5.1

Structural Overview of Intergroup Dynamics

Pillar 1: Origins

What are stereotypes and prejudice, and where do they come from?

Pillar 2: Catalysts

Why do groups come into conflict, even over trivial differences?

Pillar 3: Resolutions

What evidence-based interventions actually reduce prejudice and conflict?

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5.2
Distinguishing the Components of Intergroup Bias

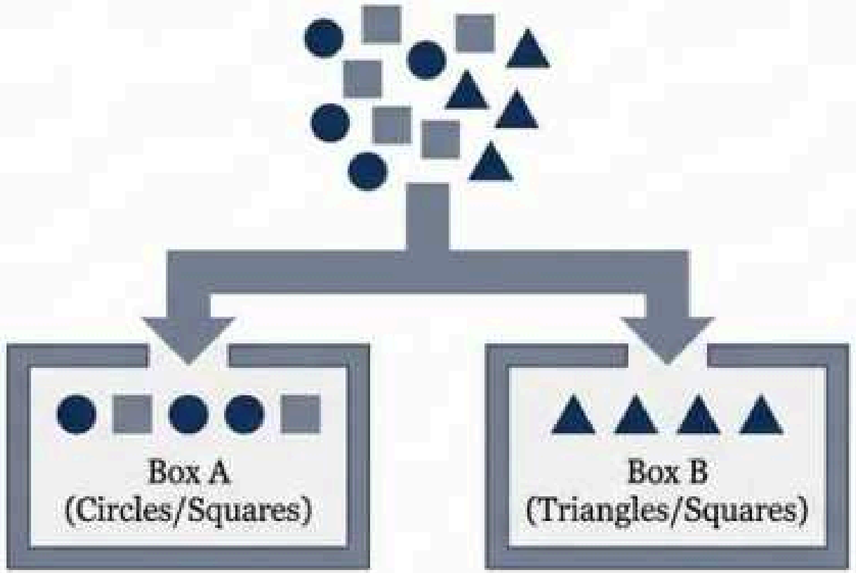
Cognitive Dimension	Affective Dimension	Behavioral Dimension
Stereotype (Belief) Assumptions or beliefs regarding a group and its individual members.	**Prejudice (Attitude)** An attitude—typically negative—directed toward individual individuals based exclusively on their group membership.	**Discrimination (Action)** The physical act of treating people differently or unfairly due to their group group classification.

Note: The fundamental separation of these three dimensions remains the enduring foundation of intergroup psychology.

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5.3
The Cognitive Origins of Stereotypes

Categorization Process



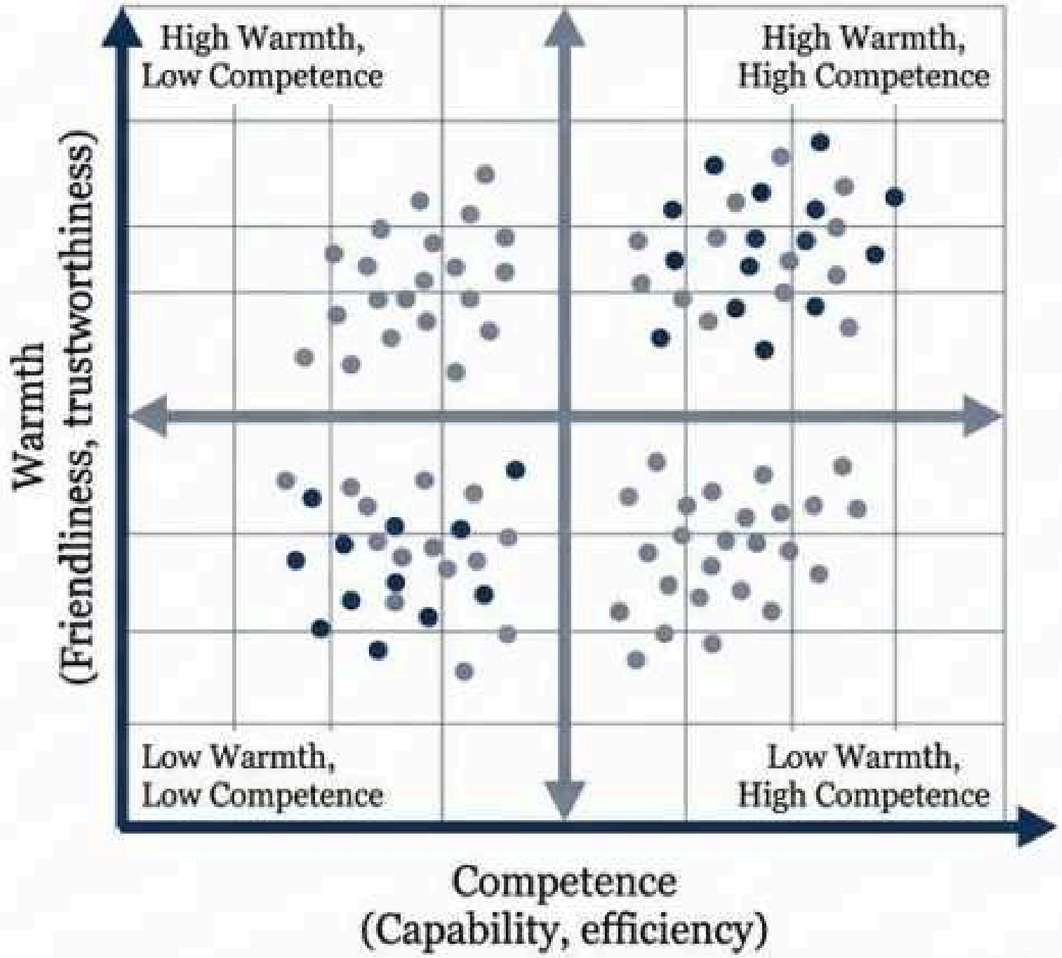
The Function:

Stereotypes stem from normal cognitive sorting to conserve effort and predict interactions.

The Flaw:

Categorization inherently exaggerates differences between groups while obscuring the variations within them.

Research confirms group stereotypes reliably plot along two primary axes.



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5.4 The Persistence of Bias in Real-World Scenarios

The Context

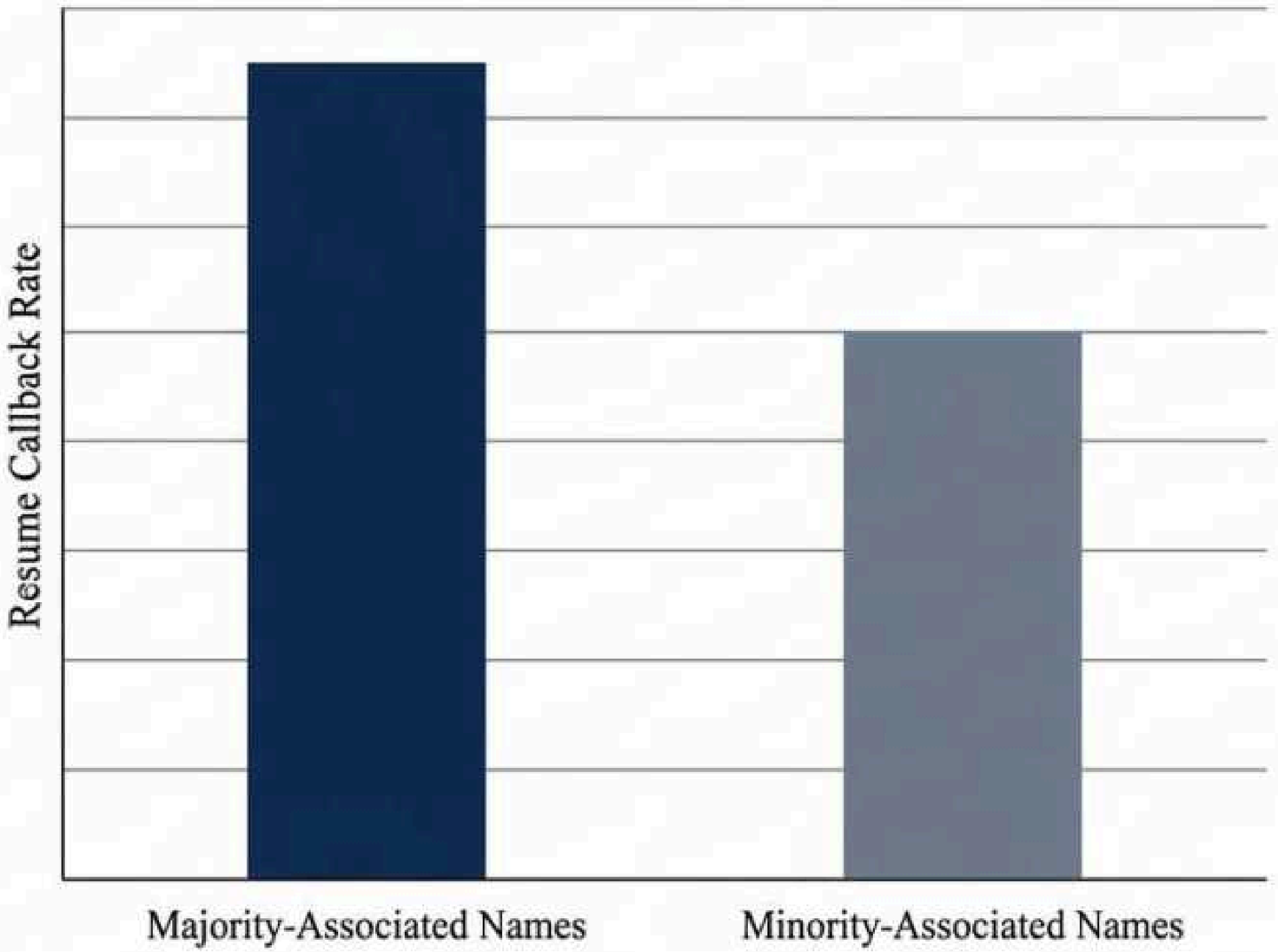
Overt prejudice has declined globally, but covert bias remains intact.

The Methodology

Thousands of identical resumes were submitted across major metropolitan areas. Only the perceived demographic association of the applicant's name was altered as the independent variable.

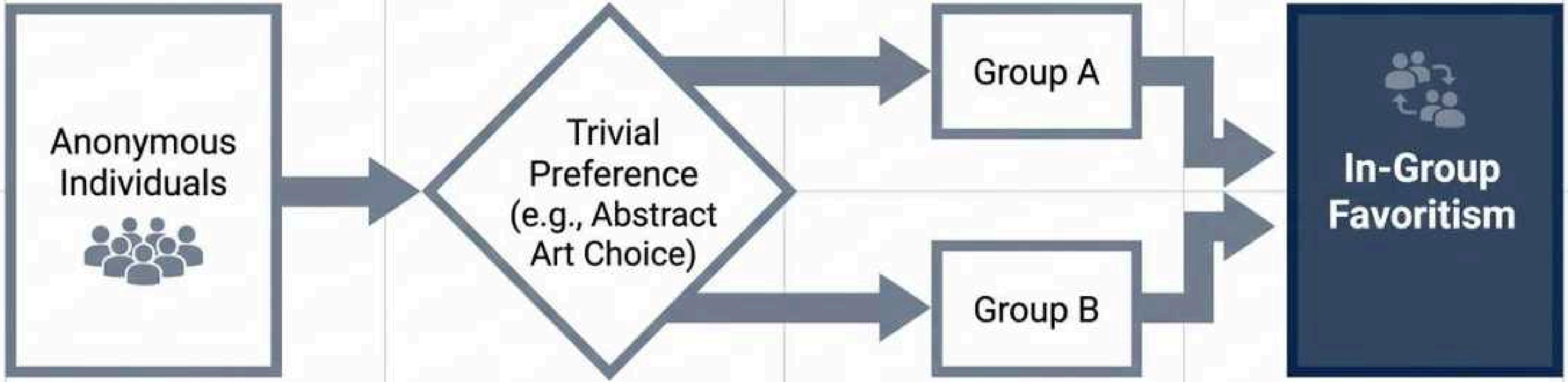
The Outcome

Resumes featuring names associated with the dominant racial majority received roughly 50% more callbacks than identical resumes with minority-associated names.



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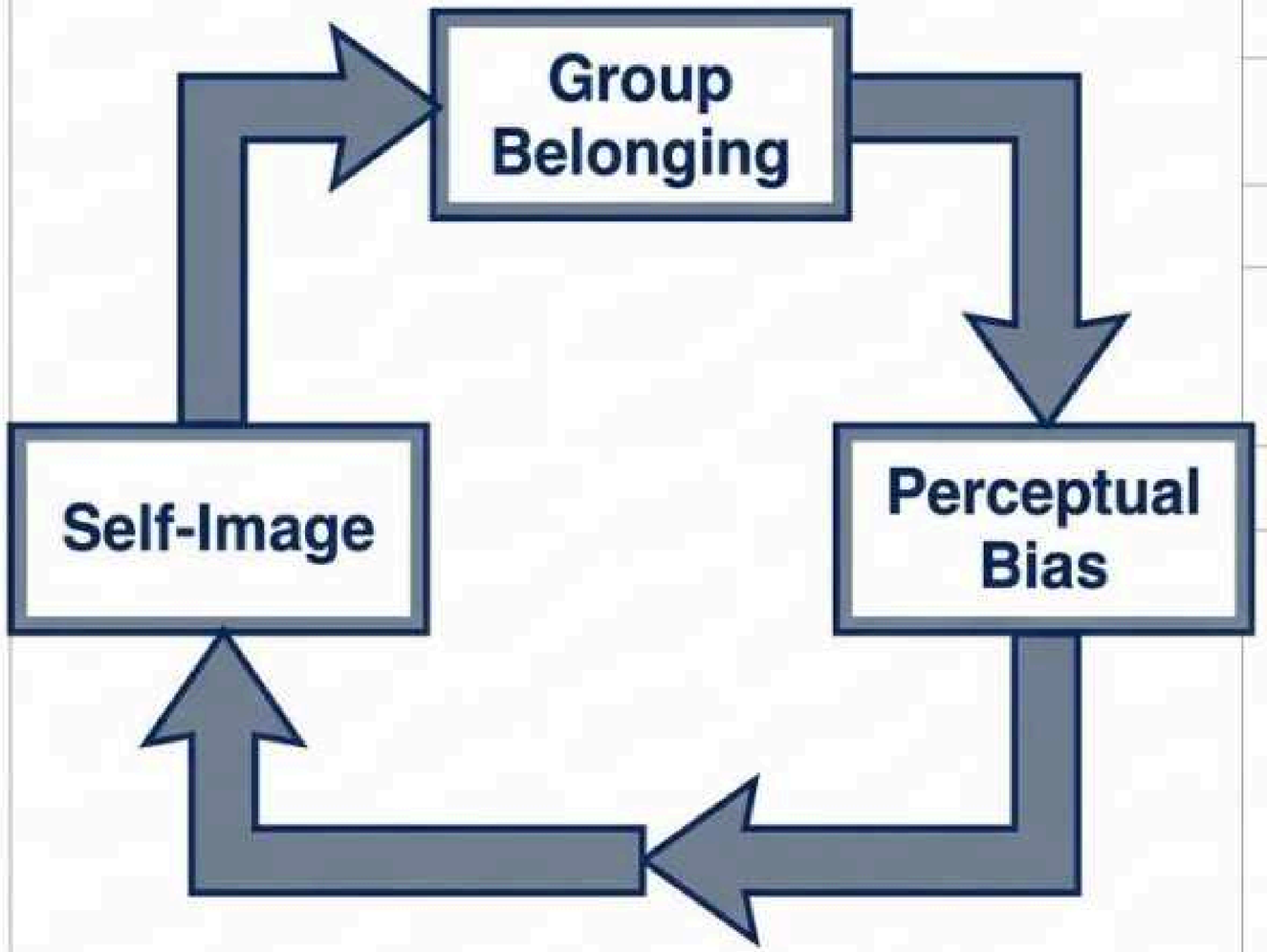
5.5
The Minimal Group Effect



The Phenomenon: Humans divide into ‘us’ and ‘them’ with alarming cognitive ease.	**Experimental Setup:** Schoolboys were divided based on entirely meaningless criteria (an abstract art preference).
Resource Allocation Task: When asked to distribute money between anonymous group members, participants consistently favored their own group.	**Conclusion:** In-group favoritism spontaneously triggers even when group divisions are arbitrary and nothing of real consequence is at stake.

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5.6 Social Identity Theory



Identity Linkage

Individuals derive a significant portion of their self-image from their group memberships.

The Motivation

To maintain a positive self-image, individuals are highly motivated to perceive their own groups as superior.

The Consequences

1. **In-Group Favoritism:** Preferential treatment of one's own.
2. **Out-Group Hostility:** Potential antagonism toward rival factions.
3. **Out-Group Homogeneity Effect:** The cognitive distortion where out-group members are perceived as 'all alike,' while in-group members are recognized as diverse individuals.

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5.7

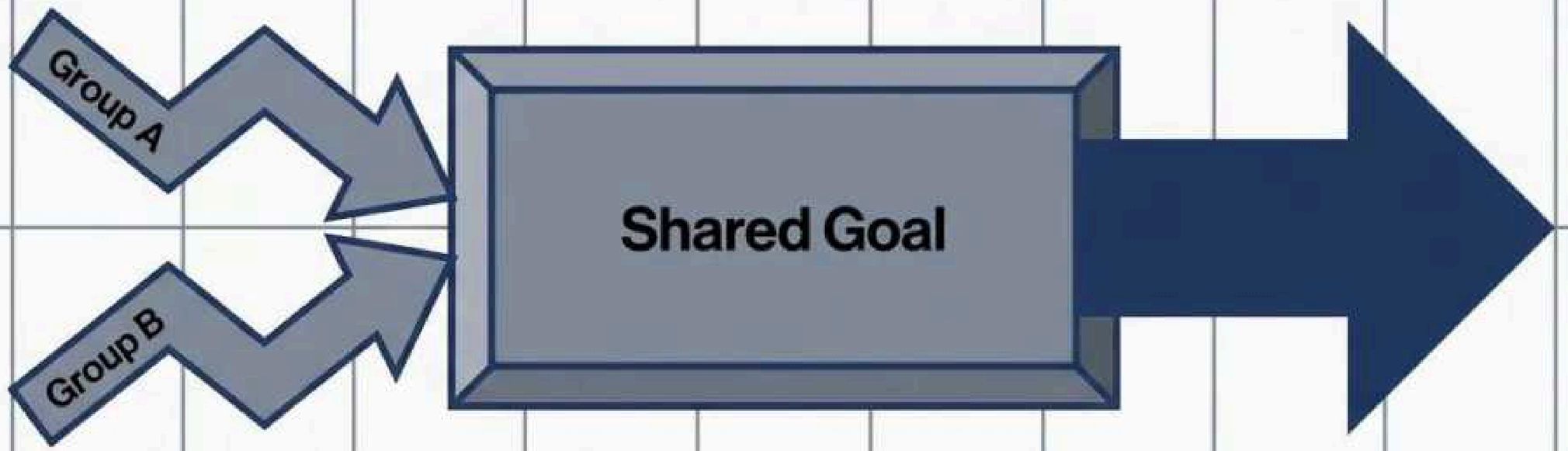
Conflict Over Real Resources

[Group A] + [Group B] + [Scarce Resources] = **Rapid Escalation & Hostility**

Historical Context Box		
The Setting	**The Catalyst**	**The Result**
A classic field study dividing young boys at a summer camp into two isolated groups (the Eagles and the Rattlers).	The groups were forced to compete for scarce prizes and goals.	Rapid environmental deterioration into extreme hostility, manifesting as name-calling, physical raids, and total social segregation (e.g., refusing to share dining spaces).

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5.8 Reducing Hostility via Superordinate Goals



What Fails

Simple social contact (e.g., merely sharing meals) is structurally insufficient to resolve entrenched hostility.

What Works

Superordinate Goals—objectives deeply desired by both groups that can only be achieved through mutual, integrated effort.

Evidence

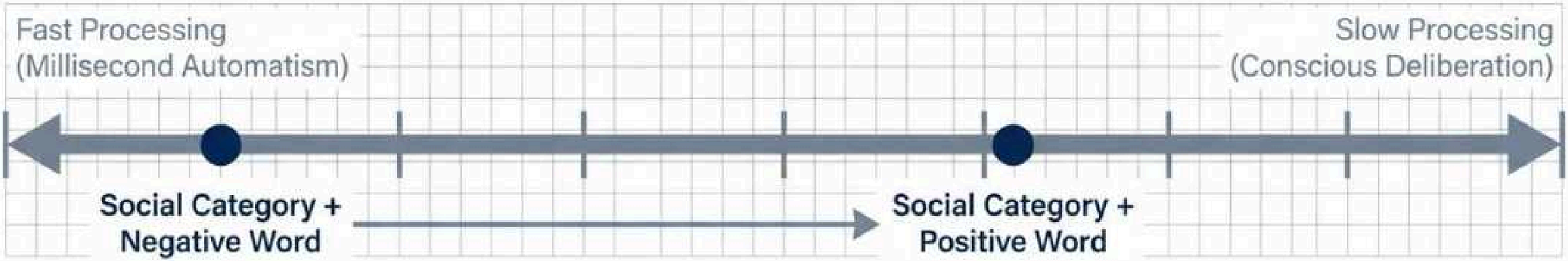
When camp infrastructure failed (a broken water supply, a stuck supply truck), the competing groups had to cooperate to survive.

Outcome

This forced interdependence actively dismantled hostility and organically fostered cross-group friendships.

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5.9
Automatic and Implicit Prejudice



The Mechanism:

Prejudice frequently operates automatically, entirely bypassing conscious intent or stated values.

Measurement:

Implicit Association Testing measures the millisecond speed at which the brain links categories with positive or negative concepts.

Findings:

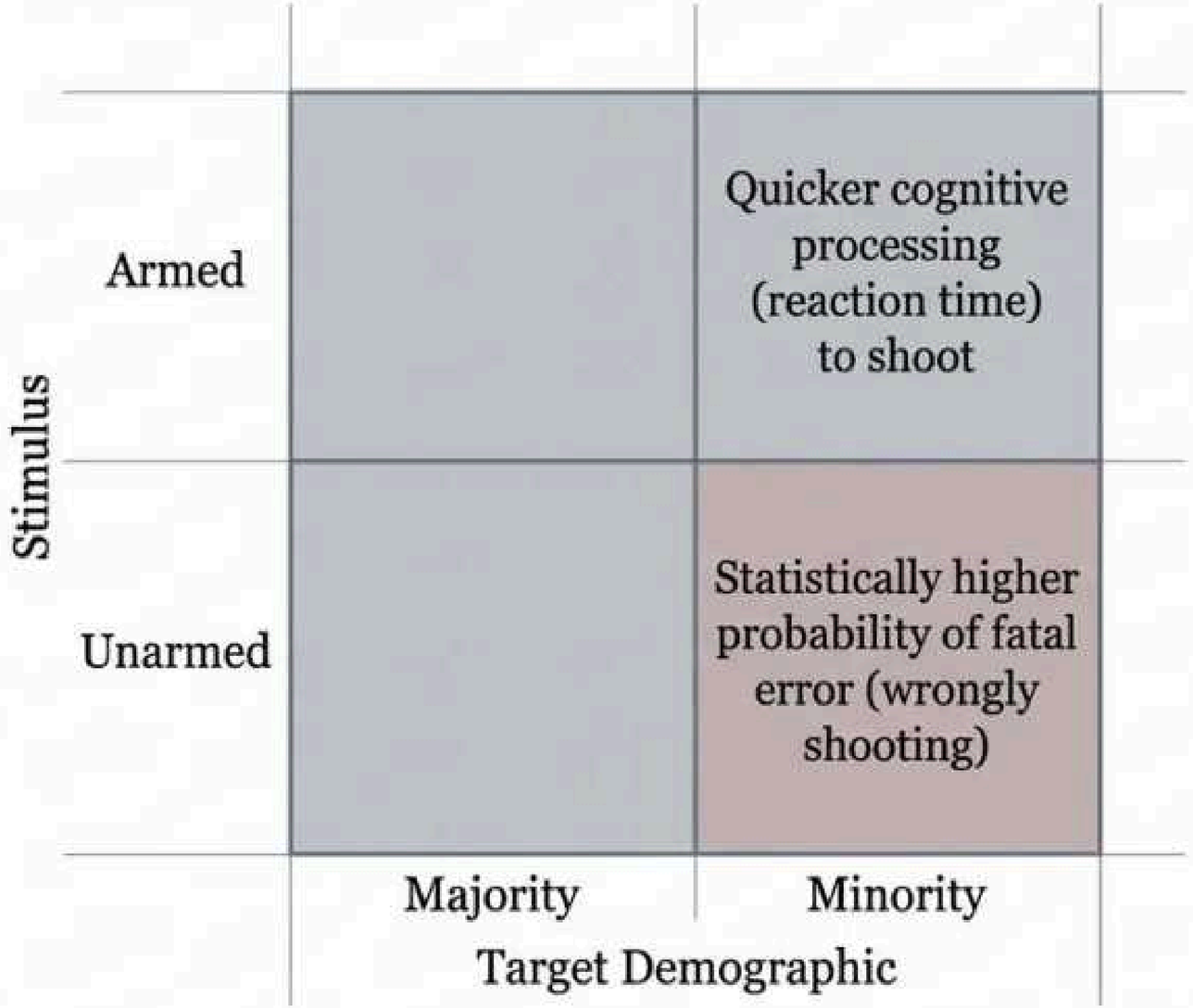
A vast majority of individuals demonstrate faster cognitive pairings that align with pervasive cultural stereotypes.

Academic Caveat:

Implicit scores demonstrate modest stability over time and are weak predictors of isolated individual behaviors. The tool is highly effective for self-reflection, but lacks the determinism required to judge individual character.

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5.10
Shooter Bias in High-Stakes Decisions



The Risk: Implicit biases heavily influence rapid, high-pressure, split-second physiological reactions.

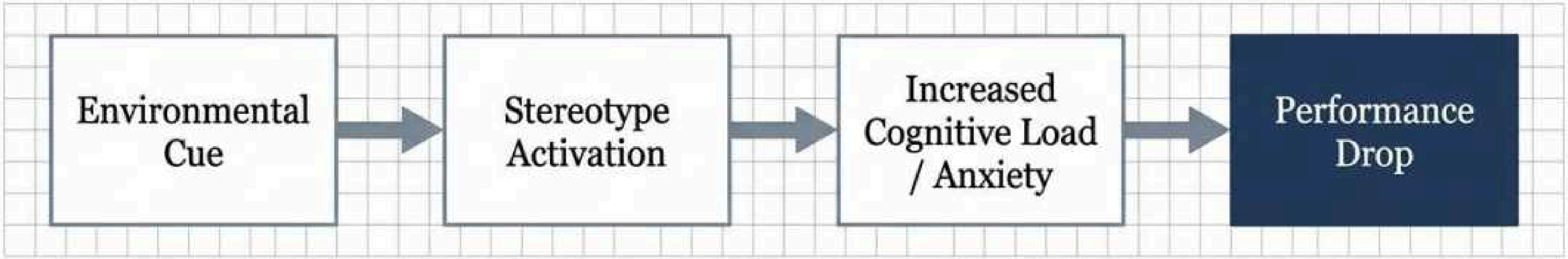
Experimental Paradigm: Video game simulations measuring reaction times and accuracy in decisions to shoot or not shoot diverse targets.

Reaction Speed: Participants consistently demonstrated faster cognitive processing when shooting armed minority targets compared to armed majority targets.

Catastrophic Error: Participants were statistically more likely to make the fatal error of wrongly shooting unarmed minority targets.

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5.11
Stereotype Threat



The Phenomenon:

Pervasive stereotypes profoundly impact the psychological state and physiological performance of the people they target.

The Mechanism:

Framing a difficult task (like a verbal exam) as a measure of innate ability triggers acute anxiety in targeted students about confirming a negative cultural stereotype.

Initial Evidence:

This internally generated anxiety consumes cognitive bandwidth, resulting in significantly lower task performance.

⚠ Scientific Nuance:

Subsequent academic replications have yielded smaller, less consistent effects. This phenomenon must be interpreted with analytical caution.

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5.12 The Dual Faces of Ambivalent Sexism

Concept: Prejudice is rarely monolithic; it presents in multifaceted, ambivalent ways.

Hostile Bias	Benevolent Bias
Open, aggressive antagonism and explicit negativity directed toward a specific demographic (e.g., women).	Attitudes that feel subjectively positive or kind to the holder, but rely entirely on restrictive, patronizing stereotypes (e.g., treating women as fragile entities requiring protection).

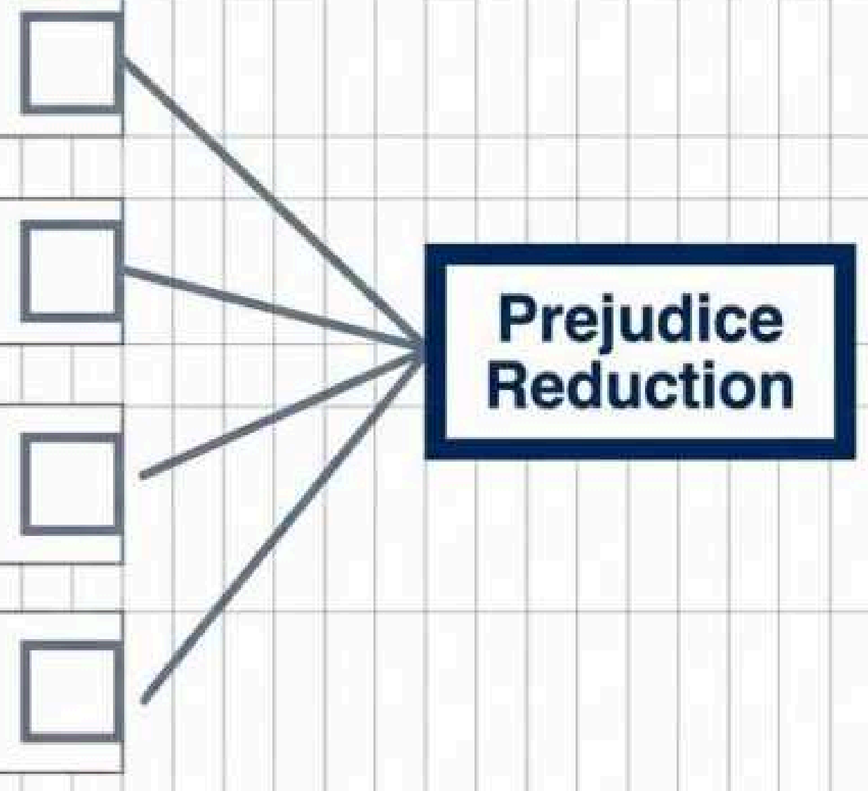
Synthesis: Both forms of bias are highly prevalent, and both operate systematically to restrict autonomy and narrow opportunity for the targeted group.

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5.13
The Contact Hypothesis and Efficacy

Core Hypothesis: Intergroup contact effectively dismantles prejudice, optimized by four structural conditions:

1. Equal status between the groups.
2. Common, shared goals.
3. Active, sustained cooperation.
4. Institutional or authoritative support.



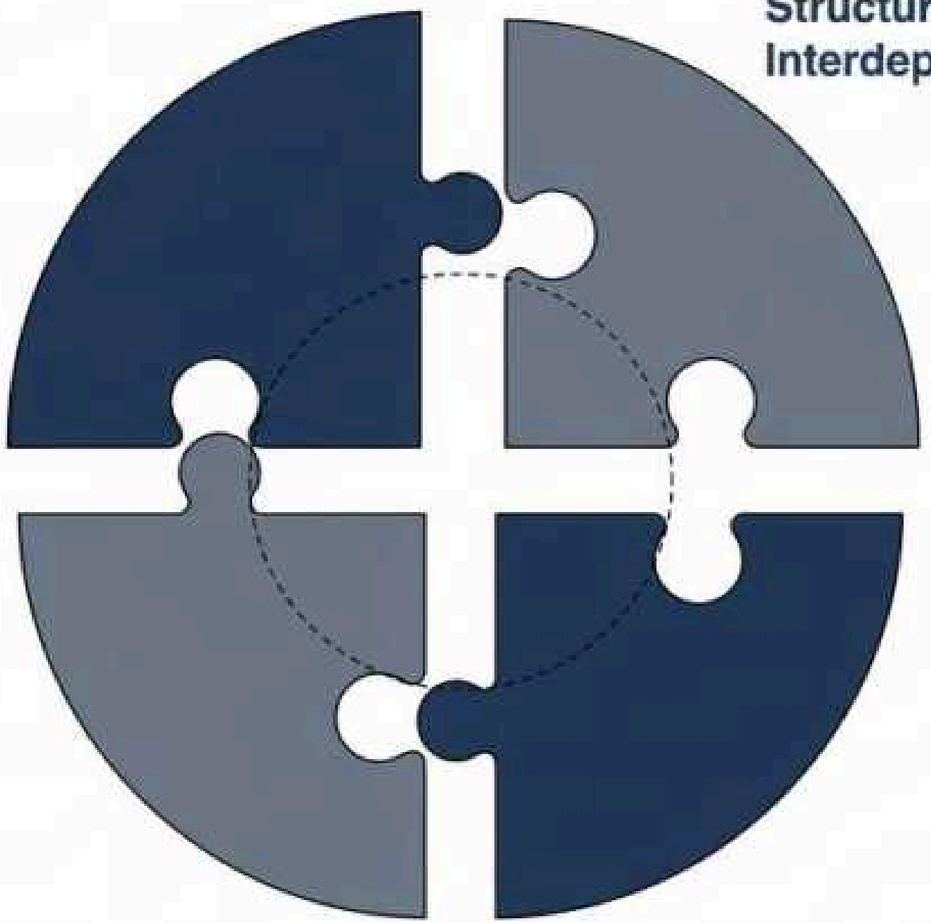
Meta-Analytical Evidence: A comprehensive review of over 500 independent studies confirms the robust efficacy of this approach.

Key Insight:

Key Insight: Contact is so powerful that it generally succeeds in reducing prejudice even when the four ideal structural conditions are only partially satisfied.

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5.14 Applied Interdependence: The Jigsaw Approach



The Context:

Practical interventions developed to ease institutional tensions (e.g., post-desegregation schooling).

The Methodology:

Individuals are placed into small, mixed-demographic groups.

Structural Interdependence:

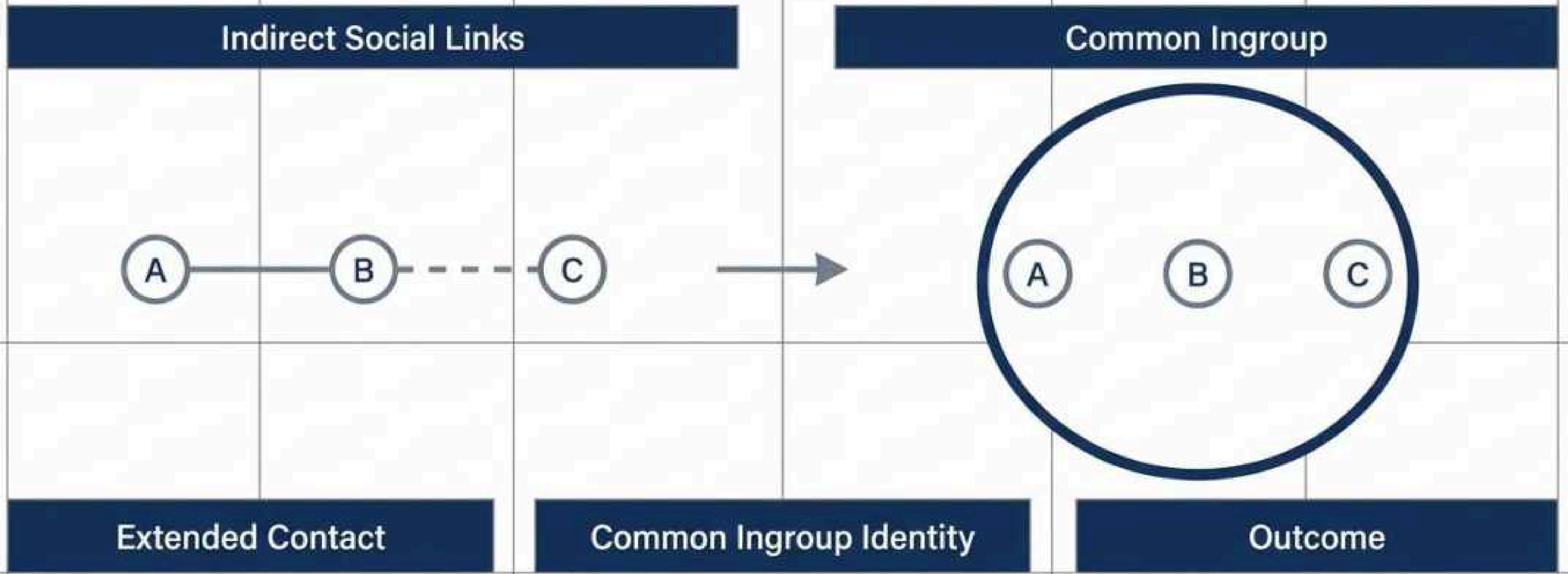
Learning materials are divided so that each member holds one exclusive, necessary piece of the lesson. Success fundamentally requires reliance on every other member.

The Result:

By structurally replacing competition with mandatory cooperation, intergroup affinity naturally increases, and peer likability rises.

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5.15 Extended Contact and Shared Identity



Extended Contact

Direct, face-to-face interaction is not strictly necessary. Simply having an in-group friend who maintains an out-group friendship can significantly improve individual attitudes.

Common Ingroup Identity

Encouraging competing factions to reconceptualize themselves as members of a larger, shared superordinate group (e.g., transitioning from rival departments to a unified school or team).

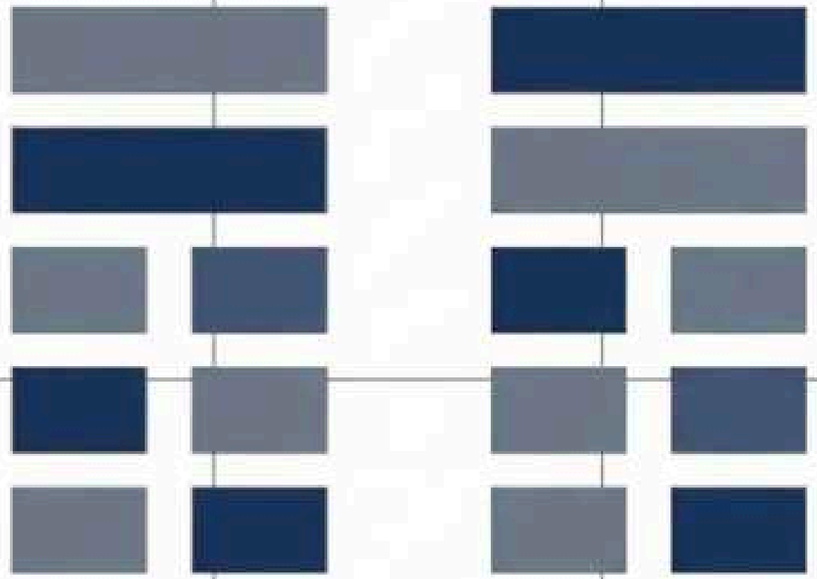
Outcome

When an overarching identity successfully takes precedence, historical sub-group boundaries lose their divisive psychological power.

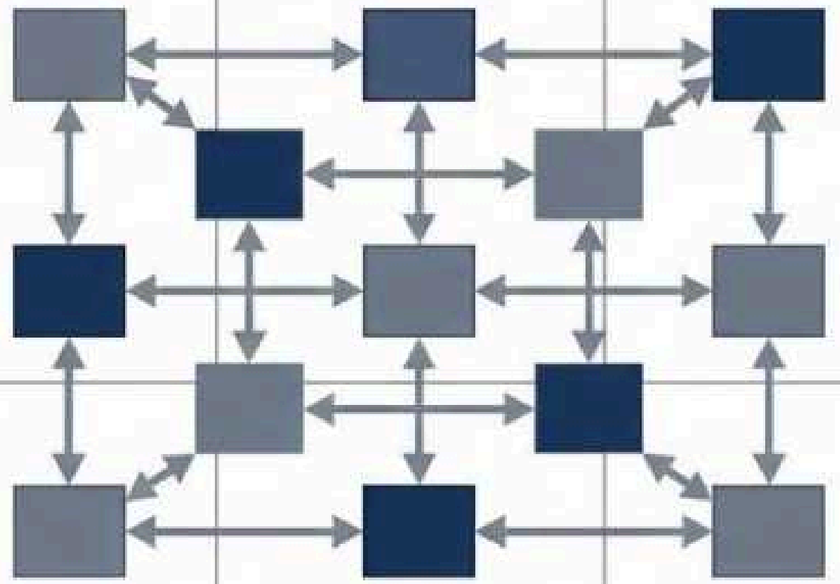
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5.16 The Role of Institutional Structure

Segregated Hierarchy



Integrated Matrix



Macro-Level Influence

Individual psychological attitudes are deeply shaped by the structural realities of the institutions they inhabit.

Historical Military Research

Studies conducted during wartime analyzed the racial attitudes of soldiers operating within different structural frameworks.

The Findings

Personnel stationed within structurally integrated units held significantly more favorable, collaborative views of minority peers compared to those stationed in segregated units.

Conclusion

Institutional policy serves as a primary driver of individual psychological change.

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5.17 Evidence-Based Evaluation of Interventions



The Need for Rigor: A vast number of commercial prejudice-reduction programs lack any rigorous empirical testing.

High Efficacy: Programs rooted in sustained cooperation and structured contact possess the strongest evidentiary support and drive behavioral change.

Low/Temporary Efficacy: One-time interventions (e.g., standard diversity workshops, single lectures) frequently produce only superficial, short-term shifts in self-reported attitudes.

The Gap: Short-term awareness interventions rarely translate into verifiable, long-term changes in actual behavior.

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5.18
Personal Strategies for Bias Mitigation

1. Cognitive Awareness

Actively notice the moment you begin generalizing an entire demographic group based on highly limited, anecdotal data.

2. Counter-Stereotyping

Intentionally curate and seek out examples, data points, and relationships that directly contradict prevailing cultural stereotypes.

3. Structural Standardization

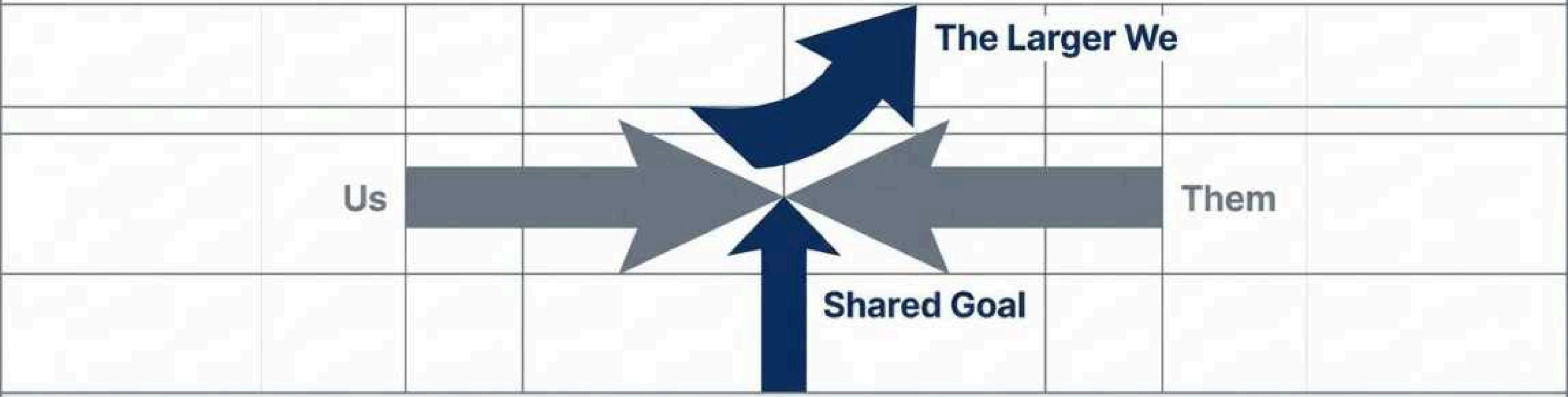
Utilize objective, predetermined criteria for critical evaluations (e.g., hiring rubrics, grading metrics) to systematically eliminate the ambiguity where “gut feelings” thrive.

4. Active Confrontation

Speak up against biased remarks. Empirical research indicates that confronting prejudice actively establishes new social norms, effectively altering future group behavior.

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5.19 | The Malleability of Intergroup Conflict



Core Principle

Intergroup conflict is a common, predictable psychological phenomenon—but it is not inevitable.

Psychological Flexibility

The exact same cognitive processes that effortlessly divide populations into distinct factions can be harnessed to forge a larger, inclusive identity.

The Ultimate Catalyst

The single most powerful mechanism for overcoming entrenched human division is sustained, mandatory cooperation toward a superordinate goal that holds critical, undeniable value for all parties involved.

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5.20 Synthesis Exercise & Next Steps

1. Identify: Think of a specific social, professional, or demographic group you belong to, and a corresponding rival group.

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2. Acknowledge: Write down exactly two functional strengths or positive attributes of each group.

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3. Synthesize: Identify one highly meaningful, superordinate goal that both of these groups could realistically share and collaborate on.

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Looking Ahead: The forthcoming module (Lecture 6) will pivot from the mechanics of conflict to the psychology of attraction, aggression, and prosocial helping behaviors.

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