



Do Major Life Events Change Personality?

A Propensity Score Matching Approach

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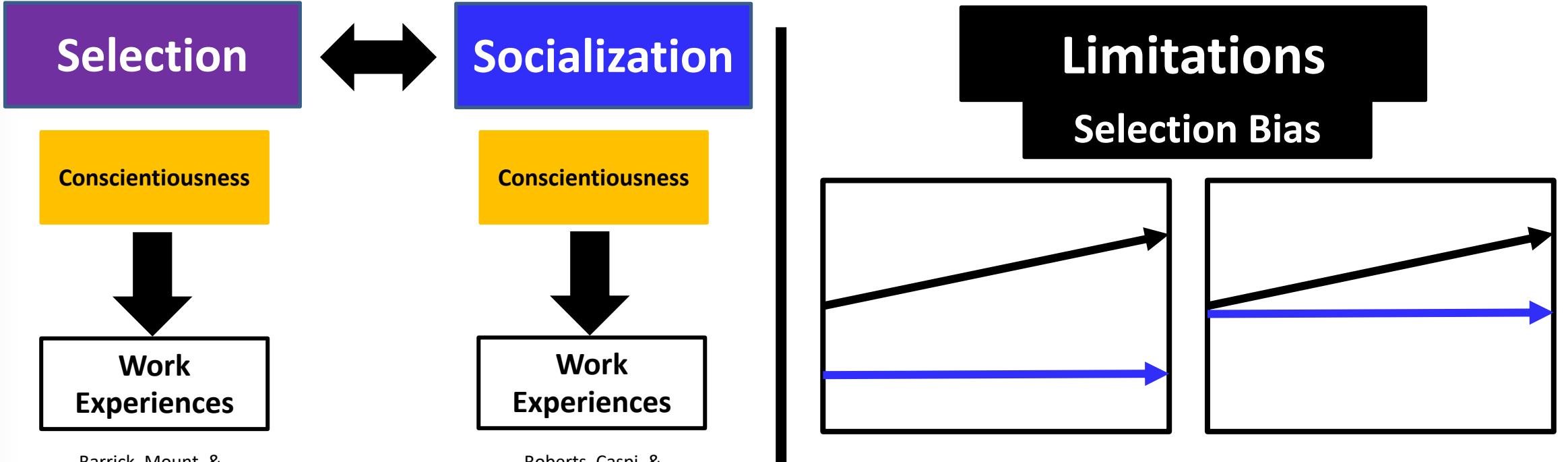


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Introduction

Longitudinal Personality Change

The Big 5	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Direction					
Magnitude	--	.6 SD	1 SD	-.8 SD	.4 SD
Timing	--	Lifespan	Lifespan	10-35	10-20
Socialization Effects	Marriage / Move in with Partner (-) Leave Parents' Home (-) Romantic Relationships (+)	Changing Majors (+) Separate from Partner (+) Military Service (-)	Retirement (-) Child Birth (-) First Job (+)	Psychotherapy (-) First Job (+) Romantic Relationships (-)	Retirement (+) Child Birth (+; Men only) Marriage (-)



Do life events change personality when controlling for selection bias?

Propensity Score Matching

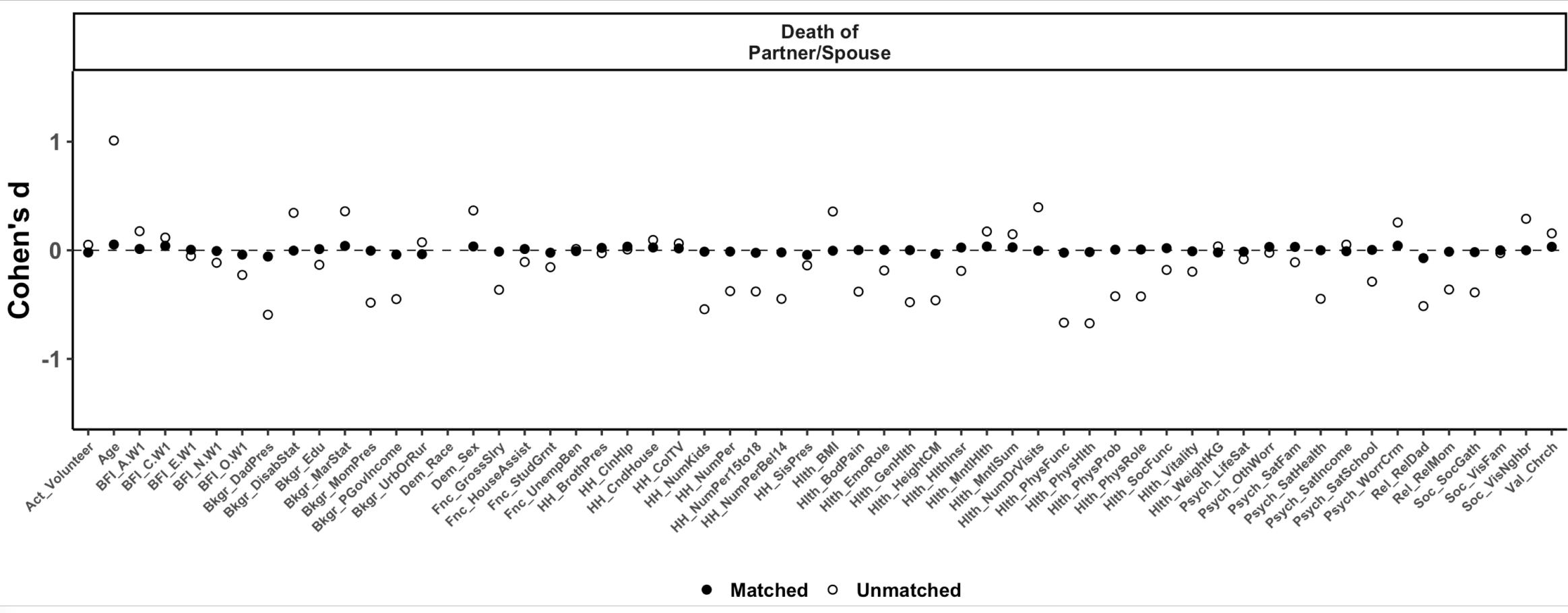
No Event

Event



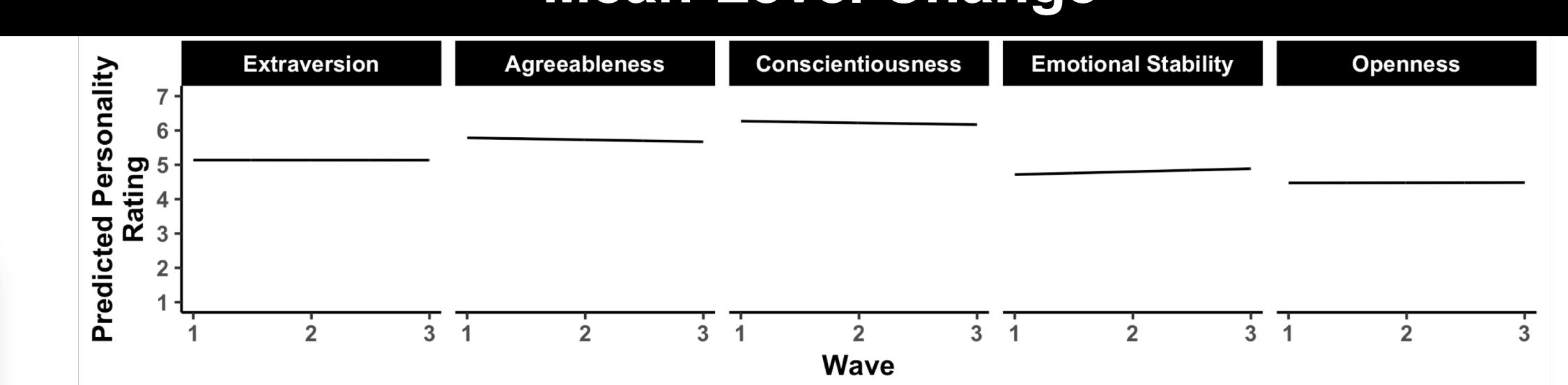
Life Event	Age in 2005		% women
	Matched	Unmatched	
Marriage	965 (4453)	33.36	51.40
Moved in with Partner	885 (4898)	31.55	53.11
Divorce	362 (1805)	40.73	58.84
Separation from Partner	947 (4528)	35.62	56.60
Death of Partner/Spouse	390 (1926)	64.08	70.26
Leaving Parental Home	374 (1529)	23.88	50.80
Child Leaves Home	1814 (7757)	48.37	55.35
Birth of Child	1116 (4352)	31.04	53.85
Death of Parent	1633 (10614)	46.78	52.54
Unemployment	1910 (7501)	38.45	12.68
Retirement	1166 (3892)	60.55	51.94
First Job	375 (1123)	22.11	54.03

Note: M = mean age in 2005; SD = standard deviation of age in 2005.

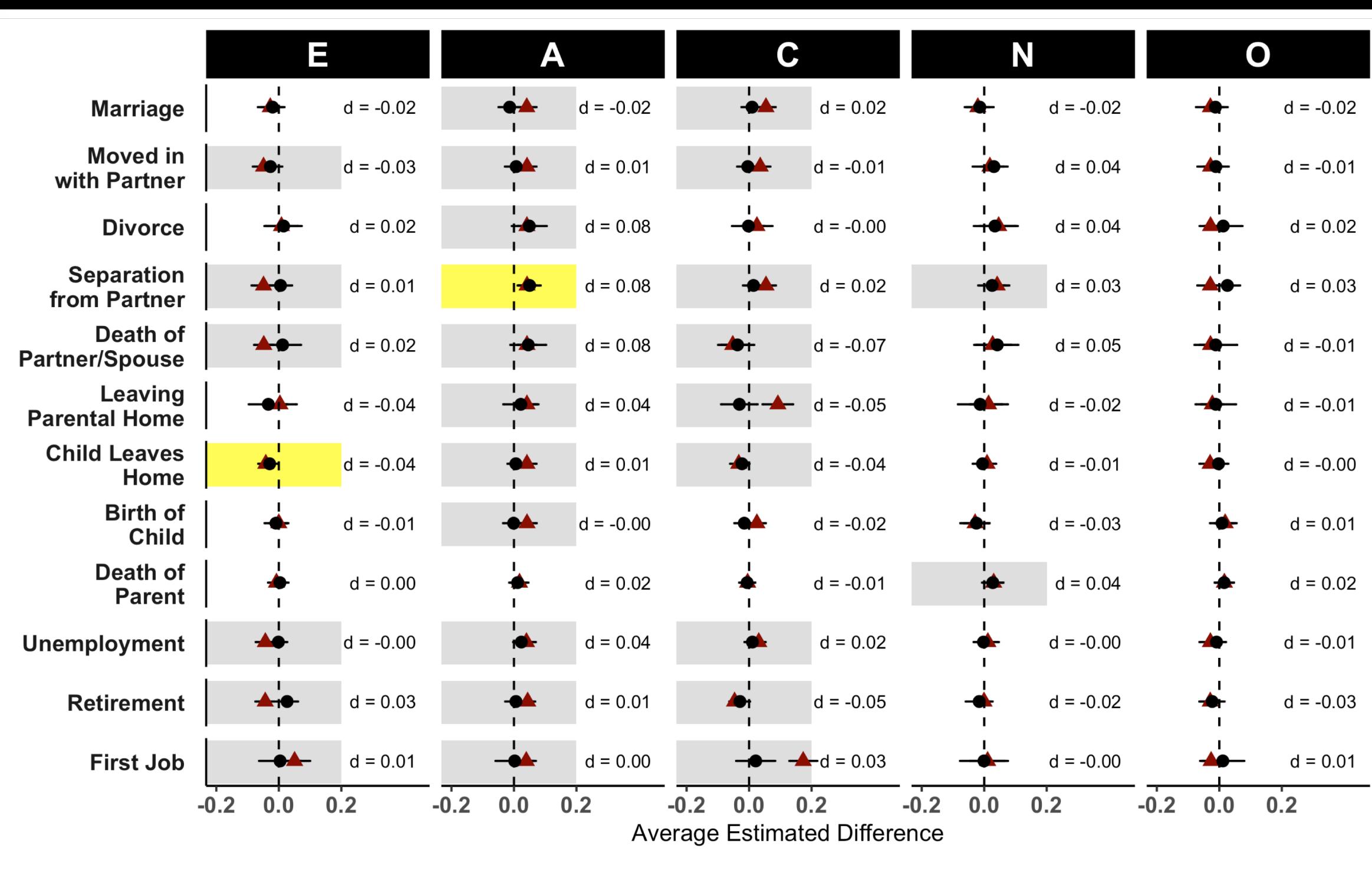


Socialization Effects

Mean-Level Change

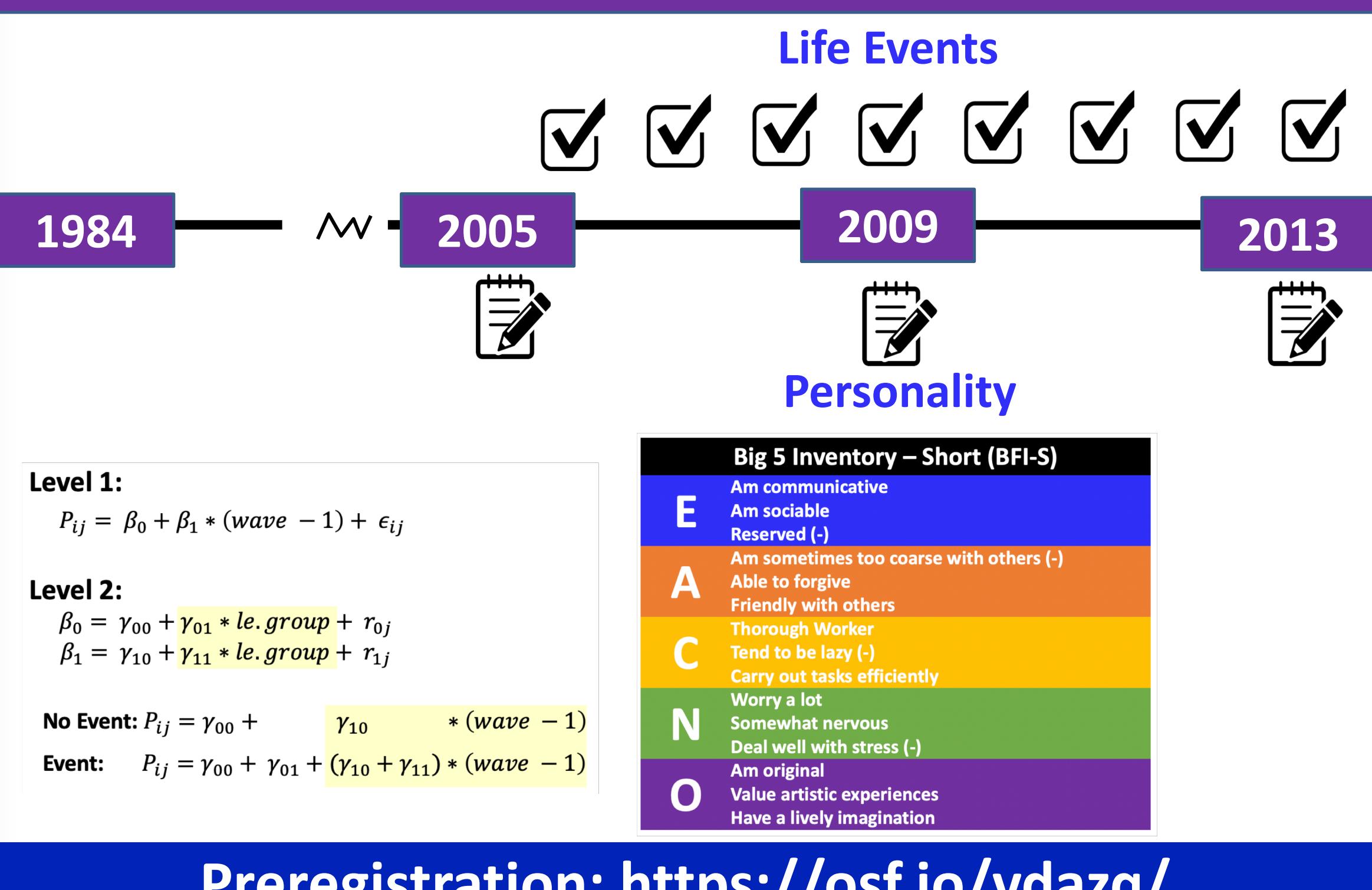


Group Differences in Matched and Unmatched Change



Method

German Socioeconomic Panel Study (GSOEP)



Conclusions

Little evidence of socialization effects, when controlling for selection bias

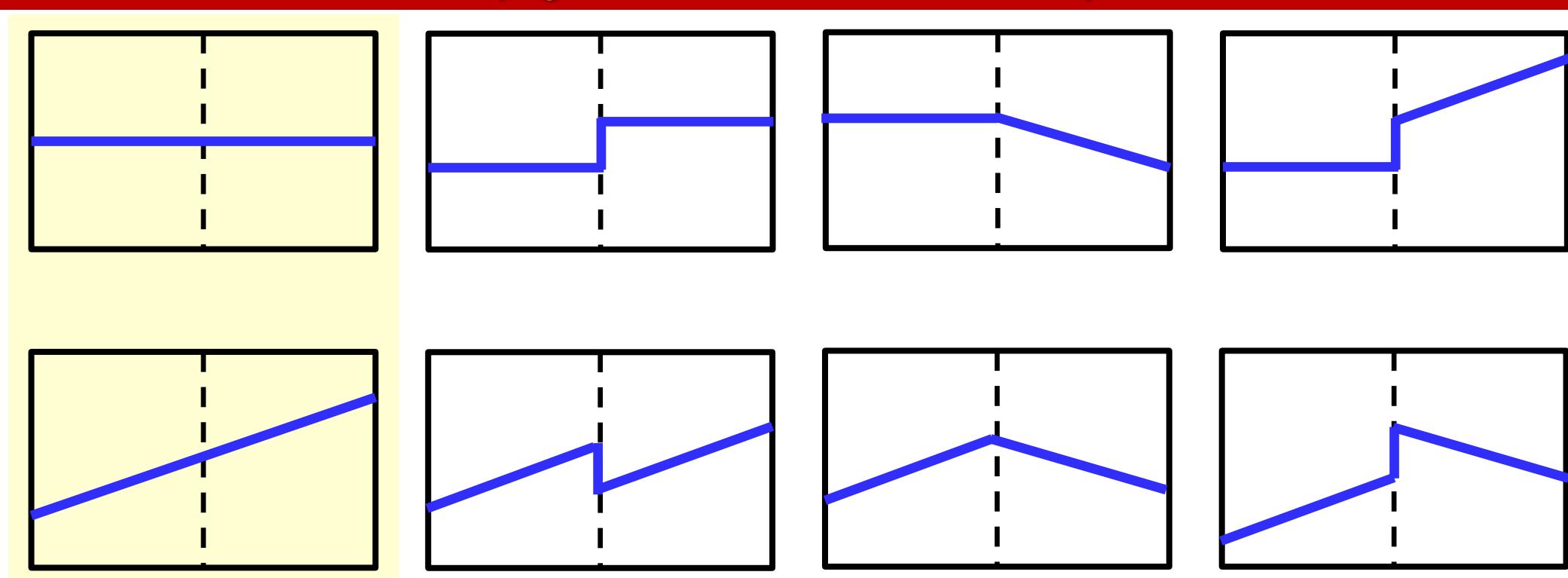
That is, selection bias may account for inconsistent evidence of socialization effects of life events on personality, highlighting the need for better measurement and modeling of personality and time

Future Directions

Alternative Explanations of Change

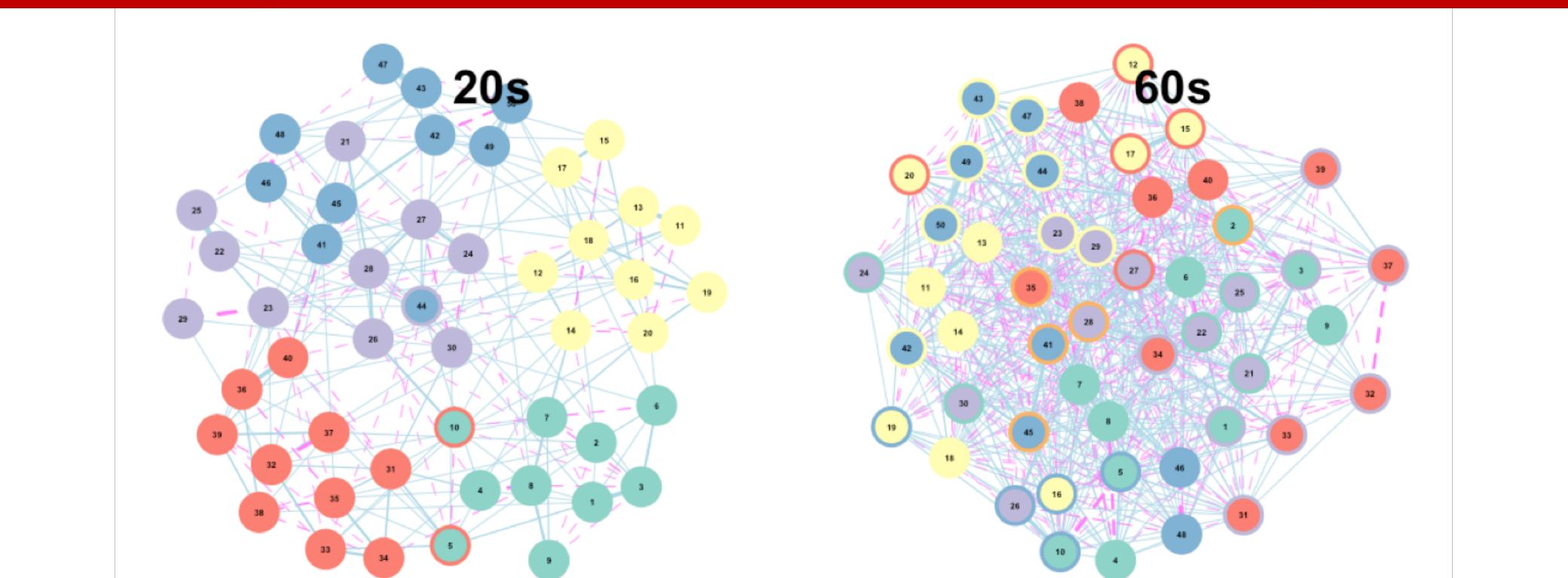
Nonlinear Change

(e.g. Schwaba & Bleidorn, 2018)



Structural Change

(Beck, Condon, & Jackson, 2019; Jackson & Beck, 2019)



Idiographic Change

(van Leemput et al., 2014; Beck & Jackson, 2019ab; Cramer et al., 2016)

