



## Seewiesen Colloquia

Speaker invited by: Niels Dingemans

**Thursday, 20 March 2014, 13:00 h, in House 4, Lecture Room**

### **The structure, evolutionary genetics and proximate processes of personality: Insights from human personality psychology**

Lars Penke

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Compared to animal personality research, human personality psychology has a much longer history in the comprehensive description of the dimensional structure of personality. This literature mostly rely on the traces that personality variation in the population leaves in the human language, the so-called lexicographic approach. Resulting models, like the Big Five, have been shown to capture genetically largely independent dimensions of broad psychological and behavioral differences, making them well-suited for evolutionary genetic analyses. Capabilities that are strongly developed in humans, including niche selection, niche construction and ecological dominance, make it likely that balancing selection maintains genetic variation in human personality differences. On the proximate level, however, there is not much evidence that these latent personality dimensions reflect unitary causal mechanisms. Rather, stable personality differences can develop from the interaction of heterogeneous physiological, psychological and behavioral differences. Recent network models capture the intercorrelation of various underlying behavioral tendencies and psychological processes without assuming a single common cause per personality dimension. These models might allow for a better understanding of what it is we study as personality differences.

## Who is Lars Penke ?

- 2007 PhD, Humboldt University of Berlin and International Max Planck Research School LIFE, Berlin
- 2008 Medical Research Council postdoctoral fellowship, University of Edinburgh, UK
- 2011 Lecturer of Psychology, University of Edinburgh, UK
- 2011 Habilitation in Psychology, Humboldt University of Berlin
- 2013 Professor for Biological Personality Psychology, Georg August University Göttingen

## Selected publications:

- Denissen, J. J. A., Wood, D., Penke, L., & van Aken, M. A. G. (2013). Self-regulation underlies temperament and personality: An integrative developmental framework. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7, 255-260.
- Johnson, W., Penke, L. & Spinath, F. M. (2011). Heritability in the era of molecular genetics: Some thoughts for understanding genetic influences on behavioral traits (target article). *European Journal of Personality*, 25, 254-266.
- Deary, I.J., Penke, L. & Johnson, W. (2010). The neuroscience of human intelligence differences. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 11, 201-211.
- Penke, L. (2010). Bridging the gap between modern evolutionary psychology and the study of individual differences. In D. M. Buss & P. H. Hawley (Eds.): *The evolution of personality and individual differences* (pp. 243-279). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Penke, L., Denissen, J.J.A. & Miller, G.F. (2007). The evolutionary genetics of personality (target article). *European Journal of Personality*, 21, 549-587.