

A treatise on an epistemological problem

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How to measure (and not measure)
the prevalence of discrimination?

The negative discourse

- **Inherent controversy** between quali and quanti
- No compromise possible (any combination provides the mix of the downside of both methods)

The positive discourse

Re-invention of alternative methodological solutions might
open **new paths** –
no panacea but better than the dead-end street

The three evaluation criteria: reliability, validity and generalisability

Reliability: the consistency of the measuring instruments and/or anytime repeated – same result

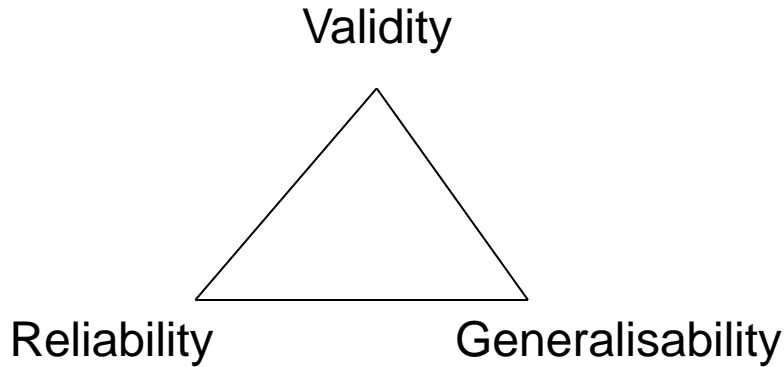
Validity: consistency between the data and "reality" , between the measuring instrument and the conclusion and the minimum of unobserved factors

Generalisability: the extent to which research findings can be applied to settings other than that in which they were originally tested

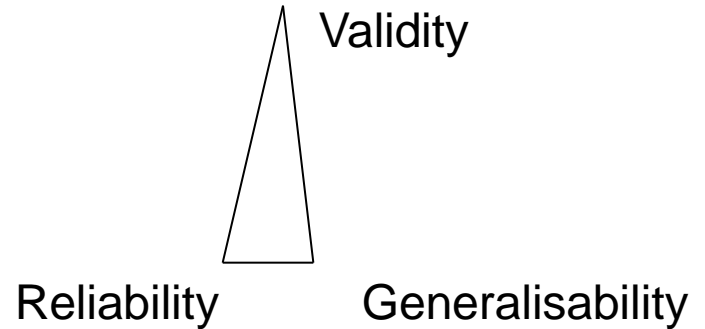
If all three perfect – predictability is at the max
– the dream of social sciences
but it is impossible

The inherent difference between quali and quanti

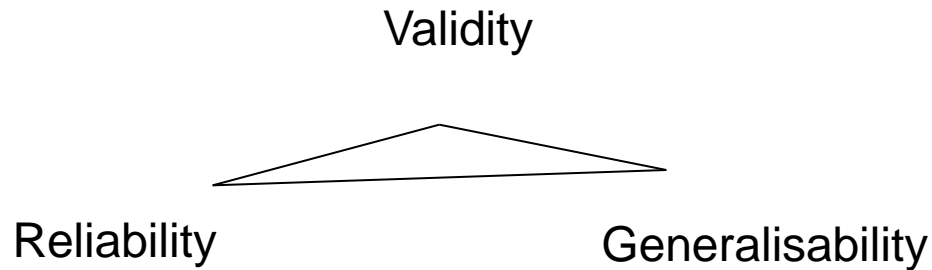
The optimum



The qualitative bias



The quantitative bias



The **idealtypes** of measurement techniques

Official statistics	Standard methods – many publications, – often financed, – standard classes
Survey	
Qualitative	
Experiment – laboratory	Non standard
Experiment – natural	
Experiment – controlled	
Non-participant observation	

The illustration: the prevalence of discrimination to predict discriminative behavior

- Not the attitudes towards discrimination
(attitude survey)
- Not the consequences of discrimination
(wage data)
- Not the media representation of discrimination
(content analysis)
 - Not the unintended-unconscious
(Implicit Association Test)

But

the behavior of average actors (employer, fellow employee, customer, landlord, teacher, policeman, clerk, salesman, etc.)
in everyday circumstances

Tentative overview by the three evaluation criteria of the **idealtypes** of measurement techniques

	Validity	Reliability	Generalisability
Official statistics	–	+	?
Survey	–	+	?
Qualitative	+	–	–
Experiment – laboratory	+	+	–
Experiment – natural	+	–	–
Experiment – controlled	?	?	?
Non-participant observation	+	+	?

To sum up

**We know
everything about
nothing
(R- and G-)**

qualitative methods,
laboratory and quasi
laboratory
experiment,
natural experiment

**We might know
something about
something
(no -)**

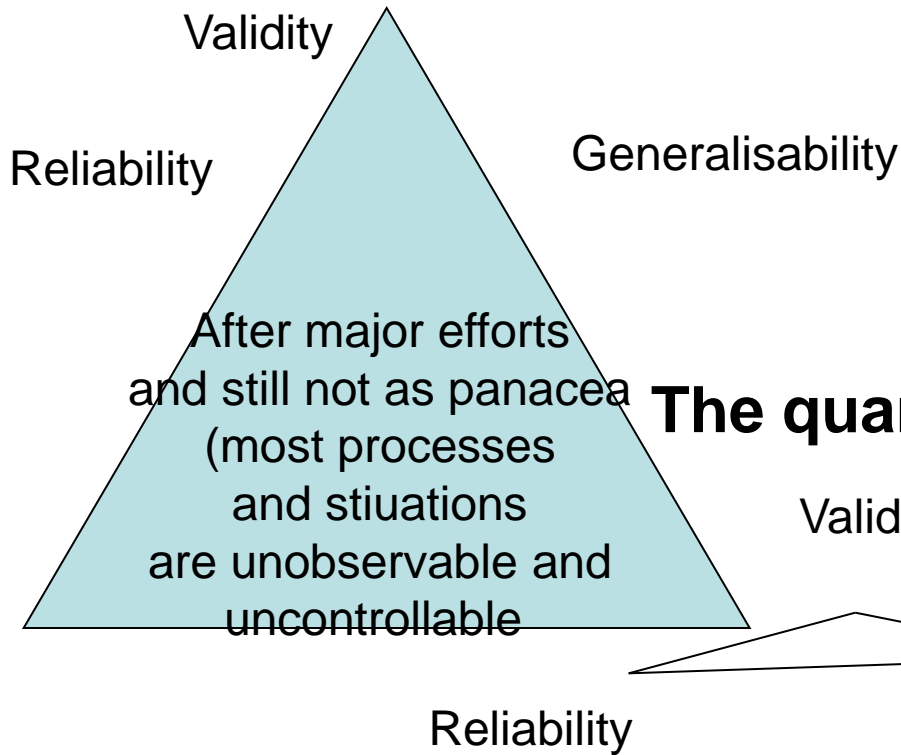
discrimination
testing,
non-participant
observation

**We know
nothing about
everything
(V-)**

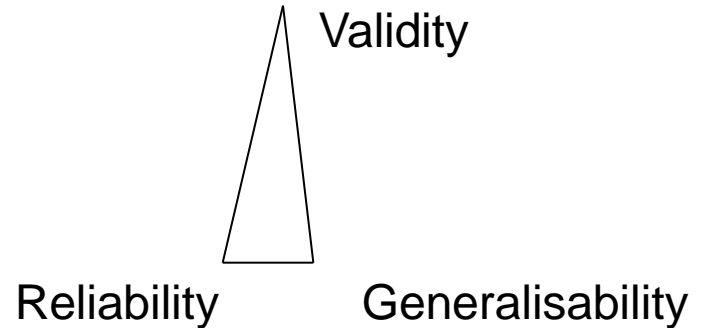
discrimination
statistics,
survey

Controlled experiment and non-participant observation as best options

Controlled experiment and non-participant observation



The qualitative bias



The quantitative bias

