

PLS 140 Introduction to comparative politics

Week 1 – August 17
Basic concepts in CP

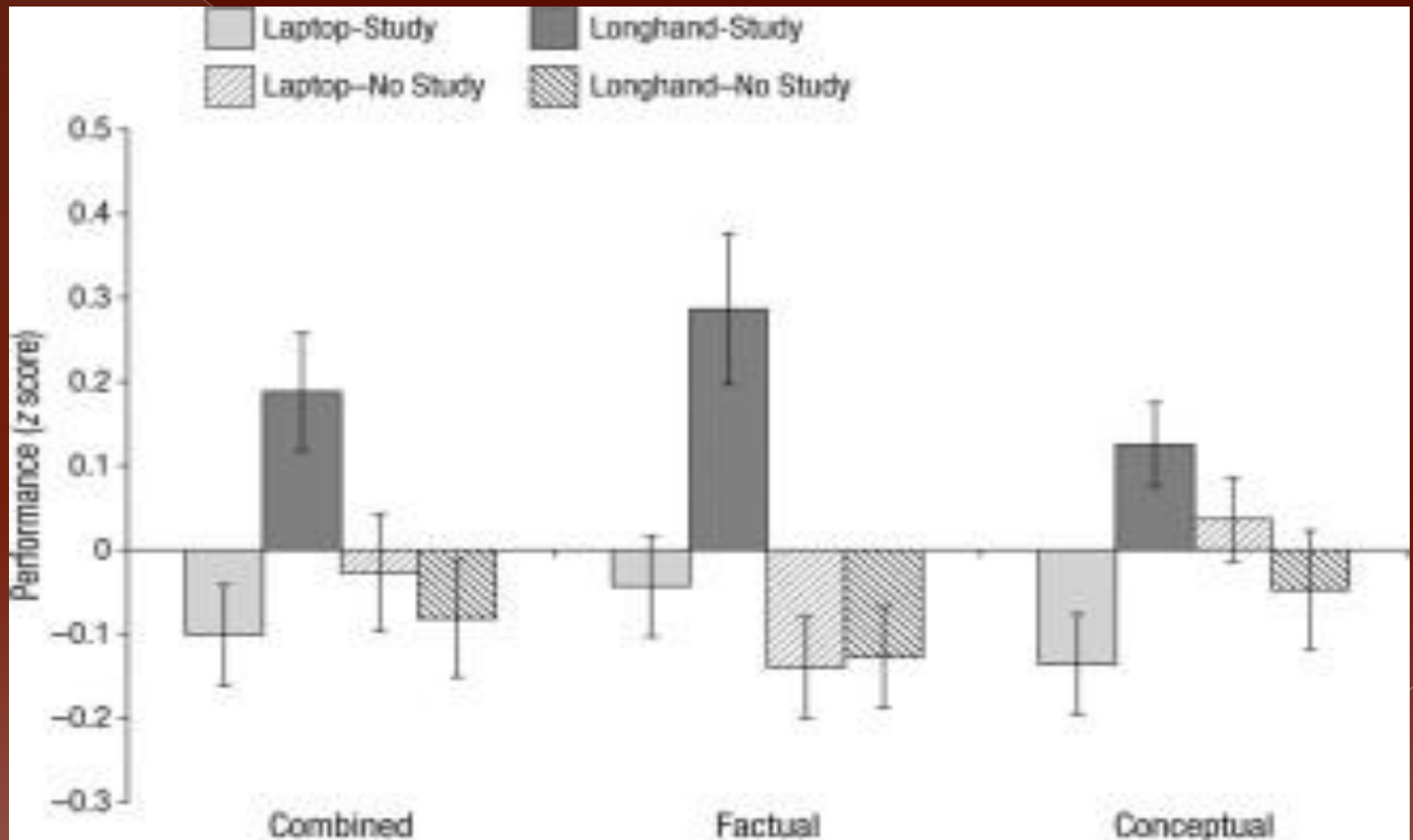
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Why you should take notes by hand?

It is less distracting.

- Students with computers have much lower results, and those seated around them also.
- Students with computers got on average 11 points lower. Students **surrounded** by computers got **17 points less**.
- Difference between B and B+

Better results!



Source: Psychological Science, 2013.

Why you should take notes by hand?

You learn better!

- Students who use their computer retain significantly less information. Why?
- Students who handwrite their notes write significantly fewer words: 173 vs 310.

Concepts in social science research

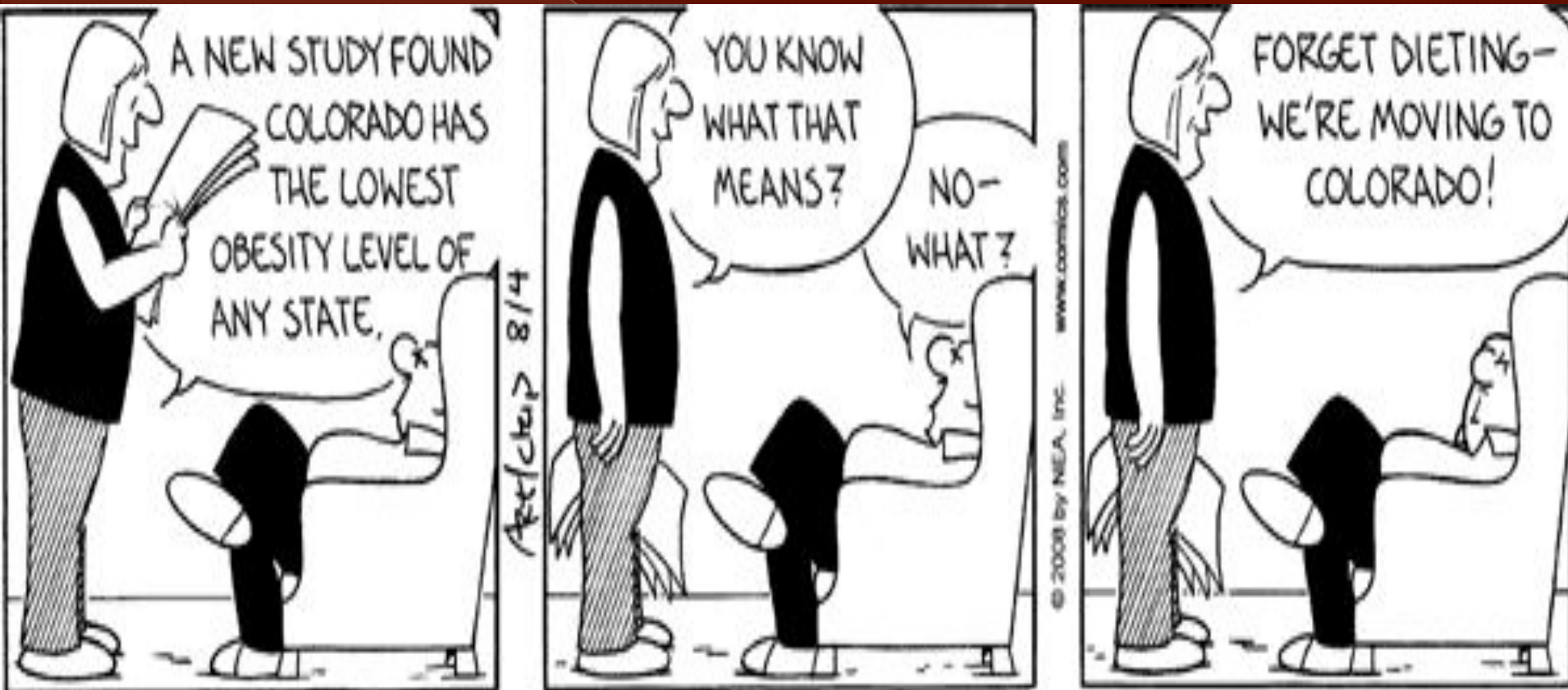
- **Correlation:** statistical relationship between two random variables. Events linked together without necessarily having a causal relationship. Examples?
- **Causality:** A direct link between the two events. **A** → **B**. The search for factors that lead to this or that social phenomenon. Examples?

Correlation not causality

100% of people that
drink water die, so ...
water is poison



Correlation not causality



**Is it possible to truly
make sense of the reality?**



Methodology

A system of methods used in a given research sector. Tools and analytical methods used for the purpose of acquiring knowledge. The methodology is at the service of epistemology.

The rationale for the application of specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, and analyze information applied to understanding the research problem, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

Two approaches to research

DEDUCTION

generalization

All birds fly.

specific

The cardinal is a
bird.

The cardinal is a bird
that flies.

conclusion.

INDUCTION

specific

The cardinal is a bird
that flies.

specific

The robin is a bird
that flies.

All birds fly.

generalization

Induction

Specific

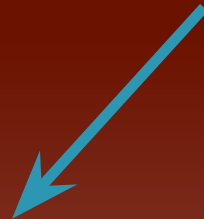
North Korea is a
nationalist country

Specific

Iran is a nationalist
country

Nationalism is strong in
authoritarian countries

Generalization



Deduction

General

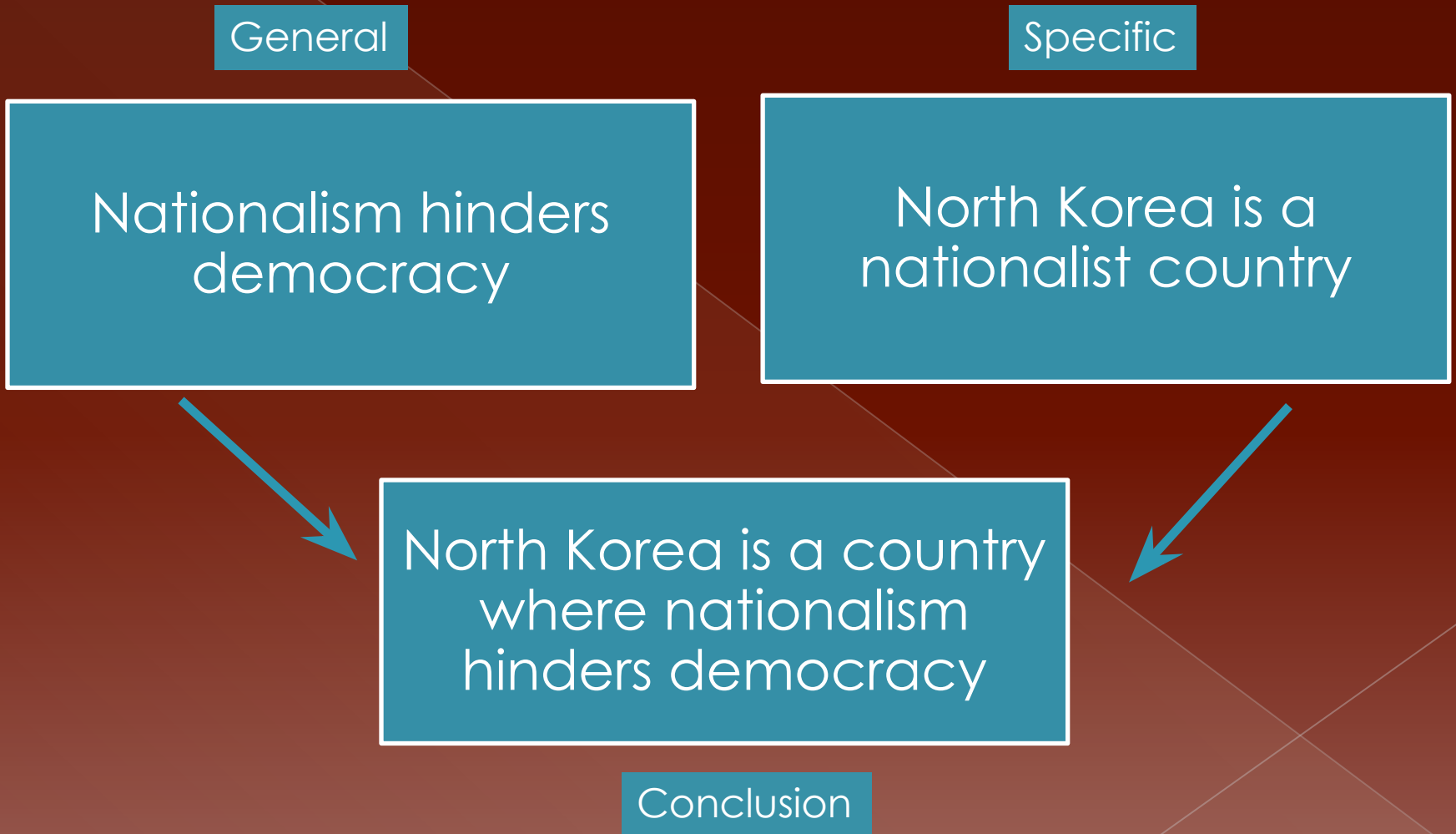
Nationalism hinders
democracy

Specific

North Korea is a
nationalist country

North Korea is a country
where nationalism
hinders democracy

Conclusion



Qualitative methods

Rely on data to which we can not assign a value or characteristic.

Focus on a given case or a small number of cases. Small N.

Aim at a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon.

Involves historical research methods, bibliographic or field research.

Ex: Set of interviews with representatives of European left-wing political parties.

Quantitative methods

Use of numbers, values and statistics.

Allow the use of large samples. Large N.

Seek conclusions that other researchers can use to reproduce the research and extrapolate.

Intention to generate general descriptions or test causal hypotheses.

Use of surveys, databases, could lead to the creation of its own dataset.

Ex: Analysis/survey of voting patterns among Japanese and Korean youth.

Critiques

Qualitative methods

Narrow-focused

Variables not rigorously defined

No predictive power

Quantitative methods

Discard of cultural factors

Discard of environmental factors

Question the universality of rational behavior