School of Psychology and Exercise Science
Research Seminar

Speaker: Dr Peter Jonason
Title: The Dark Side of Personality and Fundamental Social Motives
Where: Kim Beazley Lecture Theatre (351.1.001)
Host: Dr Guy Curtis

Abstract:
A useful way of understanding personality traits is to examine the motivational nature of a trait because motives drive behaviors and influence attitudes. In two cross-sectional, self-report studies (N = 942), we examined the relationships between fundamental social motives and dark personality traits (i.e., narcissism, psychopathy, sadism, spitefulness, and Machiavellianism) and examined the role of childhood socio-ecological conditions (Study 2 only). For example, we found that Machiavellianism and psychopathy were negatively associated with motivations that involved developing and maintaining good relationships with others. Sex differences in the darker aspects of personality were a function of, at least in part, fundamental social motives such as the desire for status. Fundamental social motives mediated the associations that childhood socio-ecological conditions had with the darker aspects of personality. Our results showed how motivational tendencies in men and women may provide insights into alternative life history strategies reflected in dark personality traits.

Biography:
By training I am a social-personality psychologist who uses evolutionary theory to derive predictions and account for observable phenomena in personality, individual differences, mating strategies, and sexuality. After I completed my B.A. in Political Science and Communication Sciences and my M.A. in Communication Sciences at the University of Connecticut, I got my Ph.D. in Psychology at New Mexico State University. After graduation, I taught Personality Psychology, Social Psychology, Evolutionary Psychology, and Introductory Psychology at the University of West Florida and the University of South Alabama. Now I am at Western Sydney University where I specialize in Evolutionary Psychology, Statistics, and Research Methods. In 2014, I won the Ig Nobel award in psychology for my research into the "dark side" of human nature. In 2015, I served visiting scholar positions at Lomonosov Moscow State University and the University of Western Ontario. In 2016, I became a fellow at the Secular Policy Institute and an Affiliated Associate Professor at Florida Atlantic University. In 2018, I served a visiting scholar position at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (Warsaw, Poland).

Meeting the presenter:
To arrange a meeting with the presenter, please contact the host.
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Reading for the keen:

