

EAPP expert meeting: Life Events and Personality Change

Organizer: Wiebke Bleidorn, University of California, Davis

Abstract:

Research documenting personality change across the lifespan has led to considerable speculation about the conditions and causes of these changes. Major theories emphasize both genetic factors (e.g., Bleidorn et al., 2009; Hopwood et al., 2011) as well as the impact of major life events such as marriage, unemployment, or parenthood (e.g., Bleidorn, 2015; Kandler et al., 2012; Roberts et al., 2005). However, past research yielded mixed and sometimes conflicting results concerning the nature and direction of personality change in response to life events (Bleidorn et al., in press). The inconclusive nature of the current state of evidence may be partly explained by the scope and quality of previous studies, many of which were not explicitly designed to test the impact of life events on personality trait change (cf. Luhmann et al., 2014).

The purpose of the proposed meeting is to bring together scholars with expertise in personality development and processes, assessment, behavioral genetics, and longitudinal methodology to plan more rigorous studies on life events and personality change that can address the limitations of past research. This overarching goal leads to two specific outcomes for the proposed meeting:

1) Plans for existing-data studies that can address the gaps and shortcomings of past research on life events and personality change. Ideally, these plans will take the shape of pre-registered reports that could be disseminated through the European Journal of Personality (e.g., as a special issue).

2) One or more grant proposals for large-scale many-lab projects on life events and personality change. With this second goal, I hope to bring together expertise and knowledge from multiple labs around the world to raise funds for data collections that would provide more conclusive answers to the question of whether (and if so, which) life events are associated with personality change.

Time: I would like to plan a 3-day meeting in late September or early October, 2018 (depending on the availability of the participants).

List of participants:

- Wiebke Bleidorn, University of California, Davis (USA)
- Jaap J.A. Denissen, Tilburg University (The Netherlands)
- Brent Roberts, University of Illinois (USA)
- Jenny Wagner, University of Hamburg (Germany)
- Cornelia Wrzus, University of Mainz (Germany)
- Christopher J. Hopwood, University of California, Davis (USA)
- Mitja D. Back, University of Muenster (Germany)
- Ulrich Orth, University of Bern (Switzerland)
- Richard E. Lucas, Michigan State University (USA)

- Maike Luhmann, Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany)
- Johannes Zimmermann, Psychologische Hochschule Berlin (Germany)
- Christian Kandler, Medical School Berlin (Germany)

Budget

Thanks to Johannes Zimmermann, we would be able to use a meeting room at no additional cost at the Psychologische Hochschule Berlin (PHB) which is conveniently located in Berlin Kreuzberg close to the U-Bahn station Heinrich Heine Strasse (<http://psychologische-hochschule.de/>)

- Hotel / accommodation: €2,000 Euro (€200 per person, not including Berlin-based participants)
- Travel: €4,800 (€200 for German participants, €300 for European participants, €850 for U.S. participants not including Berlin-based participants)
- Other costs: €1,200 (2x coffee and lunch for 12 participants)

References

- Bleidorn, W. (2015). What accounts for personality maturation in early adulthood?. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24, 245-252.
- Bleidorn, W., Hopwood, C. J., & Lucas, R. E. (in press). Life Events and Personality Trait Change. *Journal of Personality*.
- Bleidorn, W., Kandler, C., & Caspi, A. (2014). The behavioural genetics of personality development in adulthood—Classic, contemporary, and future trends. *European Journal of Personality*, 28, 244-255.
- Hopwood, C. J., Donnellan, M. B., Blonigen, D. M., Krueger, R. F., McGue, M., Iacono, W. G., & Burt, S. A. (2011). Genetic and environmental influences on personality trait stability and growth during the transition to adulthood: a three-wave longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100, 545-556.
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- Luhmann, M., Orth, U., Specht, J., Kandler, C., & Lucas, R. E. (2014). Studying changes in life circumstances and personality: It's about time. *European Journal of Personality*, 28, 256-266.
- Roberts, B. W., Wood, D., & Smith, J. L. (2005). Evaluating five factor theory and social investment perspectives on personality trait development. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 39, 166-184.