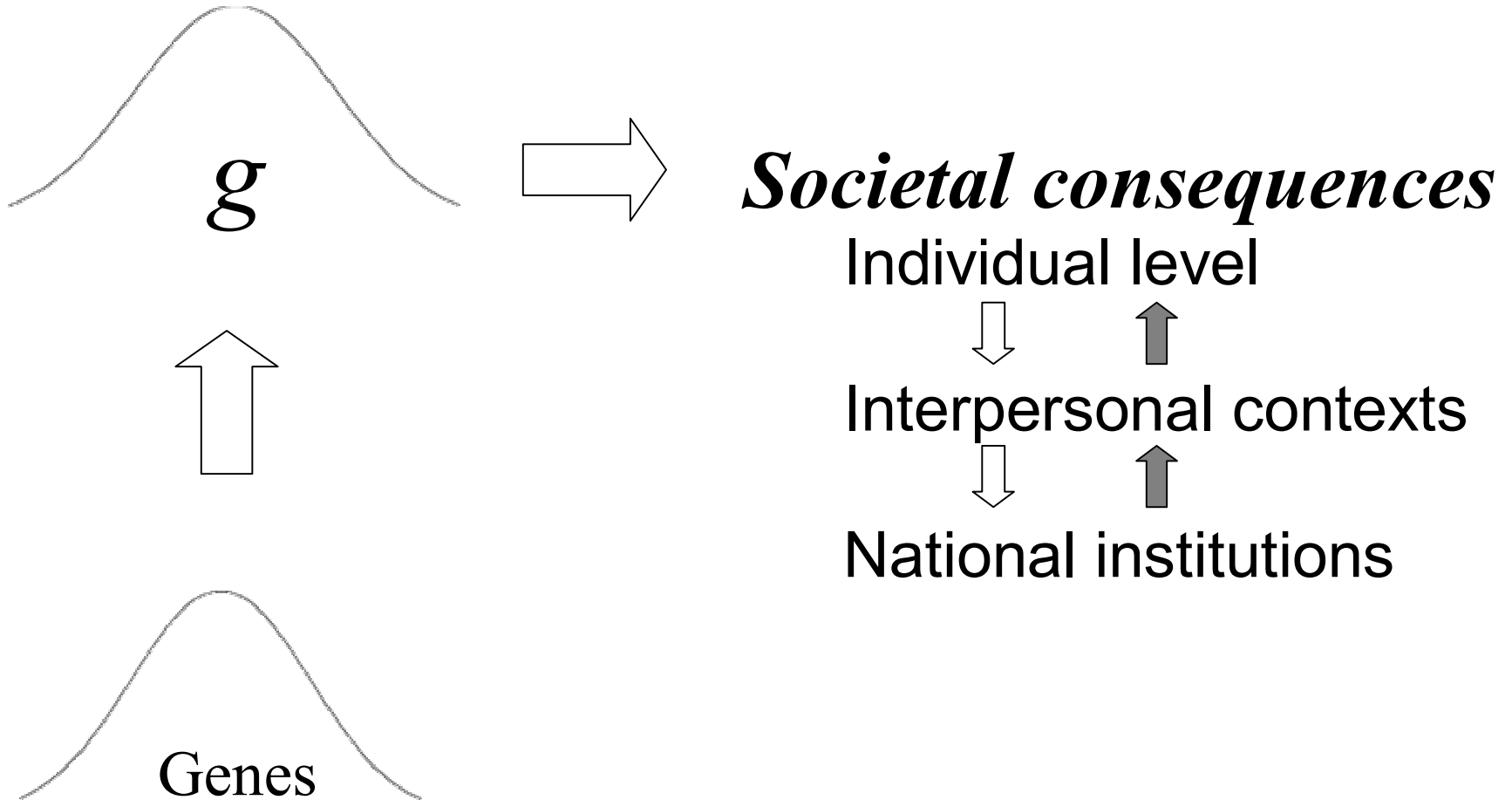


# The Sociology of Intelligence: Ten Years After *The Bell Curve*

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ISIR 2004

# *Sociology of Intelligence*



# *Two Theories of IQ and Inequality*

<i>Are IQ differences:</i>	<b>Functional tool (g) theory</b>	<b>Social privilege (SES) theory</b>
<i>Real?</i>	Yes—Valid ability (g)	No—Socially constructed
<i>Stable?</i>	Yes—Stubborn	No—Malleable
<i>Functionally important?</i>	Yes—Confer practical advantages	No—Legitimate the privileges of the powerful

# *Advances—Empirical Contest*

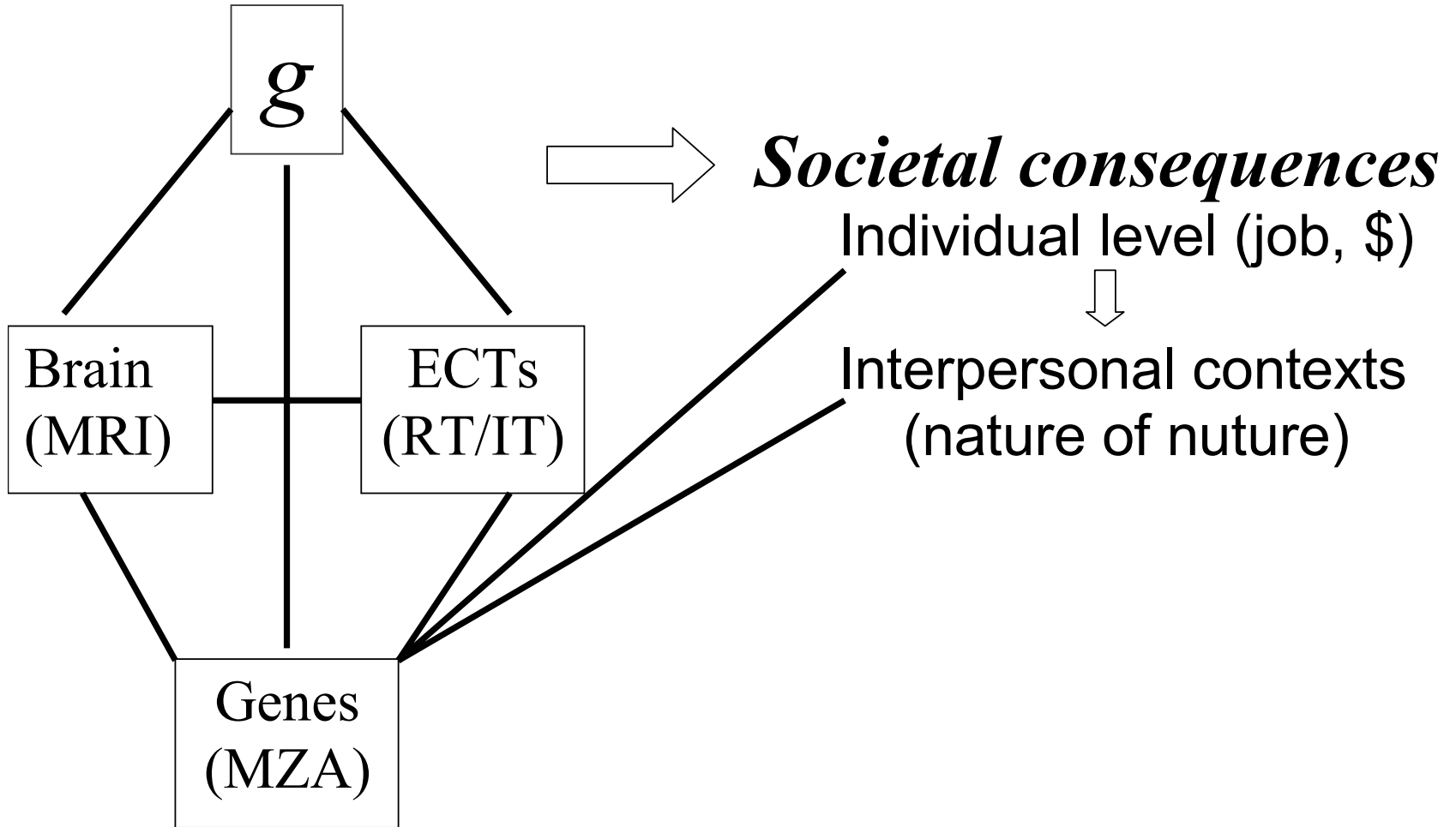
## Linchpin facts (disconfirmations)

- Brain
- ECTs
- Heritability of life outcomes
- Heritability of environments
- Within-family variance

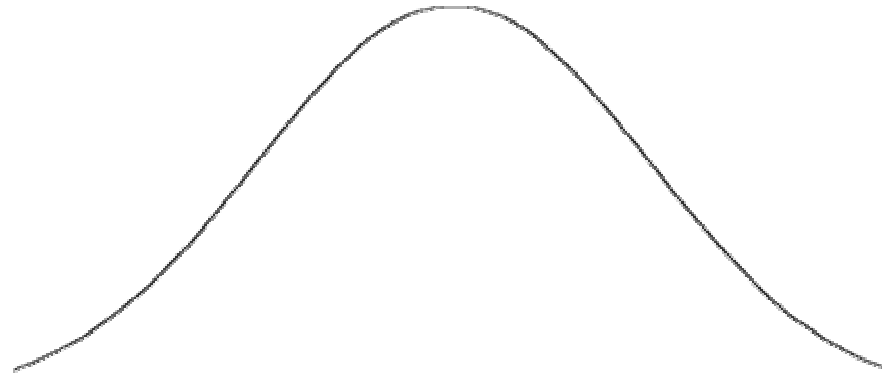
## Compelling pattern (consilience)

- Bio-social nexus
- Gradients of task complexity & risk
- Life as (and as not) a mental test
- Cascading, multi-level effects

# *Biological-Social g Nexus*



# Gradients of Risk



	< 75	76-90	91-110	111-125	>125	Risk gradients
<b>% of IQ level affected:</b>						
Unemployed	12	<b>10</b>	7	<b>7</b>	2	<b>3:2</b>
Illegitimate child	32	<b>17</b>	8	<b>4</b>	2	<b>4:1</b>
Lives in poverty	30	<b>16</b>	6	<b>3</b>	2	<b>5:1</b>
Chronic welfare	31	<b>17</b>	8	<b>2</b>	0	<b>8:1</b>
HS dropout	55	<b>35</b>	6	<b>0.4</b>	0	<b>88:1</b>

# *Psychometrics of Everyday Life*

<i>properties</i>	<b>IQ Test Battery</b>	<b>Daily Life</b>
<i>g loading (complexity)</i>	Mod to high	Low to high
<i>Reliability</i>	High	Low to high
<i>Standardization</i>	High	Low to high
<i>Subtests taken</i>	Generic, no choice	Domain-specific, self-selected

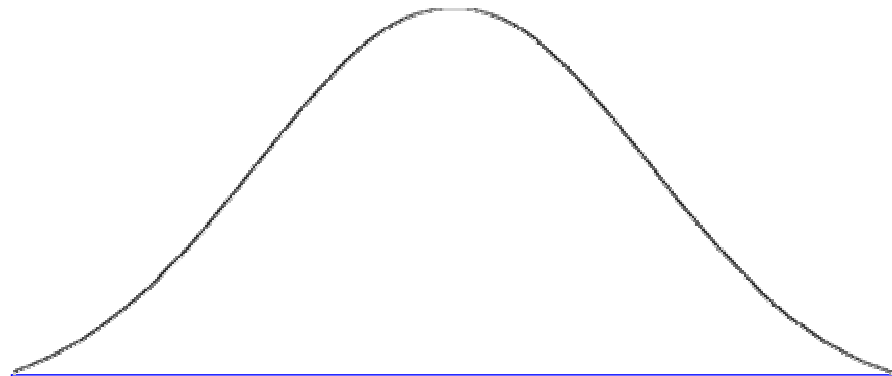


## **Predictions:**



1. Risk gradients steepen with complexity of life tasks
2. Pervasive small effects cumulate into big lifetime risks
3. Help, practice, other non-standard conditions blur distinctions in *g*; create *g*-context effects
4. Specialization limits performance comparisons (social equalizer) & suggests multiple intelligences; “subtests” taken signals *g*

# Cascading, Multi-Level Effects



g-based social clustering in schools, jobs, neighborhoods

Unemployed	12	10	↓	7	↓	7	2
Illegitimate child	32	17	↓	8	↓	4	2
Lives in poverty	30	16	↓	6	↓	3	2
Chronic welfare	31	17	↓	8	↓	2	0
HS dropout	55	35	↓	6	↓	0.4	0

Different interpersonal climates, help, risks

g-based sub-cultures; diffusion gradients for information, help, & regard

Social inequality, job hierarchies, intergroup competition, policy responses



# *Advances—Political Contest*

## **SP theory's highly public failures**

Failed predictions & policies (Shaker Heights)



Some regress into ad hoc, implausible, extreme  
Some backing into *g* theory (Jencks & Phillips)

## **FT (*g*) theory's public successes**

Institutional psychology stands (sort of)  
*g* theorists remain standing, stronger after attack

**Lead to cracks in collective ignorance**

# *To Puncture Collective Ignorance: I*

## **Press for empirical contests**

- ✓ Mine their evidence
- ✓ Emphasize full pattern of evidence, connect the dots
- ✓ Embarrass SES adherents with evidence-based questions

# *To Puncture Collective Ignorance: II*

## **But do not ignore the political**

- ✓ Be matter-of-fact, pedagogical
- ✓ Find common moral ground  
(*e.g., health risks of low g*)
- ✓ Defuse unrealistic fears (*e.g., heritability is a friend, ally*)
- ✓ Offer (only) realistic hope (*e.g., we can't raise g but we can lower cognitive barriers*)