

The Person in Psychology: The Importance of Idiographics and Nomothetics

Emorie D. Beck, Ph.D.

University of California, Davis

beck-lab.ucdavis.edu



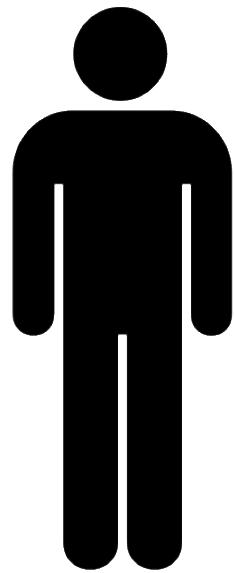
@EmorieBeck



Description

Prediction

Explanation



Thoughts

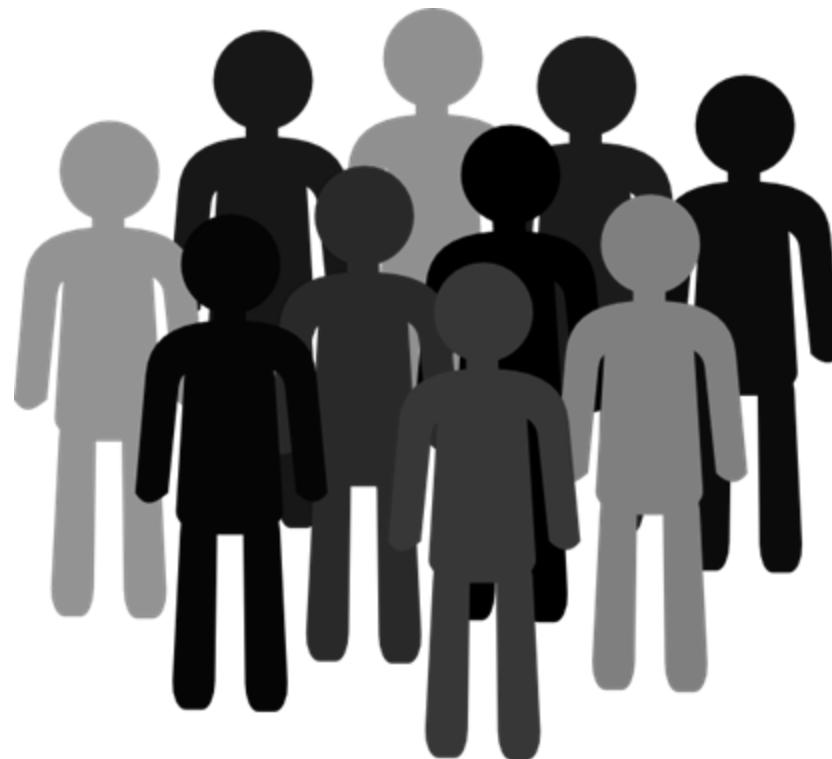
Feelings

Behaviors

Description

Prediction

Explanation



Thoughts

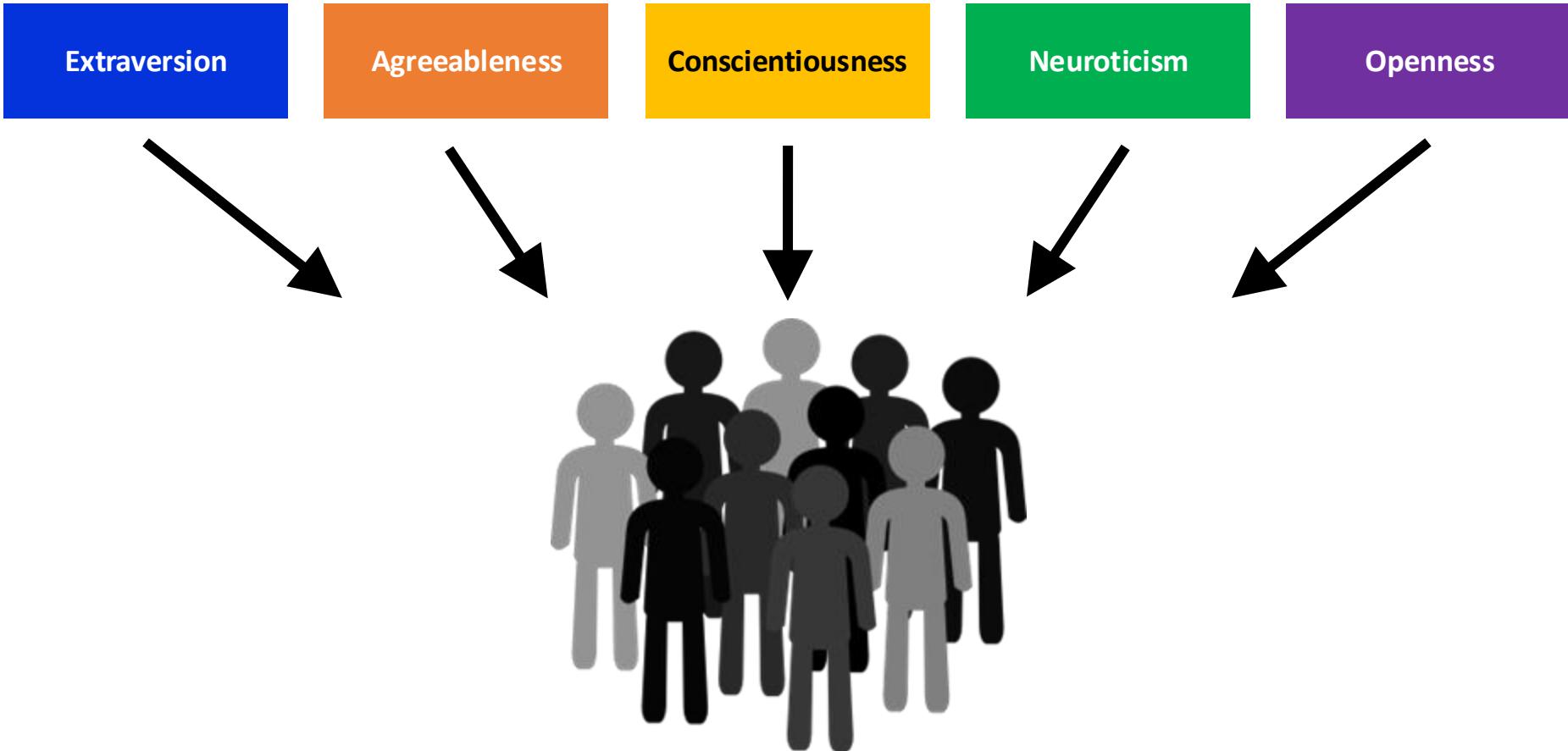
Feelings

Behaviors

What is personality?

“Personality refers to those **characteristics** of the person that account for **consistent patterns of feelings, thinking, and behaving.**”

(Pervin, Cervone & John, 2005, p. 6)



**Nomothetic
Between-Person
Variable Centered**

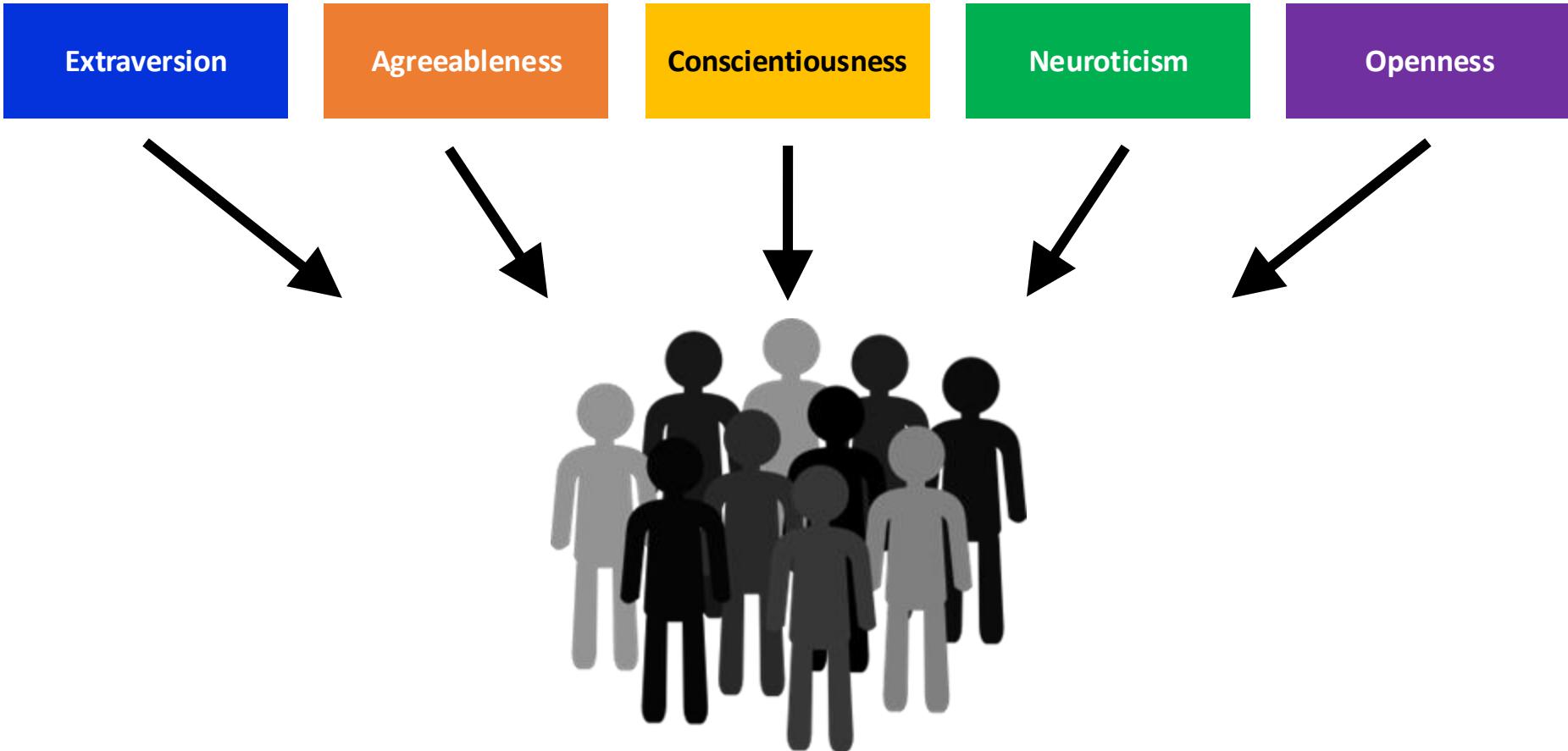


EJP
@EJPBlog

"We assessed personality with the Big Five - As seductive as it is to make such statements, they are only a bit true... personality is not just the Big Five." Read [@rauthmann](#) blog post and memes here. ejp-blog.com/blog/2024/9/17...



12:07 PM · Sep 17, 2024 · 275 Views

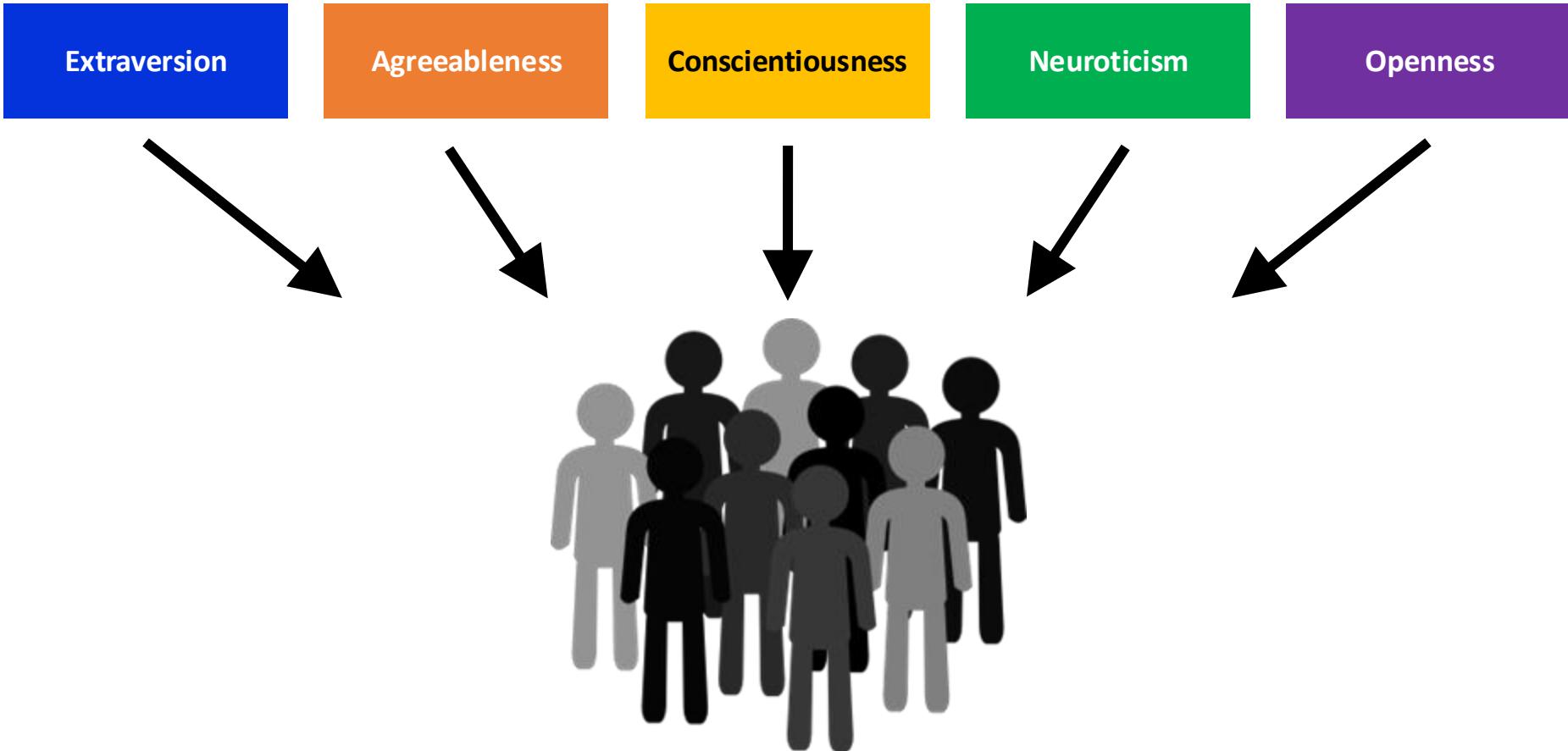


**Nomothetic
Between-Person
Variable Centered**

What is personality?

Personality is what personality tests test.

(Jack Wright, personal communication, 2013)



**Nomothetic
Between-Person
Variable Centered**

What is personality?

“Personality is the **dynamic organization** within the individual of those **psychophysical systems** that determine his **unique adjustments to the environment**.”



(Allport, 1937, p. 32)

e.g., Allport, 1937, 1961, 1968

What is personality?

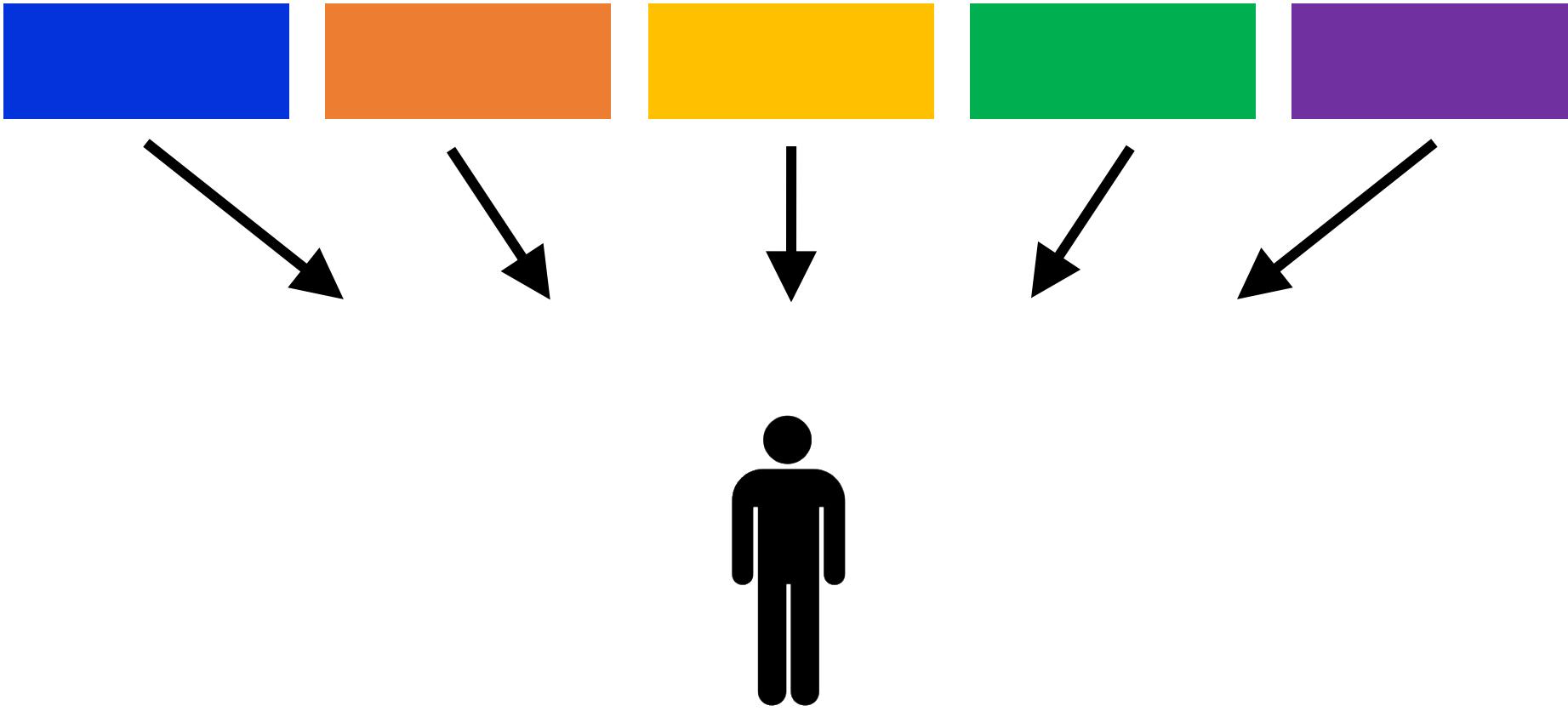
Personality is what personality tests test.

(Jack Wright, personal communication, 2013)

Individuals
(idiographic)

Contexts & Time

Dynamics &
Systems



**Idiographic
Person-Specific
 $N = 1$**

e.g., Beck & Jackson, 2020a, *JPSP*; 2020b, *CDPS*

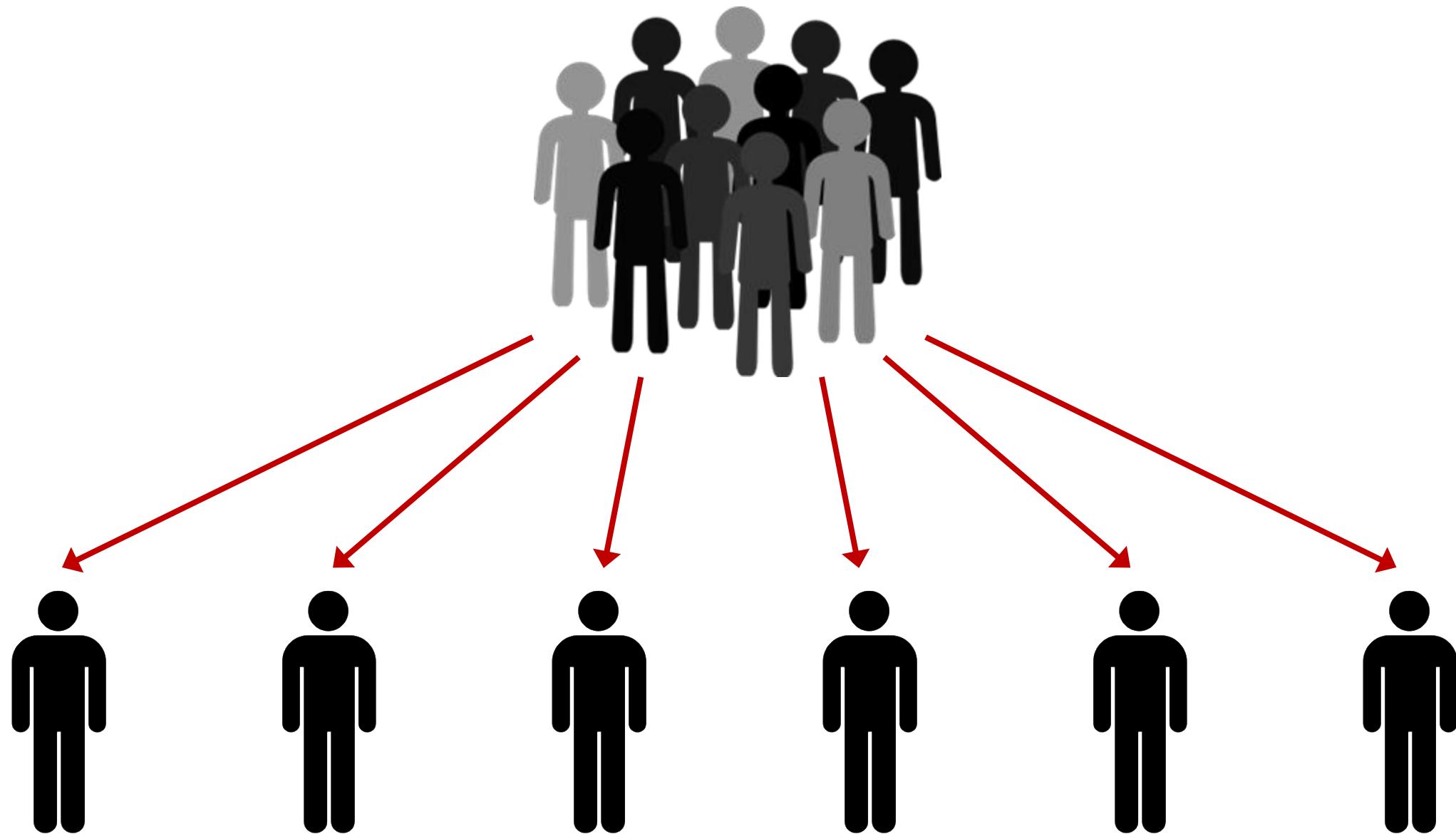
FOCUS ARTICLE

A Manifesto on Psychology as Idiographic Science: Bringing the Person Back Into Scientific Psychology, This Time Forever

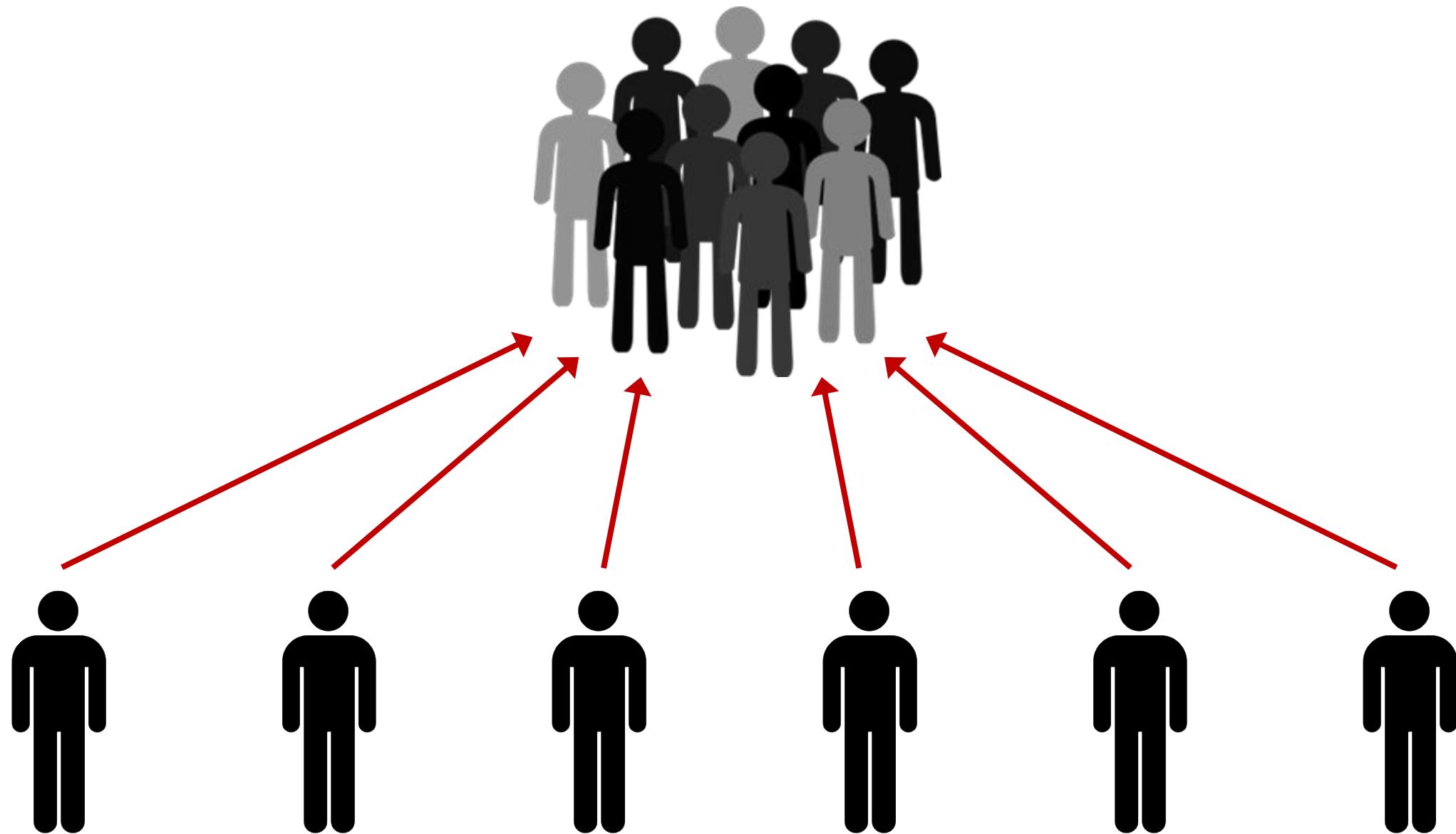


Peter C. M. Molenaar
*Department of Psychology
University of Amsterdam*

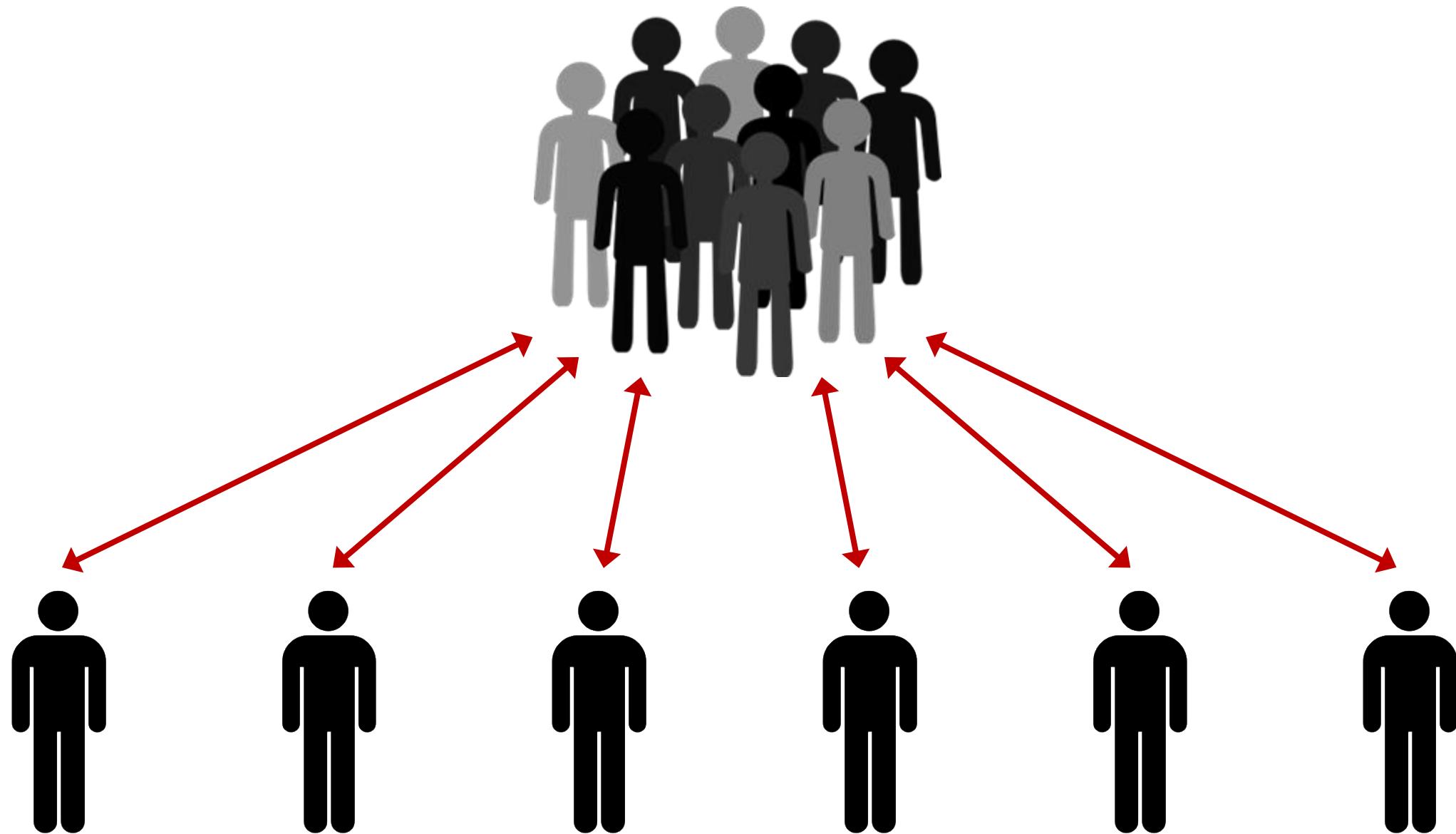
Bottom-Up Psychological Science



Bottom-Up Psychological Science



Bottom-Up Psychological Science





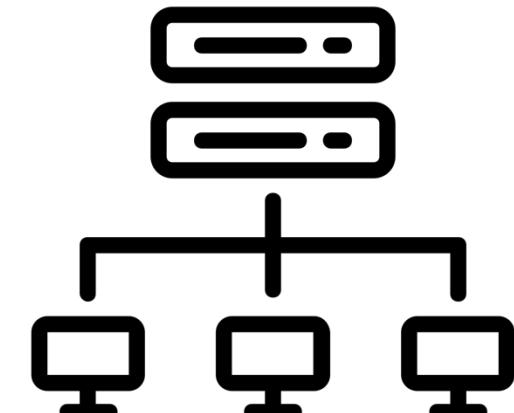
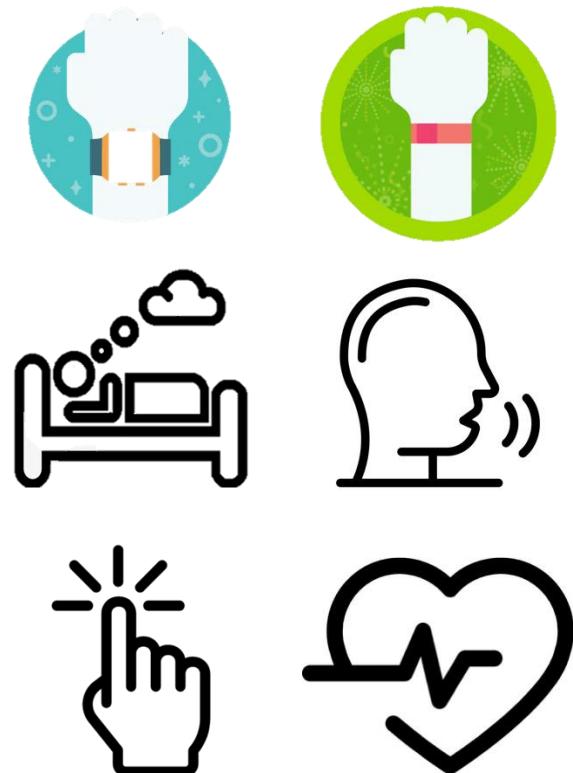
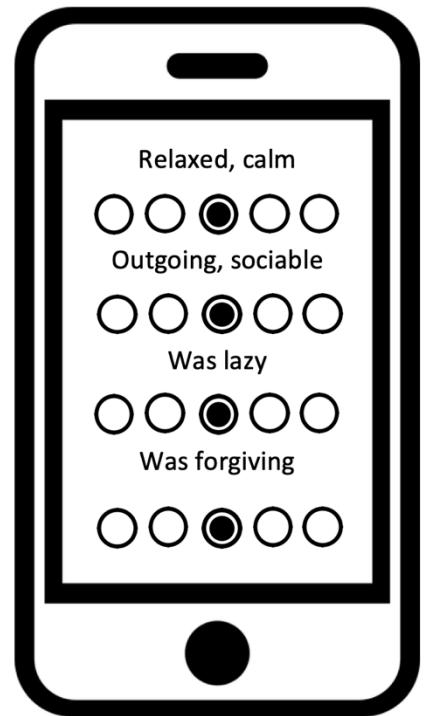
Modern Opportunities for $N = 1$ Research

ESM / EMA

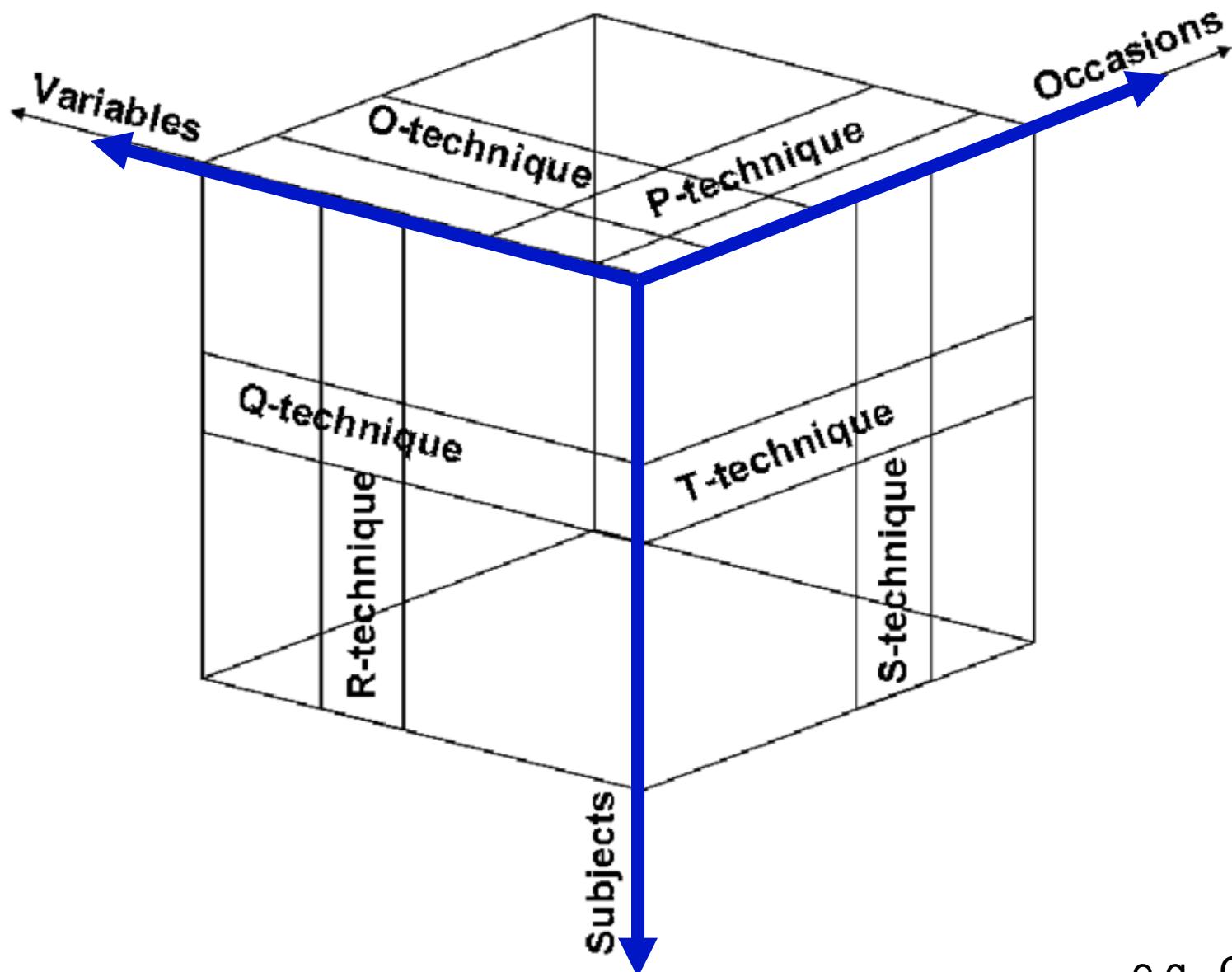
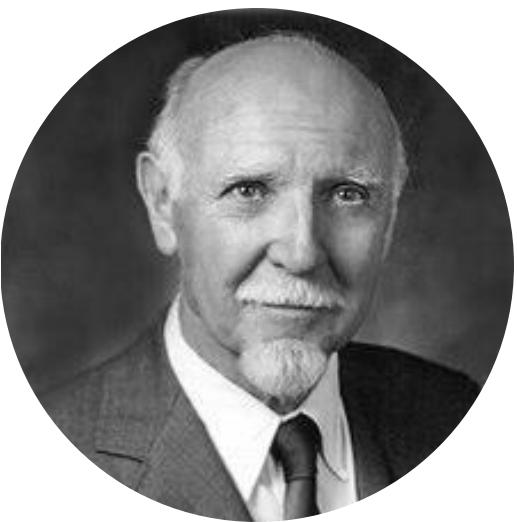
Mobile Sensing

Open-Ended
Responses

Computing
Power

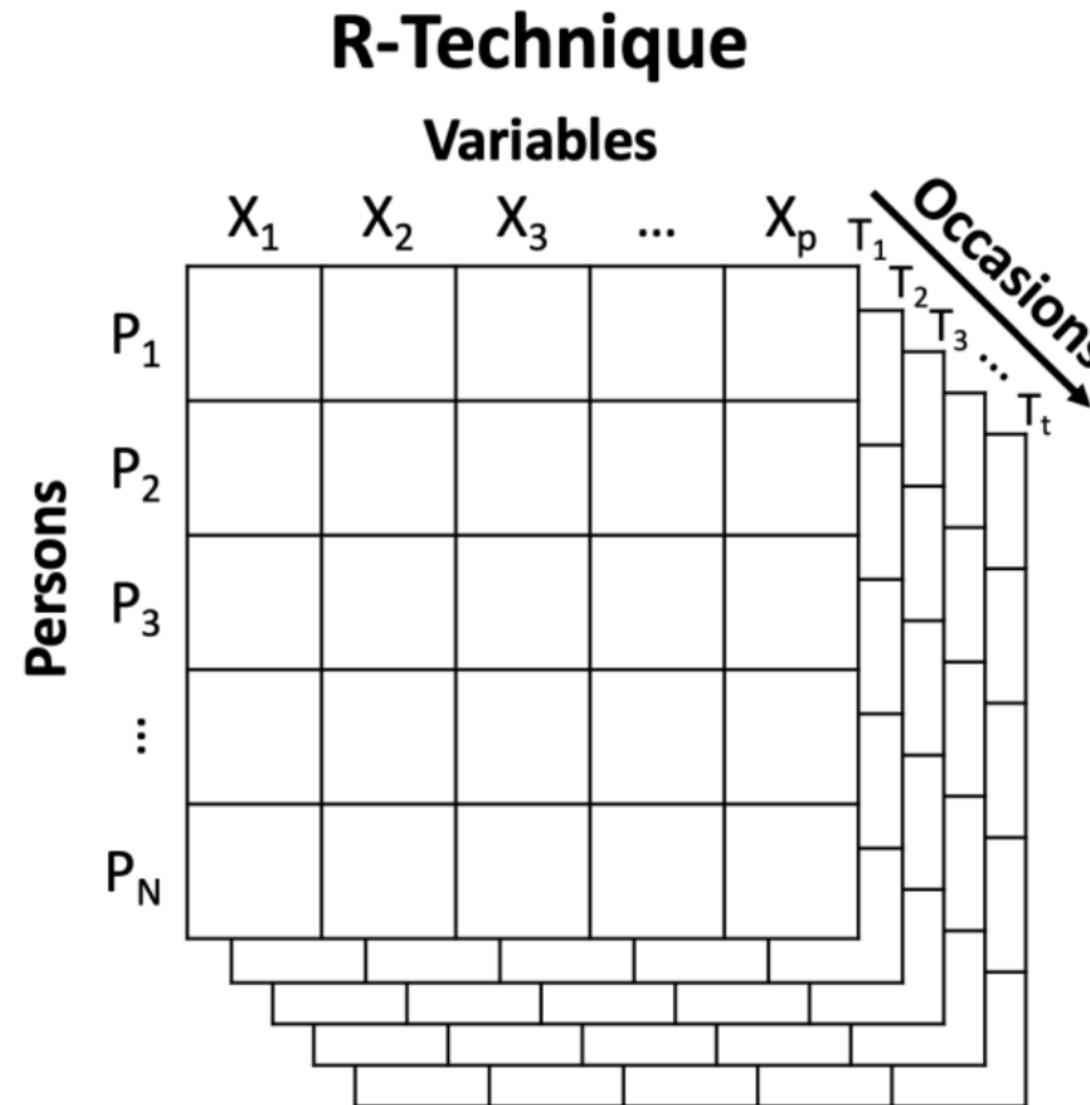


What is personality?



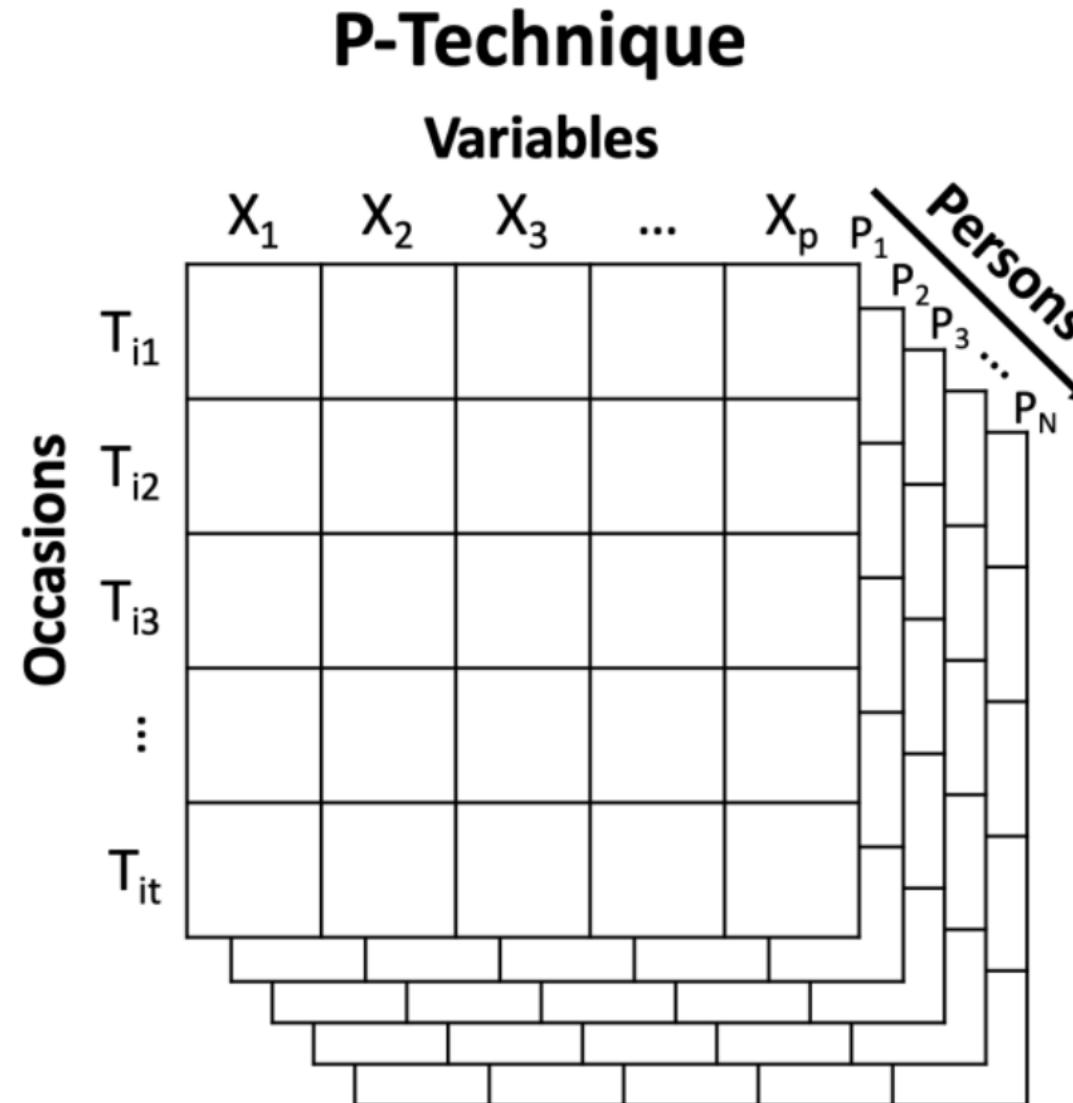
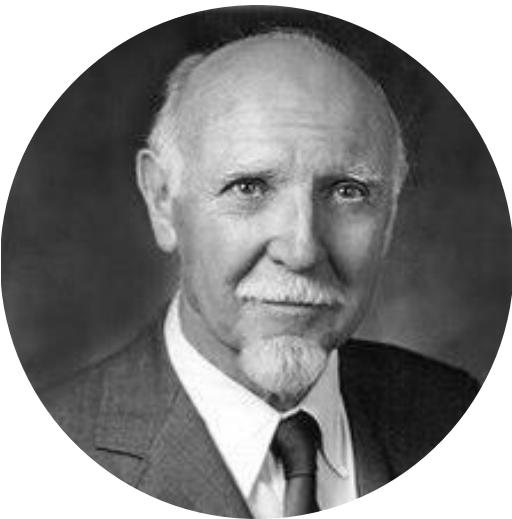
e.g., Cattell, 1943, 1946, 1957

What is personality?



e.g., Cattell, 1943, 1946, 1957

What is personality?



e.g., Cattell, 1943, 1946, 1957



What is personality?

if

...

then

Context

Situation perception

Experience

Etc.

Behavior

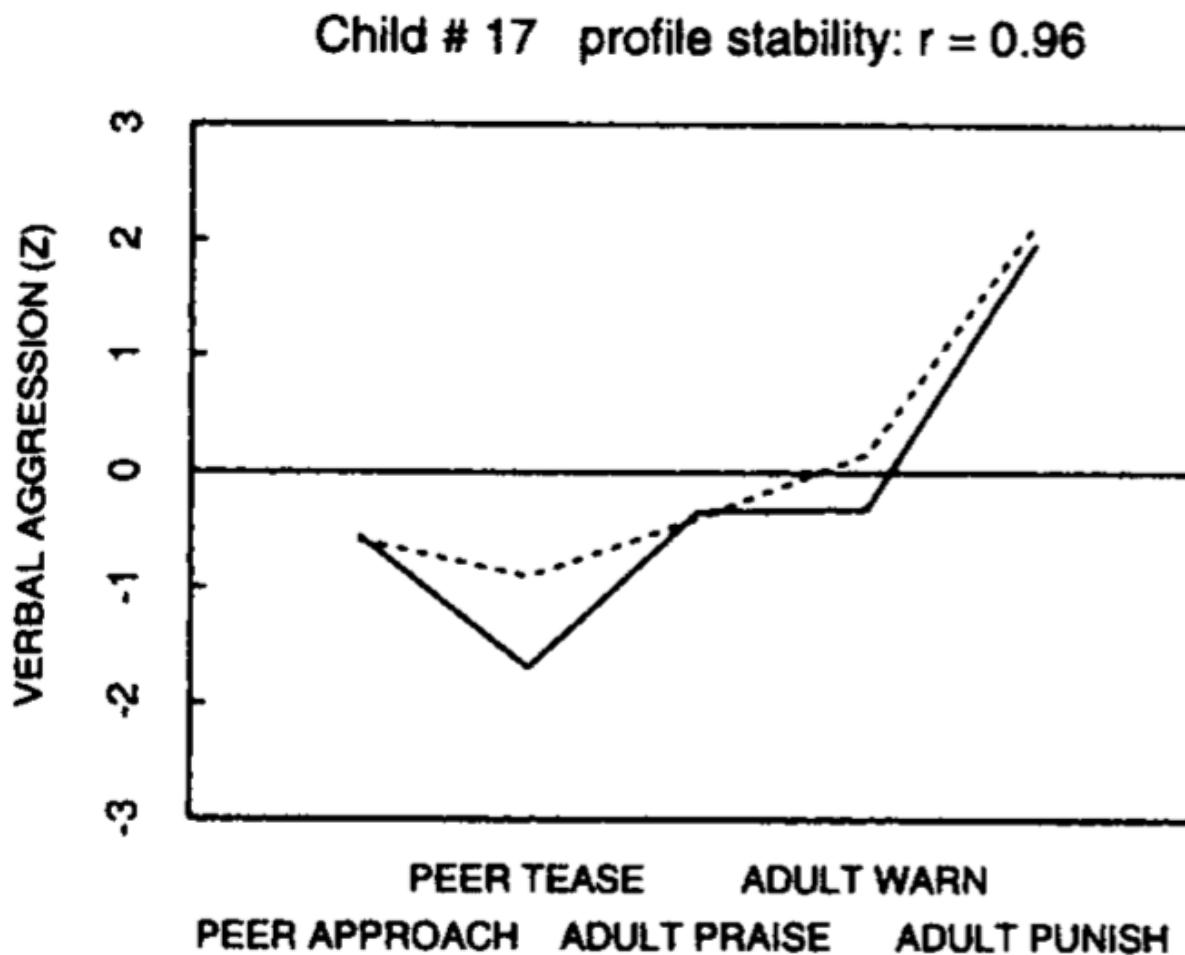
Experience

Etc.

e.g., Mischel & Shoda, 2005; Wright & Mischel, 1987;
Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1993; Mischel, 1973



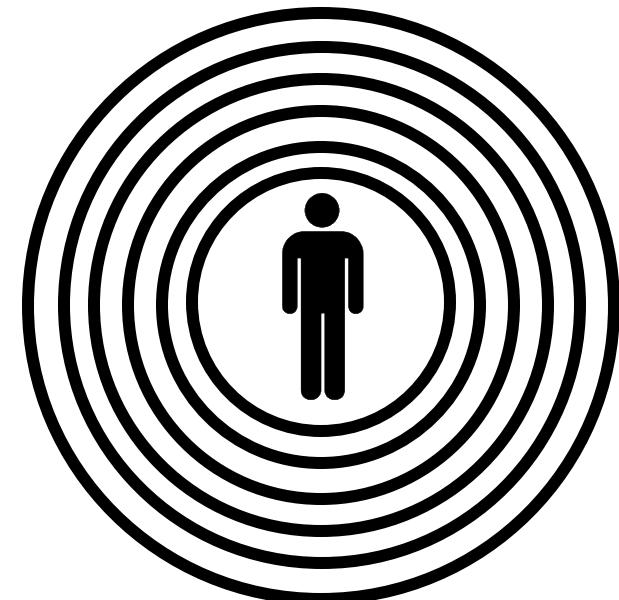
What is personality?



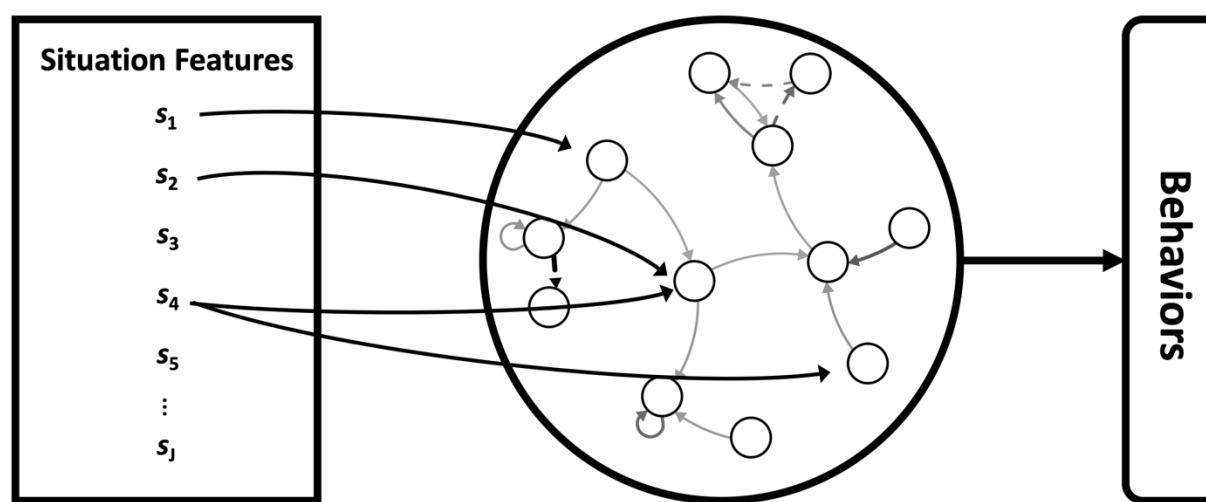
e.g., Mischel & Shoda, 2005; Wright & Mischel, 1987;
Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1993; Mischel, 1973

Persons in Context: Systems Theories

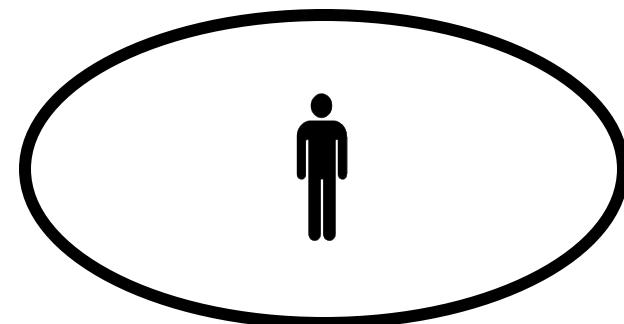
Ecological Systems Theory
(e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979)



Cognitive Affective Personality System
(e.g., Mischel & Shoda, 1995)



Field Theory
(e.g., Lewin, 1936)

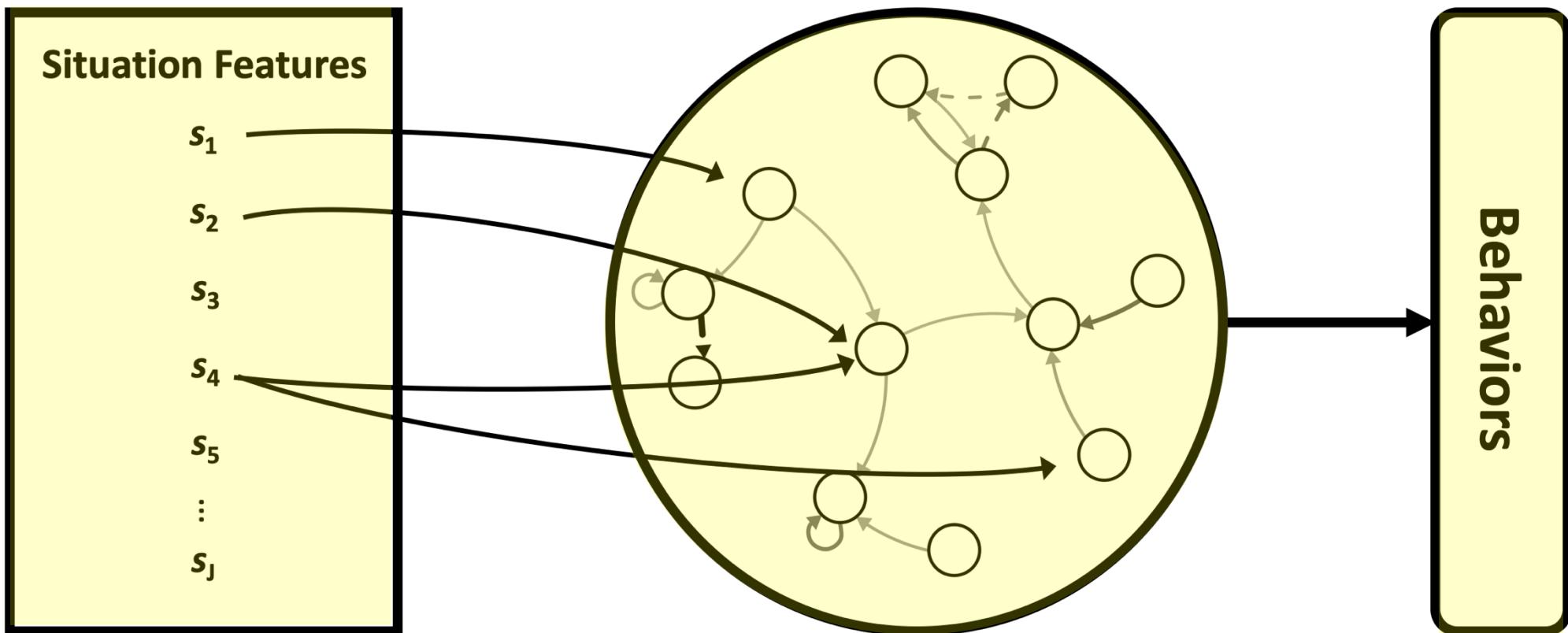


e.g., Lewin, 1936

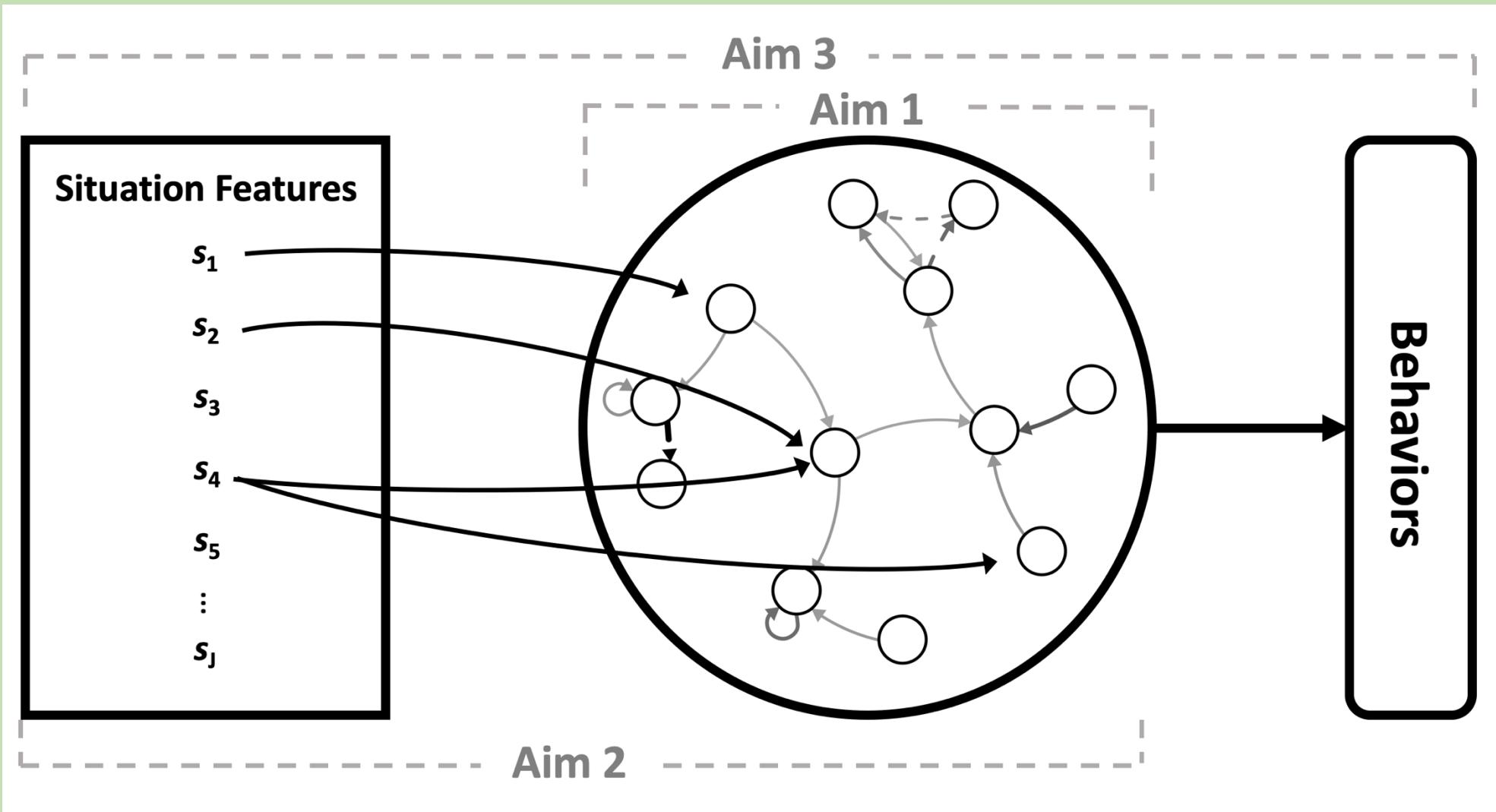


What is personality?

A Cognitive Affective Processing System (CAPS)



e.g., Mischel & Shoda, 2005; Wright & Mischel, 1987;
Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1993; Mischel, 1973



Aim 1: Bringing the individual back in the study of personality structure and change.

Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

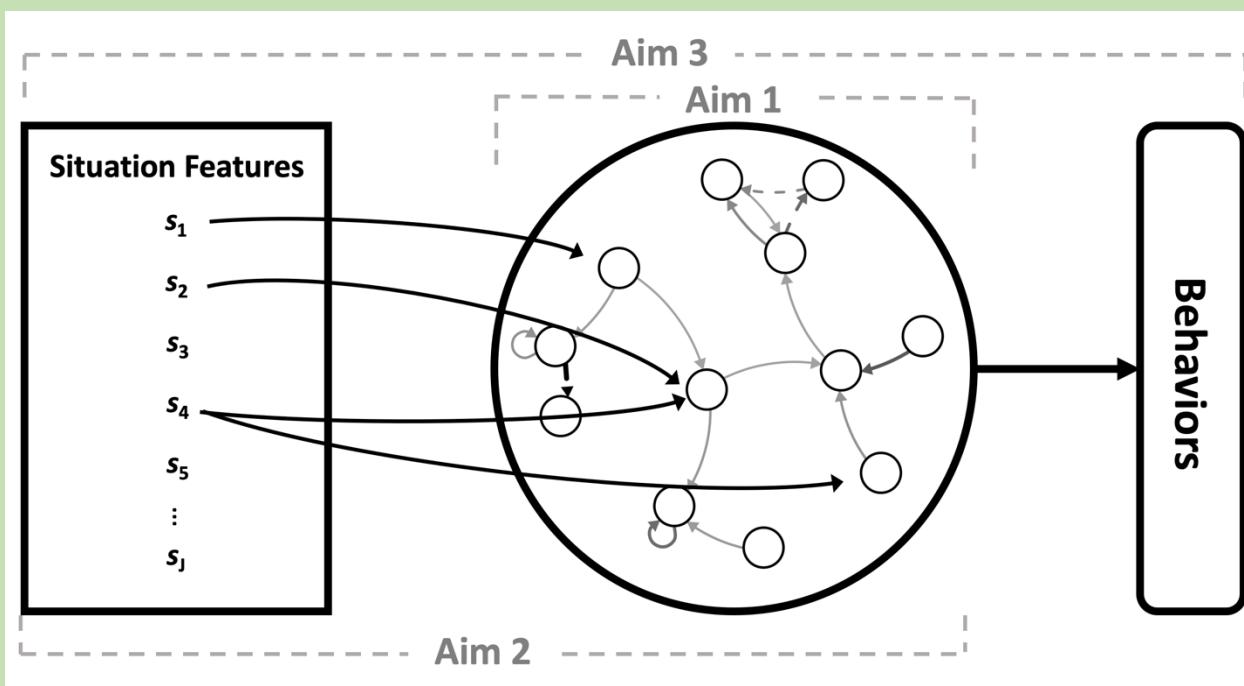
Aim 2: Using longitudinal data to understand how well-being unfolds across contexts.

Beck, et al.
(revision submitted, NHB)

Aim 3: Predicting behavior using machine learning.

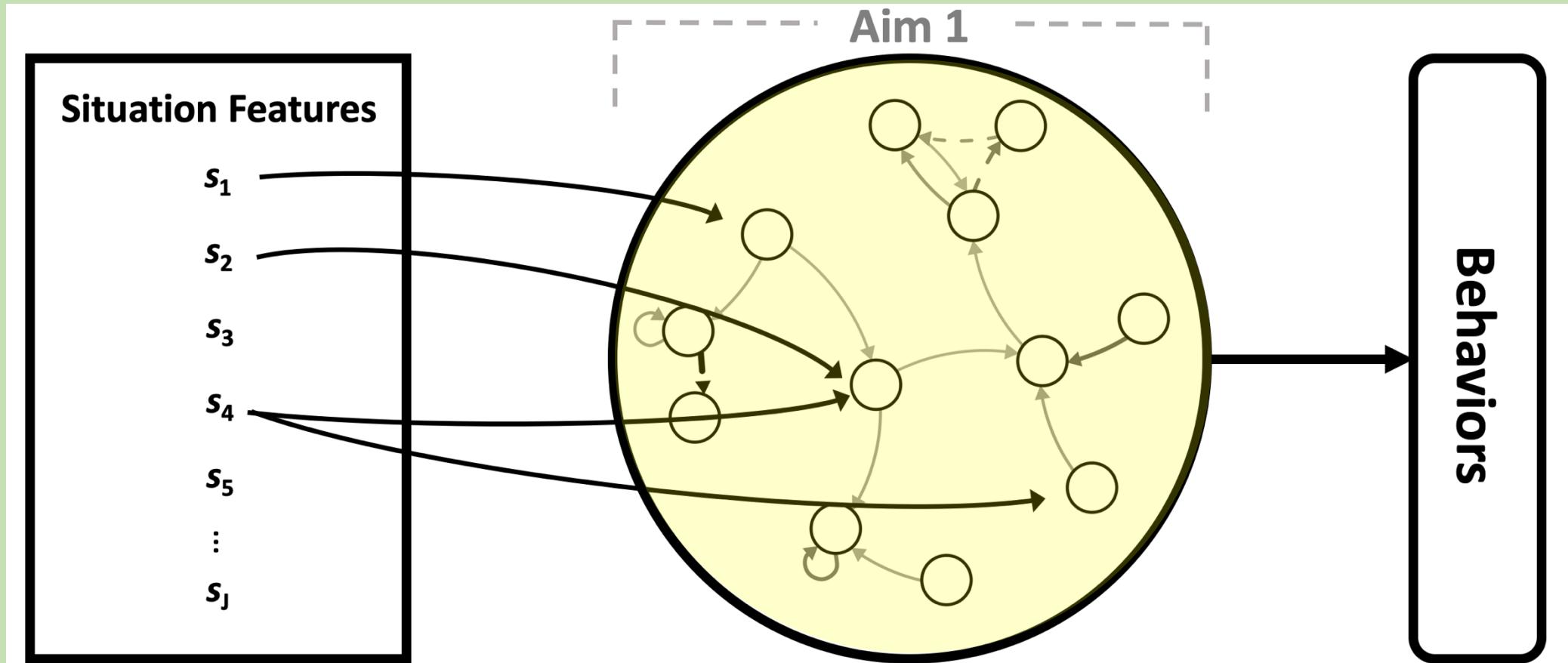
Beck & Jackson
(2023, *Psych Science*)

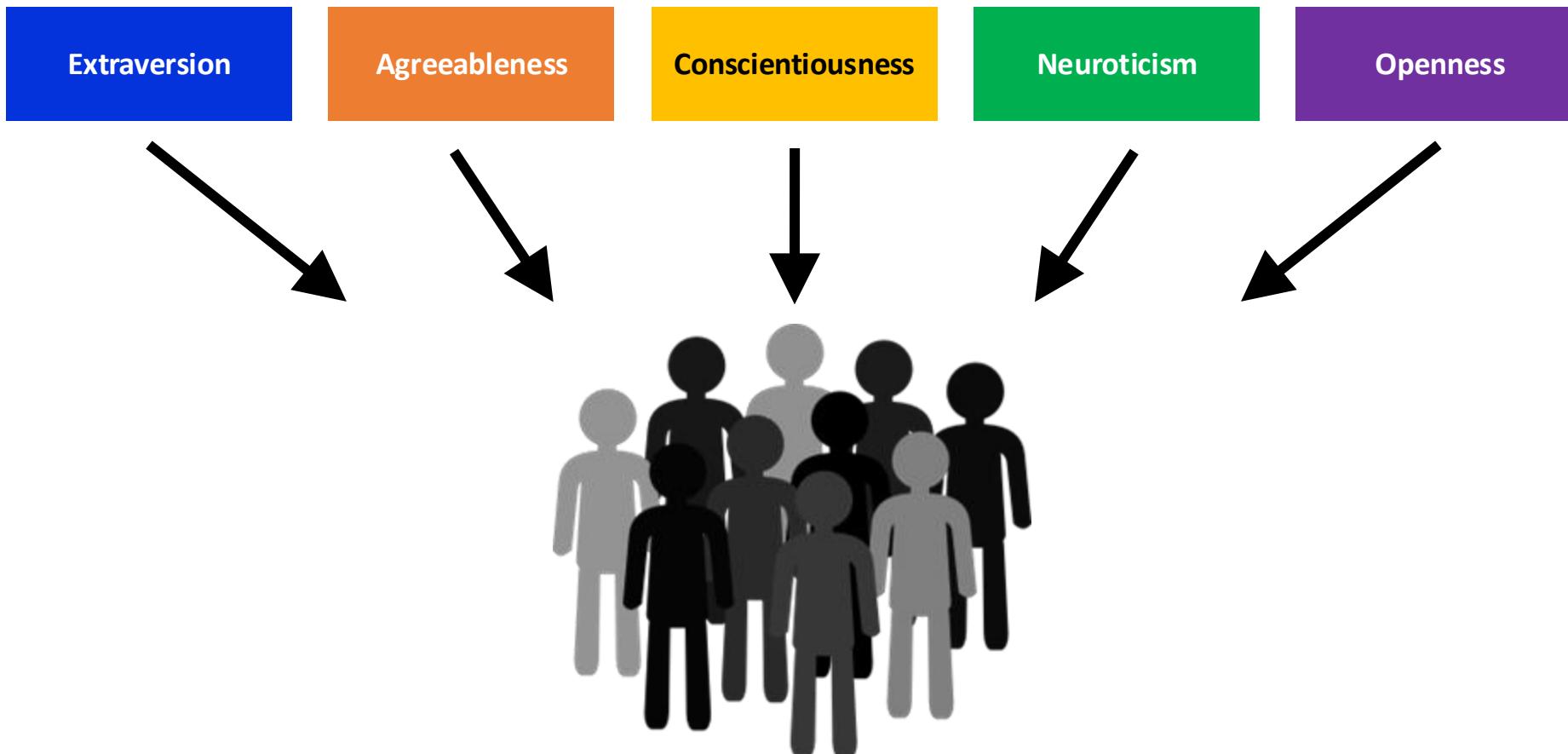
Ongoing Directions



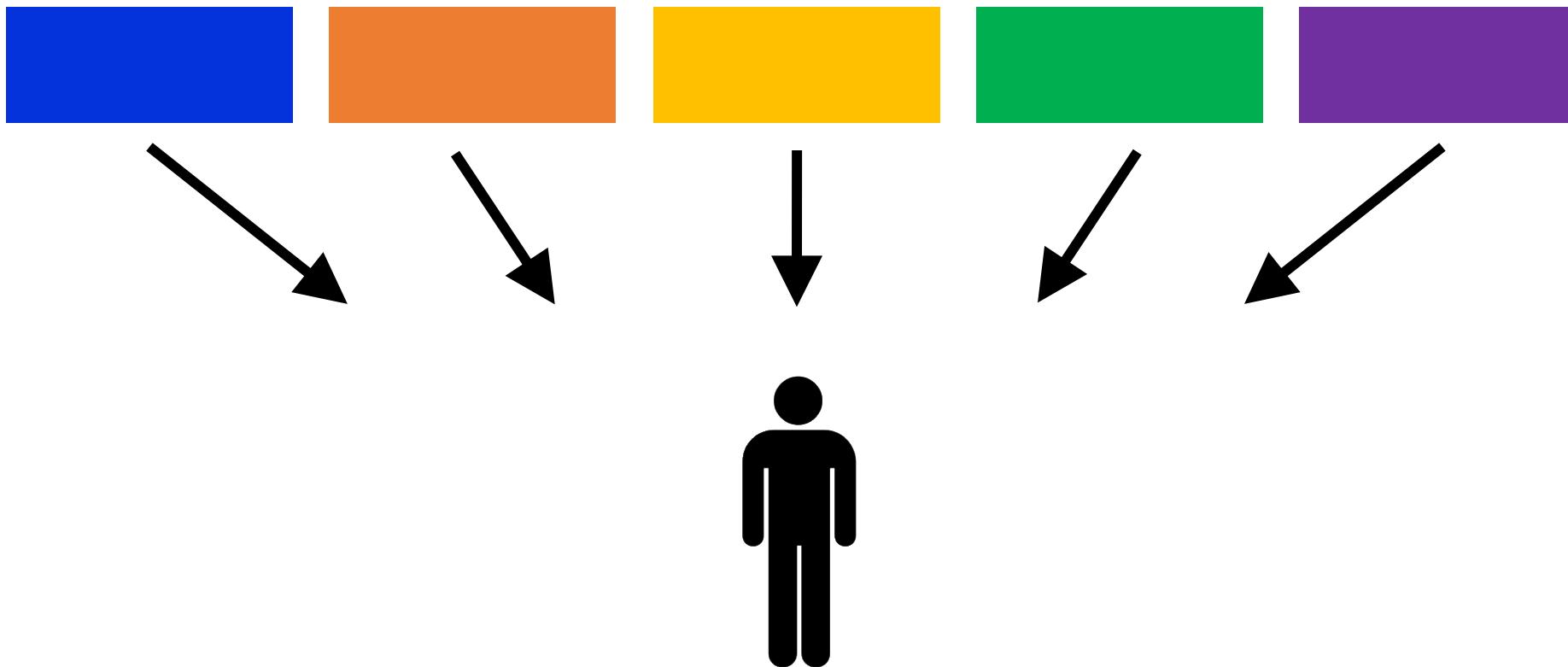
Aim 1: Bringing the individual back in the study of personality structure and change.

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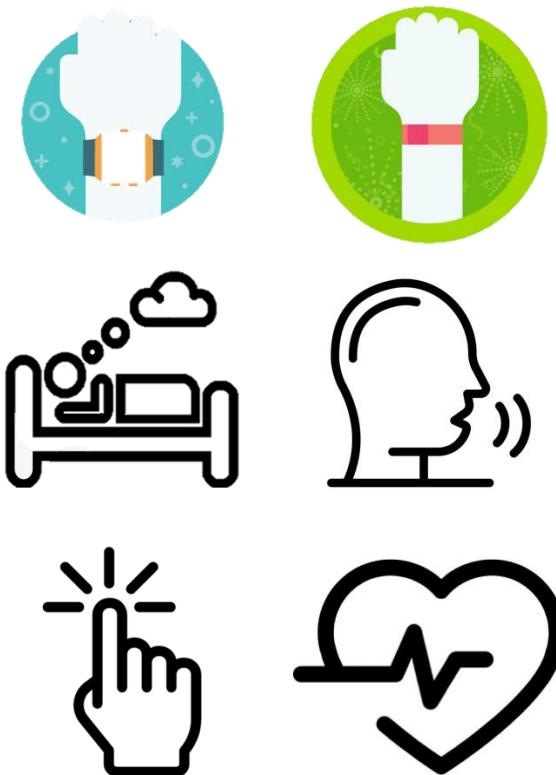
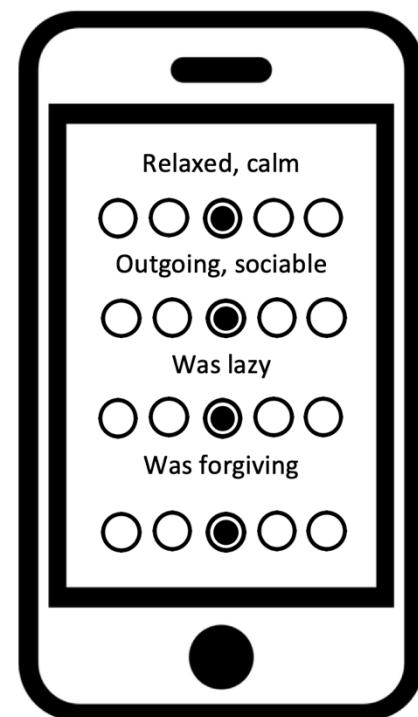
Nomothetic
Variable-Centered



Idiographic Person-Specific

ESM / EMA

Mobile Sensing



Methods

2 years of ESM responses from the Personality and Interpersonal Roles Study (PAIRS)

N = 372 Wash U undergrads, total assessments N = 17,715

Measures

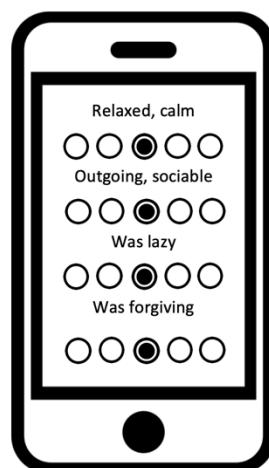
9 items from the Big Five Inventory (BFI)

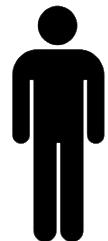
Procedure

4 assessments / day for 15 days

Modeling

Graphical vector autoregression

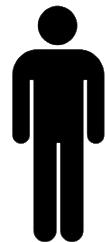




time	E	A	C	N	O
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

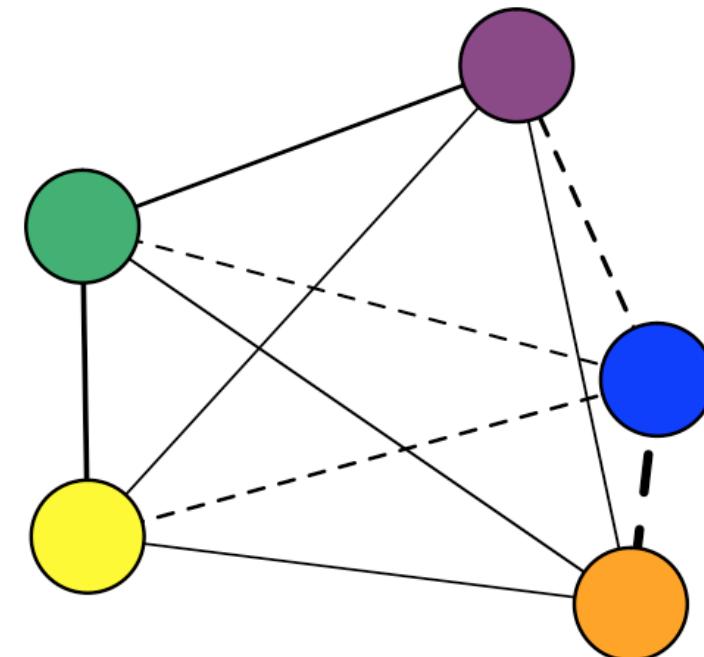
E				
A	0.02			
C	-0.05	0.08		
N	0.64	-0.12	-0.10	
O	0.26	-0.27	0.43	0.07

Contemporaneous: Within Time-Points
 $x_{it} \leftrightarrow x_{jt}$

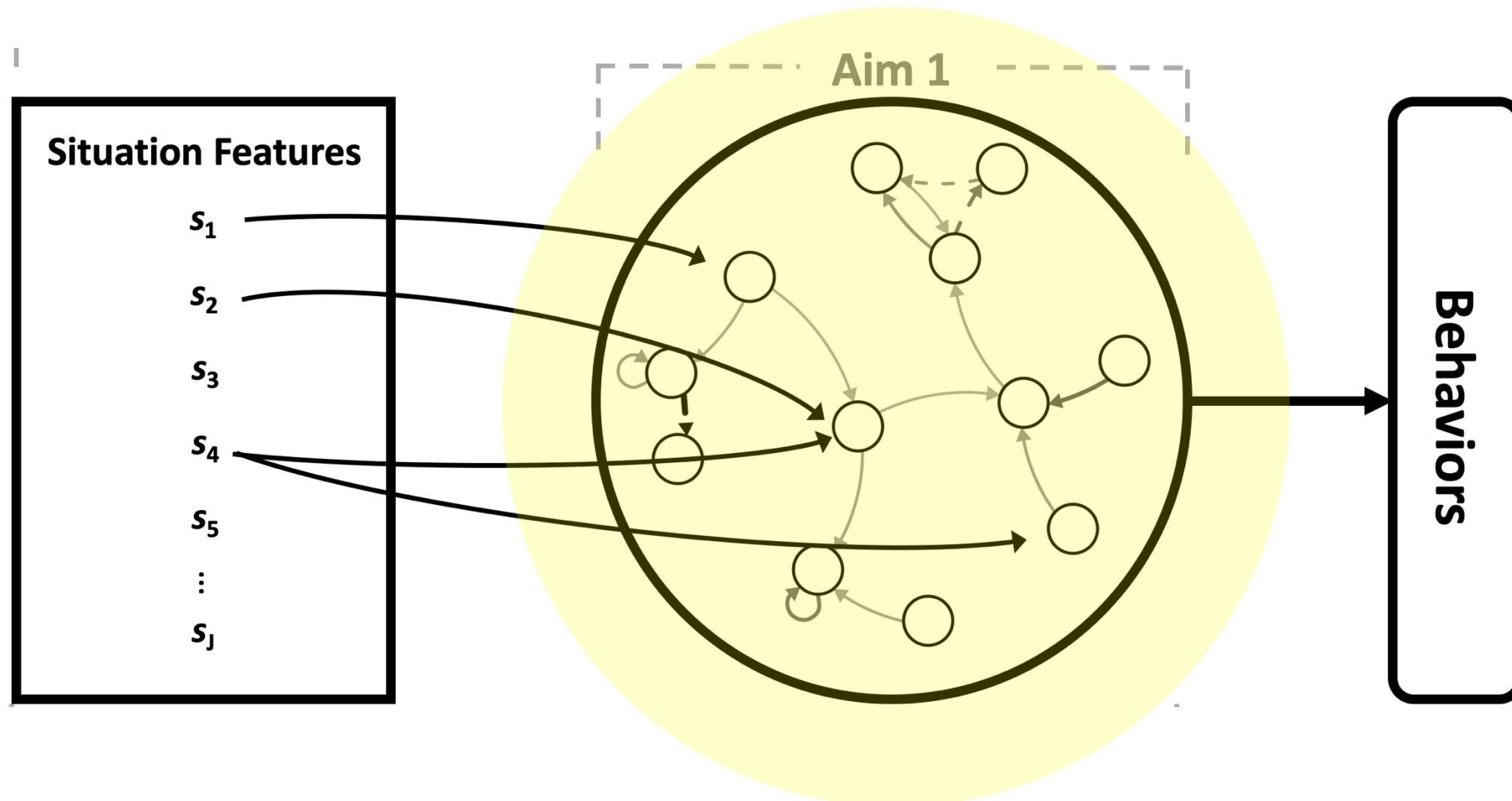


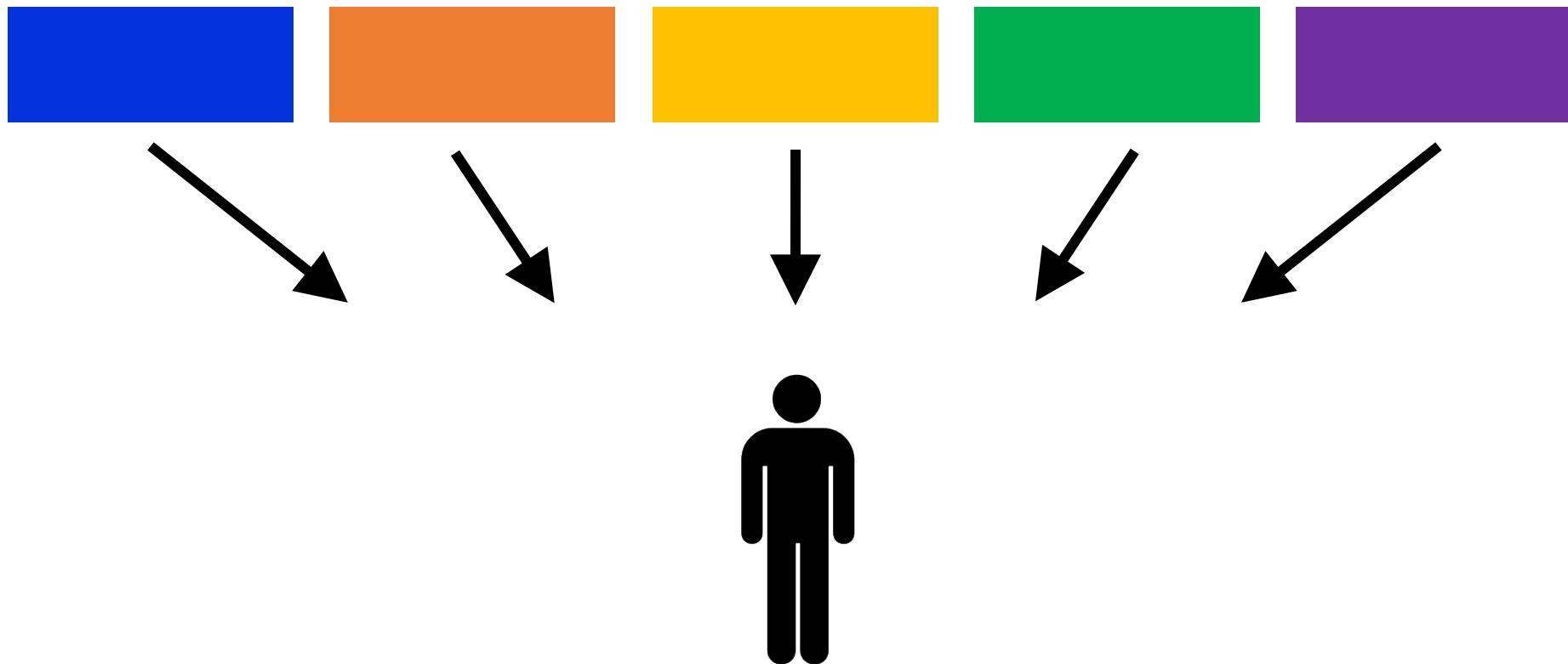
time **E A C N O**

1	4	2	3	2	4
2	2	3	4	1	4
3	3	3	2	2	4
4	3	1	3	2	3
5	4	4	3	2	2
6	4	1	2	3	4
7	2	2	2	2	1
8	4	2	3	3	4
9	3	2	2	1	2
10	4	2	3	3	3
11	3	1	3	2	5

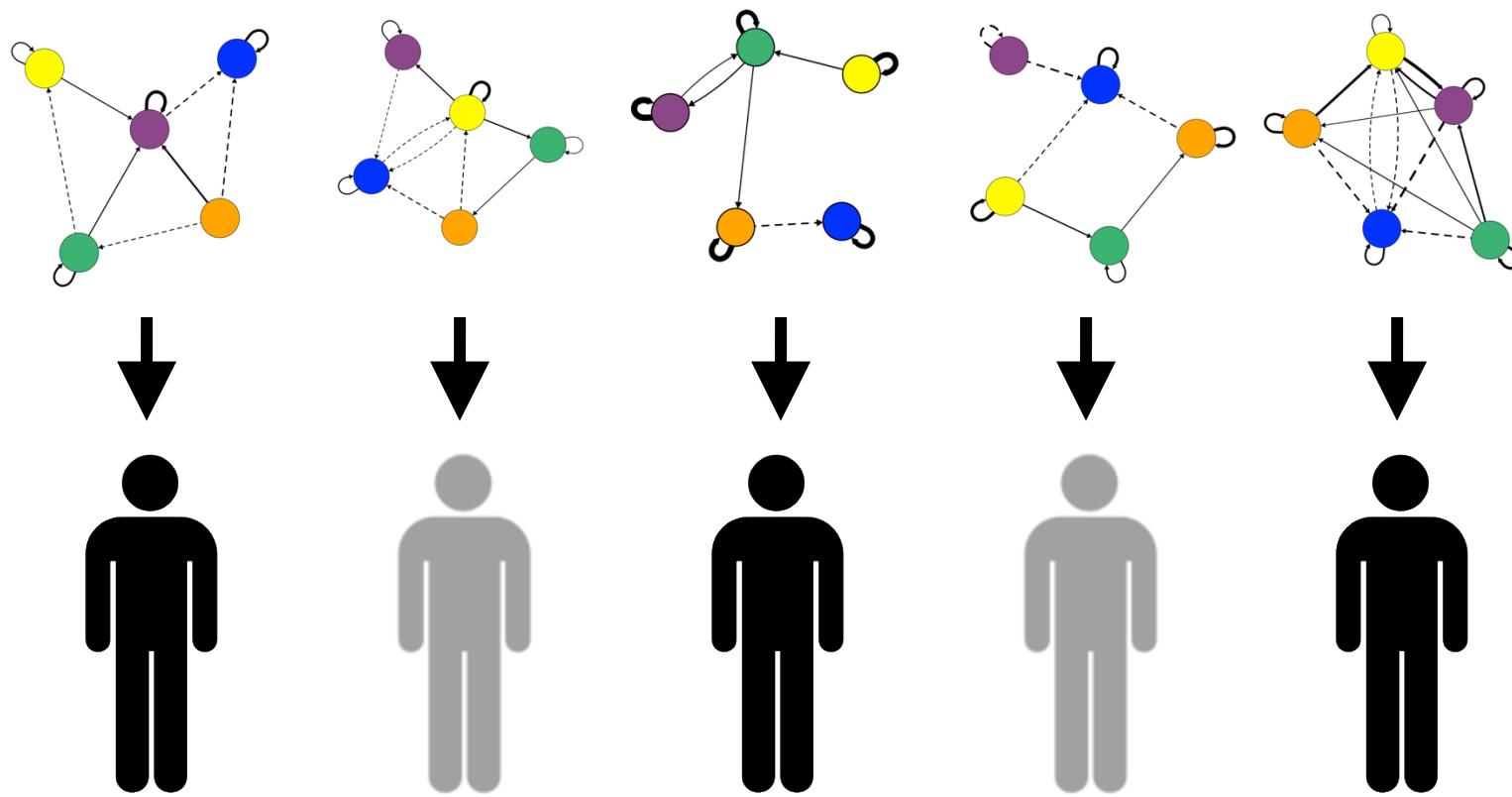


Contemporaneous: Within Time-Points
 $x_{it} \leftrightarrow x_{jt}$





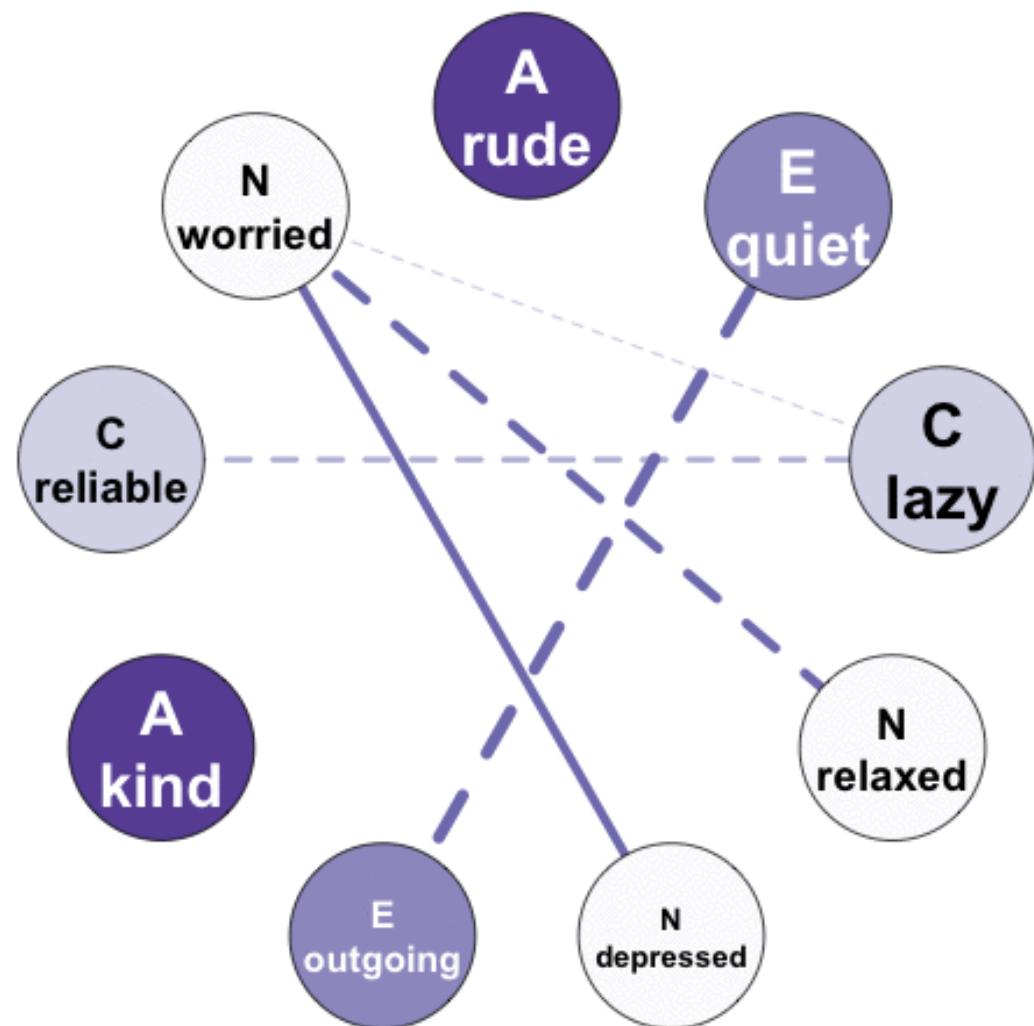
Idiographic Person-Specific

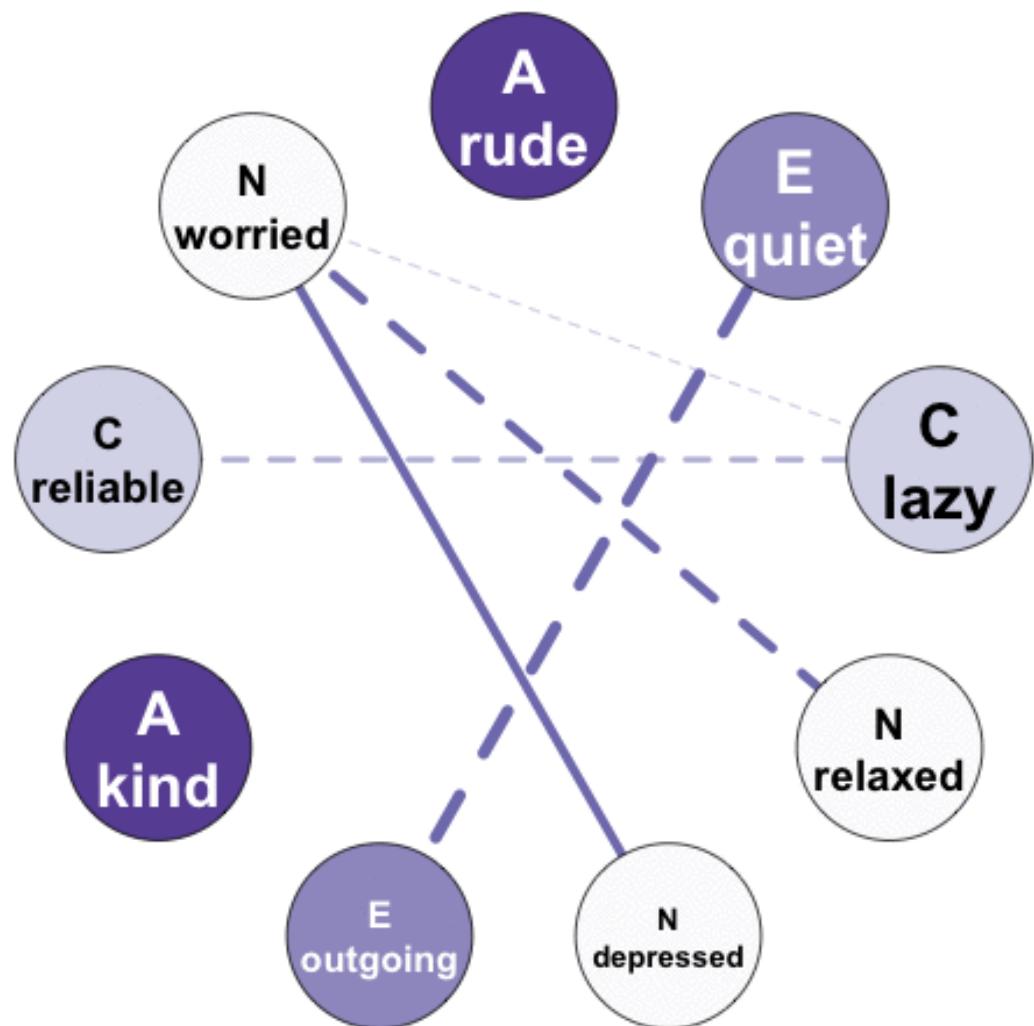


**Idiographic
Person-Specific**

RESULTS

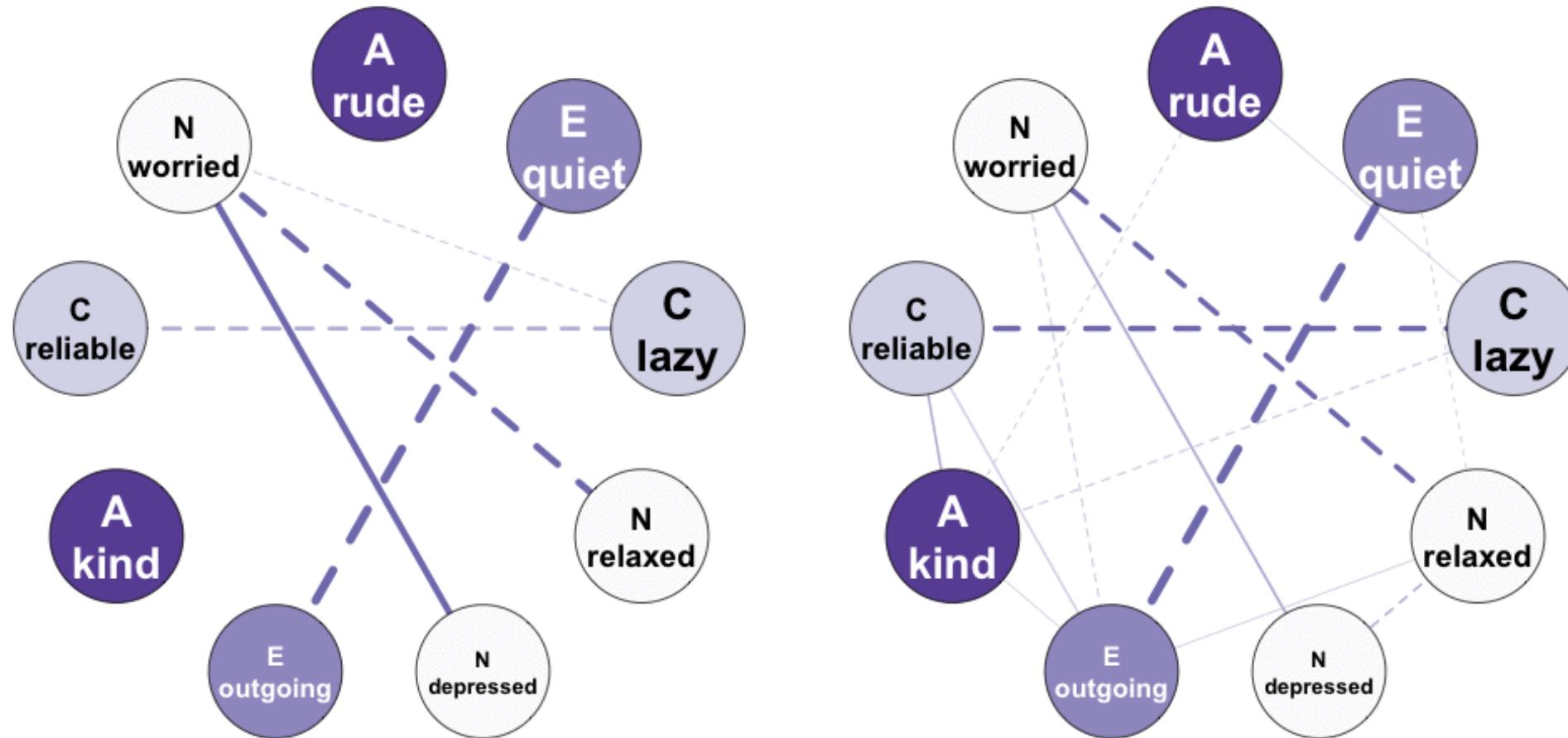
Aim 1

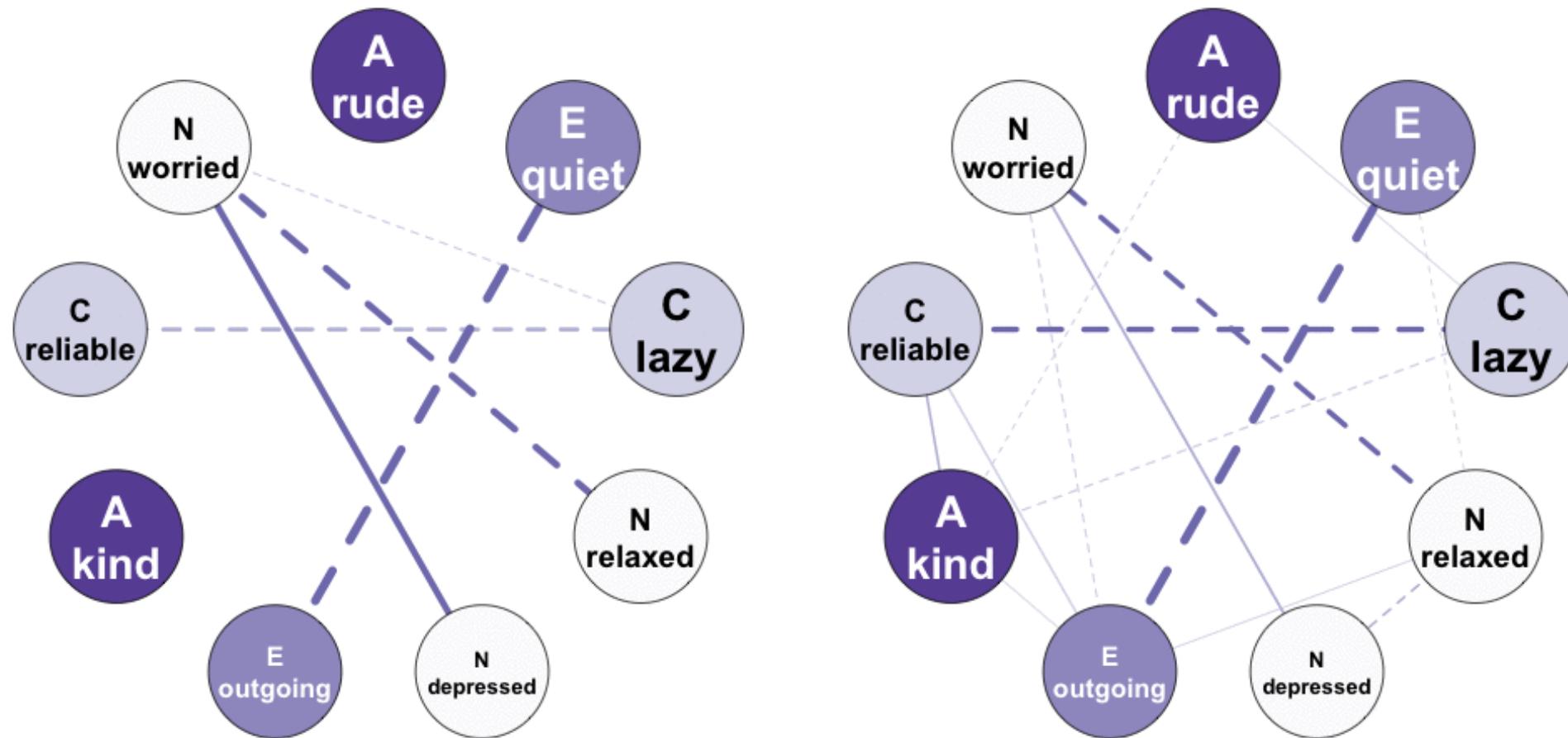


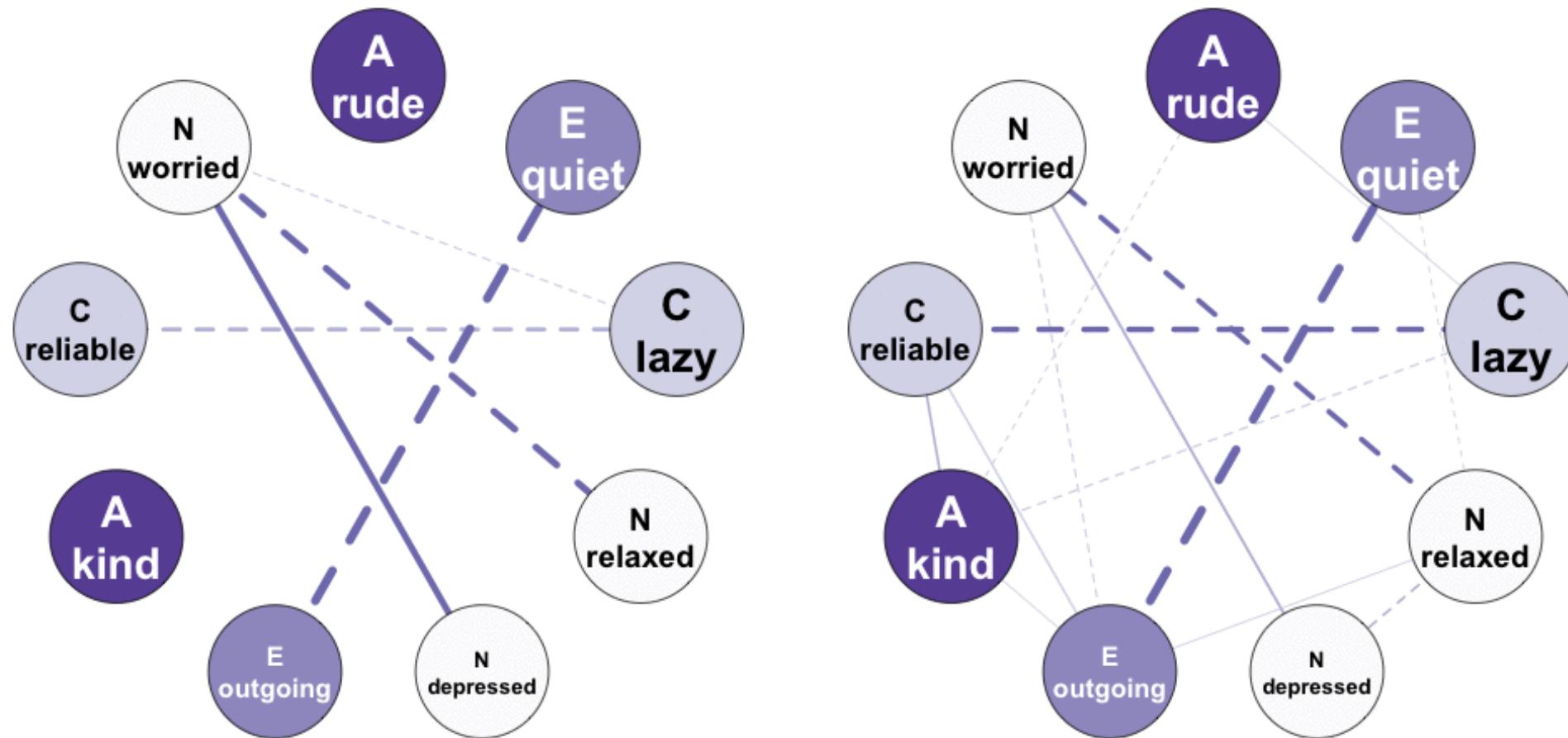


The structures differ across people.

But do they show expected longitudinal consistency?



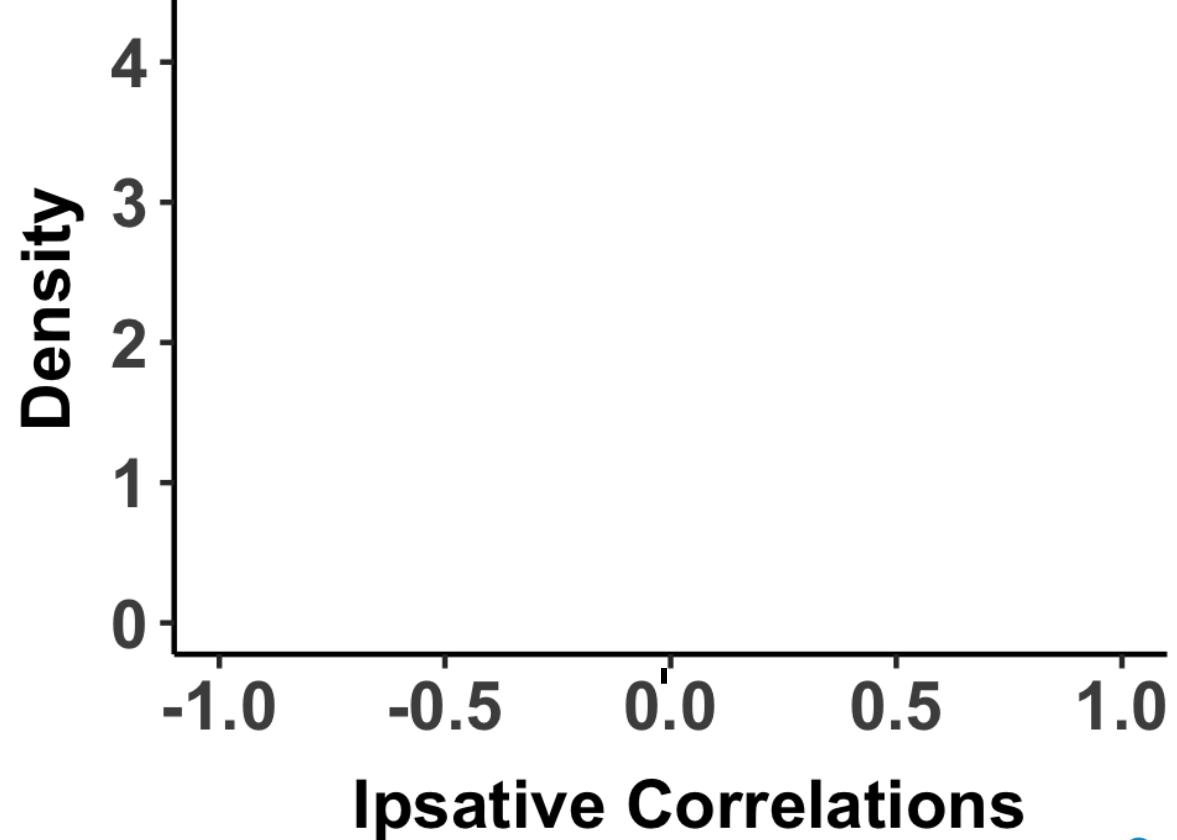




How consistent is
idiographic personality
across two
years?

Ipsative Network Consistency

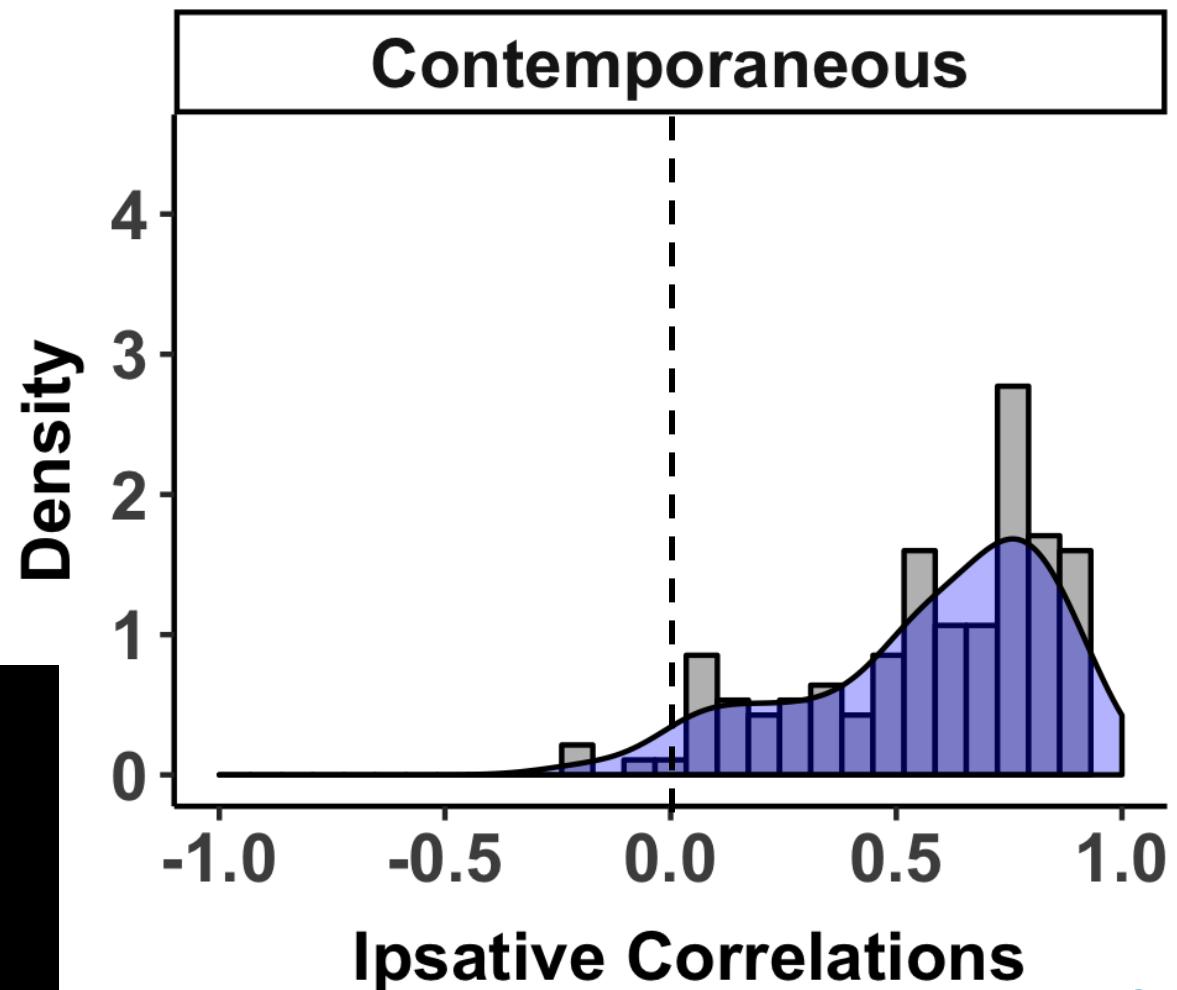
Contemporaneous



How consistent is
idiographic personality
across two
years?

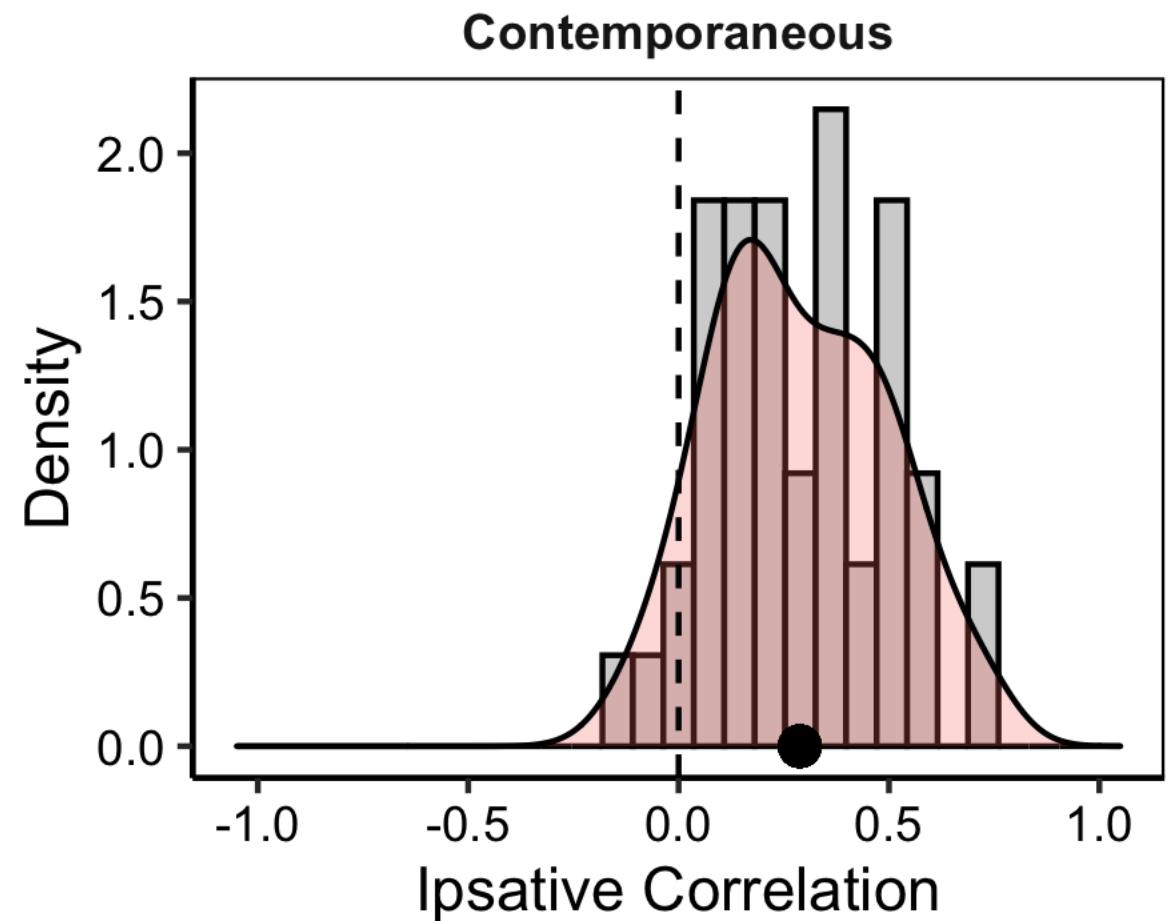
Idiographic Personality is
consistent over two years.

Ipsative Network Consistency



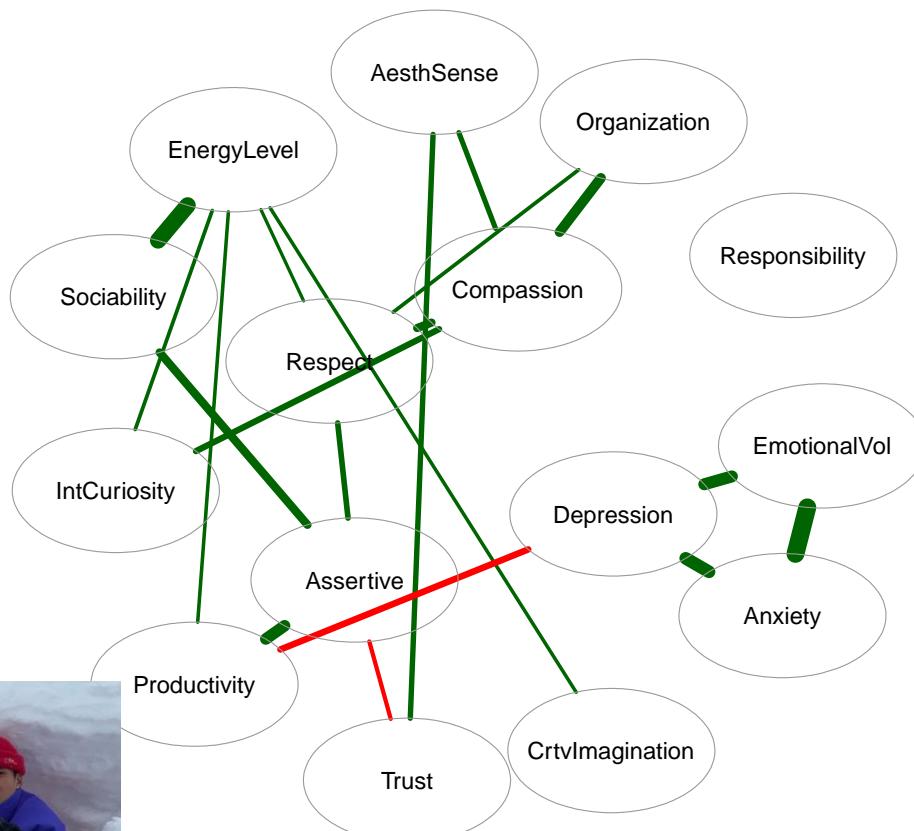
How consistent is
idiographic personality
across two
years?

Idiographic Personality is
consistent over two years AND
global events.



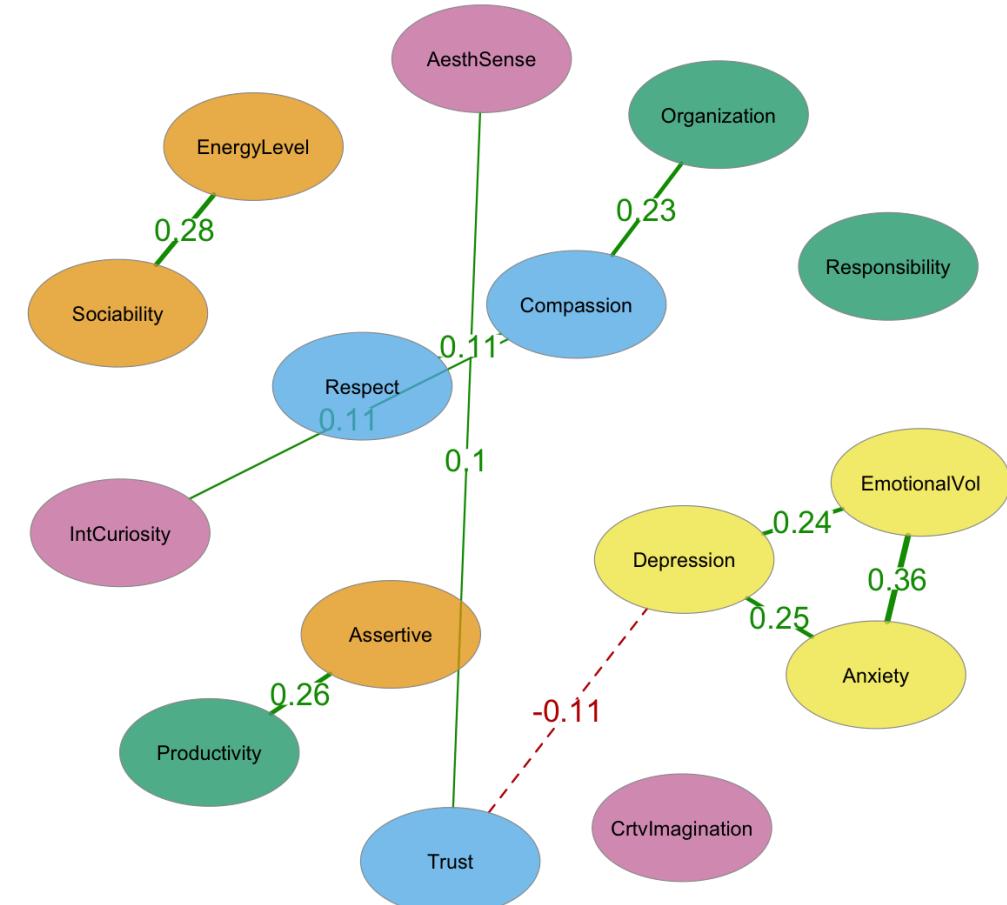
Extension: Time-Varying Networks

Stationary Network



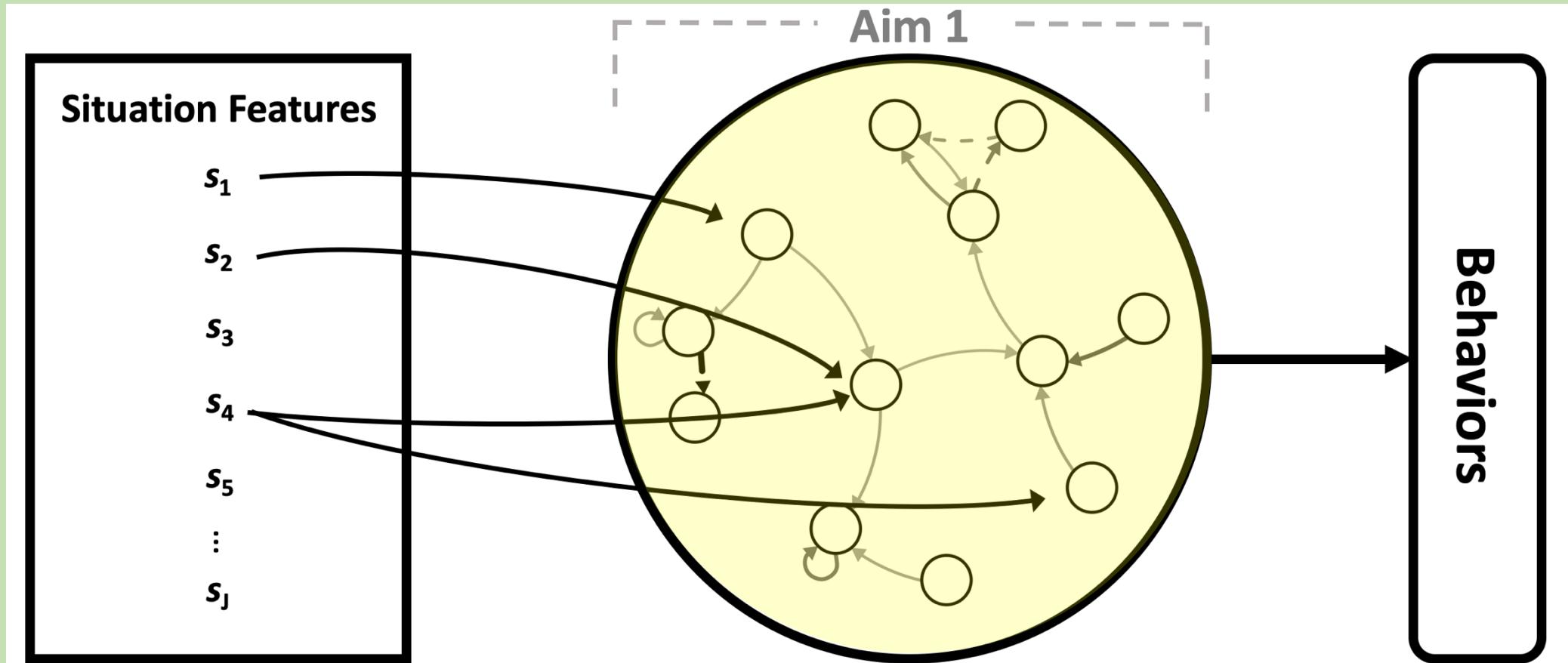
Colin J Lee

Estimation Point 1



Aim 1: Bringing the individual back in the study of personality structure and change.

Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)



Aim 1: Bringing the individual back in the study of personality structure and change.

Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

Idiographic personality structures are:

Unique (i.e. differ across people).

Relatively consistent over time.

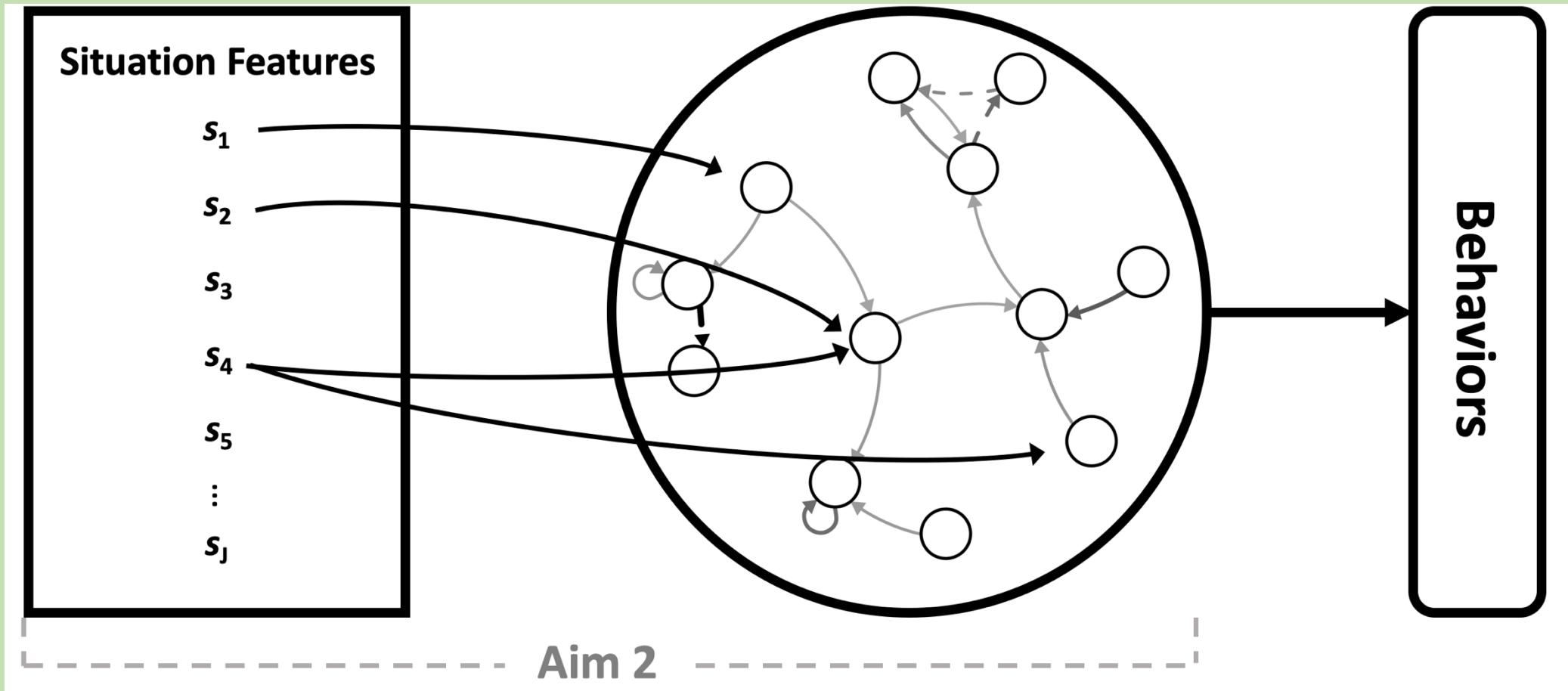
Relatively consistent across global events.

Aim 1: Individuals show unique personality structures that are relatively consistent across time and events.

Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

Aim 2: Using longitudinal data to understand how well-being unfolds across contexts.

Beck, et al.
(revision submitted, *NHB*)

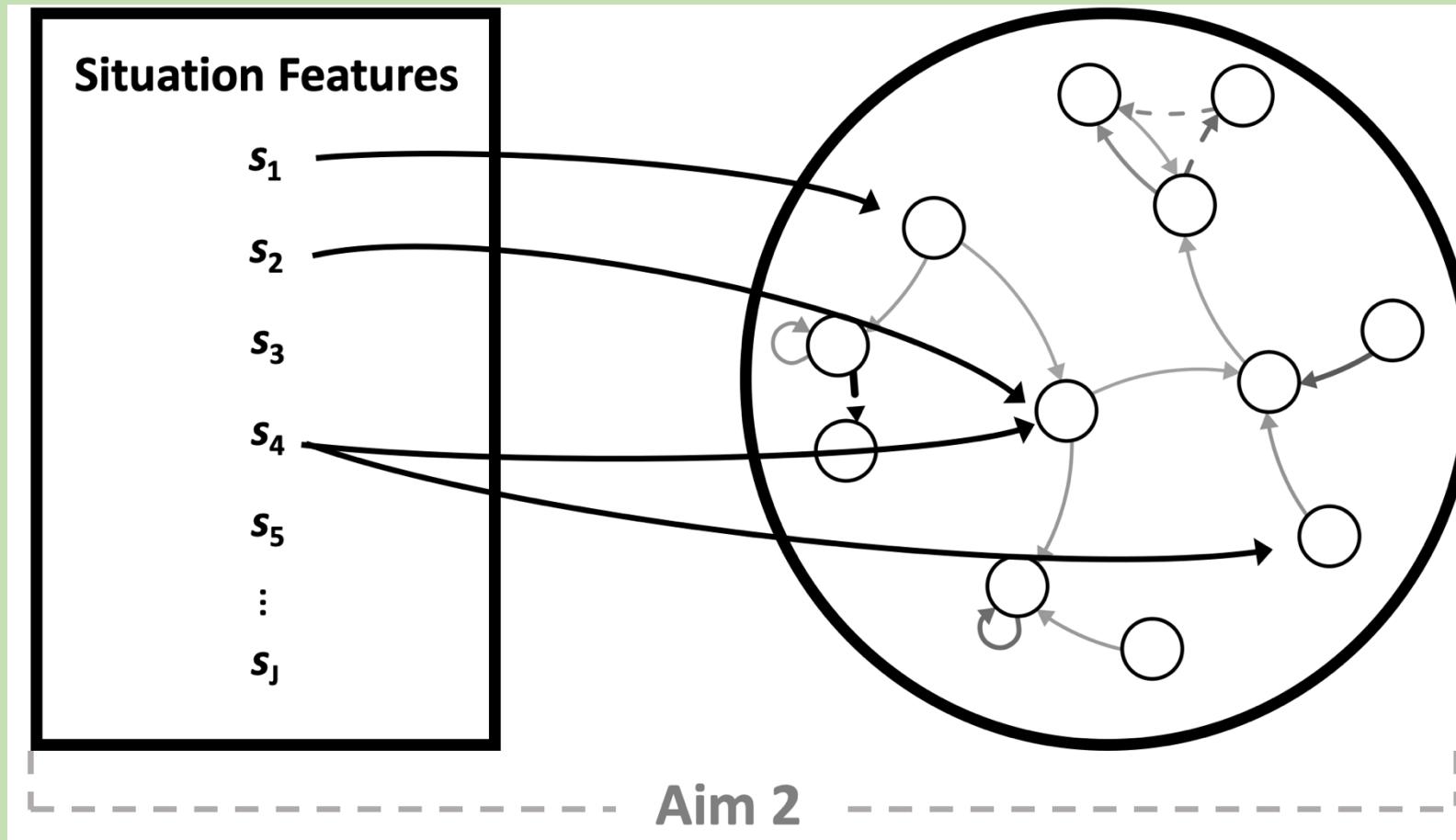


Aim 1: Individuals show unique personality structures that are relatively consistent across time and events.

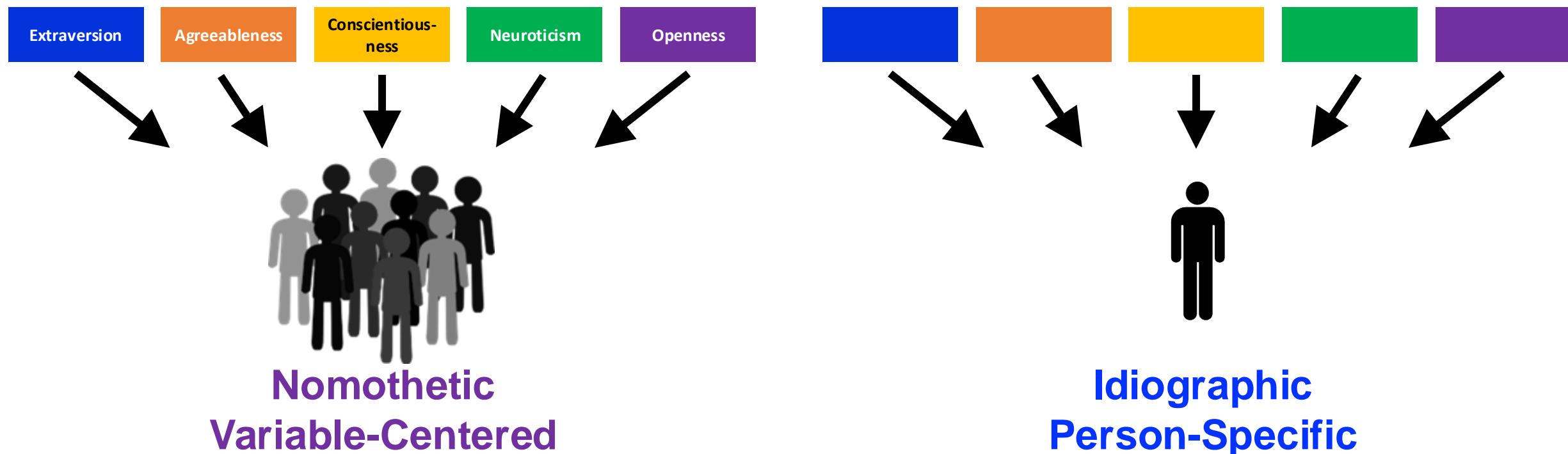
Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

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* = shared first authorship.



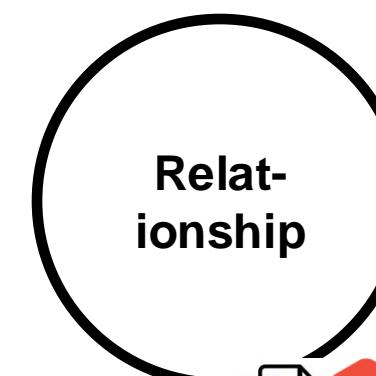
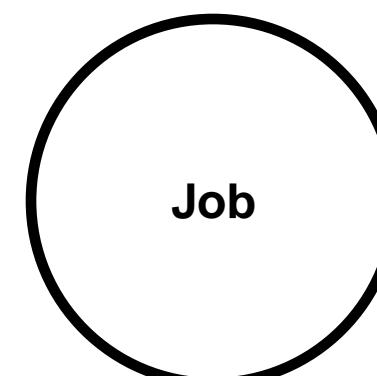
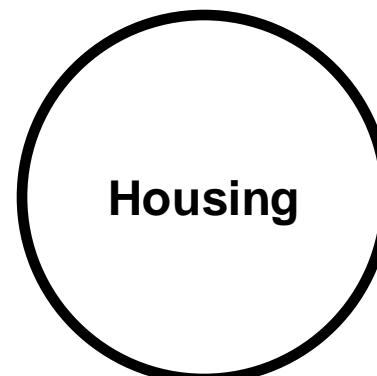
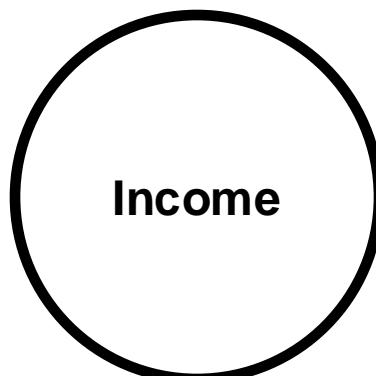
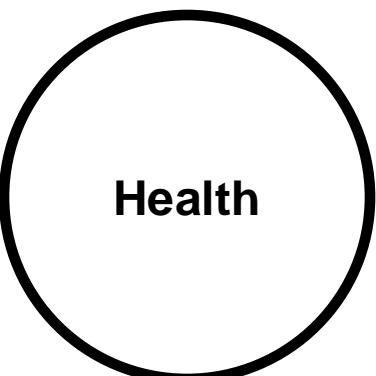


Strong Theoretical Models

Rich longitudinal data

Unique patterns ignored

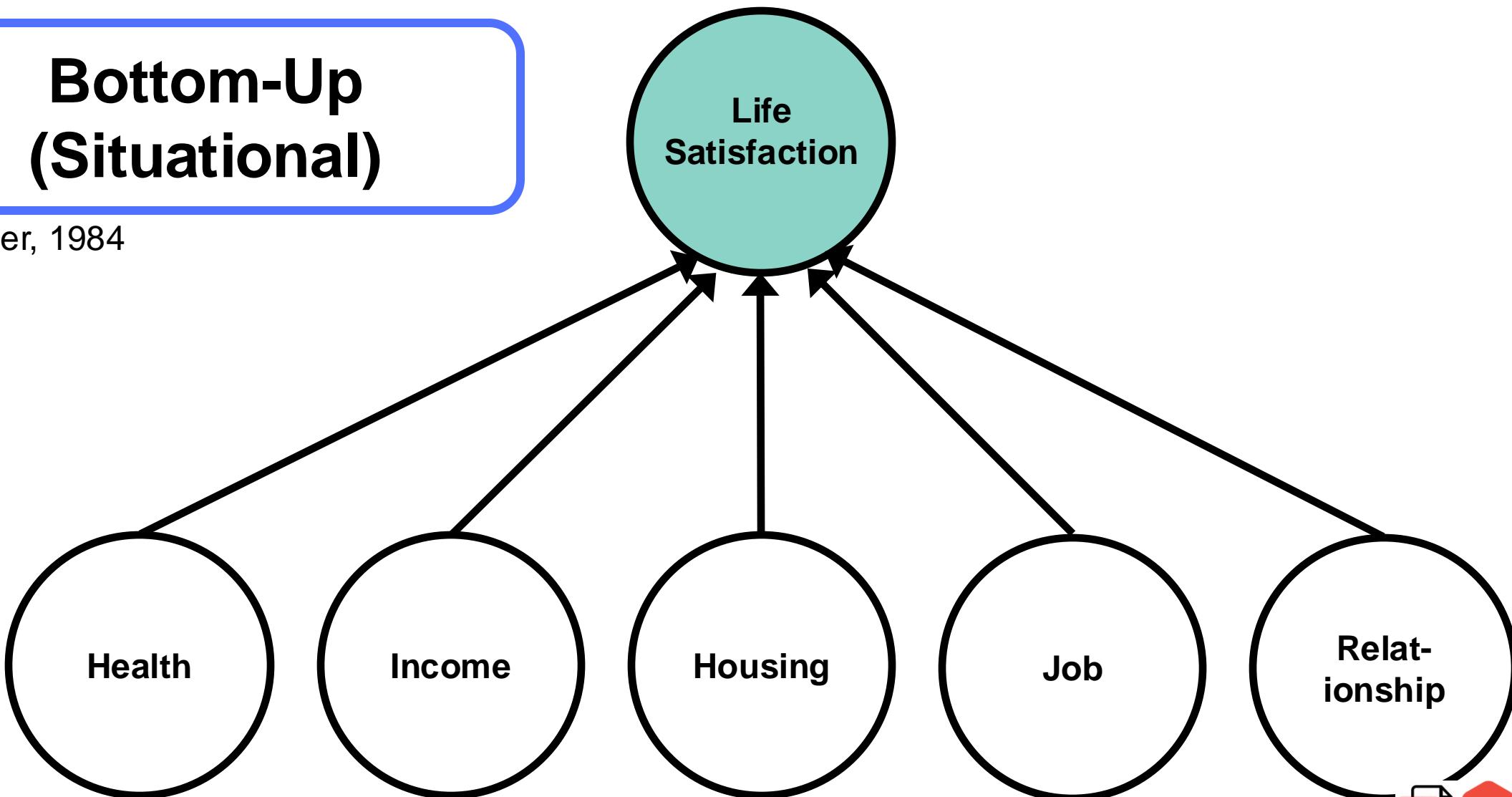
Domain Satisfaction



Bottom-Up (Situational)

Diener, 1984

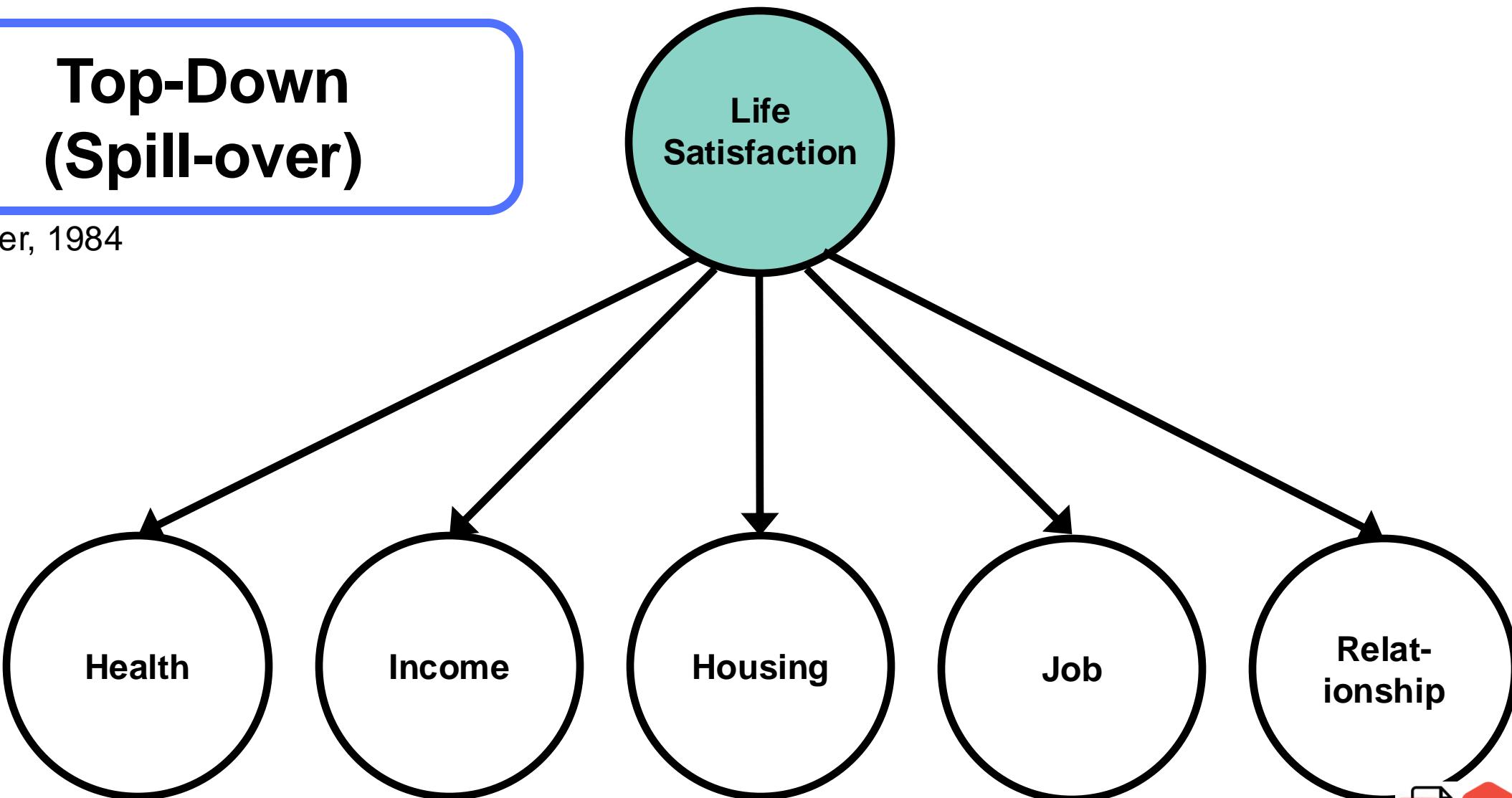
Domain Satisfaction



Top-Down (Spill-over)

Diener, 1984

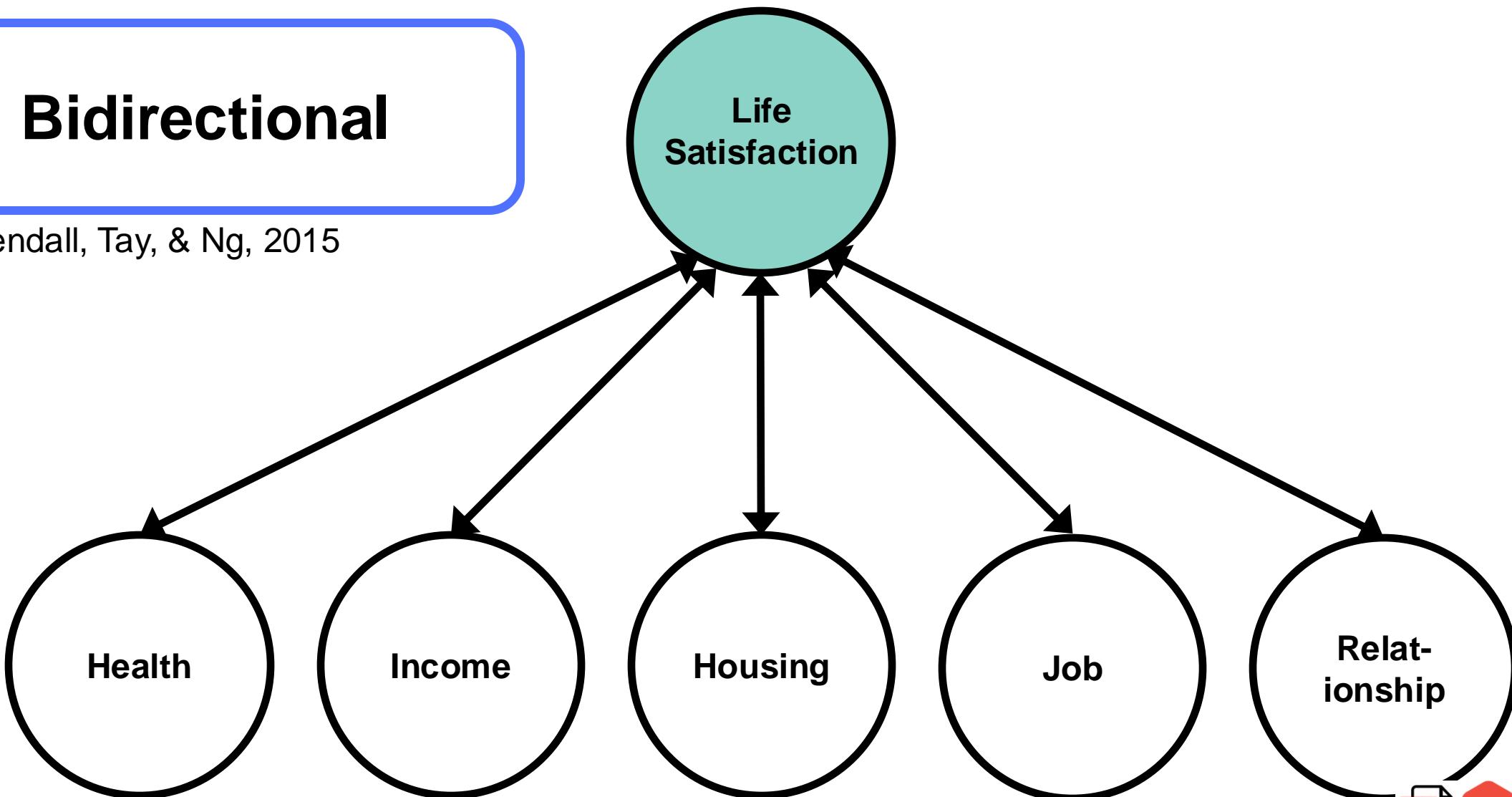
Domain Satisfaction



Bidirectional

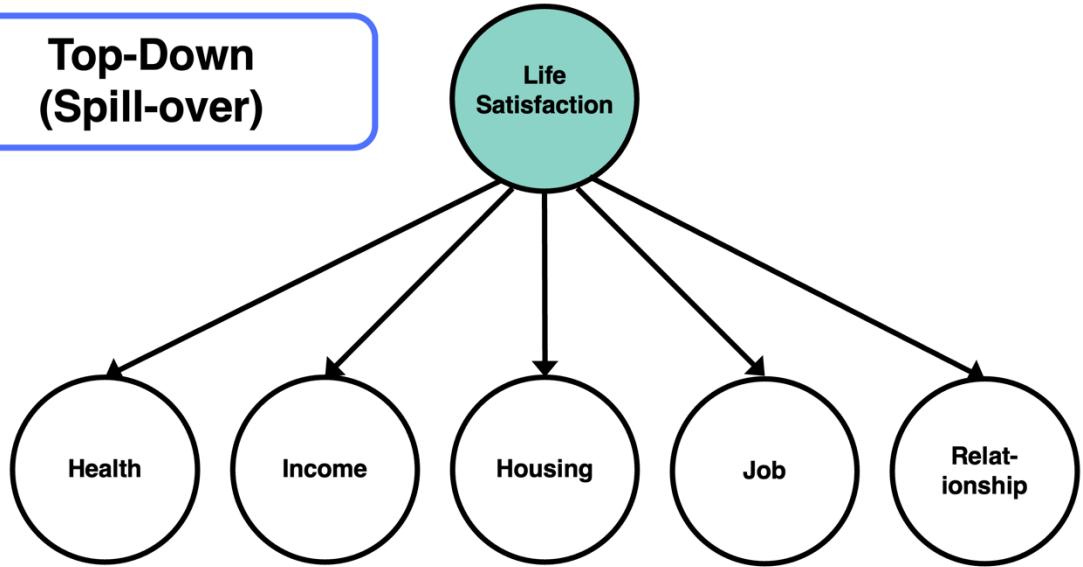
Kuykendall, Tay, & Ng, 2015

Domain Satisfaction



Top-Down (Spill-over)

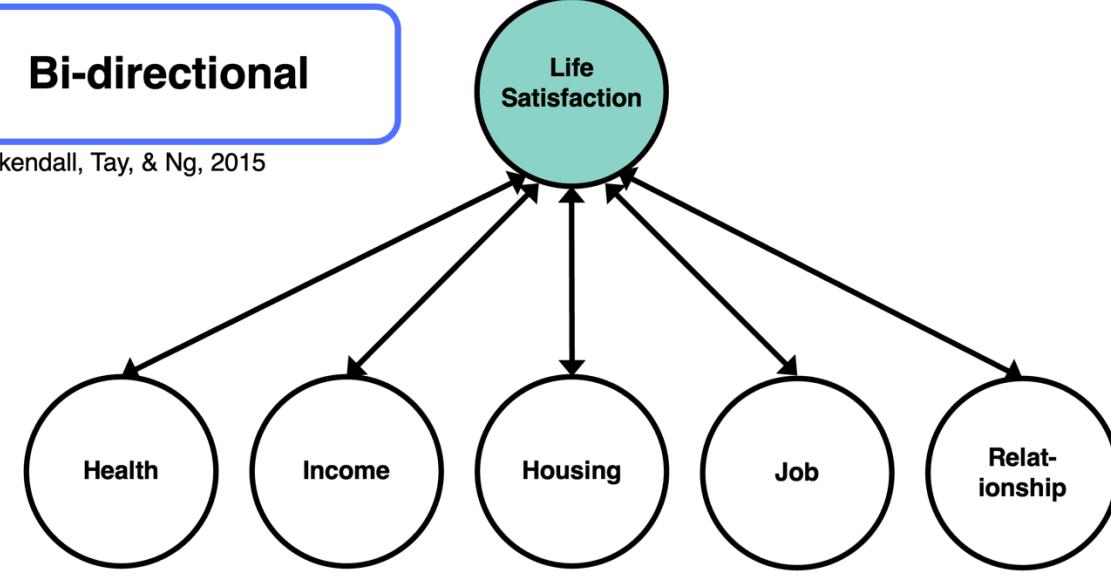
Domain Satisfaction



Bi-directional

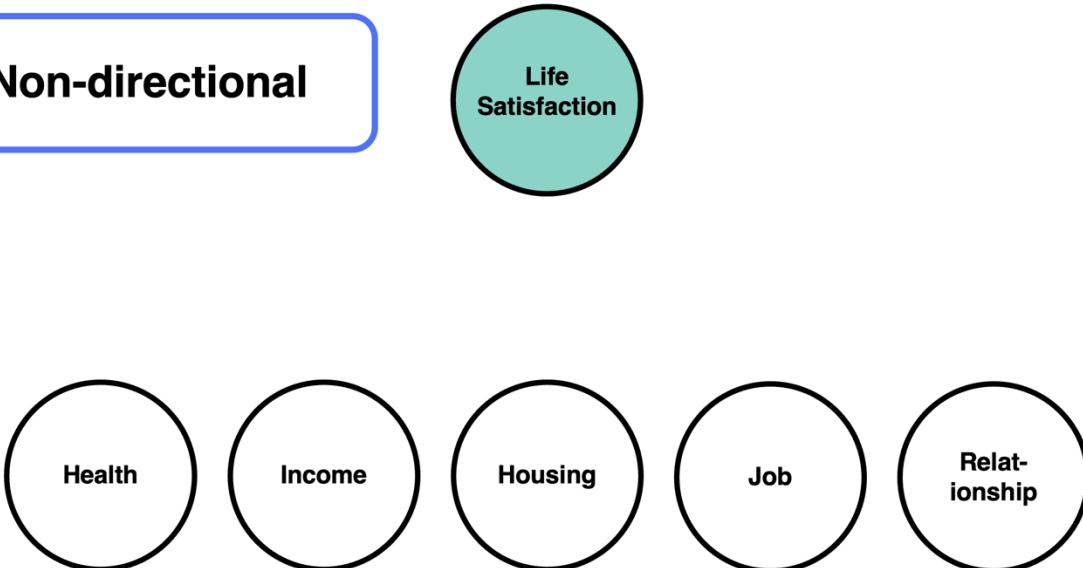
Kuykendall, Tay, & Ng, 2015

Domain Satisfaction



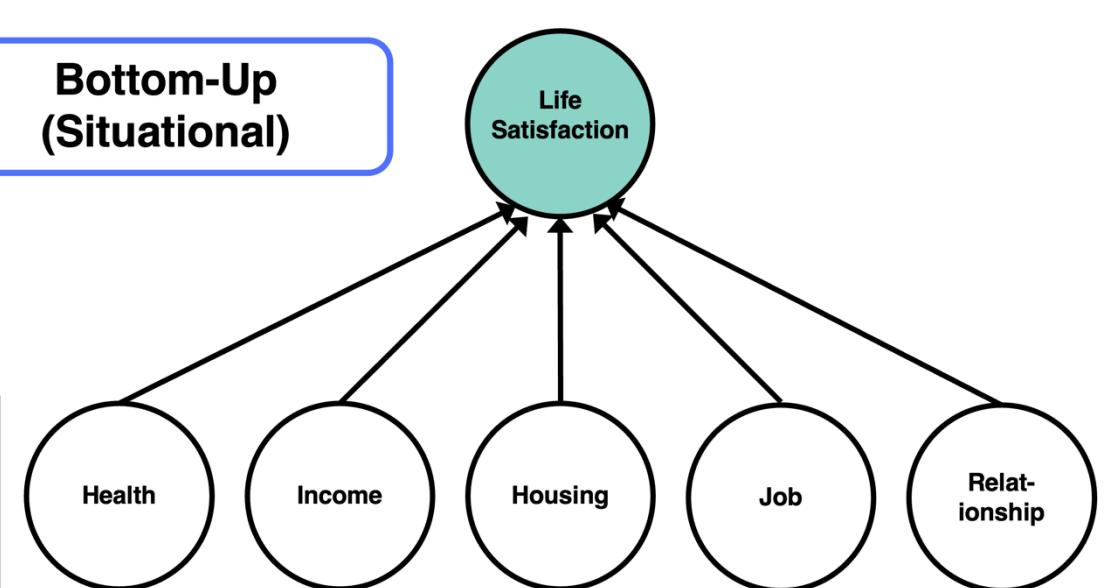
Non-directional

Domain Satisfaction

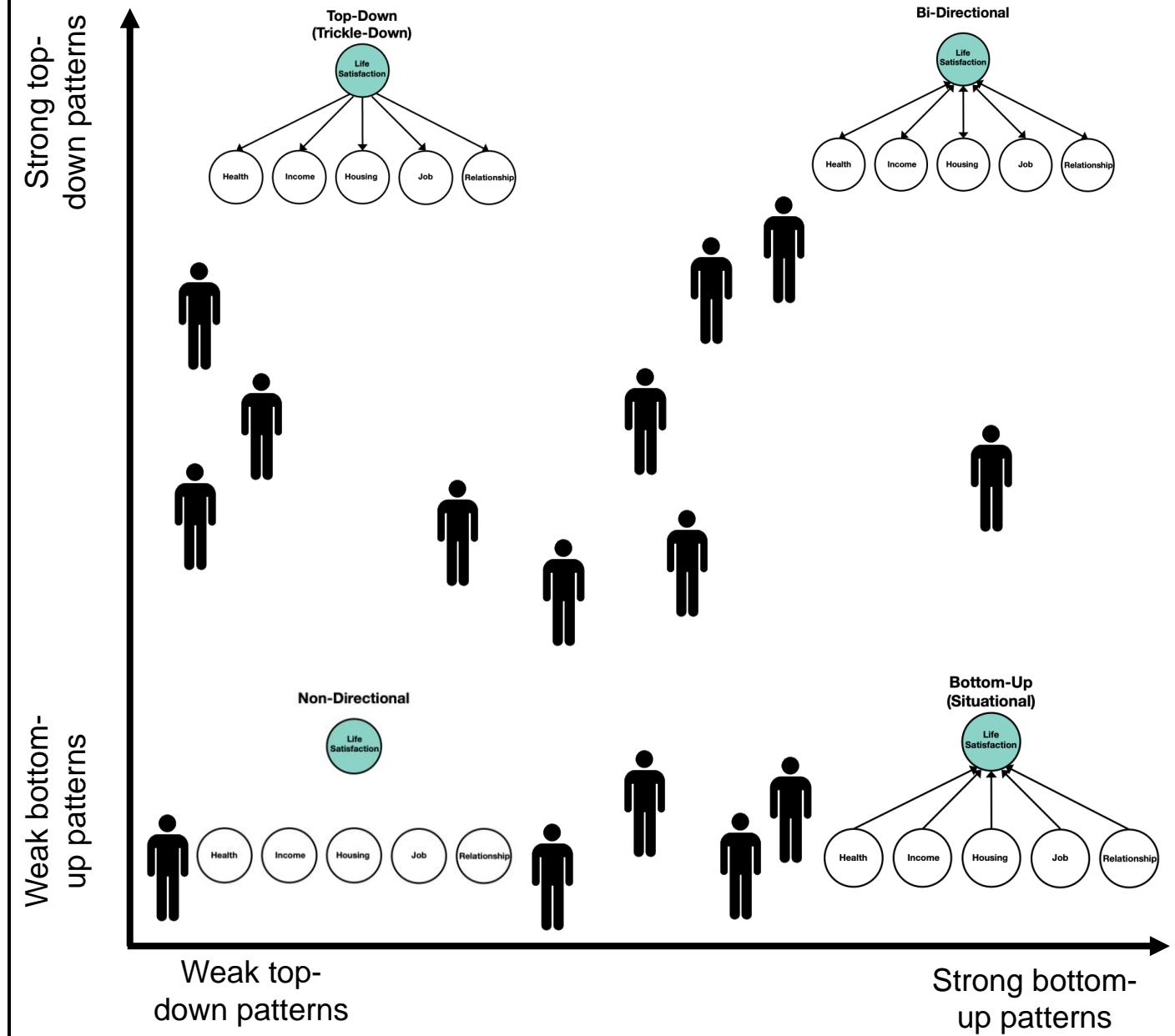


Bottom-Up (Situational)

Domain Satisfaction



Personalised Perspectives on Happiness: For whom is each theory correct?



GSOEP**HILDA****SHP****BHPS****LISS****Multilevel VAR(1) Models**

Epskamp et al., 2018

Level 1:

$$Y_{ptj} = \beta_{0pj} + \beta_{1pj} * V_{1,p,t-1} + \dots + \beta_{kpj} * V_{k,p,t-1} + \varepsilon_{ptj}$$

Level 2:

$$\beta_{0pj} = \gamma_{00j} + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{1,p} + \dots + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{kp} + r_{0pj}$$

$$\vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots$$

$$\beta_{kpj} = \gamma_{k0j} + \gamma_{k1j} * \bar{V}_{p,1} + \dots + \gamma_{kkj} * \bar{V}_{pj} + r_{kpj}$$

**Between-Person Effects
(Level 2)**

$$\gamma_{01j} - \gamma_{0kj}$$

**Within-Person Effects
(Level 1)**

$$\gamma_{10j} - \gamma_{kkj}$$

**Person-Specific Effects
(Level 2 random effects)**

$$r_{0pj} - r_{kpj}$$

GSOEP**HILDA****SHP****BHPS****LISS****Multilevel VAR(1) Models**

Epskamp et al., 2018

Level 1:

$$Y_{ptj} = \beta_{0pj} + \beta_{1pj} * V_{1,p,t-1} + \dots + \beta_{kpj} * V_{k,p,t-1} + \varepsilon_{ptj}$$

Level 2:

$$\beta_{0pj} = \gamma_{00j} + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{1,p} + \dots + \gamma_{01j} * \bar{V}_{kp} + r_{0pj}$$

$$\vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots \quad \vdots$$

$$\beta_{kpj} = \gamma_{k0j} + \gamma_{k1j} * \bar{V}_{p,1} + \dots + \gamma_{kkj} * \bar{V}_{pj} + r_{kpj}$$

**Between-Person Effects
(Level 2)**

$$\gamma_{01j} - \gamma_{0kj}$$

**Within-Person Effects
(Level 1)**

$$\gamma_{10j} - \gamma_{kkj}$$

**Person-Specific Effects
(Level 2 random effects)**

$$r_{0pj} - r_{kpj}$$

RESULTS

Aim 2

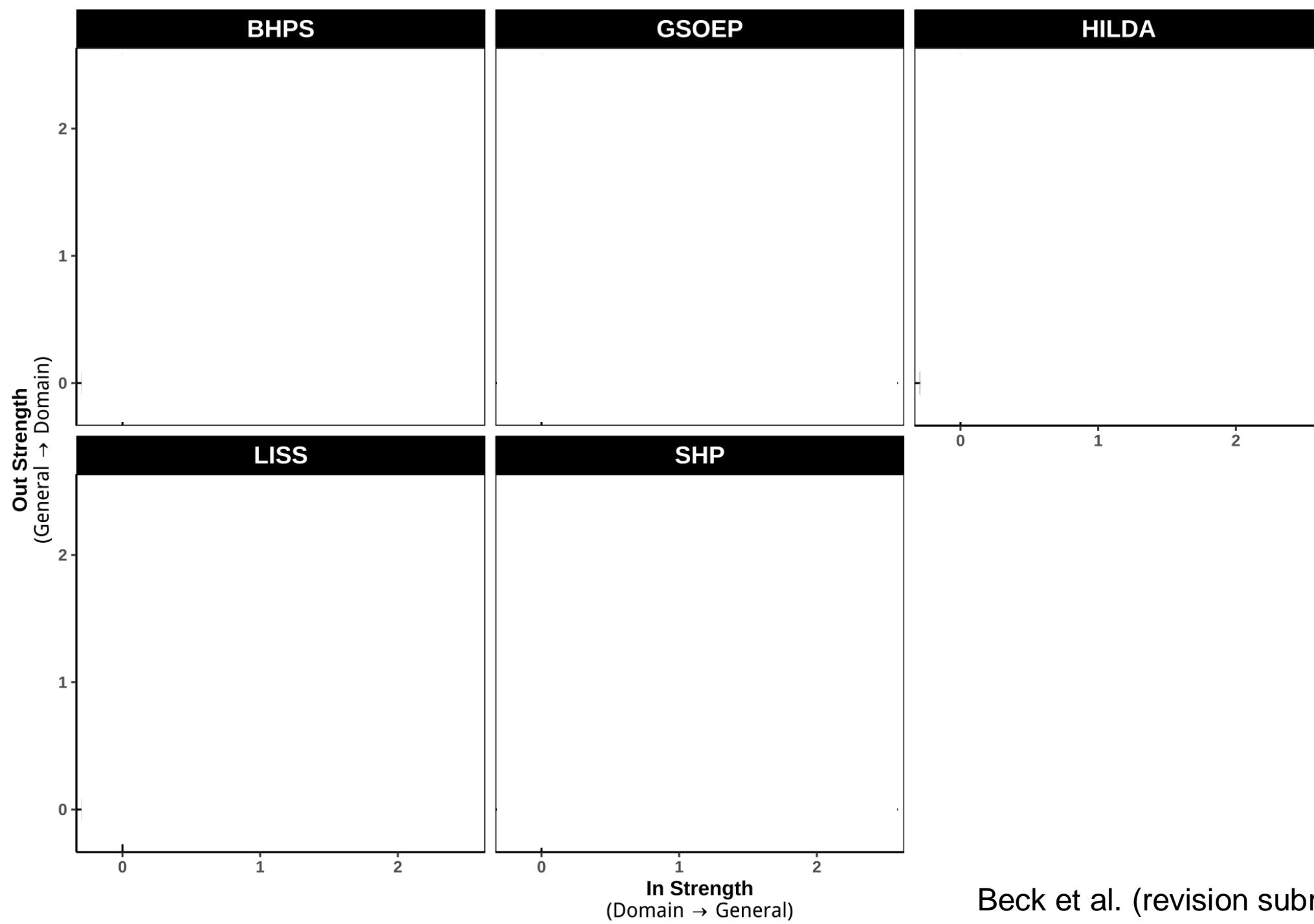
Top Down

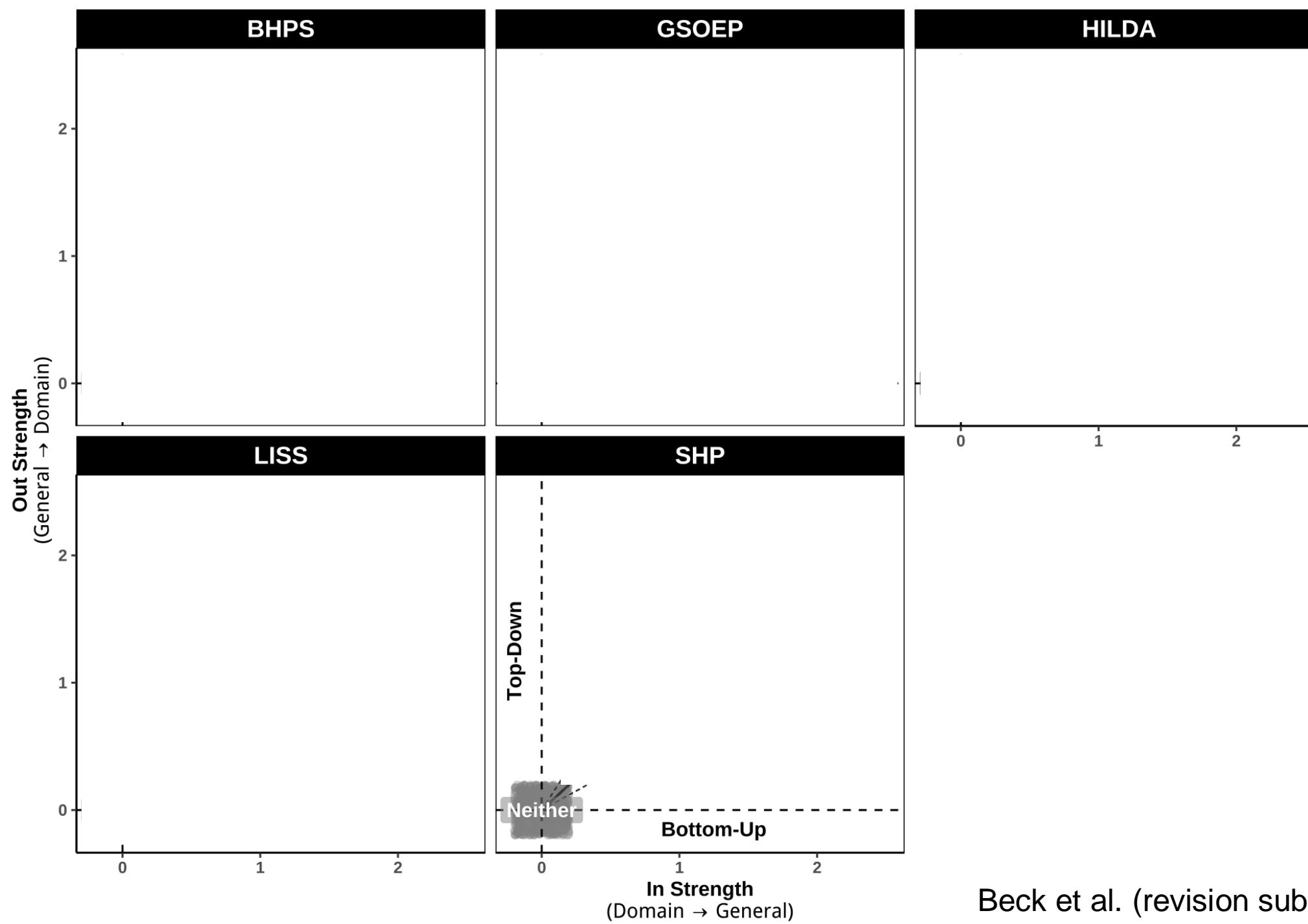
Bi-directional

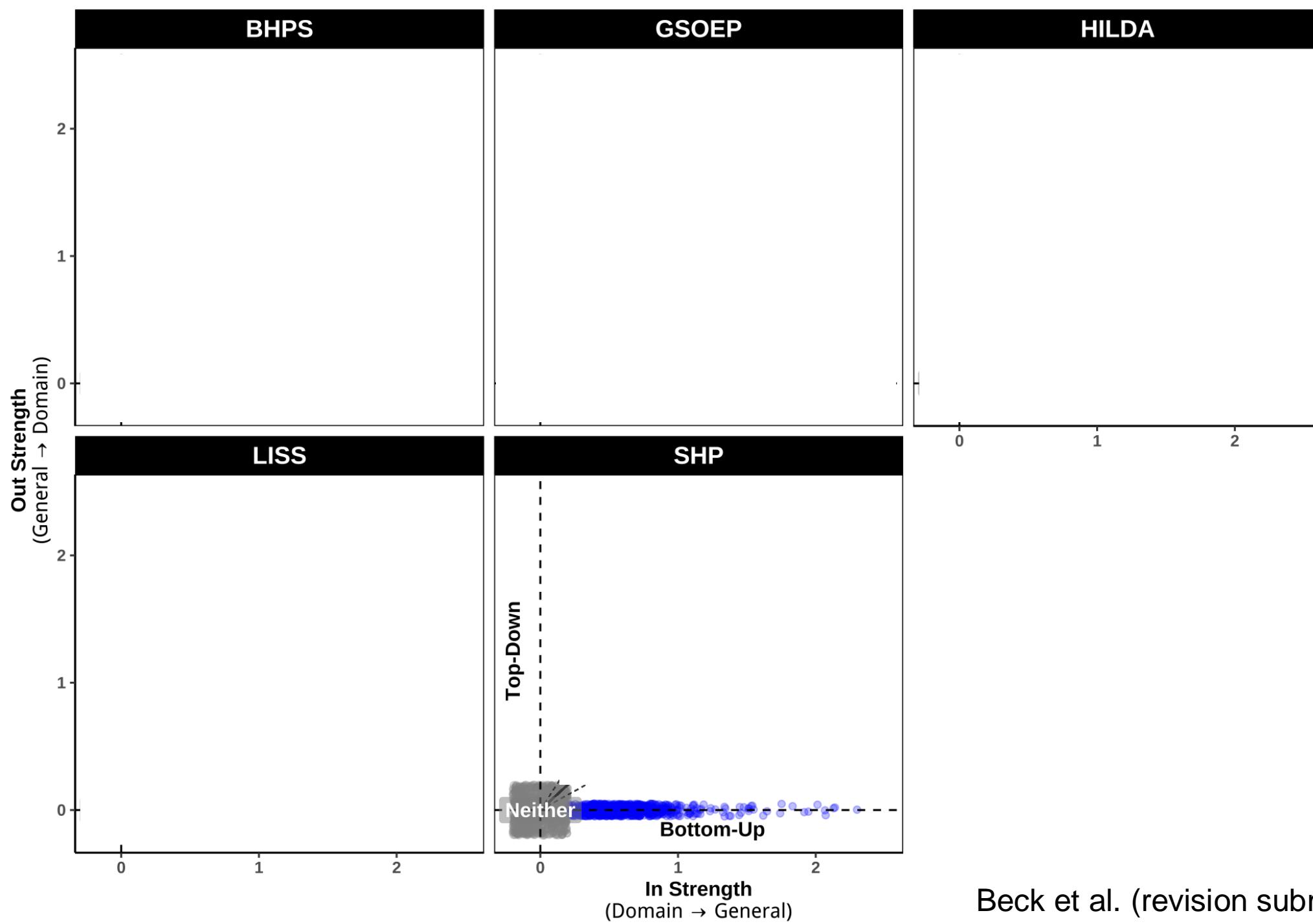
Non-Directional

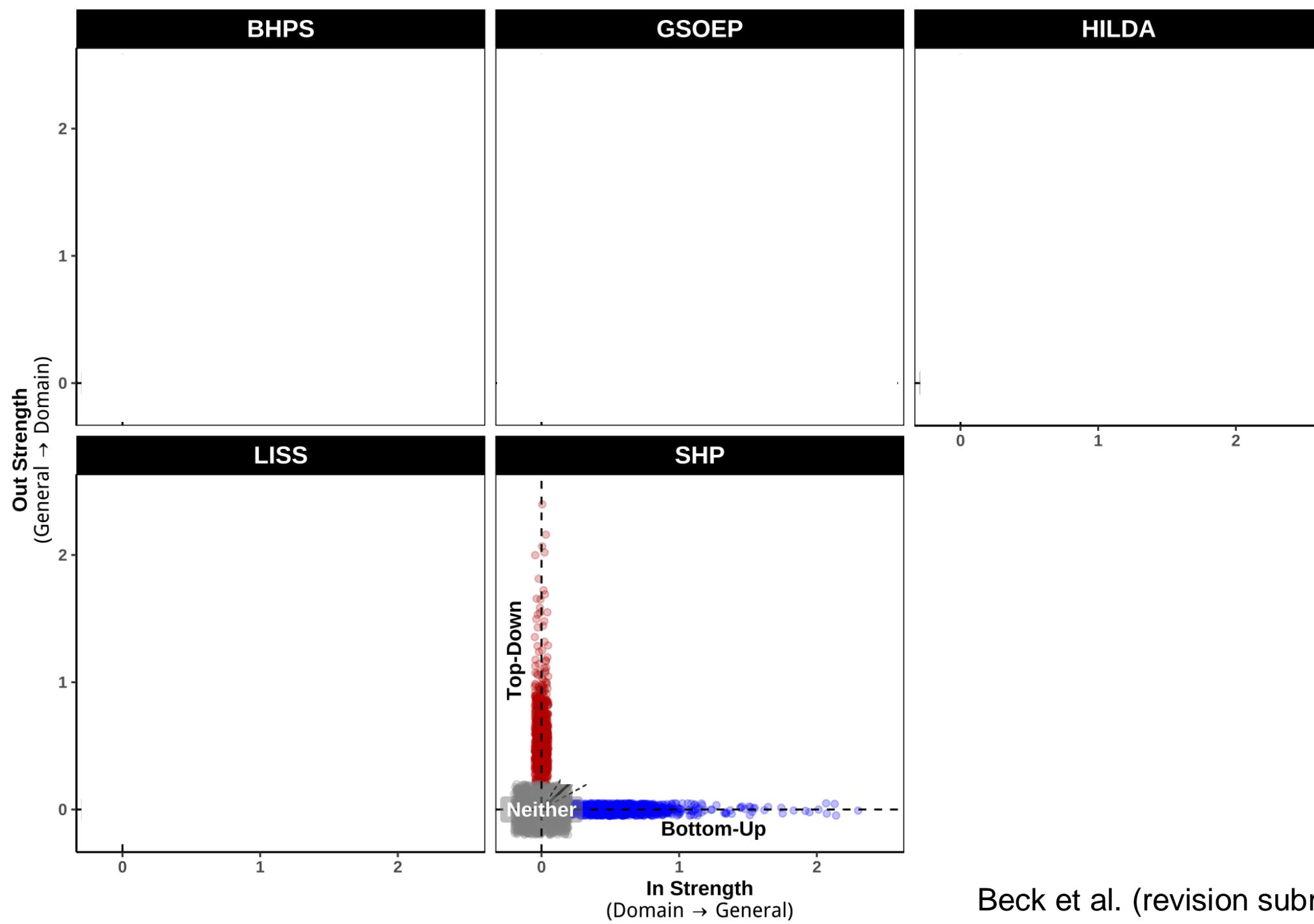
Bottom Up

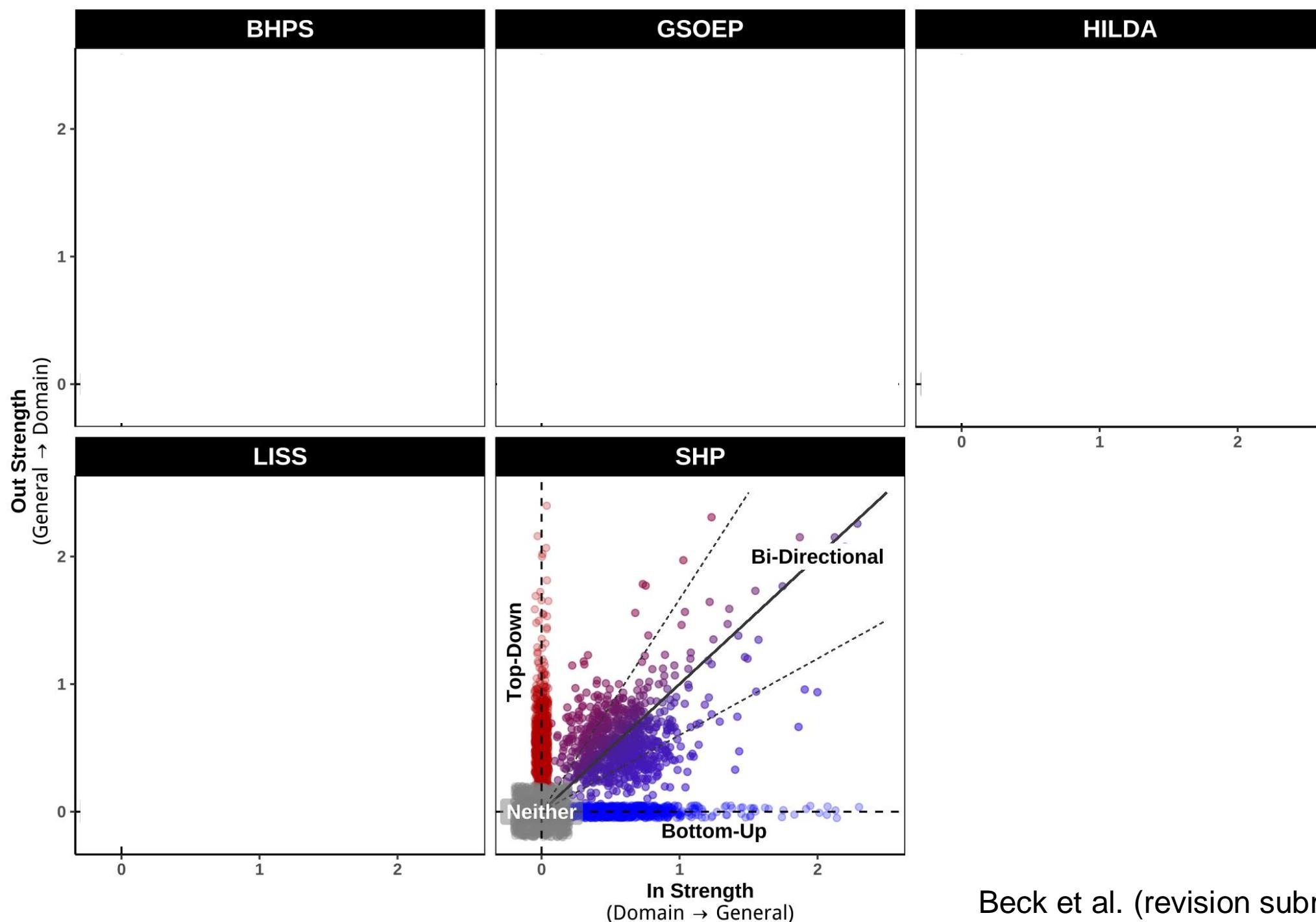


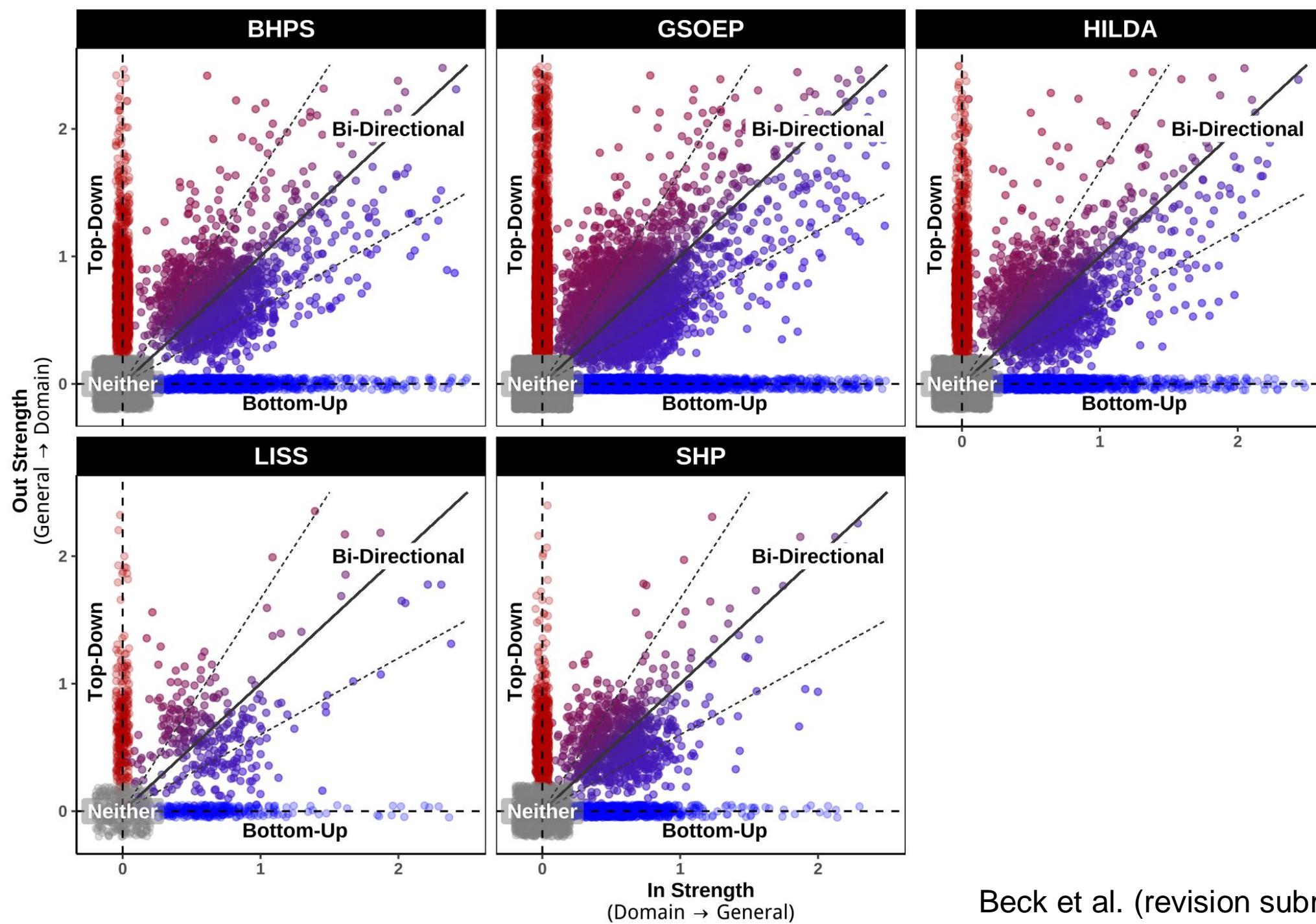


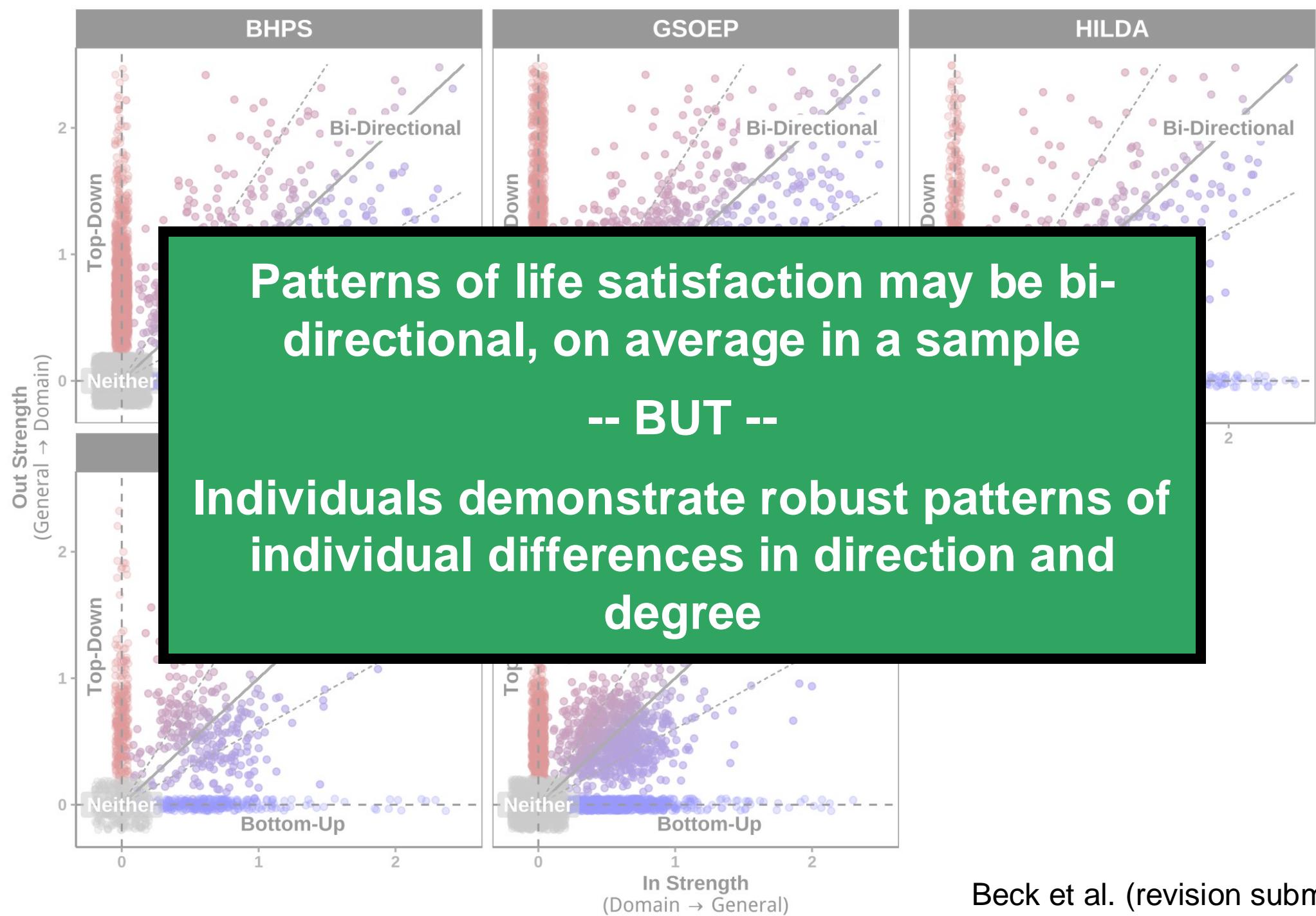










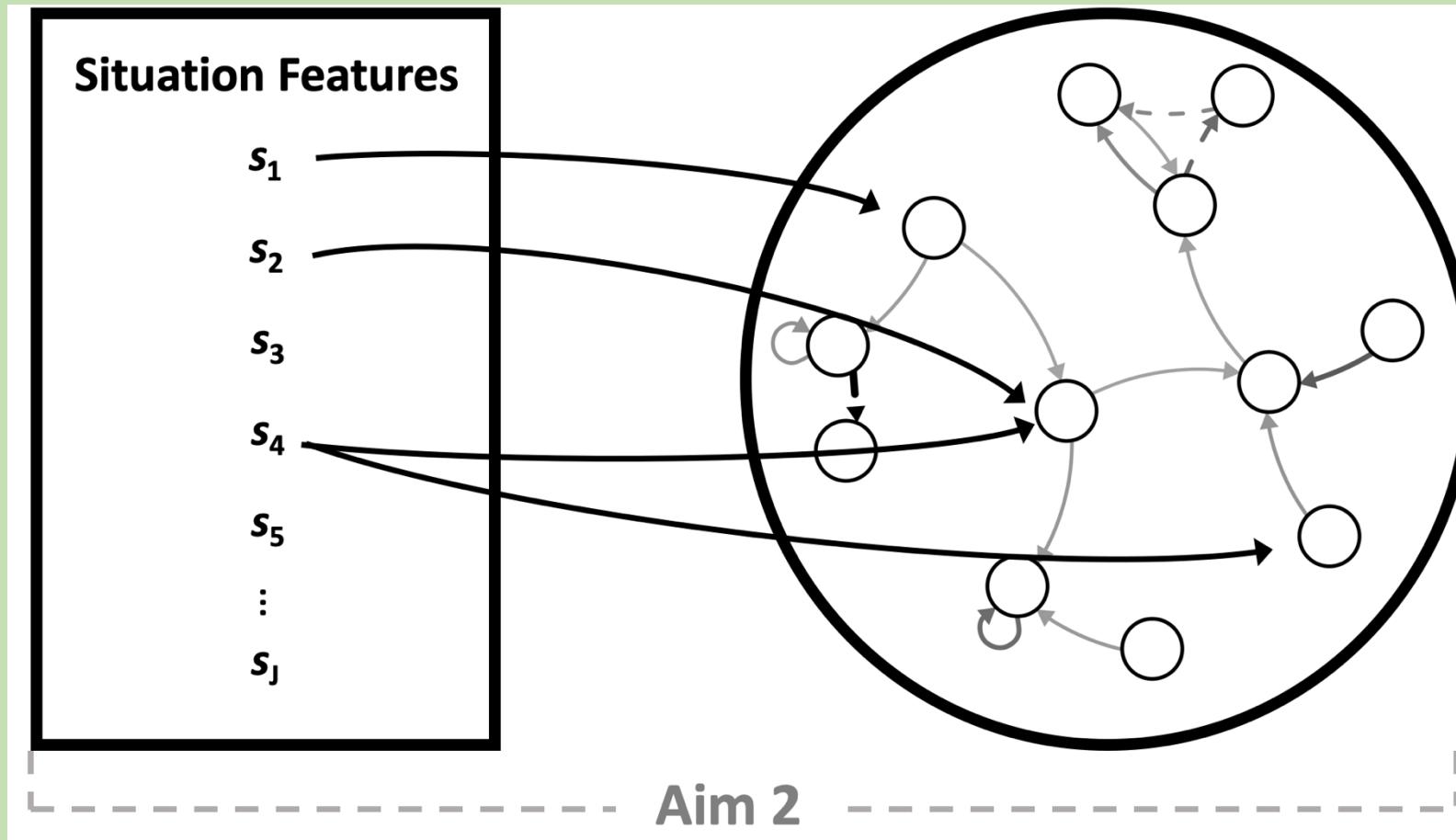


Aim 1: Individuals show unique personality structures that are relatively consistent across time and events.

Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

Aim 2: Using longitudinal data to understand how well-being unfolds across contexts.

Beck et al.
(revision submitted, *NHB*)



* = shared first authorship.

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Beck et al.
(revision submitted, *NHB*)

The dynamics of life and domain satisfaction:

Unfold differently across people

Do not appear well-captured by sample averages of idiographic dynamics

Have similar patterns of individual differences across samples

Aim 1: Individuals show unique personality structures that are relatively consistent across time and events.

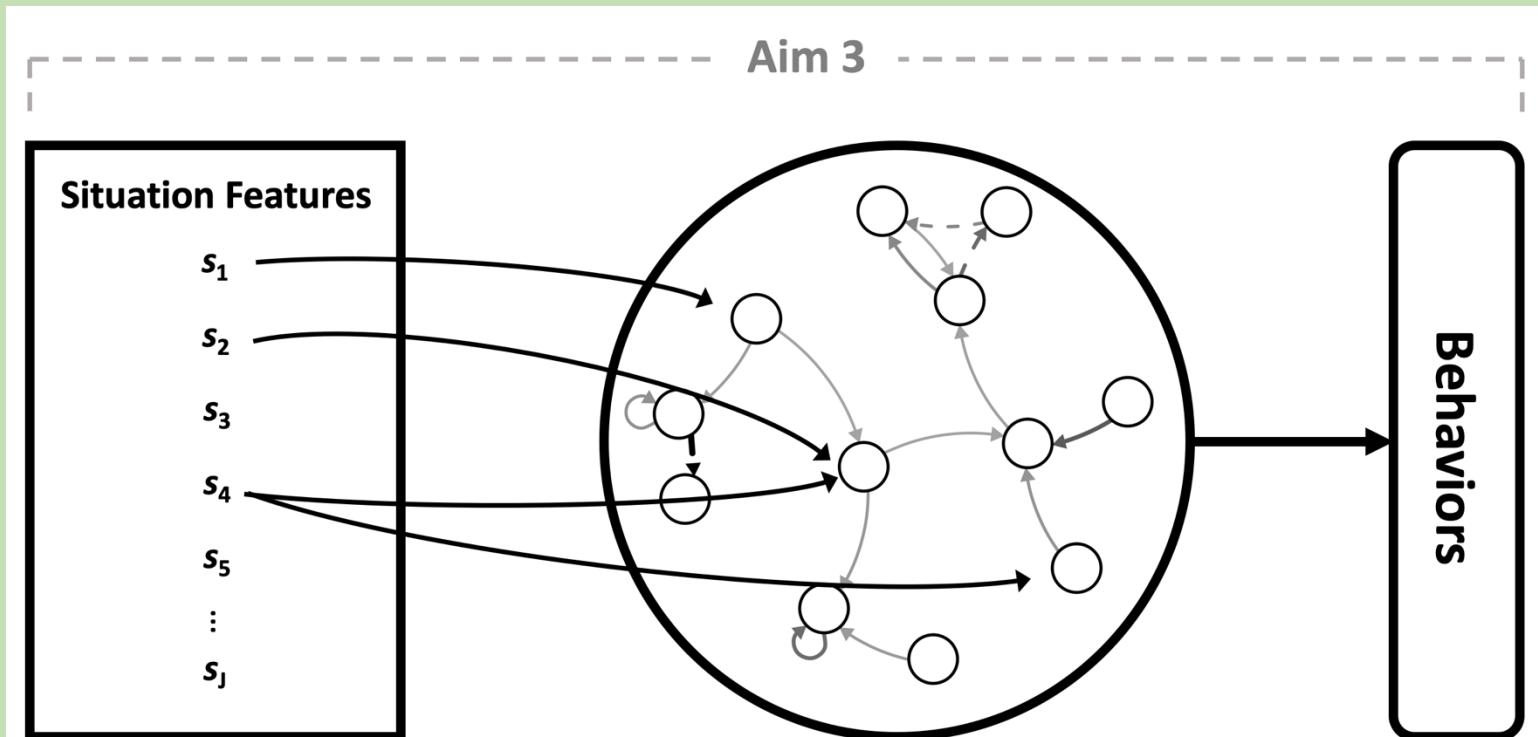
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Aim 3: Predicting behavior using machine learning.

Beck & Jackson
(2023, *Psych Science*)



Psychological

Situations

Behavior /
Experiences

Critical Assumption

**Situations and experiences
should have similar
consequences across people.**

**People with similar levels of a
personality characteristic
should behave in similar ways.**

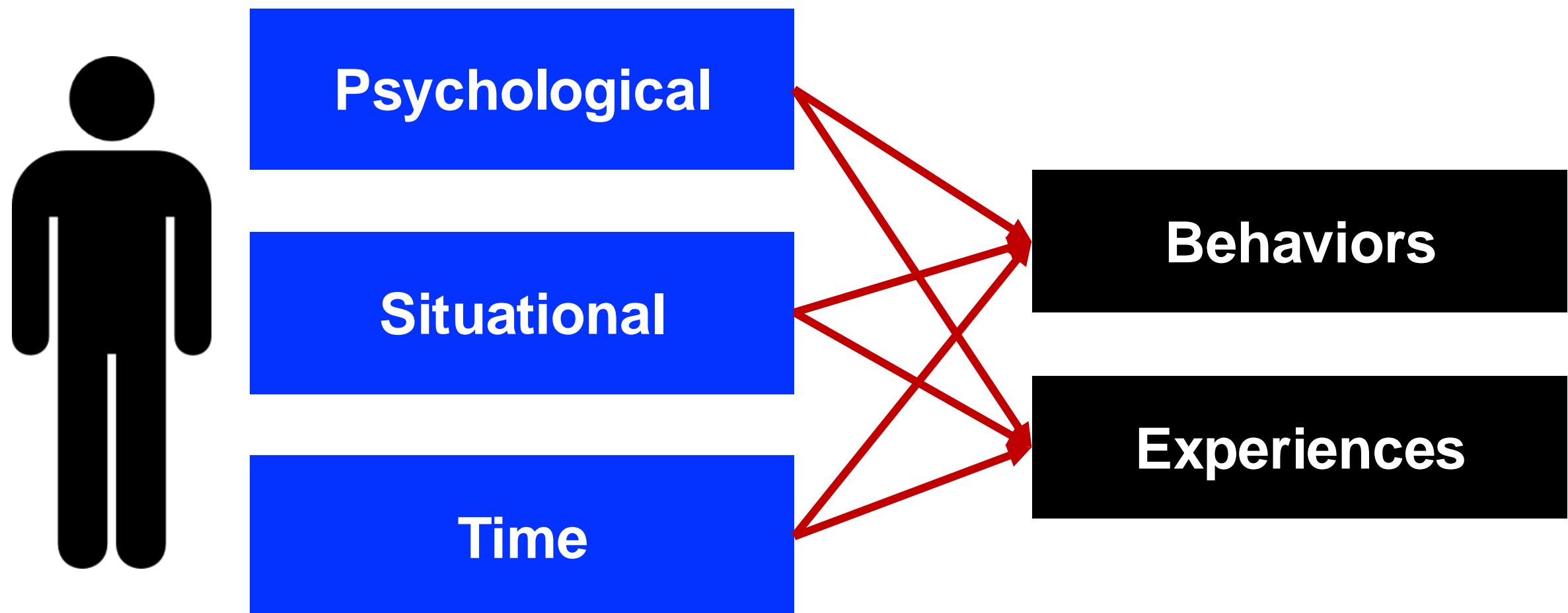


Alternative Assumption

Situations and experiences
should have *different*
consequences across people.

People with similar levels of a
personality characteristic *may*
not behave in similar ways.

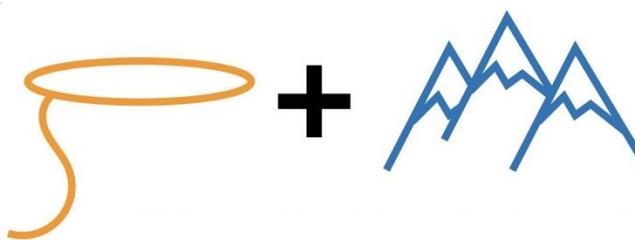




Analytic Plan

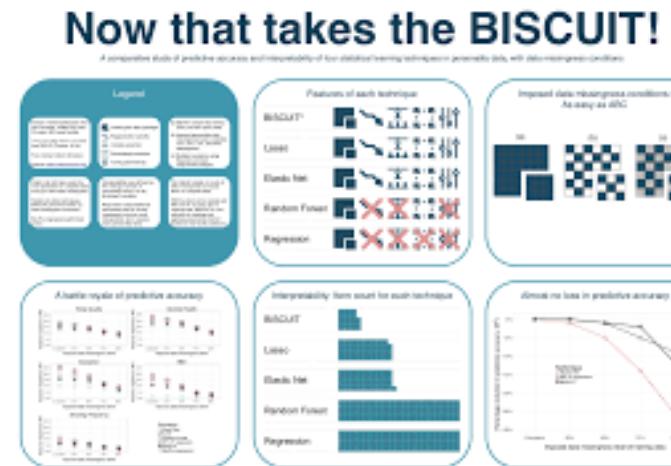
3 machine learning classification methods:

Elastic Net

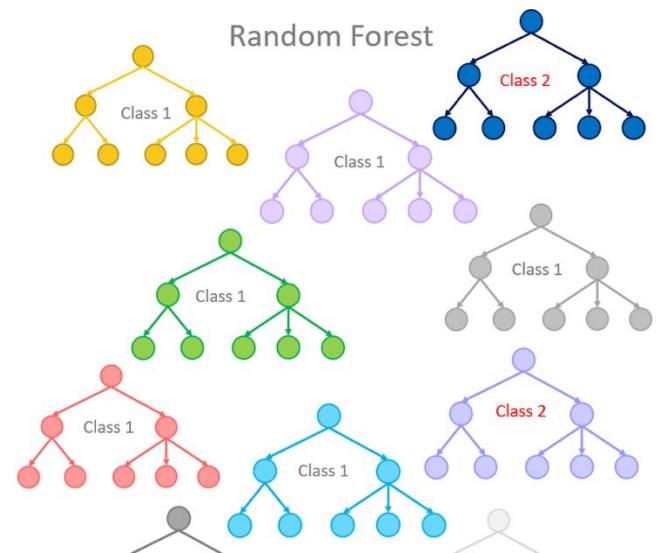


- Classification Accuracy
- Area under the receiver operating curve (AUC)

BISCWIT



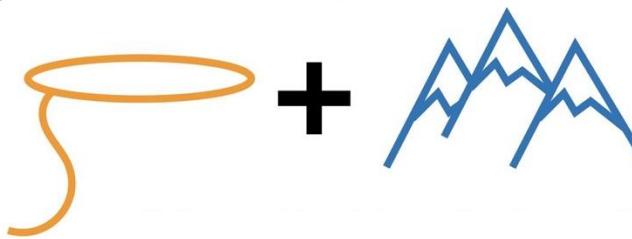
Random Forest



Analytic Plan

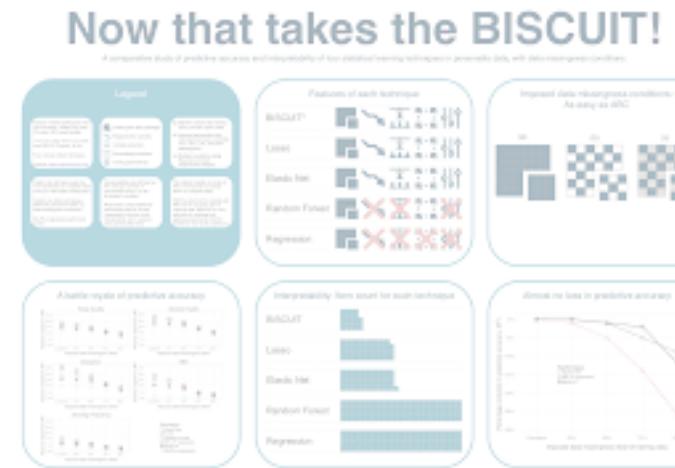
3 machine learning classification methods:

Elastic Net

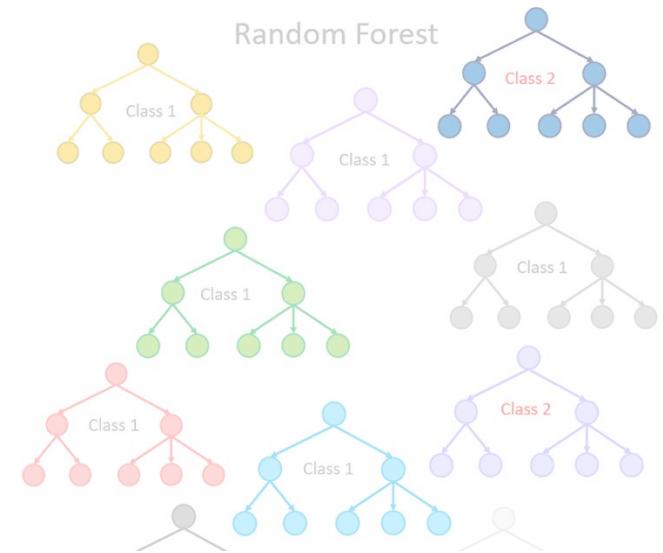


- Classification Accuracy
- Area under the receiver operating curve (AUC)

BISCWIT



Random Forest



RESULTS

Aim 3

Classification Accuracy

Elastic Net

Median (SD)	N
-------------	---

Procrastination

Loneliness

Argument

Interacted

Studying

Sick

Tired



Classification Accuracy

Elastic Net

Classification accuracy was high, on average, with some variability across outcomes.

Sick

Tired

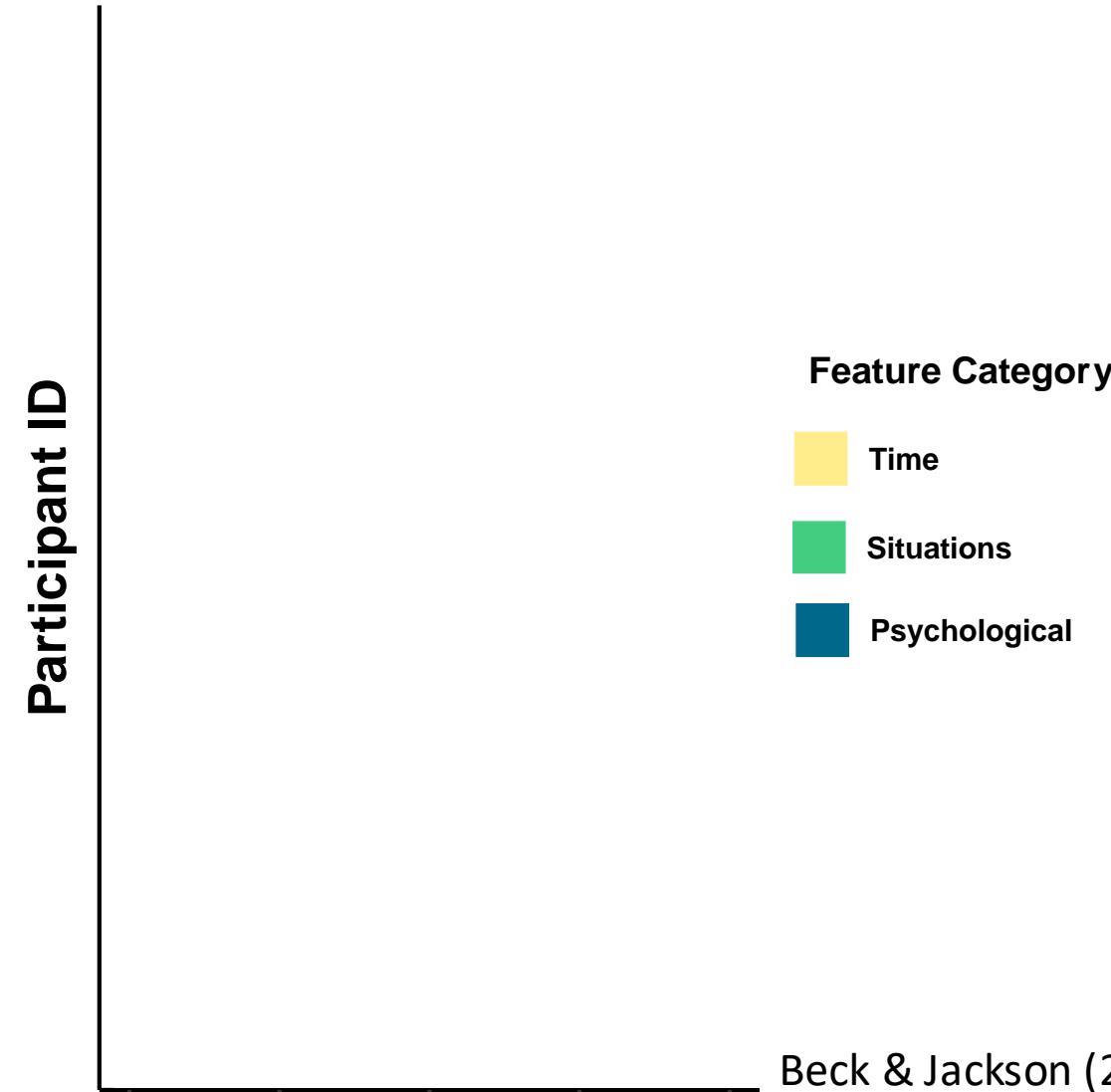


Do certain categories of features out-predict others?

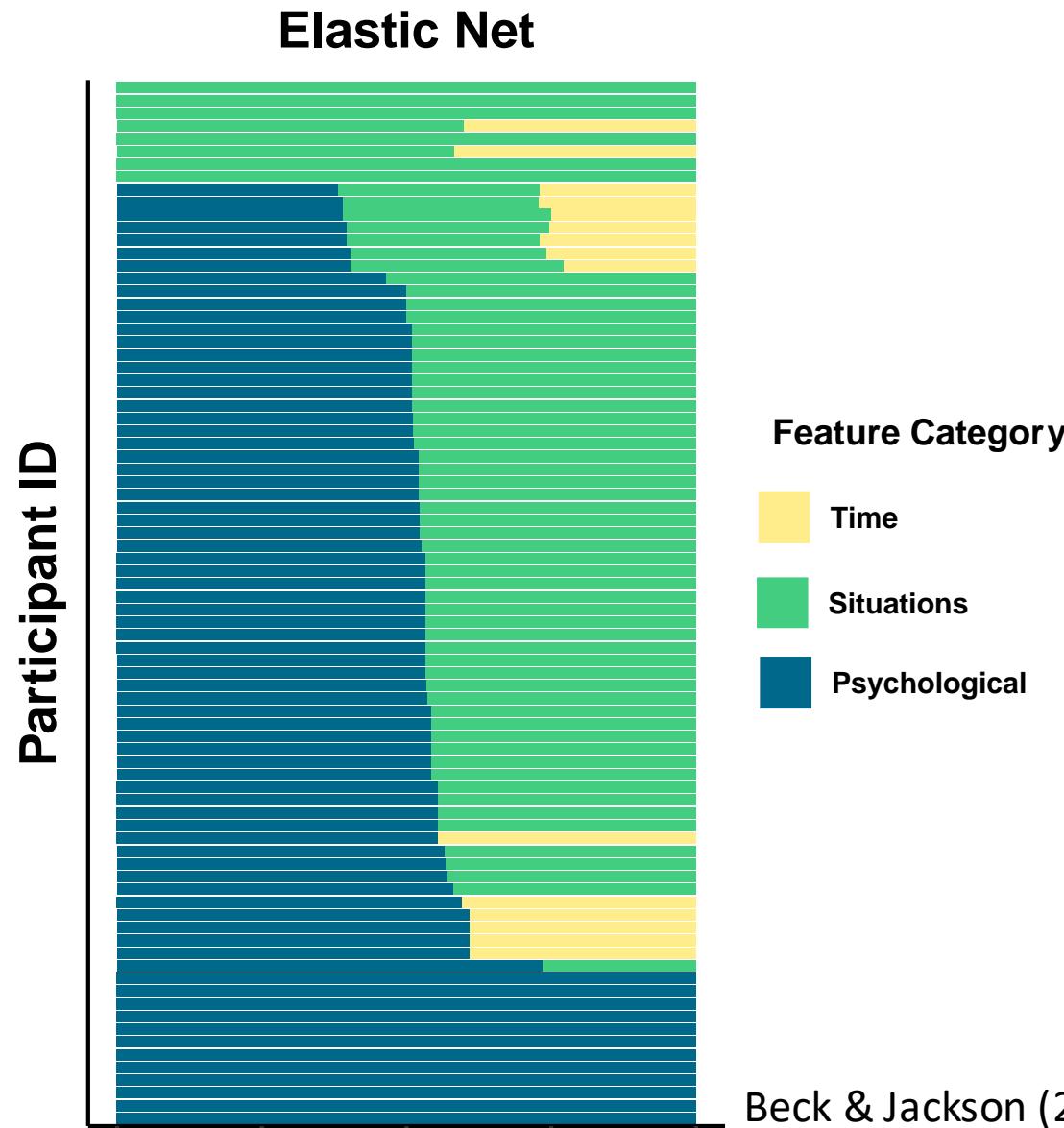


Do certain categories of features out-predict others?

Elastic Net



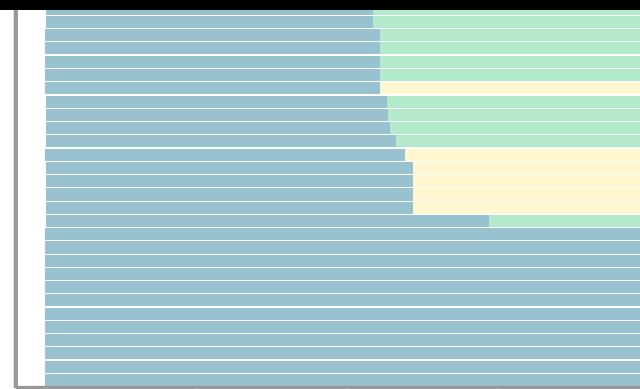
Do certain categories of features out-predict others?



Do certain categories of features out-predict others?

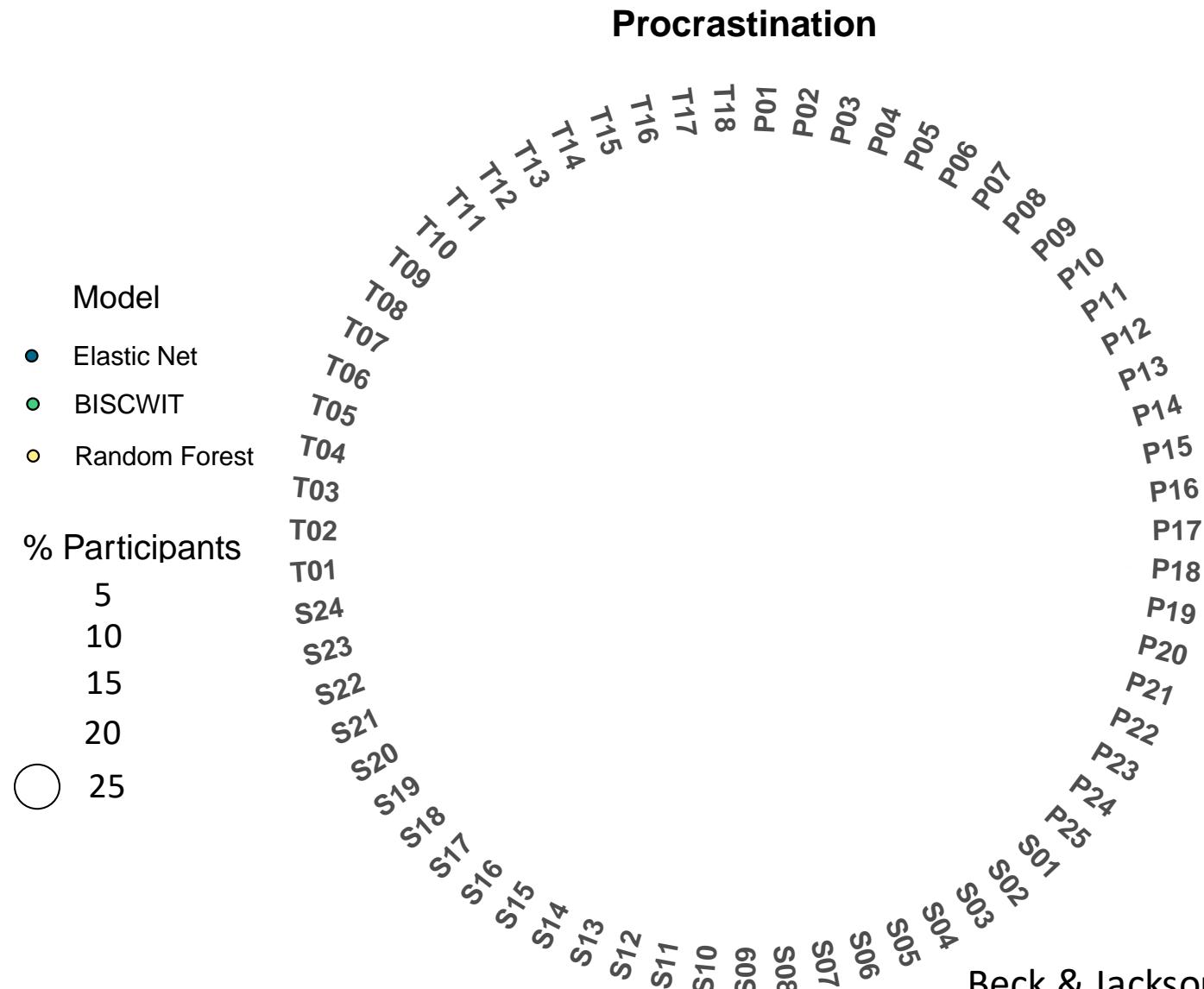
Elastic Net

The relative contribution of person, situation, and timing features varies across people.

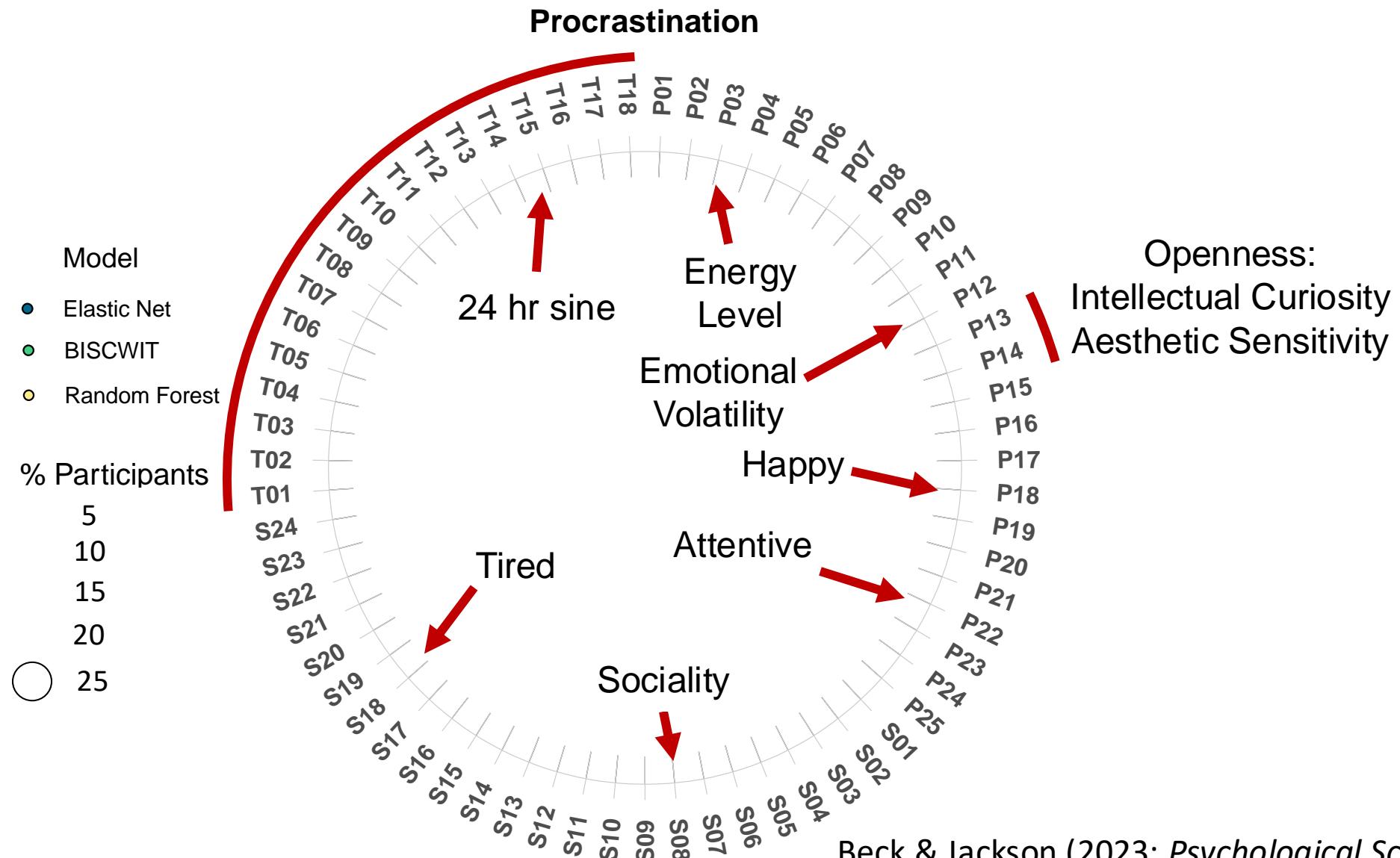


Which features play the strongest roles?

Which features play the strongest roles?



Which features play the strongest roles?



Which features play the strongest roles?

Procrastination

No one feature dominated the prediction of any outcome (max ~35%).

Behaviors & experiences have unique antecedents.

○ 25

S₂₀
S₁₉
S₁₈
S₁₇
S₁₆
S₁₅
S₁₄
S₁₃
S₁₂
S₁₁
S₁₀
S₀₉
S₀₈
S₀₇
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S₀₂
S₀₁
P₂₃
P₂₄
P₂₅

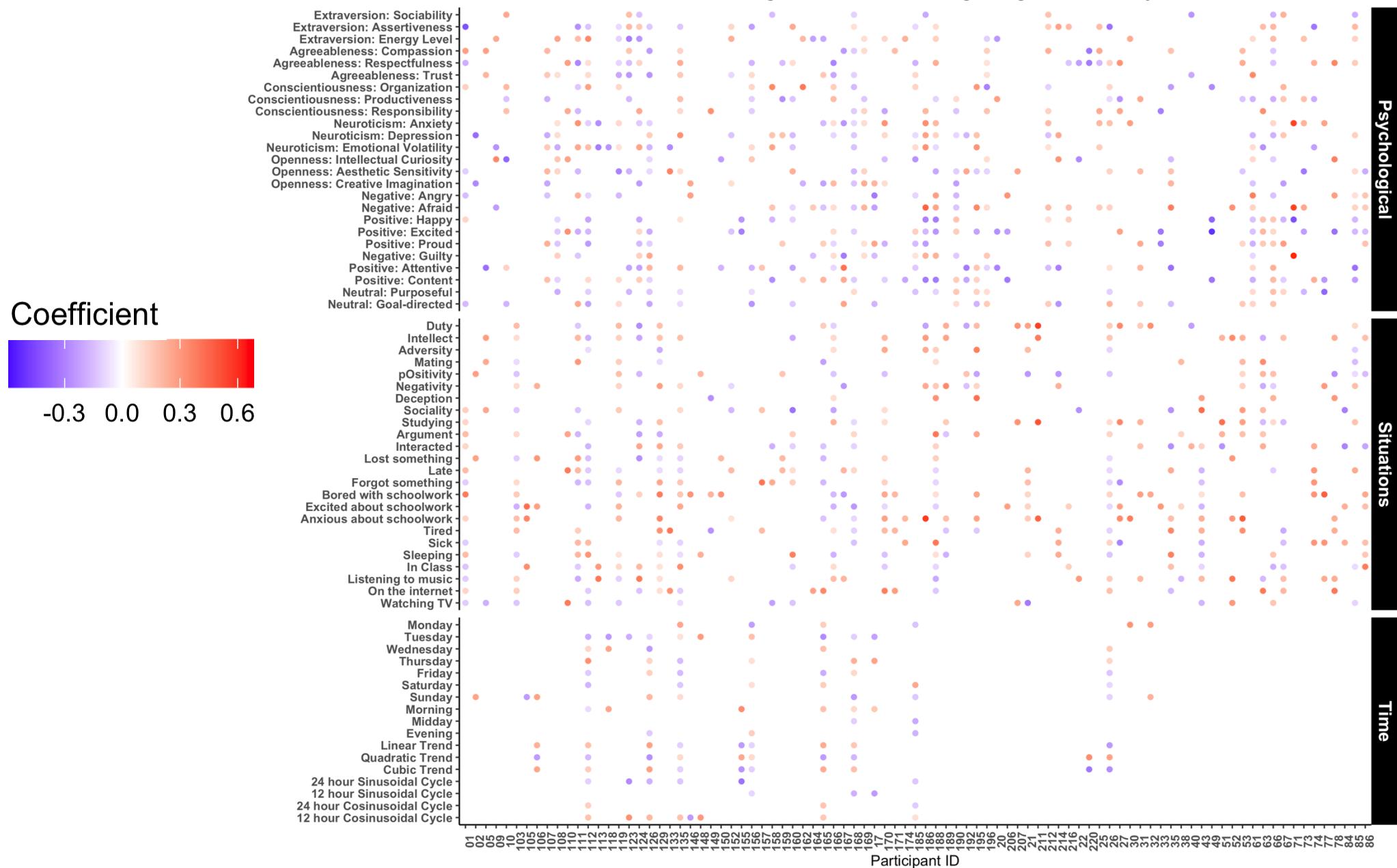
Aim 1: Individuals

Aim 2: Dynamics

Aim 3: Integration

Future Directions

BISCWIT Predicting Future Procrastinating Using Best Accuracy Models



Aim 1: Individuals

Aim 2: Dynamics

Aim 3: Integration

Future Directions

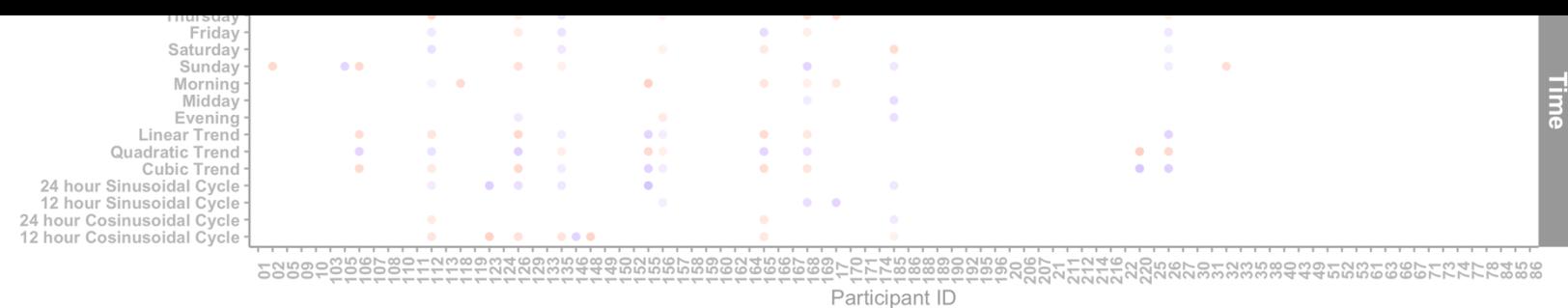
BISCWIT Predicting Future Procrastinating Using Best Accuracy Models



Coefficient



Individuals' profiles of antecedents differed in presence and direction.



Aim 1: Individuals show unique personality structures that are relatively consistent across time and events.

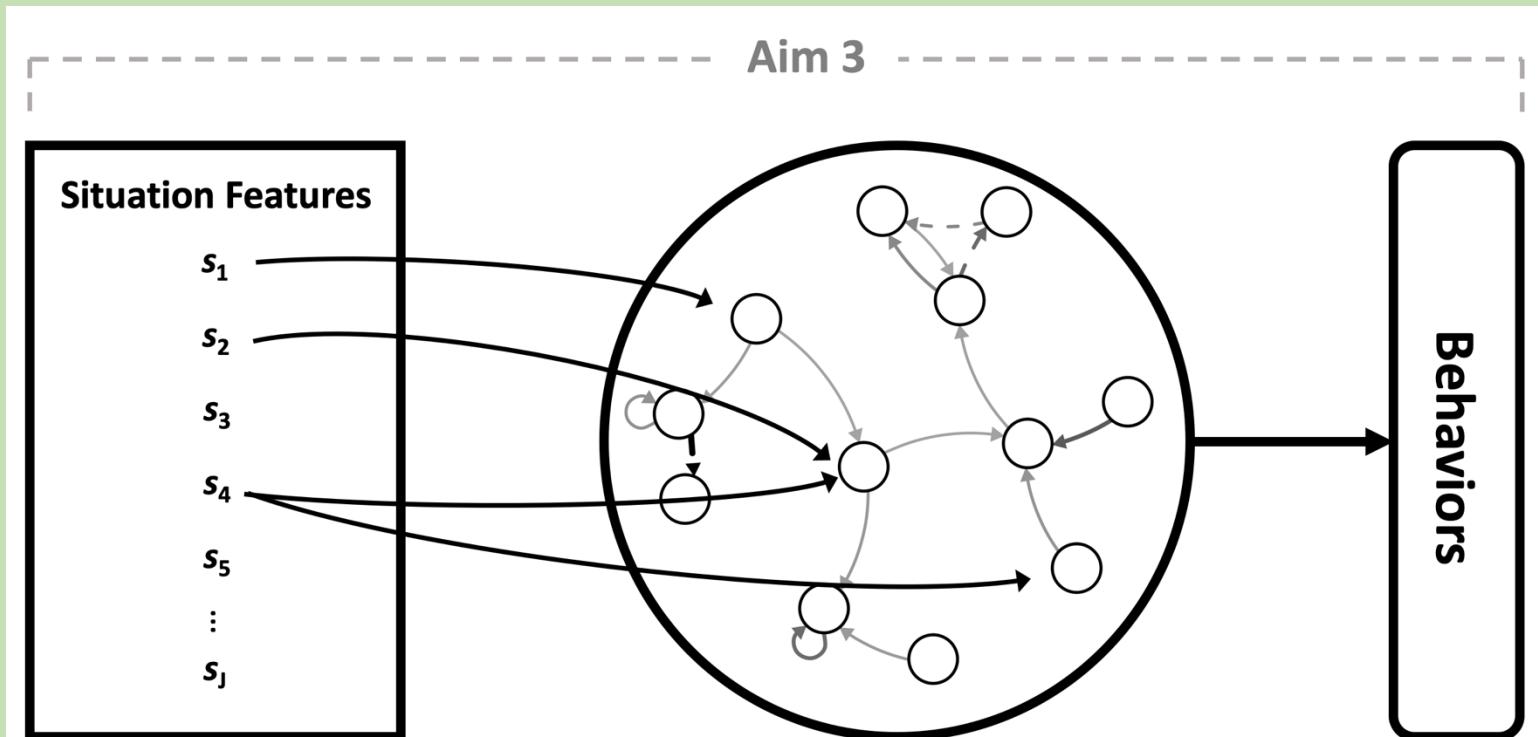
Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

Aim 2: The dynamics of well-being unfold differently across people.

Beck et al.
(revision submitted, *NHB*)

Aim 3: Predicting behavior using machine learning.

Beck & Jackson
(2023, *Psych Science*)



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Beck & Jackson
(2023, *Psych Science*)

The antecedents of behaviors and experiences:

Can be used to accurately predict those behaviors and experiences

Differ across people

Vary in the degree of psychological, situational, and timing antecedents

Aim 1: Individuals show unique personality structures that are relatively consistent across time and events.

Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

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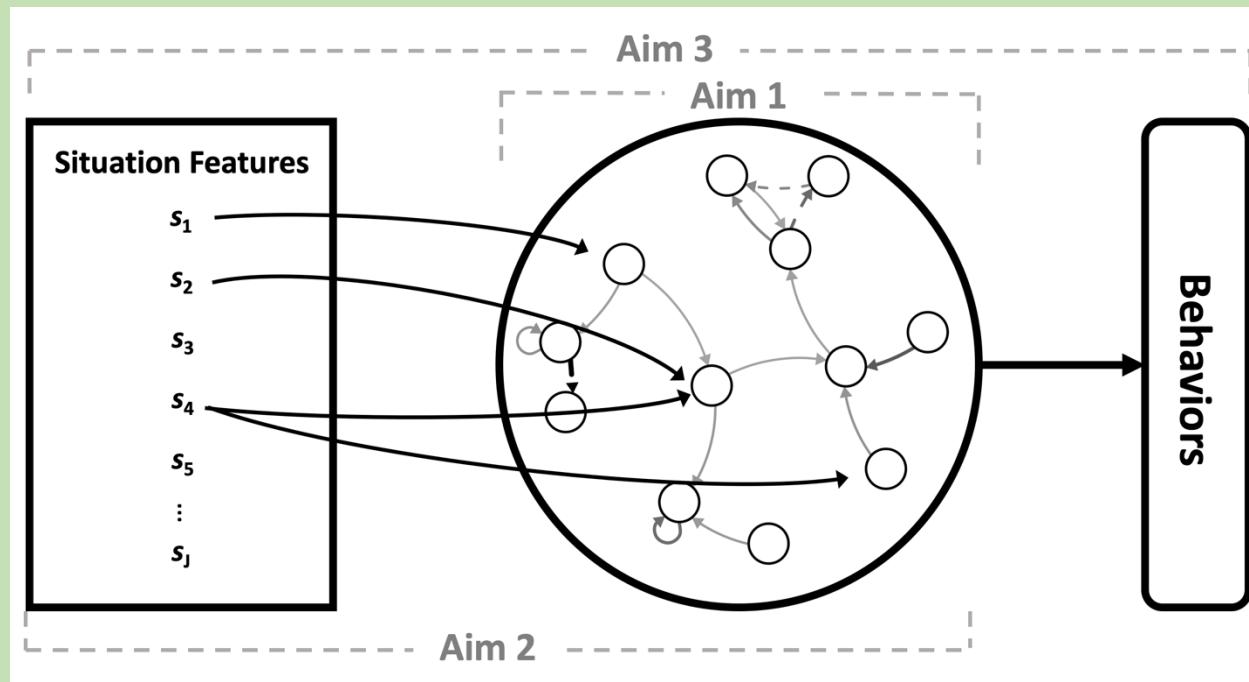
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Ongoing Directions



Ongoing and Future Directions

Integrating idiographic and between-person approaches via bottom-up psychological assessment

Using heterogeneous dynamics to link traits and states

Introducing the Personality Consortium on Research in Idiographics and Nomothetics (PECORINO)

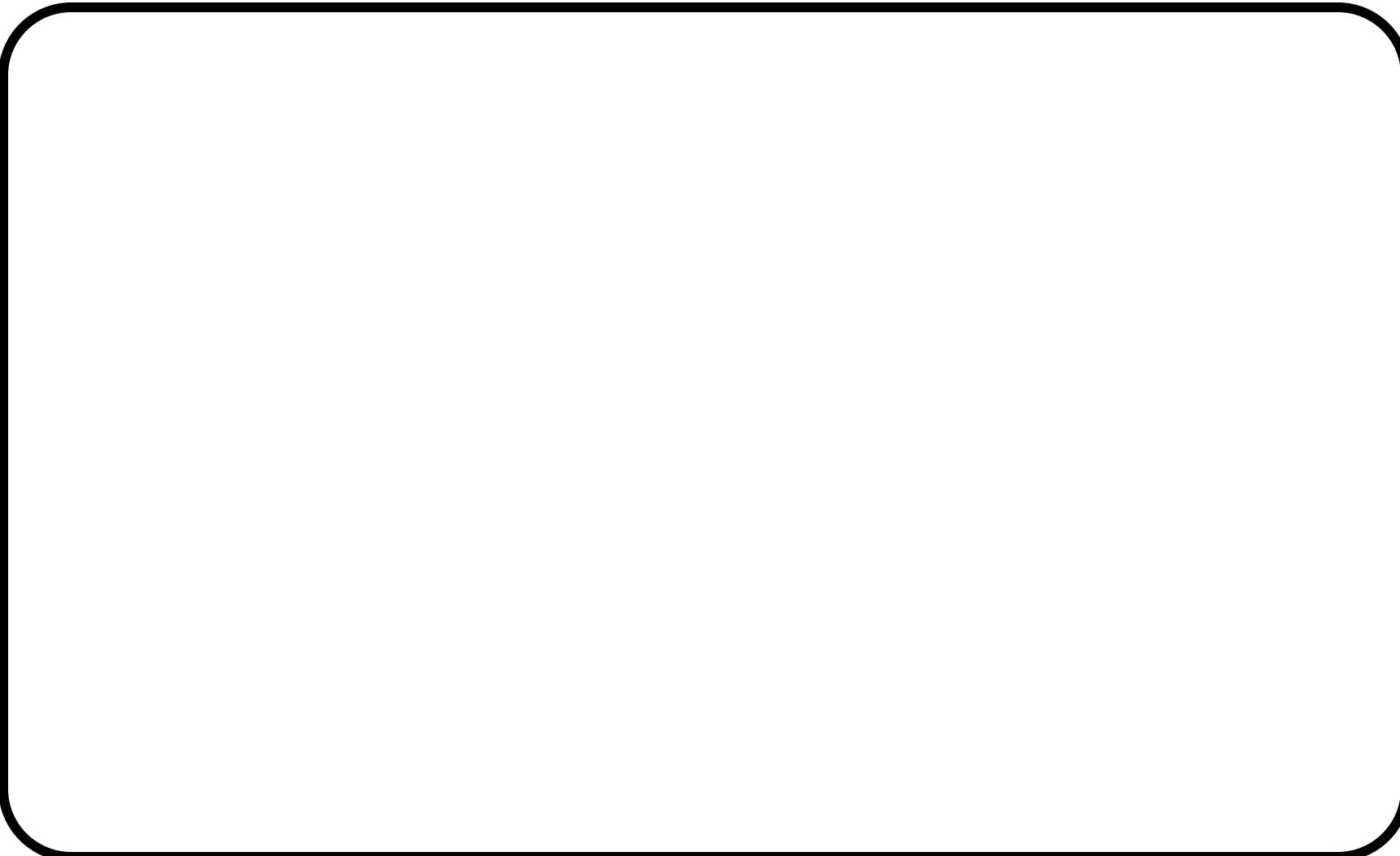
Ongoing and Future Directions

Integrating idiographic and between-person approaches via bottom-up psychological assessment

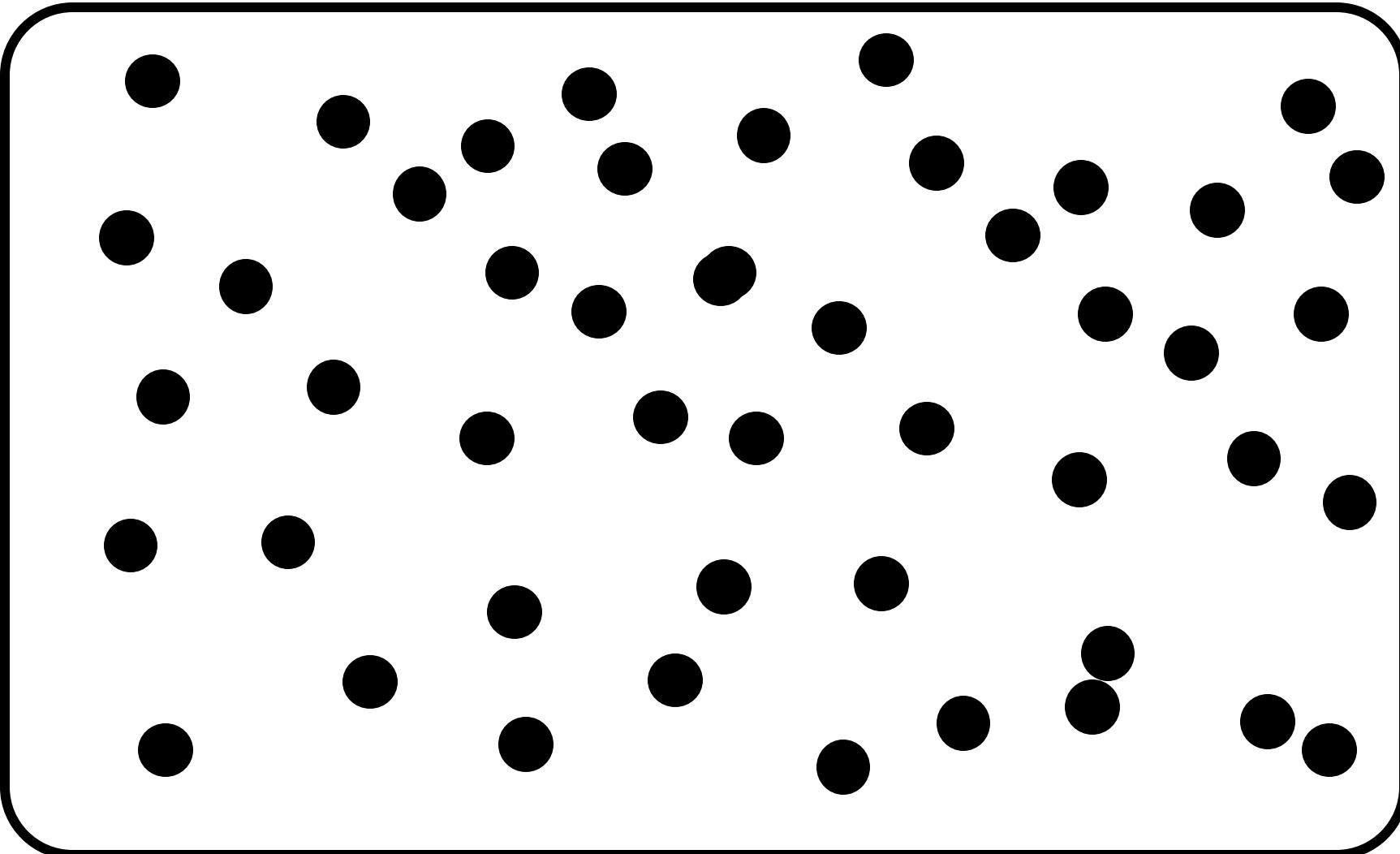
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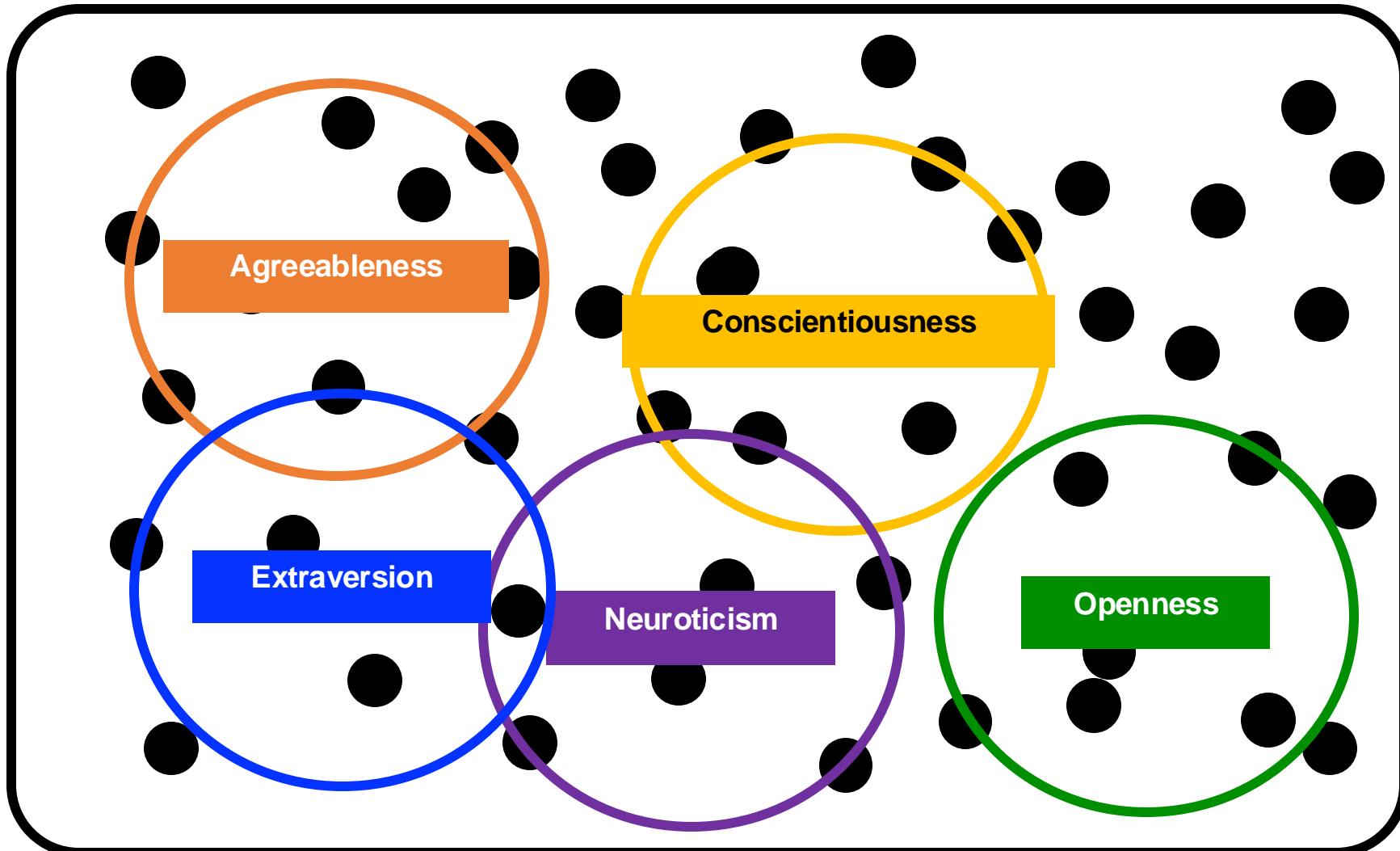
The Essential Trait Approach



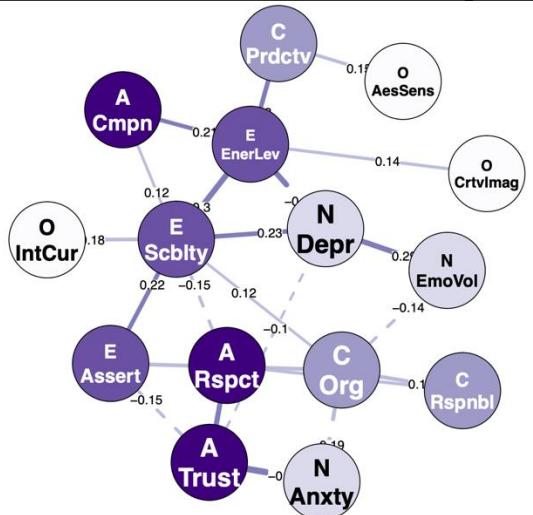
The Essential Trait Approach



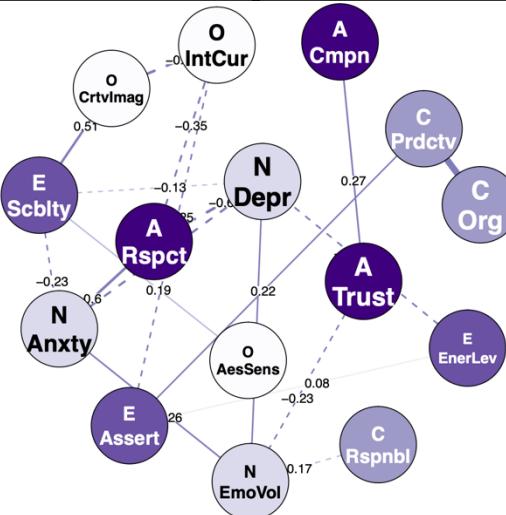
The Essential Trait Approach



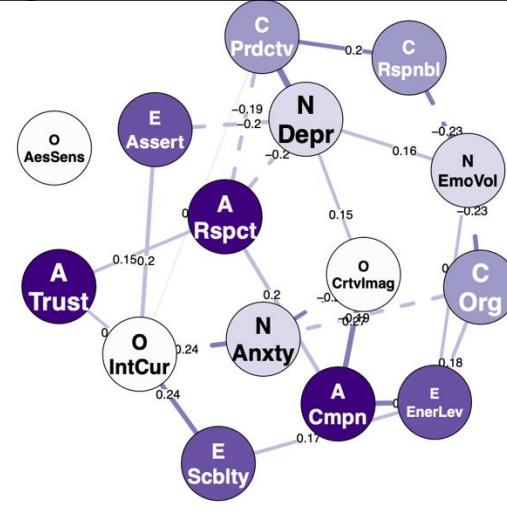
Aim 1: Individuals



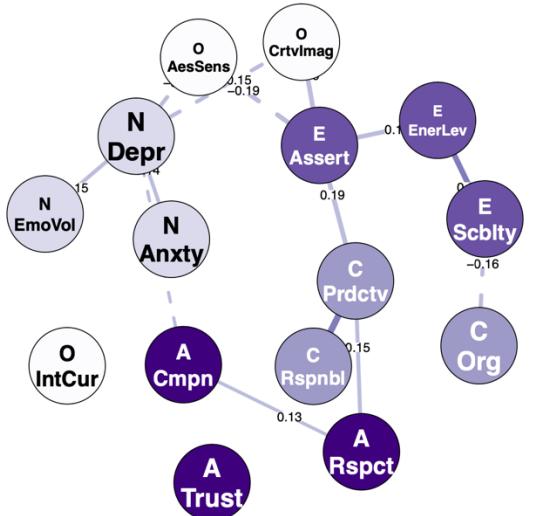
Aim 2: Dynamics



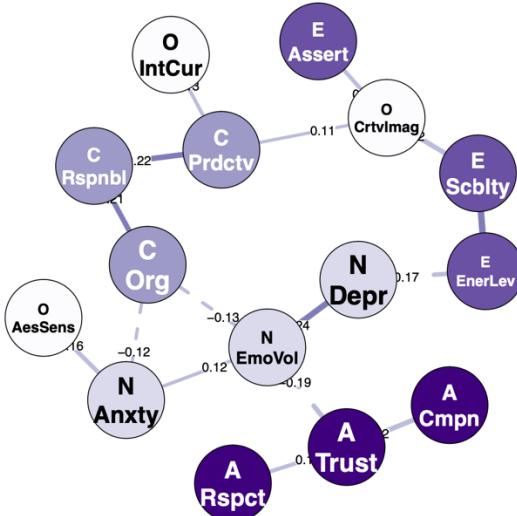
Aim 3: Integration



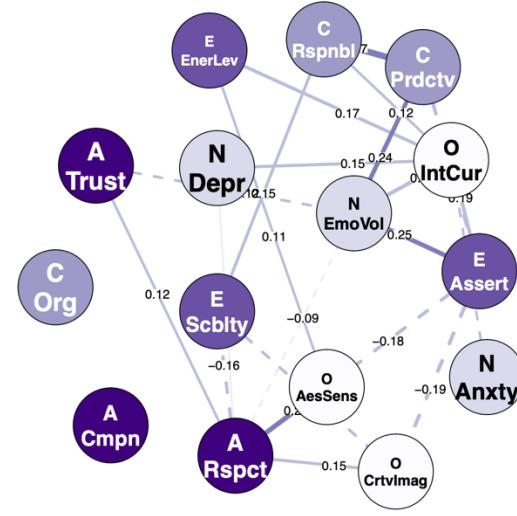
Wave 1: Contemporaneous for S16



Wave 1: Contemporaneous for S22



Wave 1: Contemporaneous for S29



What are we missing when we use the same measures for everyone?

We have no idea. That's an empirical question!

What are we missing when we use the same measures for everyone?

Content

Hypothesis: People will generate content that doesn't overlap with the Big Five or other typical shared indicators we measure.

Variability

Hypothesis: People will show more variability and use the full scale more for unique items than shared items, on average.

Predictive Utility

Hypothesis: Unique items will improve predictive utility and play important roles in personalized prediction models.

The Personalizing Personality Pilot Study

Study Design

UCDAVIS

● N = 200



Baseline Surveys

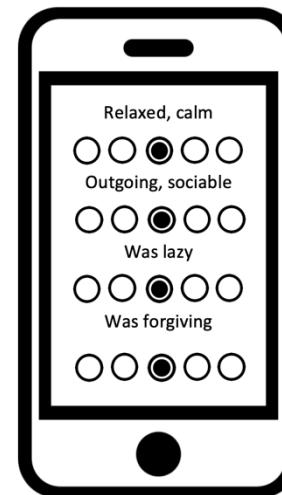
- Big Five Personality
- Cardinal Traits
- Demographics
- **Unique Item Generation**
- ...
- etc.



Experience Sampling Method (ESM)

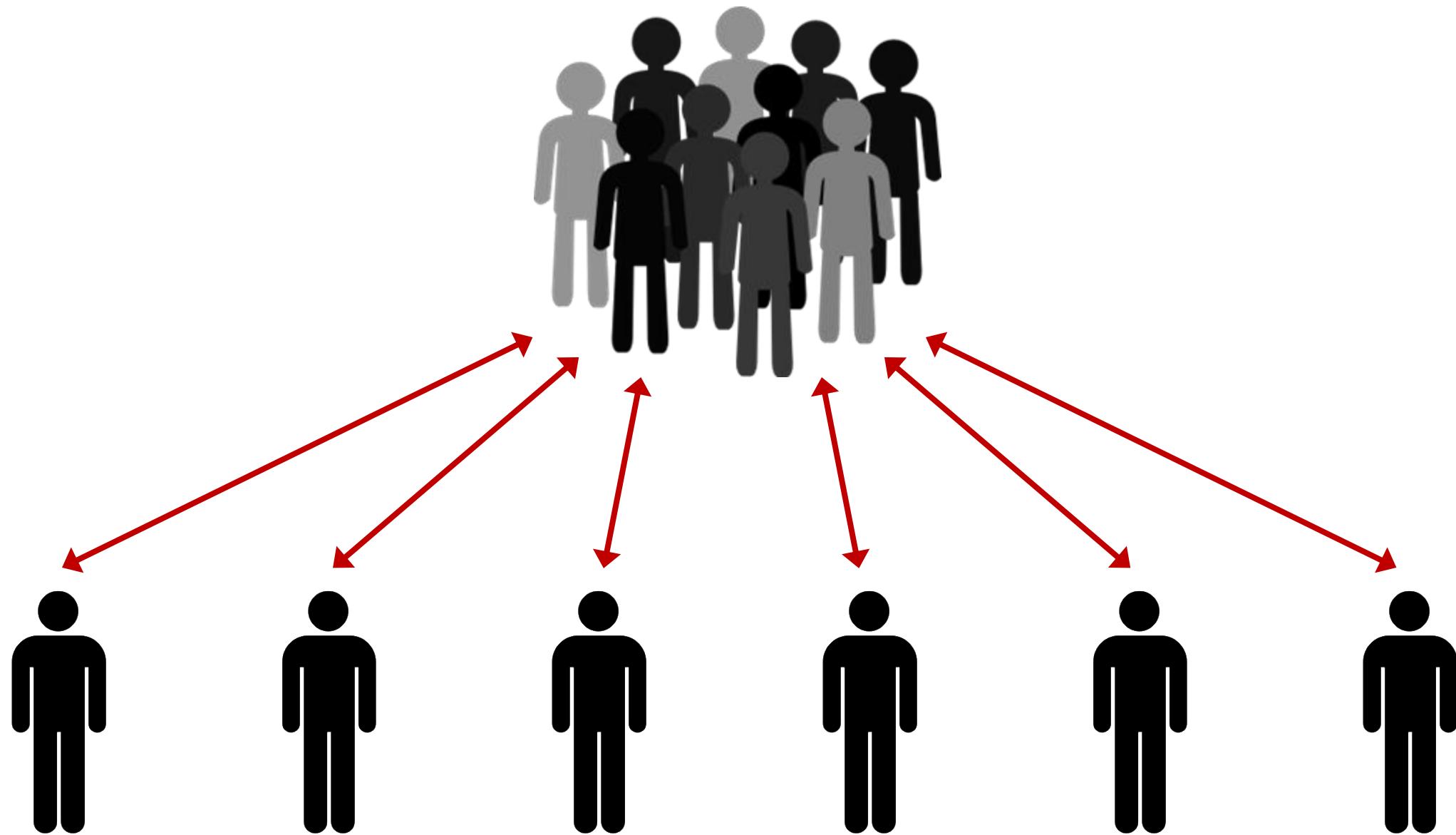
5 x / day for 3 weeks ($\max n = 105$)

- Big Five Personality States
- Unique, participant generated “Cardinal States”
- DIAMONDS Situation Characteristics
- Binary Behavior Indicators
- Passive Sensing



BCS-2336406

Bottom-Up Psychological Science



Between-Person

Extraversion

Agreeableness

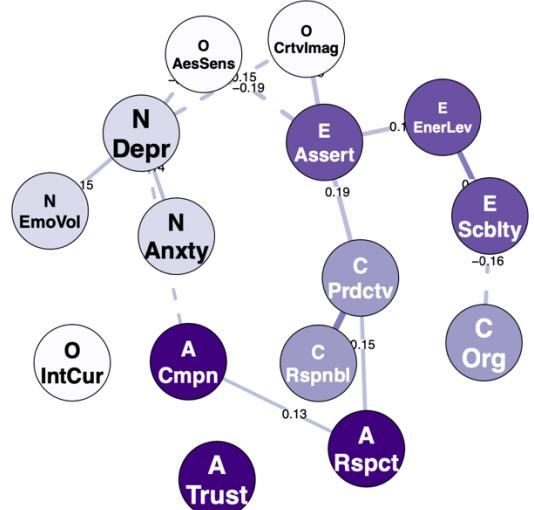
Conscientiousness

Neuroticism

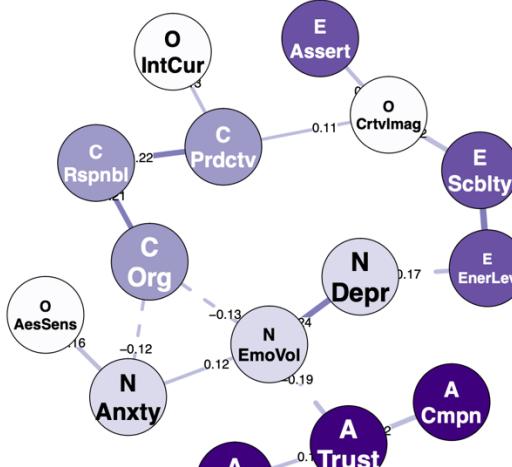
Openness



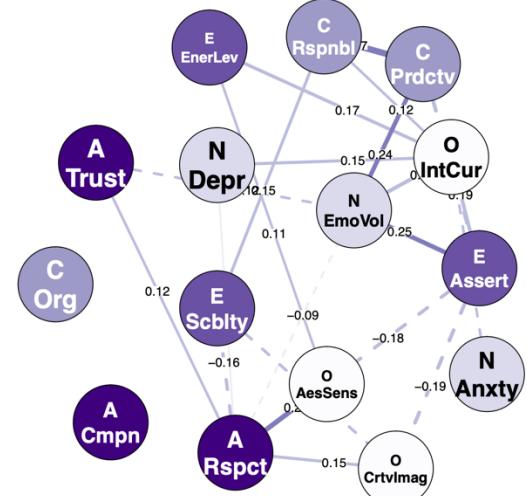
Wave 1: Contemporaneous for S16



Wave 1: Contemporaneous for S22



Wave 1: Contemporaneous for S29



Idiographic

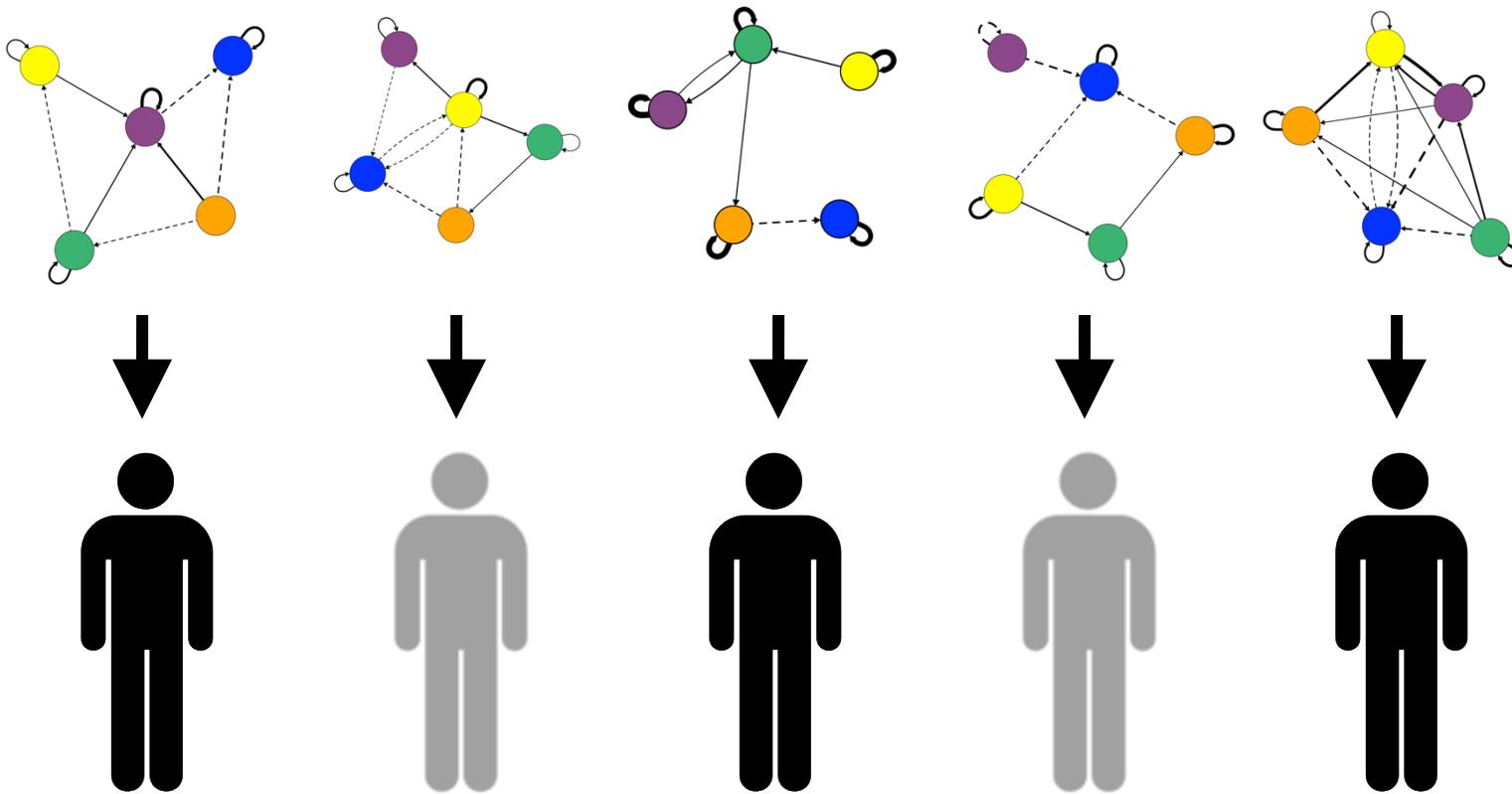
Ongoing and Future Directions

Integrating idiographic and between-person approaches via bottom-up psychological assessment

Using heterogeneous dynamics to link traits and states

Introducing the Personality Consortium on Research in Idiographics and Nomothetics (PECORINO)

Using personality dynamics to link idiographic systems to personality trait change



**Idiographic
Person-Specific**

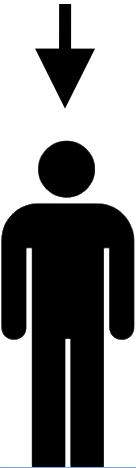
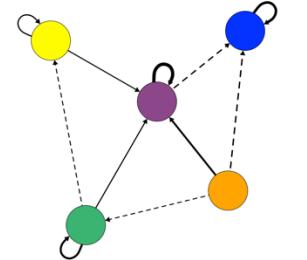
Extraversion

Agreeableness

Conscientiousness

Neuroticism

Openness

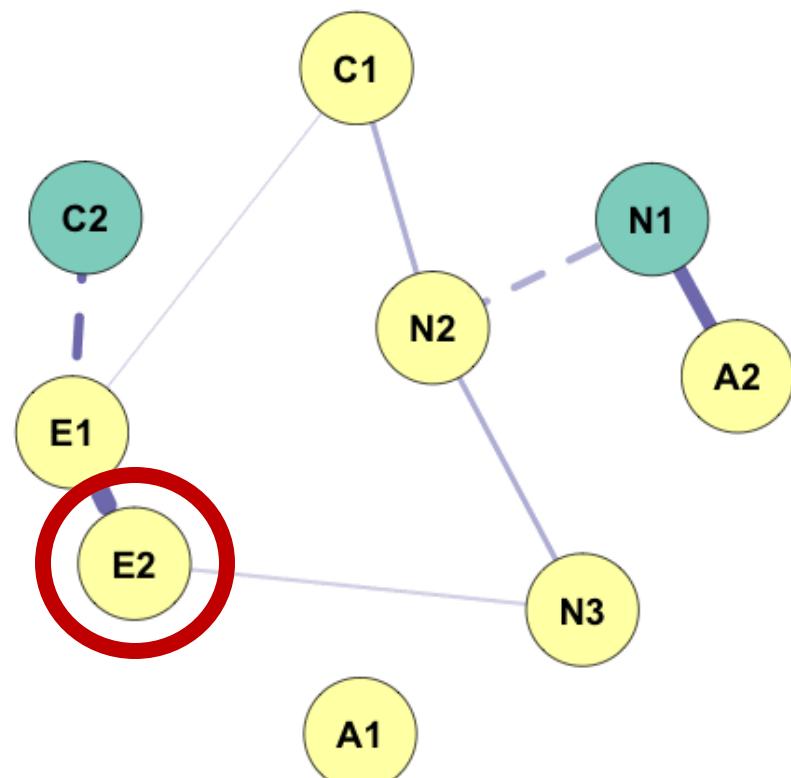


Adam Nissen

Nissen & Beck (under review)

Low Density, Degree

Contemporaneous Wave 1 for S62



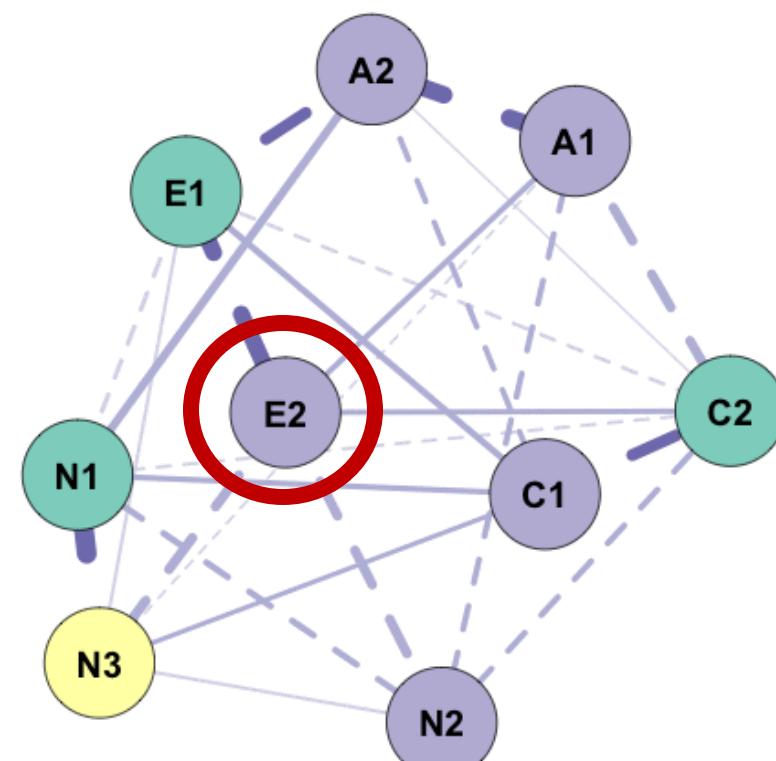
RIGIDITY



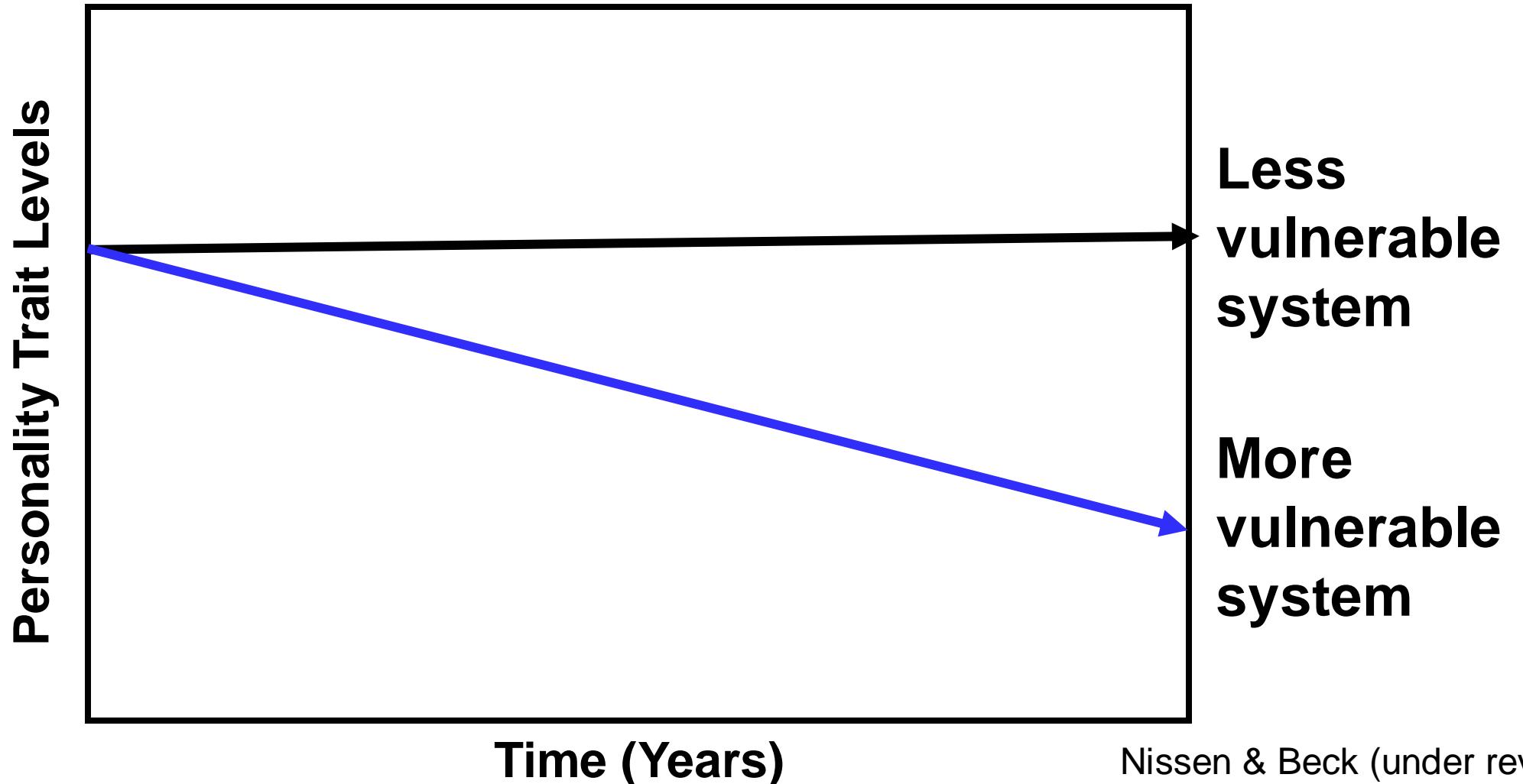
CHAOS

High Density, Degree

Contemporaneous Wave 1 for S95



Systems Perspectives: Persons in Context



Adam Nissen

Nissen & Beck (under review)

Using personality dynamics to link idiographic systems to health risk and AD/ADR

Received: 17 May 2023

Revised: 18 September 2023

Accepted: 4 October 2023

DOI: 10.1002/alz.13523

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Alzheimer's & Dementia®
THE JOURNAL OF THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Personality predictors of dementia diagnosis and neuropathological burden: An individual participant data meta-analysis

Emorie D. Beck^{1,2} | Tomiko Yoneda^{1,2} | Bryan D. James³ | David A. Bennett⁴ |
Jason Hassenstab⁵ | Mindy J. Katz⁶ | Richard B. Lipton⁶ | John Morris⁴ |
Daniel K. Mroczek^{1,7} | Eileen K. Graham¹

¹Department of Medical Social Sciences, Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, Illinois, USA

²Department of Psychology, University of California, Davis, Davis, California, USA

³Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center, Department of Internal Medicine, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois, USA

⁴Department of Neurology, Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois, USA

⁵Department of Neurology, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri, USA

⁶Department of Neurology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, New York, USA

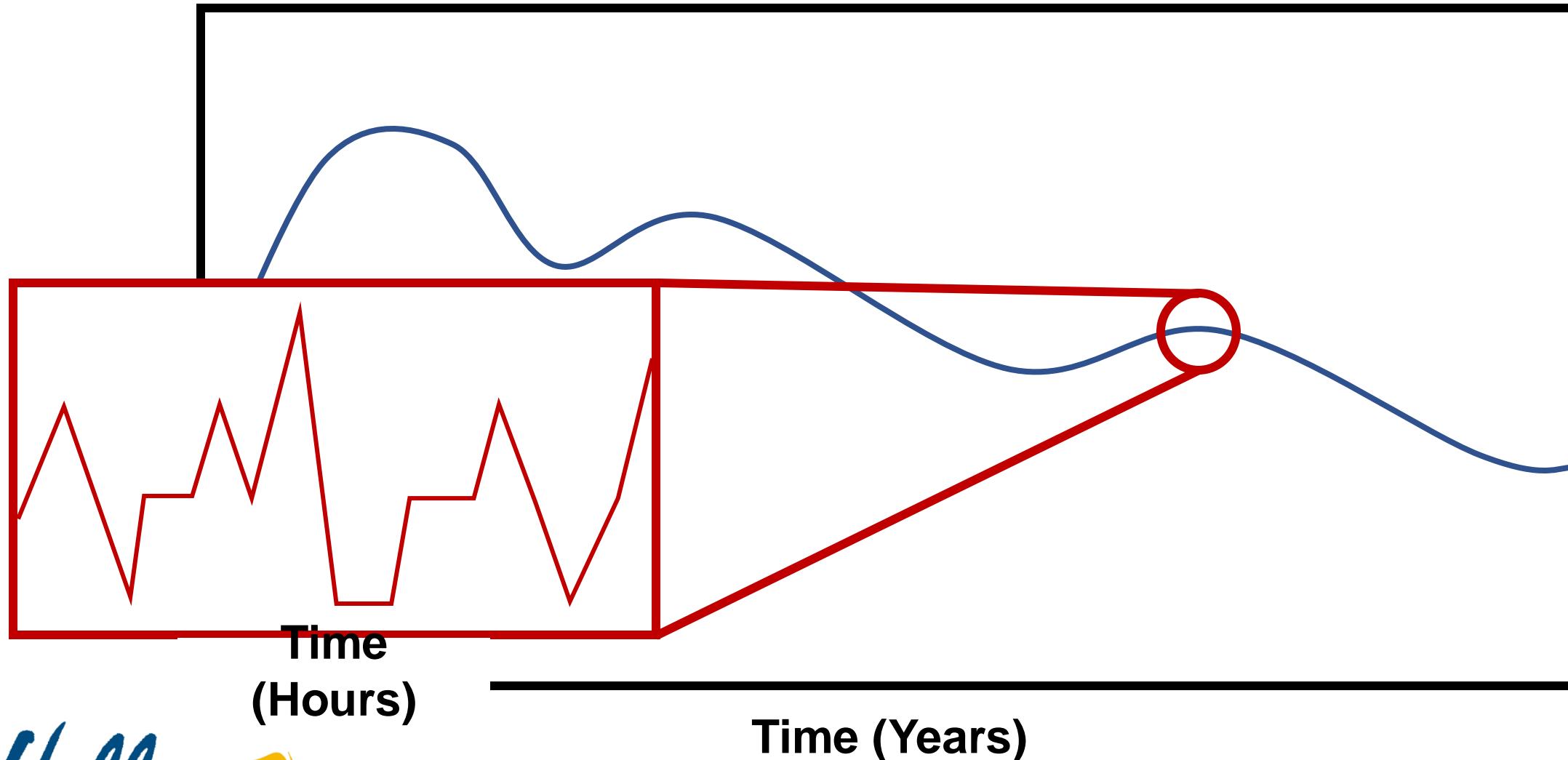
⁷Department of Psychology, Northwestern University, Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences, Evanston, Illinois, USA



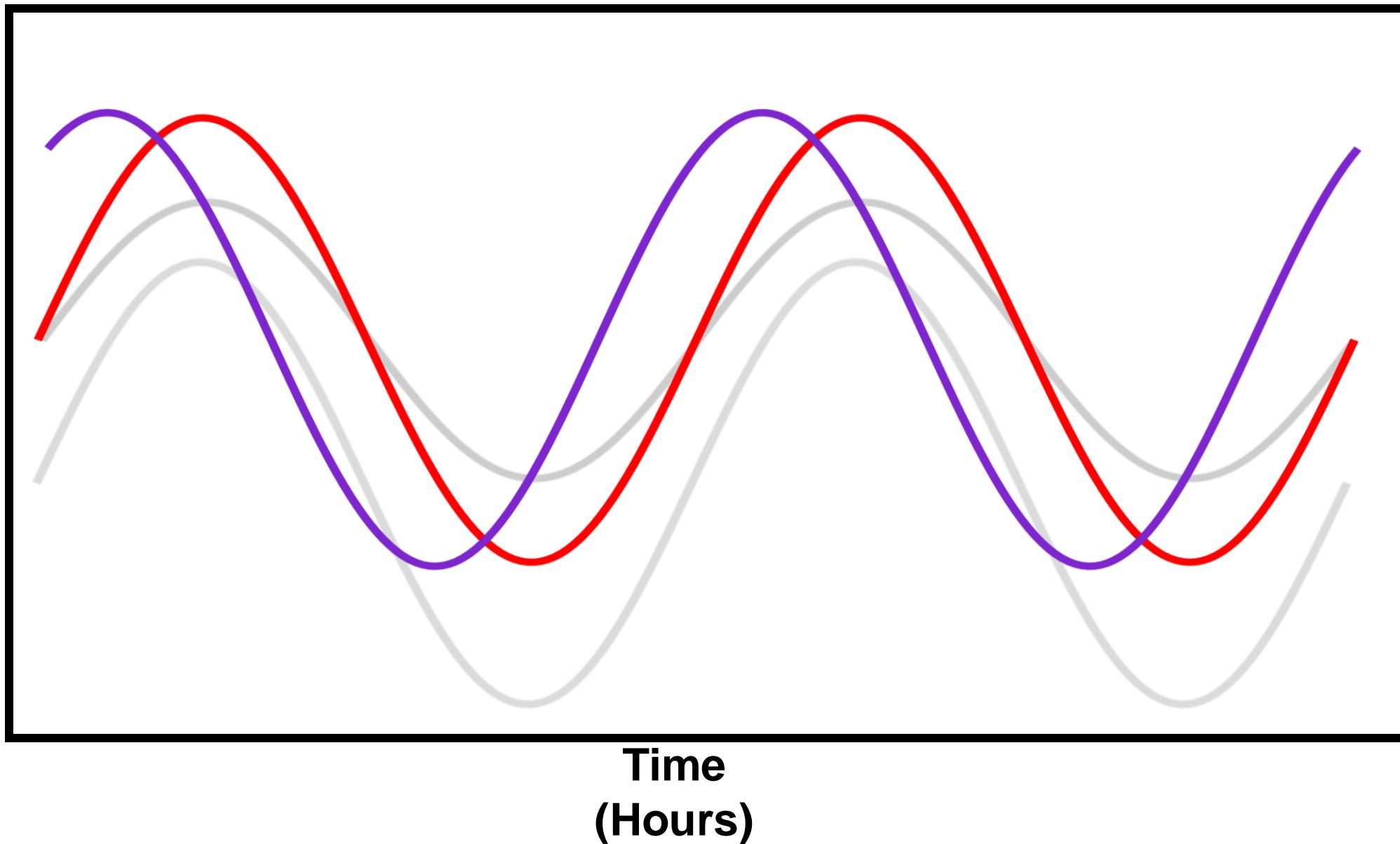
National Institute
on Aging

Beck et al. (2024;
Alzheimer's and Dementia)
Beck et al. (under revision; JPSP)

Lifespan Cognitive Variability



Individual Differences in Cognitive Variability



Individual Differences in Daily Cycles of Cognitive Function

Dot Memory: Daily Rhythms

Cosinor Trends Within Day

Mean Error (Euclidean Distance)

Model Predicted Mean Error

0.04
0.00
-0.04

06:00:00 08:00:00 10:00:00 12:00:00 14:00:00 16:00:00 18:00:00 20:00:00 22:00:00

Time of Day (Hour)

Mean Response Time

Model Predicted Mean RT

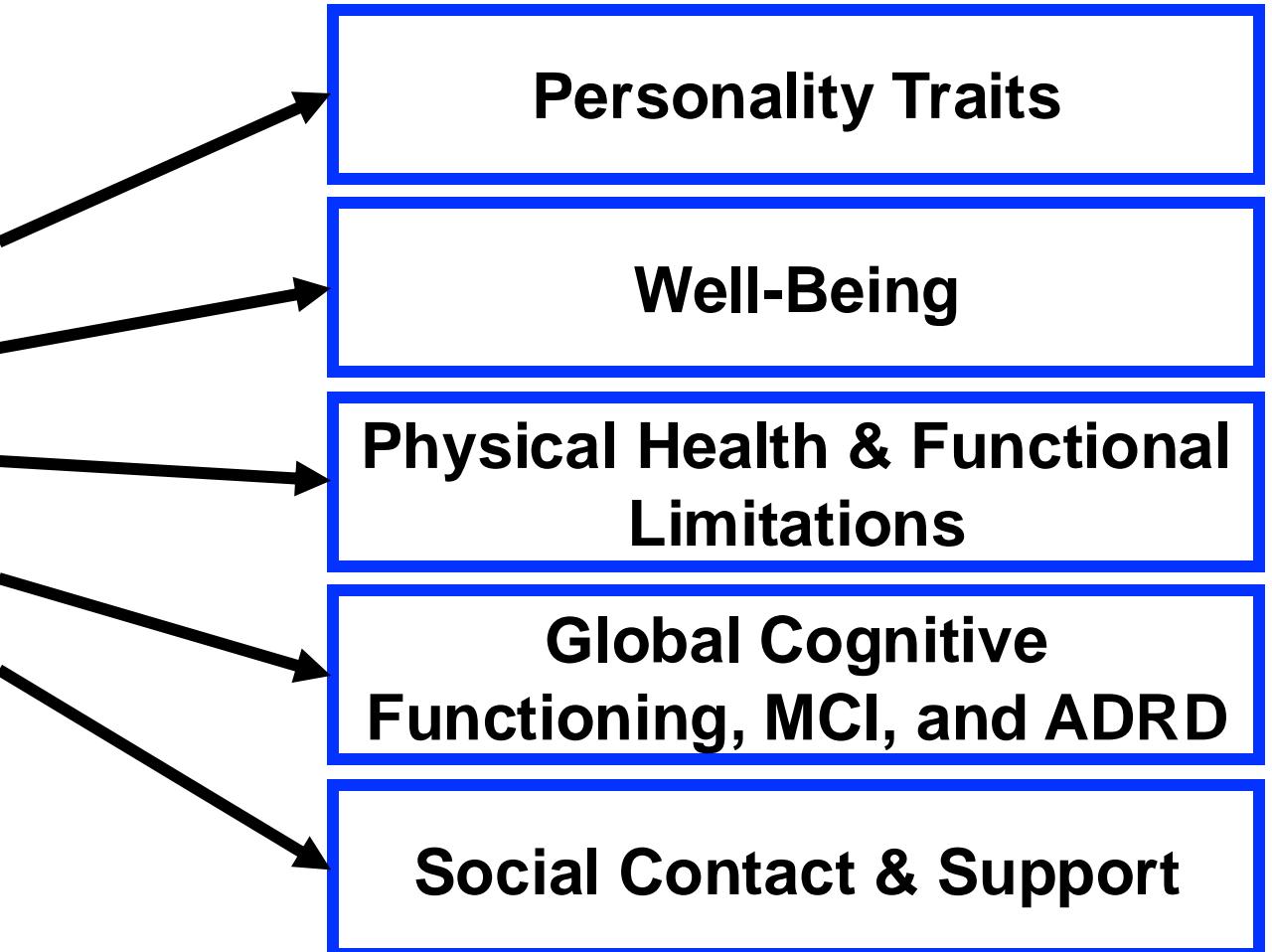
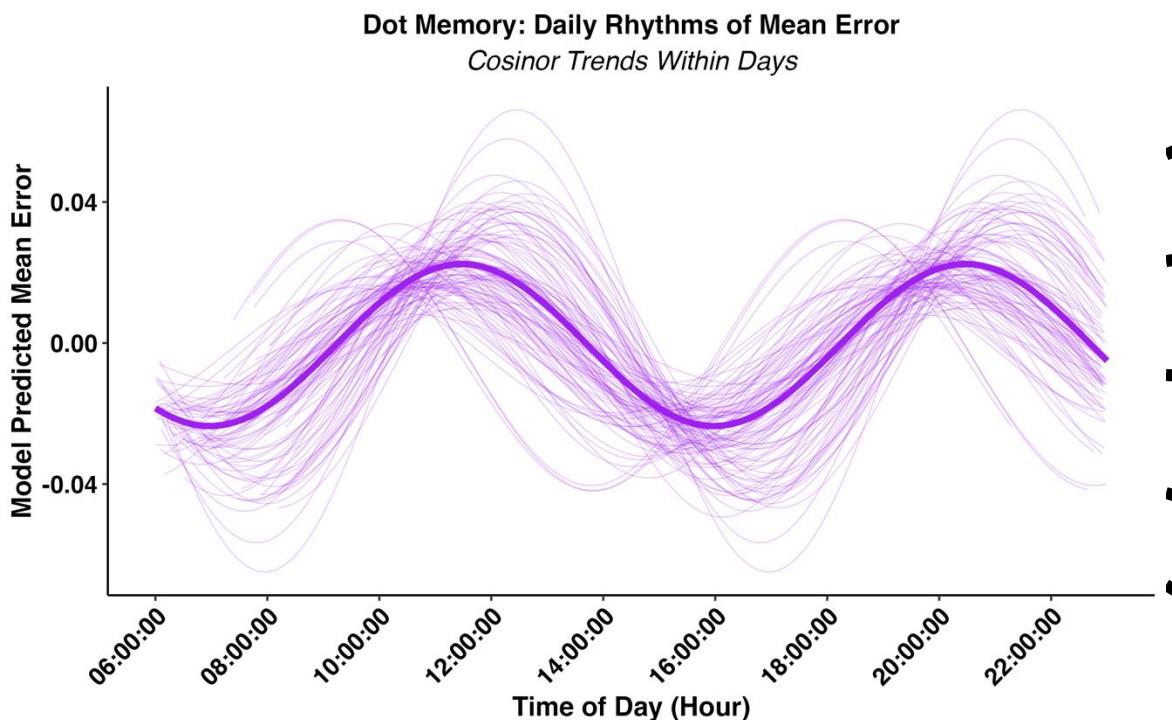
200
0
-200

06:00:00 08:00:00 10:00:00 12:00:00 14:00:00 16:00:00 18:00:00 20:00:00 22:00:00

Time of Day (Hour)

Next Steps

What are individual differences in cognitive cycles associated with?



Ongoing and Future Directions

Integrating idiographic and between-person approaches via bottom-up psychological assessment

Using heterogeneous dynamics to link traits and states

Introducing the Personality Consortium on Research in Idiographics and Nomothetics (PECORINO)

Introducing PECORINO

Personality Consortium on Research in Idiographics and Nomothetics

- **Mission statement:** PECORINO is dedicated to advancing the field of personality science by bridging the gap between the study of individual persons and the exploration of general laws of personality functioning. Our mission is to integrate idiographic and nomothetic approaches to create a more comprehensive understanding of personality.

Introducing PECORINO: Organization

President: Emorie Beck

Vice President: Charlie Renner

Organizational Team:

Niclas Kuper

Nick Modersitzki

Le Vy Phan

John Rauthmann

Current Members (alphabetical):

Pia Andresen

Nadin Beckmann

Giulio Costantini

Egon Dejonckheere

Małgosia Fajkowska

Aaron Fisher

Mario Gollwitzer

Ellen Hamaker

Kai Horstmann

Niclas Kuper

Suzanne McDonald

Nick Modersitzki

Le Vy Phan

Markus Quirin

John Rauthmann

Aidan Wright

Johannes Zimmermann

Introducing PECORINO: Get Involved!

Mailing List



Contact Us

pecorino.consortium@gmail.com

Website

<http://pecorinoconsortium.wixsite.com/pecorino>

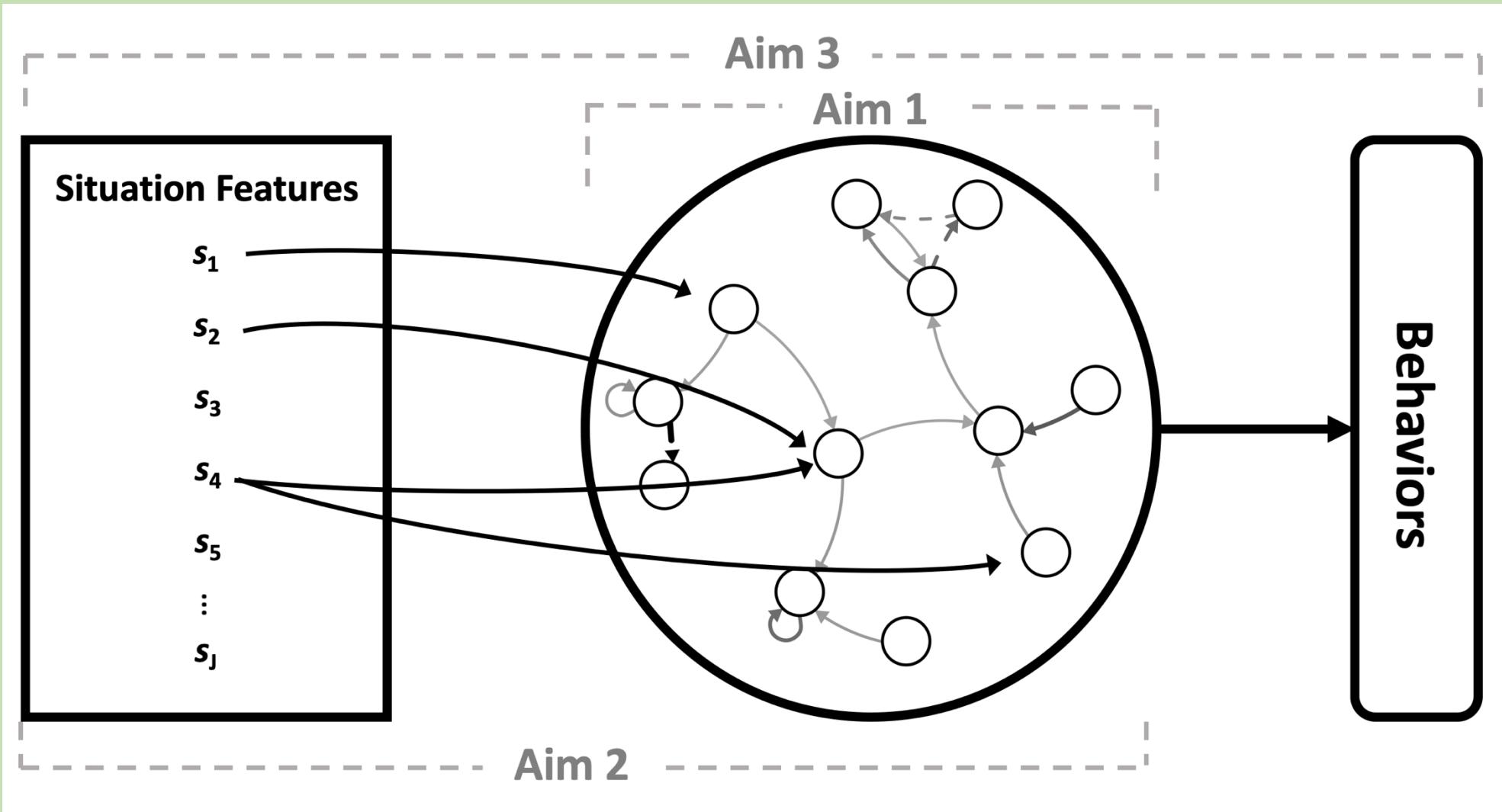
The consortium emerged out of an expert meeting and pre-conference on the topic “Dynamics of Personality: Integrating Nomothetic and Idiographic Approaches into a Synthetic Framework” funded by the European Association of Personality Psychology and organized by Niclas Kuper, Nick Modersitzki, Le Vy Phan, Markus Quirin, and John Rauthmann.

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* = shared first
authorship.

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Beck & Jackson
(2020, *JPSP*; 2021b; *EJP*)

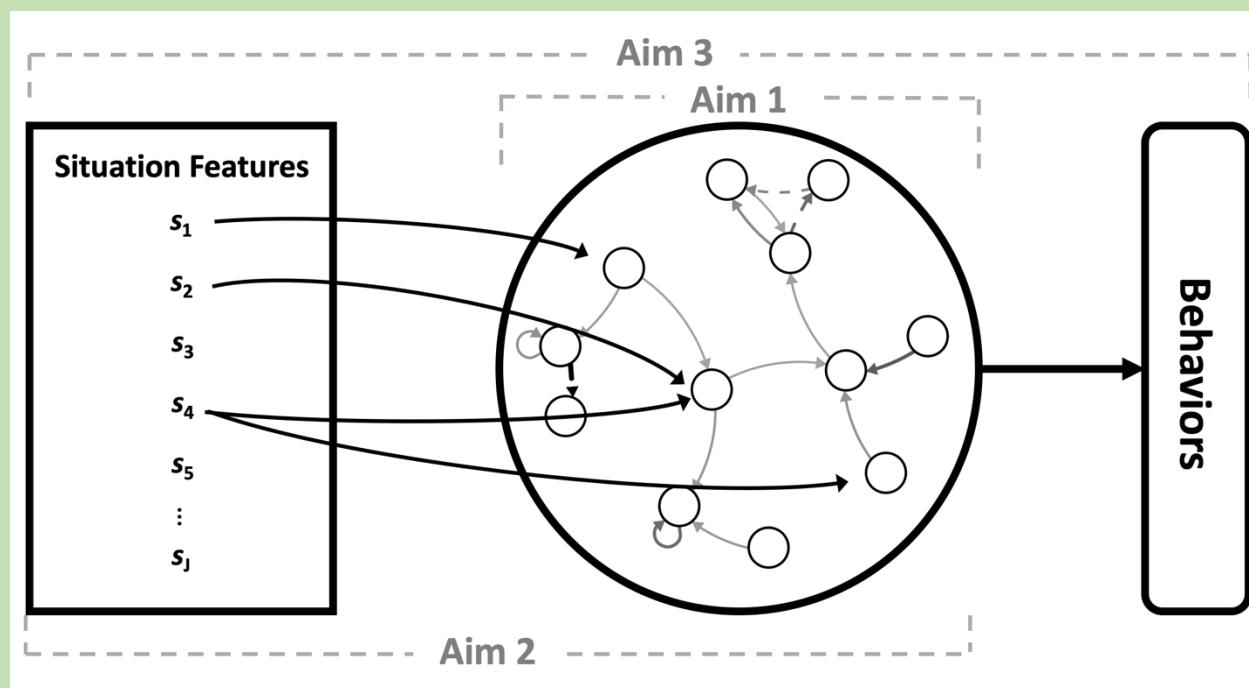
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Beck et al.
(revision submitted, *NHB*)

Aim 3: Psychological and situational antecedents of behaviors and experiences vary across people.

Beck & Jackson
(2023, *Psych Science*)

Ongoing Directions



Acknowledgements

Collaborators

Dr. Josh Jackson
Adam Nissen
Colin Lee
Dr. Felix Cheung
Dr. Stuti Thapa
Dr. Zoe Hawks
Dr. Dan Mroczek
Dr. Eileen Graham

The Beck Lab



Contact

✉️ edbeck@ucdavis.edu

💻 beck-lab.ucdavis.edu

🐦 @EmorieBeck



Funding Sources: National Institute on Aging Grant T32 AG00030-3, R01-AG067622, and R01-AG018436;
National Science Foundation Grants BCS-2336406 and BCS-1125553; SPSP Inside the Grant Panel