

# Beyond Static Traits in the Study of Personality

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# **What is personality?**

“Personality is the **dynamic organization** within the individual of those **psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments** to the environment.”

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(Allport, 1937, p. 32)

# What is personality?

“Personality refers to those characteristics of the person that account for **consistent patterns of feelings, thinking, and behaving**.”

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(Pervin, Cervone & John, 2005, p. 6)

# What is personality?

“Personality refers to an individual’s characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, **together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns.**”

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(Funder, 2004, p. 5)

**“...consistent patterns of feelings,  
thinking, and behaving.”**

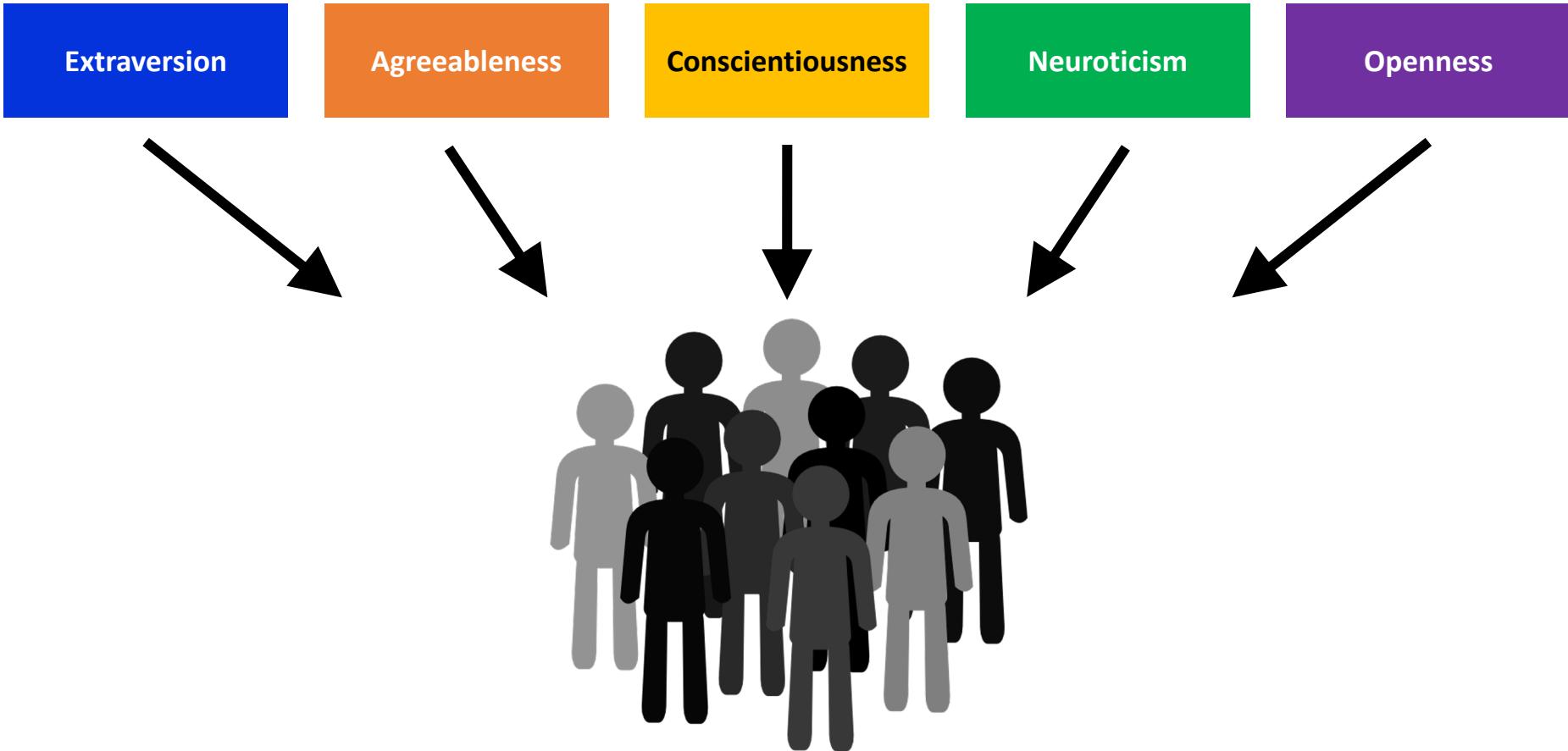
**“...dynamic organization”**

**“...psychological mechanisms – hidden  
or not – behind those patterns.”**

# **What is personality?**

Personality is what personality tests test.

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Nomothetic  
Between-Person  
Variable Centered

**“...consistent patterns of feelings,  
thinking, and behaving.”**

**“...dynamic organization”**

**“...psychological mechanisms – hidden  
or not – behind those patterns.”**

# **What is personality?**

Personality is what personality tests test.

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*For whom* does personality predict outcomes?

Beck & Jackson  
(2021a; *JPSP*)

Does the Big Five emerge *across ages*?

Beck et al.  
(revision submitted; *EJP*)

*How consistent* are person-specific personality structures?

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How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?

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Do personality *changes persist*?

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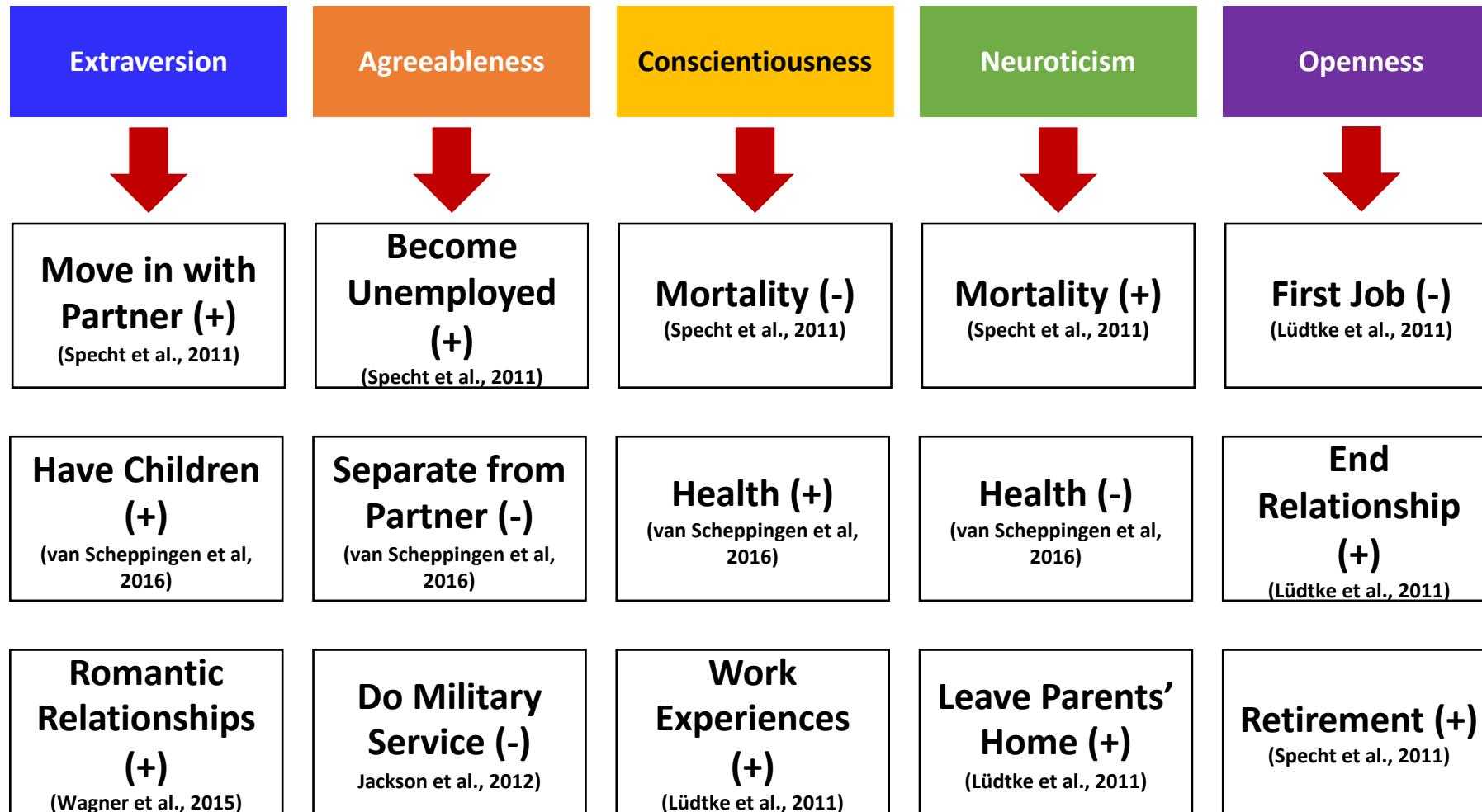
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# *For whom* does personality predict outcomes?



Q1: For whom does personality predict outcomes?

## Specification Curve Analysis

All possible specifications

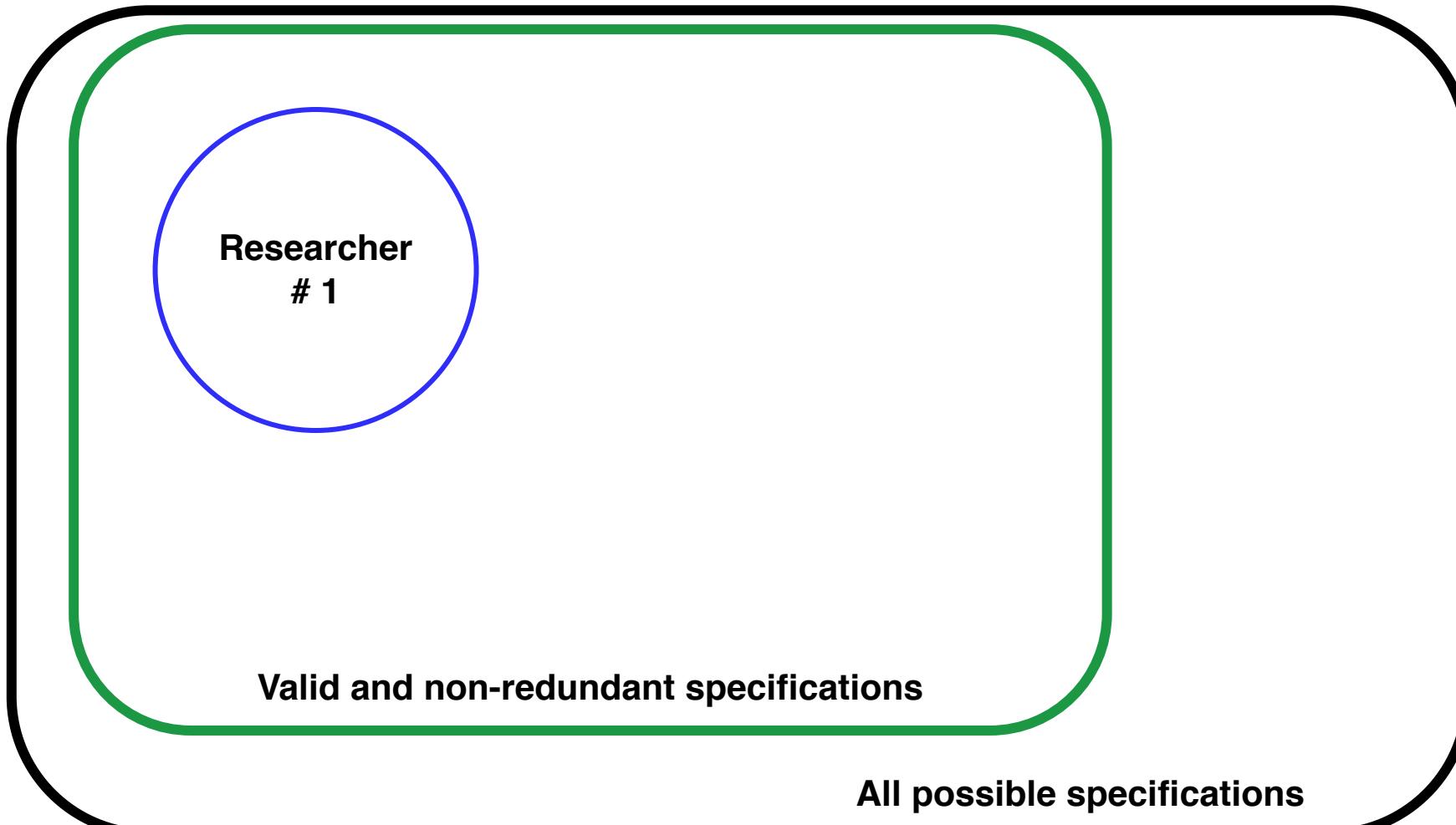
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## Specification Curve Analysis



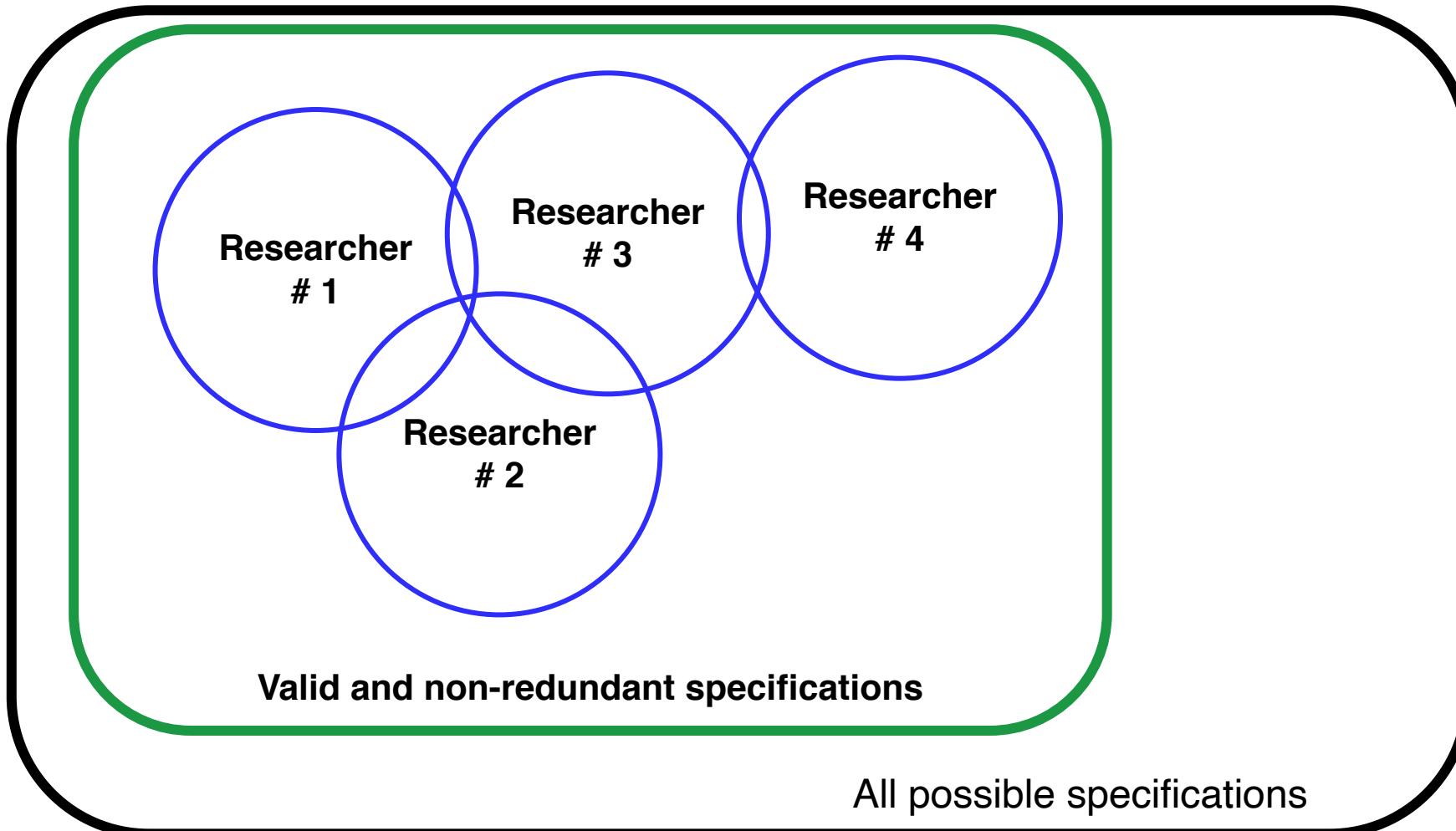
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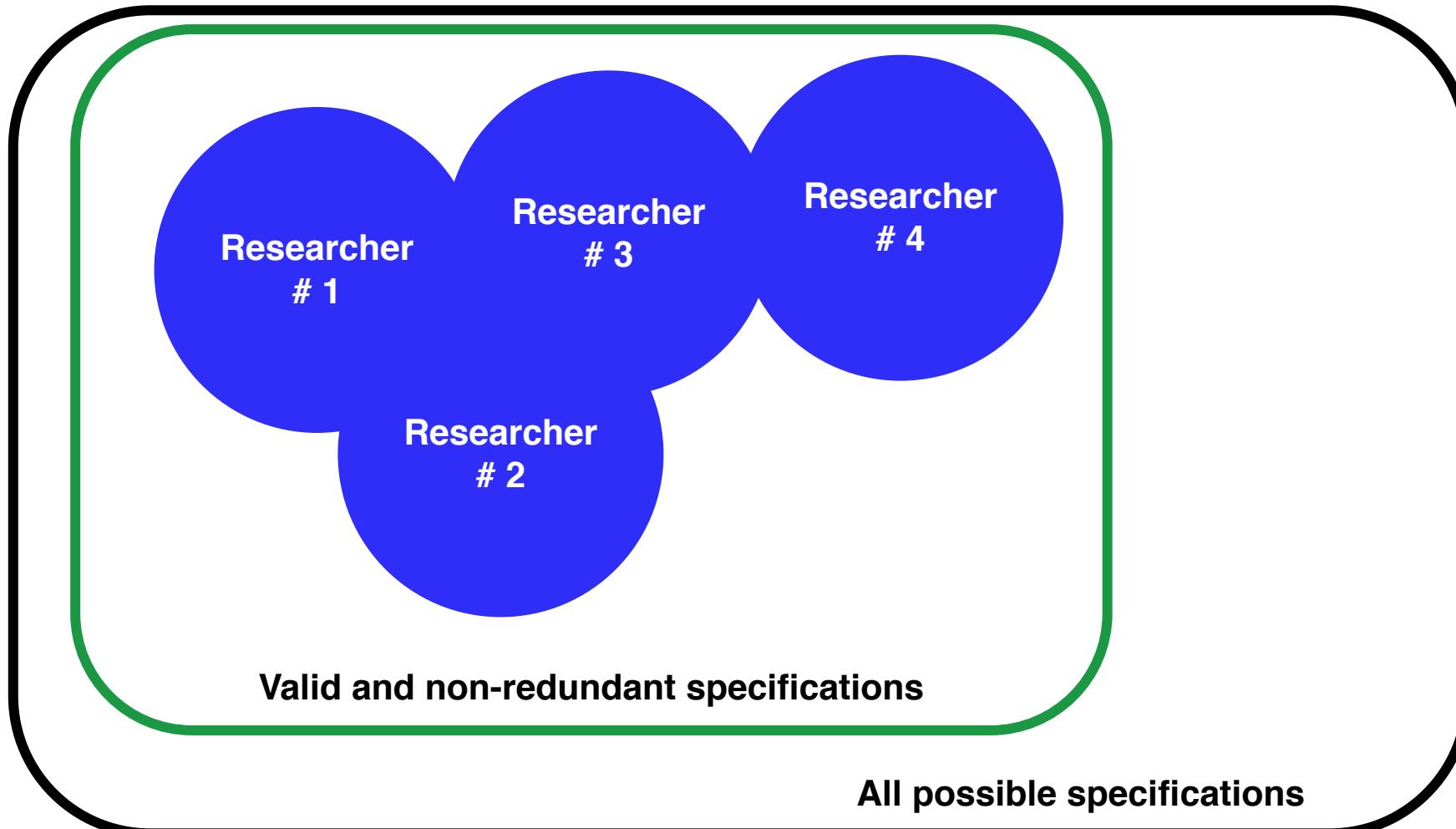
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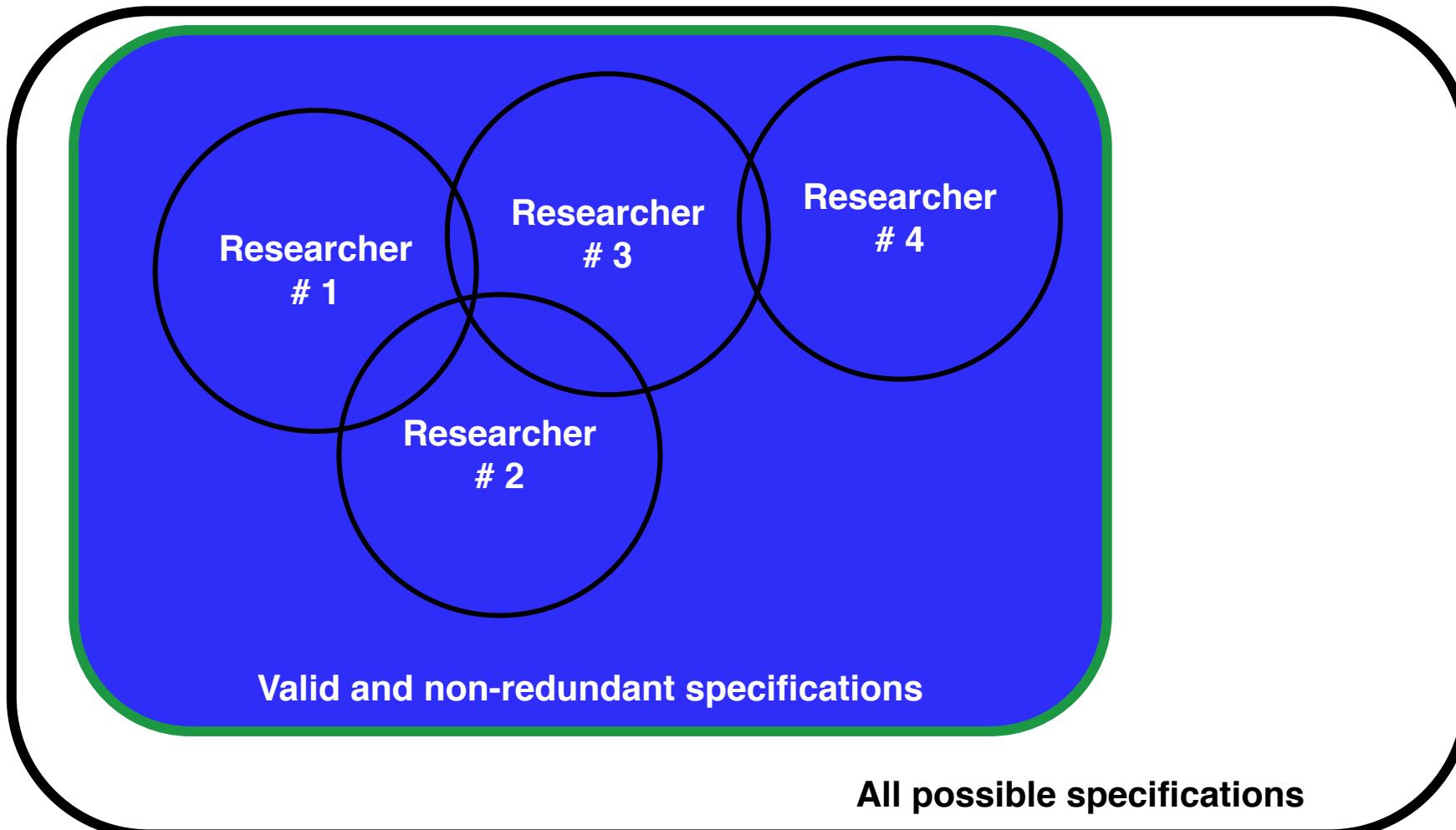
**Q1: For whom does personality predict outcomes?**

## Specification Curve Analysis



Q1: For whom does personality predict outcomes?

## Specification Curve Analysis



# Q1: For whom does personality predict outcomes?

Age	Gender	Health	SES
<b>1 Covariate</b>	<b>2 Covariates</b>	<b>3 Covariates</b>	<b>4 Covariates</b>
1. Age	5. Age + Gender	11. Age + Gender + Health	15. Age + Gender + Health + SES
2. Gender	6. Age + Health	12. Age + Gender + SES	
3. Health	7. Age + SES	13. Age + SES + Health	
4. SES	8. Gender + Health	14. Gender + Health + SES	
	9. Gender + SES		
	10. Health + SES		
			<b>0 Covariates</b>
			16.

**Total Specifications =  $2^{\# \text{ of terms}}$**

# **Q1: *For whom* does personality predict outcomes?**

- 
1. Age  
2. Gender  
3. Health  
4. SES  
7. Age + SES  
5. Age + Gender  
8. Gender + Health  
6. Age + Health  
9. Gender + SES  
10. Health + SES  
11. Age + Gender + Health  
12. Age + Gender + SES  
13. Age + SES + Health  
14. Gender + Health + SES  
15. Age + Gender + Health +  
SES  
16.

14 Predictors

14 Outcomes

Many Covariates

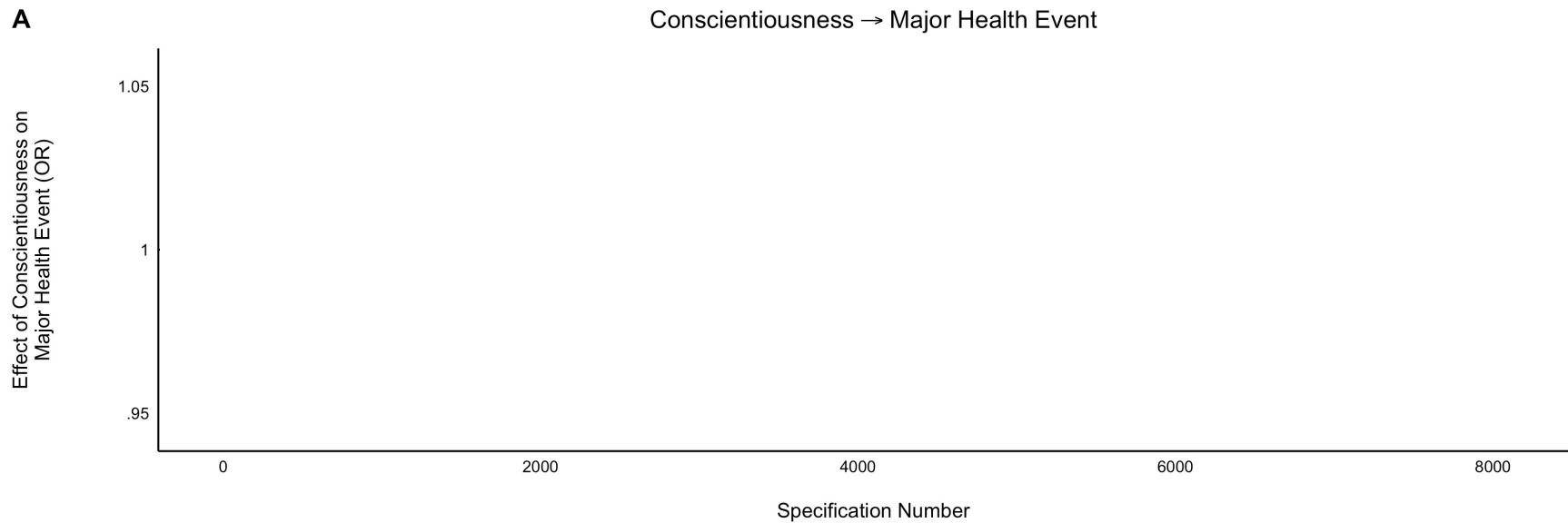
10 Studies

**N > 170,000**

Beck & Jackson (2021a; *JSPS*)

# Q1: *For whom* does personality predict outcomes?

A



B

Variables

- SRhealth
- smokes1
- race2
- race1
- PhysFunc1
- parOccPrstg
- parEdu3
- parEdu2
- p\_value
- married1
- grsWages
- gender1
- exercise
- education2
- education1
- BMI
- alcohol1
- age

Specification Number

Beck & Jackson (2021a; JPSP)

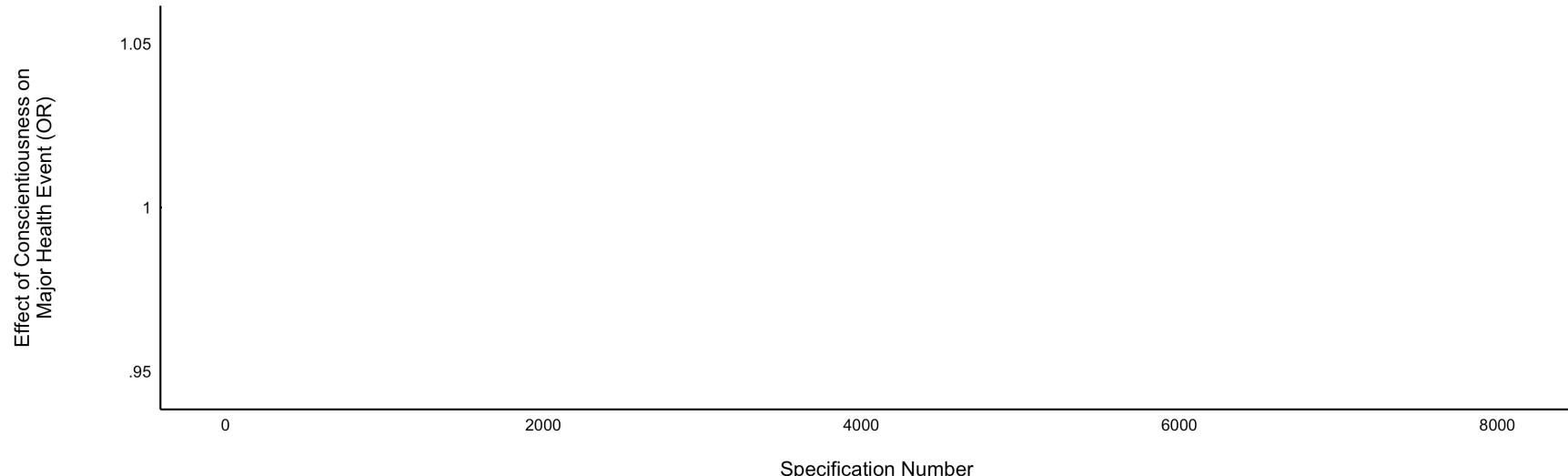
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OSF: <https://osf.io/usqzp/>

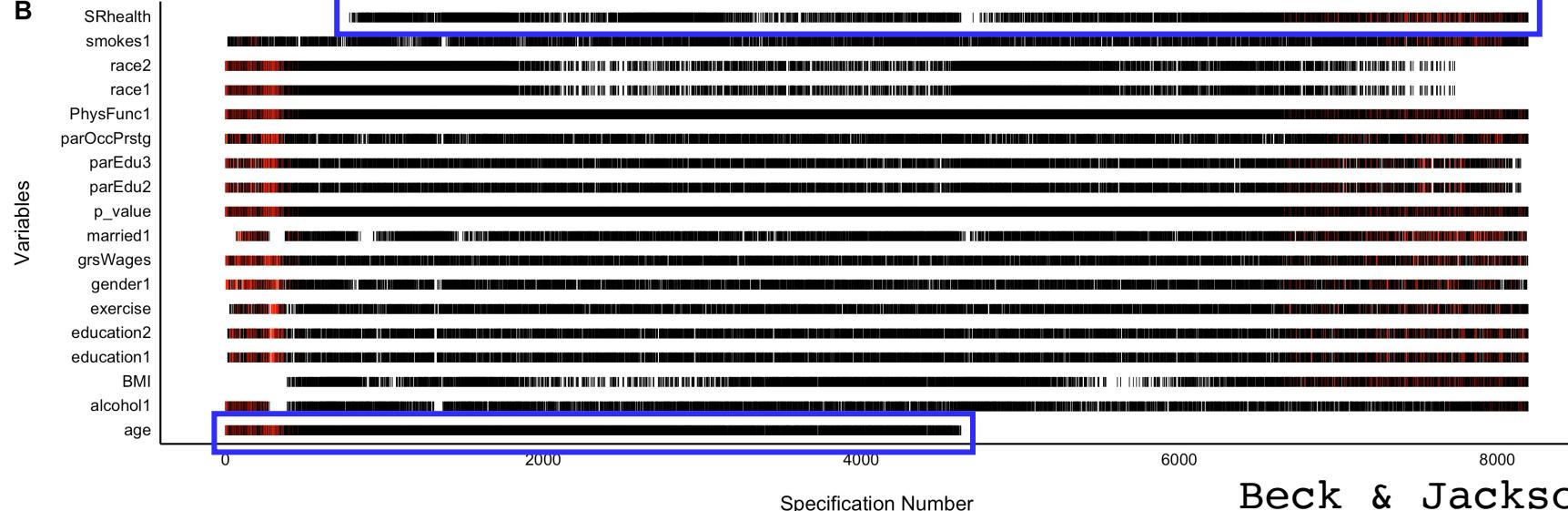
Shiny App: <https://emoriebeck.shinyapps.io/selection>

A

Conscientiousness → Major Health Event



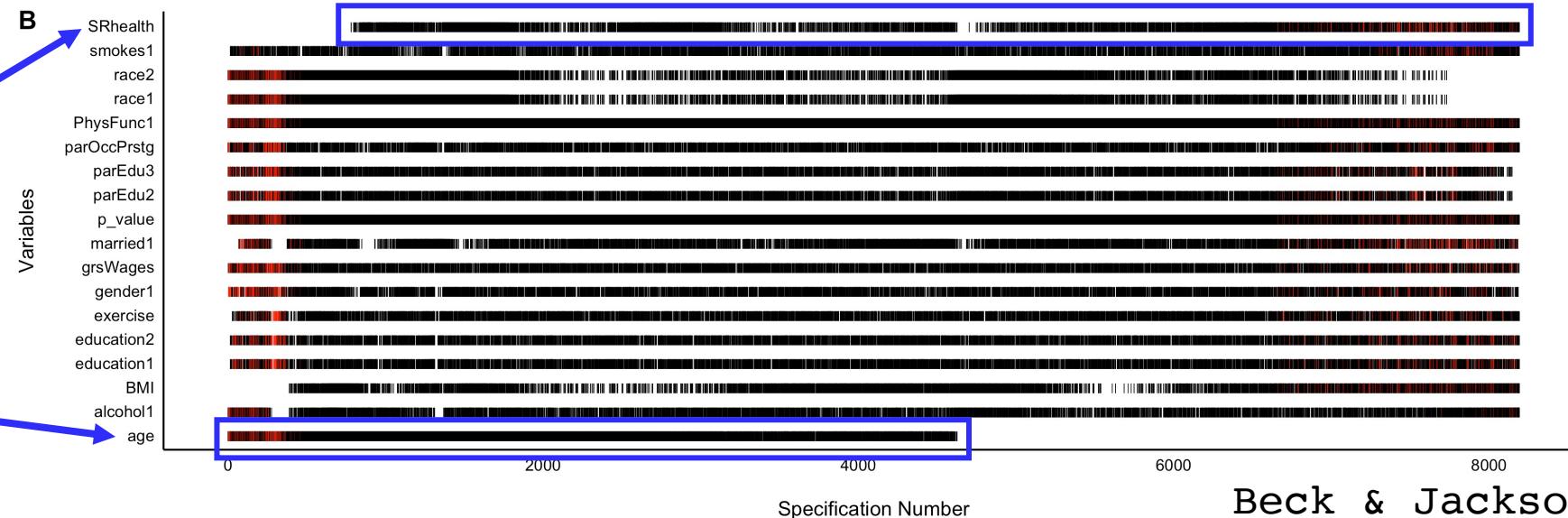
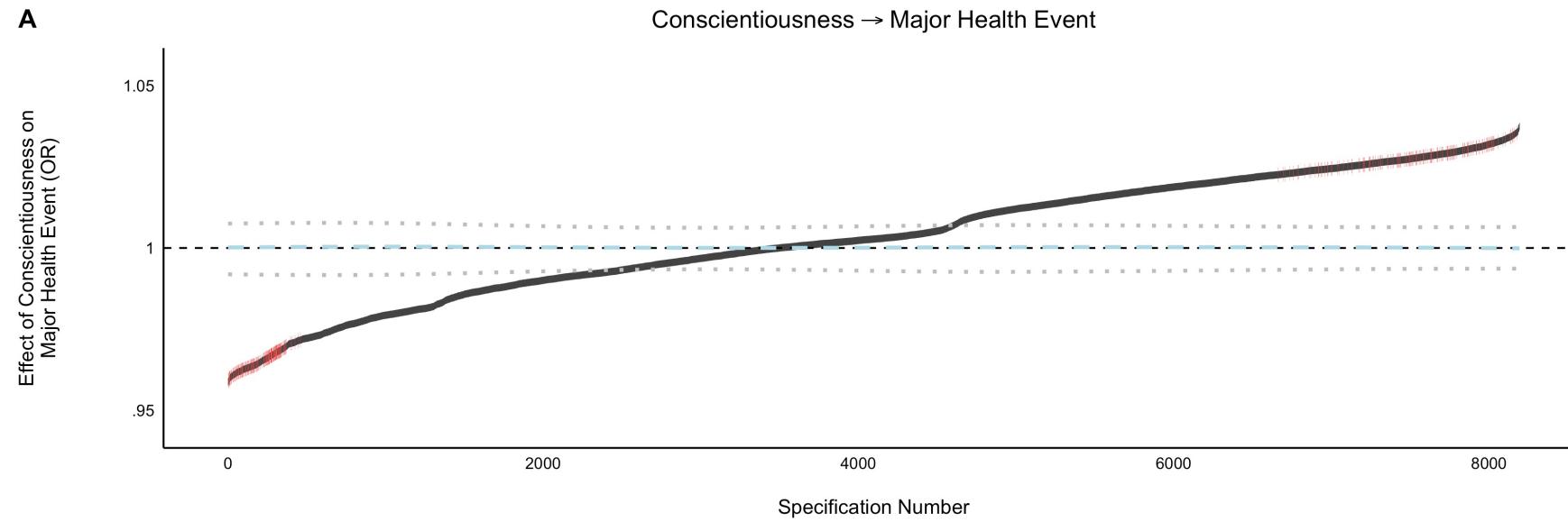
B



# Q1: *For whom* does personality predict outcomes?

OSF: <https://osf.io/usqzp/>  
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60/196 (30.61%)



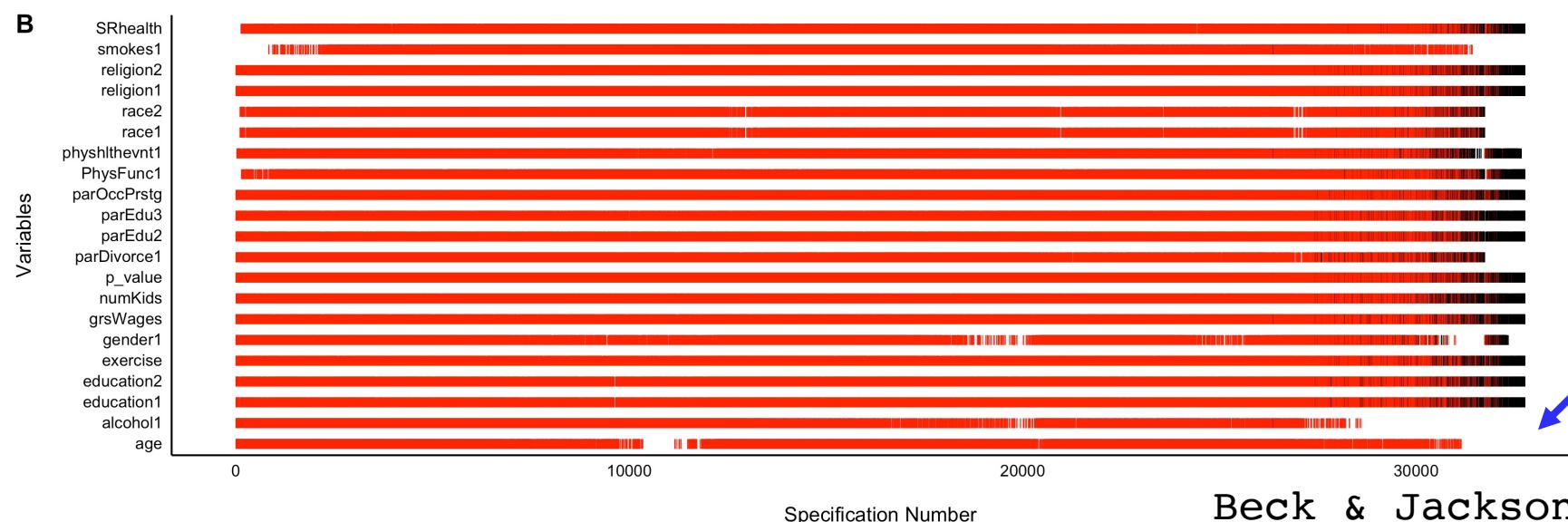
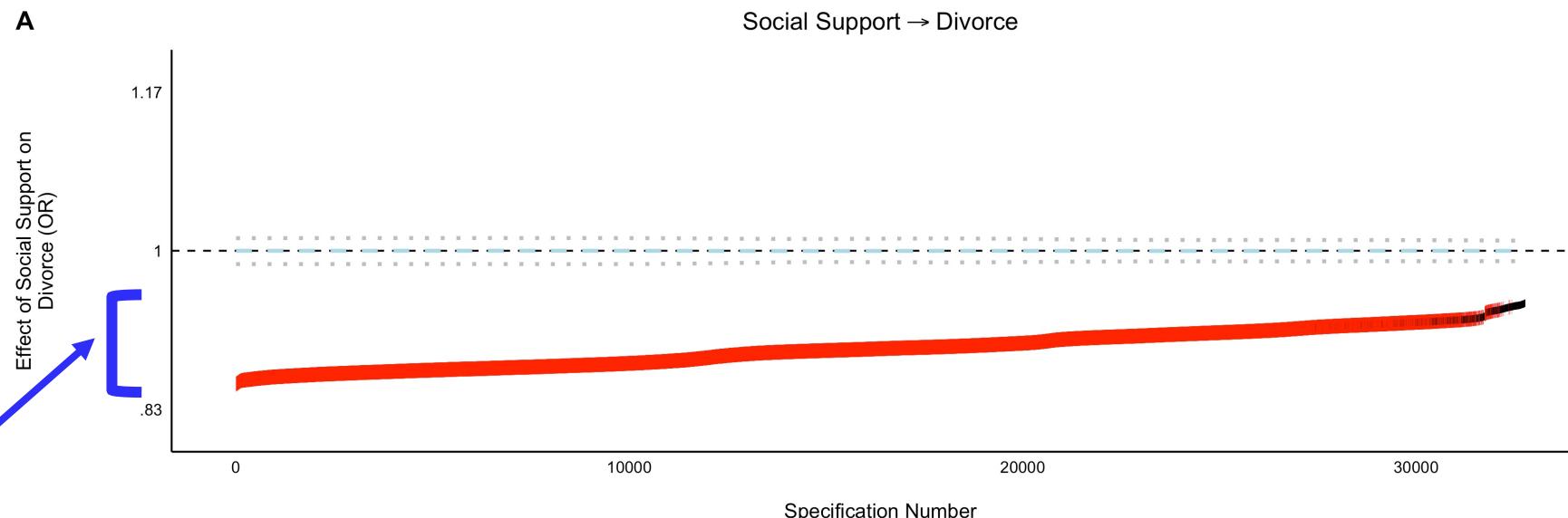
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18/196 (9.18%)

Not a lot of effect size change



Only specifications including age and alcohol are significant

# Q1: *For whom* does personality predict outcomes?

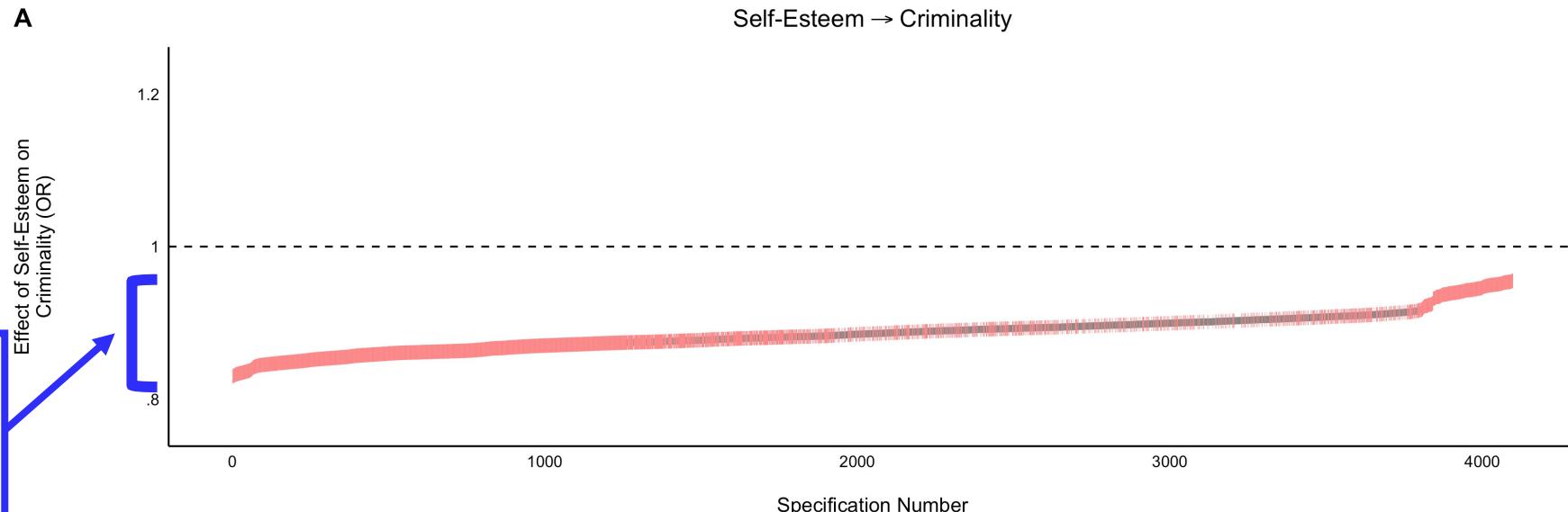
OSF: <https://osf.io/usqzp/>

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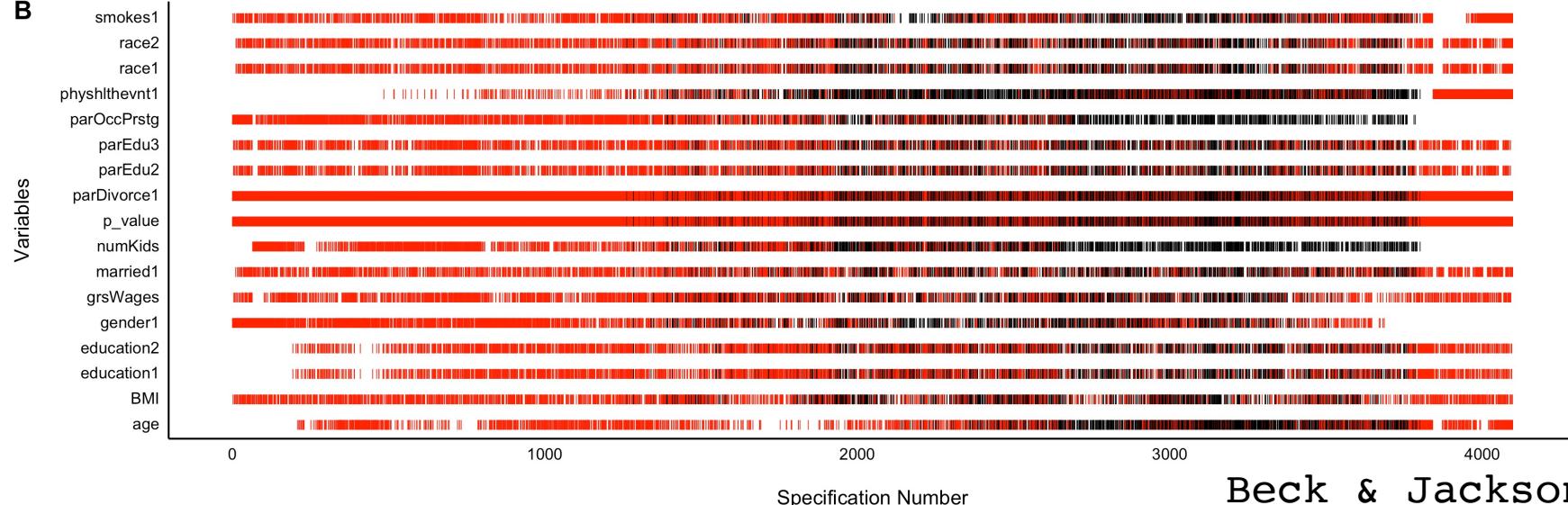
16/196 (8.16%)

Not a lot of effect size change

A



B



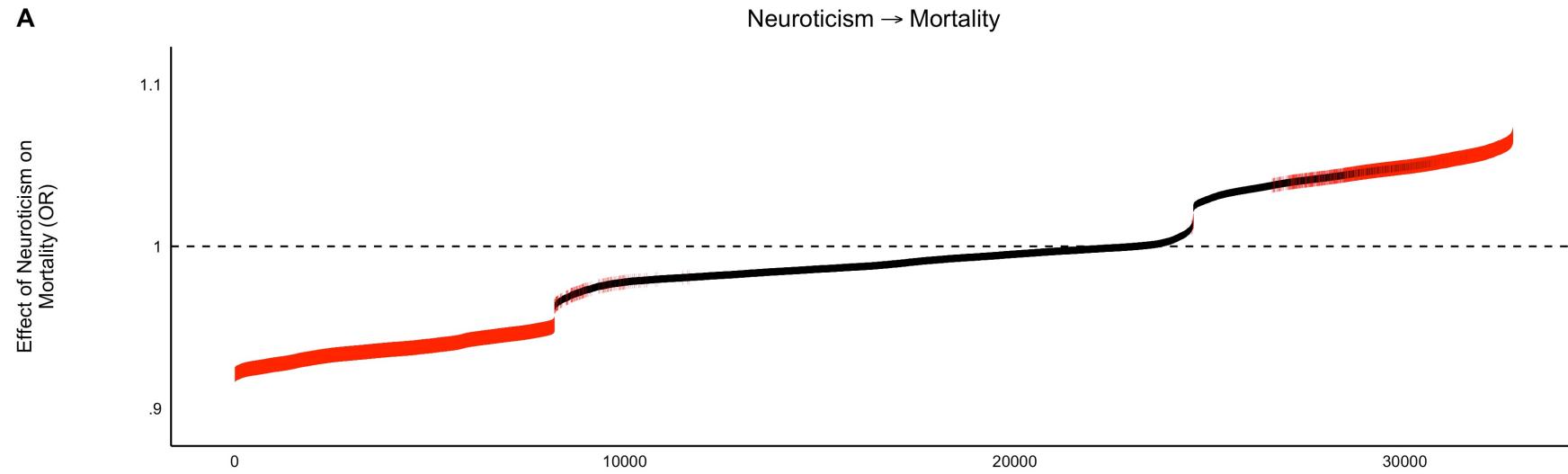
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Shiny App: <https://emoriebeck.shinyapps.io/selection>

102/196 (52.04%)

A



Significant and negative with self-rated health but not age

B

Variables

- SRhealth
- smokes1
- religion2
- religion1
- race2
- race1
- physlthevn1
- PhysFunc1
- parOccPrstg
- parEdu3
- parEdu2
- p\_value
- married1
- grsWages
- gender1
- exercise
- education2
- education1
- BMI
- alcohol1
- age

Largely null when controlling for both

Somewhat Significant and positive with age but not self-rated health

Specification Number

Beck & Jackson (2021a; JPSP)

***For whom*** does personality predict outcomes?

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(2021a; *JPSP*)

Does the Big Five emerge *across ages*?

Beck et al.  
(revision submitted; *EJP*)

***How consistent*** are person-specific personality structures?

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**However, some covariates, particularly age, are frequently and sometimes drastically consequential to the direction, magnitude, and significance of personality-outcome associations.**

**How do we understand what is happening with personality across the lifespan?**

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## Q2: Does the Big Five emerge *across ages*?

	Absolute	Relative
Population	Mean-Level	Rank Order
Individual	Individual Differences in Change	Ipsative

Structural

## Q2: Does the Big Five emerge *across ages?*

### Sample

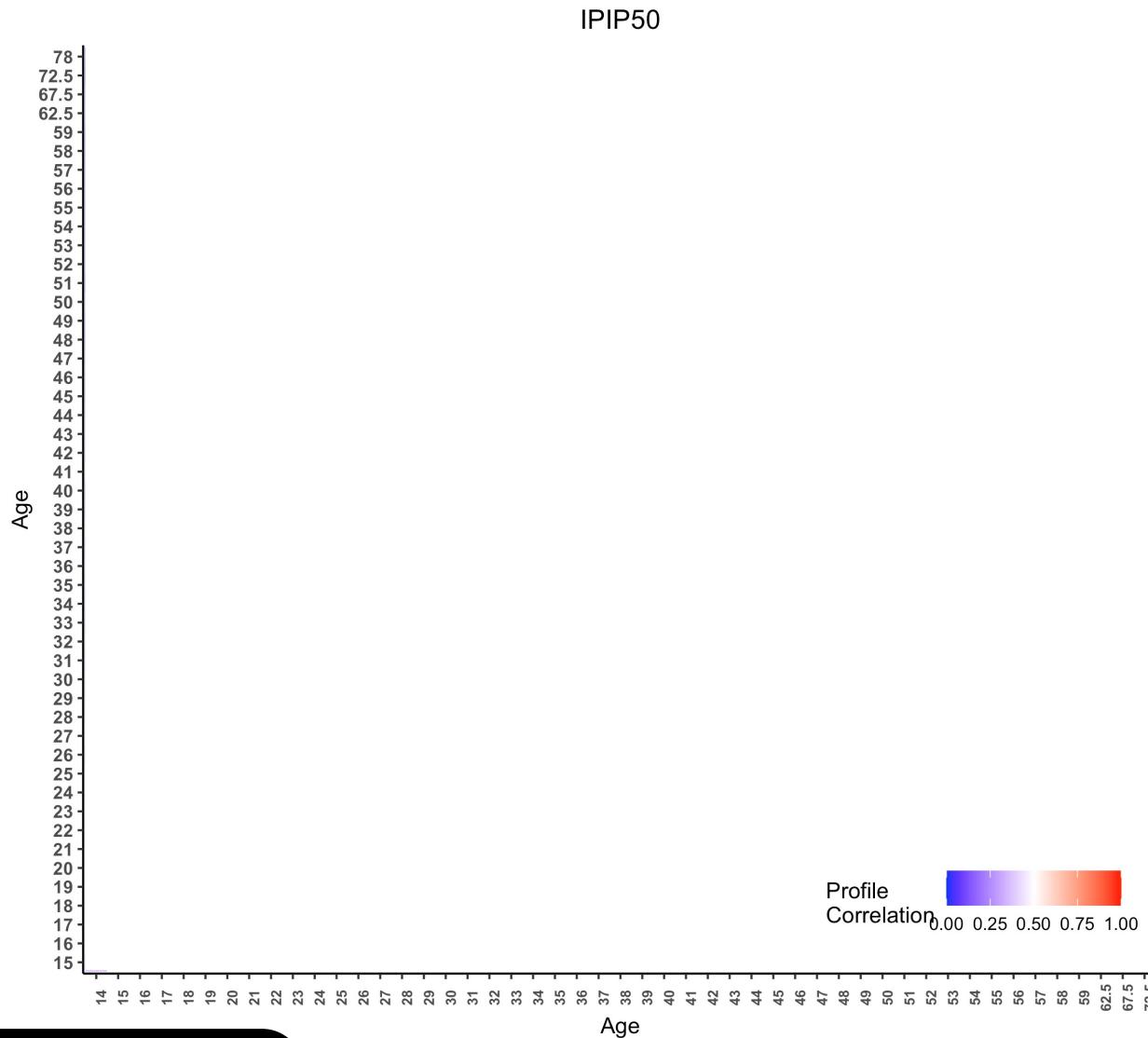
**SAPA Project**

(Condon & Revelle, 2015)

**N = 369,151**

**64% F, 72.5% US**

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**Older adults show a different structure of the Big Five.**

**Beck et al.  
(revision submitted; *EJP*)**

**The Big Five robustly emerges among younger adults.**

**What about the structure of an *individual's* personality?**

Prediction is relatively robust across covariates.

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### **Q3: *How consistent* are person-specific personality structures?**

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	Absolute	Relative
Population	Mean-Level	Rank Order
Individual	Individual Differences in Change	Ipsative

**Structural**

## Q3: *How consistent* are person-specific personality structures?

# Methods

2 years of ESM responses from the Personality and Interpersonal Roles Study (PAIRS)

N = 372 Wash U undergrads, total assessments N = 17,715

## Measures

9 items from the Big Five Inventory (BFI)

## Procedure

4 assessments / day for 15 days

## Modeling

Graphical vector autoregression

**N1:** Relaxed

**N2:** Depressed

**N3:** Worried

**E1:** Quiet

**E2:** Outgoing

**A1:** Rude

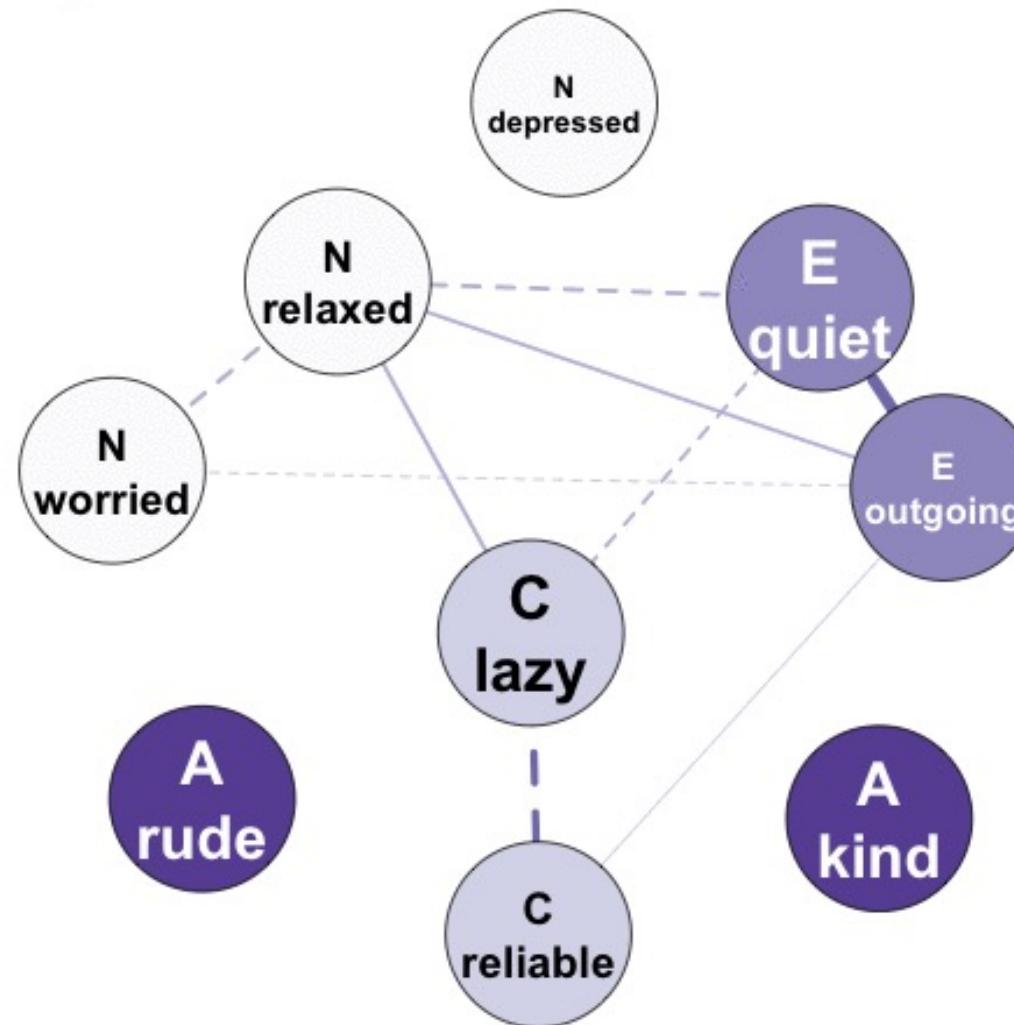
**A2:** Kind

**C1:** Lazy

**C2:** Reliable

### **Q3: *How consistent* are person-specific personality structures?**

Contemporaneous Wave 1 for S23423



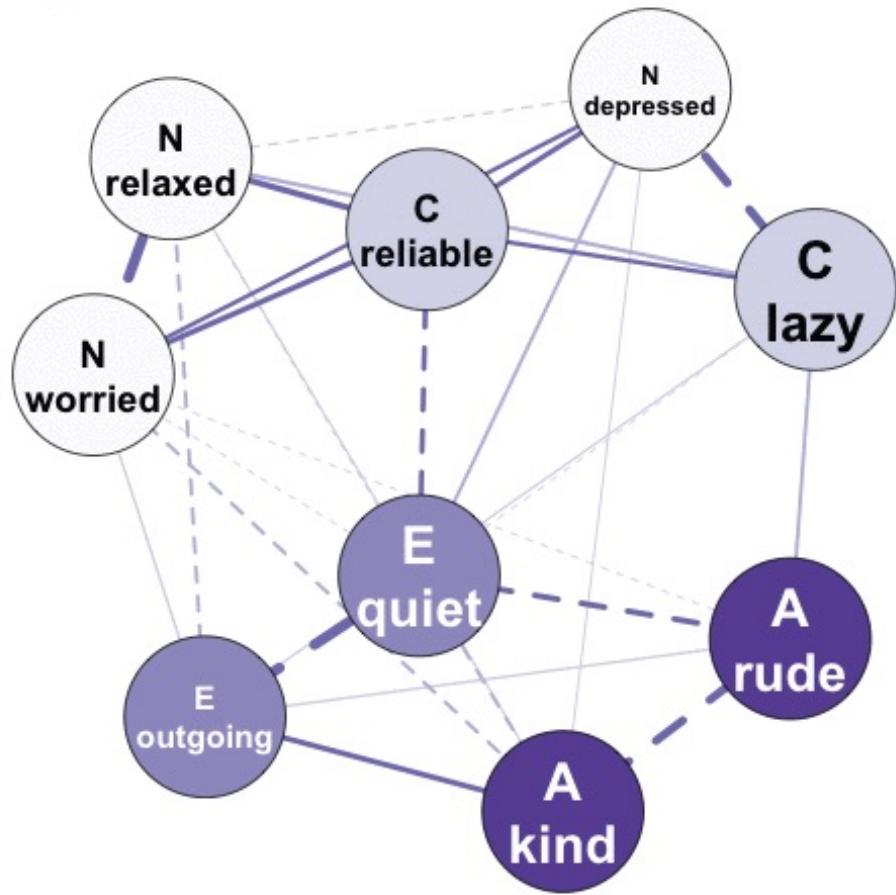
[https://emoriebeck.shinyapps.io/pairs\\_graphicalvar/](https://emoriebeck.shinyapps.io/pairs_graphicalvar/)

<https://osf.io/fyxza/>

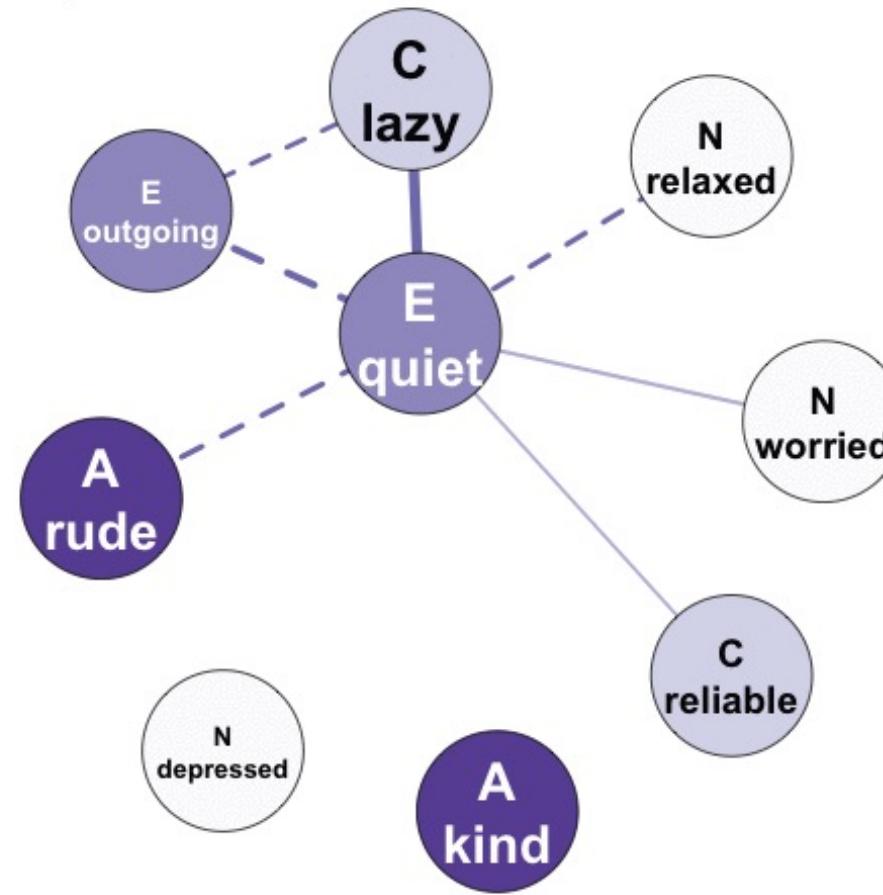
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### **Q3: *How consistent* are person-specific personality structures?**

Contemporaneous Wave 1 for S6777



Contemporaneous Wave 2 for S6777

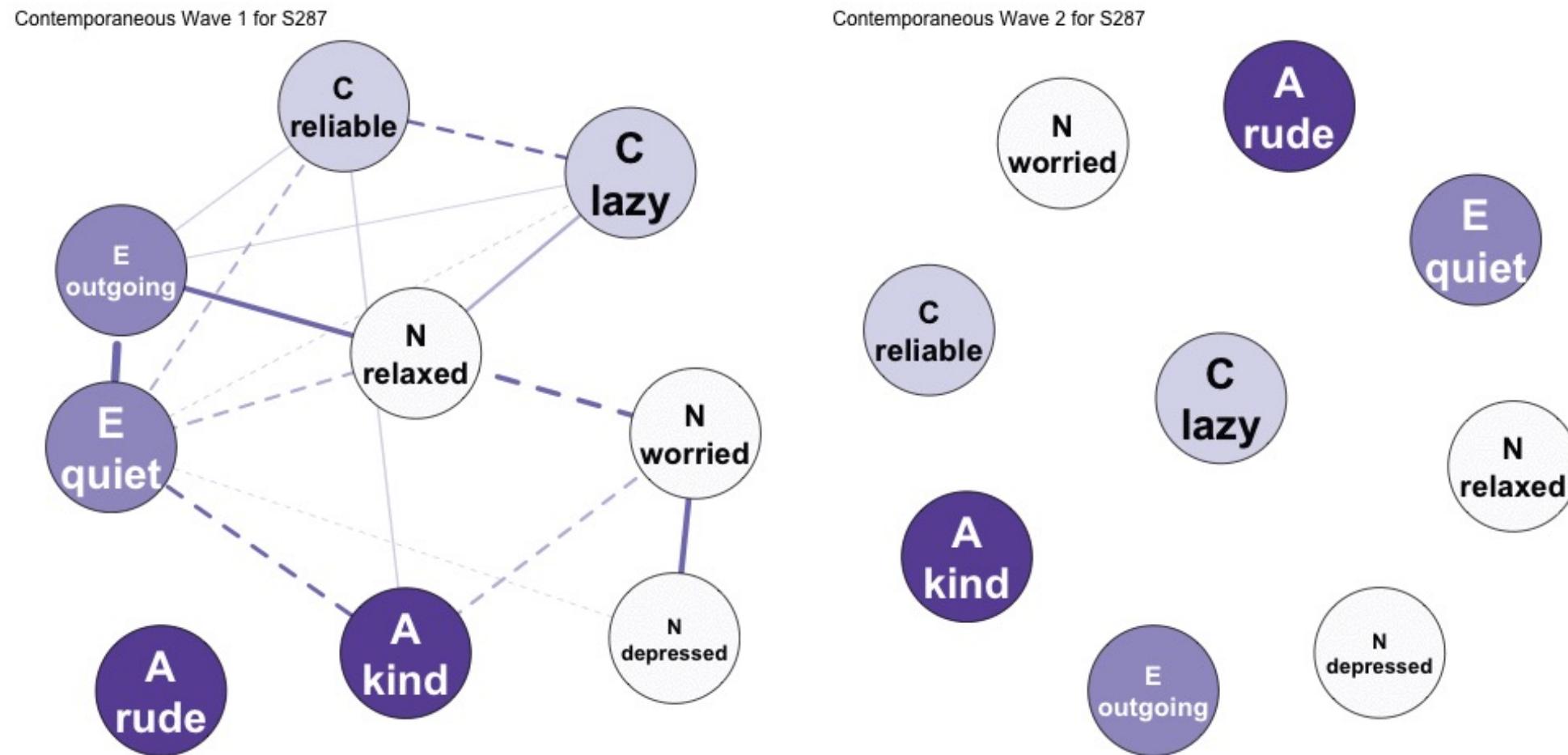


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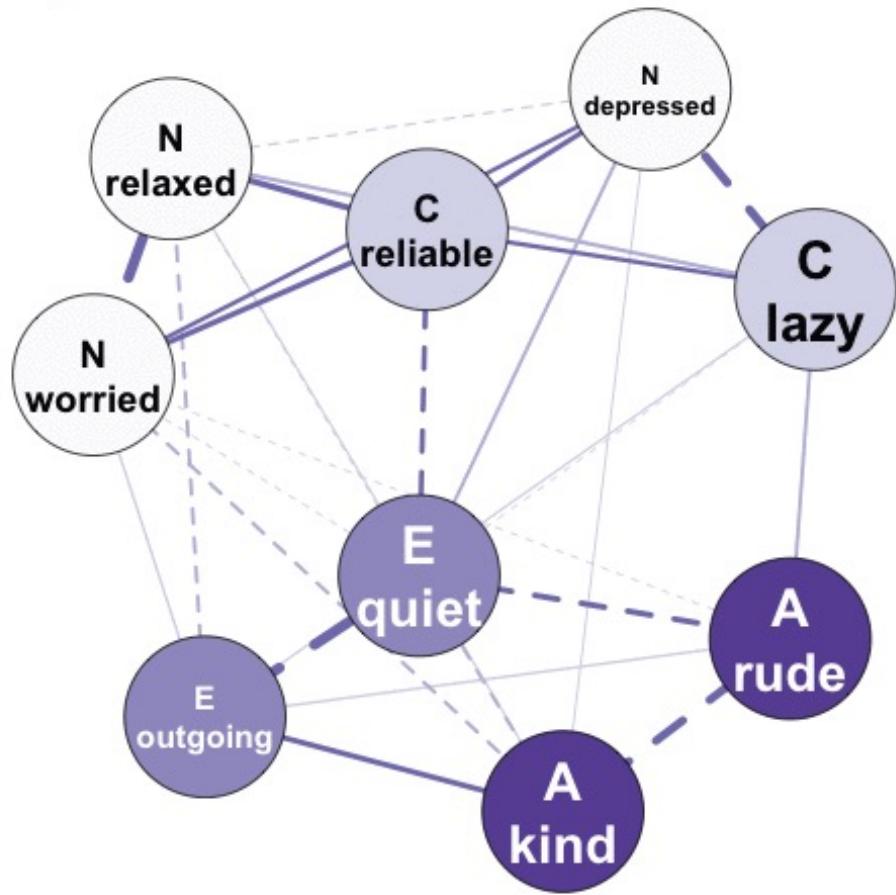
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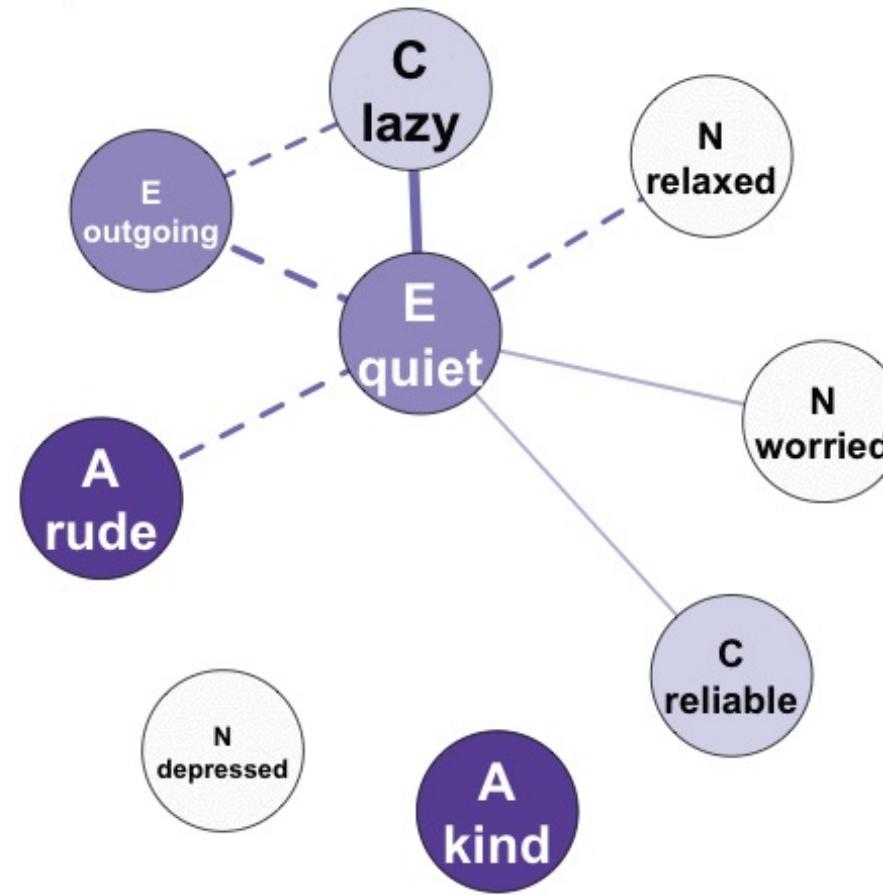
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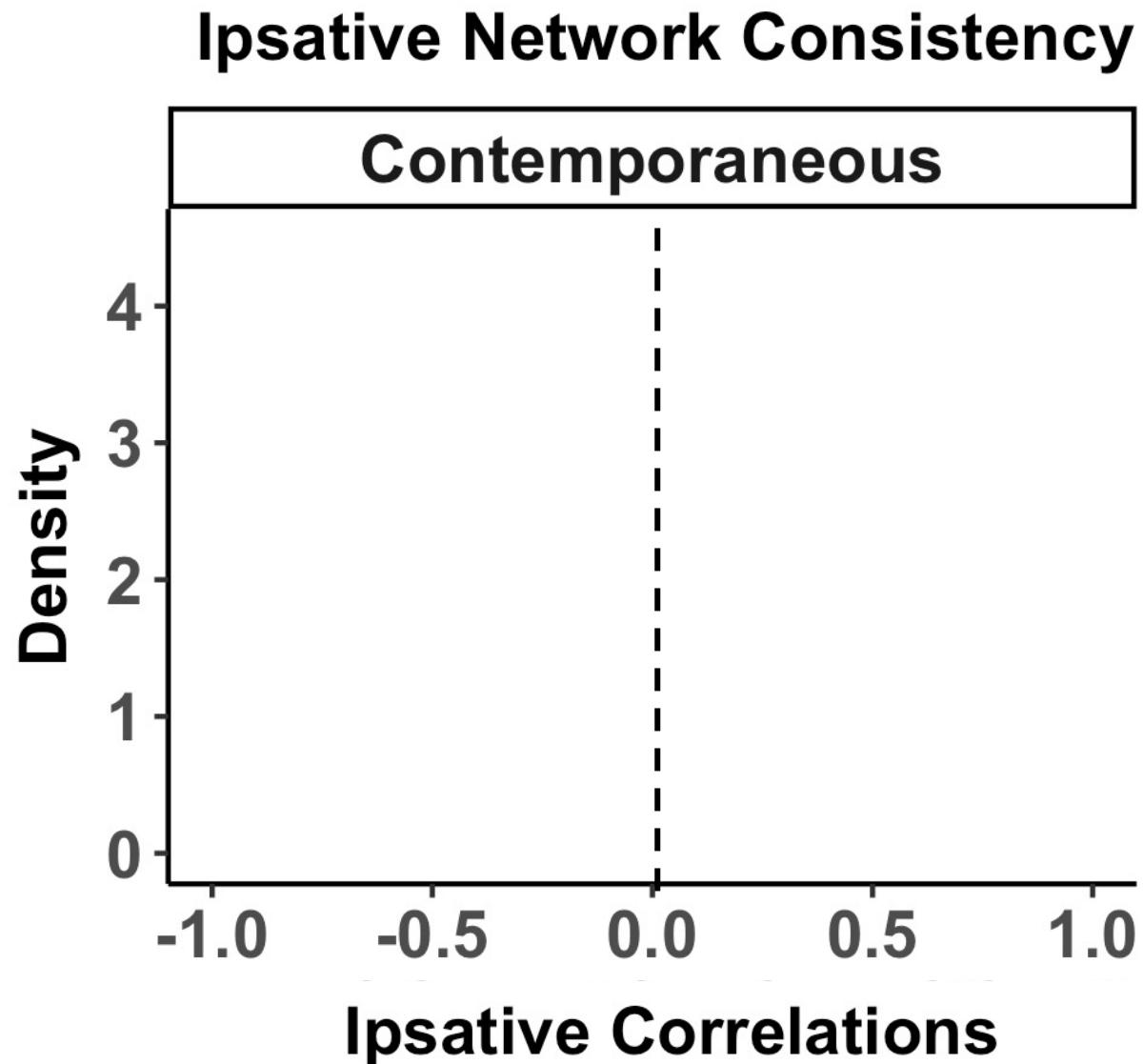
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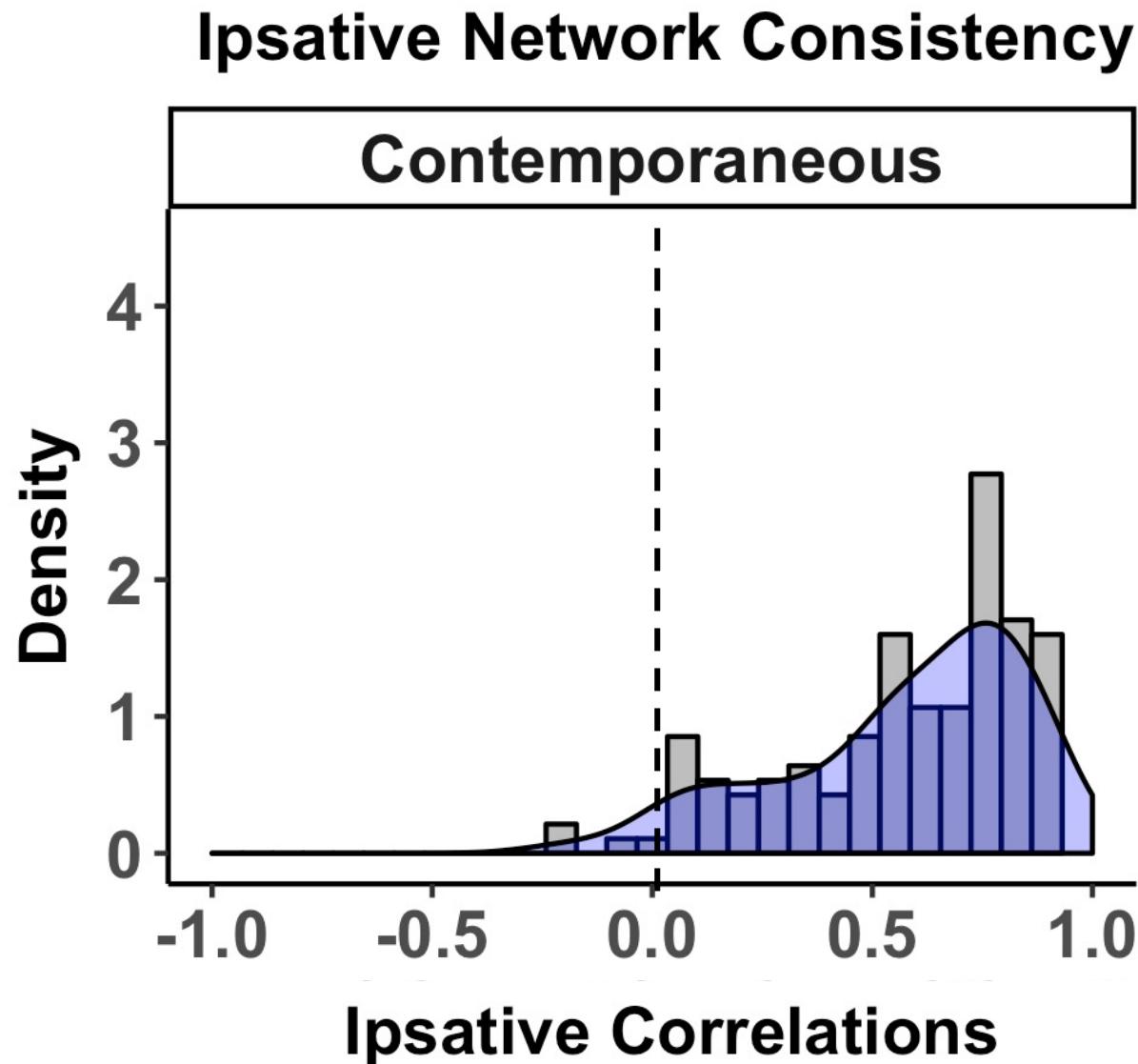
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**Across two  
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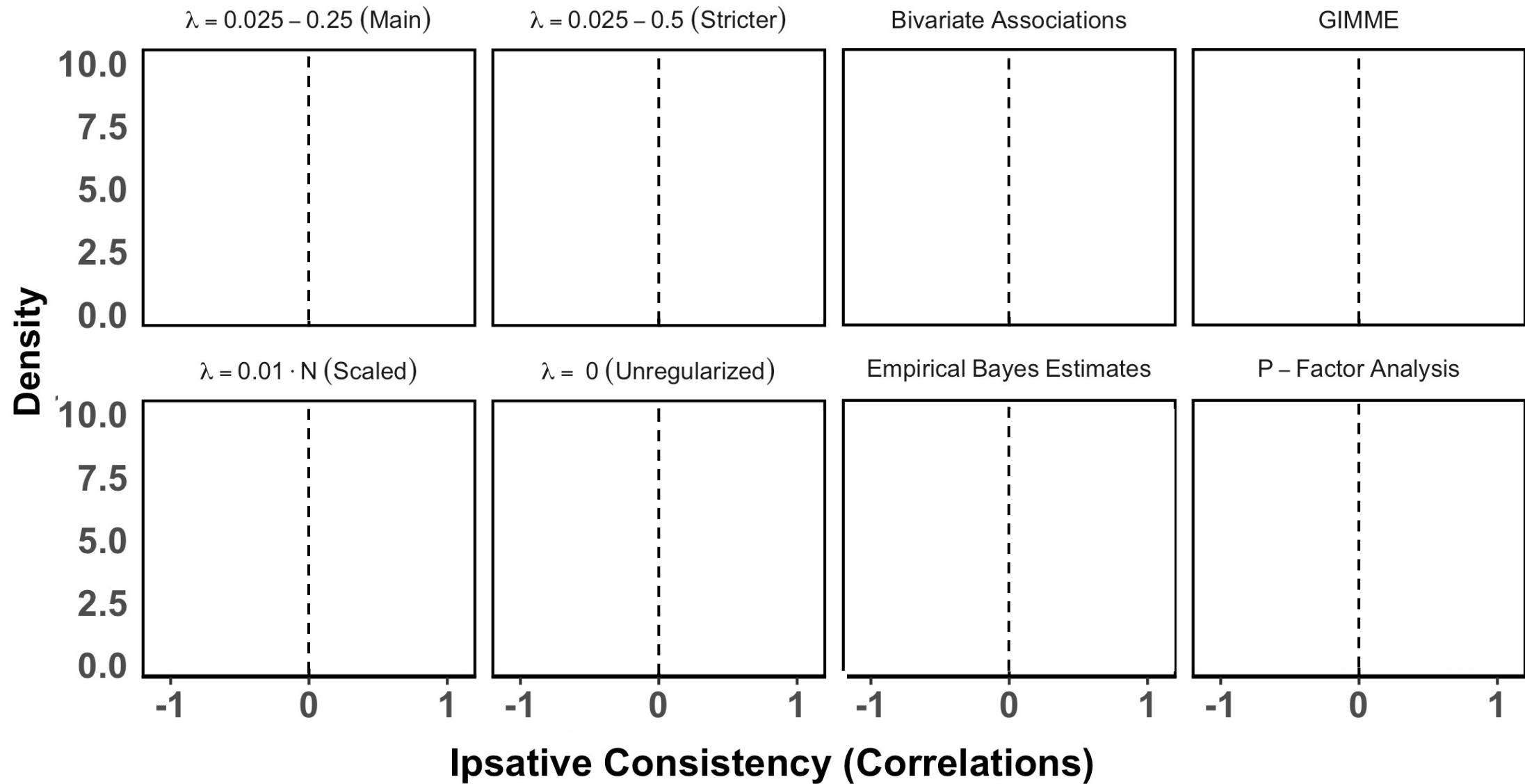


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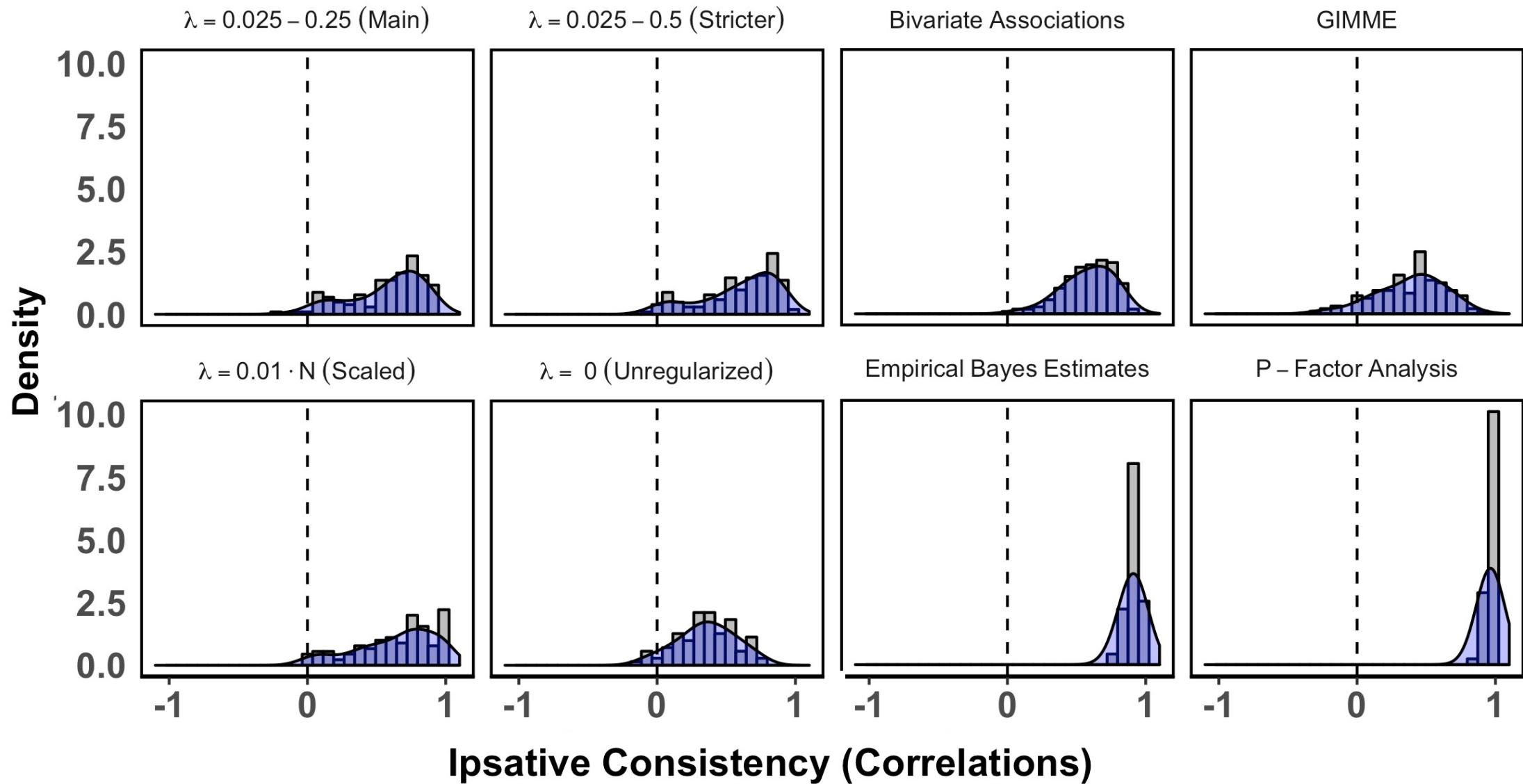
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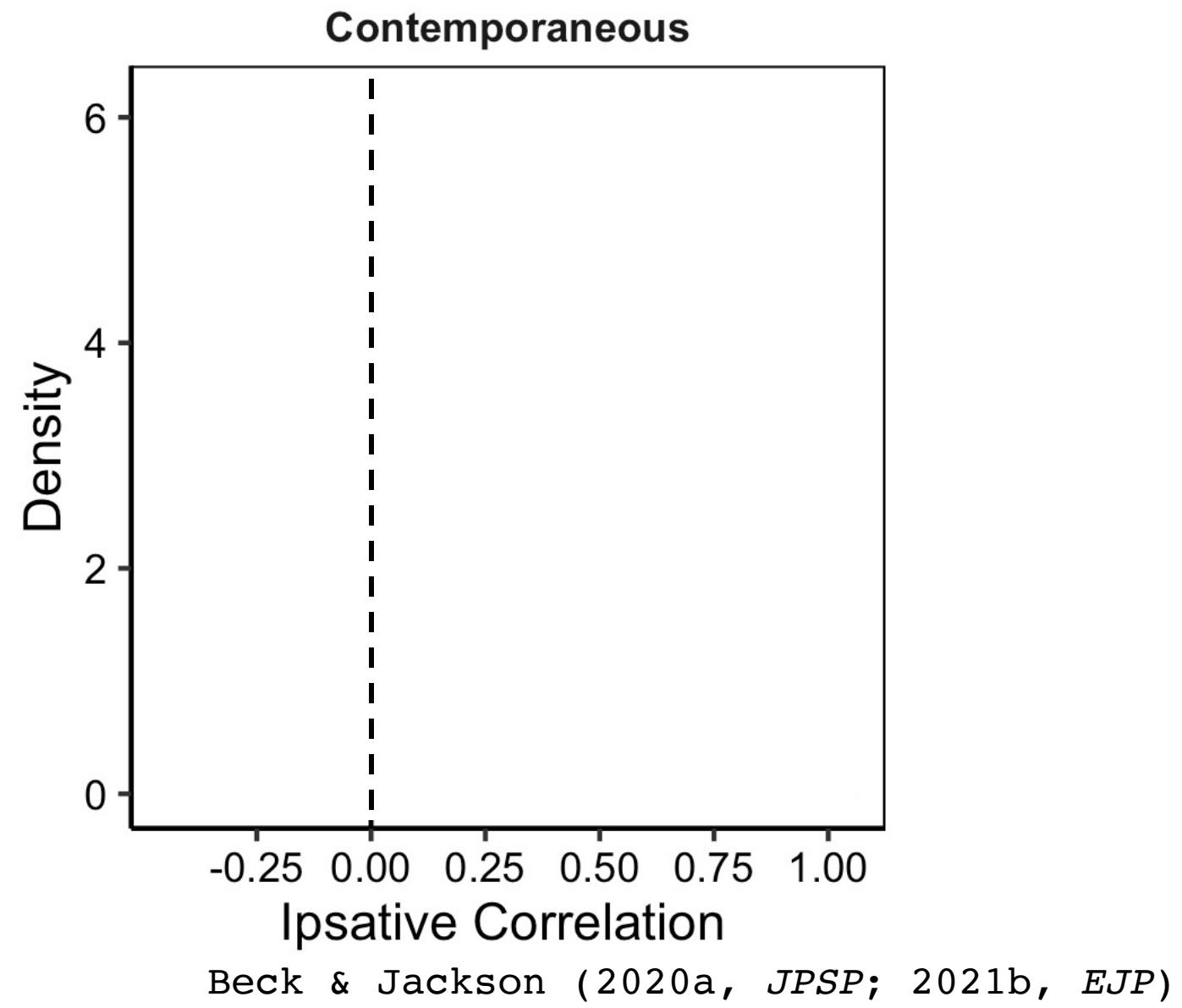


### **Q3: *How consistent* are person-specific personality structures?**



### Q3: *How consistent* are person-specific personality structures?

Before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?

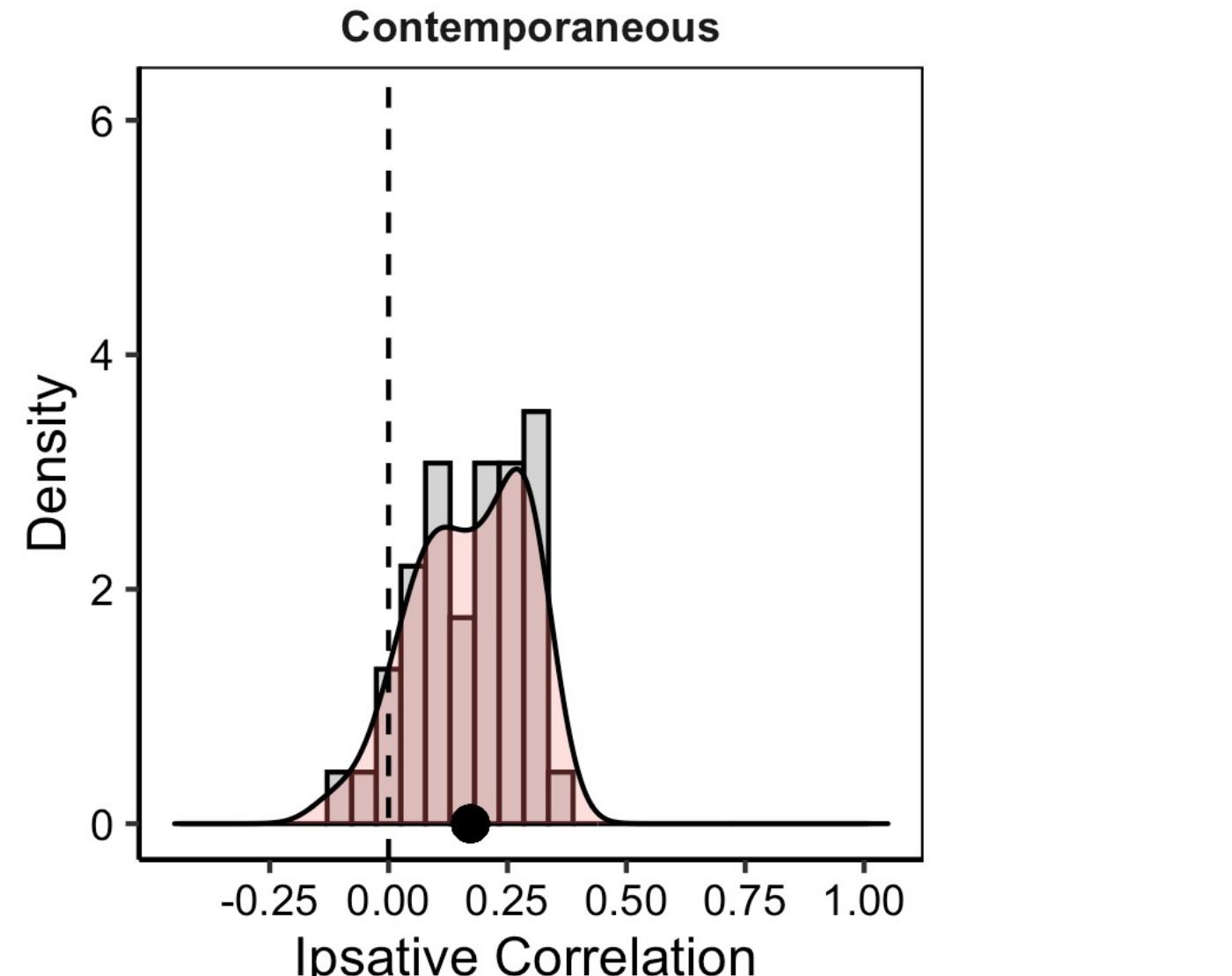


Prereg: <https://osf.io/qjs5v>

OSF: <https://osf.io/qwtu3/>

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**Idiographic personality structures are consistent across years and global events.**

**Beck & Jackson (2020,  
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**People show unique idiographic personality structures**

**But how do we understand how personality unfolds over time?**

**Prediction is relatively robust across covariates.**

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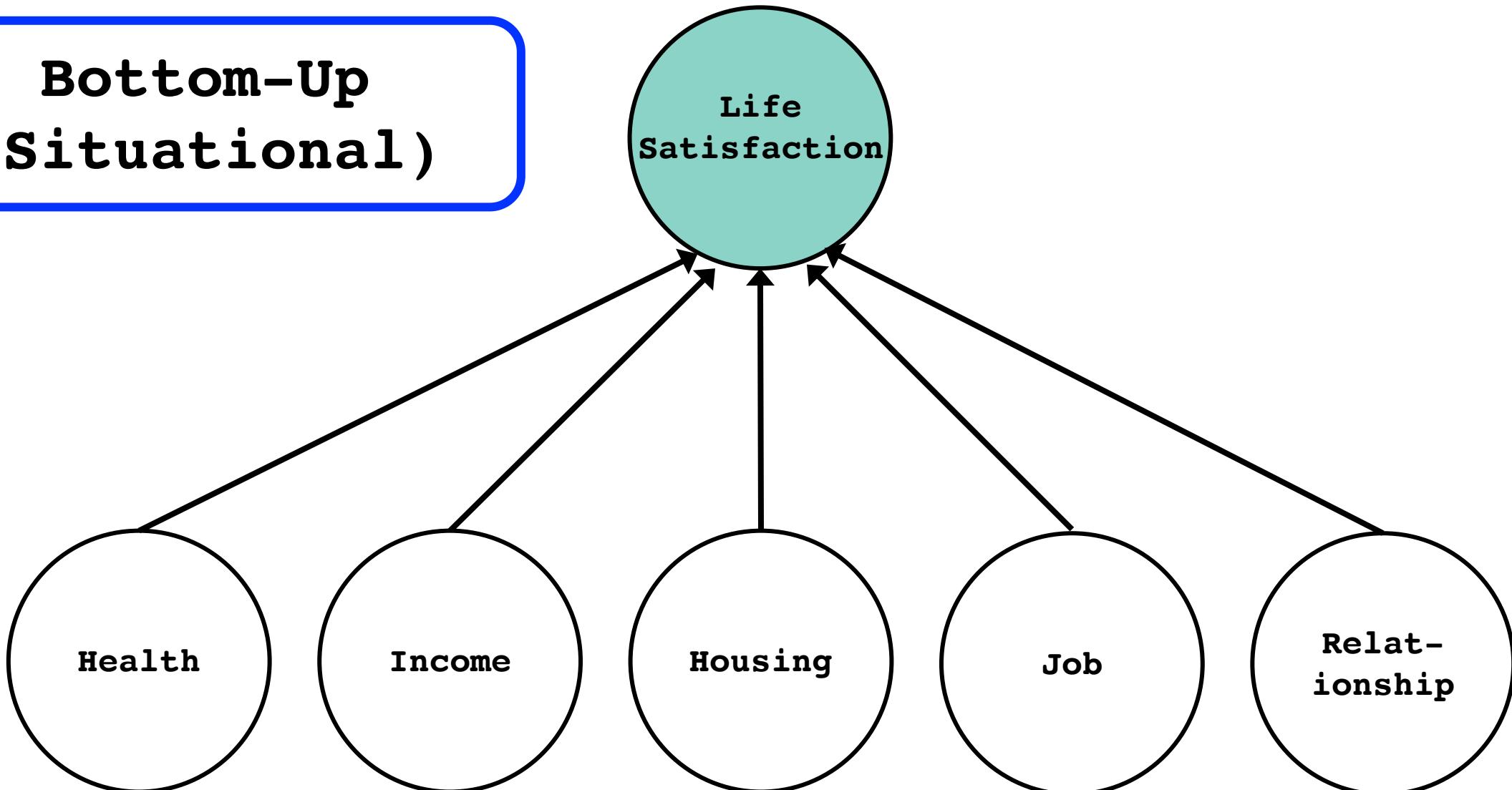
**Can personality *predict individual behaviors?***

**Beck & Jackson  
(under revision, *PS*)**

# Q4: How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?

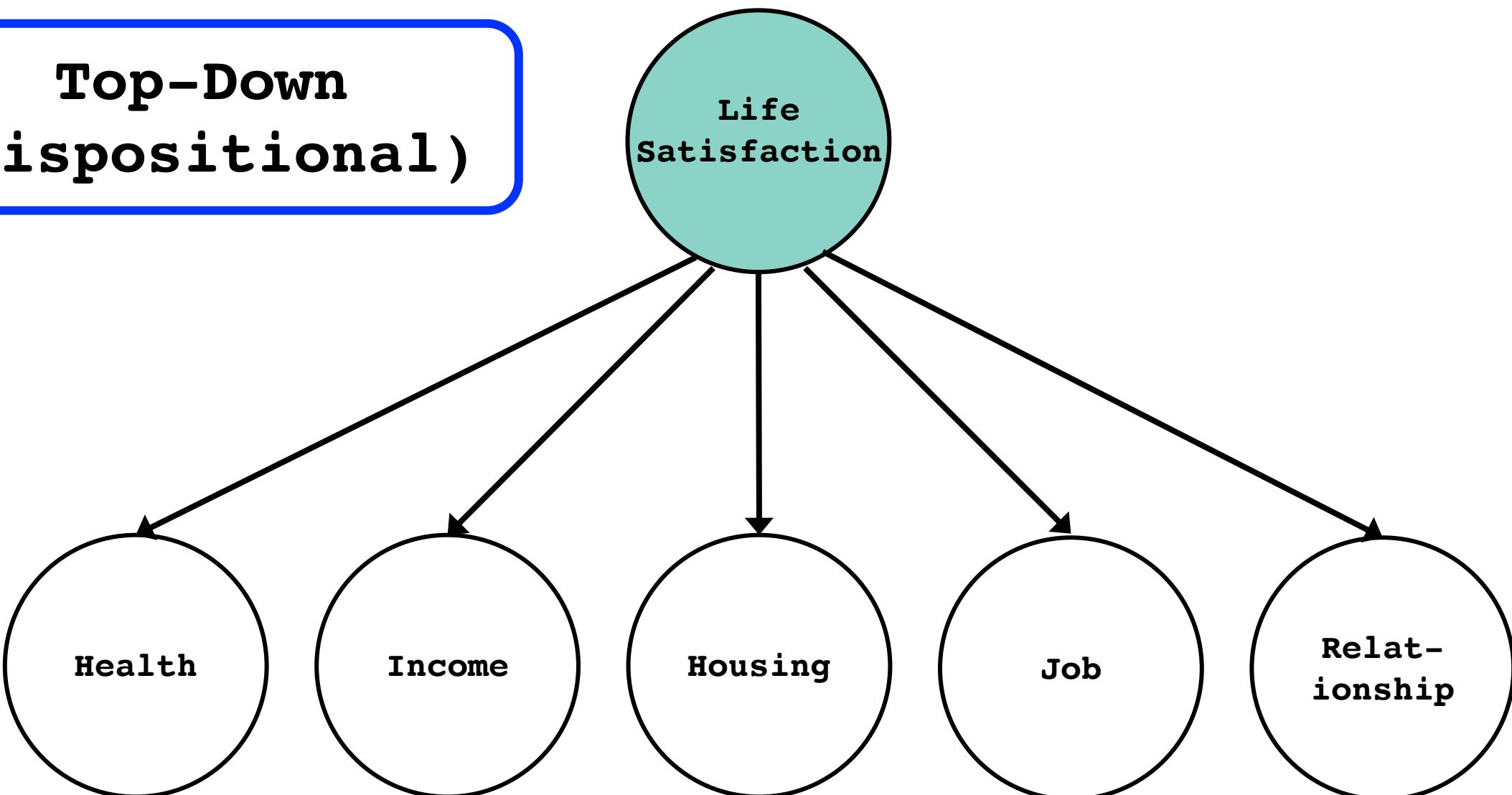
**Bottom-Up  
(Situational)**

Domain Satisfaction



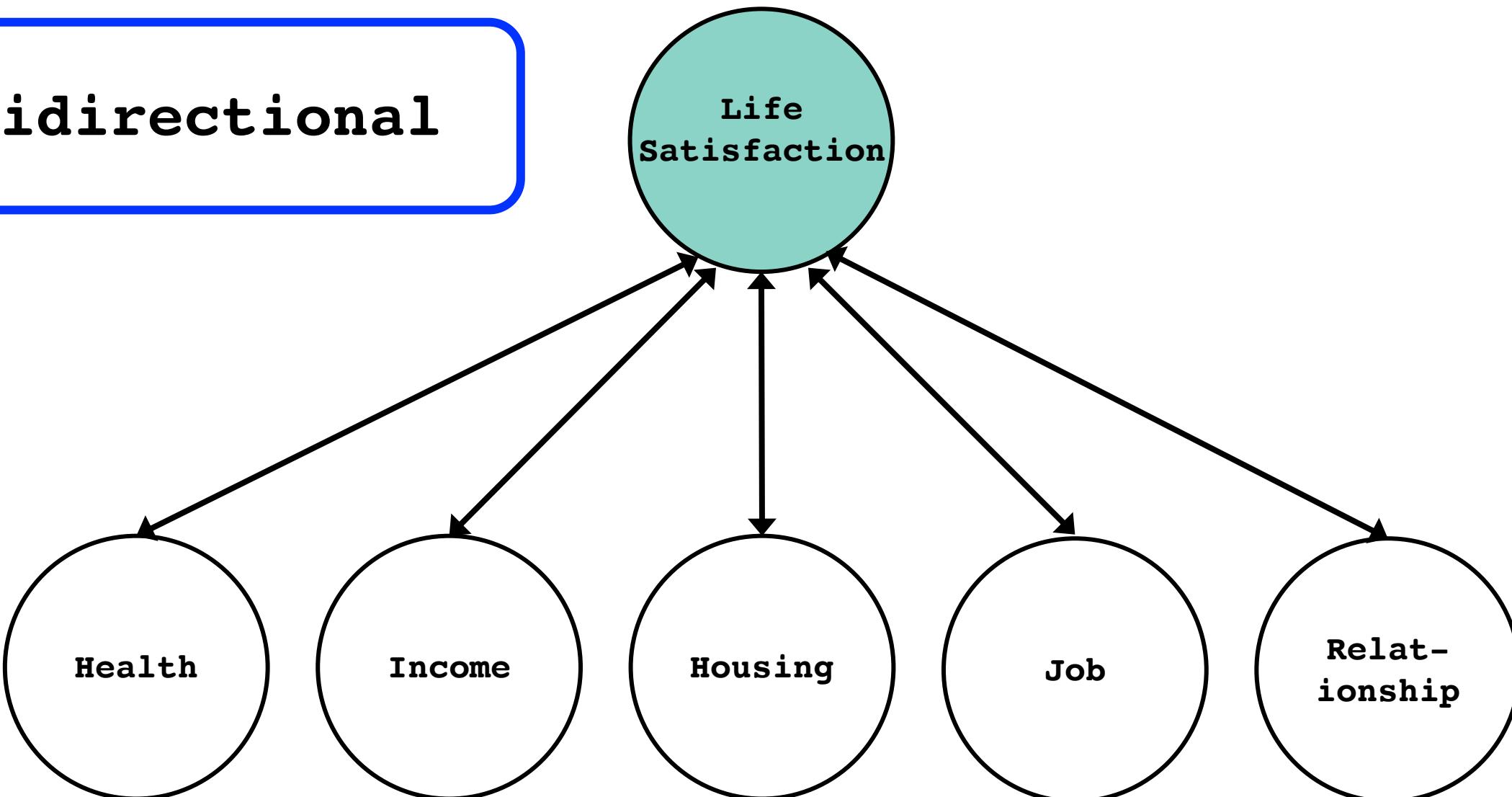
# Q4: How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?

**Top-Down  
(Dispositional)**



# Q4: How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?

**Bidirectional**



# Q4: How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?

GSOEP

HILDA

SHP

BHPS

LISS

## Multilevel VAR(1) Models

Level 1:

$$Y_{ptj} = \beta_{0pj} + \beta_{1pj} * V_{1,p,t-1} + \dots + \beta_{kpj} * V_{k,p,t-1} + \varepsilon_{ptj}$$

Level 2:

$$\beta_{0pj} = \gamma_{00j} + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{1,p} + \dots + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{kp} + r_{0pj}$$

$$\vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots$$

$$\beta_{kpj} = \gamma_{k0j} + \gamma_{k1j} * \bar{V}_{p,1} + \dots + \gamma_{kkj} * \bar{V}_{pj} + r_{kpj}$$

Between-Person Effects  
(Level 2)

$$\gamma_{01j} - \gamma_{0kj}$$

Within-Person Effects  
(Level 1)

$$\gamma_{10j} - \gamma_{kkj}$$

Person-Specific Effects  
(Level 2 random effects)

$$r_{0pj} - r_{kpj}$$

# Q4: How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?

GSOEP

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LISS

## Multilevel VAR(1) Models

Level 1:

$$Y_{ptj} = \beta_{0pj} + \beta_{1pj} * V_{1,p,t-1} + \dots + \beta_{kpj} * V_{k,p,t-1} + \varepsilon_{ptj}$$

Level 2:

$$\beta_{0pj} = \gamma_{00j} + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{1,p} + \dots + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{kp} + r_{0pj}$$

$$\vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots$$

$$\beta_{kpj} = \gamma_{k0j} + \gamma_{k1j} * \bar{V}_{p,1} + \dots + \gamma_{kkj} * \bar{V}_{pj} + r_{kpj}$$

Between-Person Effects  
(Level 2)

$$\gamma_{01j} - \gamma_{0kj}$$

Within-Person Effects  
(Level 1)

$$\gamma_{10j} - \gamma_{kkj}$$

Person-Specific Effects  
(Level 2 random effects)

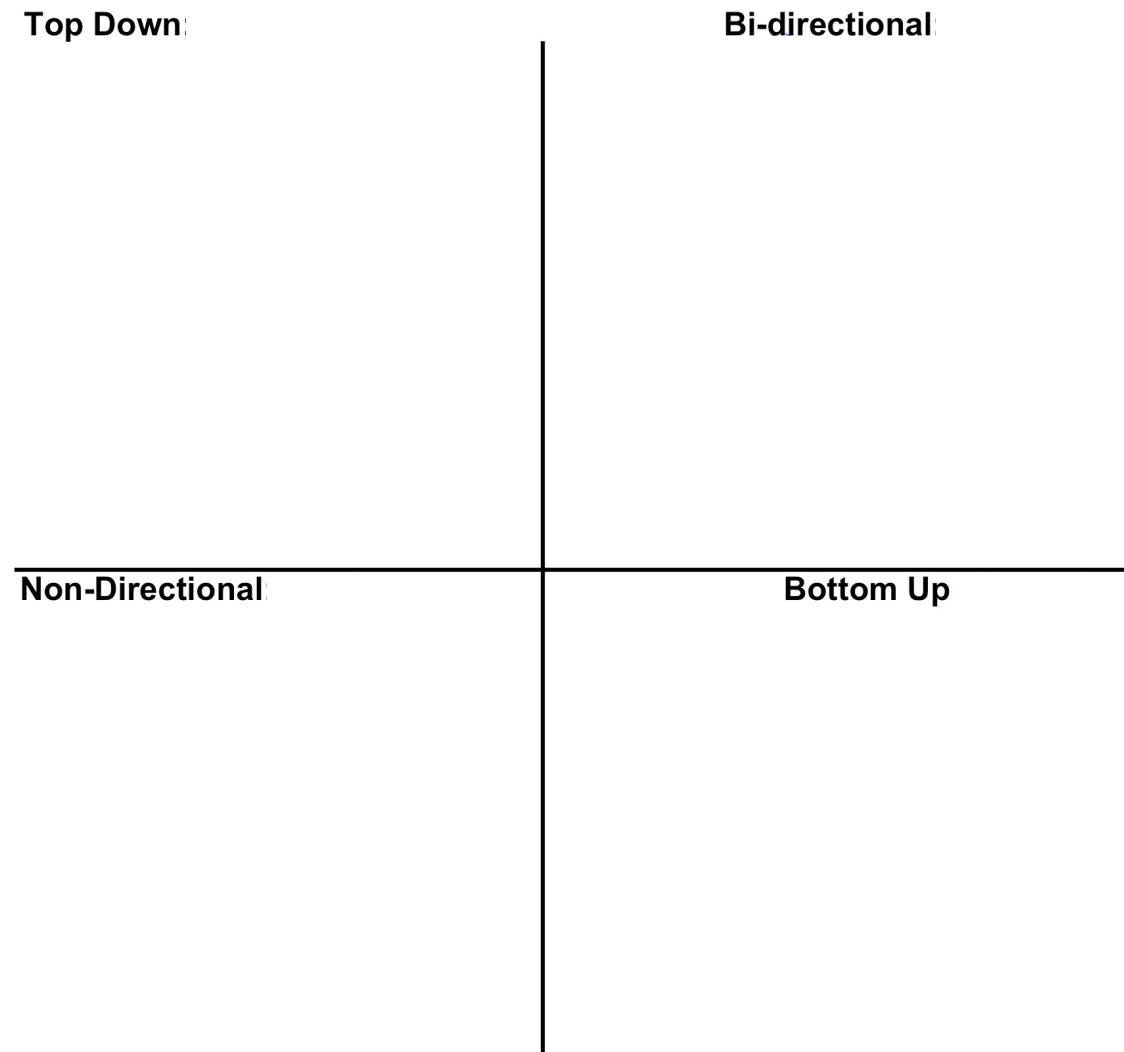
$$r_{0pj} - r_{kpj}$$

# Q4: How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?

Shiny app: <http://emoriebeck.shinyapps.io/personalised-happiness/>  
OSF: <https://osf.io/r7vgq/>

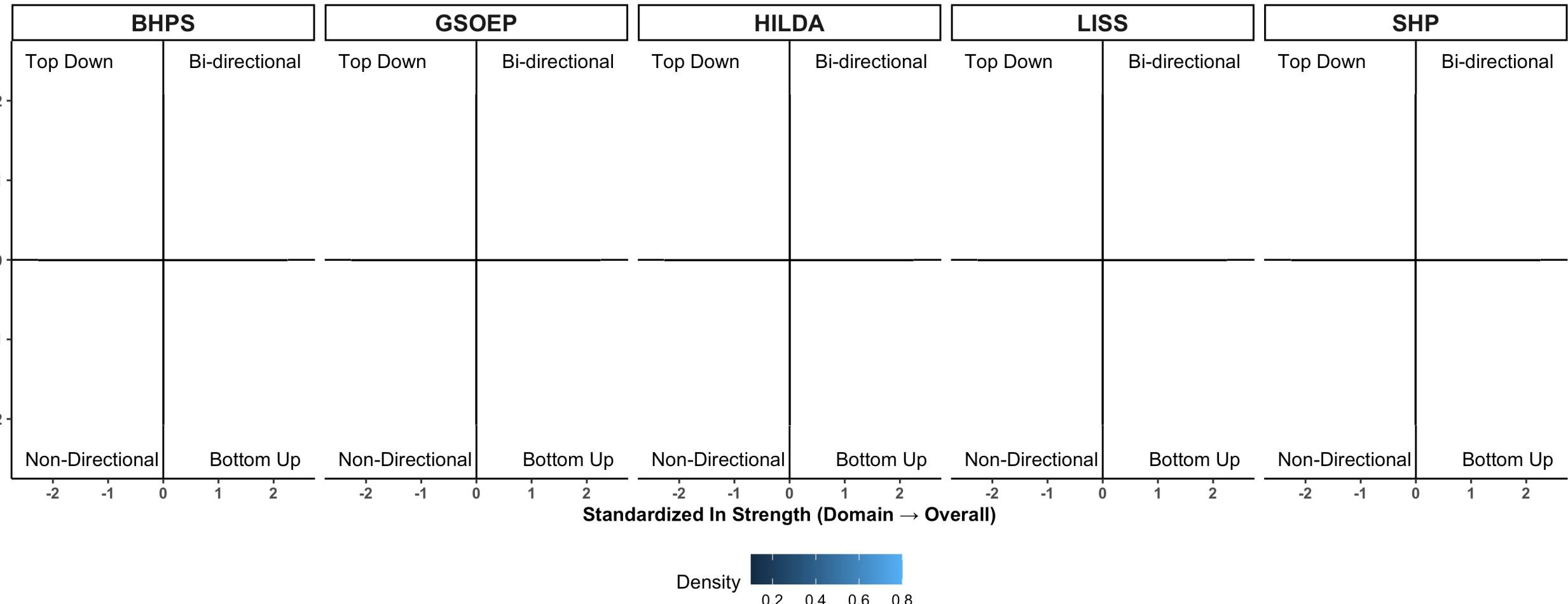
\*Cheung, \*Beck,  
Thapa, & Jackson  
(under review)

# Q4: How do personality characteristics unfold *over time*?



\*Cheung, \*Beck,  
Thapa, & Jackson  
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(revision submitted; *EJP*)**

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**Within-person patterns ≠ Person-specific patterns.**

**\*Cheung, \*Beck, et al.  
(under review)**

**Examining personality at one level of aggregation may mask the full picture.**

**So person-specific effects matter, but what can they teach us about personality change?**

**Prediction is relatively robust across covariates.**

**Beck & Jackson  
(2021a; *JPSP*)**

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## Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*

## Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*



OPEN

### Testing for the Presence of Correlation Changes in a Multivariate Time Series: A Permutation Based Approach

Jedelyn Cabrieto<sup>1</sup>, Francis Tuerlinckx<sup>1</sup>, Peter Kuppens<sup>1</sup>, Borbála Hunyadi<sup>2,3</sup> & Eva Ceulemans<sup>1</sup>

Received: 23 August 2017

Accepted: 11 December 2017

Published online: 15 January 2018

Prereg: <https://osf.io/zbkta>  
OSF: <https://osf.io/mfn8w/>

GitHub: <https://github.com/emorybeck/KCP>  
Preprint: <https://psyarxiv.com/uts5a/>

# Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*

## Fraley Longitudinal Project

E	Extraverted, enthusiastic
	Reserved, quiet (-)
A	Critical, quarrelsome (-)
	Sympathetic, warm
C	Dependable, self-disciplined
	Disorganized, careless (-)
N	Anxious, easily upset
	Calm, emotionally stable (-)
O	Open to new experiences, complex
	Conventional, uncreative (-)

N = 388 participants (total N =  
21,790  
60 possible assessments

## Personality

Baseline



60  
weeks

## Life Events

Preregistration: <https://osf.io/mfn8w/>

# Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*

- 1** Moving Window Correlations
- 2** Gaussian Similarity between all possible phases for different k
- 3** Calculate average within-phase Variance of Gaussian Similarity
- 4** Repeat steps 1 and 2 for 1000 permuted data sets
- 5** Perform the variance test
- 6** Perform the variance drop test
- 7** Declare significance if either the variance or variance drop tests passes
- 8** Keep k of minimum penalized average within-phase variance

$$Gk(\mathbf{R}_i, \mathbf{R}_j) = \exp\left(-\frac{\|\mathbf{R}_i - \mathbf{R}_j\|^2}{2h_R^2}\right)$$

$$\mathbf{R}_i = \begin{bmatrix} w_{i,1} \\ w_{i,2} \\ \vdots \\ w_{i,\frac{V(V-1)}{2}} \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\hat{R}(\tau_1, \tau_2, \dots, \tau_K) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{p=1}^{K+1} \hat{V}_p, \tau_1, \tau_2, \dots, \tau_K$$

$$\hat{V}_{p,\tau_1,\tau_2,\dots,\tau_K} = (\tau_p - \tau_{p-1}) - \frac{1}{\tau_p - \tau_{p-1}} \sum_{i=\tau_{p-1}+1}^{\tau_p} \sum_{j=\tau_{p-1}+1}^{\tau_p} Gk(\mathbf{R}_i, \mathbf{R}_j)$$

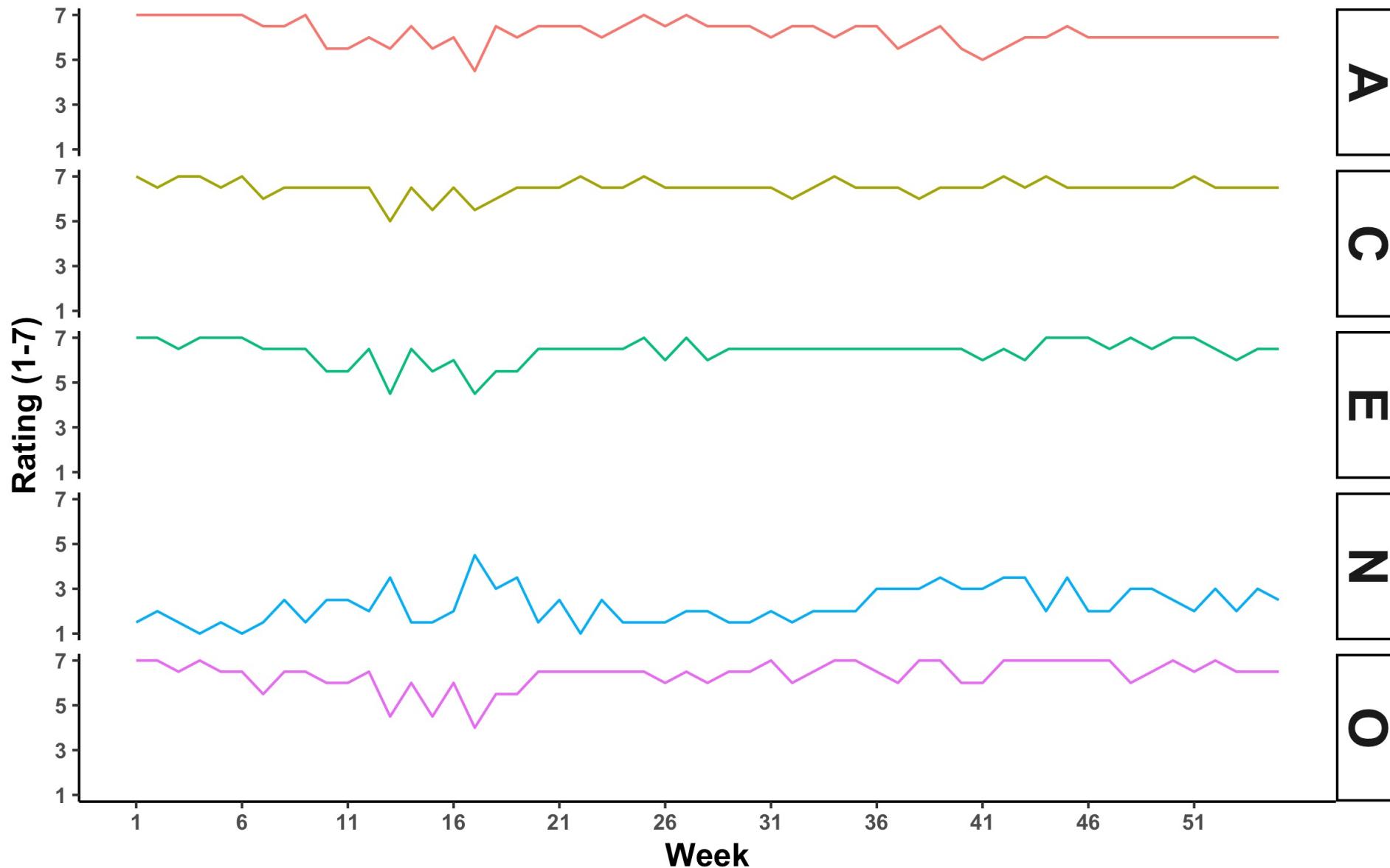
$$p_{variancetest} = \frac{\#(\hat{R}_{min,K=0,perm} > \hat{R}_{min,K=0})}{B}$$

$$p_{variancedrop} = \frac{\#(\max \text{ variance drop}_{perm} > \max \text{ variance drop})}{B}$$

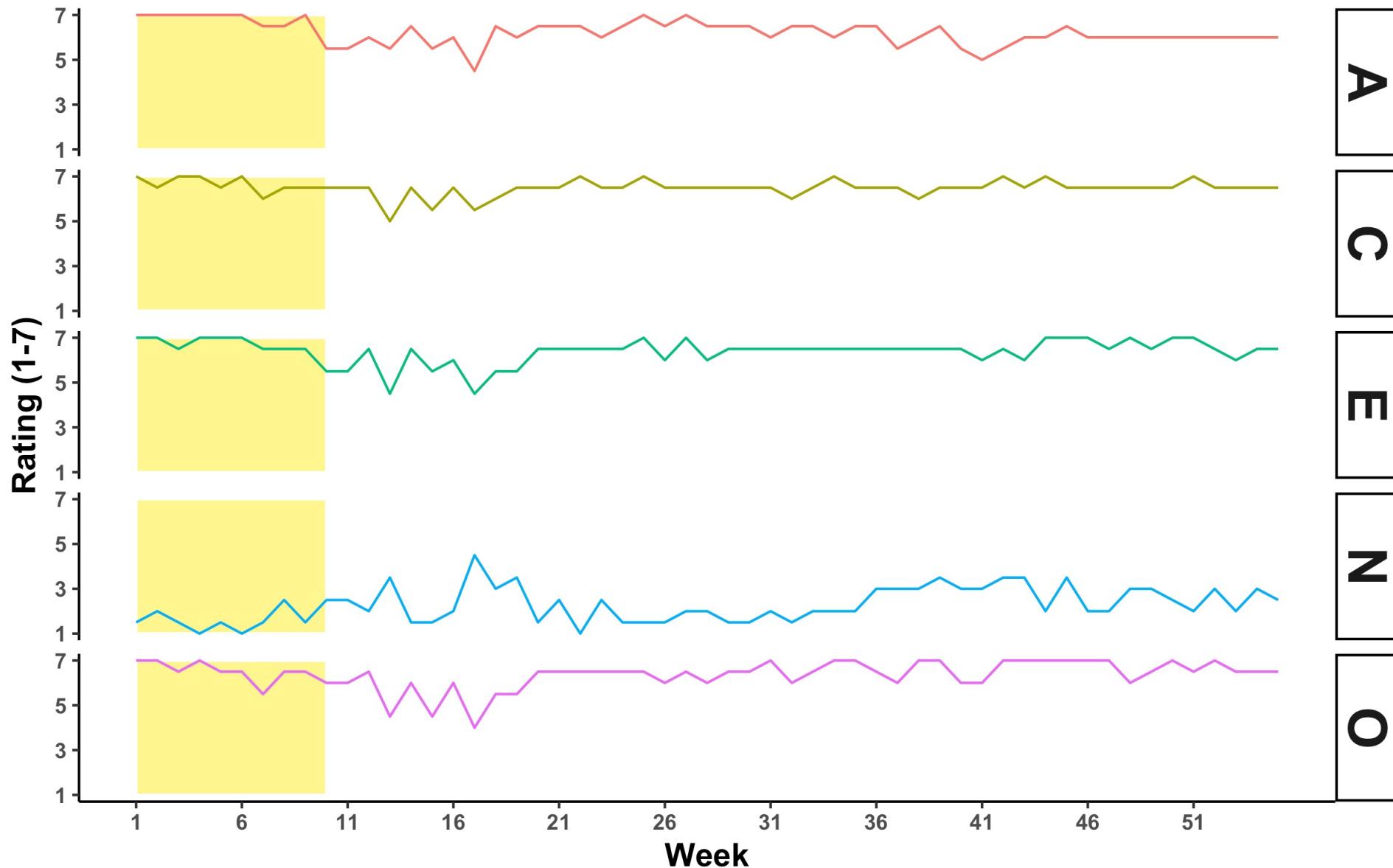
$$pen_K = C \frac{V_{max}}{n} \frac{(K+1)}{n} [1 + \log(\frac{n}{K+1})]$$

$$\hat{K} = \arg \min \hat{R}_{min,K} + pen_K,$$

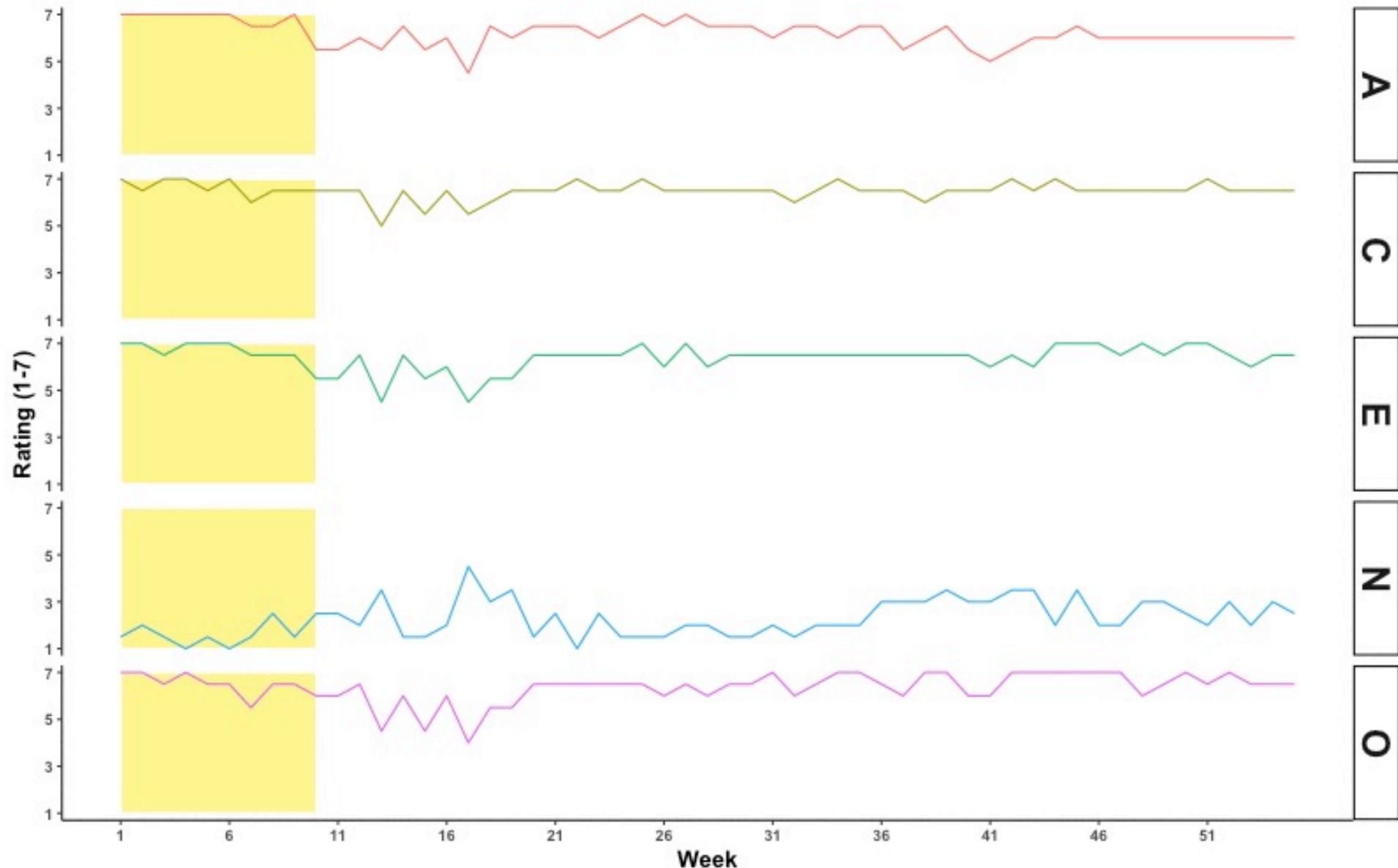
## Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*



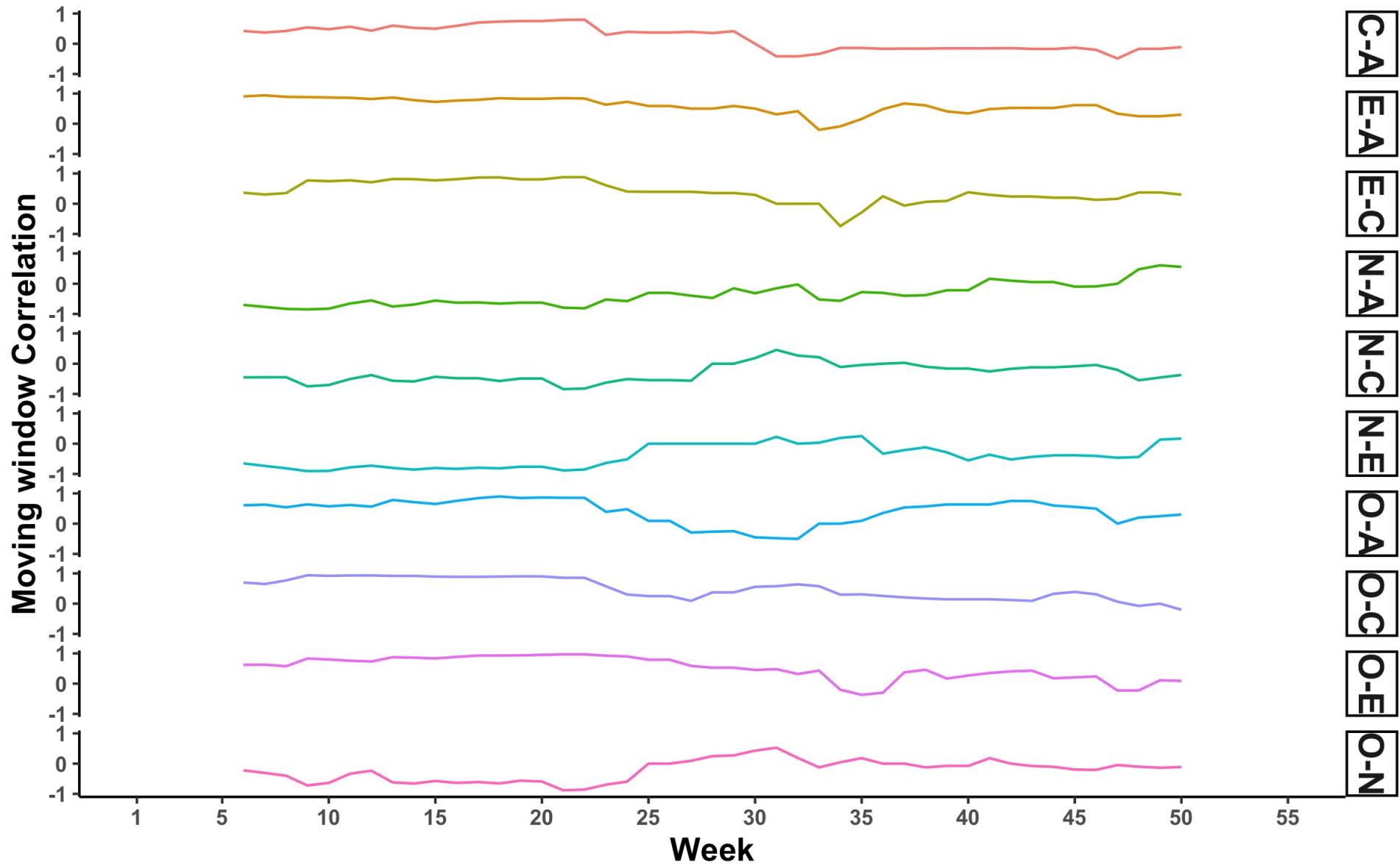
## Q5: Do personality *changes* persist?



## Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*

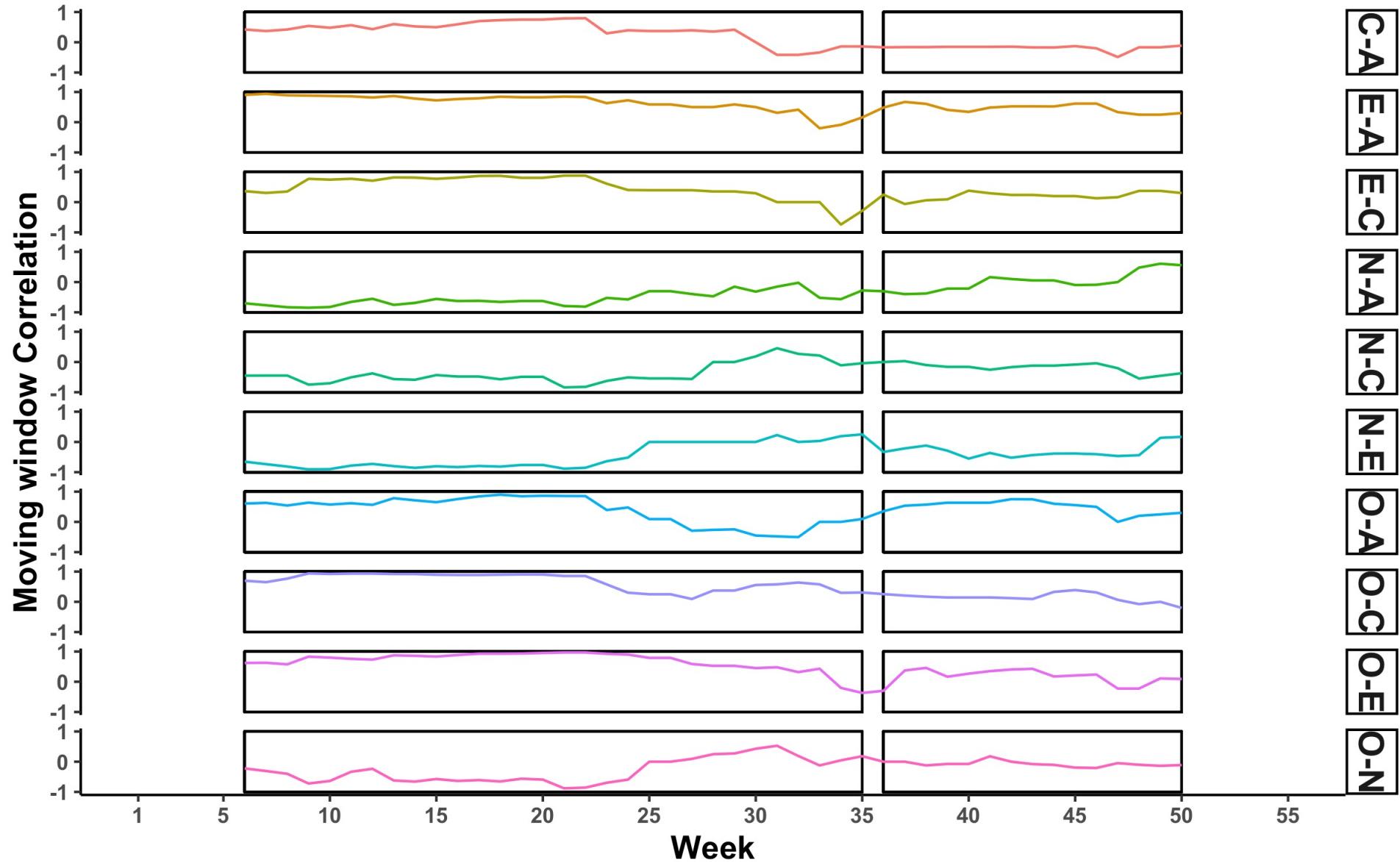


# Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*



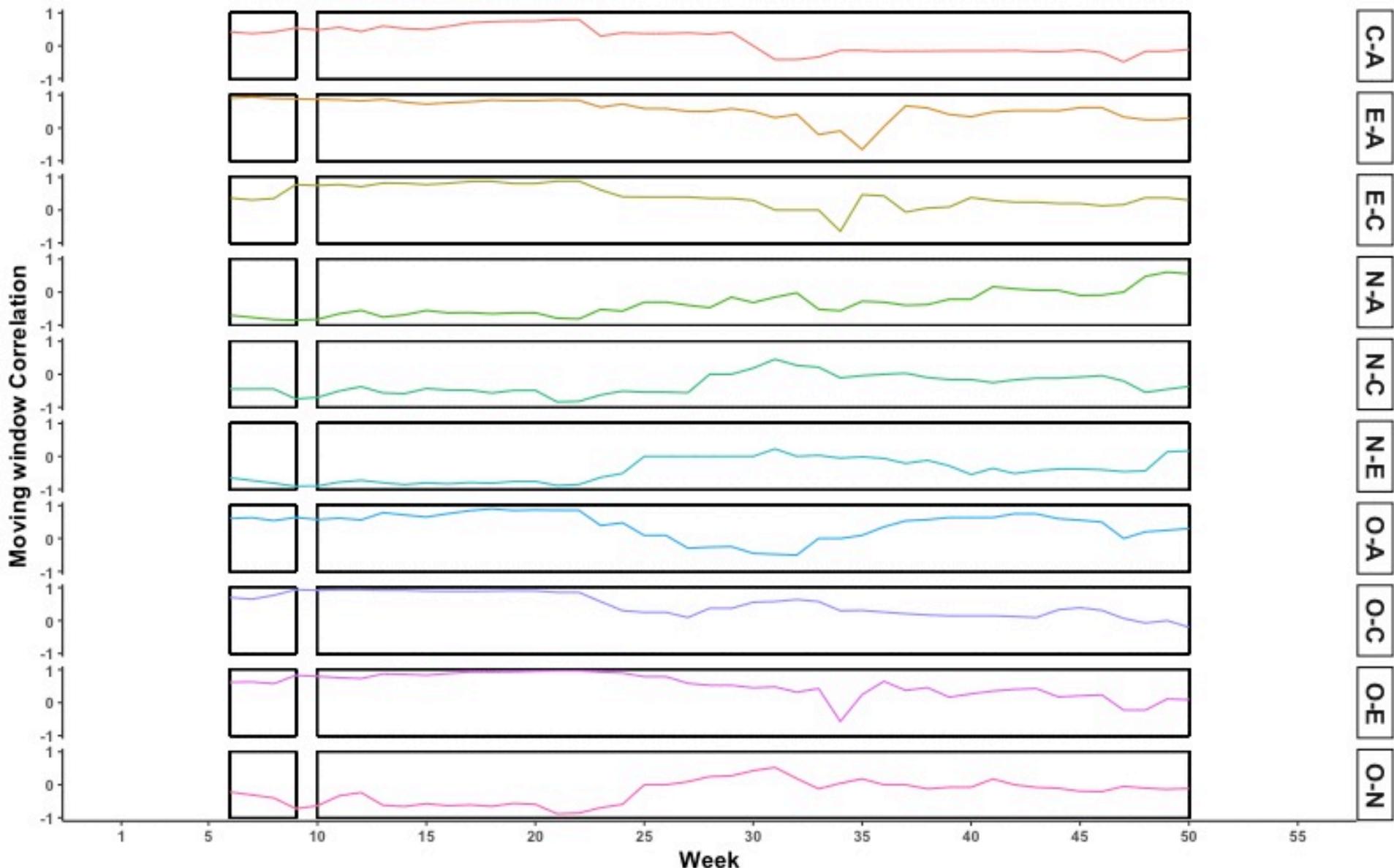
# Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*

## 2 Phases



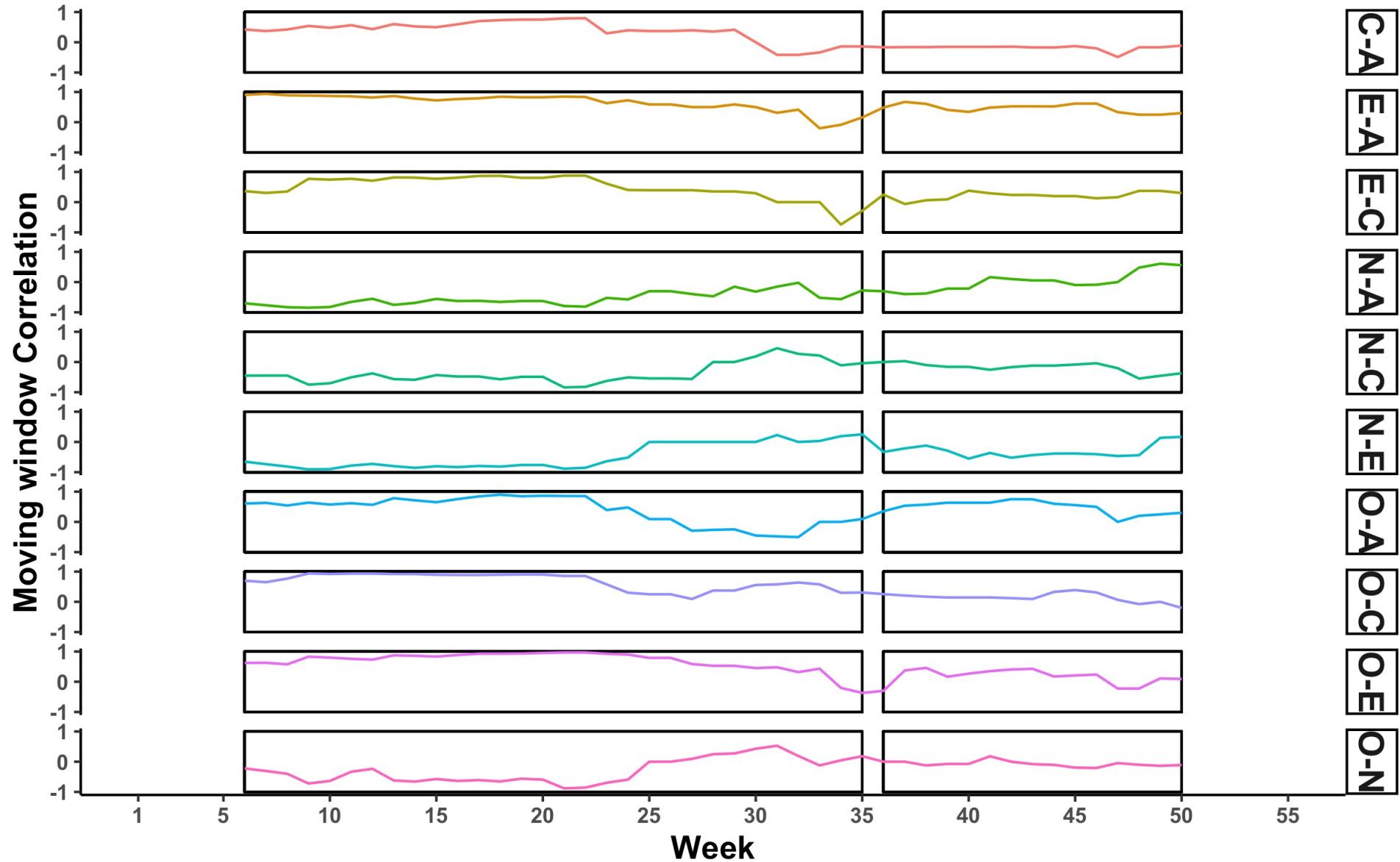
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# 2 Phases



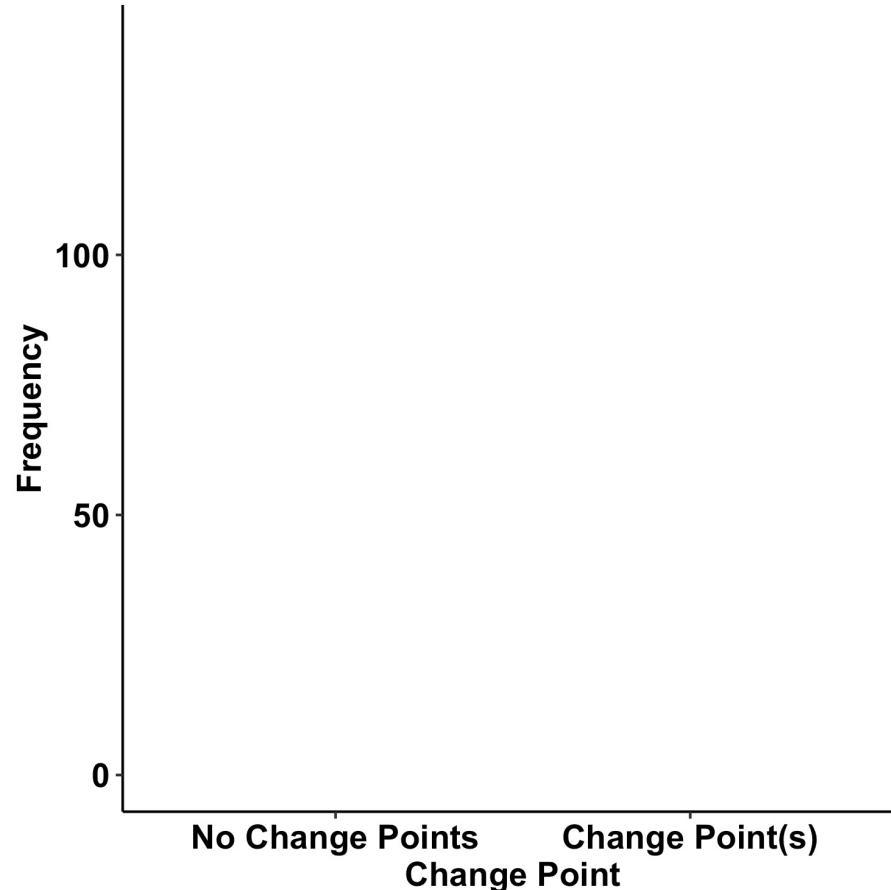
# Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*

## 2 Phases



## Q5: Do personality *changes persist?*

Did people show correlational changes?

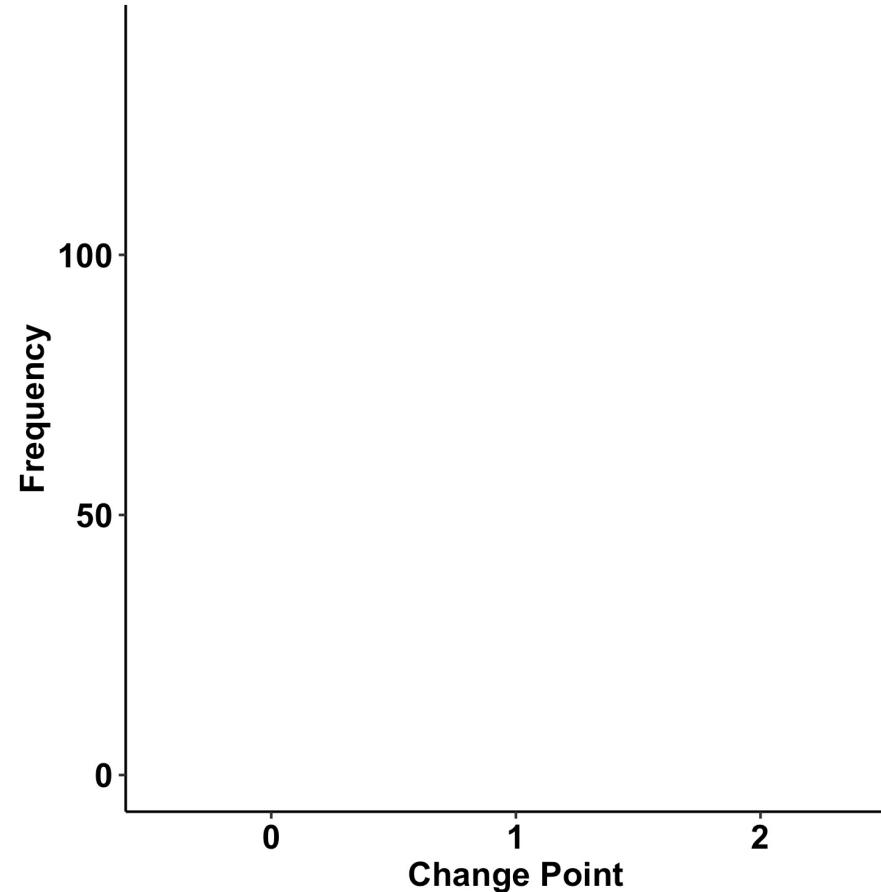
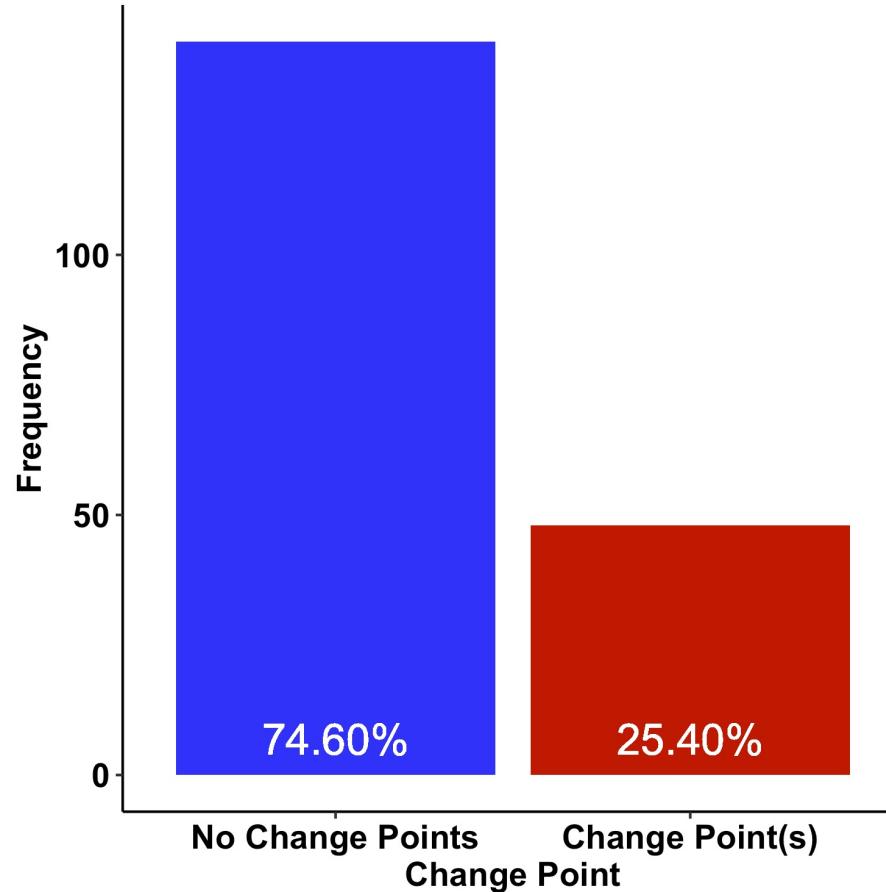


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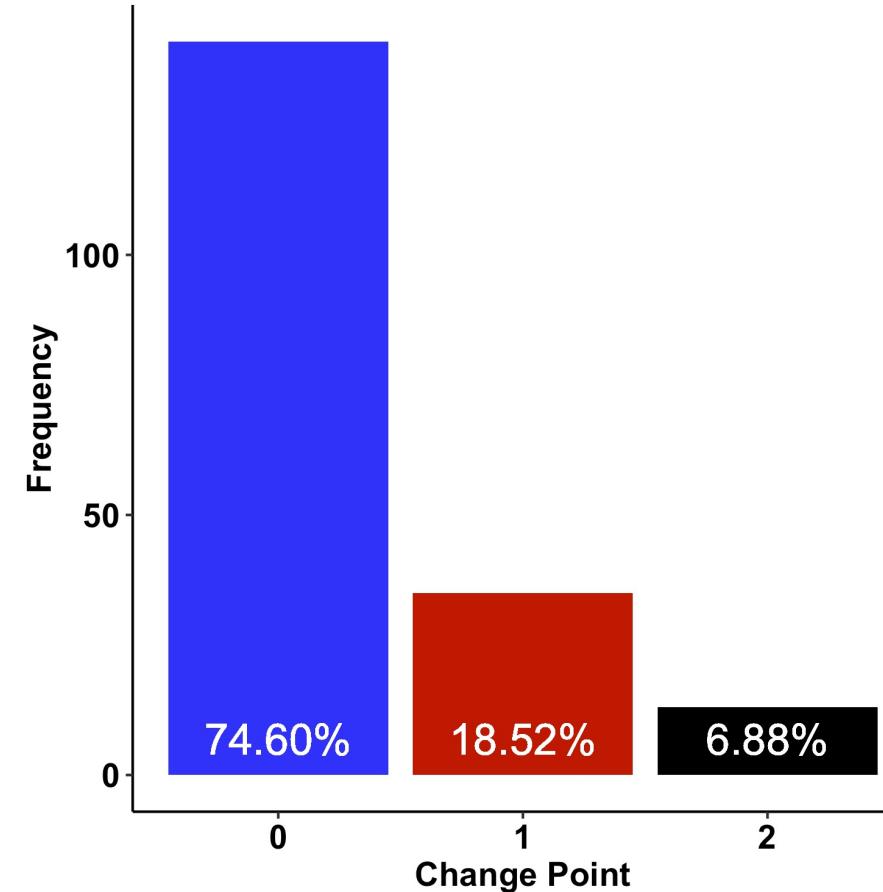
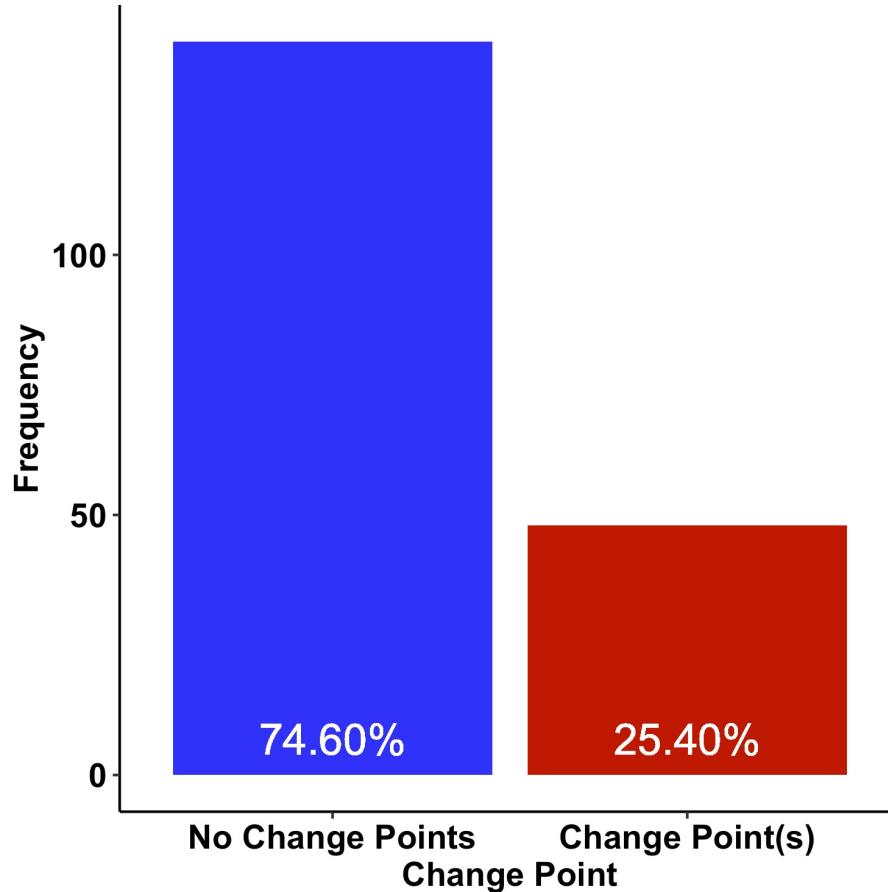
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**Idiographic personality structures are relatively consistent over a year.**

**But what are the consequences of different structures for behavior and experiences? How do situations fit in?**

**Prediction is relatively robust across covariates.**

**Beck & Jackson  
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## Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*



## Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*

### Critical Assumption

**Situations and experiences should have similar consequences across people.**

**People with similar levels of a personality characteristic should behave in similar ways.**

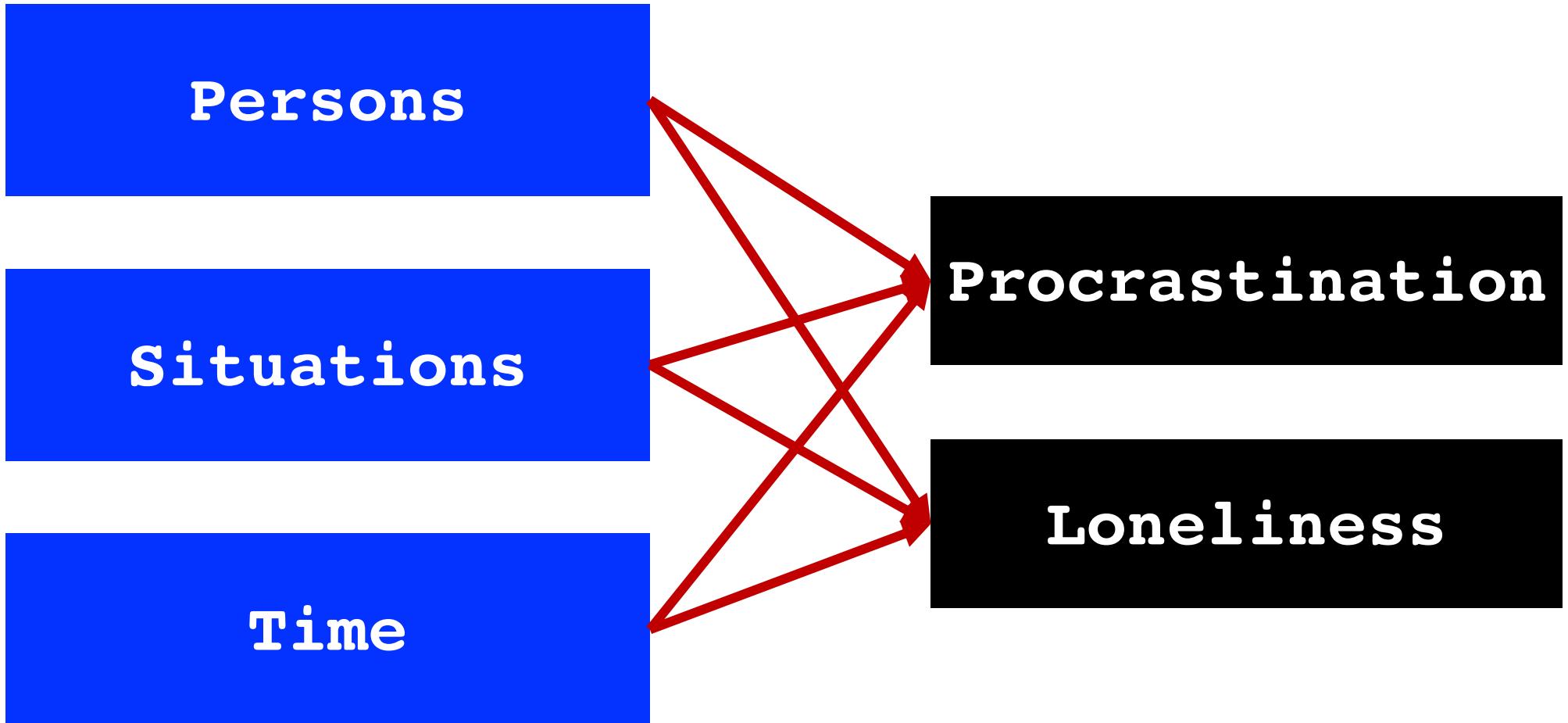
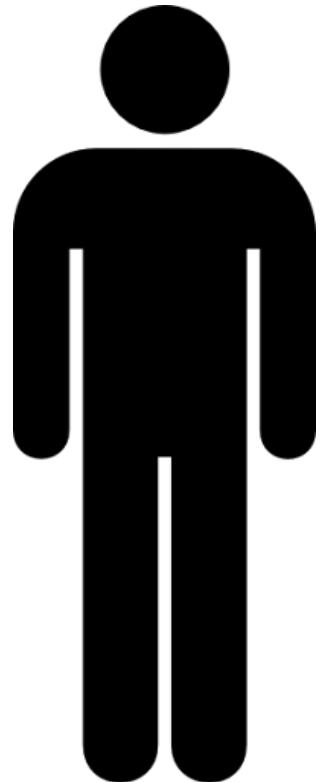
## Q6: Can personality ***predict individual behaviors?***

### Alternative Assumption

Situations and experiences should have ***different*** consequences across people.

People with similar levels of a personality characteristic ***may not*** behave in similar ways.

## Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*



Prereg: <https://osf.io/4nm5p>  
OSF: <https://osf.io/8ebyx/>

Shiny: <https://emoriebeck.shinyapps.io/behavior-prediction/>  
Preprint: <https://psyarxiv.com/syhw5>

## Q6: Can personality ***predict individual behaviors?***

# Measures

## Personality & Affect

Full BFI-2,  
administered with 75%  
planned missingness

Subset of the PANAS-X  
(items redundant with  
the BFI-2 removed)

5-point Likert-like scale  
from 1 "disagree strongly"  
to 5 "agree strongly."

Binary indicators of  
procrastination & loneliness

0 = no, 1 = yes

## Situations

Binary indicators  
generated by  
undergraduate  
research assistants

0 = no, 1 = yes

**Ultra-brief DIAMONDS**  
scale

3-point scale from 1 "not  
at all" to 3 "totally."

Binary indicators of  
procrastination & loneliness

0 = no, 1 = yes

## Time

Derived from time  
stamps:

1. Time of day  
(morning, midday,  
evening, night)

2. Day of week

0 = no, 1 = yes

3. Linear, Quadratic,  
& Cubic Trends

4. 1 & 2 period sine  
and cosine

Beck & Jackson (under  
revision, *Psych Science*)

## Outcomes

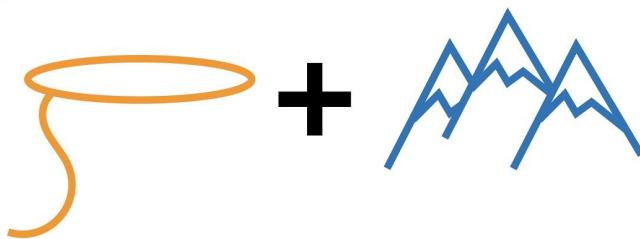
lead 1 (previous  
features predict  
future outcomes)

Q6: Can personality ***predict individual behaviors?***

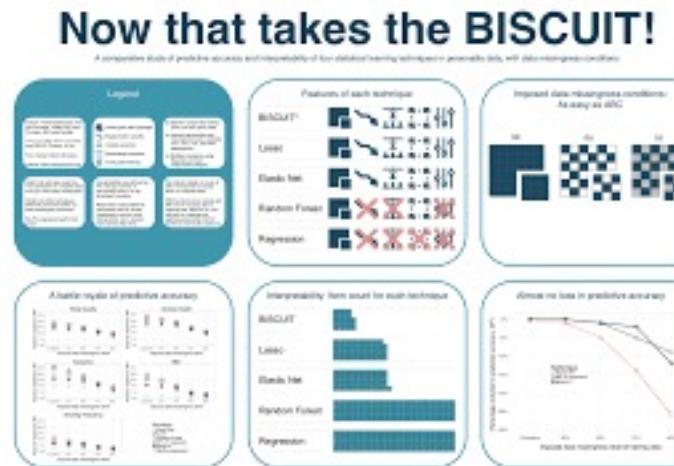
# Analytic Plan

3 machine learning classification methods:

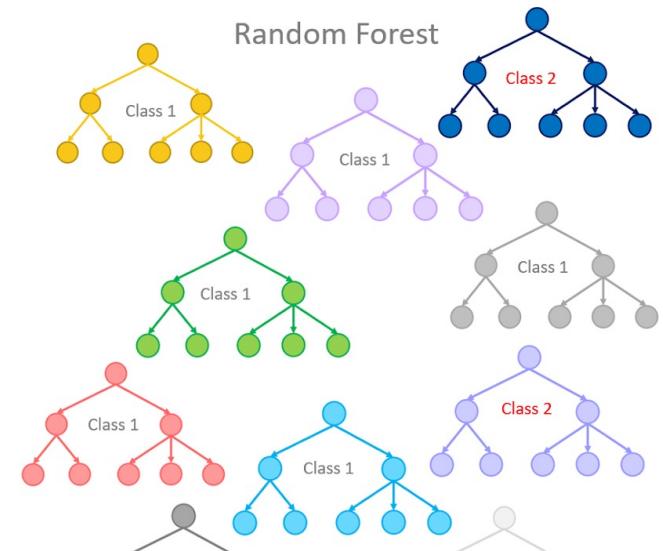
## Elastic Net



## BISCWIT



## Random Forest



- Classification Accuracy
- Area under the receiver operating curve (AUC)

Shiny: <https://emoriebeck.shinyapps.io/behavior-prediction/>  
Preprint: <https://psyarxiv.com/syhw5>

# Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*

Beck & Jackson (under revision, *Psych Science*)

## Procrastination

	<b>M (SD)</b>
Random Forest	0.82 (0.13)
BISCWIT	0.82 (0.12)
Elastic Net	0.83 (0.12)

## Loneliness

	<b>M (SD)</b>
	0.87 (0.09)
	0.87 (0.08)
	0.87 (0.09)

## Q6: Can personality ***predict individual behaviors?***

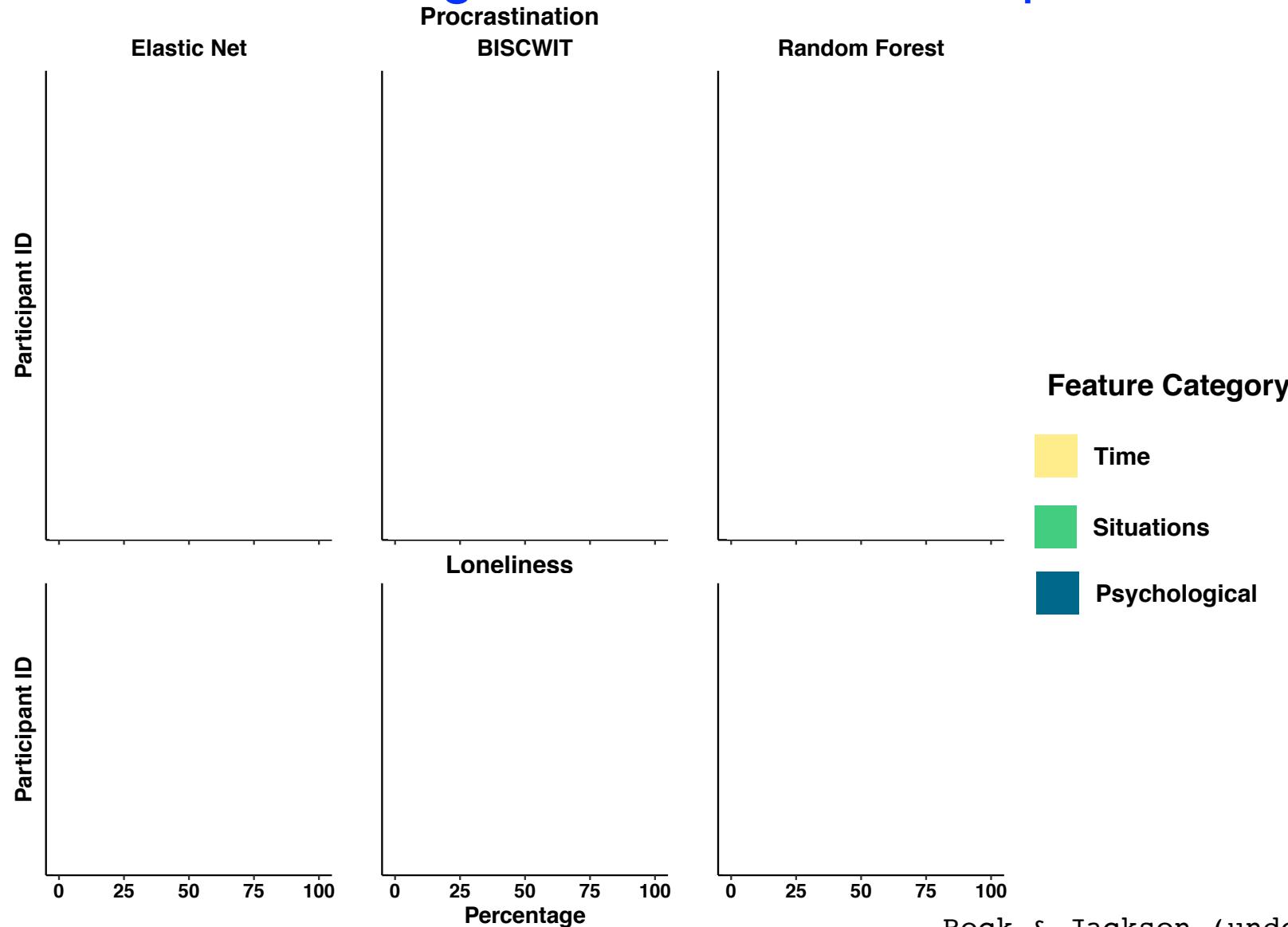
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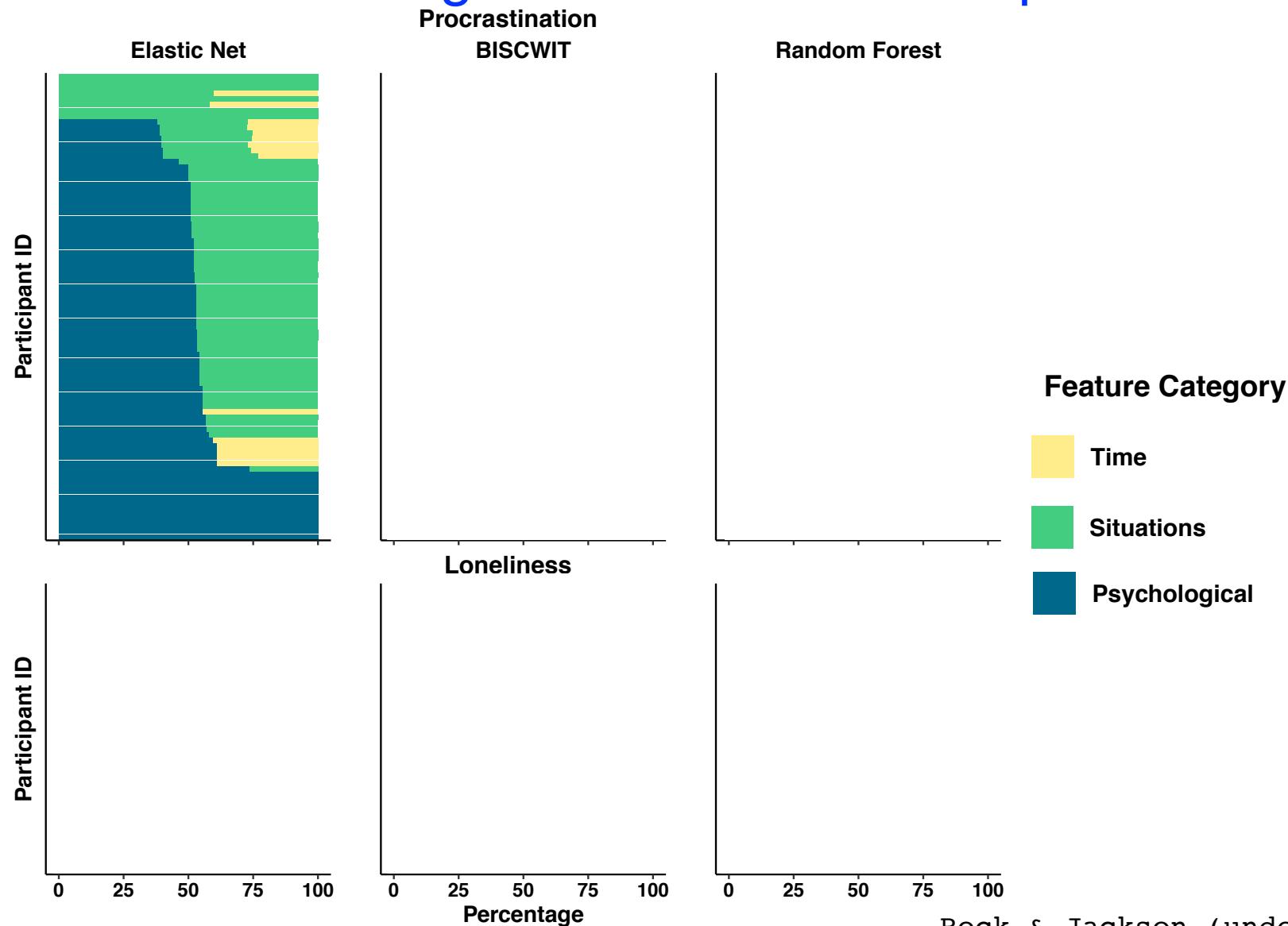
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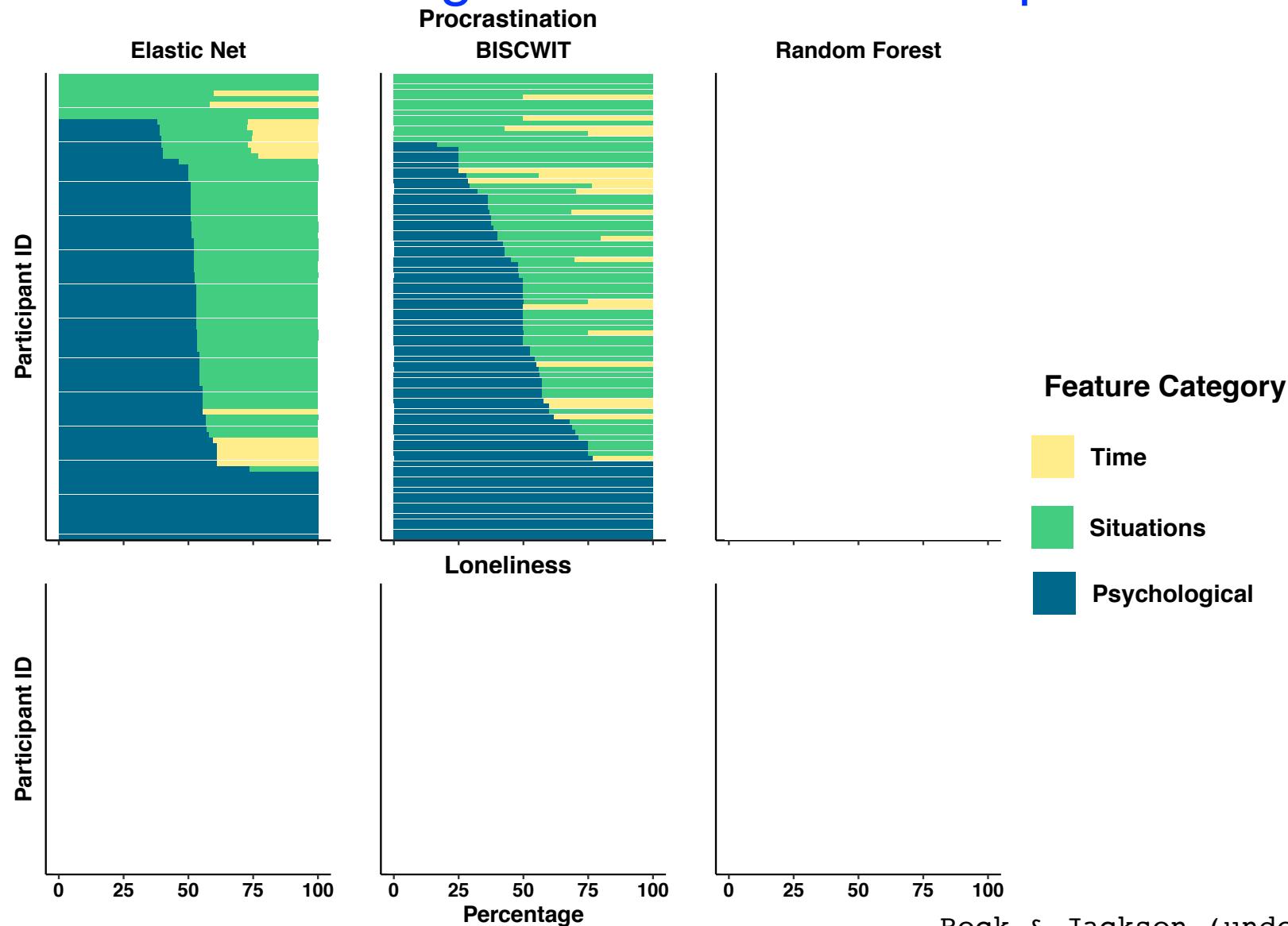
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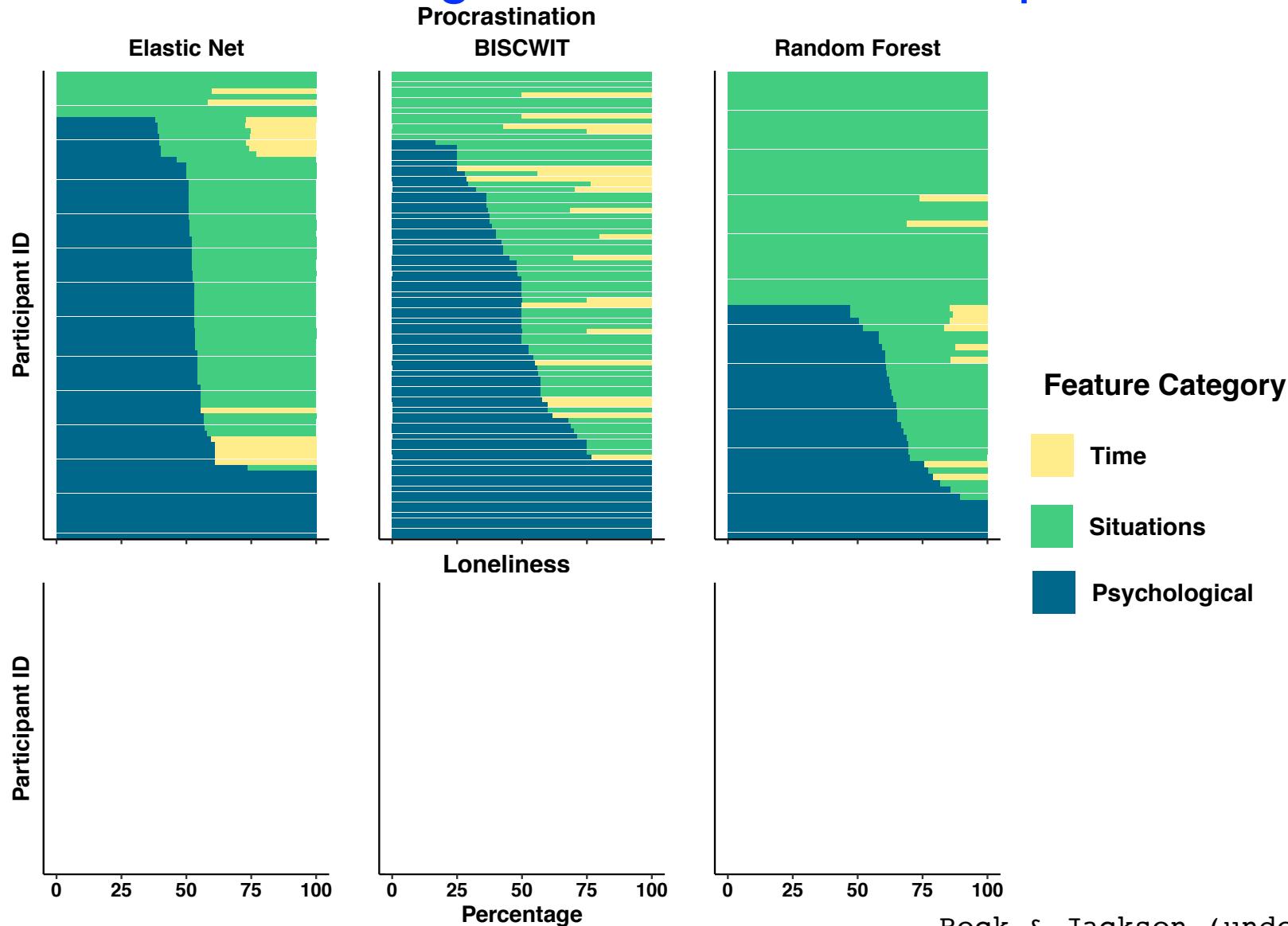
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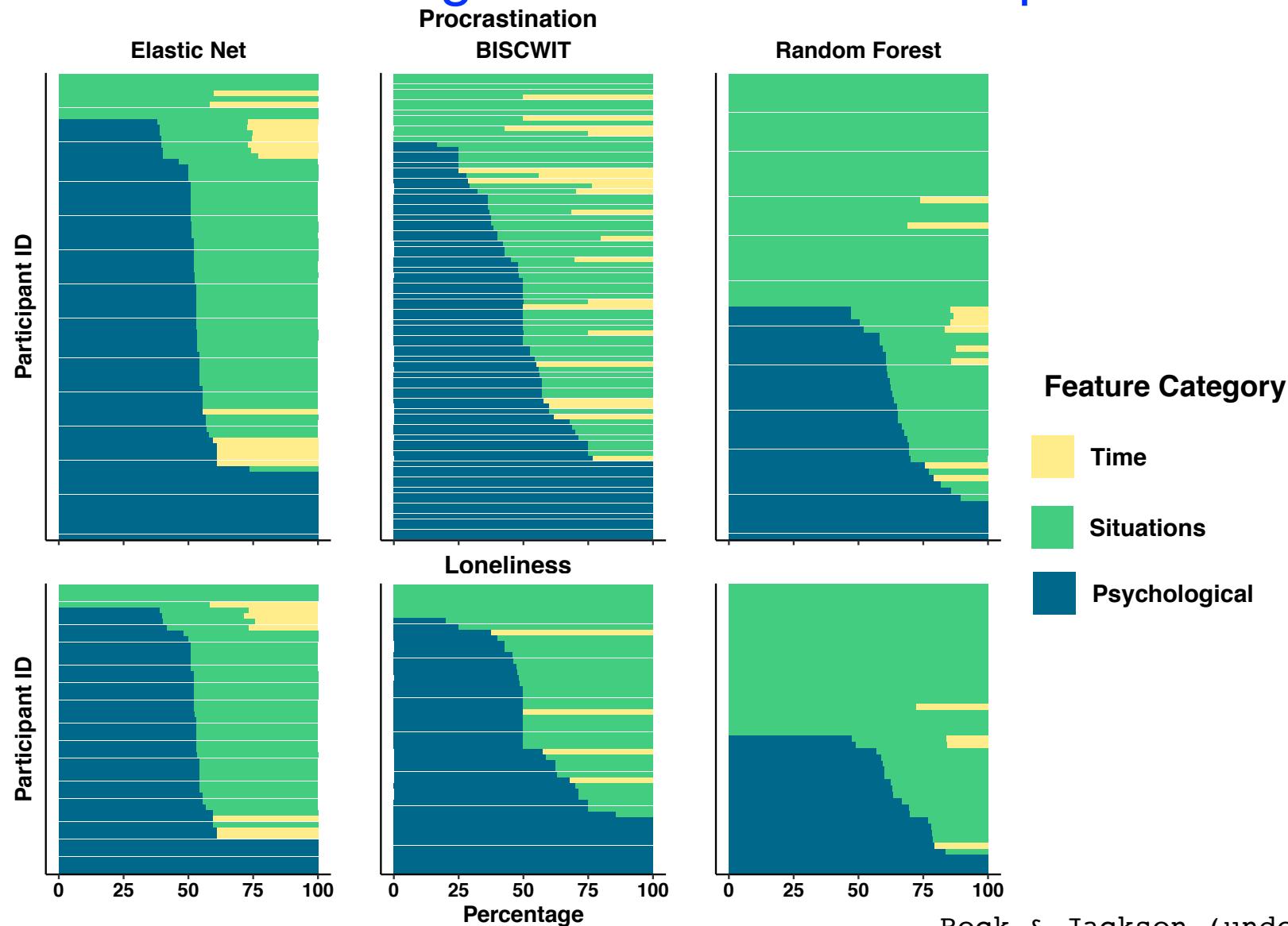
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## Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*

Which features play the strongest roles?

# Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*

Which features play the strongest roles?

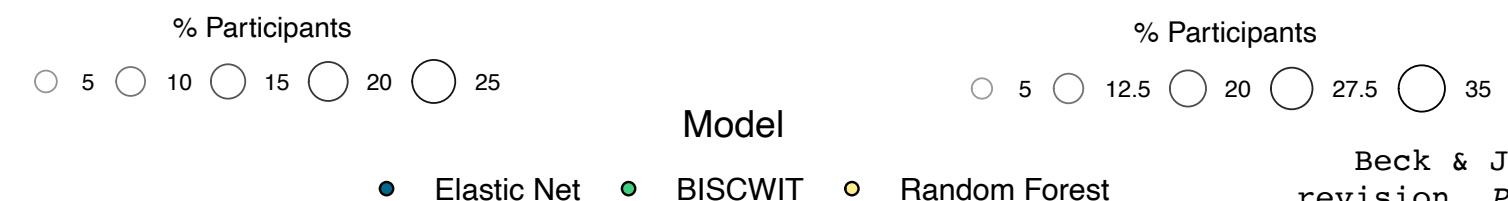
P01: Extraversion: Sociability  
P02: Extraversion: Assertiveness  
P03: Extraversion: Energy Level  
P04: Agreeableness: Compassion  
P05: Agreeableness: Respectfulness  
P06: Agreeableness: Trust  
P07: Conscientiousness: Organization  
P08: Conscientiousness: Productiveness  
P09: Conscientiousness: Responsibility  
P10: Neuroticism: Anxiety  
P11: Neuroticism: Depression  
P12: Neuroticism: Emotional Volatility  
P13: Openness: Intellectual Curiosity  
P14: Openness: Aesthetic Sensitivity  
P15: Openness: Creative Imagination  
P16: Negative: Angry  
P17: Negative: Afraid  
P18: Positive: Happy  
P19: Positive: Excited  
P20: Positive: Proud  
P21: Negative: Guilty  
P22: Positive: Attentive  
P23: Positive: Content  
P24: Neutral: Purposeful  
P25: Neutral: Goal-directed

S01: Duty  
S02: Intellect  
S03: Adversity  
S04: Mating  
S05: pOsitivty  
S06: Negativity  
S07: Deception  
S08: Sociality  
S09: Studying  
S10: Argument  
S11: Interacted  
S12: Lost something  
S13: Late  
S14: Forgot something  
S15: Bored with schoolwork  
S16: Excited about schoolwork  
S17: Anxious about schoolwork  
S18: Tired  
S19: Sick  
S20: Sleeping  
S21: In Class  
S22: Listening to music  
S23: On the internet  
S24: Watching TV

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T15: 24 hour Sinusoidal Cycle  
T16: 12 hour Sinusoidal Cycle  
T17: 24 hour Cosinusoidal Cycle  
T18: 12 hour Cosinusoidal Cycle

Procrastination

Loneliness

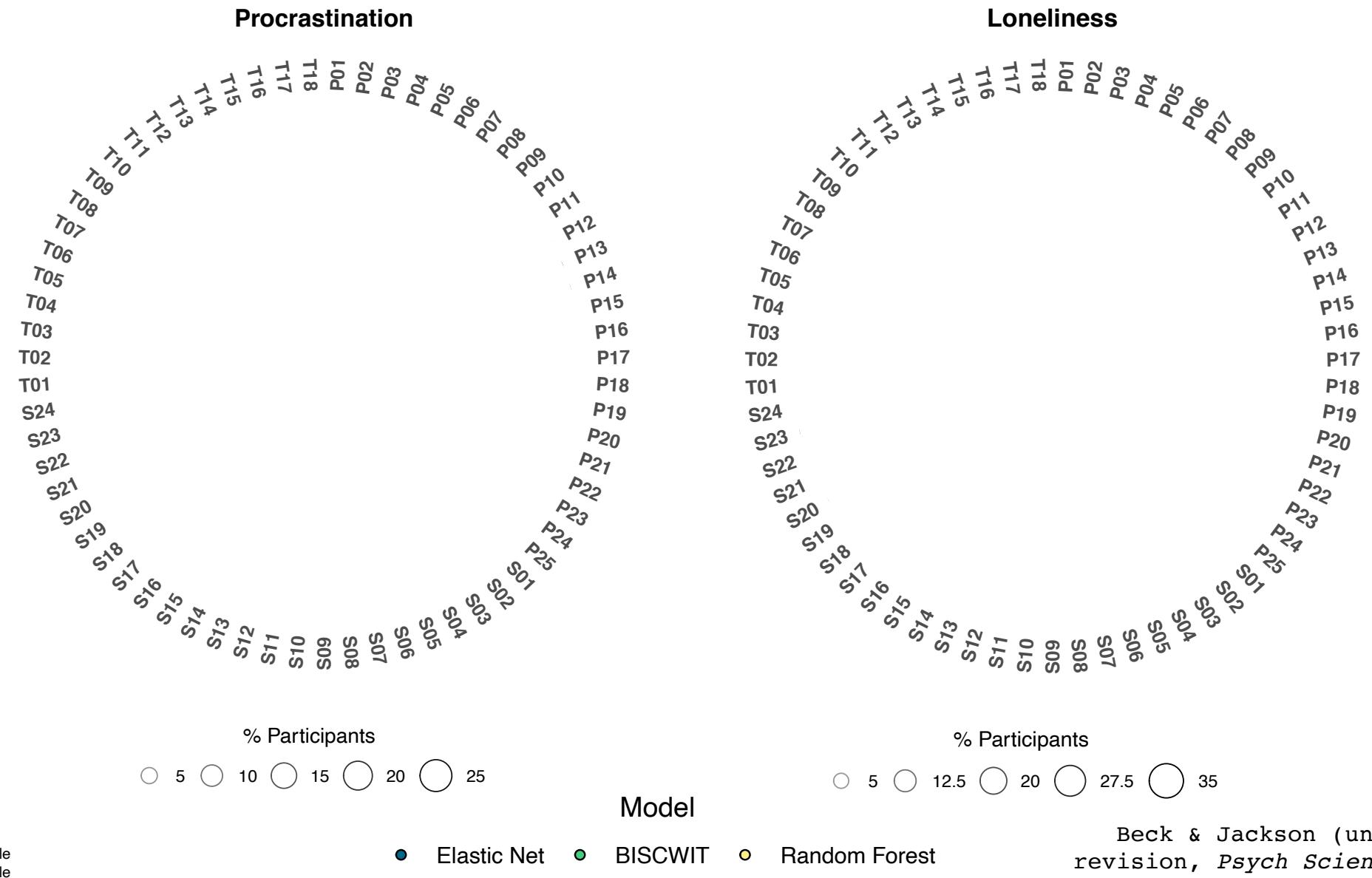


# Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*

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 P16: Negative: Angry  
 P17: Negative: Afraid  
 P18: Positive: Happy  
 P19: Positive: Excited  
 P20: Positive: Proud  
 P21: Negative: Guilty  
 P22: Positive: Attentive  
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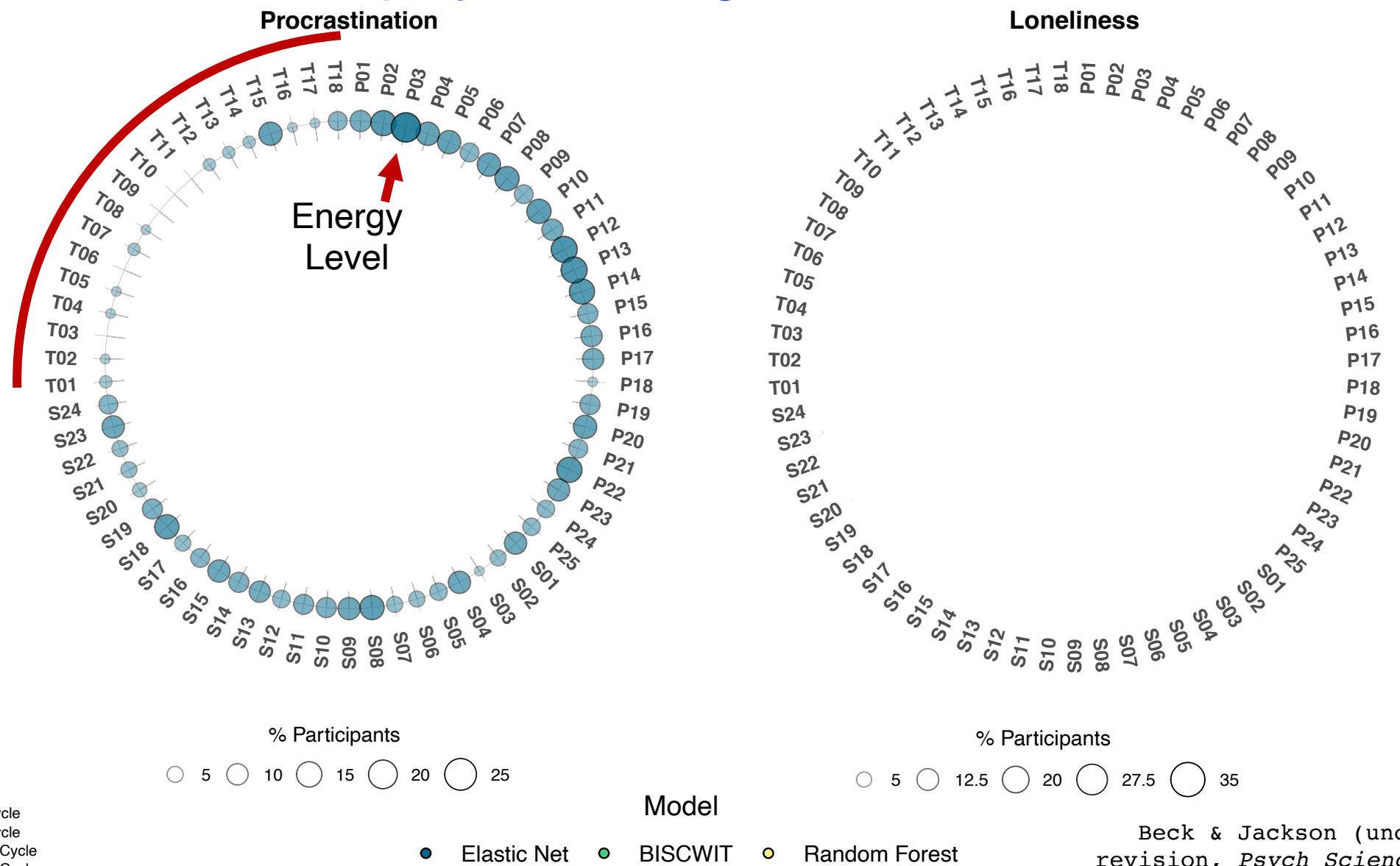


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 S01: Duty  
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 S12: Lost something  
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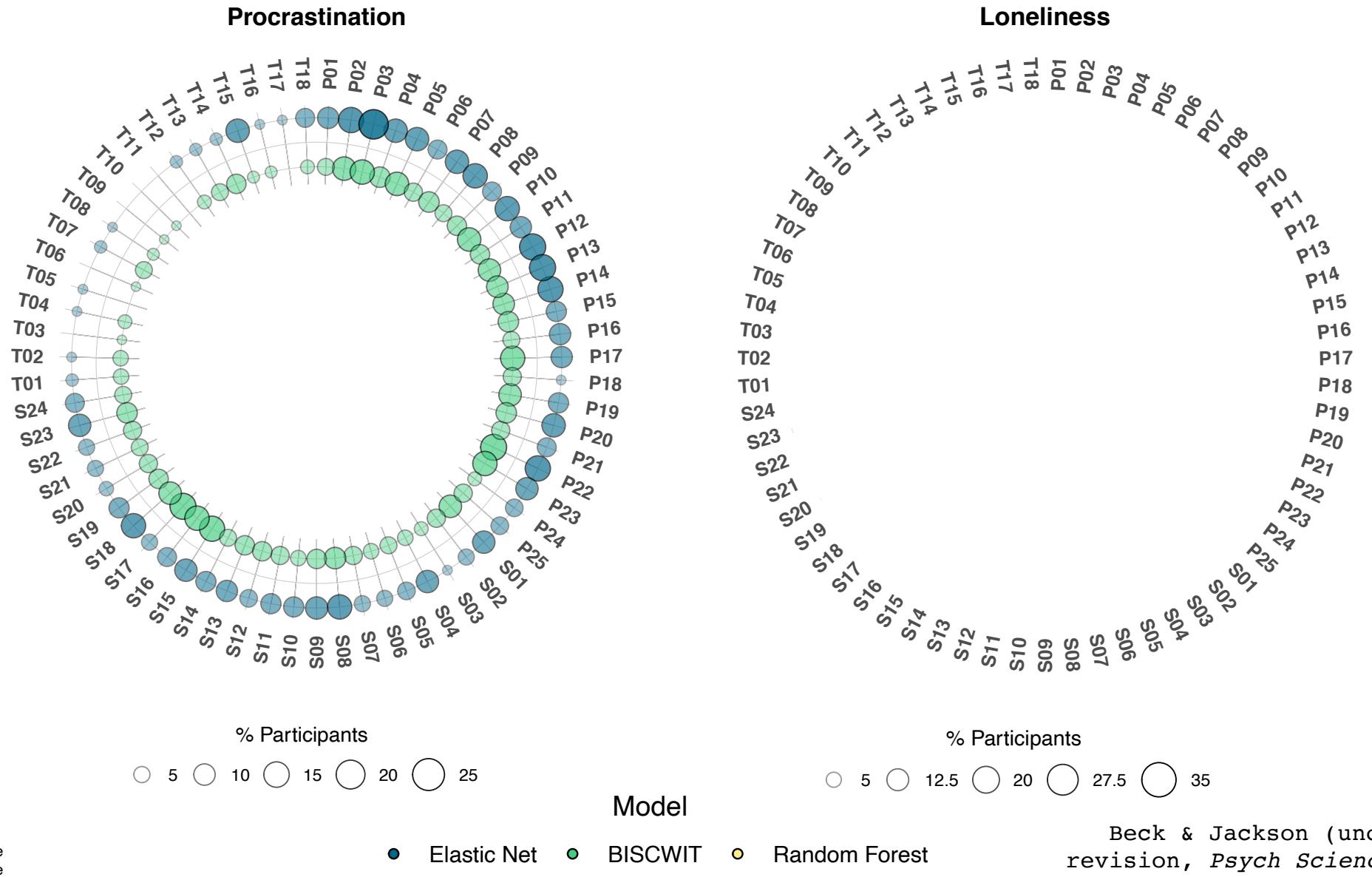


# Q6: Can personality *predict individual behaviors?*

Which features play the strongest roles?

P01: Extraversion: Sociability  
 P02: Extraversion: Assertiveness  
 P03: Extraversion: Energy Level  
 P04: Agreeableness: Compassion  
 P05: Agreeableness: Respectfulness  
 P06: Agreeableness: Trust  
 P07: Conscientiousness: Organization  
 P08: Conscientiousness: Productiveness  
 P09: Conscientiousness: Responsibility  
 P10: Neuroticism: Anxiety  
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 P12: Neuroticism: Emotional Volatility  
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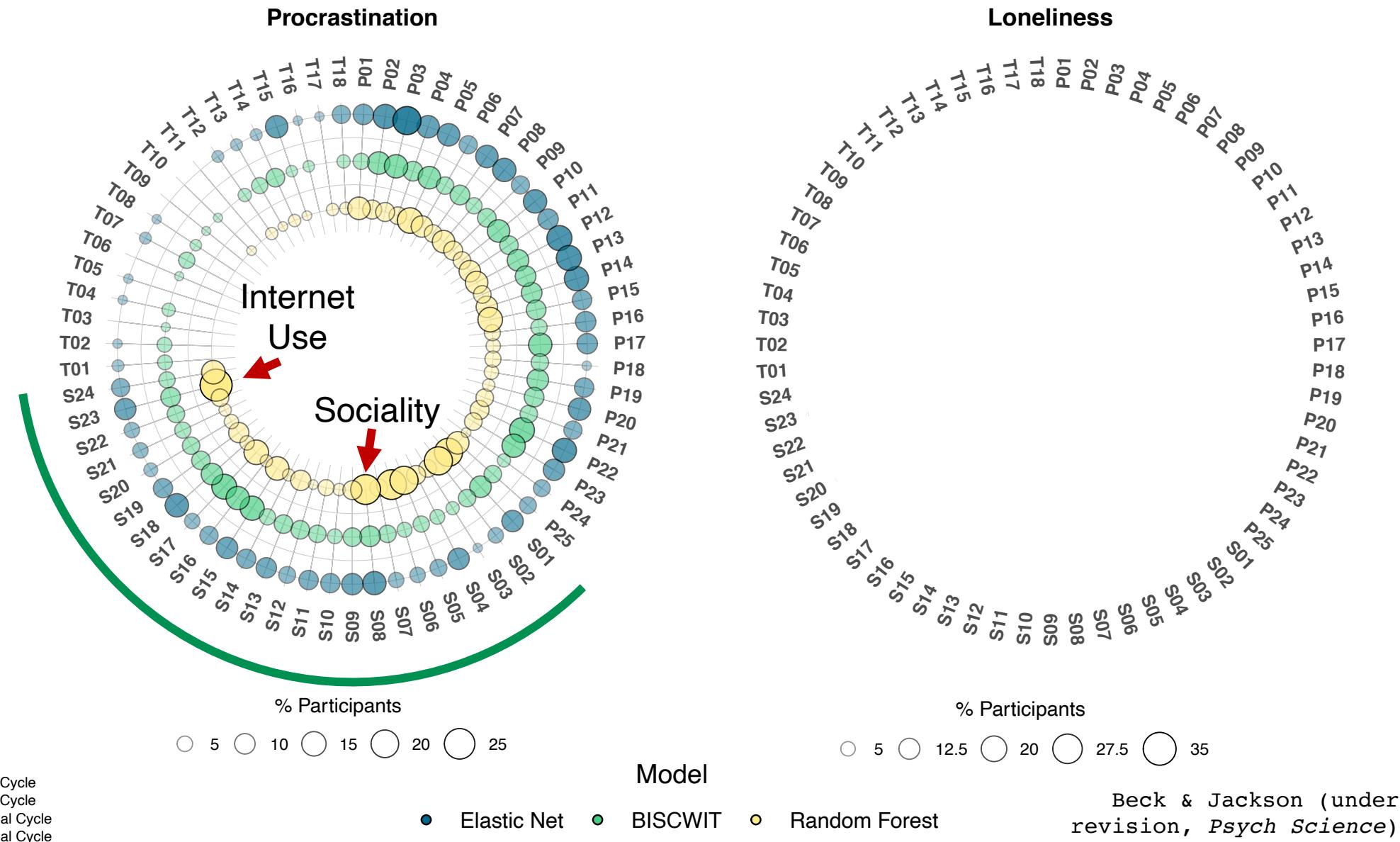


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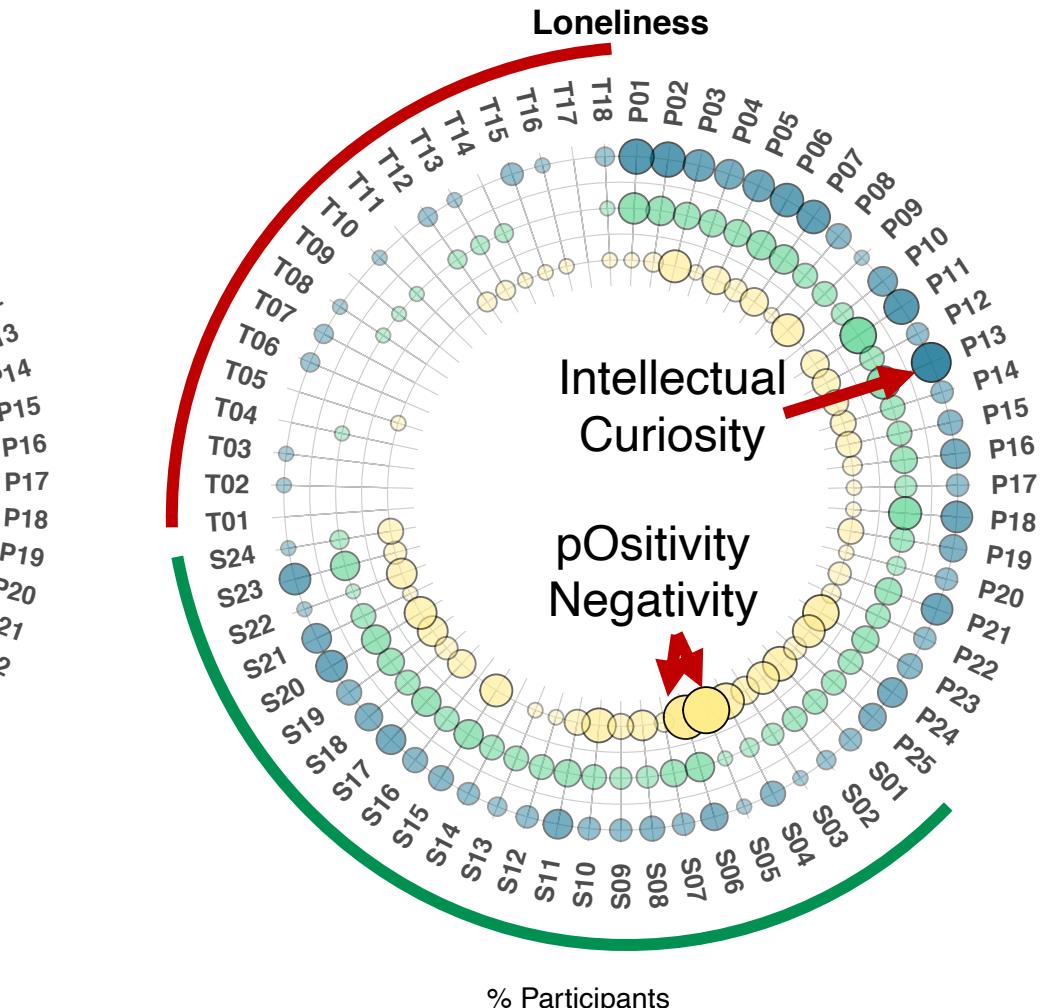
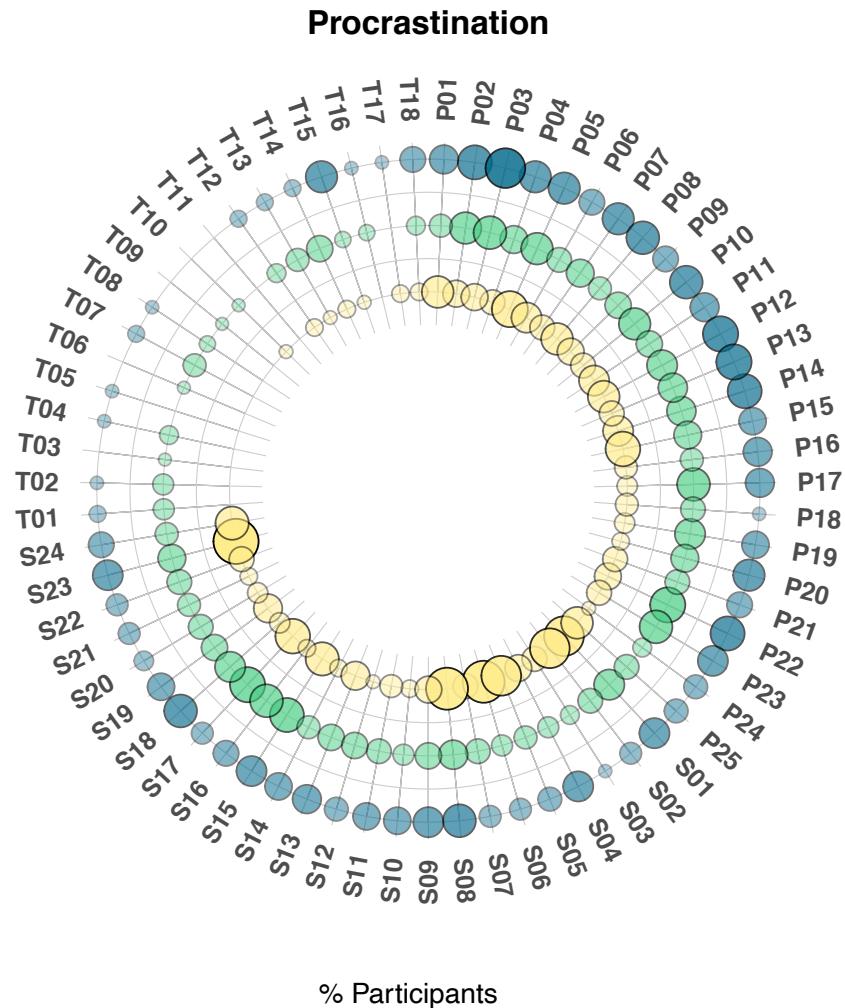


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Model

● Elastic Net   ● BISCWIT   ○ Random Forest

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**Beck & Jackson  
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**But we can predict behaviors and experiences quite accurately, on average.**

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# Acknowledgements

## Collaborators

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AJ Wright	Eileen Graham
Leah Schultz	Emily Willroth
Abby Rodler	Olivia Atherton
Dante Chao	Jing Luo
Rachel Best	
Jessie Rich	

## Data Sources

BHPS (and US)	OCTO-TWIN
GSOEP	WUSM-MAP
HILDA	EAS
HRS	ROS
LISS	MAP
MIDUS	MARS
NLSY	LASA
SHP	BASE-I
WLS (G&S)	BASE-II
SATSA	SHARE