

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Personality development in disruptive times: The impact of personal versus collective life events

Richard Wundrack  | Eva Asselmann  | Jule Specht

Department of Psychology, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Correspondence

Richard Wundrack, Department of Psychology, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Unter den Linden 6, 10099 Berlin, Germany.
Email: richard.wundrack@hu-berlin.de

Funding information

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL

Abstract

Personality development is related to life events that change social roles and environments. Here, we provide an overview of the differences between personal and collective life events relevant to personality development. Following some basic assumptions about the malleability of personality traits due to life events, we discuss the differences in the thematic, social, spatial, and temporal characteristics of personal and collective life events. Personal life events often cover the domains of health, work, family, and love in individual people's lives, while collective life events refer to disasters and power struggles that affect many people. Collective life events are different because they can (a) trigger different personal life events for different people, (b) indirectly affect many more individuals who identify with a directly affected group, and (c) change social role demands through cultural changes. We discuss how these, and other differences affect the way researchers should investigate collective life events.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Imagine Ada, Bea, and Cem: Ada quit her job for personal reasons, the plant where Bea was working was shut down, and Cem was laid off during an economic crisis. In short, at some point, all three transitioned into unemployment. In contrast to Ada's case, Bea and Cem's personal setbacks were the result of collective changes affecting hundreds and millions of people, respectively.

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2021 The Authors. Social and Personality Psychology Compass Published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Researchers interested in the impact of life events for personality development often focus on *personal life events* like unemployment (Binder & Coad, 2015; Boyce et al., 2015; Gnamb & Stiglbauer, 2019; Hald Andersen, 2009; Vellekoop, 2016; Winkelmann, 2009) that primarily affect a single individual or household. However, numerous *collective life events* like plant closures or economic crises (Anger et al., 2017; Obschonka et al., 2016) involve larger groups of people, set the contexts for personal life events, and can themselves influence personality development. Our goal is to highlight these and other typical differences between personal and collective life events because they may (a) affect personality development differently, and (b) require to be treated differently in research on personality development.

2 | PERSONALITY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Personality captures relatively stable individual differences in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Shaped by biological and environmental factors, previous research suggests that personality remains malleable across the entire life span (Bleidorn et al., 2014; Caspi & Roberts, 2009; Graham et al., 2020; Kandler et al., 2012; Specht et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2020) and changes particularly during young and old age (Roberts et al., 2006; Specht et al., 2011; Wagner et al., 2016). Core personality traits like the Big Five or HEXACO—that is, openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism or emotional stability, and honesty-humility—and other individual differences such as life satisfaction and self-esteem have been found to predict various life outcomes (Luhmann et al., 2012; Orth et al., 2012; Roberts et al., 2007; Soto, 2019, 2021) including the occurrence of life events (Beck & Jackson, preprint; Denissen et al., 2019; Niehoff et al., 2017; Richter et al., 2020). At the same time, life events have been shown to play a crucial role in personality development. However, previous findings have often been heterogeneous and the strengths, durations, and directions of the associations between life events and personality trait changes varied greatly across different samples and studies (Allemand et al., 2010; Asselmann & Specht, 2020, 2021; Bleidorn et al., 2018; Bleidorn et al., 2013; Lucas, 2007; Luhmann & Eid, 2009; Luhmann et al., 2014; Orth & Luciano, 2015; Specht, 2017; van Scheppingen et al., 2016). Some of these inconsistencies might be explained by different event properties and the fact that different individuals can experience the same kind of event differently (Luhmann et al., 2020; Reese & Smyer, 1983). Here, we are interested in both typical differences in event properties and in the subjective experiences that set collective life events apart from personal ones and might help to explain why previous findings were often mixed.

2.1 | The neo-socioanalytic perspective

One framework that fits well with this general account of personality is the *neo-socioanalytic theory* (Roberts & Nickel, 2017; Roberts & Wood, 2006). It considers a broad range of individual differences including traits, abilities, narratives, motives, and values that are crucial for peoples' identities and their reputations. The theory suggests a functional interpretation of personality relating to the social roles and environments a person inhabits. Importantly, this implies that changes in social roles and environments—often demarcated by life events—are seen as the primary drivers of personality development besides biological factors.

Most relevant to within-person development, the theory's *sociogenomic model* specifies two epigenetic systems of personality malleability (Roberts, 2018; Roberts & Jackson, 2008). One system explains *lasting* personality trait changes through relevant environmental factors occurring during a specific developmental stage. The other system explains *temporary* personality trait changes in response to other environmental factors occurring at other times. However, the question of which aspects of personality can change lastingly and which temporarily for which reasons is ongoing (Henry & Möttus, 2020; Kandler et al., 2014).

Additionally, the neo-socioanalytic theory provides eight principles of personality development—four on personality change (1–4) and four on personality consistency and continuity (5–8). The most general principle of change is (1) the *plasticity principle* which states that personality traits are malleable at any age. More specifically, (2) the *maturity*

principle posits that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and social dominance (a facet of extraversion) increase and neuroticism decreases with age, while (3) the *social investment principle* suggests that personality traits of young adults change because they commit to adult social roles. Moreover, (4) the *corresponsive principle* posits that the personality traits that make it more likely that a person experiences a certain life event are also the ones that change in response to that event. In contrast, (5) the *niche-picking principle* states that people create social environments that help maintain their existing personality trait levels. In line with that (6) the *role continuity principle* states consistent social roles, rather than consistent physical environments are the cause of personality continuity. Additionally, (7) the *identity continuity principle* posits that developing, committing to, and maintaining an identity facilitates personality consistency. Finally, (8) the *cumulative continuity principle* states that personality traits increase in rank-order consistency until the fifties and then decrease again.

Although the degree of empirical support varies for different principles (Roberts & Nickel, 2017), the neo-socio-analytic theory provides a rich explanatory toolbox of why and how life events can affect personality development across the lifespan. For example, the social investment principle suggests that young adulthood is an important developmental stage during which personality matures when young adults commit to adult social roles. One piece of evidence comes from the varying onsets of personality maturation across cultures depending on the age at which young adults commonly experience life events like “starting a job,” “getting married,” and “childbirth” in these cultures (Bleidorn et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2005).

2.2 | Two approaches to life events

In psychology, life events are defined as “time-discrete transitions that mark the beginning or the end of a specific status” (Luhmann et al., 2012, p. 594). This definition allows for a pragmatic operationalization by categorical variables like “employed/unemployed.” Moreover, it suits the neo-socioanalytic perspective in that status changes typically indicate changes in social roles and environments—for example, whether working hours are spent with colleagues at the office providing financial security for one’s family or spent home alone looking for new employment and worrying about bills that must be paid.

How to best examine the role of life events for personality development has been debated for decades (Luhmann et al., 2020; Reese & Smyer, 1983). Two general approaches can be discerned: (a) an *event approach* that asks how a specific type of life event tends to affect personality development and (b) an *experience approach* that asks how specific subjective experiences regarding some life event affect personality development. One difference is that the event approach attempts to describe and predict developmental trends in the general population or specific groups of people regarding some type of life event (e.g., unemployment). In contrast, the experience approach attempts to identify the psychological processes that underlie personality development due to specific event-related experiences (e.g., experiencing a lack of control) across different types of life events. Thus, the two approaches are complementary as they answer different research questions. Eventually, one could construe different life events in terms of different likelihoods to make certain subjective experiences. For example, job loss may be more likely to be experienced as a loss of social status, while a promotion may be more likely to be experienced as a gain in social status.

So far, most studies have used the event approach and grouped life events into the domains of family, love, work, and health. Typical examples of family or love life events are the beginning and end of romantic relationships, marriage, divorce, childbirth, and widowhood; typical examples of life events in the domain of work are graduation, first job, volunteering, unemployment, promotion, and retirement; typical examples of health life events are diseases, mental illnesses, and personal accidents (Asselmann & Specht, 2020, 2021; Bleidorn et al., 2018; Denissen et al., 2019; Magee et al., 2013). Notably, all these events are personal life events that primarily concern a single individual or household.

Recently, however, the experience approach has gained increased attention. Luhmann and colleagues (2020), for example, proposed nine subjective dimensions—valence, impact, predictability, challenge, emotional significance, change in worldviews, social status changes, external control, and extraordinariness—along which individual experi-

ences of life events differ. These dimensions might help to explain why the same type of life event can lead different individuals on different developmental paths (Rakhshani et al., preprint). How life events are subjectively experienced affects personality development because the individual experience may differ greatly from how an event is stereotypically painted by society. For example, a break-up stereotypically comes with emotional turmoil, but one person may feel lost and the other one liberated which could take the two on opposing developmental paths.

That said, the importance of subjective experience for the individual course of personality development does not cancel out the possible effects of more objective and normative changes in life circumstances, such as the time and resources required for raising a child. Accordingly, the impact of life events on personality development might stem partly from their subjective meaning for the individual and partly from more objective characteristics and the larger societal context.

3 | PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE LIFE EVENTS

After having sketched out basic relations between life events and personality development, we now turn to the distinction between personal and collective life events. The main difference between personal and collective life events is of course the number of people affected. To examine their differences in more detail, we follow a framework for studying reactions to *referent events* (Dunkel et al., 2019). A referent event can be specified in terms of its thematic, social, temporal, and spatial characteristics: the thematic facet qualifies the event's contextual meaning; the social facet specifies who was involved in the event; the temporal and spatial facet describe time and place of the event, respectively. Table 1 summarizes typical descriptive differences between personal and collective life events. The framework similarly specifies *individual reactions* to an event, however, here these simply equate to the personality development of different individuals.

3.1 | The thematic facet

As mentioned above, personality developmental researchers often consider personal life events indicative of individual status changes in the domains of health, work, family, and love (Bleidorn et al., 2018; Denissen et al., 2019; Specht, 2017).

Personal life events depend on the individual. For example, losing a job affects one person at a time. Moreover, without that person, this particular job loss event could not have occurred. This is not the case for collective life events that involve many individuals whose involvement may be largely circumstantial: an earthquake, for example, can affect millions of people but its occurrence does not depend on any of them. Moreover, collective life events can trigger different personal life events for different people. The earthquake may leave everyone devastated but also costs one person their home, another one their family, yet another one remains unharmed. Accordingly, a generic status change from “unaffected” to “affected” does not sufficiently account for the complexity of many collective life events.

Additionally, we propose to classify collective life events along the thematic domains of natural or human-made *disasters*, and social, economic, or political *power struggles*. Typically, disasters are negatively valenced and include events like earthquakes, hurricanes, and large-scale industrial accidents. Two recent disasters with the potential to affect personality development are the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut explosion. Typical power struggles are terrorist attacks, civil rights movements, military conflicts, genocide, refugeeism, nation secession, and unification. Notably, whether a power struggle is seen as positive or negative usually depends on which group is considered. Two recent power struggles are the George Floyd protests and Christchurch mosque shootings.

Considering just the last 10 years, there has been a steady flow of studies on personality development, personality growth, and psychopathology for disasters and power struggles like earthquakes (An et al., 2017; Milojevic et al., 2014) hurricanes (Damian et al., 2021; Lowe, Manove, & Rhodes, 2013) the COVID-19 pandemic (Jeroni-

TABLE 1 Comparison of typical differences between personal and collective life events along their thematic, social, temporal, and spatial characteristics

Referent event facet	Personal life event	Collective life event
Thematic facet: Thematic attributes characterizing the event	Events are typically from the domains of family, love, work, and health of a single individual or household; usually marked by individual status changes	Events are typically from the domains of (natural or human-made) disaster and (socioeconomic or political) power struggle; usually covered by the media
Social facet: People affected by the event	Events typically affect a single individual, dyad, or household directly and independently from other people	Events typically affect a large group of individuals or households directly or indirectly, though each one possibly in different ways and to different degrees
Temporal facet: Instance or interval the event happens	Can typically be identified with an exact date (of status change) but their actual duration and effectiveness can extend long into the past and future	Can typically be identified with an exact date or period but their actual duration and effectiveness can extend long into the past and future
Spatial facet: Spatial location associated with the event occurrence	Typically, the event location is tied to the location of the individual involved	Typically, the event location is distributed across the location of all the people directly involved and distance from the event location can play different roles

mus, 2020; Peters et al., preprint; Sutin et al., 2020), terrorist attacks (Luhmann & Bleidorn, 2018), and military conflict (Cheung et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2019; Stevanović et al., 2016). Moreover, several studies have focused on changes in mental health and resilience following disasters and power struggles (Brannen, 2020; Lai et al., 2017; Masten & Narayan, 2012; Munjiza et al., 2014; Neria et al., 2011).

Overall, these studies suggest that disasters and power struggles tend to negatively affect the subjective well-being and mental health of most people. In some people, such events might lead to severe psychopathology, while they are less likely to induce personality growth (Infurna & Jayawickreme, 2019; Jayawickreme & Blackie, 2014; Jayawickreme et al., 2021; Mangelsdorf et al., 2019). However, most previous studies on collective life events have examined whether and how certain personality traits predict and moderate changes in psychological functioning and other life outcomes. Comparatively, little research has examined how personality traits themselves change due to collective life events.

Three such exceptions provide little evidence for personality change due to disasters: The first study compared HEXACO trait changes in New Zealand residents affected and unaffected by the 2010/2011 Christchurch earthquakes (Milojev et al., 2014). The only difference they found was that affected residents became slightly less emotionally stable in the following years. Similarly, the second study found a slight decrease in emotional stability but no other Big Five traits during the acute phase of the first wave of the COVID-19 lockdown in a US sample (Sutin et al., 2020). The third study found no significant changes in the Big Five trait levels or their rates of change in Huston students a year after they were exposed to Hurricane Harvey in 2017 (Damian et al., 2021). Notably, none of these studies considered to what extent different individuals were personally affected by the respective disasters, which might explain the lack of notable changes.

A final point on the thematic characteristics of life events is that social roles implicitly reference a society's culture, that is, the social practices and meanings (Blau et al., 2013; Duffy et al., 2013; Hofstede, 1984). For example, the culture Ada, Bea, and Cem's are part of will influence their unemployment experience. The private and state social support systems in place and the value their society attributes to work and financial security affect their new social roles. For country-specific personal life event analysis, culture may be largely negligible. However, for collective life

events taking culture into account becomes crucial because they have the power to change the established social meanings and practices if a critical mass of people gets involved (Centola et al., 2018; Oliver et al., 1985). For example, before the spread of COVID-19 going to work despite not feeling well indicated conscientiousness. For now, the social meaning has reversed and is instead a sign of irresponsibility (Sutin et al., 2020). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way employees can train in the job and make a career (Boeren et al., 2020; Guan et al., 2020). Thus, collective life events can change the opportunities and requirements of social roles that may affect personality development through cultural changes for which individual social role status changes are not indicative.

3.2 | The social facet

The role of others is most central for our proposal of a personal–collective distinction. Research on *group socialization theory* for young age (Harris, 1995), the *convoy model* for old age (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987), and peer group relations across the lifespan (Reitz et al., 2014; Wrzus et al., 2013) illustrate how crucial the social environment is for personality development. Notably, the main issue is less about the absolute number of people involved but whether and how a person relates to other people. In this regard, collective life events are particularly potent to get individuals involved in the lives of others.

Research on individual emotion generation and regulation (Gross, 2015; Gross et al., 2007) suggests that “different emotion regulation strategies [...] should have different consequences for how a person feels, thinks, and acts, both immediately and over the longer term” (Gross, 2015, p. 7) making it likely they concern personality development as well. The research has been expanded to group-based emotion regulation (Goldenberg et al., 2016; Porat et al., 2020) through *intergroup emotion theory* (Mackie & Smith, 2018; E.R. Smith, 1993). This theory suggests that individuals self-categorize both as unique individuals and as members of different groups. Through the latter, they can experience group-based emotions to the degree they identify with a specific group, which in turn influences how they experience an event and how they act upon it (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Group-based experience matters here because it allows for individuals to be indirectly affected—that is through their group identification—by life events that do not directly affect them otherwise. To illustrate the difference between direct and indirect involvement in a collective life event, first, reconsider Bea who was directly affected by two life events: the collective life event “plant closure” and the dependent personal life event “job loss.” Second, consider Cem who might have become indirectly involved in hearing about the plant closure in the news without having lost his job due to the plant closure. Bea experiences her personal and the collective life event in two ways: once as an individual and once as a member of some group. In other words, here we use “personal” and “collective” to describe event types and “individual” and “group-based” to describe subjective experiences. Depending on the combination of event type and its subjective experience different developmental trajectories can be imagined (cf. cross-classification Table 2 quadrants):

- A) Bea experiences job loss as an individual. Instead of working for her former employer, Bea now spends her days at home worrying about money and looking for new jobs. Without a job that structures her everyday life, Bea's conscientiousness might drop, and her neuroticism might rise. (In fact, research regarding the role of unemployment for basic personality trait development is yet inconclusive [Anger et al., 2017; Boyce et al., 2015; Gnambs & Stiglbauer, 2019; Vellekoop, 2016], while the negative effect on subjective well-being is well-established [Binder & Coad, 2015; Hald Andersen, 2009; Winkelmann, 2009].).
- B) Bea experiences job loss as a member of her family. In this case, Bea's financial concerns extend to her family and Bea might take action for their sake as well. On the one hand, Bea's family might be an additional stressor, on the other hand, they might provide social support both of which might affect the trajectory of Bea's development.

TABLE 2 Cross-classification of personal and collective life events and their individual and group-based experience exemplified by Bea's unemployment due to plant closure

	Individual experience (concerns Bea personally)	Group-based experience (concerns Bea's people)
Personal life event (job loss)	A Cognitive–affective concern: “ <i>I have to find a new job.</i> ” Behavior: <i>Bea looks for a new job.</i>	B Cognitive–affective concern: “ <i>How will my family get by?</i> ” Behavior: <i>Bea asks her family to spend less.</i>
Collective life event (plant closure)	C Cognitive–affective concern: “ <i>Working in plants has no future.</i> ” Behavior: <i>Bea changes industries.</i>	D Cognitive–affective concern: “ <i>We are victims of a broken system.</i> ” Behavior: <i>Bea joins protests for social justice.</i>

- C) Individually, Bea might experience the plant closure as an indicator that there is no future for her in this industry anymore which might make Bea even more worried about her future but also more open about alternative career paths.
- D) Bea experiencing the plant closure as a member of the workforce. As such, she and her colleagues condemn the profit-driven decision to close the plant leaving the management with bonuses and the workforce jobless. Bea joins a protest for social justice leaving little time for the downward spiral of unemployment to take place. Instead, the newly found activism might facilitate Bea's sociability and assertiveness, two facets of extraversion.

In this example, Bea is directly affected by the collective life event “plant closure” because it involved the personal life event “job loss.” Now consider Cem who was at this point still employed, did not work for the same company, and was not acquainted with Bea. There is no reason to assume Cem is—individually or as a member of some group (quadrant A and B)—affected by Bea's recent unemployment. However, Cem may be indirectly affected by the plant closure representing mass job loss after reading about it in the news. It might raise similar concerns regarding Cem's own future in the industry (quadrant C) but, more importantly, the plant closure may affect Cem as someone strongly identifying with the mistreated workforce (quadrant D). In the latter case, Cem might join the protests leading him on a similar developmental path as Bea.

The example of Bea and Cem illustrate that for the investigation of collective life events, we have to consider (a) who has been affected directly and indirectly through (b) which group membership, and (c) which personal life events have come for whom from the collective life event. The reality of indirect effects of collective life events on personality development is exemplified by findings of personality state changes in vicarious victims following the Paris terrorist attack (Luhmann & Bleidorn, 2018), well-being spillover effects of the Syrian conflict (Cheung et al., 2020), and changes in psychological functioning following low-intensity hurricane exposure (Mancini et al., 2021).

3.3 | The spatial facet

The field of geographical psychology investigates regional differences in personality trait levels and changes as they relate to the local topological, economic, or political conditions (Rentfrow, 2020; Rentfrow & Jokela, 2016). While such regional differences can play a role for both personal and collective life events, the particular role of the event location and an individual's distance from a life event tend to differ.

Here, distance can be understood in absolute terms of physical distance, how far a person is from an event, and in relative terms of psychological distance, how close a person feels to an event. Psychological distance subsumes

among others informational and social distance to a life event and one of the main routes by which information about a life event is provided and the social relevance is increased is its media coverage (Fiedler et al., 2012; Philippe & Houle, 2020; Trope & Liberman, 2003). Considering some life event's media coverage is particularly important to identify who is likely to be indirectly affected depending on where the event made the news and who was the target audience. Although the media is full of personal stories, they often serve to illustrate collective phenomena and the likelihood that the fate of a particular person is reported is very low.

Generally speaking, personal life events happen more or less spatially bound to the individual to whom they happen. People experience personal life events wherever they live and for many research questions, it does not matter where exactly, for example, someone got fired or hired. In contrast, location can play different roles for collective life events: Some collective life events can only occur in specific places, some are spatially distributed, and their severity can differ across regions. For example, hurricanes can only occur in the Atlantic, they are about 300 miles wide and across its different parts—outflow, feeder bands, eyewall, eye, and the storm surge—its destructive powers can vary dramatically. Thus, location can be important to determine who has been more or less exposed to some collective life event like a hurricane (Damian et al., 2021; Mancini et al., 2021). Moreover, topographical features like mountains can attract and foster individuals of a specific personality profile (Götz et al., 2020). Thus, there might even be selection and anticipation effects for experiencing different collective life events like avalanches and landslides. However, who anticipates disaster can also be distorted by socio-spatial constructs like state borders which have been shown to bias earthquake threat perception away from the actual physical distance to an epicenter (Mishra & Mishra, 2010). In yet other cases, physical location is no meaningful characteristic at all as in the case of #MeToo movement on social media.

3.4 | The temporal facet

For both kinds of life events, it is important to consider the timing and duration of the life event concerning the individual. At which age or developmental stage does an individual experience the event and for how long does it affect them? At the same time, it is crucial to consider the time course of personality development concerning the life event. Does personality change before, during, or after the life event happens, and does it do so gradually or rapidly? Comprehensive discussions of the role of time for the impact of life events on personality development (Luhmann et al., 2014) have motivated more fine-grained differentiation of multiple temporal effects, including selection, anticipation, immediate post-event year, and gradual socialization effects (Asselmann & Specht, 2020, 2021; Denissen et al., 2019).

The difference between personal and collective life events does not concern the types of temporal effects but how researchers can explain their occurrence. Most notably, individuals have much more control over personal life events, while collective life events are usually beyond individual people's control.

Selection effects describe whether individuals with different personality trait levels differ in the likelihood to experience a certain event and psychologists regularly use personality traits as predictors for various life outcomes (Beck & Jackson, preprint; Denissen et al., 2019; Luhmann et al., 2013; Orth et al., 2012; Roberts et al., 2007; Soto, 2019, 2021). For example, selection effects for having a sojourn experience due to different personality trait levels are well established (Niehoff et al., 2017; Richter et al., 2020). Having a sojourn experience tends to be the active choice of individuals of a certain cut. Concerning collective life events, a single individual rarely has the same amount of control over the event. Nevertheless, selection effects might occur because people with different personalities cluster in different regions thereby creating and exposing themselves to different risks and opportunities (Ebert et al., 2019; Götz et al., 2020). For example, regional differences in openness and extraversion have predicted the different spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the United States and Germany (Peters et al., preprint) so that on average more open and extraverted people are more likely to experience more severe COVID-19 outbreaks.

Anticipatory effects describe changes in personality trait levels before the life event takes place. In many cases, the likelihood of anticipatory effects depends on how predictable life events are. However, anticipatory effects can occur either because an event can be expected or because the personality change itself leads to the event happening.

For example, Ada might have quit her job because she has grown to dislike it, or she changed voluntarily preparing for a different career (Allen et al., 2005; Thielmann & de Vries, 2021). Similarly, Cem foreseeing an economic hardship might have changed into a more frugal person or it was the growing greed in Cem and millions of other people that contributed to the economic crisis happening in the first place (Pettinicchi & Vellekoop, 2019; R. D. Smith, 2010).

Post-event year effects follow immediately after a life event but might wear off after a short period (Ormel et al., 2017). These effects might result from an immediate need to adapt to new circumstances and to transition into new social role demands. They should apply similarly to personal and collective life events with the exception that the effect onset can be delayed for individuals who become indirectly involved later in the process (Goldenberg et al., 2020).

Socialization effects occur gradually after an event as people settle into their new post-event living conditions including new social role demands and new social environments like the workplace (Alessandri et al., 2020; Einat & Suliman, 2021). We can expect socialization effects for both personal as well as collective life events. However, the potential of collective events to change social meanings and practices of social roles also allows them to potentially induce personality change without an obvious role status change of the individual. While personal life events usually indicate that a person adapts to a new social role, collective life events can also change the requirements of an established social role (cf. Section 3.1).

In conclusion, we can expect the same spectrum of developmental effects before and after personal and collective life events though the mechanisms may differ. Accordingly, researchers should be careful with their expectations and explanations why one or the other developmental effect might occur.

4 | DISCUSSION

Researchers slowly begin to untangle how life events affect personality development. The personal–collective distinction adds to the recent push for a more fine-grained and policy-relevant examination of personality, its development, and the role of life events (Baumert et al., 2019; Baumert et al., 2017; Bleidorn et al., 2019, 2020; Kuper et al., 2021; Luhmann et al., 2020; Wagner et al., 2020). We based our distinction on a model of referent events distinguishing thematic, social, spatial, and temporal event characteristics (Dunkel et al., 2019).

Personal life events typically refer to the health, work, family, and love life of the individual, whereas collective life events often relate to disasters and power struggles of many. Personal life events typically affect single individuals or households directly, whereas collective life events can affect many people directly but to different degrees and with different personal life events attached. Additionally, collective life events can affect many more people indirectly if people identify with the directly affected group. Especially in this latter case, a social role status change may not be a good indicator of whether or not an individual is affected by a collective life event. Instead, group identification and psychological distance are more decisive. Furthermore, personal life events usually imply the adaptation of a new social role, while collective life events can also change the requirements of existing social roles by changing the social practices and meaning around them. We have argued that the spatial characteristics of collective life events can vary and should be considered accordingly by the researcher. Finally, we argued that processes by which different developmental effects come about differ somewhat between personal and collective events with one reason being that the individual has less control over their occurrence.

4.1 | Implications for research on personality development

The distinction between personal and collective life events emphasizes that it is psychologically meaningful whether something happens to us alone, to us among others, or not directly to us but to the people, we relate to. Thus, researchers who aim to investigate collective life events should consider: (a) the characteristics of the particular collective

life event; (b) who may be directly, indirectly, or not affected; (c) which personal life events may have been triggered for whom; (d) how the respective life event may affect social roles, practices, and meanings, and (e) whether and how regional differences and media coverage should be considered.

When investigating collective life events, many of these questions can be answered by looking at the thematic, social, spatial, and temporal characteristics. In many cases, it will be useful to take an interdisciplinary approach including sociology, economics (geographical) information science, and psychology including its subdisciplines of personality, social, cultural, and geographical psychology as done here. So far, in psychology collective life events have been investigated largely for collective action and the resilience and (mental) health of individuals. Personality developmental psychologists who want to examine the role of collective life events for basic traits can draw on ample approaches from neighboring disciplines to do justice to the complexity of these life events. We recommend starting with (Centola et al., 2018; Dunkel et al., 2019; Fiedler et al., 2012; Goldenberg et al., 2020, 2016).

4.2 | Integrating the event and experience approach

We have argued for systematic and gradual differences between personal and collective life events. We have also argued that the same collective life event can be differently experienced by different people due to among others different levels of exposure or direct and indirect involvement. Indeed, at times our argumentation for different subjective experiences overlapped with Luhmann and colleagues (2020). However, where they provide a tool to assess experiential differences, we highlighted conceptual and practical differences between personal and collective life events to which researchers should be sensitive. For example, the “external control” dimension proposed by Luhmann and colleagues measures how much people feel in control of an event, while we have argued that people at large have very little control over collective life events and that this affects how we can or cannot explain related selection and anticipation effects.

Besides “external control,” only one other dimension suggested by Luhmann and colleagues relates the subjective experience to other people, that is, the “extraordinariness” of a life event. Extraordinariness concerns how common individuals consider an event to be based on how likely it is to happen to other people as well. However, this does, for example, not say anything about whether and how many other people are involved in the same collective life event. Experiencing an earthquake can be extraordinary even if millions of other people are affected.

In this spirit, we suggest that there are two additional dimensions of subjective experience whose examination may be worthwhile: first, a “one-to-many” dimension to find out (a) whether personal and collective life events are accompanied by different feelings of being the only one affected or being one among many affected individuals and (b) whether this makes a difference for certain psychological and developmental outcomes; second, a “directness” dimension to find out how the feeling of being more or less directly or indirectly affected influences the impact some life event has on an individual.

Finally, in many cases, assessing the subjective experience of each individual involved in some event may not be possible, not feasible, or not relevant. Taking a more differentiated view towards the life event, however, may still be. For example, researchers may be able to relate different severity levels of a natural disaster to different zip codes. Or they can assess in a single multiple-choice item for whom the disaster also meant losing a spouse, a child, their home, or anything else to relate different developmental paths to different dependent personal life events. Again, this highlights that the event and experience approach are complementary.

5 | CONCLUSION

A growing body of research suggests that life events influence personality continuity and change in different ways. They occur not only in private settings but also in larger societal contexts. Based on the idea that personality changes especially due to changes in social role demands, we investigated the different impacts of personal and collective life events. We argued that social role demands can change due to individual status changes, due to cultural changes concerning these social roles, and for the sake of or on behalf of other people. One important mechanism for people being indirectly involved in collective life events is their group-based experience. This insight calls for interdisciplinary research and the consideration of group dynamics when investigating the role of collective life events on individual personality trait development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The first author has been funded by the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, Germany. Open access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The topic was developed jointly by Richard Wundrack, Eva Asselmann, and Jule Specht. The manuscript was written by Richard Wundrack and revised by Eva Asselmann and Jule Specht.

ORCID

Richard Wundrack  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2121-0982>

Eva Asselmann  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2132-8852>

REFERENCES

- Alessandri, G., Perinelli, E., Robins, R. W., Vecchione, M., & Filosa, L. (2020). Personality trait change at work: Associations with organizational socialization and identification. *Journal of Personality, 88*(6), 1217–1234. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12567>
- Allemand, M., Gomez, V., & Jackson, J. J. (2010). Personality trait development in midlife: Exploring the impact of psychological turning points. *European Journal of Ageing, 7*(3), 147–155. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-010-0158-0>
- Allen, D. G., Weeks, K. P., & Moffitt, K. R. (2005). Turnover intentions and voluntary turnover: The moderating roles of self-monitoring, locus of control, proactive personality, and risk aversion. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(5), 980–990. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.5.980>
- An, Y., Ding, X., & Fu, F. (2017). Personality and post-traumatic growth of adolescents 42 months after the Wenchuan Earthquake: A mediated model. *Frontiers in Psychology, 8*(DEC), 2152. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02152>
- Anger, S., Camehl, G., & Peter, F. (2017). Involuntary job loss and changes in personality traits. *Journal of Economic Psychology, 60*, 71–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2017.01.007>
- Antonucci, T. C., & Akiyama, H. (1987). Social networks in adult life and a preliminary examination of the convoy model. *Journal of Gerontology, 42*(5), 519–527. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronj/42.5.519>
- Asselmann, E., & Specht, J. (2020). Taking the ups and downs at the rollercoaster of love: Associations between major life events in the domain of romantic relationships and the big five personality traits. *Developmental Psychology, 56*(9), 1803–1816. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001047>
- Asselmann, E., & Specht, J. (2021). Testing the social investment principle around childbirth: Little evidence for personality maturation before and after becoming a parent. *European Journal of Personality, 35*(1), 85–102. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2269>
- Baumert, A., Schmitt, M., & Perugini, M. (2019). Towards an explanatory personality psychology: Integrating personality structure, personality process, and personality development. *Personality and Individual Differences, 147*, 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.04.016>

- Baumert, A., Schmitt, M., Perugini, M., Johnson, W., Blum, G., Borkenau, P., Denissen J. J. A., Fleeson W., Grafton B., Jayawickreme E., Kurzius E., MacLeod C., Miller L. C., Read S. J., Roberts B., Robinson M. D., Wood D., Wrzus C., & Möttus R. (2017). Integrating personality structure, personality process, and personality development. *European Journal of Personality*, 31(5), 503–528. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2115>
- Beck, E. D., & Jackson, J. J. A. (2019). A mega-analysis of personality prediction: Robustness and boundary conditions. (Preprint). <https://doi.org/10.31234/OSF.IO/7PG9B>
- Binder, M., & Coad, A. (2015). Heterogeneity in the relationship between unemployment and subjective wellbeing: A quantile approach. *Economica*, 82(328), 865–891. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecca.12150>
- Blau, G., Petrucci, T., & McClendon, J. (2013). Correlates of life satisfaction and unemployment stigma and the impact of length of unemployment on a unique unemployed sample. *Career Development International*, 18(3), 257–280. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-10-2012-0095>
- Bleidorn, W., Hill, P. L., Back, M. D., Denissen, J. J. A., Hennecke, M., Hopwood, C. J., Kandler C., Lucas R. E., Luhmann M., Orth U., Wagner J., Wrzus C., Zimmermann J., & Roberts B. (2019). The policy relevance of personality traits. *American Psychologist*, 74(9), 1056–1067. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000503>
- Bleidorn, W., Hopwood, C. J., Back, M. D., Denissen, J. J. A., Hennecke, M., Jokela, M., Lucas R. E., Luhmann M., Orth U., Roberts B. W., Wagner J., Wrzus C., & Zimmermann J. (2020). Longitudinal Experience-Wide Association Studies—A framework for studying personality change. *European Journal of Personality*, 34(3), 285–300. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2247>
- Bleidorn, W., Hopwood, C. J., & Lucas, R. E. (2018). Life events and personality trait change. *Journal of Personality*, 86(1), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12286>
- 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(3), 244–255. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1957>
- Bleidorn, W., Klimstra, T. A., Denissen, J. J. A., Rentfrow, P. J., Potter, J., & Gosling, S. D. (2013). Personality maturation around the world: A cross-cultural examination of social-investment theory. *Psychological Science*, 24(12), 2530–2540. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797613498396>
- Boeren, E., Roumell, E. A., & Roessger, K. M. (2020). COVID-19 and the future of adult education: An editorial. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 70(3), 201–204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713620925029>
- Boyce, C. J., Wood, A. M., Daly, M., & Sedikides, C. (2015). Personality change following unemployment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(4), 991–1011. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038647>
- Brannen, W. T. J. (2020). *Predicting resilience following a natural disaster*. Capella University. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2406957180?accountid=11531>
- Caspi, A., & Roberts, B. W. (2009). Personality development across the life course: The argument for change and continuity. *Psychological Inquiry*, 12(2), 49–66. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1202_01
- Centola, D., Becker, J., Brackbill, D., & Baronchelli, A. (2018). Experimental evidence for tipping points in social convention. *Science*, 360(6393), 1116–1119. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aas8827>
- Cheung, F., Kube, A., Tay, L., Diener, E., Jackson, J. J., Lucas, R. E., Ni, M. Y., & Leung G. M. (2020). The impact of the Syrian conflict on population well-being. *Nature Communications*, 11(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-17369-0>
- Damian, R. I., Serrano, S., & Hill, P. L. (2021). Hurricane exposure and personality development. *Journal of Personality*, 89(1), 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12542>
- Denissen, J. J. A., Luhmann, M., Chung, J. M., & Bleidorn, W. (2019). Transactions between life events and personality traits across the adult lifespan. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 116(4), 612–633. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000196>
- Duffy, R. D., Bott, E. M., Allan, B. A., & Torrey, C. L. (2013). Examining a model of life satisfaction among unemployed adults. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60(1), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030771>
- Dunkel, A., Andrienko, G., Andrienko, N., Burghardt, D., Hauthal, E., & Purves, R. (2019). A conceptual framework for studying collective reactions to events in location-based social media. *International Journal of Geographical Information Science*, 33(4), 780–804. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13658816.2018.1546390>
- Ebert, T., Götz, F. M., Obschonka, M., Zmigrod, L., & Rentfrow, P. J. (2019). Regional variation in courage and entrepreneurship: The contrasting role of courage for the emergence and survival of start-ups in the United States. *Journal of Personality*, 87(5), 1039–1055. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12454>
- Einat, T., & Suliman, N. (2021). Prison changed me—and I just work there: Personality changes among prison officers. *The Prison Journal*, 101(2), 166–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885521991091>
- Fiedler, K., Jung, J., Wänke, M., & Alexopoulos, T. (2012). On the relations between distinct aspects of psychological distance: An ecological basis of construal-level theory. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(5), 1014–1021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.03.013>
- Götz, F. M., Stieger, S., Gosling, S. D., Potter, J., & Rentfrow, P. J. (2020). Physical topography is associated with human personality. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 4(11), 1135–1144. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0930-x>
- Gnambs, T., & Stiglbauer, B. (2019). No personality change following unemployment: A registered replication of Boyce, Wood, Daly, and Sedikides (2015). *Journal of Research in Personality*, 81, 195–206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2019.06.009>

- Goldenberg, A., Garcia, D., Halperin, E., & Gross, J. J. (2020). Collective emotions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 29(2), 154–160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721420901574>
- Goldenberg, A., Halperin, E., van Zomeren, M., & Gross, J. J. (2016). The process model of group-based emotion: Integrating intergroup emotion and emotion regulation perspectives. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 20(2), 118–141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315581263>
- Graham, E. K., Weston, S. J., Gerstorf, D., Yoneda, T. B., Booth, T., Beam, C. R., Drewelies J., Hall A. N., Bastarache E. D., Estabrook R., Katz M. J., Turiano N. A., Lindenberger U., Smith J., Wagner G. G., Pedersen N. L., Allemand M., Spiro A., Deeg D. J. H., ... Mroczek, D. K. (2020). Trajectories of big five personality traits: A coordinated analysis of 16 longitudinal samples. *European Journal of Personality*, 34(3), 301–321. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2259>
- Gross, J. J. (2015). Emotion regulation: Current status and future prospects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 26(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2014.940781>
- Gross, J. J., Richards, J. M., & John, O. P. (2007). Emotion regulation in everyday life. In D. K. Snyder, J. Simpson, & J. N. Hughes (Eds.), *Emotion regulation in couples and families: Pathways to dysfunction and health* (pp. 13–35). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11468-001>
- Guan, Y., Deng, H., & Zhou, X. (2020, June 1). Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on career development: Insights from cultural psychology. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 119, 103438. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103438>
- Hald Andersen, S. (2009). Unemployment and subjective well-being. *Work and Occupations*, 36(1), 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888408327131>
- Harris, J. R. (1995). Where is the child's environment? A group socialization theory of development. *Psychological Review*, 102(3), 458–489. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.102.3.458>
- Henry, S., & Möttus, R. (2020). Traits and adaptations: A theoretical examination and new empirical evidence. *European Journal of Personality*, 34(3), 265–284. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2248>
- Hofstede, G. (1984). Values and culture. In G. Hofstede (Ed.), *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values* (pp. 13–38). SAGE Publications. https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=Cayp_Um4O9gC&oi=fnd&pg=PA13&ots=V4KCBwQRQ8&sig=3ZVZZs48w_CrQTzEg3evrE3zP90&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Infurna, F. J., & Jayawickreme, E. (2019). Fixing the growth illusion: New directions for research in resilience and posttraumatic growth. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(2), 152–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721419827017>
- Jayawickreme, E., & Blackie, L. E. R. (2014). Post-traumatic growth as positive personality change: Evidence, controversies and future directions. *European Journal of Personality*, 28(4), 312–331. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1963>
- Jayawickreme, E., Infurna, F. J., Alajak, K., Blackie, L. E. R., Chopik, W. J., Chung, J. M., Fleeson W., Forgeard M. J. C., Frazier P., Furr R. M., Grossmann I., Heller A. S., Laceulle O. M., Lucas R. E., Luhmann M., Luong G., Meijer L., McLean K. C., Park C. L., ... Zonneveld, R. (2021). Post-traumatic growth as positive personality change: Challenges, opportunities, and recommendations. *Journal of Personality*, 89(1), 145–165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12591>
- Jeronimus, B. F. (2020). *Personality and coronavirus 2019 pandemic*. University of Groningen Press. <https://doi.org/10.21827/5ed9ebc01d65f>
- Kandler, C., Bleidorn, W., Riemann, R., Angleitner, A., & Spinath, F. M. (2012). Life events as environmental states and genetic traits and the role of personality: A longitudinal twin study. *Behavior Genetics*, 42(1), 57–72. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-011-9491-0>
- Kandler, C., Zimmermann, J., & McAdams, D. P. (2014). Core and surface characteristics for the description and theory of personality differences and development. *European Journal of Personality*, 28(3), 231–243. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1952>
- Kuper, N., Modersitzki, N., Phan, L. V., & Rauthmann, J. F. (2021). The dynamics, processes, mechanisms, and functioning of personality: An overview of the field. *British Journal of Psychology*, 112(1), 1–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12486>
- Lai, B. S., Lewis, R., Livings, M. S., La Greca, A. M., & Esnard, A.-M. (2017). Posttraumatic stress symptom trajectories among children after disaster exposure: A review. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 30(6), 571–582. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22242>
- Lowe, S. R., Manove, E. E., & Rhodes, J. E. (2013). Posttraumatic stress and posttraumatic growth among low-income mothers who survived Hurricane Katrina. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 81(5), 877–889. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033252>
- Lucas, R. E. (2007). Adaptation and the set-point model of subjective well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(2), 75–79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00479.x>
- Luhmann, M., & Bleidorn, W. (2018). Changes in affect, cognition, and perceived behavioral changes among vicarious victims of the Paris terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 9(2), 214–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/194850617732818>
- Luhmann, M., & Eid, M. (2009). Does it really feel the same? Changes in life satisfaction following repeated life events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97(2), 363–381. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015809>
- Luhmann, M., Fassbender, I., Alcock, M., & Haehner, P. (2020). A dimensional taxonomy of perceived characteristics of major life events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000291>
- Luhmann, M., Hofmann, W., Eid, M., & Lucas, R. E. (2012). Subjective well-being and adaptation to life events: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(3), 592–615. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025948>

- Luhmann, M., Lucas, R. E., Eid, M., & Diener, E. (2013). The prospective effect of life satisfaction on life events. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4(1), 39–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550612440105>
- 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(3), 256–266. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1951>
- Mackie, D. M., & Smith, E. R. (2018). Intergroup emotions theory: Production, regulation, and modification of group-based emotions. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 58, pp. 1–69). Academic Press Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.aesp.2018.03.001>
- Magee, C. A., Heaven, P. C. L., & Miller, L. M. (2013). Personality change predicts self-reported mental and physical health. *Journal of Personality*, 81(3), 324–334. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2012.00802.x>
- Mancini, A. D., Westphal, M., & Griffin, P. (2021). Outside the eye of the storm: Can moderate hurricane exposure improve social, psychological, and attachment functioning? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 0146167221990488. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167221990488>
- Mangelsdorf, J., Eid, M., & Luhmann, M. (2019). Does growth require suffering? A systematic review and meta-analysis on genuine posttraumatic and postecstatic growth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 145(3), 302–338. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000173>
- Masten, A. S., & Narayan, A. J. (2012). Child development in the context of disaster, war, and terrorism: Pathways of risk and resilience. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63(1), 227–257. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100356>
- Meyer, E. C., Kotte, A., Kimbrel, N. A., DeBeer, B. B., Elliott, T. R., Gulliver, S. B., & Morissette, S. B. (2019). Predictors of lower-than-expected posttraumatic symptom severity in war veterans: The influence of personality, self-reported trait resilience, and psychological flexibility. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 113, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2018.12.005>
- Milojev, P., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. G. (2014). Personality resilience following a natural disaster. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5(7), 760–768. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550614528545>
- Mishra, A., & Mishra, H. (2010). Border bias: The belief that state borders can protect against disasters. *Psychological Science*, 21(11), 1582–1586. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610385950>
- Munjiza, J., Law, V., & Crawford, M. J. (2014). Lasting personality pathology following exposure to catastrophic trauma in adults: Systematic review. *Personality and Mental Health*, 8(4), 320–336. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pmh.1271>
- Neria, Y., DiGrande, L., & Adams, B. G. (2011). Posttraumatic stress disorder following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks: A review of the literature among highly exposed populations. *American Psychologist*, 66(6), 429–446. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024791>
- Niehoff, E., Petersdotter, L., & Freund, P. A. (2017). International sojourn experience and personality development: Selection and socialization effects of studying abroad and the Big Five. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 112, 55–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.02.043>
- Obschonka, M., Stuetzer, M., Audretsch, D. B., Rentfrow, P. J., Potter, J., & Gosling, S. D. (2016). Macropsychological factors predict regional economic resilience during a major economic crisis. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 7(2), 95–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550615608402>
- Oliver, P., Marwell, G., & Teixeira, R. (1985). A theory of the critical mass. I. Interdependence, group heterogeneity, and the production of collective action. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3), 522–556. <https://doi.org/10.1086/228313>
- Ormel, J., VonKorff, M., Jeronimus, B. F., & Riese, H. (2017). Set-Point Theory and personality development: Reconciliation of a paradox. In J. Specht (Ed.), *Personality development across the lifespan* (pp. 117–137). Elsevier Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-804674-6.00009-0>
- Orth, U., & Luciano, E. C. (2015). Self-esteem, narcissism, and stressful life events: Testing for selection and socialization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109(4), 707–721. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000049>
- Orth, U., Robins, R. W., & Widaman, K. F. (2012). Life-span development of self-esteem and its effects on important life outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(6), 1271–1288. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025558>
- Peters, H., Götz, F., Ebert, T., Müller, S., Rentfrow, J., Gosling, S., Potter, J., & Matz, S. Regional personality differences predict variation in COVID-19 infections, deaths and social distancing behavior. (Preprint). <https://doi.org/10.31234/OSF.IO/SQH98>
- Pettinicchi, Y., & Vellekoop, N. (2019). Job loss expectations, durable consumption and household finances: Evidence from linked survey data. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3365473>
- Philippe, F. L., & Houle, I. (2020). Cognitive integration of personal or public events affects mental health: Examining memory networks in a case of natural flooding disaster. *Journal of Personality*, 88(5), 861–873. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12531>
- Porat, R., Tamir, M., & Halperin, E. (2020, February 1). Group-based emotion regulation: A motivated approach. *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)*, 20, 16–20. <https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000639>
- Rakhshani, A., Lucas, R. E., Donnellan, B., Fassbender, I., & Luhmann, M. Personality and perceptions of major life events: Implications for personality development. (Preprint). <https://doi.org/10.31234/OSF.IO/426G5>
- Reese, H. W., & Smyer, M. A. (1983). The dimensionalization of life events. In E. J. Callahan & K. A. McCluskey (Eds.), *Life-span developmental psychology: Nonnormative life events* (pp. 1–33). Academic Press. <https://books.google.de/books?id=dylg-BAAQBAJ&pg=PA29&lpg=PA29&dq=A+dimensional+taxonomy+of+perceived+characteristics+of+ma>

lor+life+events&source=bl&ots=_ZQUkId538&sig=ACfU3U2fZj51zii9Cq_4lgtDgTzKK746Aw&hl=de&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj0gJepyojqAhXP4KQKHQwPDWgQ6AE

- Reitz, A. K., Zimmermann, J., Hutteman, R., Specht, J., & Neyer, F. J. (2014). How peers make a difference: The role of peer groups and peer relationships in personality development. *European Journal of Personality*, 28(3), 279–288. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1965>
- Rentfrow, P. J. (2020). Geographical psychology. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 32, 165, 170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.09.009>
- Rentfrow, P. J., & Jokela, M. (2016). Geographical psychology. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 25(6), 393–398. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721416658446>
- Richter, J., Zimmermann, J., Neyer, F. J., & Kandler, C. (2020). Do sojourn effects on personality trait changes last? A five-year longitudinal study. *European Journal of Personality*. 2291, 358–382. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2291>
- Roberts, B. W. (2018). A revised sociogenomic model of personality traits. *Journal of Personality*, 86(1), 23–35. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12323>
- Roberts, B. W., & Jackson, J. J. (2008). Sociogenomic personality psychology. *Journal of Personality*, 76(6), 1523–1544. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2008.00530.x>
- Roberts, B. W., Kuncel, N. R., Shiner, R., Caspi, A., & Goldberg, L. R. (2007). The power of personality: The comparative validity of personality traits, socioeconomic status, and cognitive ability for predicting important life outcomes. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2(4), 313–345. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2007.00047.x>
- Roberts, B. W., & Nickel, L. B. (2017). A critical evaluation of the Neo-Socioanalytic Model of personality. In *Personality development across the lifespan* (pp. 157–177). Elsevier Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-804674-6.00011-9>
- Roberts, B. W., Walton, K. E., & Viechtbauer, W. (2006). Patterns of mean-level change in personality traits across the life course: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.132.1.1>
- Roberts, B. W., & Wood, D. (2006). Personality development in the context of the neo-socioanalytic model of personality. In *Handbook of personality development*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315805610.ch2>
- 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(1), 166–184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2004.08.002>
- Smith, E. R. (1993). Social identity and social emotions: Toward new conceptualizations of prejudice. In D. M. Mackie & D. L. Hamilton (Eds.), *Affect, cognition and stereotyping* (pp. 297–315). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-088579-7.50017-x>
- Smith, R. D. (2010). The role of greed in the ongoing global financial crisis. *Journal of Human Values*, 16(2), 187–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097168581001600205>
- Soto, C. J. (2019). How replicable are links between personality traits and consequential life outcomes? The life outcomes of personality replication project. *Psychological Science*, 30(5), 711–727. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619831612>
- Soto, C. J. (2021). Do links between personality and life outcomes generalize? Testing the robustness of trait–outcome associations across gender, age, ethnicity, and analytic approaches. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 12(1), 118–130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619900572>
- Specht, J. (2017). Personality development in reaction to major life events. In J. Specht (Ed.), *Personality development across the lifespan* (pp. 341–356). Elsevier Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-804674-6.00021-1>
- Specht, J., Bleidorn, W., Denissen, J. J. A., Hennecke, M., Hutteman, R., Kandler, C., Orth U., Reitz A. K., & Zimmermann J. (2014). What drives adult personality development? A comparison of theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence. *European Journal of Personality*, 28(3), 216–230. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1966>
- Specht, J., Egloff, B., & Schmukle, S. C. (2011). Stability and change of personality across the life course: The impact of age and major life events on mean-level and rank-order stability of the big five. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(4), 862–882. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024950>
- Stevanović, A., Frančišković, T., & Vermetten, E. (2016). Relationship of early-life trauma, war-related trauma, personality traits, and PTSD symptom severity: A retrospective study on female civilian victims of war. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 7(1), 30964. <https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v7.30964>
- Sutin, A. R., Luchetti, M., Aschwanden, D., Lee, J. H., Sesker, A. A., Strickhouser, J. E., Strickhouser, J. E., & Terracciano, A. (2020). Change in five-factor model personality traits during the acute phase of the coronavirus pandemic. *PLoS One*, 15(8), e0237056. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237056>
- Thielmann, I., & de Vries, R. E. (2021). Who wants to change and how? On the trait-specificity of personality change goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000304>
- Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2003, July). Temporal construal. *Psychological Review*, 110, 403–421. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.110.3.403>
- van Scheppingen, M. A., Jackson, J. J., Specht, J., Hutteman, R., Denissen, J. J. A., & Bleidorn, W. (2016). Personality trait development during the transition to parenthood. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 7(5), 452–462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550616630032>

- van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2008). Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: A quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives. *Psychological Bulletin*, *134*(4), 504–535. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.134.4.504>
- Vellekoop, N. (2016). The impact of long-run macroeconomic experiences on personality. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2835432>
- Wagner, J., Orth, U., Bleidorn, W., Hopwood, C. J., & Kandler, C. (2020). Toward an integrative model of sources of personality stability and change. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *29*(5), 438–444. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721420924751>
- Wagner, J., Ram, N., Smith, J., & Gerstorf, D. (2016). Personality trait development at the end of life: Antecedents and correlates of mean-level trajectories. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *111*(3), 411–429. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pssp0000071>
- Winkelmann, R. (2009). Unemployment, social capital, and subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *10*(4), 421–430. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-008-9097-2>
- Wrzus, C., Hänel, M., Wagner, J., & Neyer, F. J. (2013). Social network changes and life events across the life span: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *139*(1), 53–80. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028601>

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Richard Wundrack is a doctoral candidate at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. His research is located at the intersection of personality development, personality variability, social cognition, and dynamic psychological systems. He collaborates with psychologists at the University of Arizona and has published in the *European Journal of Personality*, the *Journal of Intelligence*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Eva Asselmann is a postdoctoral researcher at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research focuses on personality development across the life span and clinical psychology.

Jule Specht is a professor at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research focuses on personality development across the life span and political psychology.

How to cite this article: Wundrack, R., Asselmann, E., & Specht, J. (2021). Personality development in disruptive times: The impact of personal versus collective life events. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *15*(9), e12635. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12635>