

## AN ARGUMENT AGAINST PROMISCUOUS VARIABILITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S "PERSONALITY."

I agree there is a certain degree of flexibility (which is, in part, contextually driven) in the individual's personality expression. But practically, there also appears as well to be a certain degree of fixity in personality expression. That is, that there seems to be a certain "core" of each person which is unique unto them and which tends to not change (or vary little) over time and in general. This may be recognized as the "individuality" of the person. It is that core which, by being expressed in behavior (including mental), that instantiates the person's individuality. It is that individuality which permits us to differentiate person A from person B – at least usually.

During discussion, it was suggested that the individual's core is an expression of or might result from the person's "story." Again, I concur, the person's story, or self-narrative, certainly plays a role.

Whether perceived as a core or a story, the "core" concept appears (to me) to suggest the nature of the individual's psychology as forming or contributing significantly to their particular facet of "the human condition." That is, that there is something which strongly influences the individual's behavior and which is relatively inflexible – or, at least, considerably constrained in terms of variability. Bentall<sup>1</sup> refers to such a central core as a **master interpretive system**, which he describes as:

*" - - - a class of belief phenomena that I will term master interpretive systems: systems because they involve not just one proposition but an organized system of generating propositions; interpretive because they reflect particular stances when interpreting the world; master because they tend to dominate all other ways in which human beings interpret the social world."*

Bentall, P, Delusions and other beliefs, , pg 78, Chapter 4 in: Bortolotti, L, editor, Delusions in Context, Palgrave Macmillan (Springer Nature AG), London, 2018.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328116287\\_Delusions\\_in\\_Context](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328116287_Delusions_in_Context)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97202-2>

In short, it is that "master interpretive system" (or core) which determines how each individual creates their representation/s of ontic reality which hinges upon the perceptions which they construct based upon what their senses have recorded.

I posit for consideration and discussion that a list (no doubt incomplete) of components participating in the formation and utilization of the "core master interpretive system" in determining (or, at least in influencing) behavior is composed of the following for each reasonably intact individual:

1. Their **lifequest** -their personal desires, plans, and methods to acquire meaning in their life.
    - *"Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it."* –Viktor Frankl.
  2. Their **worldview** - their personal perception of the world in which they exist.
  3. Their **lifeworld** – their personal perception of the personal/individual world in which they exist.
  4. Their **self-narrative** – their introspective recounting of a their development and existential history.
  5. Their **existential orientation** – their feelings and thoughts which are experienced as a result of their relationship with the perceptions of the world and their lifeworld.
-

As an estimation, if one assumes that each of these 5 components has 5 independent expressions, then the possibilities are 25 factorial (**25! = 15,511,210,043,330,985,984,000,000 – ie, 1.5X10<sup>9</sup>**). In other words, enough to account for individual variability/uniqueness expressed by *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

So, lots of different ways to produce unique individuals with distinct behaviors. Lewin's formula about behavior control hints at behavior's variables:

$$B = f(P, E).$$

where:

$f$  = signifies "is a function of."

B = Behavior,

P = Person,

E = Environment.

If the terms of Lewin's equation are expanded to account for things like the context of the moment, time, memory, experience, etc. Then the equation looks like:

$${}_nB = f( \{ \int_{[0+1+2+\dots+n-1]} P^{per} \} + \{ \int_{[0+1+2+\dots+n-1]} \} (M^c + E^x + P^c + B^p + M^o) ), ( \{ \int_{[0+1+2+\dots+n-1]} E^g \} ) + ({}^mC^{txt})).$$

where:

${}_nB$  = behavior at time "n".

$\int$  indicates that  $P^{per}$  at the times "0 – n" are integrated to constitute  $P^{per}$  available at time "n".

$\int_{[0+1+2+\dots+n-1]} P^{per}$  = the individual's personality or preferred adaptation systems available at time "n".

$\int_{[0+1+2+\dots+n-1]} HOS^{pers}$  = the individual's personal(ized) Human Operating System available at time "n".

( $HOS^{pers} = M^c + E^x + P^c + B^p + M^o$ )

$M^c$  – Mental capacity – ie, are dependent upon mental latitude, state, and function.

$E^x$  – Experience – ie, episodic and semantic memory and others.

$P^c$  – Perception – ie, interpretational abilities and efficacy.

$B^p$  – Behavior – ie, previous actions taken.

$M^o$  – Motivation – ie, choice opportunity and selection options.

${}_nE$  = the environment encountered at time "n". ( ${}_nE = {}_nE^g + {}^mC^{txt}$ )

${}_nE^g$  = the external environment in general in which the person finds themselves at time  $n$ .

${}^mC^{txt}$  = the *momentary context*, the context of the moment in which the individual finds themselves.

A plethora of variables – no surprise, then, that we are capable of such remarkable adaptations!

Some of the factors are easily changed.

Unfortunately, we appear to have not yet identified "core" factors which are inflexible/invariant.

Still, there are intimations that there are some things which are, if not inflexible/invariant, at least resistant to change and are, at least relatively resistant to indiscriminate change. These include things such as:

- Attachment theory.
- Object relations theory.
- Costa & McRae's Five factor model of personality..
- McAdams and Pals' *A New Big Five*.
- Separated twin studies

As an example, it appears more feasible that McAdams & Pals' *A New Big Five* is more likely a core constituent than is the more conceptually constrained Big Five model of personality.

Perhaps, these (and other) “operating systems) establish the relatively inflexible/invariant nature of the individual’s master interpretive system.

It is pertinent that our social interactions are not entirely chaotic – even in modern USA polity. We are, after all, predictable to an extent which allows prediction and productive interaction. Clearly, individual members of *Homo sapiens sapiens* often are capable of predicting others’ behavior to a significant extent.

Suggesting there is some sort of core operating system.

Some of the factors are not so easily changed – which seems to account for the considerable time required for “real change” to occur, such as via psychotherapy.

As a result, we concentrate on helping the person to modify their “operating system” (master interpretive system or core) in order to produce different perceptions, which permit different representations of ontic reality, so as to enable more functional adaptations.

I think there is some kind of a core which lies at the root of our “human condition,” and which enables functional human adaptation.

Malfunction of that core lies at the root of our psychopathologies.

We could benefit from knowing more about the origin, nature, and operation of such a “master interpretive core.”

Best regards,

Waldemar