
(1 thesis; advisor: Richard Rau)

The Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC; Wiggins, 1979) is a two-dimensional space with the dimensions of agency (dominance, assertiveness) and communion (friendliness, warmth) that is commonly used by psychologists to understand interpersonal traits. A core assumption of the IPC is that agency and communion are orthogonal axes. In other words, whether or not someone is assertive should have nothing to do with whether or not he or she is friendly. This assumption has been validated for self-perceptions, but it might not hold for other-perceptions. In fact, different relationships between perceptions of others’ agentic and communal traits—including negative, positive, and curvilinear—have been suggested in different literatures. A potential explanation for this discrepancy is that the suggestions may refer to different kinds of other-perceptions: (a) how people’s agency and communion are judged by others in general (is someone who is commonly seen as agentic more or less likely to be seen as communal?), (b) how people judge others’ agency and communion in general (is someone who sees most others as agentic more or less likely to see them as communal?), and (c) how people judge others’ agency and communion above and beyond general judgment tendencies (is Ann more or less likely to specifically see Bob as communal when she sees him as agentic?). This differentiation refers to the Social Relations Model (Kenny, 1994), which decomposes person perceptions into target effects (= a), perceiver effects (= b), and relationship effects (= c). Vorhandene Daten: We have two existing datasets that allow for an examination of the relation between agency and communion on the level of targets, perceivers, and relationships as well as in self-reports. You can choose one.

Aufgaben: Literature review, data analysis, writing up results as a master thesis
**Do people become friends by chance? A Replication and Extension Study**

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In an influential study, Back, Schmukle and Egloff (2008) found that students were more likely to become friends over the course of a year when they had been sitting next to each other on a welcoming event at their first day of university. Since they had been seated randomly at this welcoming event, the finding suggests that the formation of friendships was in part due to mere chance. However, the data were drawn from a single cohort and the sample size was relatively small (N = 54) and thus, a replication study is much needed. Further, a likely explanation for the effect of initial physical proximity on friendship formation is that students who initially sat next to each other were more inclined to interact with each other again and get to know each other better during the first weeks of the semester. However, this explanation was not explicitly tested in the original study.

Vorhandene Daten: We have data from three cohorts (n1 = 52, n2 = 70, n3 = 120) that allow for a close replication of the original study. Specifically, students were randomly seated in a lecture hall at their first days of university and reported on their relationships with each of their co-students several times over the course of their first semester (cohorts 1 and 2) or over the course of their 3-year bachelor program (cohort 3). In Cohort 3, it is also possible to test the mediating role of interaction frequency: Participants indicated how much time they had spent with each of their co-student on a regular basis over the first three weeks of the semester.