



# IT SHOULDN'T BE THIS DIFFICULT: RESEARCHER PERSPECTIVES ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN USABLE PRIVACY AND SECURITY RESEARCH



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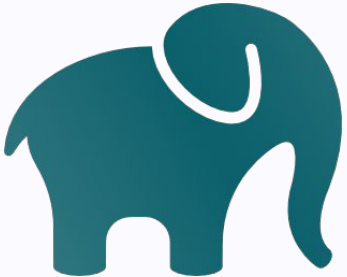
**Smirity Kaushik**



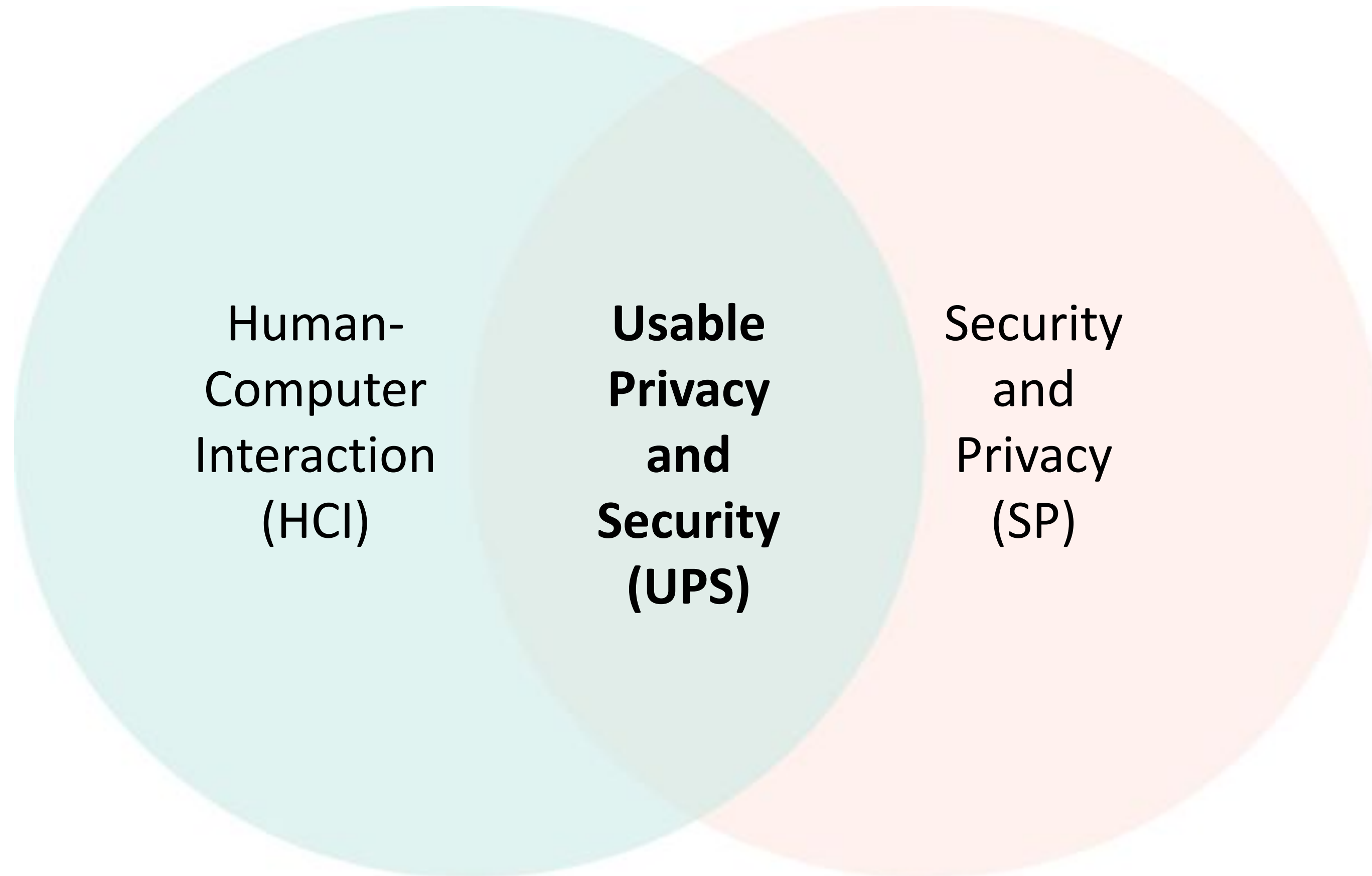
**Karola Marky**



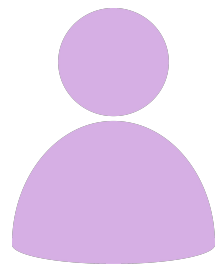
**Yixin Zou**



# Understanding the problem space



# Why is it so difficult to work with diverse and underserved populations in UPS research?



“...Right now, we are **trying to work with people**, but we don't even have standards. We **don't have methods**. We **don't have frameworks**. We don't have all these things.” ~P16

# Understanding the problem space

- *Who do we choose to work with?*
- *How do we choose?*
- *How do we work with underserved populations?*
- *How do we know our intervention or enthusiasm is welcomed/needed?*



A collective understanding 



# Research questions

RQ1: What **efforts and strategies** do UPS researchers adopt to **engage** with underserved populations ?

RQ2: What **challenges** do UPS researchers face in conducting research with diverse underserved populations?

RQ3: How do UPS researchers **navigate their own positionality** in working with diverse underserved populations?



*RQ1:*

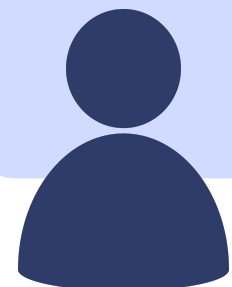
**What *efforts and strategies* do UPS researchers adopt to engage with underserved populations?**

# RQ1: Researchers' efforts and strategies

*Researcher  
collaborations and  
community relationships*

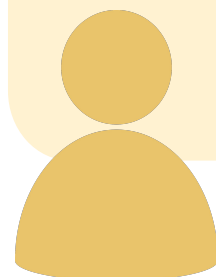
“We **build relationships with local community centers** and senior centers and support organizations and use those as an entry point for recruitment.”

~P15



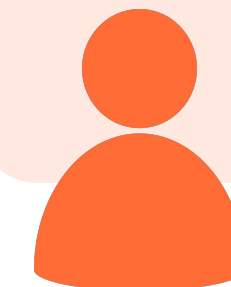
*Modified recruitment  
methods for hard-to-reach  
participants*

“...there was a long drive out there during the pandemic, they were under-staffed and under-resourced, but it was **really important for us to make those considerations** and to actually work with that specific school...” ~P20



*Societal impact beyond  
appropriate  
compensation*

“My goal as a researcher is ultimately to **produce knowledge that would be helpful** for the people that this knowledge is being produced about.” ~P10





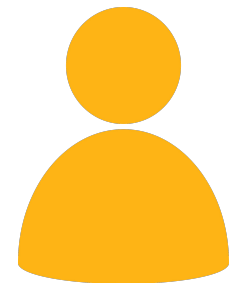
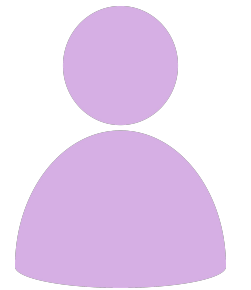
*RQ2:*

**What *challenges* do UPS researchers face in conducting research with diverse underserved populations?**

# RQ2: Challenges

## 1. *Whom to prioritise as “underserved”*

“I don't think of research as serving people...there's also a question to me about **what it means to be studied and does a community want to be studied?**” ~P08



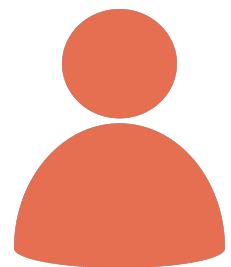
“...**where do we draw the line**, I guess as a community, between **what is underserved and what's not?** Is there enough work (about privacy and security of children) to the point **where we can feel comfortable saying that they're no longer underserved?**” ~P12

# RQ2: Challenges

## 2. *Limited access reduces feasibility*

“I can dream up a study, but if I **can't figure out how to do the recruitment**, the study won't happen”

~P01



“...you need to have some **social capital** with people who are not a general user population.” ~P11

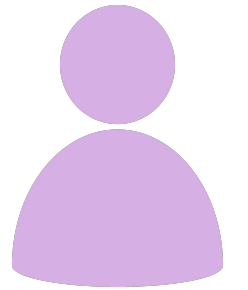
“Finding the **right communication channel** to advertise is difficult, and finding the **recruitment texts that will connect** with them is also difficult.” ~P19



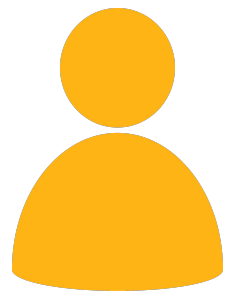
# RQ2: Challenges

## 3. *Peer reviewing norms do not provide the necessary support*

“...In a study, we had 12 participants over six months...We still get **criticized a lot because of sample size.**” ~P11



“During the publication process...I haven't found that question for...the United States, but whenever it is for the Global South, I get a ton of questions about **generalizability.**” ~P06



“If it's a **different country**, say China, maybe people will **expect them to say in the title**, this is a study of this problem in China or in the Global South.” ~P13





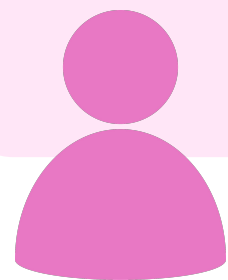
*RQ3:*

**How do UPS researchers *navigate their own positionality* in working with diverse underserved populations?**

# RQ3: Navigating positionality

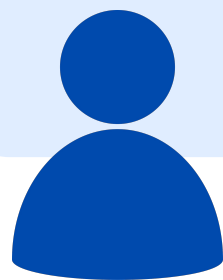
## *Introspection*

“I...had a decidedly **socialist upbringing** so that idea of like focusing on diversity and inclusion has always been much more to the forefront...” ~P18



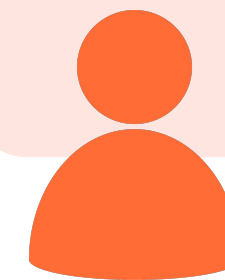
## *Considerations*

“...I don't feel right going in with no connection or no benefit that I'm providing.  
Do I have a **sufficient connection**, or am I **providing a benefit** that they actually want?”  
~P07

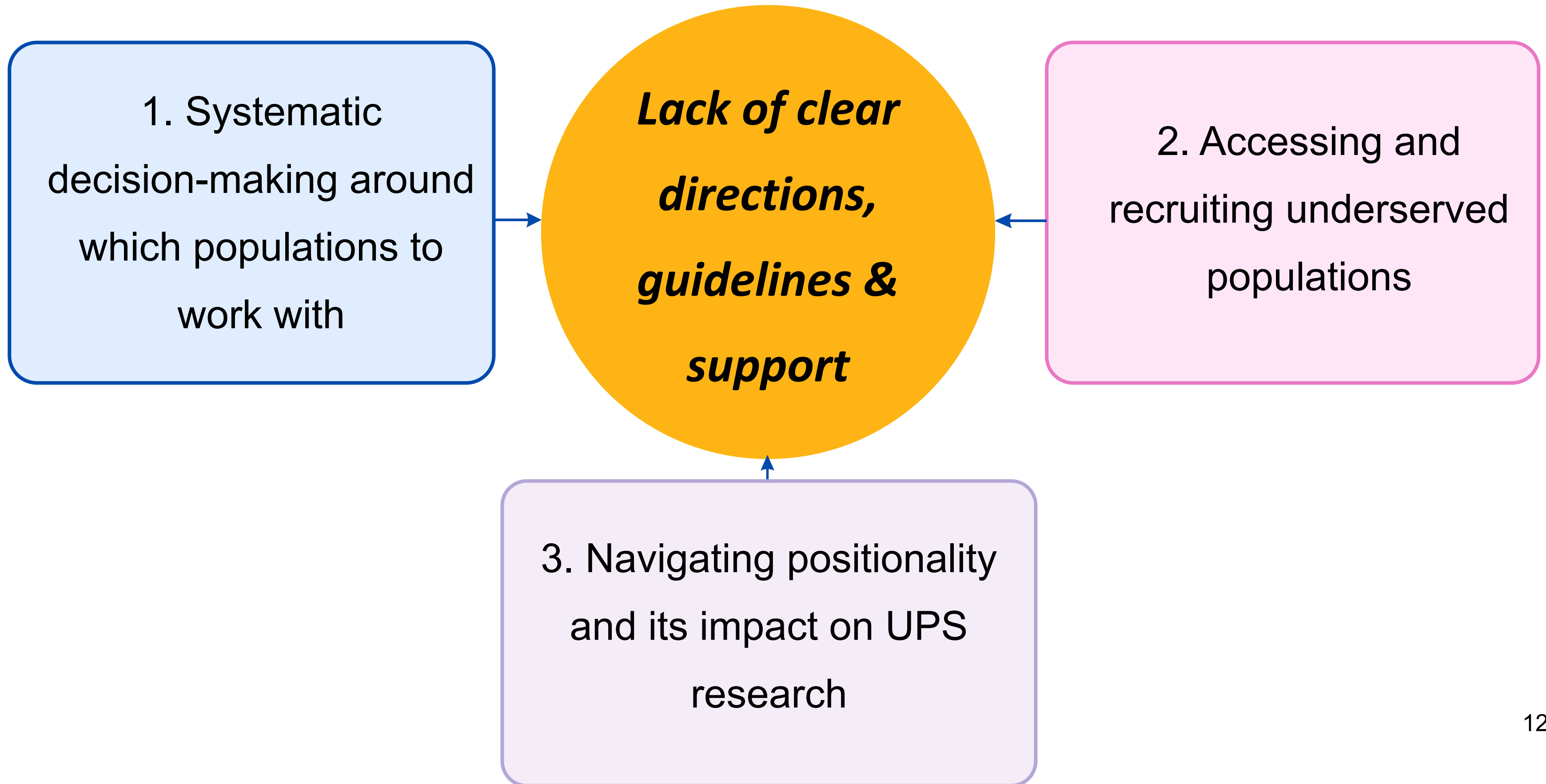


## *Communication*

“Do I feel an **industry collaborator** would feel comfortable with a **positionality statement**, which is a more **radical** thing to do in the security and privacy research field?”  
~P10




# The overarching problem



# Next steps for researchers

1. Systematic decision-making around which populations to work with



- Conduct more **foundational research** to guide population choices
- Engage in **exchange** and **establishing new norms**

# Next steps for institutions


- Increase **diversity of researchers**
- Increase **dedicated funding** for working with underserved populations

2. Accessing and recruiting underserved populations



# Next steps for venues

3. Navigating positionality  
and its impact on UPS  
research



- Establish **standardised guidance for publishing and reviewing**
- Establish **information-sharing measures and opportunities** for researchers

# Researcher perspectives on diversity and inclusion in UPS research

*What do we need as a community?*

Clear guidelines, institutional & financial support

1. Ways to meaningfully access and engage with underserved populations

2. Measures to know when the privacy and security needs of communities have been met

3. Ways to account for the positionality of researchers in the kinds of work done



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