

# The Meaning of Autonomy: On and Beyond the Interpersonal Circumplex

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**ABSTRACT** Review of existing psychological literature suggests that conceptions of autonomy as an individual difference have taken several forms. Structural analyses of 15 self-report autonomy scales utilizing the interpersonal circumplex (IPC) and the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality as structural referents confirmed the presence of diverse conceptualizations of this construct. Two hundred ninety undergraduate students completed 15 autonomy scales, the NEO Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO-PI-R), and the Interpersonal Adjective Scales (IAS). Factor analysis revealed three unique conceptualizations of autonomy. Each factor was further differentiated from the others by its unique location on the IPC and its distinct relationships with the domains and facets of the NEO-PI-R. Evaluation of these findings within the context of existing autonomy research leads to the conclusion that only two of the three

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identified factors reflect autonomy. Factor I, Depressogenic Vulnerability, though relatively consistent with its theoretical foundation, lacks the agentic quality one would expect in an autonomy construct. Factors II and III, presently labeled Self-governance and Agentic Separation, respectively, share an agentic core but differ considerably in their interpersonal content. Theoretical and empirical implications of these findings are discussed.

### THE MEANING OF AUTONOMY: ON AND BEYOND THE INTERPERSONAL CIRCUMPLEX

From its genesis as a political construct, autonomy has evolved from a rudimentary concept referring to the independence of Greek city-states to a complex psychological construct with a multitude of theoretical conceptualizations, operational definitions, and implications for the "auto (self) nomous (ruling)" individual. This construct is represented in literature spanning personality, clinical, developmental, and industrial-organizational psychology, as well as in law, medicine, and philosophy. In some form, it appears to influence interpersonal relationships (Rankin-Esquer, Burnett, Baucom, & Epstein, 1997), sense of self (McCurdy & Scherman, 1996), psychological adjustment (Deci & Ryan, 1991), and psychopathology (Alford & Gerrity, 1995; Daley, Hammen, Burge, & Davila, 1997; Moore & Blackburn, 1996). Applied research suggests that it also impacts children's academic performance, (Garcia & Pintrich, 1996; Misrandino, 1996), adult job satisfaction (Jayaratne, Vinokur-Kaplan, & Chess, 1995), and occupational group performance (Wageman, 1995).

Despite this significance to the human experience and its prevalence in the literature, autonomy is a construct lacking theoretical homogeneity as well as a consistent and common operational definition. The autonomous individual has been described as both psychologically adjusted (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and prone to psychopathology (Beck, 1983), related to others (Blatt & Blass, 1996; Koestner & Losier, 1996) and indifferent to others (Hirschfeld, Klerman, Gough, Barrett, Korchin, & Chodoff, 1977), self-ruling (Haworth, 1986) and defensively separated (Robins, Ladd, Welkowitz, Blaney, Diaz, & Kutcher, 1994). An intriguing challenge that arises from such diversity lies in the interpretation of numerous autonomy theories and research endeavors.

The present study explores three theoretical formulations of autonomy from personality and clinical psychology. Theoretical analysis (Wiggins, 1997) and empirical research (Koestner & Losier, 1996)<sup>1</sup> have converged in proposing two forms of autonomy, one seemingly based on the concept of self-governance, the other on individual differentiation and separation. An additional formulation, derived from Beck's (1983) cognitive theory, conceptualizes autonomy as a vulnerability factor in the development of depression. This perspective, prominent in the clinical literature, provides a potentially unique third conceptualization of autonomy.

### AUTONOMY AS SELF-GOVERNANCE

#### *Wiggins/Bakan*

Wiggins and other personality theorists have recognized a similarity between Bakan's (1966) concept of agency and autonomy, the construct presently under investigation (Blatt, 1990; Blatt & Blass, 1996; Wiggins, 1991, 1997). Bakan (1966) defined agency as an innate pressure to individuate, manifested as an urge to master one's environment, and as an urge for separation from others and independence from the environment. Wiggins noted the existence of two themes within Bakan's conceptualization, one based upon active agency (mastery), the other, upon separation, which led him to conclude that "two quite distinct meanings of autonomous (Autonomous<sub>1</sub> and Autonomous<sub>2</sub>)... are implied in Bakan's (1966) original formulation of the agency concept" (Wiggins, 1997, p. 1081).

The theme of active agency is manifested in an emphasis on issues of "self-protection, self-assertion, and self-expansion," and a desire to master the environment (Bakan, 1966, p. 15). Wiggins (1997) labeled this aspect of agency Autonomy<sub>1</sub> and related it to self-governance. He suggested that Autonomy<sub>1</sub> exists on a continuum from passivity to agency. Passivity, considered the bipolar opposite of agency, reflects the impact of external influences on the individual. The self-governing individual, in contrast, is internally ruled, acting from an agentic position. This view of autonomy as self-governance is congruent with

1. Koestner and Losier's (1996) suggestions in regard to what they have termed "reactive autonomy" are addressed in the Autonomy as Separation section.

the origin of the construct, and is represented within the theoretical and empirical formulations discussed below.

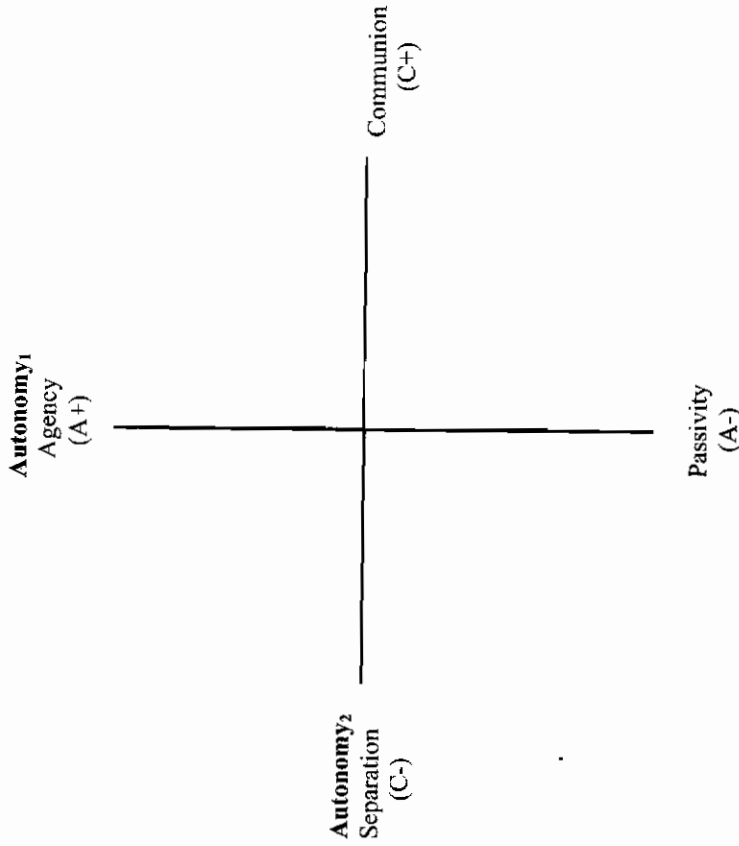
The theme of separation, rather than agency, is evident as Bakan continued his definition of agency, stating, "the existence of an organism as an individual," with the focus turning to "isolation, alienation, and aloneness" (p. 15). Wiggins labeled this defining aspect *Autonomy<sub>2</sub>* and asserted that it captures the essence of dissociation, the opposite of communion.<sup>2</sup> Figure 1 presents a structural representation of *Autonomy<sub>1</sub>* and *Autonomy<sub>2</sub>*, demonstrating the orthogonal and bipolar properties of Wiggins's interpretation in relation to the interpersonal metaconcepts of agency and communion (Wiggins, 1991).

#### *Deci and Ryan*

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) provides a theoretical and empirical approach to autonomy as self-governance. This theory suggests that autonomy is a psychological need that facilitates growth and adaptive functioning. Defined as "freedom to self-govern" and to make choices based upon self-awareness rather than external or internal controls, autonomy is thought to manifest itself in the individual's causality, or motivational, orientation (Hodgins, Koestner, & Duncan, 1996). Deci and Ryan (1985, 1987) identified three causality orientations (autonomous, controlled, and impersonal) that they suggest are the basis for the initiation and regulation of individual behavior. One's strength in each of these orientations indicates the degree of self-determination in that individual's behavior, with an autonomous orientation being indicative of the highest level of self-determination.

The General Causality Orientation Scale (GCOS; Deci & Ryan, 1985) is a measure of the three causality orientations. A highly autonomous orientation is characterized by a "high degree of experienced choice" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 111). Individuals strong in this orientation tend to seek opportunities for self-determination and choice, tend to view events as "autonomy-promoting," and tend to base their actions on personal goals and interests. Ryan (1992) suggested that these autonomy-oriented individuals experience greater

2. This is discussed further in the following section.



**Figure 1**

Wiggins' structural representation of *Autonomy<sub>1</sub>* and *Autonomy<sub>2</sub>*.

self-cohesion as their choices, based upon self-reflection, are likely to reinforce self-structure.

Research using the GCOS demonstrated that highly autonomous individuals had increased self-awareness (Bober & Grolnick, 1995), were more likely to be high in self-esteem and ego development and were less likely to be self-derogatory or to experience negative emotions such as hostility, shame, and guilt (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1995). Additional evidence indicated that these individuals rarely experienced boredom (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986) and were more focused and persistent in their goal-directed behaviors (Koestner & Zuckerman, 1994) such as the completion and maintenance of weight loss treatment (Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan, & Deci, 1996). In its totality, GCOS research suggests an adaptive quality to an autonomous causality orientation.

*Koestner and Losier*

Koestner and Losier (1996) differentiated GCOS autonomy from autonomy as measured by the Adjective Checklist (ACL; Gough & Heilbrun, 1983). They suggested that GCOS autonomy is a "reflective" style of autonomy, whereas ACL autonomy is indicative of a "reactive" style. These researchers identified a positive association between GCOS autonomy and the perception of positive daily events, and a negative relation between GCOS autonomy and the experience of unpleasant emotions. The same study also found that individuals high in reflective (GCOS) autonomy experienced more intimate and pleasant peer interactions than those high in ACL autonomy (Koestner & Losier, 1996).

Additional research using GCOS and ACL measures of autonomy support a differentiation between the two types. Koestner, Gingras, Abutaa, Losier, DiDio, and Gagne (1999) found individuals high in GCOS (reflective) autonomy more likely to accept advice from credible experts, whereas individuals high in ACL (reactive) autonomy were significantly less likely to accept expert assistance, suggesting that different forms of autonomy are related to different interpersonal behavior patterns. In summary, GCOS autonomy is predicated on the concept of self-governance and has been empirically differentiated from the form of autonomy measured by the ACL.

*Worthington*

An additional self-report instrument that appears to tap a self-governing form of autonomy is the Worthington Autonomy Scale (WAS; Anderson, Worthington, Anderson, & Jennings, 1994). Four WAS subscales suggest a focus on freedom, self-control, and self-responsibility within the context of family, emotions, behavior, and values. Family Loyalty autonomy refers to freedom from "binding" by one's family of origin. Emotional autonomy refers to the desire to exert self-control, exercise emotional independence, and achieve interpersonal competence. Behavioral autonomy reflects freedom of action and acceptance of responsibility for one's behavior, and Value autonomy is reflective of the ability to make moral, vocational, and religious decisions (Anderson et al., 1994). While the GCOS autonomy scale has been well validated, the WAS is a relatively new instrument. Extensive review and evaluation of existing autonomy scales

suggested that the item-content and scale definitions of the WAS most clearly resembled the self-governance form of autonomy. Thus the WAS was selected in order to include multiple measures of a self-governing form of autonomy in our study.

**AUTONOMY AS SEPARATION***Wiggins/Bakan*

As previously noted, the second element of Bakan's conceptualization of agency suggests individuation and separation from others. Wiggins (1997) proposed that this aspect of agency, which includes an emphasis on isolation, alienation, and aloneness, does not address issues of agency as self- or other-governance but instead focuses on separation of self from others. The proposition of autonomy as separation appears to be consistent with other theoretical views, scale descriptions, and item contents of a number of autonomy measures.

*Murray*

Murray's (1938) personality theory addressed autonomy as 1 of 20 "psychogenic needs" that he thought impacted human behavior. He suggested that individuals with a high need for autonomy would "want to go their own way, uninfluenced and uncoerced by others" (p. 151). He further proposed that this need might manifest itself as defiance or escape from perceived restraint.

Influenced by Murray's theoretical position, Gough and Heilbrun (1983) developed the Adjective Checklist (ACL), which includes an autonomy motivation subscale. Defined as a need to act independently of others or of social values and expectations (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983), ACL autonomy has been associated with dropping out of school (Heilbrun, 1965), satisfaction with careers requiring self-direction (Arvey, Dewhirst, & Boling, 1976), and dissatisfaction with work that requires teamwork (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Additional associations have been identified between ACL autonomy and a GCOS control orientation, the experience of negatively perceived daily events, higher levels of negative affect, and poor social adjustment (Koestner & Losier, 1996).

The Personality Research Form (PRF; Jackson, 1984), a second operationalization of Murray's needs, includes an eight-item Need for

Autonomy subscale developed to assess the desire to be free of restraint and confinement, avoidance of ties to people or obligations, and occasional rebellion (Clark & Beck, 1991). PRF autonomy items suggest a preference for being and working alone, a tendency to demonstrate independence of judgment, and a willingness to question rules (Costa & McCrae, 1988).

#### *Other Measures*

Other self-report scales of autonomy that seem related to Murray's perspective are found within the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI; Hogan, 1986) and the Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (IDI; Hirschfield et al., 1977). The HPI is based primarily on Hogan's (1983, 1986) socioanalytic theory that suggests that humans are caught in the dilemma of being successful group members while also achieving and maintaining power and status relative to one's peers (Briggs, 1992). This perspective is not unlike Bakan's (1966) contention that agency and communion are fundamental elements in personality development or Blatt and Blass's (1996) proposal that a complex "interrelatedness" emerges from a developmental dialectic between autonomy and relatedness. It is likewise consistent with Wiggins (1997) suggestion that *Autonomy*<sub>2</sub> is related to a dissociation-communion dimension.

Hogan's personality inventory contains six scales, which, in turn, are organized into 43 subscales (Homogeneous Item Clusters; HICs). The present study incorporated the autonomy HIC, a constituent of the Likability scale. Scale items suggest that this instrument may more strongly represent separation than interrelatedness; hence, its inclusion with the autonomy as separation perspective.

The IDI was developed to assess the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with the need to maintain close ties with valued people. While used primarily as a measure of dependency, the IDI contains an Assertion of Autonomy subscale that is reflective of "the degree to which an individual is indifferent to or independent of the evaluation of others" (Hirschfield et al., 1977, p. 617). Though less theoretically articulated than the measures of Murray's needs, both IDI and HPI item content suggest similarity among these scales. This appears particularly true in regard to an apparent emphasis on indifference to others and preference for solitude, suggesting a focus on the separation of self from others rather than on self-governance.

The following formulation of autonomy also suggests separation rather than self-governance. It is distinguished, however, by its association with psychopathology, an implication missing in the above formulation.

### **AUTONOMY AS VULNERABILITY**

#### *Beck*

This final formulation of autonomy, based upon Beck's cognitive model of depression, is well represented in autonomy literature. According to this model, autonomy is a personality construct that places the highly autonomous individual at risk for the development of reactive depression (Beck, Epstein, Harrison, & Emery, 1983). Beck et al. (1983) suggested that individuals high in autonomy have an excessive personal investment in freedom, mobility, achievement, and individuality, and tend to be hypersensitive to events perceived to threaten these values. When confronted with failure, obstacles to goal attainment, or other perceived restrictions to autonomy, they become vulnerable to a unique cluster of depressive symptoms. For example, autonomous individuals are thought to be particularly susceptible to anhedonia, self-criticism, concern about personal effectiveness, withdrawal, and hostility when depressed (Clark, Steer, Haslam, Beck, & Brown, 1997).

This view of autonomy as a vulnerable personality construct has been operationalized via a series of self-report instruments. Beck et al. (1983) developed the original Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale (SAS), including a three-factor autonomy subscale, using patient self-reports and records from a clinical population. Psychometric inadequacies led to a revision of the instrument based upon a college, rather than clinical, sample (Clark & Beck, 1991). This revision maintained a three-factor structure, labeled Solitude/Interpersonal Insensitivity, Independence, and Individualistic Achievement. This revised version was utilized in the present study.

#### *Robins*

Problematic psychometric qualities of existing sociotropy/autonomy measures also led to the development of the Personal Style Inventory (PSI; Robins et al., 1994; Robins & Luten, 1991). Robins et al. (1994; Robins & Luten, 1991) maintained the basic propositions of Beck's



vulnerability theory but sought to improve the psychometric qualities of Beck's and other interpersonal (sociotropy) and achievement (autonomy) self-report instruments. Therefore, many PSI scale items were exact or modified versions of SAS and similar scale items (Robins et al., 1994). The PSI includes three autonomy subscales, labeled Excessive Perfectionism, Need for Control, and Defensive Separation from Others.

Empirical investigation of the basic premise that a meaningful relationship exists between autonomy and depression has yielded mixed support (Bartlestone & Trull, 1995; Blaney & Kutcher, 1991; Gilbert & Reynolds, 1990; Rude & Burnham, 1993). Clark and Beck's (1991) investigation of the revised SAS scales found that only Solitude/Interpersonal Insensitivity was related to negative affect. Robins, Bagby, Rector, Lynch, and Kennedy (1997) did, however, identify an association between PSI autonomy and psychopathology as demonstrated by the predictive value of PSI autonomy scores on depressive symptoms.

### SUMMARY

As demonstrated above, at least three views of autonomy appear to be present in the current autonomy literature. One view suggests that autonomy is, as its label implies, indicative of self (auto) – governance (nomous); one suggests an emphasis on interpersonal separation; and the third addresses a cognitive vulnerability associated with depression. Articulating these diverse conceptualizations of autonomy demonstrates the heterogeneity of this construct. However, it does not contribute to meaningful clarification of autonomy in a manner that allows for the integration of existing literature and that would provide a useful framework for future investigations of the construct. The present study demonstrates how investigation of these views within broader models of individual differences provides clarity to the universe of content of these diverse conceptualizations and provides, as well, a common language with which to discuss them.

### STRUCTURAL REFERENTS

The present study of autonomy employs two methods of structural clarification, each of which provides a unique understanding of the

construct under investigation. The literature suggests that autonomy encompasses both interpersonal and non-interpersonal aspects of personality. Therefore, analyses that address both aspects will provide the most thorough clarification of this construct.

The Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC) originated as a taxonomy to classify interpersonal traits (Leary, 1957; Pincus, 1994; Wiggins, 1979). This taxonomic approach provides a framework within which personality scales can be categorized according to their interpersonal content (Wiggins & Broughton, 1991). Beginning with Wiggins and Broughton (1985), more than 172 personality scales had been investigated within this context by 1991 (Wiggins & Broughton, 1991). More recently, constructs such as perfectionism (Flynn, Hewitt, Broughton, & Flett, 1998), social competence (Gurtman, 1999), and dependency (Pincus & Gurtman, 1995; Pincus & Wilson, 2001) have been meaningfully analyzed within this structure, adding clarity to the universe of content of these previously ambiguous constructs.

The present study utilized the Interpersonal Adjective Scales (IAS; Wiggins, 1995) as markers of the IPC. The IAS contains eight scales, with each scale reflecting an octant of the circumplex, and each octant reflecting an interpersonal quality. The reader is referred to Wiggins and Broughton (1991) and Gurtman and Pincus (in press), for a comprehensive explication of the specific computational procedures utilized to project personality instruments onto the IPC, and to the Results section of the present manuscript for the basic equations.

Additional analyses utilizing the Five-Factor Model of personality (FFM) allows for clarification of the noninterpersonal nature of autonomy while also providing corroborative evidence and elaboration of the interpersonal aspects of the construct (e.g. Pincus, 2002; Pincus & Gurtman, 1995). First identified by Fiske (1949) and Tupes and Cristal (1961), the Five-Factor Model (FFM) has become a prominent framework within which to understand personality structure (McCrae, 1989) and personality theory (Wiggins, 1996). The present investigation utilized the revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1992) as a measure of the FFM.

### GOALS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This study joins the list of many studies that have utilized the IPC and the FFM as structural frameworks within which to better comprehend

personality constructs (Pincus & Gurtman, 1995; Wiggins & Pincus, 1989). The present study sought to extend existing literature via structural analyses of autonomy by simultaneously evaluating the most widely used self-report measures of the construct. It was hypothesized that factor analysis would demonstrate heterogeneity among the scales yielding at least three different forms of autonomy, one reflecting self-governance, one reflecting separation, and one associated with Beck's vulnerability theory. It was hypothesized that this differentiation would also be evident in unique patterns of interpersonal and non-interpersonal correlates across extracted factors.

Specifically, we expected to find two forms of autonomy strongly related to the IPC based upon Wiggin's (1997) conceptualization of Autonomy, and Autonomy<sub>2</sub>. While both forms were expected to have an agentic core (Bakan, 1966), it was expected that they would differ in their relationship to communion. One form of agentic autonomy (Self-governance) was expected to give rise to interpersonal relatedness as suggested by Blatt and Blass (1996), while the other form was expected to give rise to interpersonal separation as suggested by Murray (1938). Specific hypotheses were not made in regard to autonomy as a vulnerability factor beyond the expectation that it would reflect interpersonal separation as measured by the IAS and exhibit its strongest relationship with neuroticism as measured by the NEO-PI-R. This expectation was based upon SAS/PSI item content and the relationship between this form of autonomy and depression (Beck, 1983).

Based upon these predictions, analyses began with principle axis factor analysis to distill specific forms of autonomy, followed by projection of these factors onto the IPC to determine interpersonal content. Finally, noninterpersonal associations were explored via correlational analyses with the domains and facets of the FFM.

## METHODS

### Participants

Two hundred ninety introductory psychology students (139 males and 145 females, average age 19.8 years; 6 missing values for gender) volunteered to participate in this study for course credit. Sample size varied ( $N = 226 - N = 290$ ) between statistical analyses due to incomplete responding at later points in the testing session. Approximately 25% of sample did not complete the entire questionnaire packet. Given a lack of

evidence of any participants leaving the study session early, it is suggested that incomplete packets reflected inadequate time for some participants to finish, as well as possible fatigue effects.

### Procedures

Participants had a 2-hour period in which to complete a packet of self-report measures in a monitored group setting as part of a larger study. Self-report instruments were presented in the following manner. The Adjective Checklist (ACL), the General Causality Orientation Scale (GCOS), the Expanded Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale (SAS) and the Interpersonal Adjective Scale (IAS) were presented individually in order to maintain the integrity of the measures. The Personality Research Form (PRF) and Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI) items were combined to create one presenting scale while retaining their True-False response format. All remaining measures were randomly embedded within the NEO-PI-R in order to prevent participants from discerning the personality construct under investigation through repeated item exposure (see, e.g., Pincus & Gurtman, 1995).

The packet order was as follows: Mixed scales (NEO-PI-R, IDI, WAS, PSI), followed by the GCOS, SAS, ACL, IAS, and the Mixed PRF/HPI scale. The battery was comprised of 519 items. Alpha values and descriptive statistics for these instruments are presented in Table 1. Data collection for the present study was completed within the context of a larger study that prohibited alternate ordering of instruments.

### Autonomy Measures

*The Adjective Checklist* (ACL; Gough & Heilbrun, 1983). The ACL is a 300-item inventory of self-descriptive adjectives. Its Autonomy subscale is comprised of a checklist of 44 adjectives, 29 indicative of autonomy, 15 contra-indicative of the construct. Items indicative of autonomy include adventurous, aggressive, individualistic, and uninhibited; cautious, depend-able, submissive, and tolerant are contra-indicative of the construct. Respondents check all items that are considered self-descriptive. The ACL autonomy subscale is reported to have an internal reliability of .69 and 6-month test-retest reliability of .76 (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983).

*The General Causality Orientations Scale* (GCOS; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan, 1989). The GCOS is a 36-item measure of one's tendency toward three causality orientations: Autonomy, Control, and Impersonal. Twelve situational vignettes are followed by three possible responses to the

**Table 1**  
Descriptive Statistics for Autonomy Measures

Autonomy scale	No. items	Alpha	M	SD	Min	Max	Cases
<b>Adjective Checklist</b>							
Autonomy	44	*	11.40	4.60	1	29	284
<b>General Causality Orientation</b>							
Autonomy scale	12	.75	68.20	7.76	37	84	286
<b>Hogan Personality Inventory</b>							
Autonomy scale	4	*	1.62	1.41	0	4	284
<b>Interpersonal Dependency Inventory</b>							
Autonomy	14	.75	23.73	7.15	7	51	286
<b>Personality Research Form</b>							
Autonomy	8	*	4.00	1.98	0	8	284
<b>Personal Style Inventory</b>							
Defensive Separation	12	.80	22.24	6.89	7	45	280
Need for Control	8	.70	18.66	4.71	5	34	279
Perfectionism/Self-criticism	4	.62	9.32	3.01	1	16	288
<b>Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale</b>							
Revised Independence	16	.81	55.74	8.58	26	108	278
Revised Individualistic	14	.78	47.87	7.40	18	66	282
Achievement	15	.79	35.19	8.27	16	76	277
<b>Worthington Autonomy</b>							
Interpersonal Insensitivity	10	.63	26.91	4.55	13	40	282
Behavioral Autonomy	10	.65	28.79	4.49	17	41	284
Emotional Autonomy	10	.74	27.63	5.82	6	40	280
Family Autonomy	10	.55	27.75	4.39	14	39	278
Value Autonomy	10	.55	27.75	4.39	14	39	278

Note. Min = minimum score; Max = maximum score.

\* = unavailable; total scores, rather than individual items in database.

situation. Each response is representative of one of the causality orientations and is rated on a 7-point Likert scale based on the degree to which that response is considered by the participant to be characteristic of him/herself. For example, the scenario "You have been offered a new position in a company where you have worked for some time. The first question that is likely to come to mind is..." is followed by these statements: a) What if I can't live up to the new responsibilities? b) Will I make more at this position? c) I wonder if the new work will be

## The Meaning of Autonomy

interesting. Autonomy scores are based upon ratings of the autonomy responses. In the above example, statement A is indicative of an impersonal orientation, statement B, of a control orientation, and statement C of an autonomous orientation. The present study utilized only the autonomy scores for analysis. Coefficient alpha for the present sample was .75.

*The Hogan Personality Inventory* (HPI, Hogan 1986). The HPI is a 310-item, true-false, self-report trait inventory. The four-item autonomy HIC includes statements such as "I don't care if others like the things I do" and "I really don't care what other people think about me." Alpha reliabilities for HPI scales range from .76 to .89.

*The Interpersonal Dependency Inventory* (IDI, Hirschfeld et al., 1977). This 48-item measure of interpersonal dependency includes a 14-item Assertion of Autonomy subscale. Autonomy items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating the degree to which participants felt the statement was characteristic of themselves. Assertion of Autonomy is measured by items such as "I prefer to be by myself" and "I hate it when people offer me sympathy." Coefficient alpha for the IDI was .75 in the present sample.

*The Personality Research Form, Form E* (PRF; Jackson, 1984). This 352-item inventory, designed to measure normal personality functioning, contains an 8-item Need for Autonomy subscale. A True or False response is indicated for each descriptive statement. Items indicative of autonomy include "I delight in feeling unattached" and "My greatest desire is to be independent and free." The PRF has been validated against peer ratings, self-ratings, and other questionnaire measures (Costa & McCrae, 1988).

*The Personal Style Inventory* (PSI; Robins et al., 1994). This 48-item scale was designed to measure the constructs of sociotropy and autonomy as vulnerability factors for depression. The 24 autonomy items were utilized in the present study. These autonomy items comprise three subscales: Perfectionism/Self-criticism, Need for Control, and Defensive Separation. Participants read 24 statements about personal characteristics and indicated on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they either agreed or disagreed with the statement. Items for this measure include statements such as "It bothers me when I feel that I am only average and ordinary," "I am bothered by other people making demands of me," and "I tend to keep other people at a distance." In the present sample,



coefficient alphas for the Perfectionism/Self-criticism, Need or Control, and Defensive Separation scales were .62, .70, and .80 respectively; full scale alpha was .84.

*The Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale* (SAS; Beck et al., 1983; Clark & Beck, 1991). The Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale is an instrument designed to measure the constructs of autonomy and sociotropy as vulnerability factors for depression. The current study utilized the autonomy scales of the revised SAS, including a 15-item measure of Individualistic Achievement, a 16-item measure of Independence and a 15-item measure of Solitude/Interpersonal Insensitivity (Clark & Beck, 1991). Ratings are based upon responses on a 5-point Likert scale that assesses the percentage of time that a participant feels that the statement applies to him/herself. The Likert scale ranges from 0% to 100%, in 25% intervals. Subscale alphas for the present sample were .78, .81, and .79 respectively. Full-scale reliability alpha was .89.

*The Worthington Autonomy Scale* (WAS; Anderson et al., 1994). This 40-item scale was designed to measure autonomy across four domains: Family Loyalty autonomy, Value autonomy, Emotional autonomy, and Behavioral autonomy. Each domain is assessed with 10 statements that participants responded to on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement. Family Loyalty autonomy is measured by items such as "My family always encouraged me to set my own goals." "I have a definite plan for my life" is indicative of Value autonomy; Emotional autonomy is reflected in endorsement of items such as "I can be close to others and give them space at the same time." Finally, statements such as "I accept responsibility for my own mistakes" measure Behavioral autonomy. Chronbach alphas for the present sample were .74 for Family autonomy, .55 for Value autonomy, .65 for Emotional autonomy, and .63 for Behavioral autonomy. Reliability alpha for the full scale was .84.

#### Structural Referents

*The Interpersonal Adjective Scales* (IAS; Wiggins, 1995; Wiggins, Trapnell, & Phillips, 1988). This self-report measure consists of 64 adjectives, 8 reflecting each octant of the interpersonal circle. Each adjective is rated on an 8-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *extremely inaccurate* to (8) *extremely accurate*, in terms of how characteristic it is of the rater. Research indicates that the IAS has acceptable internal consistency (alphas range from .75 for octant JK to .86 for octant LM), and it exhibits meaningful correlations with other self-report measures of personality (Wiggins &

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Broughton, 1985, 1991) and with ratings of nonverbal interpersonal behavior (Gifford & O'Connor, 1987). When the IAS scales are subjected to confirmatory circumplex analyses, a clear circumplex structure is supported (Gurtman & Pincus, 2000).

*The NEO Personality Inventory-Revised* (NEO-PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1992). The NEO-PI-R is the predominant measure of the Five-Factor Model of personality, assessing Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. In addition to assessing the major domains of personality, this 240-item inventory measures six facets of personality within each domain.

Participants completed the full inventory, responding to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) to the extent to which they (dis)agreed with the item. There is substantial research indicative of this instrument's reliability and validity (see Costa & McCrae, 1992).

#### RESULTS

Analysis began with 15 autonomy measures, as described in the methods section above. Principal axis factor analysis was conducted to identify superordinate autonomy factors. Derived factors were then projected onto the interpersonal space of the interpersonal circumplex (IPC). Analyses were concluded with the correlation of factors with NEO-PI-R domains and facets.

#### Factor Analysis

Principal axis factor analysis with oblique rotation of 15 autonomy instruments and subscales identified three distinct factors. Visual examination of the scree plot as well as exploration of two and four factor solutions led to the conclusion that a three-factor solution provided the most parsimonious and informative fit. Eigenvalues for this solution were 3.84, 3.28, and 1.43 accounting for 57% of the total variance. Factor I accounted for 26% of the variance, Factor II for 22%, and Factor III for 10%. All scales loaded onto their primary factor at .40 or greater (see Table 2).

Factor I had five primary loadings, all subscales designed to measure Beck's vulnerability to depression. These included the PSI Need for Control, SAS Independence, SAS Solitude/Interpersonal Insensitivity subscales, PSI Defensive Separation, and PSI Perfectionism/

**Table 2**  
Factor Analysis of Autonomy Measures

Autonomy Measure	Oblimin Rotated Factors	
	I	II
PSI Need for Control	<b>.78</b>	-.15
Revised SAS Independence	<b>.75</b>	.25
Revised SAS Solitude/ Interpersonal Insensitivity	<b>.68</b>	-.38
PSI Defensive Separation	<b>.62</b>	-.34
PSI Perfectionism/Self-criticism	<b>.44</b>	-.13
Worthington Emotional Autonomy	-.25	<b>.76</b>
Worthington Value Autonomy	.00	<b>.76</b>
Revised SAS Individualistic Achievement	.18	<b>.60</b>
General Causality Orientation Autonomy	-.14	<b>.60</b>
Worthington Behavioral Autonomy	.00	<b>.59</b>
Worthington Family Autonomy	-.13	<b>.48</b>
IDI Assertion of Autonomy	.27	.00
PRF Autonomy	<b>.40</b>	.00
Hogan Autonomy	.00	.28
ACL Autonomy	.22	.00

Note.  $n = 290$ .

Self-criticism subscales. Need for Control and Independence exhibited a positive secondary loading on Factor III. Solitude/Interpersonal Insensitivity exhibited a negative secondary loading on Factor II and a positive secondary loading on Factor III, as did Defensive Separation. Implications of these double loadings will be addressed in the discussion.

Six scales loaded on Factor II. All WAS subscales (Emotional, Value, Behavioral, and Family), the GCOS autonomy subscale, and the SAS Individualistic Achievement subscale loaded positively on this factor. SAS Individualistic Achievement had a positive secondary loading on Factor III.

Factor III was comprised of the IDI Assertion of Autonomy subscale, the PRF autonomy subscale, the HPI autonomy subscale, and the ACL autonomy subscale. The PRF had a positive secondary loading on Factor I.

Factor scores were obtained via Principle Axis Factor Analysis with Oblimin rotation and Kaiser normalization. Factors were not con-

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strained for orthogonality and factor scores were obtained via regression-based estimates. Factor I was correlated  $-.17$  with Factor II and  $.34$  with Factor III. Factor II was uncorrelated ( $.00$ ) with Factor III.

### Projection of Factors Onto the Interpersonal Circumplex

The "vector method" (Gurtman & Pincus, in press; Wiggins & Broughton, 1991), was utilized to project the identified factors onto the IPC. As noted in Wiggins and Broughton (1991), angular locations and vector lengths locate outside variables (i.e., autonomy factors) within the geometric structure of the IPC via their correlations with Dominance ( $y$ ) and Love ( $x$ ). Angular location of factors is calculated by  $\theta = \tan^{-1}(y/x)$  and factor vector lengths are calculated by  $r = (x^2 + y^2)^{1/2}$ . While the angular location indicates the specific blend of love and dominance and places the factor around the perimeter of the circumplex (from 0 to 360 degrees), the vector length indicates the extent to which the factor can be considered interpersonal in nature. Figure 2 demonstrates that each factor was represented in a distinct quadrant of the IPC, indicating differentiation in each factor's blend of love and dominance.

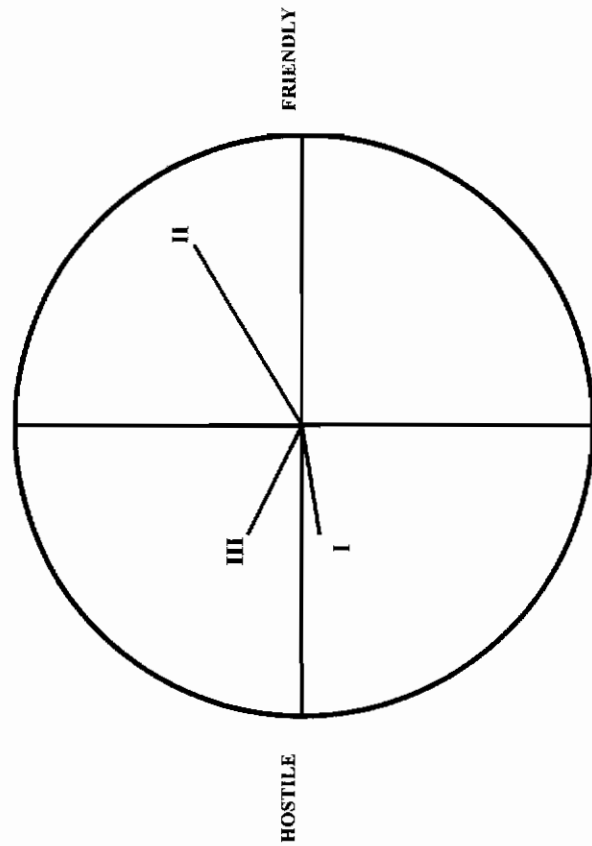
Vector lengths that ranged from  $.36$  to  $.70$  indicated diversity in the extent to which these factors were captured by the dominance and love coordinates of interpersonal space (see Figure 2). Factor I (Vulnerability), with a vector length of  $.36$  and an angular location of  $186^\circ$ , was located in the hostile-submissive quadrant of the IPC. This vector length indicates moderate interpersonal content, negative in both dominance and love.

Located at  $42^\circ$  within the friendly-dominant quadrant, Factor II (Self-governance), with a vector length of  $.70$ , demonstrated strong communality within interpersonal space, positive in both dominance and love. Factor III (Separation), located at  $154^\circ$  degrees, within the hostile-dominant quadrant was also interpersonal in nature, as evidenced by its vector length of  $.37$ . This factor reflects a blend of positive dominance and negative love.

### Relationships With Domains and Facets of the Five-Factor Model

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to explore the relationships between the three derived factors and the five domains and 30 facets of the NEO-PI-R (see Table 3). For NEO-PI-R domain

DOMINANT



SUBMISSIVE

Figure 2

Projection of extracted factors onto interpersonal circumplex.

scales, Factor I (Vulnerability) had significant associations with Neuroticism (+), Agreeableness (-), Extraversion (-), and Conscientiousness (-). Factor II (Self-governance) was significantly associated with Neuroticism (-), Agreeableness (+), Conscientiousness (+), Extraversion (+), and Openness (+). Factor III (Separation) was related to both Extraversion (-), and Agreeableness (-).

Table 3 also presents correlations between derived factors and facets of the NEO-PI-R. In general, correlations with facets mirrored those with domain scores, with some notable exceptions. Factor III, though exhibiting a negative association with Neuroticism, demonstrated a positive association with the Angry-Hostility facet of this domain. In addition, this factor exhibited positive associations with Assertiveness and Activity facets of Extraversion while demonstrating a negative

Table 3

NEO-PI-R Domain and Facet Correlations of Autonomy Factors

NEO-PI-R Facet Scale	Factor		
	Vulnerability	Self-Governance	Separation
Neuroticism	.43**	-.43**	-.13
(N1): Anxiety	.31**	-.24**	-.24**
(N2): Angry Hostility	.49**	-.26**	.24**
(N3): Depression	.37**	-.37**	-.03
(N4): Self-Consciousness	.34**	-.40**	-.17**
(N5): Impulsiveness	.22*	-.14*	-.09
(N6): Vulnerability	.18**	-.53**	-.30**
Extraversion	-.19**	.57**	-.16*
(E1): Warmth	-.31**	.60**	-.28**
(E2): Gregariousness	-.24**	.30**	-.43**
(E3): Assertiveness	-.05	.44**	.19**
(E4): Activity	.11	.34**	.15*
(E5): Excitement Seeking	.07	.29**	-.07
(E6): Positive Emotions	-.25**	.50**	-.20**
Openness	.03	.42**	.03
(O1): Fantasy	.00	.17**	-.12
(O2): Aesthetics	.04	.32**	.06
(O3): Feelings	.00	.49**	-.09
(O4): Actions	-.13	.14*	-.01
(O5): Ideas	.06	.31**	.18**
(O6): Values	-.08	.34**	-.12
Agreeableness	-.34**	.36**	-.32**
(A1): Trust	-.46**	.42**	-.33**
(A2): Straightforwardness	-.28**	.22**	-.23**
(A3): Altruism	-.24**	.57**	-.15*
(A4): Compliance	-.26**	.06	-.33**
(A5): Modesty	.06	-.01	-.09
(A6): Tender-Mindedness	-.12	.36**	-.10
Conscientiousness	-.13	.58**	.13
(C1): Competence	-.14*	.62**	.14*
(C2): Order	-.06	.28**	.06
(C3): Dutifulness	-.01	.54**	.15*
(C4): Achievement Striving	.02	.43**	.17**
(C5): Self-Discipline	-.18**	.48**	.10
(C6): Deliberation	-.19**	.26**	.09

Note. NEO-PI-R = NEO Personality Inventory Revised.

n = 226-229.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01.

association with the Extraversion domain. Implications of these split correlations are discussed below.

## DISCUSSION

The present findings support the hypothesis that different forms of autonomy are represented in existing psychological literature and instrumentation. Principle axis factor analysis identified a three-factor oblique solution. Projection of these factors onto the IPC demonstrated that the three factors occupied unique locations within the coordinates of love and dominance and contained varying degrees of interpersonal content. Correlations between derived factors and NEO-PI-R domains and facets further differentiated these constructs and provided three unique portraits of "autonomy."

In conjunction with existing theoretical formulations and empirical evidence, the present analyses elucidate these constructs and lead to the conclusion that while three distinct factors are represented in autonomy literature, only two of these factors exhibit characteristics consistent with the fundamental meaning of auto (self) - nomy (governance).

### *What Do Autonomy Measures Really Assess*

Factor I, comprised of five of the six vulnerability subscales, is presently conceptualized as Depressogenic Vulnerability. The loading of these scales onto one factor suggests that they are indeed tapping the same construct and that this construct may be the epitome of one cognitive personality style that confers vulnerability to depression. The absence of SAS Individualistic Achievement on this factor suggests that, contrary to Beck's theory, achievement issues may not be crucial to this construct.

Factor I falls at 186° on the IPC, with a vector length of .36, placing it within the hostile-submissive quadrant of interpersonal space. Consistent with theory, this location reflects interpersonal separation. A notable inconsistency, however, is the location of this factor in a submissive, rather than agentic quadrant of the IPC. As noted by Wiggins (1997), passivity is the polar opposite of agency, an element thought to be the essence of autonomy. As the passive individual does not act of his/her own accord but according to internal or external controls, we find this first factor to be devoid of the most fundamental

element of autonomy—agency. We therefore suggest that Factor I, lacking agency, and actually endorsing a degree of submissiveness, cannot be accurately labeled "autonomy." Analysis within the framework of the FFM appears to support this assertion and contributes to the conclusion that Depressogenic Vulnerability, while relatively consistent with its theoretical orientation, is not consistent with conceptualizations of autonomy.

In particular, we note the lack of significant associations between Factor I and the Assertiveness and Activity facets of Extraversion and the Achievement Striving facet of Conscientiousness. In conjunction with significant negative correlations with the Competence, Self-Discipline, and Deliberation facets of Conscientiousness, we find a manner of being characterized by lack of assertiveness and achievement motivation, perceived incompetence, and tendencies toward disorganization, procrastination, and hastiness. We suggest that such characterization belies a portrait of self-governance and supports the assertion that the scales comprising Factor I are not congruent with the concept of autonomy.

Positive associations with Neuroticism and its facets appear to capture the core of this factor—psychological vulnerability. According to Costa and McCrae (1992), this domain is most strongly associated with the experience of negative affect and susceptibility to psychological distress. In addition, a negative association with the Positive Emotions facet of Extraversion implies infrequency in the experience of positive affect. We find this consistent with the theoretical foundation of these scales and reflective of a vulnerability to depression.

This portrayal of Factor I, primarily characterized by its lack of agentic quality, interpersonal detachment, and propensity to negative affect, is inconsistent with the fundamental meaning of autonomy. In fact, we find no evidence in the present analysis to suggest that this factor is at all indicative of the construct. We therefore conclude that this factor's "autonomy" label is a misnomer that contributes to the ambiguity found in autonomy literature. In addition, we suggest that it fails to capture the essence of the construct that it is intended to represent (autonomy).

Although we conclude that this factor does not represent autonomy, we take no stand as to what label would most accurately capture its unique nature. The label of Depressogenic Vulnerability is one of convenience rather than specificity. With due respect, we

defer a more appropriate label to those who have conceptualized and studied this construct.

*Self-governance.* Factor II is presently conceptualized as Self-governance. With the exception of the SAS Individualistic Achievement scale, the theoretical underpinning of these instruments suggested that they would load together. GCOS and WAS appear to be based upon similar conceptualizations of autonomy as self-governance. In addition, scale items appear at face value to tap a form of autonomy that might be considered psychologically adaptive in nature, likewise suggesting the presence of common underlying elements (see Method section for examples).

Although Individualistic Achievement was constructed to measure an aspect of depressive vulnerability, Clark and Beck (1991) acknowledged that this subscale might be tapping a different aspect of personality. Scale items such as "When I achieve a goal I get more satisfaction from reaching the goal than from any praise I might get" and "I set my own standards and goals for myself rather than accepting those of others" suggest that this instrument may be tapping a form of intrinsic motivation. At face value, these items appear consistent with the self-governance concept suggested by Wiggins (1997), Deci and Ryan (1985), and Anderson et al. (1994).

Location of Self-governance at 42° places it in the Friendly-Dominant quadrant of the IPC. A positive mixture of dominance and love, this factor's vector length of .70 indicates that it contains substantial interpersonal content. This location is consistent with Wiggins's (1997) suggestion that Autonomy<sub>1</sub> is an interpersonal construct with an agentic underpinning. It differs, however, to the extent that communion is likewise a core aspect of this factor, leading to the conclusion that a rotation of Wiggins's theoretical placement of Autonomy<sub>1</sub> is necessary to adequately capture both agentic and communal elements of this construct.

Consistent with Blatt and Blass's (1996) assertion that autonomy interacts in a positive manner with relatedness, we suggest that this IPC location reflects an interpersonal blend underlying a healthy, adaptive type of autonomy to the extent that it allows for relatedness to others as well as enough dominance to allow the individual to be "self-ruling." This seemingly interdependent aspect of self-governance is consistent with Koestner and Losier's (1996) finding that GCOS autonomy was associated with more intimate and pleasant peer

relationships and with the negative loading of the SAS Solitude/Interpersonal Insensitivity scale onto this factor.

FFM analysis confirms the positive interpersonal essence of this factor since we find positive associations with the domains and facets of both Extraversion and Agreeableness. It is notable that Compliance and Modesty are the only facets unrelated to Self-governance, supporting the thought that while self-governance is indicative of interpersonal relatedness, it is also characteristic of a strong sense of self and self-directedness.

Associations with noninterpersonal domains and facets round out the portrayal of Factor II. A significant negative correlation with neuroticism suggests that individuals high in Self-governance may indeed be more psychologically adjusted and less prone to psychopathology. The present analyses demonstrate that measures comprising this factor are tapping into a construct indicative of low levels of anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. In conjunction with a positive association with the Positive Emotions facet of Extraversion, this profile of low negative emotionality and high positive emotionality is consistent with existing research (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1995) and suggestive of a level of psychological adjustment.

Positive associations with all facets of Openness and Conscientiousness also support previously cited research and suggest the potential for psychological soundness. Consistent with Bober and Grolnick's (1995) finding that those high in GCOS autonomy have increased self-awareness, associations with Openness facets suggest that individuals high in this form of autonomy tend to be emotionally tuned-in, with a greater awareness of their inner emotional experience. Intellectual curiosity and openness to values suggests a willingness to consider new ideas and reconsider existing values, as well as demonstrates a lack of dogmatism. We find this consistent with previously cited research that found highly autonomous individuals to be less prone to boredom and more open to expert advice.

Significant and positive associations with all facets of Conscientiousness indicate high levels of self-perceived competence, intellectual curiosity, diligence and purposefulness. It also suggests high achievement motivation as well as a willingness to persevere in order to achieve chosen goals. Again, we find congruence with existing research and with the loading of SAS Individualistic Achievement onto this factor.



This composite of FFM and IPC findings are supportive of existing theoretical conceptualizations and empirical findings in regard to a self-governing, interdependent form of autonomy. In its totality, it suggests a form of autonomy that is consistent with the literal meaning of the word "self-ruling." We submit that it is also congruent with existing literature that suggests an association between this form of autonomy and psychological adjustment. Future directions for research of this construct are addressed at the conclusion of this discussion.

*Agentic separation.* Factor III, comprised of scales designed to tap Murray's needs (ACL and PRF), as well as the IDI and the HPI, is presently conceptualized as Agentic Separation, an independent form of autonomy. Positive secondary loadings of the PSI Defensive Separation and Need for Control scales, and all SAS scales suggest a level of commonality between this factor and Depressogenic Vulnerability (Factor I). It is suggested that this factor overlap is reflective of the interpersonal separateness that appears to be a core element of both constructs.

The location of this factor at 154° in the Hostile-Dominant quadrant of the IPC reveals a blend of hostility and dominance, or using Wiggins' terminology, detachment and agency. While Wiggins (1997) suggested that Autonomy<sub>2</sub> is situated solely on the detached end of the communion dimension, the current analysis again suggests that a rotation of his IPC placement is necessary to include the agentic qualities of this factor. In other words, this second form of autonomy encompasses both separation and agency as demonstrated by its location on the control/agency end of the vertical dimension. We find this consistent with Koestner and Losier's (1996) characterization of ACL reactive autonomy as a blend of independence and detachment.

In comparison to Factor II, we find similarity in the agentic core of both Self-governance and Agentic Separation, yet a notable distinction in the interpersonal nature of each. Agentic Separation resides at the hostile end of the communal dimension, whereas Self-governance is located at the friendly end of the continuum. These distinctions, identified via the IPC, are supported in the FFM analyses.

Agentic Separation is *negatively* associated with both interpersonal domains of the FFM—Extraversion and Agreeableness. On a facet level, we find negative associations with Extraversion's Warmth,

Gregariousness, and Positive Emotions facets. Interestingly, however, this domain is split by *positive* associations with Activity and Assertiveness. It is suggested that these split associations provide a second view of the essence of Factor III, demonstrating again the elements of interpersonal separateness and agency.

Comparison of these facet correlations with those found with Self-governance emphasizes the common agentic element of both constructs, as demonstrated by both constructs' positive associations with Activity and Assertiveness. The domain associations, however, continue to emphasize differentiation in terms of relatedness, as we recall the positive associations between Self-governance and both Extraversion and Agreeableness.

A negative association is found between Agentic Separation and Neuroticism. While facet analysis identifies a positive association with Angry-Hostility, it appears that this construct tends not to be associated with negative affect or psychological distress. This is consistent with Wiggins's (1997) assertion that Autonomy<sub>2</sub> is not indicative of maladjustment. The positive association with Angry-Hostility is interpreted as additional evidence of the separation theme associated with this factor.

Positive associations with the Competence, Dutifulness, and Achievement Striving facets of Conscientiousness suggest that investment in non-interpersonal strivings may take precedence over relatedness strivings. In fact, it may reflect a compensatory outlet developed in response to unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships.

In its totality, we find Agentic Separation to be markedly different from Self-governance in terms of its interpersonal nature, yet similar in regard to a core agentic quality that is common to both. We suggest that this reflects two distinct forms of autonomy, one "independent" in nature and characterized by agency and interpersonal separation, the other, "interdependent" in nature and characterized by agency and interpersonal relatedness. As autonomy is frequently considered within theoretical discussions of Dependency, a brief exploration of this independent-interdependent distinction within that context warrants consideration.

A similar analysis of the dependency construct located three distinct traits of dependency in the friendly-submissive quadrant of interpersonal space (Pincus & Gurtman, 1995). We find this noteworthy as it places opposing forces, specifically "independent" Agentic Separation and Dependency, in polar opposite quadrants of

interpersonal space. In addition, the placement of "interdependent" Self-governance, in the agentic opposite quadrant of dependency and the communal opposite quadrant of Agentic Separation, demonstrates that this construct lies somewhere between the extremes of "I need you; you do it" (dependency) and "I don't need you; I'll do it" (independence).

While this leads to a number of questions about the IPC, autonomy, and dependency, we recognize that speculation would be beyond the scope of this paper. We therefore submit two basic points of inquiry. First, we find issues of dependency encompassing three of the four quadrants of interpersonal space in a pattern that one might expect, given the relatedness of these constructs to one another. We are left, then, to wonder about the role of Depressogenic Vulnerability, or the hostile-submissive quadrant, within this larger picture. Notably, the location of Self-governance suggests that it may present an opposing force to Depressogenic Vulnerability, as these constructs reside in polar opposite quadrants. However, a simple adjustment-maladjustment dichotomy does not stand up to scrutiny. On a related note, we recall the assertion that Self-governance is a marker of psychological adjustment. Although speculative, it implies that adjustment may reflect some optimal blend of agency and relatedness. We suggest that this would prove a valuable avenue of inquiry. Specific suggestions for future research are addressed within the following conclusions.

## CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the present analyses, we submit the following conclusions. First, the identification of three diverse conceptualizations of "autonomy" within the literature leads to the conclusion that autonomy measures are not assessing the same construct. Second, analyses of these three factors within the broader taxonomies of the IPC and the FFM lead to the conclusion that Factor I (Depressogenic Vulnerability) lacks the essential agentic core that would be necessary for an autonomy construct. We therefore conclude that it is inconsistent with conceptualizations of autonomy and in need of a label more consistent with its nature.

Factors II and III appear to represent two distinct forms of autonomy. Both agentic in nature, there is considerable differentia-

tion between the two, particularly in regard to their communal nature. Self-governance appears to be an interdependent form of autonomy, strongly and positively interpersonal in nature. In conjunction with existing empirical evidence and theoretical models, we suggest that this factor is also a marker of psychological adjustment.

Consistent with Koestner and Losier (1996), we conclude that Factor III (Agentic Separation) represents a second, independent form of autonomy, manifested in agency and interpersonal separation. Future research endeavors might explore additional similarities and differences between this factor and Self-governance. As previously noted, the relationship between Self-governance and markers of psychological adjustment leads to questions about the adaptive value of Agentic Separation, given its lack of such associations.

We are likewise left to wonder about the individual differences in Autonomy that lead to one manifestation, characterized by interdependence and perhaps, psychological adjustment, or the other manifestation that is characterized by independence, with no evidence of a relationship to psychological adjustment. The role of interpersonal relatedness seems the most logical starting point, given that this element appears to be the most striking difference between these autonomy constructs.

In light of the value of distinguishing these constructs, we suggest that an item analysis of autonomy scales representative of Self-governance and Agentic Separation might allow for greater discrimination between these distinct forms of the same construct. In addition, item analysis would allow for a more informed decision about the future operationalization of these constructs and the potential value of constructing new scales. At present, we suggest that existing research supports the utilization of ACL and GCOS instruments as measures of these two forms of autonomy.

We conclude with the recognition that the present study is not without limitations. First, the present study utilized self-report instruments with a college population of late adolescents and young adults. Given that autonomy may be more salient at this developmental stage and, perhaps, within this particular social context, generalizations may be limited until these results are replicated with more diverse samples and across different periods in the lifespan. In addition, a large amount of data was collected in a limited time,

increasing the potential for fatigue effects in this sample as well as limiting the availability of some data for analyses.

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## The Role of Personality in Task and Relationship Conflict

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**ABSTRACT** Two studies explored the extent to which dispositions influence the attributions individuals make about the type of conflict they experience. Traits from the Five-Factor Model of personality (FFM) were linked to the tendency to experience task- and relationship-oriented conflict. Results provide some support for the idea that individuals have stable tendencies in the attributions they make about their conflict experiences across time, partners, and situations. Agreeableness and openness were related to reports of relationship conflict at the individual level. However, the strongest effects of personality on conflict attributions were found in the analysis of dyads. This analysis revealed that partner levels of extraversion and conscientiousness were associated with individuals' tendencies to report relationship conflict. Moreover, mean levels of extraversion and conscientiousness in a pair were associated with reports of relationship conflict. Differences between partners in extraversion were associated with more frequent conflict and a greater likelihood of reporting task-related conflict. Implications of these findings with

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