



Personality

What makes us who we are?

Psychology 305A
Lecture 12

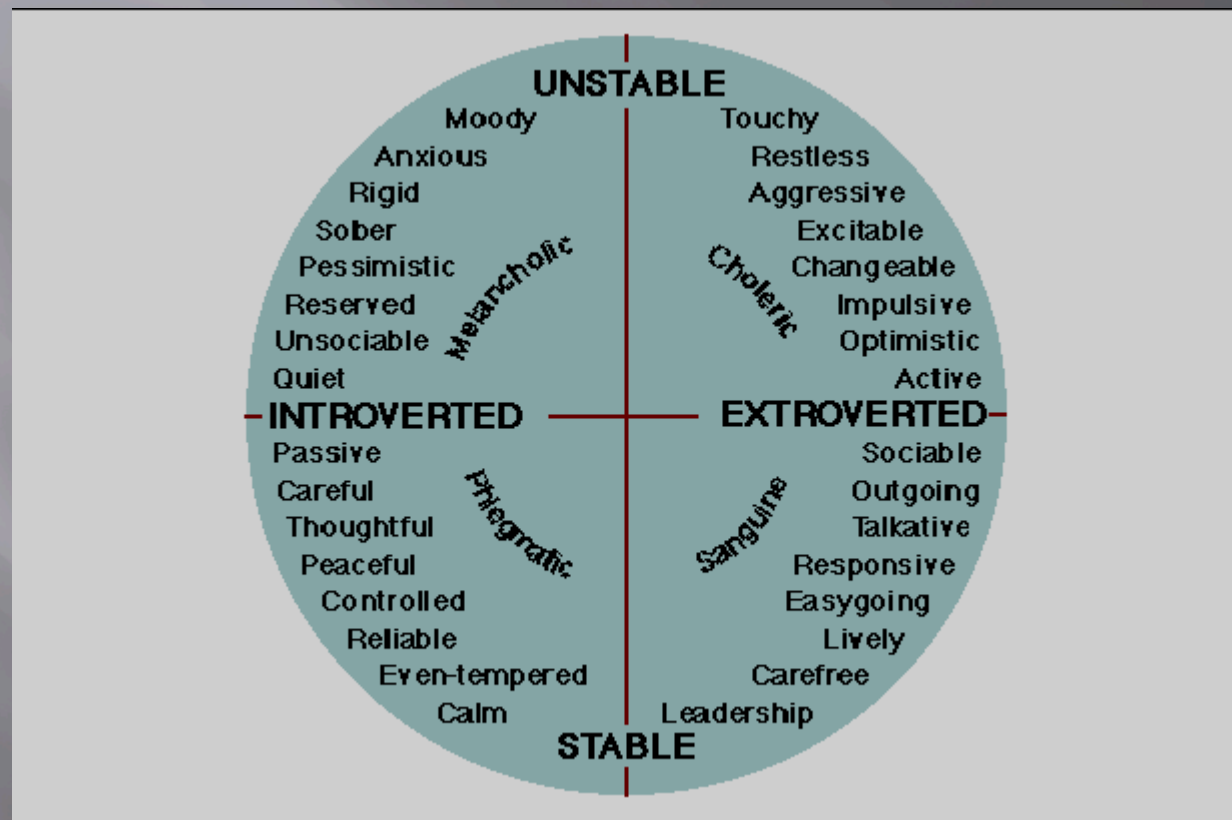
Trait Taxonomies
Personality Change and Stability

Trait Taxonomies: Organizing Personality

- ▣ Theoretical approach: Hans Eysenck
 - Personality taxonomy should be rooted in biology
- ▣ 3 major traits of interest: “**PEN**”
 - **P**sychoticism (related to testosterone level)
 - **E**xtraversion (related to physiological arousal)
 - **N**euroticism (related to lability of autonomic nervous system)



Eysenck's 'Big Two': Neuroticism and Extraversion



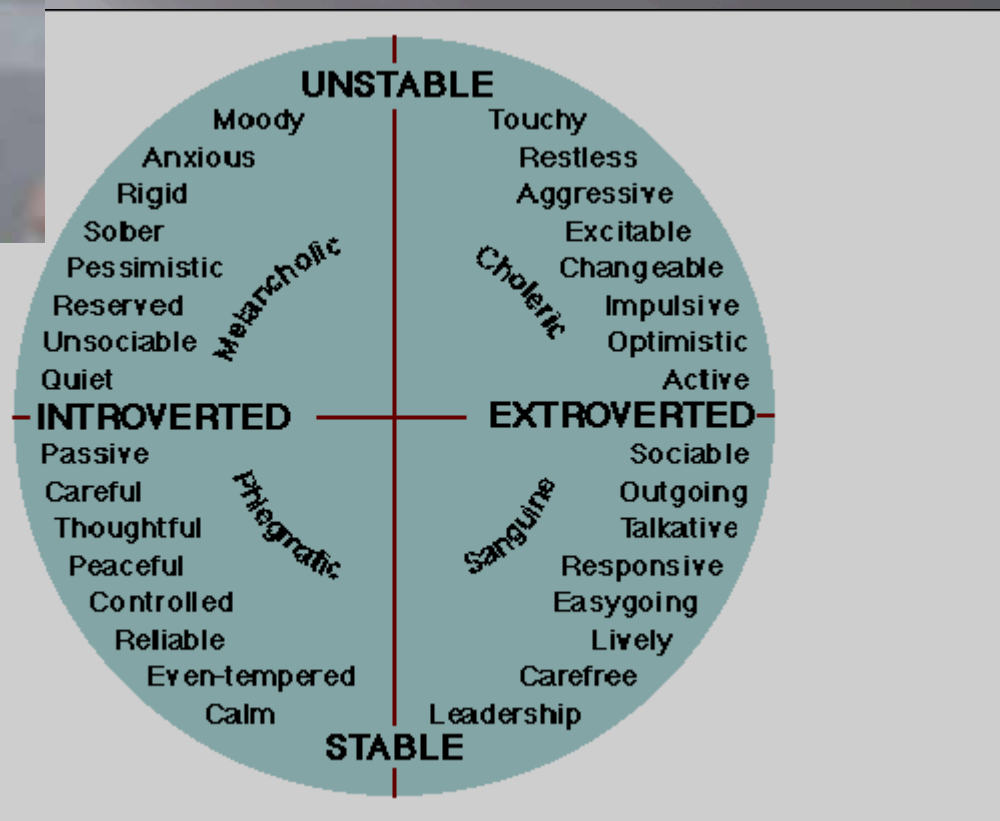
Circumplex Taxonomies

- Broad level factors are statistically independent
 - Your level on one factor does not have any relation to your level on another factor
 - Possible to be high N + high E, high N + low E, low N + low E, or low N + high E



Cameron Frye: High N, Low E
High N: Anxious about germs, social life
Low E: Does not have many friends

Eysenck's 'Big Two': Neuroticism and Extraversion



Problems with PEN

- ▣ Not all-inclusive
 - Other empirical studies found more than 3 factors
- ▣ Other traits show heritability
 - e.g., conscientiousness
- ▣ Other taxonomies developed to address issues
 - Wiggins' theory of interpersonal traits
 - ▣ Agency + Communion
 - Cattell's 16
 - The Five Factor Model (FFM)

The Five-Factor Model (FFM) or “Big 5”

- ▣ Openness
 - Curious and unconventional
- ▣ Conscientiousness
 - Ordered and persistent
- ▣ Extraversion
 - Exuberant and sociable
- ▣ Agreeableness
 - Caring and considerate
- ▣ Neuroticism
 - Emotional and anxious

Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1981

FFM: Factor Analysis

- ▣ Lexical studies of the dictionary
 - Started with 17,953 trait terms (Allport & Odbert)

Artistic
Curious
Cultured
Imaginative

Refined
Conventional

Cautious
Industrious
Orderly

Responsible
Assertive

Enthusiastic
Energetic

Altruistic
Caring
Modest
Tender

Trusting
Anxious

Angry
Depressed

Self-Conscious
vulnerable

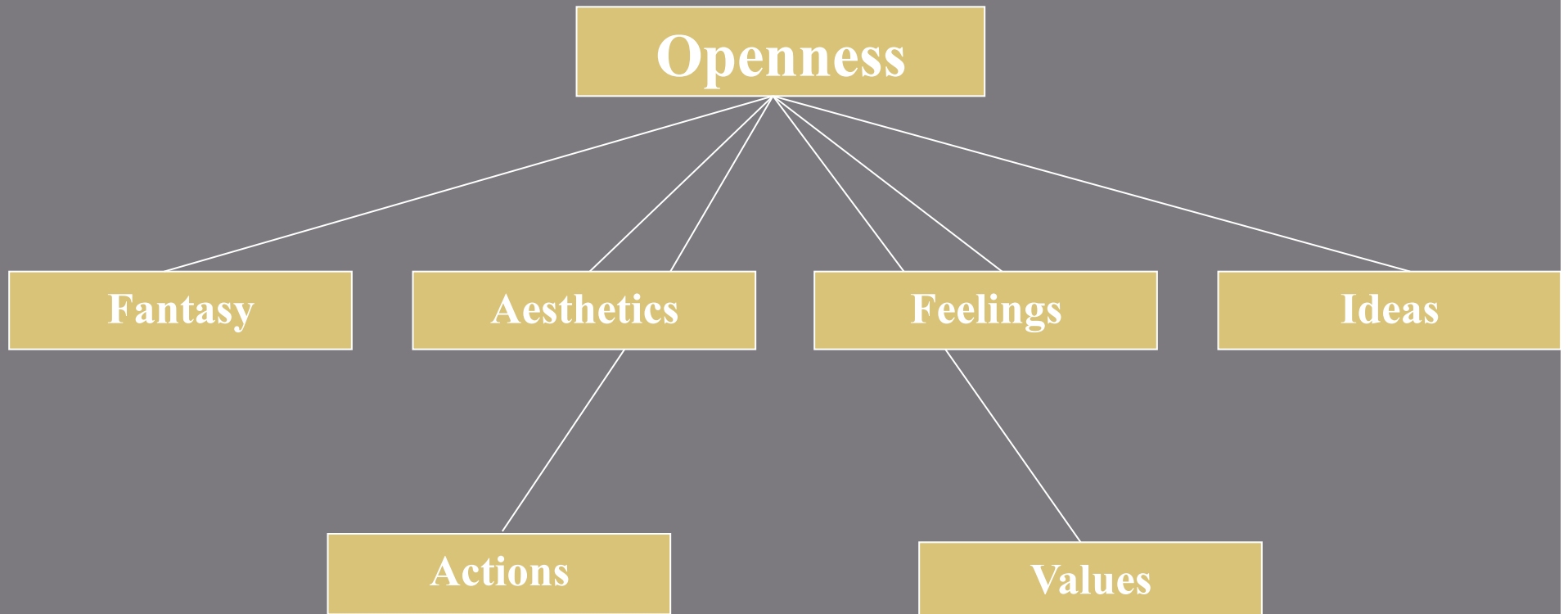
Gregarious
Warm

Openness
Conscientiousness
Extraversion
Agreeableness
Neuroticism

FFM: Strong Empirical Support

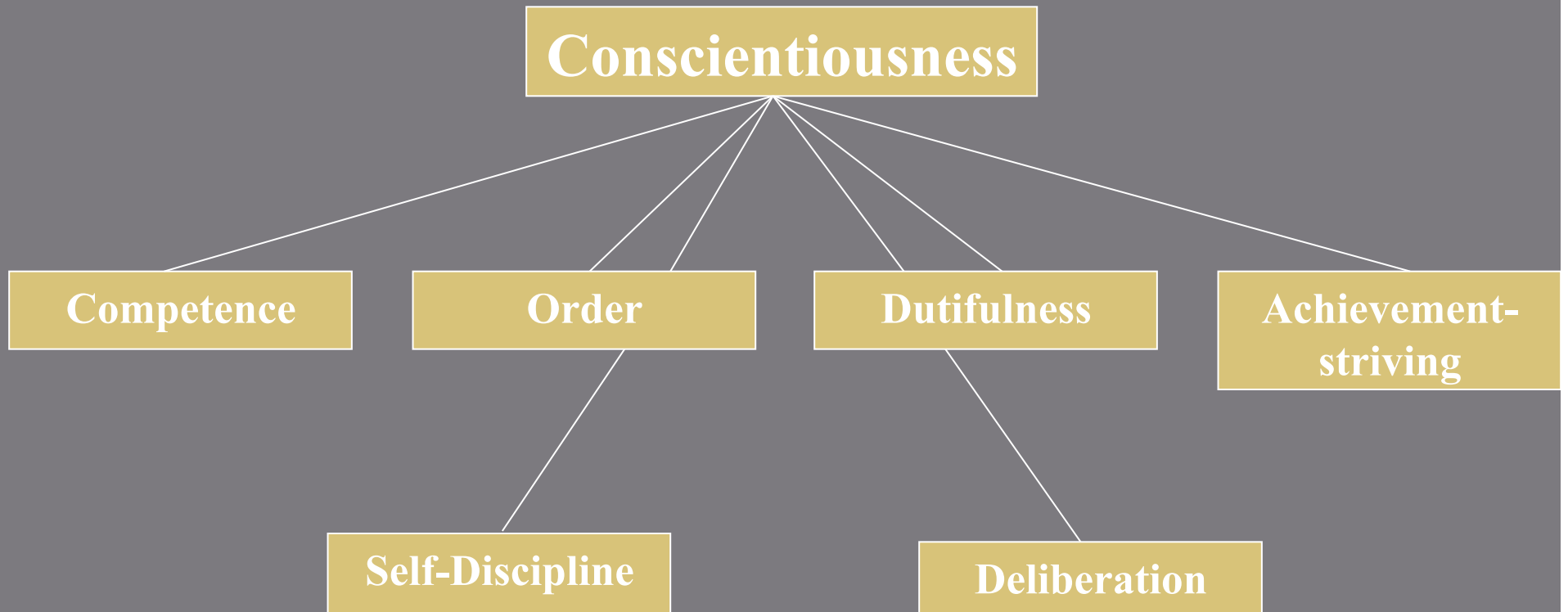
- ▣ Factor analysis repeatedly finds five factors
 - Cross-cultural replication
 - Genetic links
 - Cross-species replication
 - ▣ e.g., dogs, hyenas, monkeys

FFM: Openness to experience



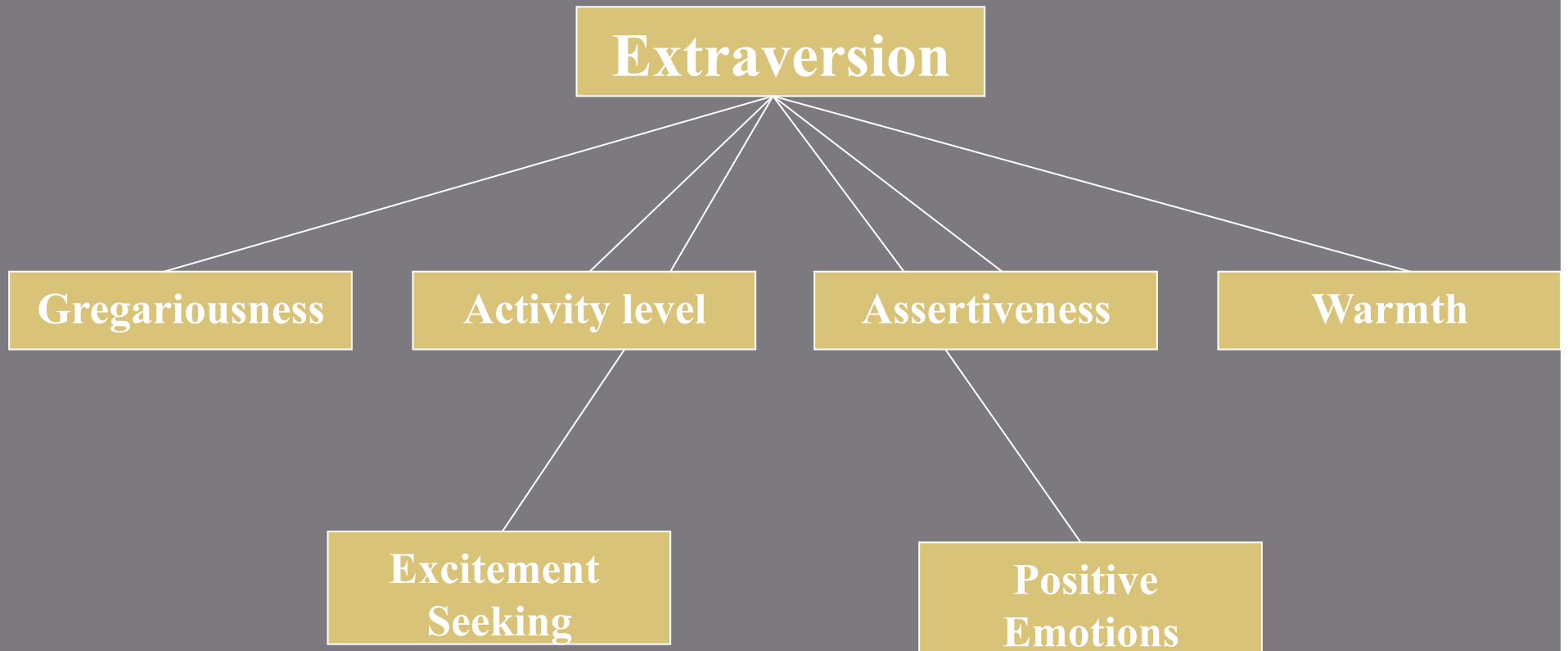
Open people remember dreams better, are more creative, and enjoy novel experiences

FFM: Conscientiousness



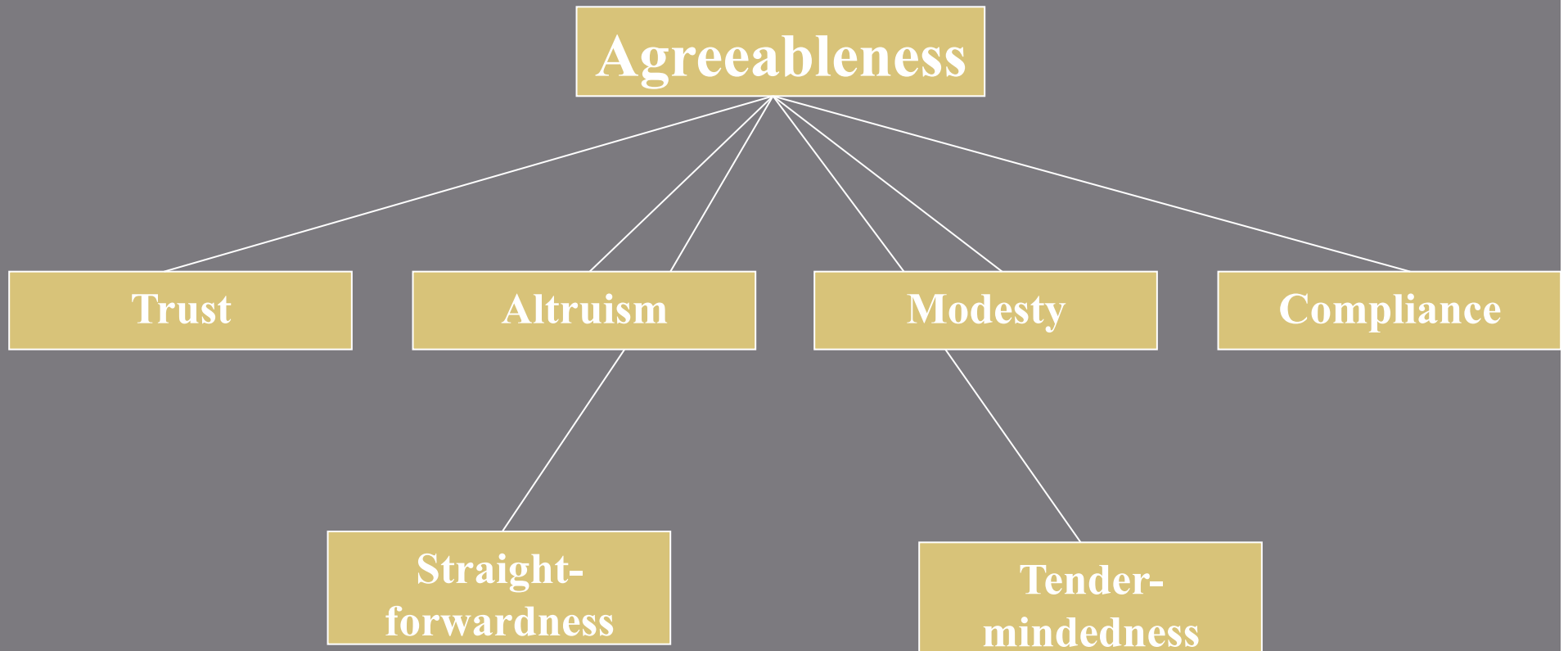
Conscientious people are successful in school and work, and have more stable, committed romantic relationships

FFM: Extraversion



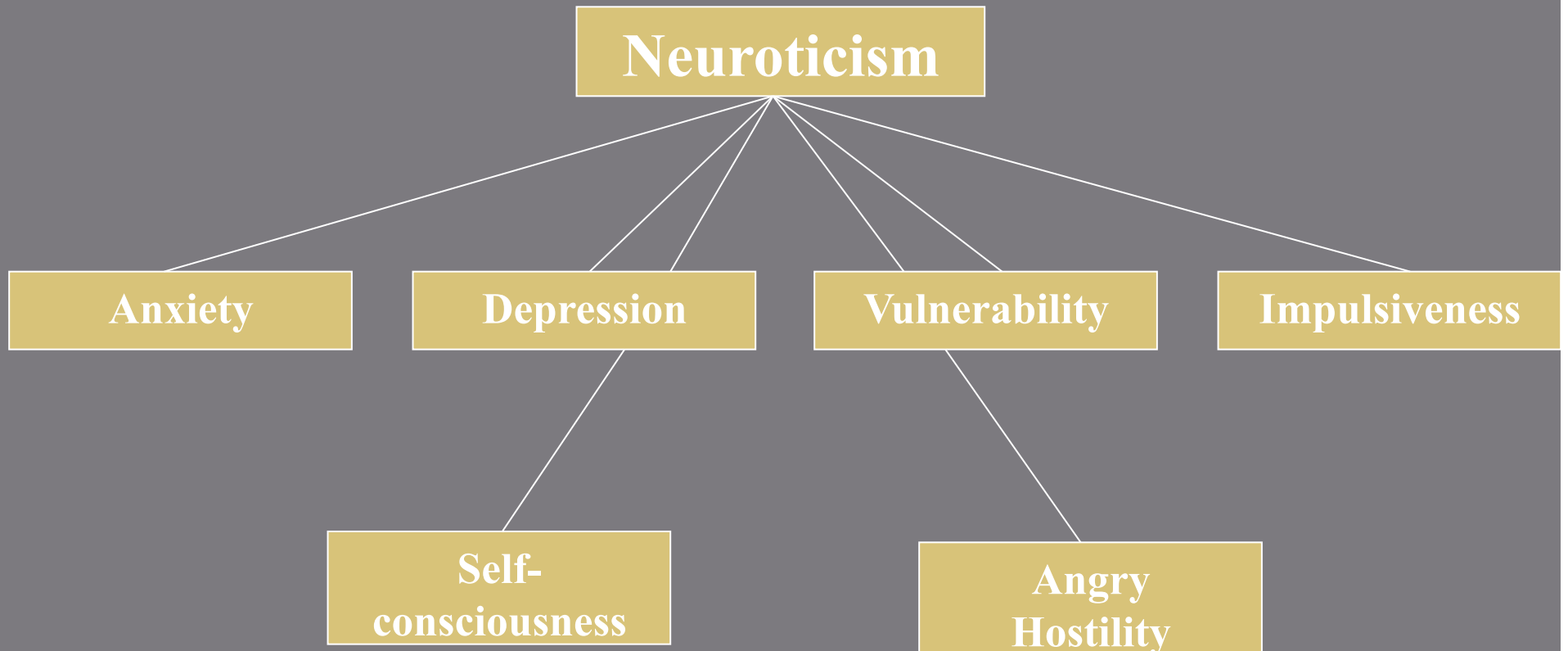
Extraverts love social attention and leadership, and are happier

FFM: Agreeableness



Agreeable people resolve conflicts, are generous, and are well-liked

FFM: Neuroticism



Neurotic people are highly emotional, have mood swings and instability in relationships, and are more fatigued

What's Missing from Big 5?

- ▣ Physical attractiveness and promiscuity
- ▣ Positive evaluation and negative evaluation
 - “Big 7”
- ▣ Honesty/humility
 - HEXACO model
- ▣ Religiosity/spirituality

FFM and PEN

- ▣ Extraversion
 - PEN Extraversion
- ▣ Neuroticism
 - PEN Neuroticism
- ▣ Agreeableness
 - PEN Psychoticism (low)
- ▣ Conscientiousness
 - PEN Psychoticism (low)
- ▣ Openness to Experience
 - PEN?

Personality Stability and Change



Stability of Personality

- ▣ By definition, traits are stable dispositions across:
 - Situations
 - Time
- ▣ Traits are NOT completely “set like plaster”

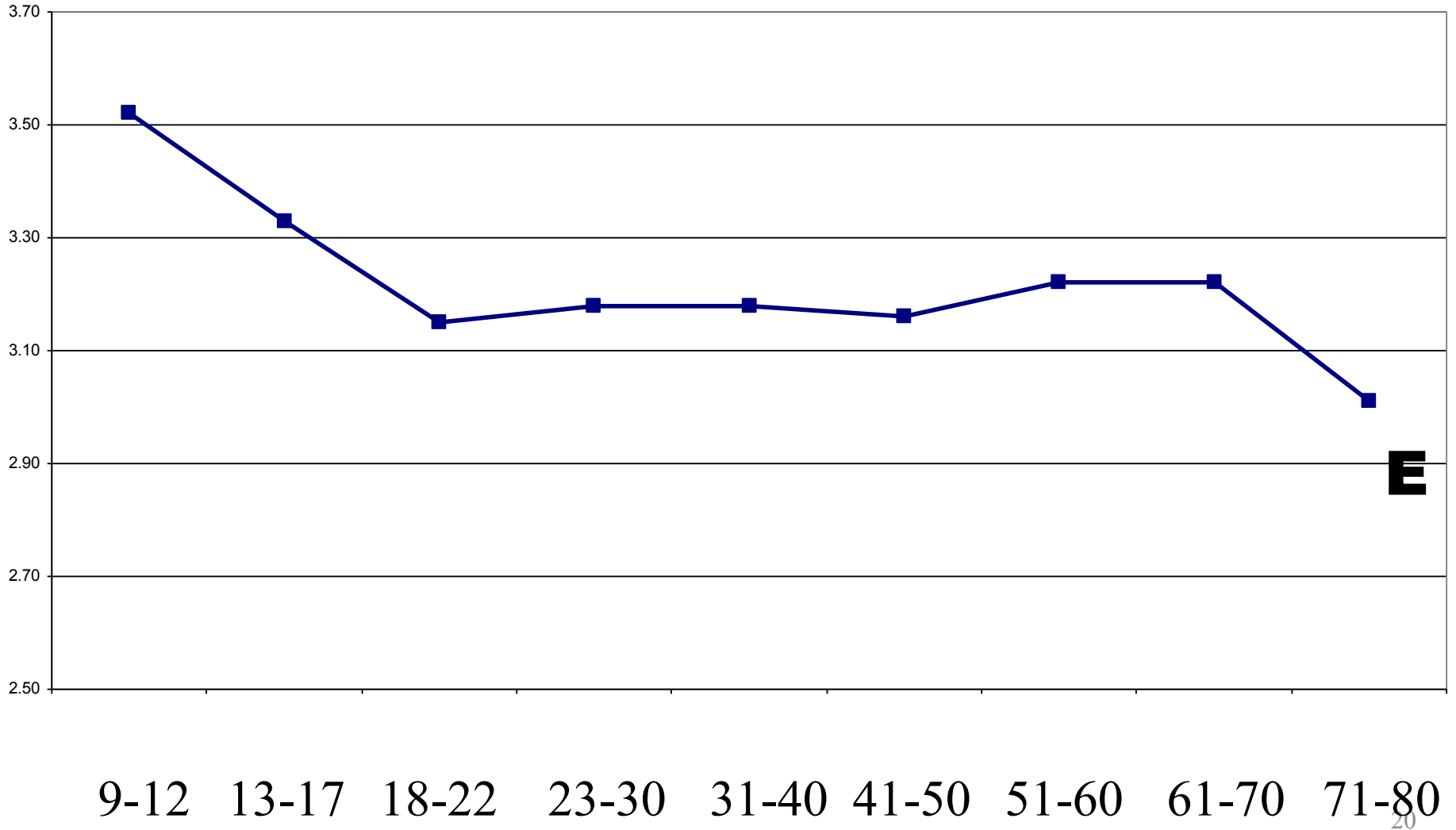


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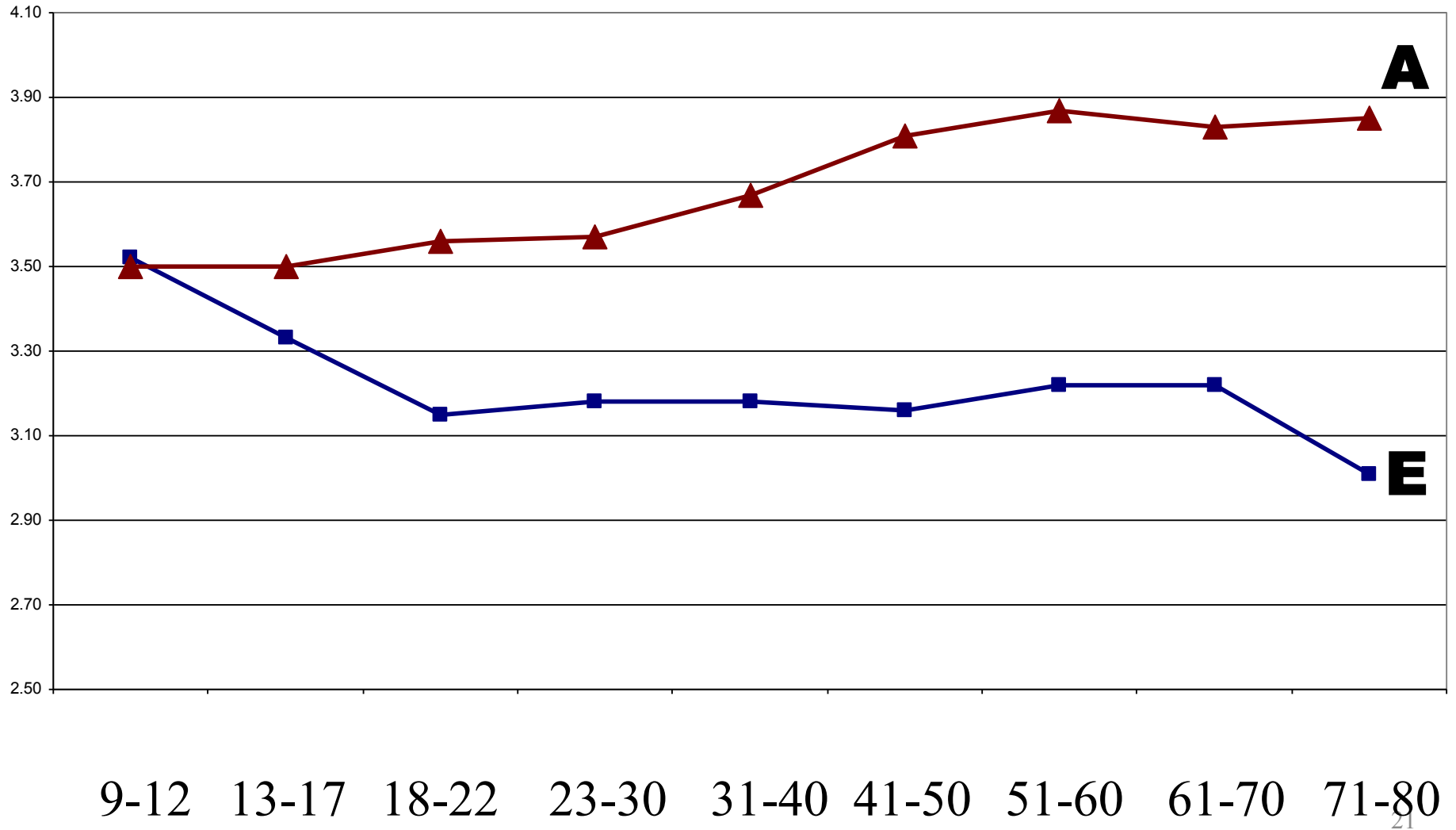
Mean Level Change Across Lifespan

- ▣ Cross-sectional study
 - Sample of approximately 130,000 adults reported Big 5 personality traits
 - Representative of population in US and Canada
 - Childhood to old age

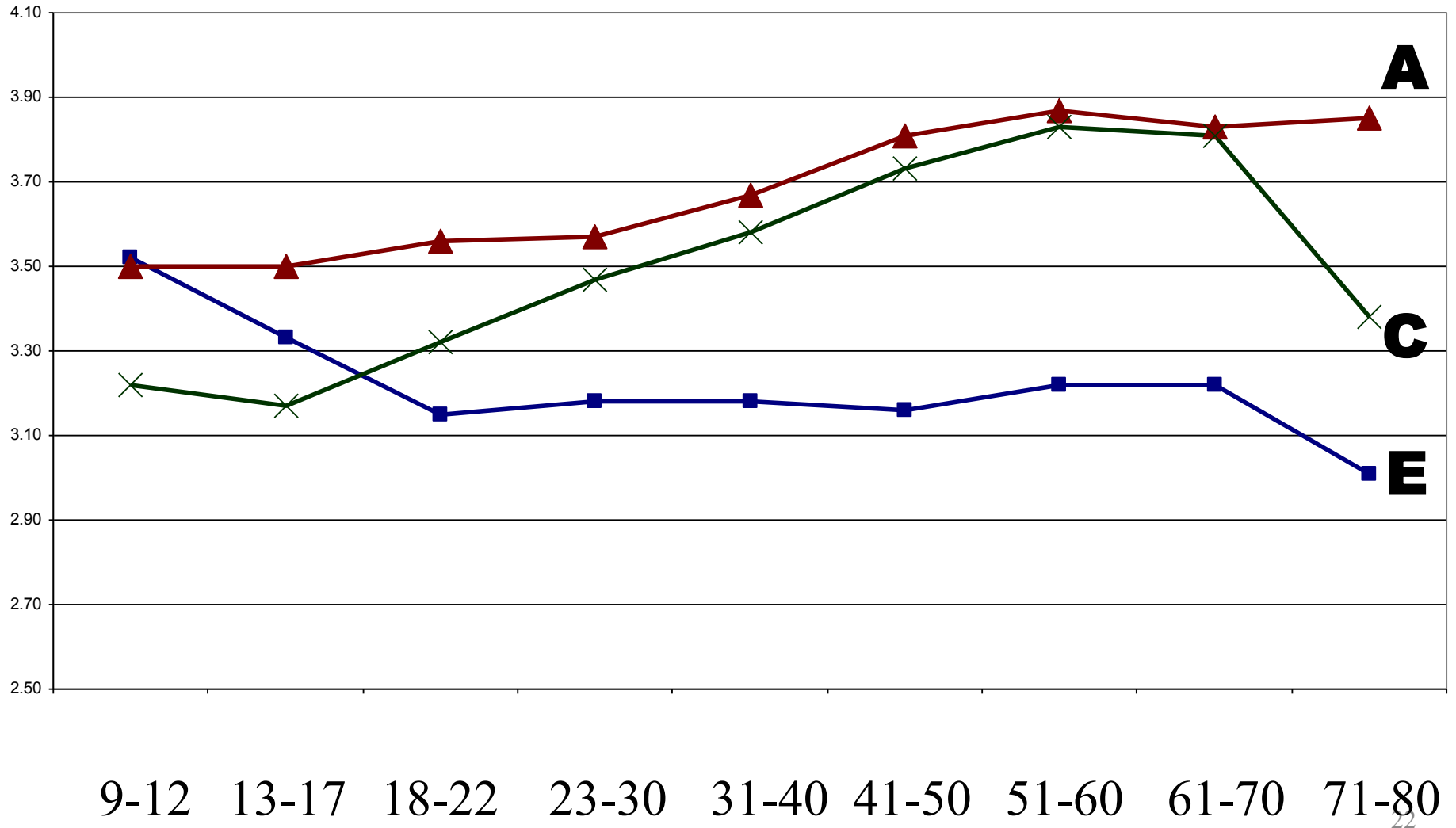
Lifespan Cross-Sectional Study



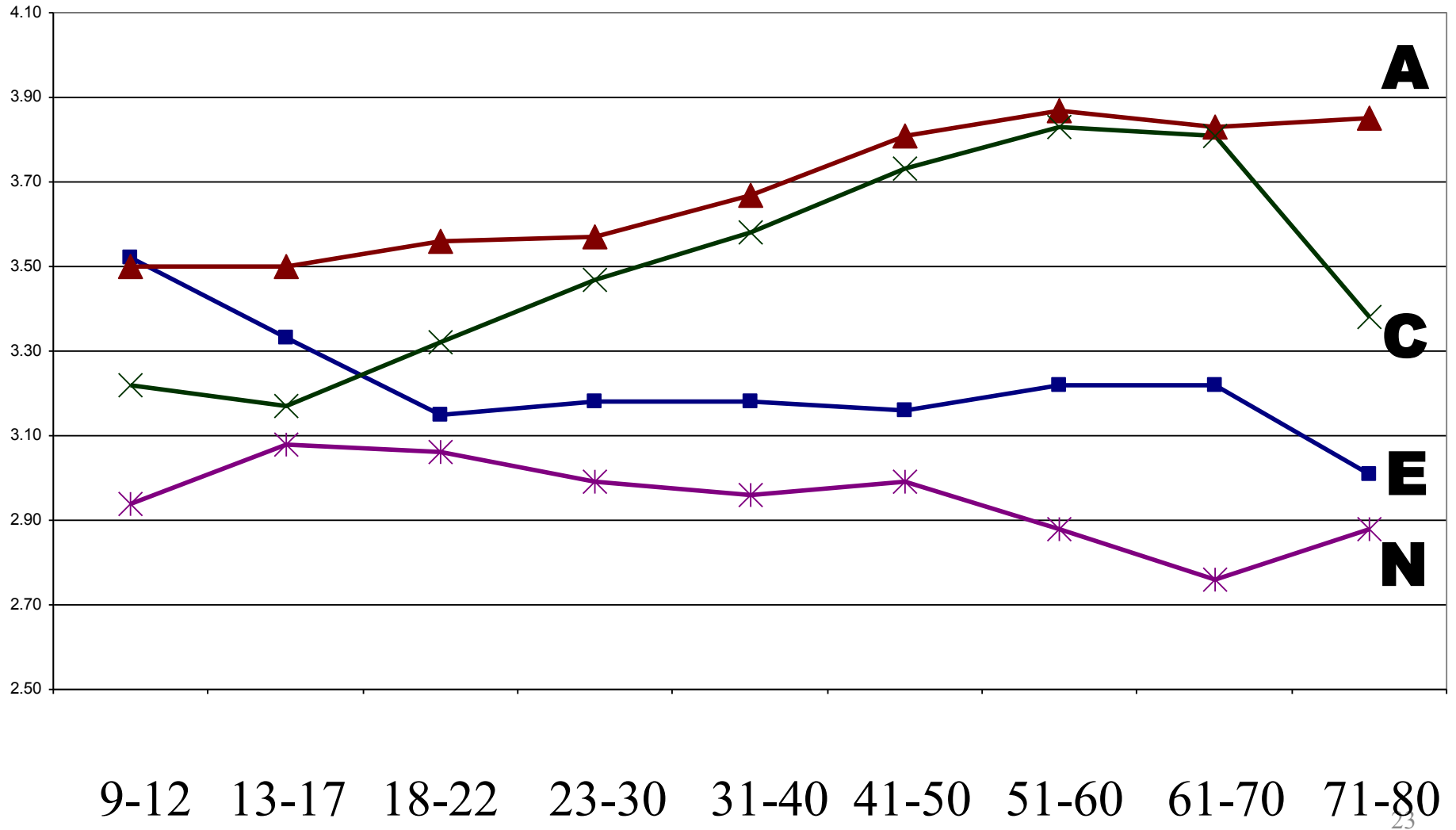
Lifespan Cross-Sectional Study



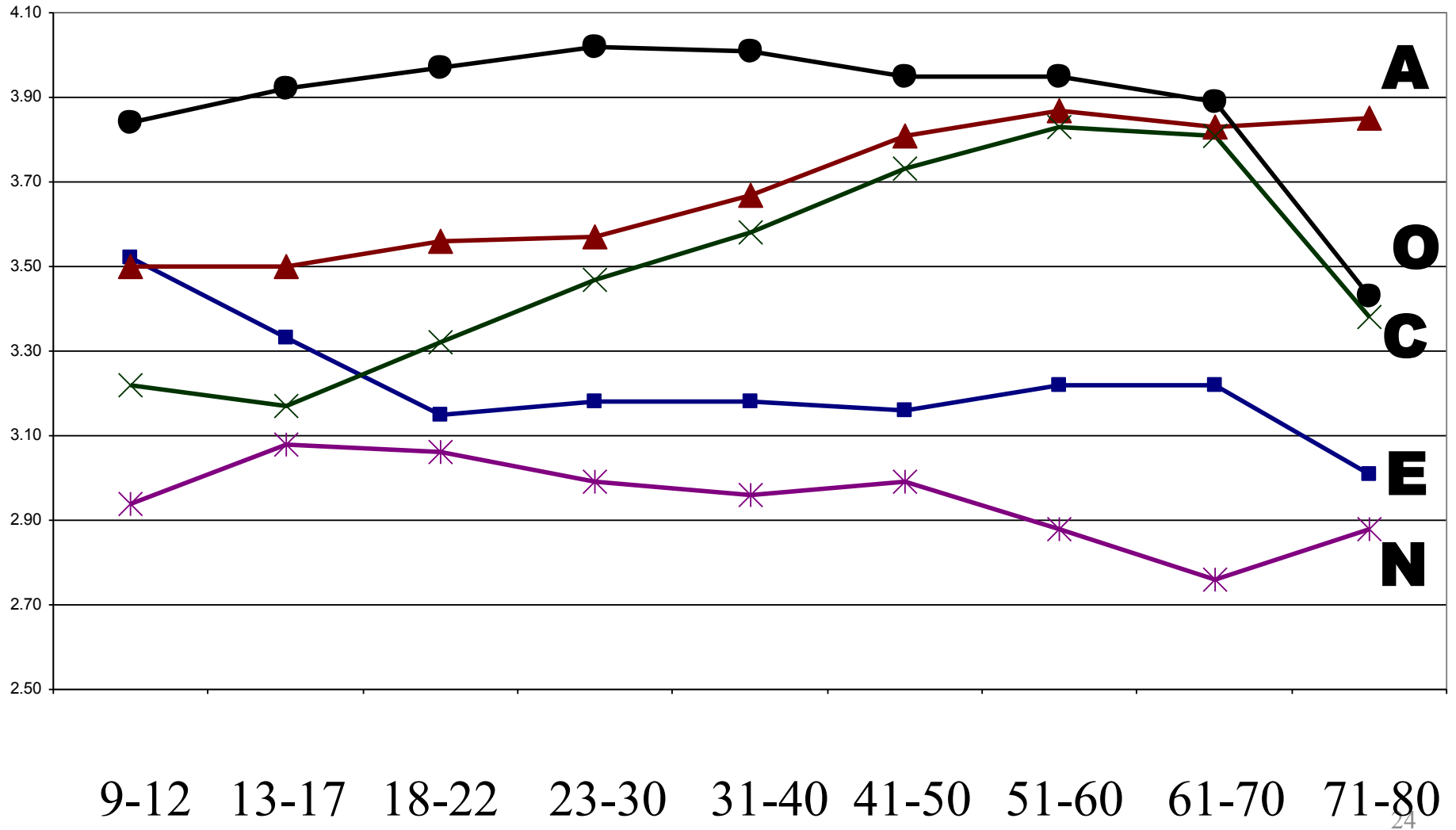
Lifespan Cross-Sectional Study



Lifespan Cross-Sectional Study



Lifespan Cross-Sectional Study



Personality Change in College

- ▣ Study compared personality scores at beginning and end of university among 270 students

Two Assessments

- Year 1 (beginning of first year)
- Year 4 (end of senior year)

Longitudinal University Study

<u>Big Five Dimension</u>	<u>Change during university</u>
Extraversion	0
Agreeableness	+
Conscientiousness	+
Openness	+
Neuroticism	-

Maturity principle: People tend to increase on traits that promote optimal behavior in adult social roles, and decrease on less socially desirable traits

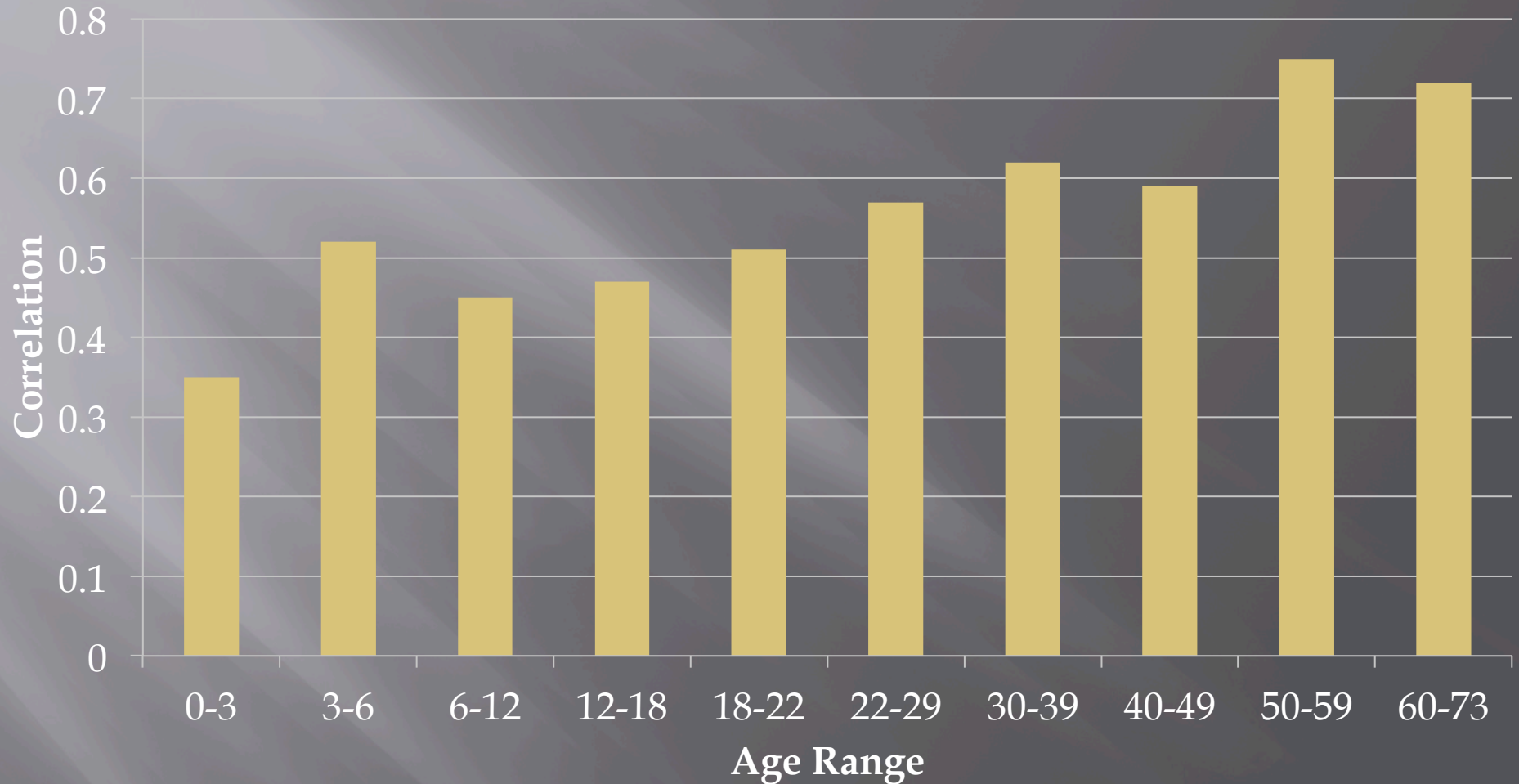
Two Types of Change

- ▣ Mean-level change
- ▣ Rank-order stability
 - Consistency of individual differences on traits
 - Is the most extraverted child still the most extraverted adult?
 - Is the least agreeable college student still the least agreeable 40 year-old?

Stability at Different Ages

- ▣ Meta-analysis
 - Compiled results from all studies ever done on personality change and development
 - Compared “personality consistency” across ages
 - ▣ At which ages was the correlation between personality at T_1 and personality at T_2 highest?
 - ▣ Correlation: Same group of people measured at two ages
 - e.g., 3 & 4, 23 & 29, 55 & 72
 - High correlation implies high personality consistency

Personality Consistency at Different Ages



Personality is somewhat inconsistent in childhood and young adulthood
Personality becomes increasingly stable throughout middle age
Personality is extremely stable in old age

Two Types of Change

- ▣ Mean-level
- ▣ Rank-order

- ▣ Why does personality change or stay stable?

Why do We Change or Stay Stable?

- Person-environment transactions
 - People select situations based on their personalities
 - e.g., a conscientious individual enrolls in an honor's class
 - Situations in turn influence people's personalities
 - e.g., an honors student becomes more conscientious



Personality → Life Events

Trait	High levels lead to	Low levels lead to
O		Becoming unemployed
C		Getting divorced
E	Moving in with partner	
A		Getting divorced
N	Living at home Getting divorced	Getting married

Sample of ~ 15,000 German adults, followed over four years

Specht, Egloff, & Schmuckle, 2011; 2012

Life Events → Personality Change

Trait	Events lead to increases	Events lead to decreases
O	Getting divorced	Getting married
C	Starting first job	Retiring
E		Getting married
A	Having a baby	
N	Moving out of parent's home	

Sample of ~ 15,000 German adults, followed over four years

Specht, Egloff, & Schmuckle, 2011; 2012

Stability and Change: Summary

- ▣ Personality **changes** across the lifespan
 - Mean-level shifts
- ▣ Personality is **consistent** across the lifespan
 - Different levels of consistency emerge in childhood, adulthood, and old age
- ▣ Change and consistency is dictated in part by **person-environment transactions**
 - Who we are leads us to take on certain roles, and those roles in turn shape who we become

Next Class

- ▣ Traits (wrap-up)
- ▣ Self-esteem

THANK YOU!

Comments? Questions? Feedback?

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