Disconnected self: influence of dissociation on emotional distractibility in Borderline Personality Disorder: a neuroimaging approach

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1. Dissociation is closely linked to altered stress reactivity and cognitive disturbances in Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) (this thesis)
2. Alterations in fronto-limbic brain regions (including the amygdala and anterior cingulate) and in the default mode network seem to underlie key features of BPD (this thesis).
3. Dissociative states seem to be associated with a stronger coupling of the amygdala with frontal, temporo-parietal regions and a reduced coupling of the amygdala with occipital areas (this thesis).
4. The combination of dissociation induction and affective-cognitive tasks (Emotional Working Memory Task, Emotional Stroop Task) might help to gain more insight into specific dissociative processes in BPD.
5. Acute dissociation can critically interfere with affective-cognitive processing; it should therefore be taken into account in future neuropsychological and neuroimaging research in BPD, even when this is not a major research focus (this thesis).
6. Dissociative symptoms are associated with negative treatment outcomes in BPD; studying neurobiological underpinnings of dissociation might help to improve the treatment of this complex disorder.
7. The complexity and heterogeneity of BPD psychopathology can only be grasped by combining multiple measures (self-reports, behavioral, cognitive, psychophysiological measures, neuroimaging etc.).
8. Studying dynamic interactions within brain networks instead of focusing on neural activation patterns in localized brain regions is crucial to advance knowledge in the field of BPD.
9. Given the critical concerns about robustness and reproducibility of fMRI findings, large-scale meta-analysis and replication studies with larger sample sizes are needed to advance the knowledge in this field.
10. Literature searches in biomedical data bases need to be critically improved, providing a better dissociation between task-relevant hits and distracting borderline results.