggesting a relatively

broad distribution of perceptions in response to the full range of stimuli. VL may thus reflect *differentiation* of not only one's own perceived behavior/problems (Gurtman & Pincus, 2003), but also the behavior of others, rather than rigidity per se. Additionally, IIP-C elevation negatively predicted flux of perceptions along both dimensions, but positively predicted flux of behavior on both dimensions. This suggests that interpersonally distressed individuals failed to perceive the full range of others' behavior, consistent with covert rigidity, but simultaneously reported relatively high variability of social behaviors, consistent with the notion of oscillation. The relationship between IIP-C elevation and behavioral affiliation flux was partially mediated by the affiliation flux in participants' perceptions. No significant results emerged for spin variables.

Study 2

In the second study, 192 students from Study 1 recorded their social perceptions and behavior during several interactions per day over one week using

the Social Behavior Inventory (Moskowitz, 1994). In structural equation models, VL failed to predict flux or spin for perceptions or behavior. BIC positively, but modestly predicted flux for both dominance and affiliation dimensions of social perceptions, perhaps suggesting slightly more "flexible" perceptual range. IIP-C elevation positively predicted spin of behavior, as well as flux on both dimensions for perceptions and behavior; interpersonally distressed students showed heightened

variability of perceptions and behavior across situations. Lastly, flux of perceptions for both dimensions partially mediated effects of BIC and Elevation on flux of behavior.

Conclusion

In conclusion, indices traditionally assumed to measure rigidity/flexibility did not consistently predict cross-situational variability, suggesting the need for both empirical clarification of these indices and more theory-consistent self-report measures of the

constructs. In contrast, the construct validity of IIP-C elevation was extended in new directions, with prediction of flux/spin showing evidence of both oscillation (behavior flux in both studies, perception flux in Study 2) and covert rigidity (Study 1). Interpersonally distressed persons showed perception low in flux with stimuli held constant and high in flux across reported interactions, pointing to complex phenomena in need of further elucidation. Lastly, results show that individual differences in variability (flux/spin) of perceptions exist and predict variability of behavior meaningfully.

Future work is warranted on the multi-method measurement of interpersonal rigidity, flexibility, and oscillation, along with applications to interpersonal problems related to Axis I and II disorders. Incidentally, reduction of both rigidity and chaotic variability in my attempts at dancing is also warranted, but that may be well beyond the scope of standard interpersonal interventions.

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The Interpersonal Context of Depression in Couples

by Lynne Knobloch-Fedders



Lynne Knobloch-Fedders

Depression is a major public health problem. Up to 20% of people are expected to experience major depression at least once during their lifetimes (Cross-National Collaborative

Group, 1992; Kessler et al., 1994). Costs for job absenteeism, curtailed education, and reduced earning potential are estimated at \$44 billion per year (Greenberg et al., 1993).

Depression also impacts the well-being of the depressed person's family. Over 40% of spouses living with a depressed partner experience enough distress to meet standardized criteria for psychiatric intervention (Coyne et al., 1987). Children of depressed parents are at risk for a range of psychological disorders, academic difficulties, and health problems (Coyne et al., 1991).

Although historically depression has been viewed as a disorder of the individual, a large body of evidence links depression and relationship dysfunction. People in distressed marriages experience a ten-fold increased risk of depression, regardless of gender (O'Leary et al., 1994). A meta-analysis of 26 studies found that 44% of the variance associated with depressive symptomatology was explained by concurrent marital dissatisfaction (Whisman, 2001). Retrospective studies using clinical samples (Weissman & Paykel, 1974) and longitudinal prospective studies using community samples (Beach & O'Leary, 1993; O'Leary et al., 1994) have implicated marital dysfunction in depression.

Despite the strong links between depression and marital distress, Coyne (1976a; 1990) argued eloquently that mental health research has separated depressed patients and their symptoms from the relational context in which they are embedded, thereby limiting the usefulness of theory and intervention. Depression when defined as an individual person's disorder ignores the ways in which the behavior of depressed people and their partners fit into a relational system, become rigidly patterned over time, and serve

to perpetuate dysfunction. Coyne (1990) writes,

There is a long-standing bias towards viewing depressed persons and their complaints in isolation from their interpersonal context. Currently, this is evident in cognitive theories of depression that narrowly focus on the purportedly biased and distorted thinking of depressed persons and in biological theories of depression that do not allow for interpersonal factors possibly influencing biological variables or the course of a depressive episode....Even when there is strong evidence that there is a biological component to a depressive episode, interpersonal factors are likely to have served as a precipitant, and they may be an important determinant of the response to treatment and how the episode is resolved, what the cost is to the family as well as the patient, what residual problems remain, and what the likelihood of relapse is.

When an adequately comprehensive model of depression is developed, interpersonal processes will have a key role. (p. 33)

The goal of this program of research is to understand the links between couples' interpersonal behavior, their relationship dysfunction, and depression, in

"Depression defined as an individual person's disorder ignores the ways in which the behavior of depressed people and their partners fit into a relational system, become rigidly patterned over time, and serve to perpetuate dysfunction."

order to develop a more effective couple therapy that treats both relationship distress and depression.

Relational patterns and depression

Several preliminary theoretical models have been proposed to explain how the behavior of the depressed person and his or her partner may fit into a recurrent relational pattern (Coyne, 1976a; Horowitz & Vitkus, 1986). Coyne (1976a) suggests both partners participate in the interactional sequence: first, the depressed person reacts to an insecure situation by exhibiting distress and submissiveness, which shifts the interactional burden onto the partner (Coyne, 1976b) and exerts aversive control over the partner's behavior (Nelson & Beach,

1990; Schmalzing & Jacobson, 1990). This evokes the partner's guilt, inhibition, and heightened hostility (Coyne, 1976b). In response to this aversive situation, the partner tries to change the depressed person's symptoms, but while doing so also communicates underlying impatience, hostility, and rejection. This rejection is accurately perceived by the depressed person, creating even more distress (Leff & Vaughn, 1985) and reinforcing the pattern. Alternatively, depressed persons' symptomatic behavior may be "rewarded" by inhibiting partners' hostile or irritable behaviors or ensuring their short-term compliance (Biglan et al., 1985; Biglan, Rothlind, Hops & Sherman, 1989).

Interpersonal theory as a tool for integrating theory and research

Despite Coyne's initial formulation, however, our understanding of the interpersonal process of depression is very fragmented, consisting mainly of unrelated findings that particular processes co-occur, rather than an explanation of how they are linked. Coyne (1990) suggests that the field is "handicapped by the lack of a theoretical model that is adequate to the task of integrating these diverse findings" (p. 34).

In response to Coyne (1990), I propose that interpersonal theory and circumplex assessment can provide a parsimonious explanatory model. Among other advantages, interpersonal theory provides an expanded conceptualization of psychopathology, sophisticated assessment techniques, and a common metric for defining therapy process and outcome.

Re-conceptualizing the psychopathology of depression

Interpersonal theory expands the boundaries of what is considered relevant in the treatment of depression by recognizing that psychological problems are embedded in an interpersonal context, and are maintained by circular causality and bidirectionality of influence. Depression affects the cognitive and affective reactions of both partners, as well as their reciprocal relationship behavior (Teichman et al., 1995). Instead of defining psychopathology as an

[continued on page 5]

Knobloch-Fedders (continued)

individual condition, interpersonal theory defines it as a process marked by sequential patterns of behavior (Henry, 1994) and thus provides a framework for understanding the link between depression and relationship dysfunction.

Interpersonal assessment

Interpersonal theorists have long argued that the comprehensive description of relational behavior is critical to the assessment and treatment of psychological problems, including depression (Adams, 1964; Carson, 1969; Leary, 1957; McLemore & Benjamin, 1979). Unfortunately, existing research has been conducted primarily from an individualistic perspective – utilizing distinct measures of patient, spouse, and/or therapist behavior and aggregating these separately for analysis (Kiesler, 1991). Research on depressed couples has also been quite global in its description of interactional phenomena. For example, studies comparing nondepressed couples with depressed couples indicate the latter are generally more negative in their interactions (Gotlib & Whiffen, 1989; McCabe & Gotlib, 1993). During conflict tasks, depressed women display more depressive behavior and less problem-solving behavior, and both partners self-disclose less frequently than nondepressed couples (Biglan et al., 1985; Hops et al., 1987).

We have used the cluster version of the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB; Benjamin, 1979; 1987; 1996) as an observational measure of couples' interpersonal behavior. SASB's clinically-sophisticated, microanalytic coding system is well-suited for identifying sequences of maladaptive interpersonal behavior. It is constructed on a slightly more complex three-dimensional formulation of the traditional two-dimensional Leary circumplex, because the control construct is differentiated into two different dimensions: dominance – autonomy-granting, and submission – autonomy-taking. Because of this, SASB permits an examination of a wider range of control-related behaviors, ranging from the absence of control (separation or differentiation) to intense control (fusion or enmeshment).

The circumplex as a common metric

Interpersonal assessment can specify treatment goals and intervention strategies (Brokaw & McLemore, 1991). It can

even be used to measure the process and outcome of therapy using the same metric, the interpersonal circumplex (Henry, 1996). Unfortunately, to date researchers have not widely applied the interpersonal circumplex to their assessment of couples, in part because they have tended to immerse themselves in either behavior/social-learning theory or systems theory, without recognizing the potential contributions of interpersonal theory to current conceptualizations.



Preliminary study and results

Using self-report and observational methods, our first preliminary study compared two groups of couples – distressed couples in which one partner is depressed (N=22), and distressed couples without current mood disorder in either partner (N=23). Each partner was assessed for current Axis I disorders with the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV (First, Spitzer, Gibbon & Williams, 1997). Couples also met standardized relationship distress criteria, defined as a combined score of <200 on the self-report Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). Couples were brought into our lab and videotaped interacting during six standardized discussion tasks. Interpersonal behavior was coded using SASB.

Preliminary findings suggest that depressed / distressed couples displayed more hostile controlling behavior (SASB's "belittling and blaming" cluster) and less behavior that encouraged friendly autonomy (SASB's "affirming and understanding" cluster). Interestingly enough, in our preliminary analyses no differences were found between depressed partners and randomly-selected, matched-on-gender partners from the nondepressed / distressed control group. However, partners of depressed persons differed from matched controls in the nondepressed / distressed group. Partners of depressed persons demonstrated significantly more "belittling and blaming" and less "affirming and understanding" behavior than partners in the nondepressed / distressed group.

These aggregate behavioral differences suggest potential treatment targets for intervention, but much more work needs to be done to understand them in context. Future sequential analyses are planned to identify behavioral sequences that distinguish the couple groups.

Conclusion

In individual psychotherapy, sophisticated

interpersonal approaches have been described by theorists such as Benjamin (1996; 2003), Carson (1969), Kiesler (1996), and others. However, couple and family therapies have developed in a very separate tradition. This is ironic, given that Harry Stack Sullivan influenced the first generation of family therapists, especially Donald Jackson and Salvador Minuchin (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001). However, as I have tried to argue above, couple therapy for depression has much to gain by recognizing the contributions of modern interpersonal theory.

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[continued on page 7]

President's Message (continued)

As a result of my interactions with them and dozens of others who have been involved with SITAR over the years, I have developed a generalized expectation of the ambience of a SITAR meeting. When preparing a talk for our meetings, and right now when writing this column for our newsletter, I engage in an imagined interaction with that anticipated audience. Expecting my audience—you—to be both accepting and challenging helps me to evaluate and edit my words, but without evaluating and editing them to the point that I am tongue-tied and paralyzed. In this way, my own voice, while singular, is nonetheless an expression of my internal dialogues, which themselves are echoes of past conversations. In short, I am still collaborating with each of you who at some point

joined with me in an intellectually engaging exchange.

Of course, both large meetings (such as those hosted by the American Psycho-



logical Association) and small meetings (such as those hosted by SITAR) offer venues for stimulating interactions. Moreover, the agency of large organizations like APA exceeds that of small organizations like SITAR. However, the weaker agency of small groups is often offset by stronger communion. Speaking at the 1994 APA convention, Timothy Leary celebrated "our charming under-

ground community of dedicated interpersonal researchers"—a community that, by the way, included the founders of SITAR. These words in that context highlighted how the experience of community was more readily created and sustained by an organization of small size and focused interests than by an organization like APA.

But my quotes and anecdotes are not proof. That is why I hope that, at some future SITAR conference, there is research that speaks to my conjectures about how agency and communion are the framework for rewarding professional interactions. I cannot anticipate what the data will be or whether they will support or challenge my pre-existing beliefs, but I can anticipate that a pleasingly communal yet excitingly agentic discussion will ensue.

Introducing the Guest Speakers for SITAR's 11th Annual Meeting in Tempe, Arizona

Timothy W. Smith



Professor Smith received his PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Kansas. Following a pre-doctoral internship and post-doctoral fellowship at the

Brown University Program in Medicine, he joined the faculty of the University of Utah, where he has served as Director of Clinical Training and Chair of the Department of Psychology. He is a Past President of the APA Division of Health

Psychology, and is the recipient of the Distinguished Scientist Awards from the University of Utah and from the Society of Behavioral Medicine. He has served as an Associated Editor of several journals, including *Health Psychology*, *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, and the *American Psychologist*. His research on personality, relationships and health has been funded by the Na-



tional Institute on Aging and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. He has published widely in clinical, personality, social and health psychology, and his most recent work utilizes concepts and methods from the interpersonal tradition in examining psychosocial risk factors for coronary heart disease. His SITAR talk title is "Circles and Cycles in the Search for Coronary Prone Behavior: An Interpersonal Approach to Psychosocial Risk and Resilience".

Douglas T. Kenrick

Douglas Kenrick, Ph.D., is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Arizona State University. He also received his M.A. in Clinical Psychology and his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from ASU. Doug's current research interests focus mainly on integrating models from evolutionary biology, cognitive science, and dynamical systems to study the effects of fundamental social motivations (e.g., self-protection, status, mate



finding) on basic cognitive processes (e.g., attention to, encoding of, and memory for other people). He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Society and Division 8 of the American Psychological Association, and his research is currently funded by over a million dollars in federal grants. A recent example of his diverse interests can be found in: Kenrick, D.T. (2006). A dynamical evolutionary view of love. In R. J. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *Psychology*

of Love (2nd edition, pp. 15-34). New Haven: Yale University Press.

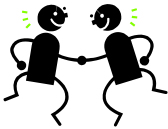


Graduate Student Corner



Lindsay Ayearst

Happy New Year SITAR members! Another year is upon us offering an opportunity for novel research ideas, new collaborations, and a fresh start after the enjoyment of some much needed R&R over the holidays. For the first newsletter of the year, we have once again invited some students from a variety of labs to introduce themselves to the membership. In this issue students from Dr. Moskowitz's lab at McGill University will be introducing themselves, as well as one student from the University of Waterloo. After this, I believe all of the labs have been featured. If your lab has been overlooked, please be sure to contact me ASAP so that we can be sure to have those students featured in the next issue of the newsletter. Once all labs have been featured, the Graduate Student Corner will switch gears. Lab introductions will be replaced with short entries tailored to the interests of students including pieces from recent graduates (yes – we do eventually graduate!), discussion about post-docs and internships, etc. If you would be interested in submitting a piece to the Graduate Student Corner in a future edition of the newsletter, please be sure to contact me. For now, please take the time to read the short pieces included below, as these could be some of the faces you see at the upcoming annual meeting this summer in Arizona. Until next time, I wish you all the best for a happy, healthy, and productive new year.



My name is Gentiana Sadikaj and I am in my second year of the Clinical Psychology Program at McGill University, working with Dr. Debbie Moskowitz. My research interests lie at the intersection of clinical psychology and personality psychology. Currently, I am exploring attachment processes and interpersonal behavior in close relationships. More specifically, I am exploring changes that occur in the affect and behavior of individuals with different attachment styles, as a consequence of changes in interpersonal behavior of their rela-



Gentiana Sadikaj

tionship partner. Results of preliminary analyses indicate that avoidantly attached individuals are less emotionally and behaviorally reactive to the partner's behavior than securely attached individuals.

My next project, which is unique in using a neurochemical intervention, such as tryptophan supplementation, will further examine attachment processes in close dyads. Research has demonstrated that tryptophan, which increases brain serotonin, influences interpersonal behavior (i.e. reduces quarrelsome behavior and increases positive affect) and affect in normal subjects. We hypothesize that increases in the neurotransmitter serotonin will improve relationships for insecurely attached individuals, but the kind of change will depend on whether the individual is anxious about or avoidant of closeness in couple relationships.

In the future, I would like to investigate patterns of relations between interpersonal behavior, affect, and perception of others' interpersonal behavior in various clinical populations, such as depressed or eating disordered populations. I hope to meet and present you with findings from this line of research in the future SITAR conference.

Hello. My name is David Paul. I'm in my seventh and final year of the Ph.D. program in clinical psychology at McGill University in Montréal, where I work with Debbie Moskowitz. I formerly worked in the Department of Psychology at the University of British Columbia, where I completed my undergraduate degree in Political Science and Psychology. I've just returned to Montréal after a year spent in Alberta on internship.

My doctoral research has touched on a number of facets of interpersonal perception and behaviour in various normal and clinical populations. Most recently I've been investigating whether state-specific affect moderates interpersonal complementarity in persons with social anxiety. I am also in the process of examining how these relationships change with pharmacological treatment. I hope to graduate this spring.

My name is Susanna Gehring Reimer, and I am in my second year of graduate studies in clinical psychology at the University of Waterloo under the joint supervision of Drs. David Moscovitch and Jonathan Oakman. My current research examines emotion regulation processes in social anxiety. The idea that socially anxious people experience heightened distress in social interactions, and are then motivated to conceal their distress, is intuitively appealing, yet this sequence has not

been examined from an emotion regulation perspective. My research looks at whether the emotion regulatory strategy of expressive suppression of emotions (i.e. effortfully hiding one's feelings) uniquely characterizes socially anxious individuals. Also, while we know that socially anxious people generally report lower positive affectivity and diminished quality of life, compared to non-socially anxious people, I hope to get a snapshot of this broad relationship in an isolated occasion by examining the impact of emotion suppression in one instance on positivity of response to a pleasurable stimulus in a subsequent instance. My research also examines the impact of emotion suppression on authenticity, physiology, and attention in social anxiety.



Susanna Gehring Reimer

When I'm not making people anxious or thinking about making people anxious, I enjoy biking far distances; cooking, growing, (and eating) local foods, fixing up the house with my husband, and generally obsessing about the environment.

Knobloch-Fedders (continued)

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[continued on page 8]

Society for Interpersonal Theory and Research

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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.

Call for SITAR Newsletter Editor

- We are looking for an individual to assume the position of the SITAR newsletter editor starting sometime in 2008. The position involves reminding regular contributors of the deadlines and lengths for their pieces (e.g., for the president's piece and graduate student corner), soliciting scholarly contributions and working with the newsletter committee regarding possible new content, editing and typesetting the newsletter using Microsoft Publisher, and printing and sending the newsletter to the SITAR membership. The newsletter is produced three times per year. Interested applicants, please contact a member of the SITAR newsletter committee (Steve Strack, Aaron Pincus, and Pam Sadler) or a member of the executive committee.

- This is the last SITAR newsletter that I plan to edit, due to my changing responsibilities within the SITAR organization and my upcoming sabbatical, starting in July 2008. I may be involved in helping with the June 2008 newsletter, if needed. By June 2008, I will have served as editor of the SITAR newsletter for four years. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve in this capacity, and I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to newsletter committee members Steve Strack and Aaron Pincus, who have provided unwavering support and guidance in putting the newsletters together, especially when I was "learning the ropes". I would be happy to discuss the position and what it entails with anyone who is considering it.

—Pamela Sadler, SITAR Newsletter Editor

Personal and Professional Announcements

Martin Grosse Holtforth will spend the next year as a stand-in full professor at the University of Jena, Germany (near Weimar, 3 hours south of Berlin). Completing stand-in professorships is an option on the way to a permanent position in the German-speaking academia. Martin will work at the University of Jena as professor for psychological intervention starting in April 2008.

Patrick Markey was appointed as Associate Editor of *Journal of Personality* in October 2007.

Aaron Pincus was appointed as Associate Editor of *Psychological Assessment* in January 2008.

Christopher Hopwood accepted an assistant professorship in the clinical area at Michigan State University. He was also elected President of the Society for Personality Assessment's graduate student organization.

Anthony Ruocco accepted an offer for a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). It is a 2-year combined clinical and research position. On the clinical side, he will be working with Neil Pliskin conducting neuropsychological assessments as part of the outpatient clinic

at UIC, which will make him license- and ABPP-eligible by the end of the post-doc. In terms of research, he will be working with John Sweeney doing fMRI work as part of a new multi-center family study of bipolar disorder. Anthony will be developing combined cognitive-affective paradigms for patients and family members, with the aim of identifying neurocognitive endophenotypes of specific personality dimensions. Finally, Anthony plans to defend his dissertation in May 2008.

Lindsay Ayeart and her husband, David, reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro on January 19, 2008, during their honeymoon in Tanzania Africa (see below).



Knobloch-Fedders (continued)

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