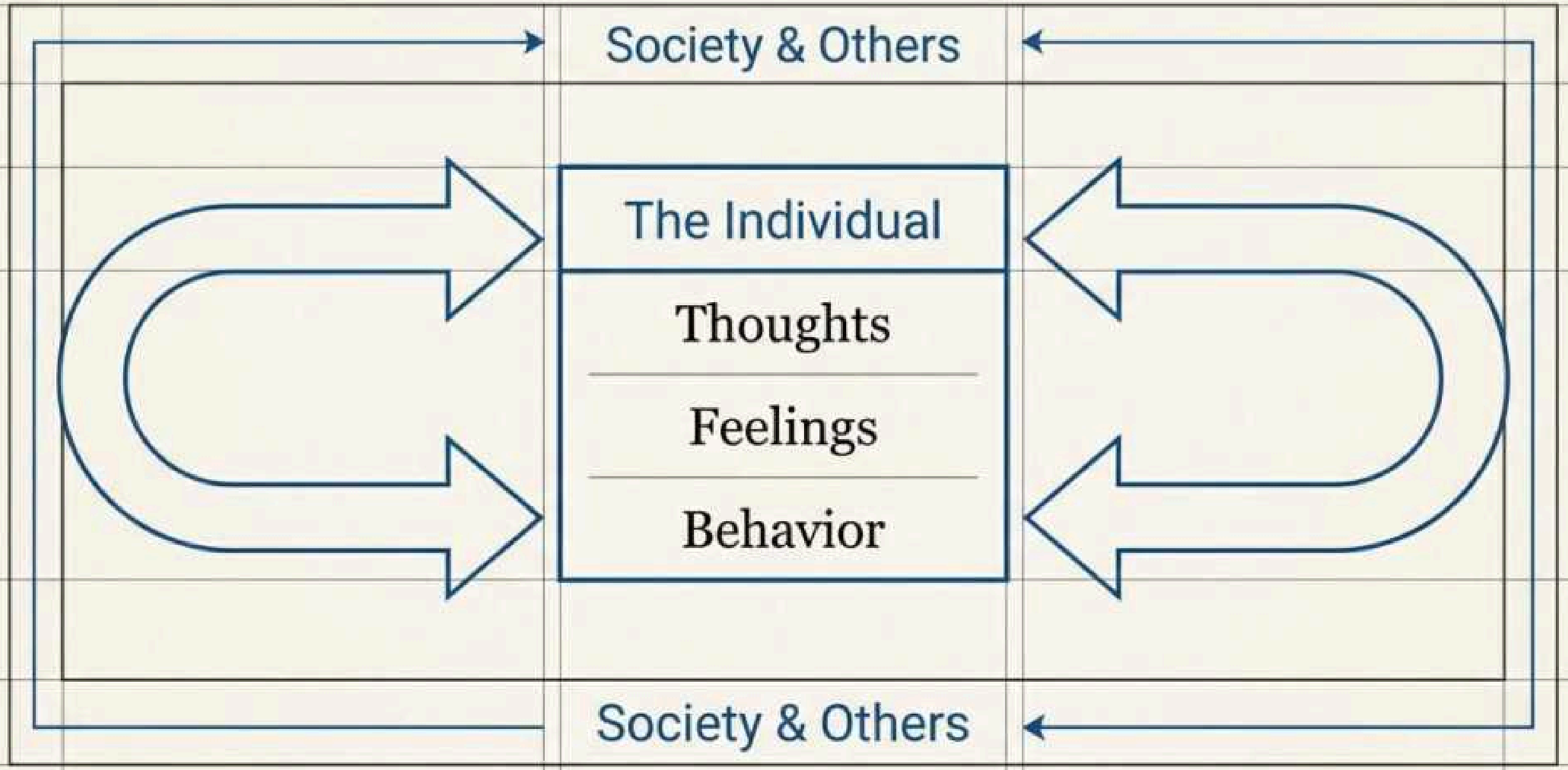
1.1

Subject Matter	Methodology	Critical Context
What does social psychology study?	How are ideas tested?	What limits and nuances must we keep in mind?

The terms introduced in these three pillars will recur in every subsequent topic.

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1.2 The scientific study of how individuals are influenced by others.



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1.3 Three Forms of Social Presence



Actual Presence

Real people physically present.

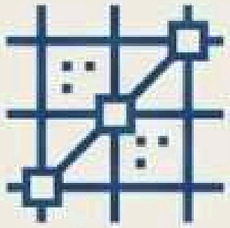
Example: A crowd or a teacher in the room.



Imagined Presence

People pictured in the mind.

Example: Dreading a parent's disapproval.



Implied Presence

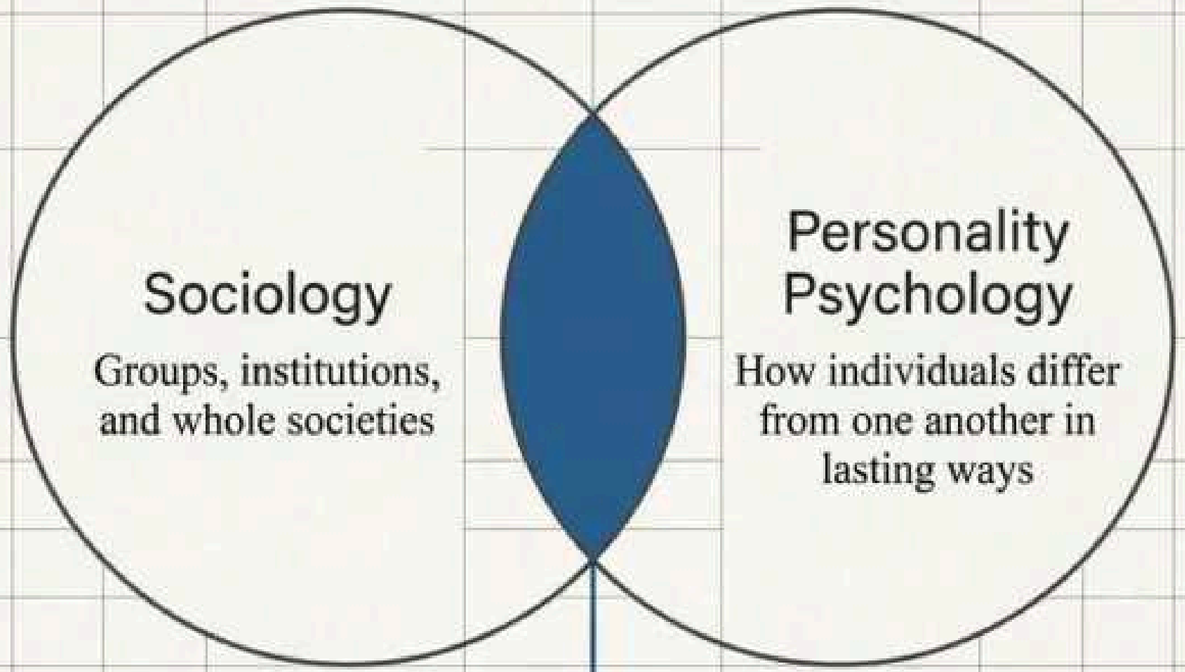
Cultural norms and unspoken rules.

Example: Facing forward in an elevator.

Other people matter even when nobody speaks.

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1.4 The Scope of Social Psychology



Social Psychology

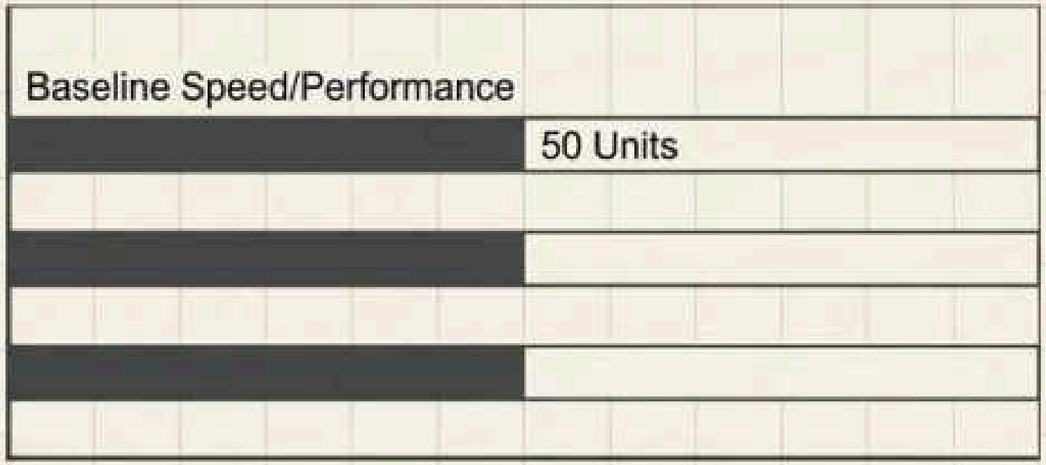
How a particular situation affects a particular person.

Emphasizes the many people who share a situation rather than one person's unique history.

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1.5 The First Social Psychology Experiment

Alone



1898: Cyclists ride faster in company than alone.

In Company



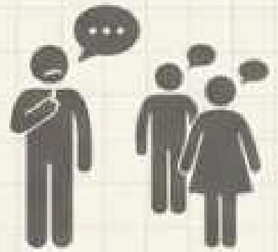
First Experiment: Children winding fishing reels perform faster when another child is nearby.

The mere presence of others fundamentally alters individual performance.

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$$B = f(P, E)$$

Behavior is a function of the Person and the Environment.

	Strong Situation (Funeral)	Weak Situation (Party)
Shy Person		
Bold Person		

Environments and persons interact; strong situations override individual differences.

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1.7

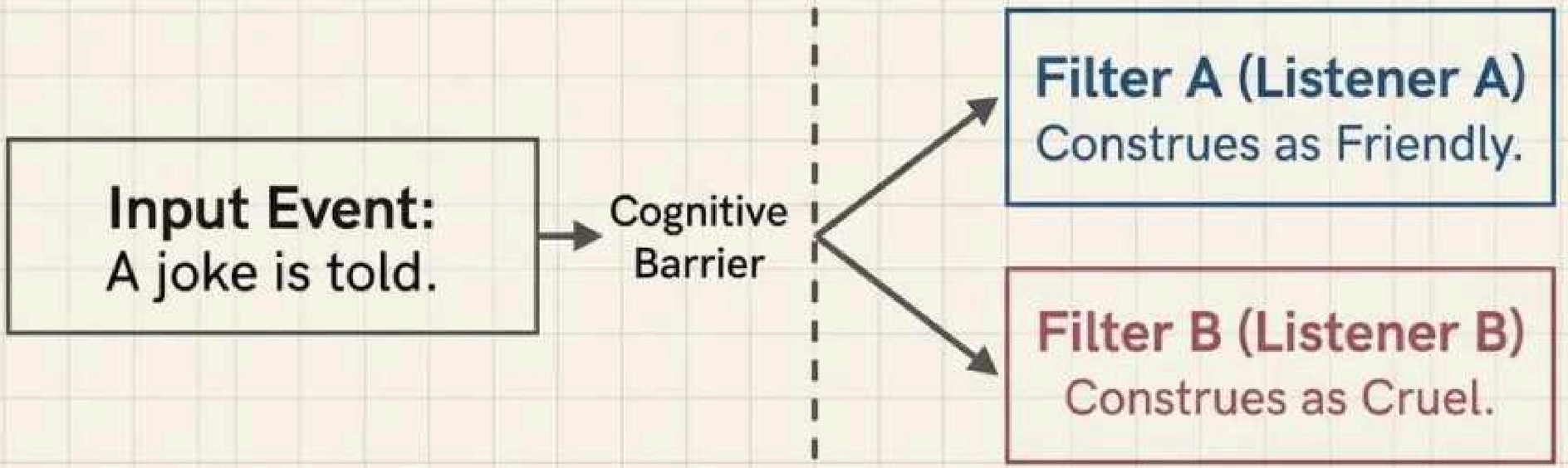


Situations shape behavior far more than most people suppose, yet we systematically overlook the environment.

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1.8

Construal:
The way a person actively interprets a situation, not just its objective properties.



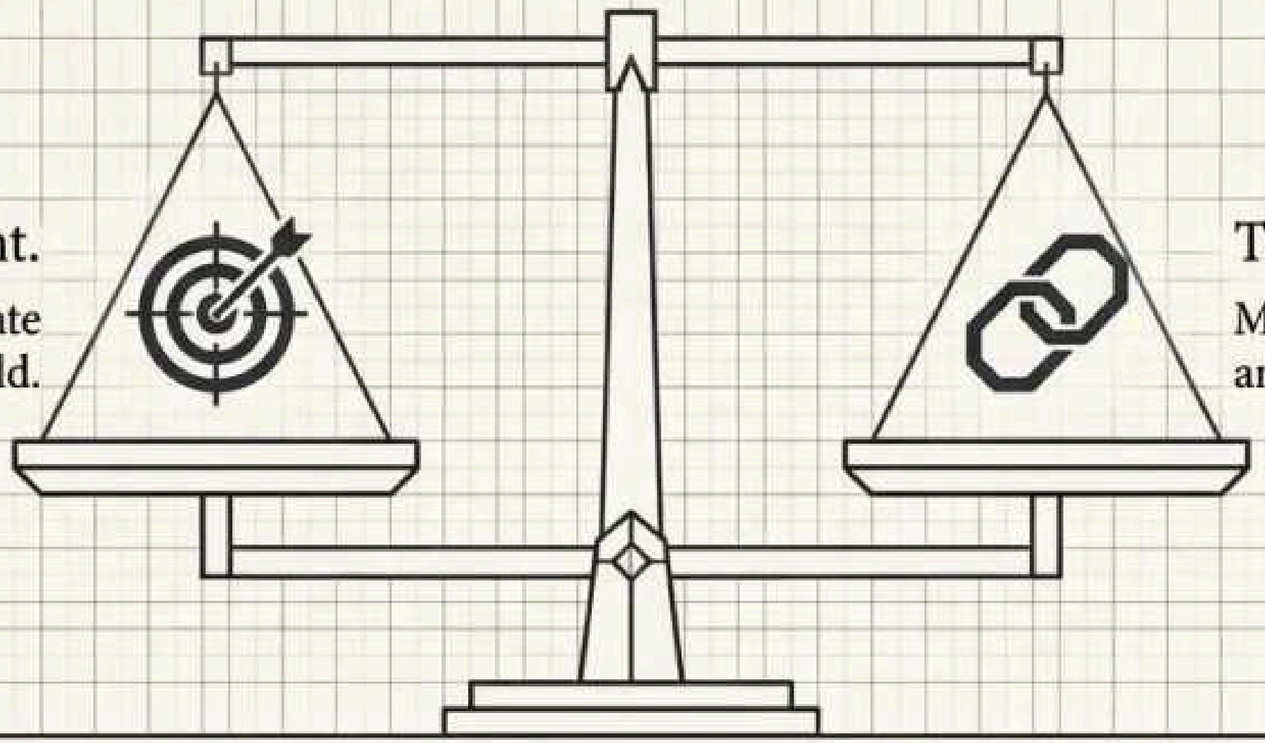
Rule for Prediction: To predict behavior, ask what the event meant to the person, not just what objectively happened.

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1.9

To be right.

Seeking an accurate understanding of the world.



To feel good & belong.

Maintaining self-esteem and group inclusion.

These motives frequently pull in different directions. Classic findings in the field reveal which motive wins under specific pressures.

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1.10

Common Sense (Hindsight)

Birds of a feather flock together vs. *Opposites attract.*

Look before you leap vs. *He who hesitates is lost.*

The Flaw: Proverbs can explain any result after the fact.

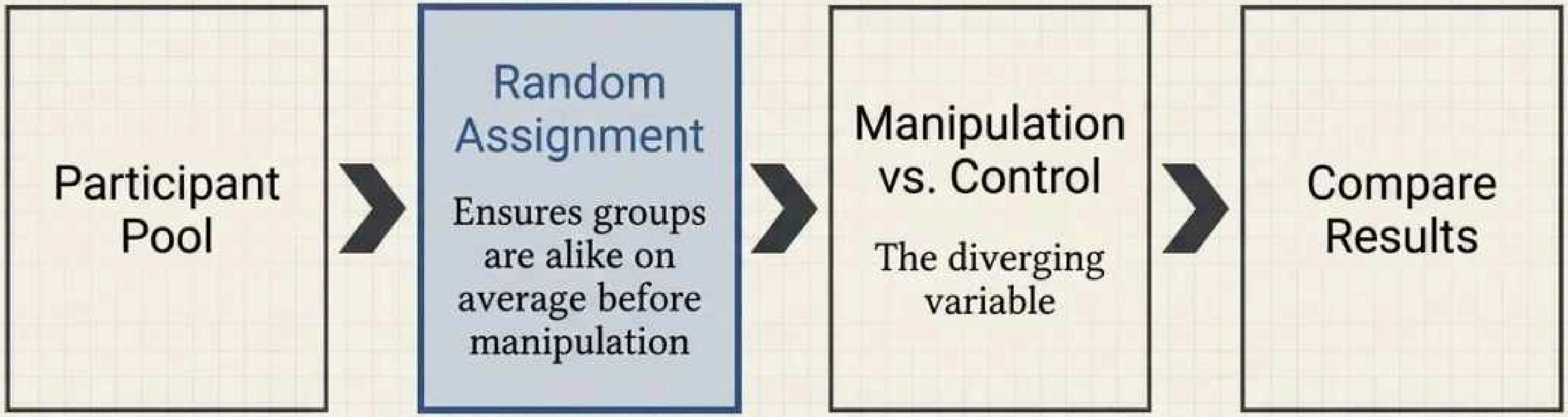
The Scientific Method (Foresight)

Requirement: Falsifiability.

The Standard: A true science requires rigorous tests that could theoretically come out the other way.

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1.11



This exact mechanism separates direct causes from mere correlations.

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1.12

The Setting: Laboratories (High control, low realism).

The Threat: Demand Characteristics

Participants guess the study's purpose and alter their behavior to fit expectations.

The Defense Mechanism

Phase 1: Cover Stories

(Hiding the true hypothesis during the experiment)

Phase 2: Debriefing

(Explaining the true purpose and methods immediately afterward)

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1.13

	Control	Realism
Lab Experiments	● High (Shows cause)	○ Low
Field Experiments (e.g., unwitting shoppers)	○ Low	● High (Shows cause)
Correlational Studies (e.g., surveys)	— N/A (Measures unassignable variables like income/politics)	● High (Cannot show cause)

The most robust research combines these methods.

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1.14

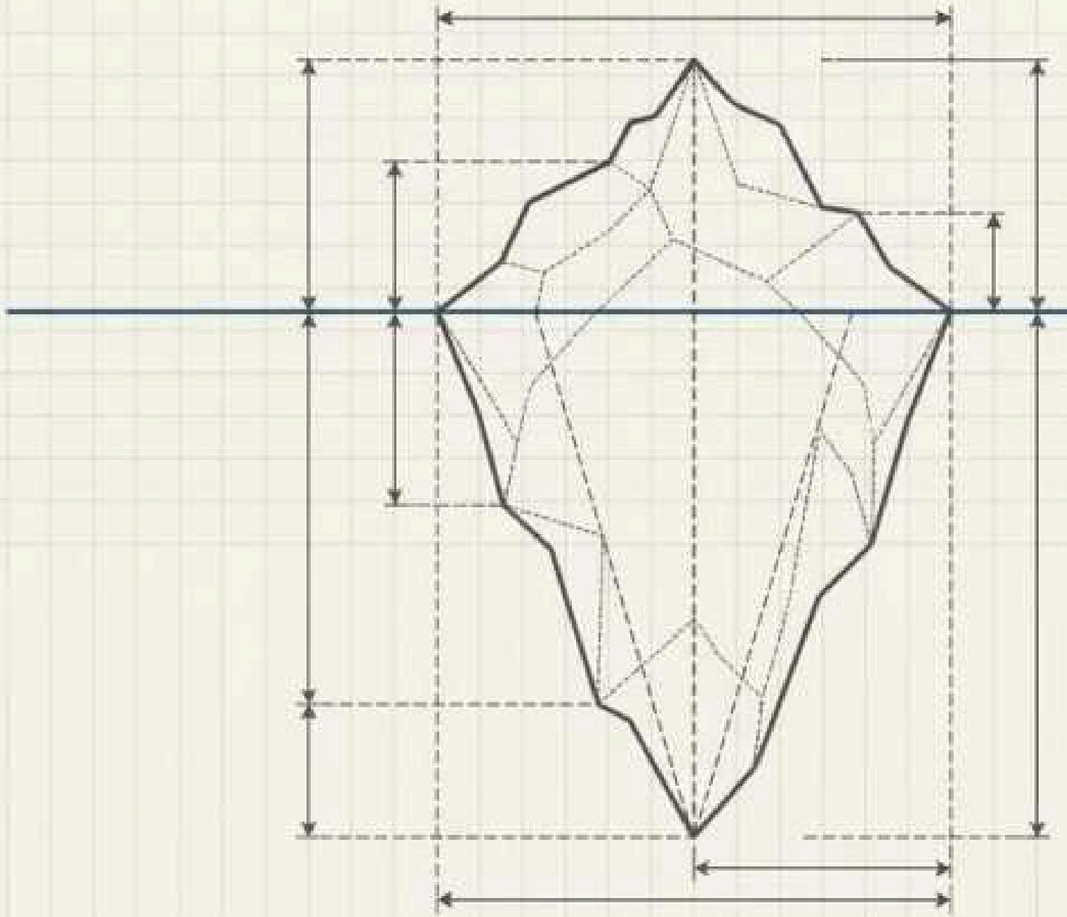
☑ 1. Informed Consent	☑ 2. Minimal Risk
☑ 3. Right to Withdraw	☑ 4. Debriefing

Developed in response to 20th-century abuses. Strictly enforced by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). Many classic experiments could not be run today under these rules.

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1.15

Social Desirability — People hide true feelings to look good.



Direct / Explicit

- Questionnaires, self-reports.
- Status: Easily manipulated.

Indirect / Implicit

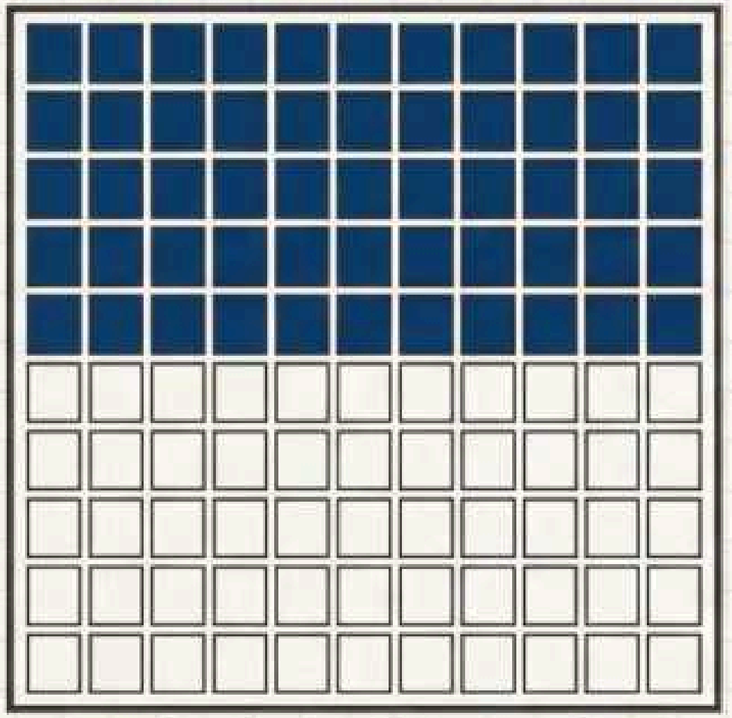
- Reaction times, behavioral observations, physical records.
- Status: Much harder to fake.

Rule of Thumb: Always scrutinize how a variable was actually measured, not just what it claims to measure.

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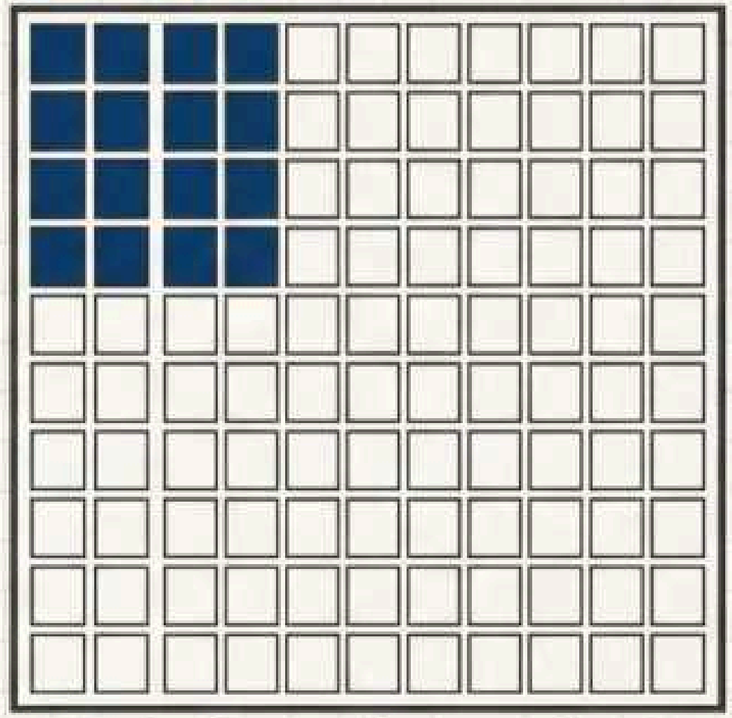
1.16

Cognitive Psychology



~50% clearly significant replication

Social Psychology

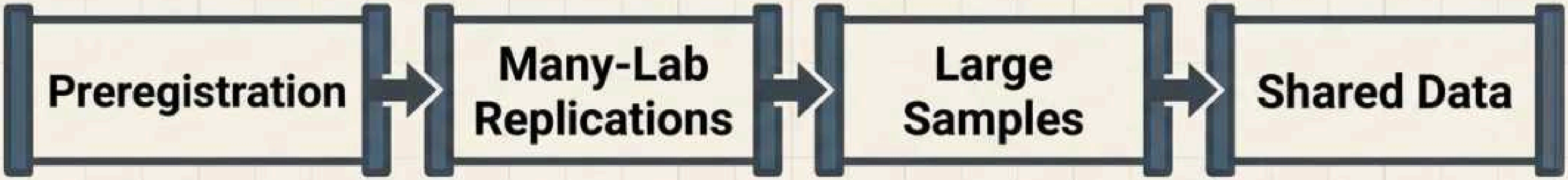


~25% clearly significant replication

Based on a 2015 effort testing 100 published studies

Many initial findings require significantly more rigorous support and repetition than previously believed

1.17



Stating the plan and hypothesis in advance

Testing the same idea across multiple independent settings simultaneously

Ensuring robust statistical power

Maintaining open methodological transparency

The New Standard: Trust ideas that possess a long record and multiple large-sample repetitions

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1.18

W Western
E Educated
I Industrialized
R Rich
D Democratic



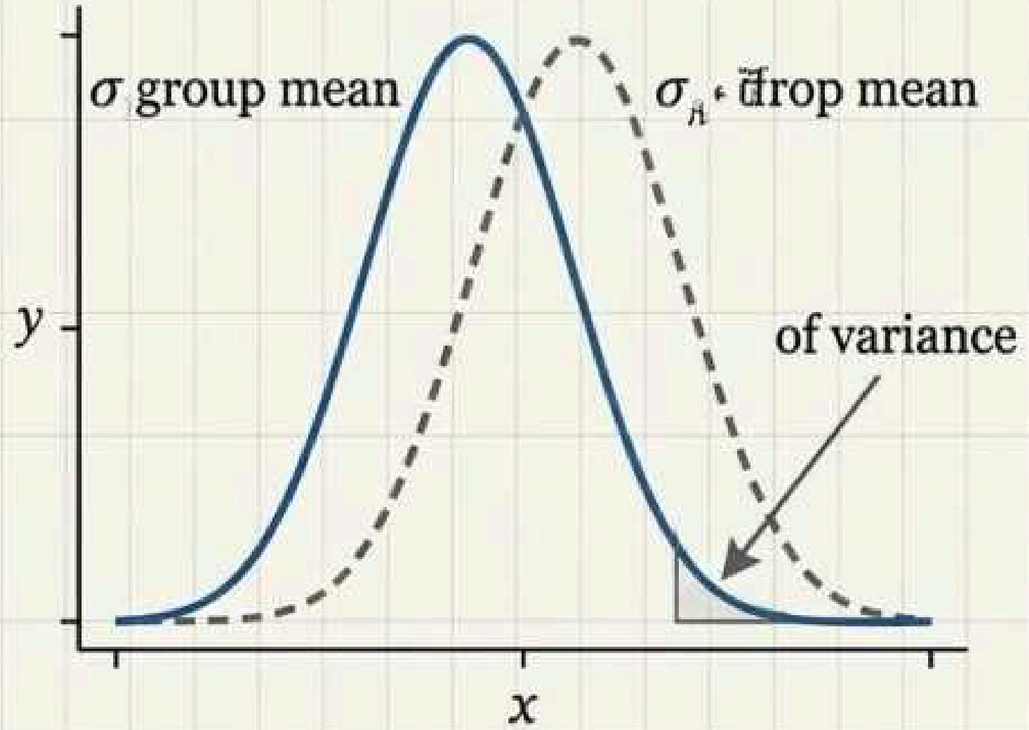
The Demographic Limit: American college students do not represent all of humanity. Basic psychological patterns can differ significantly in other populations.

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1.19

False Media Headline:

Science proves people always do X.



Honest Scientific Reality:

People tend to do X, under certain conditions.

Findings describe tendencies in large groups, not absolute certainties about how a particular individual will act in a given moment.

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1.20



Explanations
Understanding puzzling, counterintuitive human behavior.



Tools
Recognizing and resisting interpersonal manipulation and undue influence.



Humility
Recognizing that smart, decent people can be pushed into bad decisions by powerful situations.

Knowing the pressure exists is the first required step to resisting it.

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1.21

Closing Exercise

1. Think of a recent time you judged someone harshly.
2. List three situational pressures that might have affected their behavior.

.....

.....

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The Core Skill: Making a habit of looking for the situation rather than jumping to personality flaws.

Next: Lecture 2 examines exactly how we explain b

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