Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley

Spokane and Belonging

Co-Creating in the Lilac City

DATE

June 29, 2023

PRESENTER

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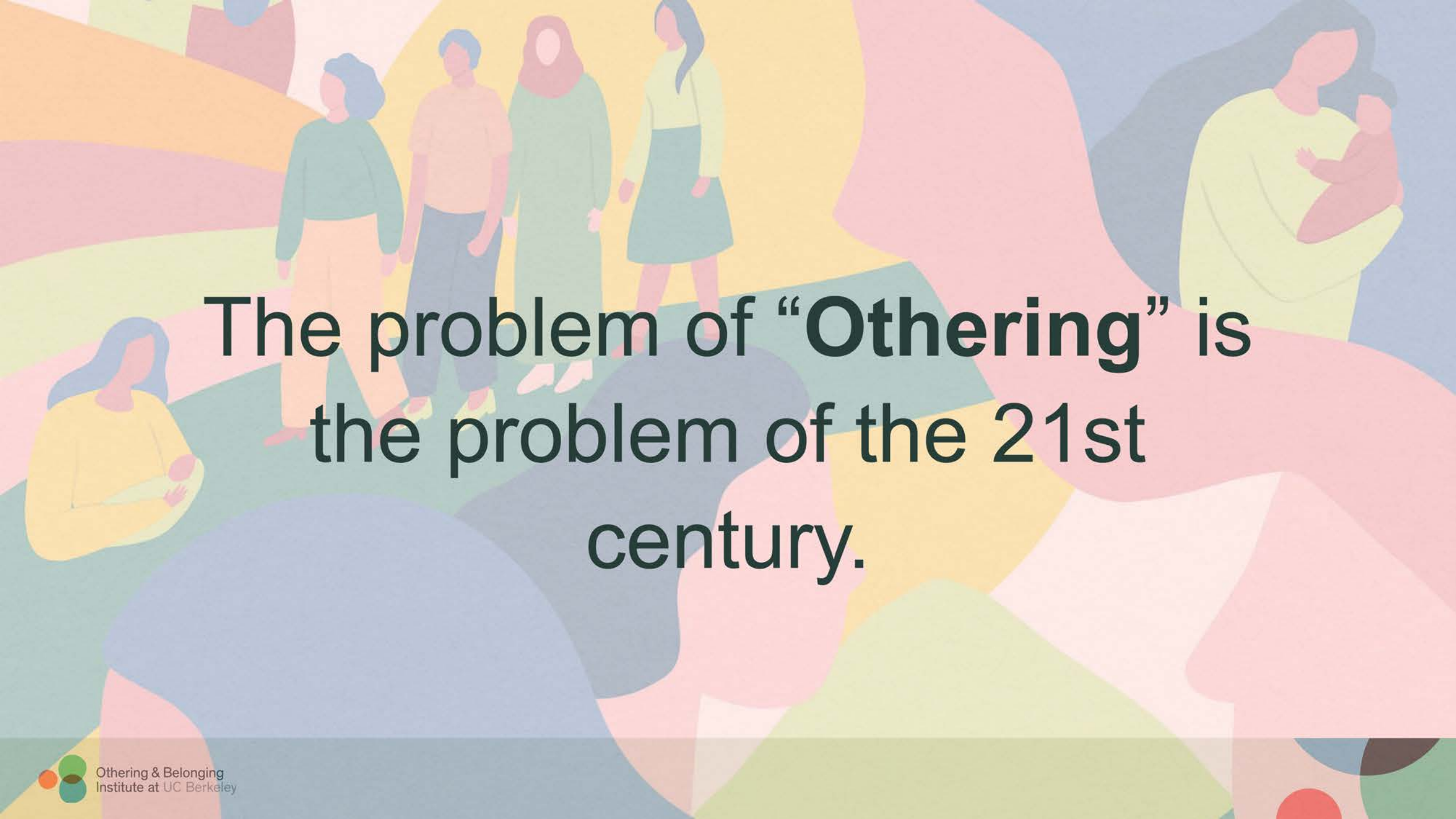
Othering & Belonging Institute

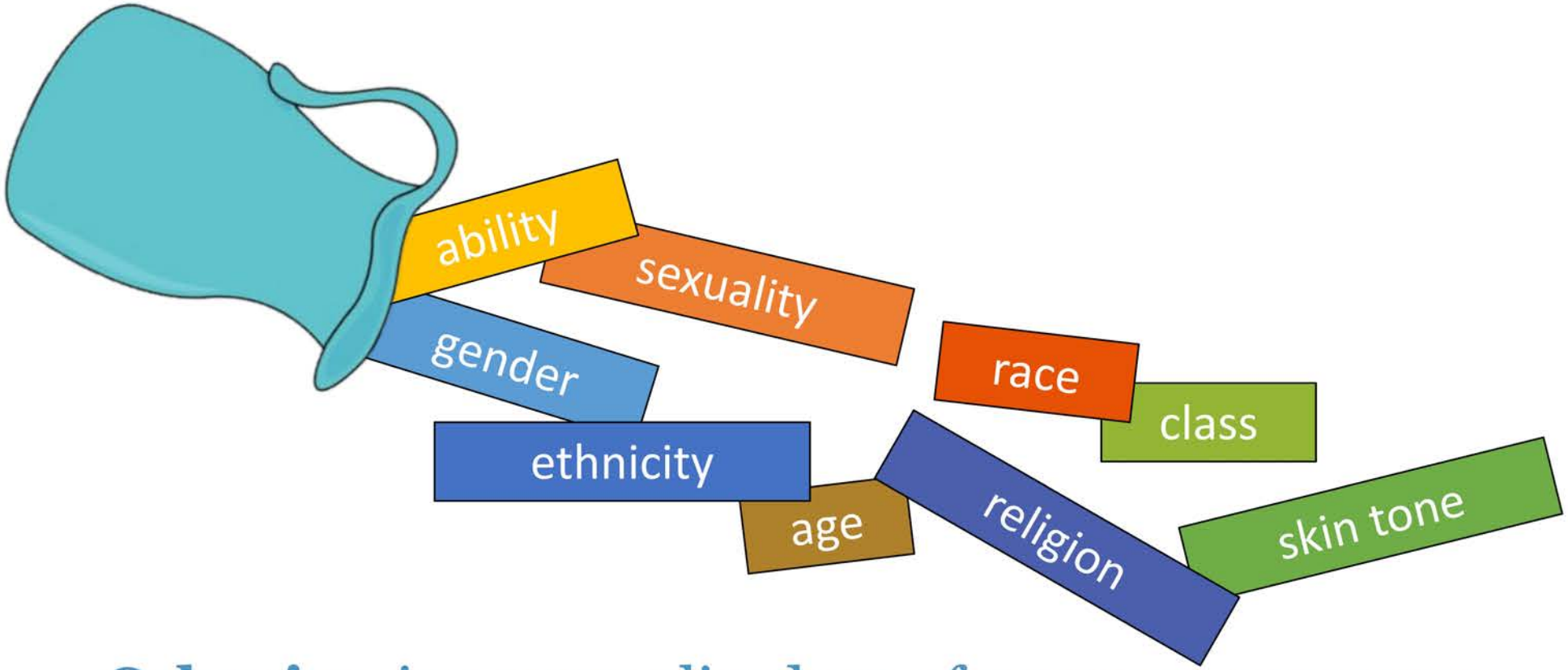
AUTHORIAL SUPPORT

Othering & Belonging Institute

Part I

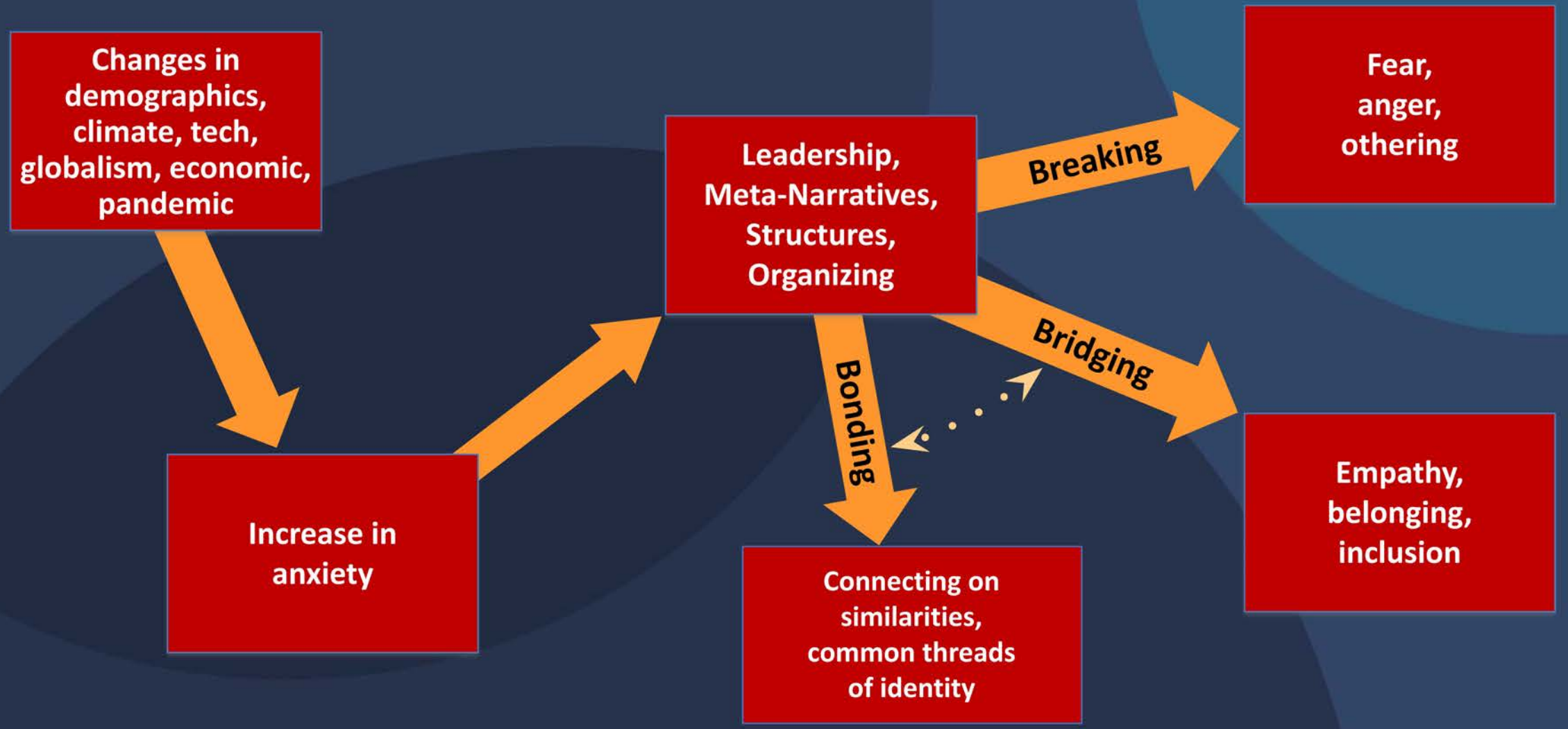
Othering, Belonging & Bridging


The problem of "**Othering**" is the problem of the 21st century.



Othering is a generalized set of common processes that engender marginality and group-based inequality across any of the full range of human differences

Rapid change produces collective anxiety:



Indices of Othering

Lack of effective voice

Lack of representation

Lack of recognition

Lack of power

People can experience strong othering in one or some of these areas and low or no othering in others. When someone experiences othering on all of these indices, then the othering is more likely durable. High durability also exists when othering happens between the interpersonal, structural, and cultural levels.

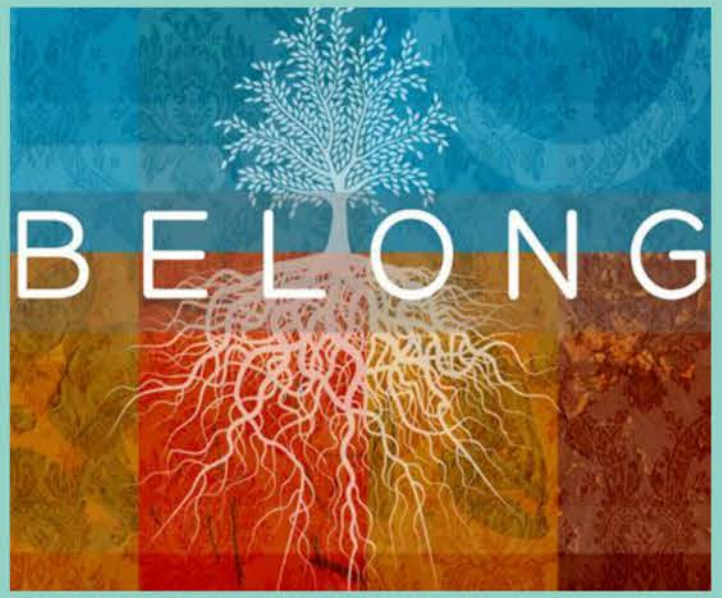
The opposite of Othering is *not*
saming but belonging.

WE NEED TO CREATE A CULTURE OF *BELONGING*.

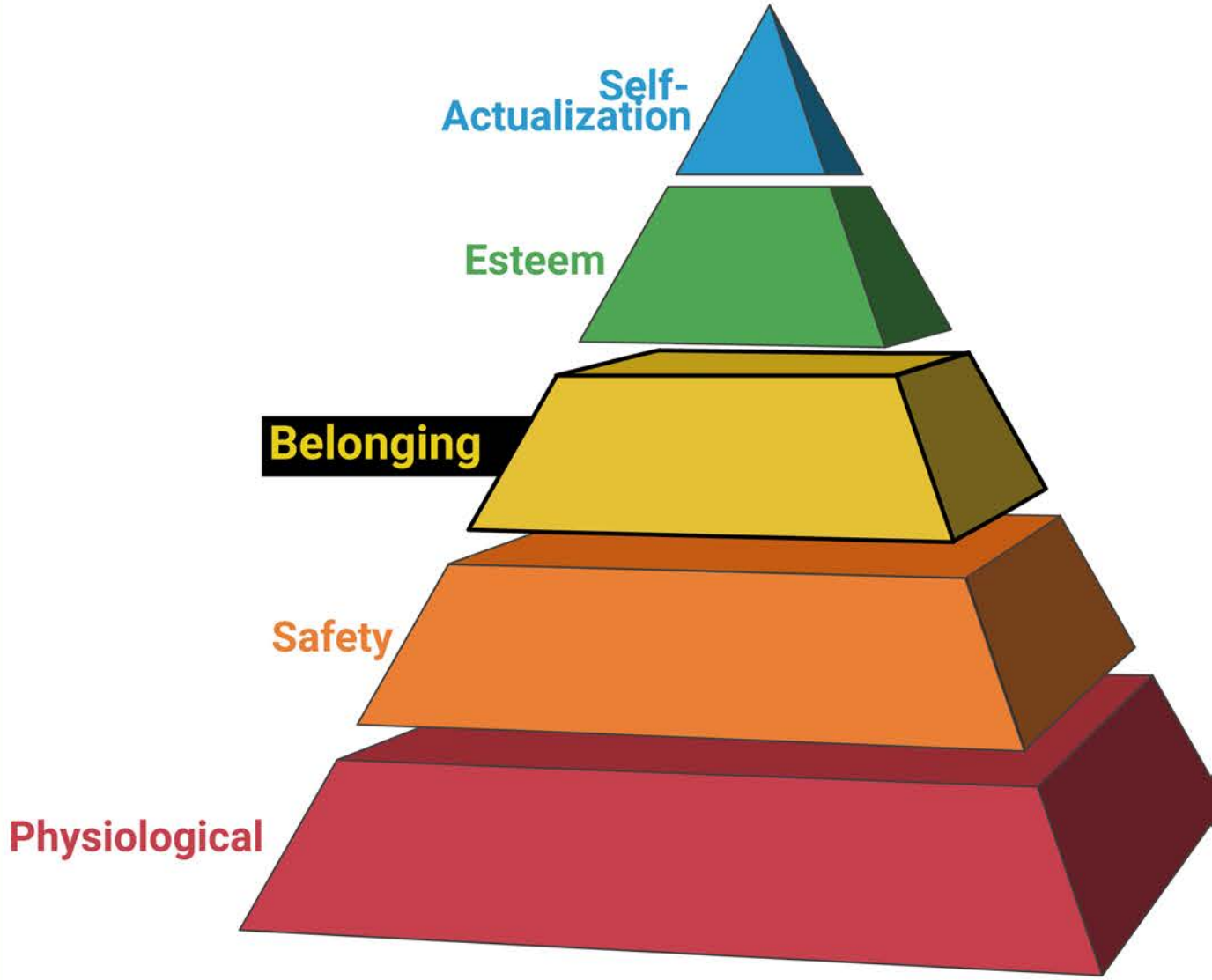
SAWUBONA!

***Sawubona:* Zulu greeting meaning "We see you"**

1. An invitation to a deep witnessing and presence
2. This greeting forms an agreement to affirm and investigate the mutual potential and obligation that is present in a given moment



Belonging or being fully human means more than having access. Belonging entails being respected at a basic level that includes the right to both co-create and make demands upon society.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

From Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to Bridging and Belonging

Why move from DEI to Bridging and Belonging?

- We don't want to just welcome people into existing structures
- We want people to co-create structures and institutions together
- We want to build systems that are welcoming to all and that everyone has a stake in, where everyone is represented and the work of bridging happens through co-creation

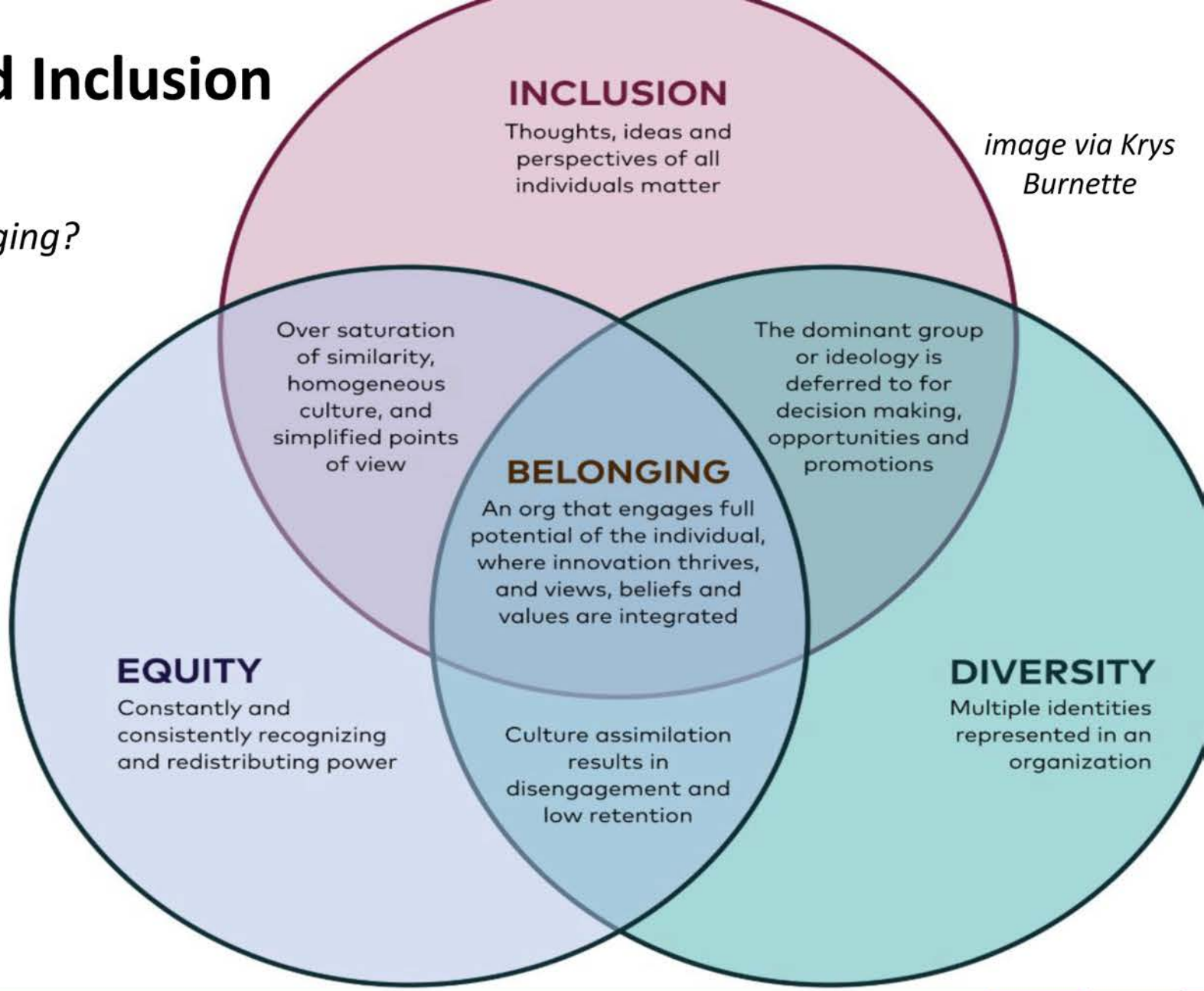
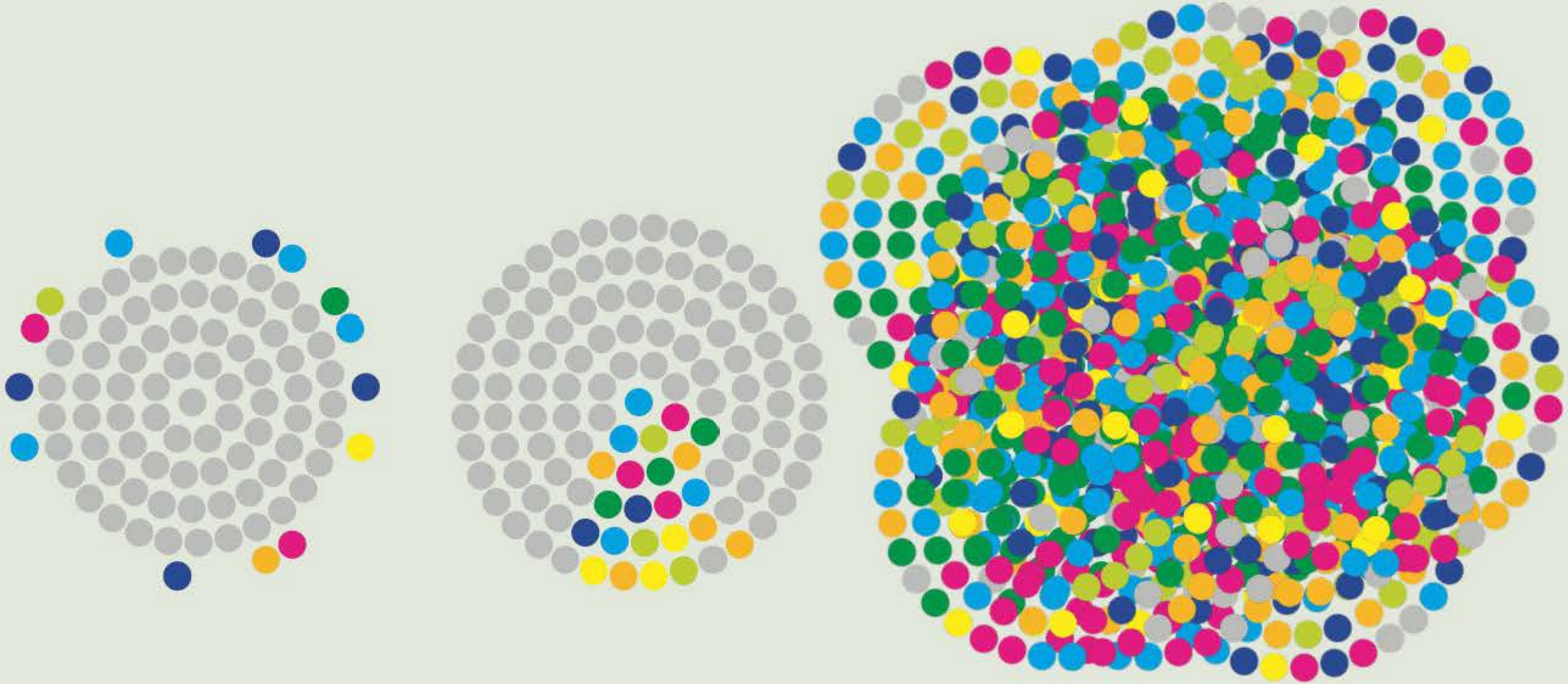
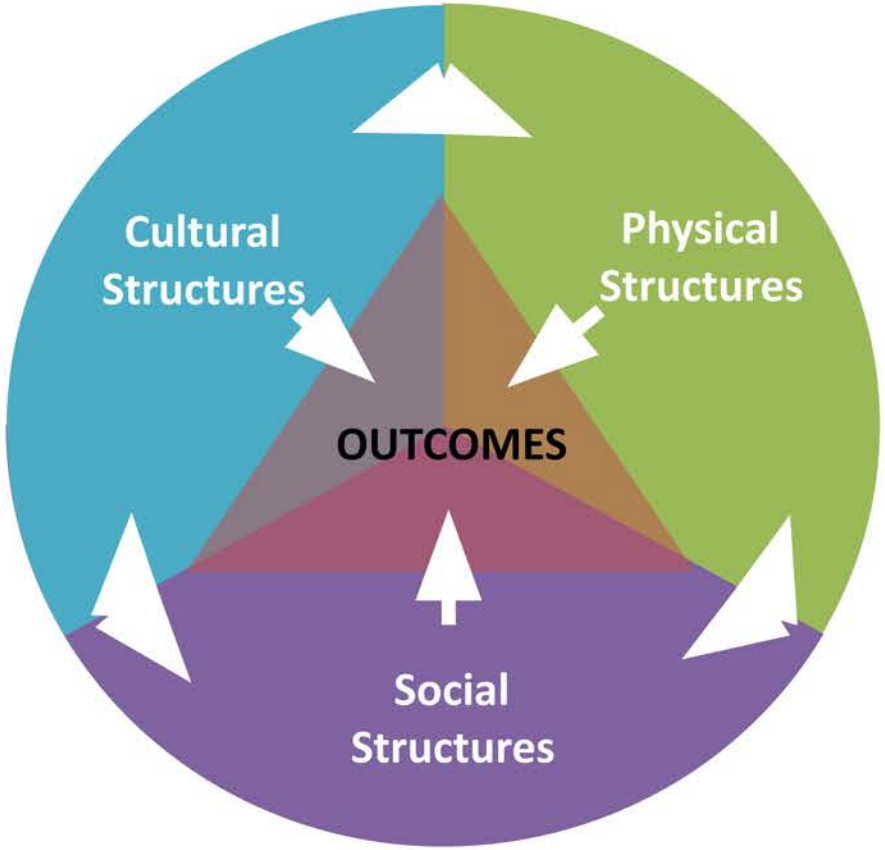


image via Krys Burnette


Exclusion
Inclusion
Belonging

Othering & Belonging within Structures

We are all situated within structures but not evenly.



Structures unevenly distribute benefits and burdens to various groups.

These structures are not neutral and interact in ways that produce differential outcomes.

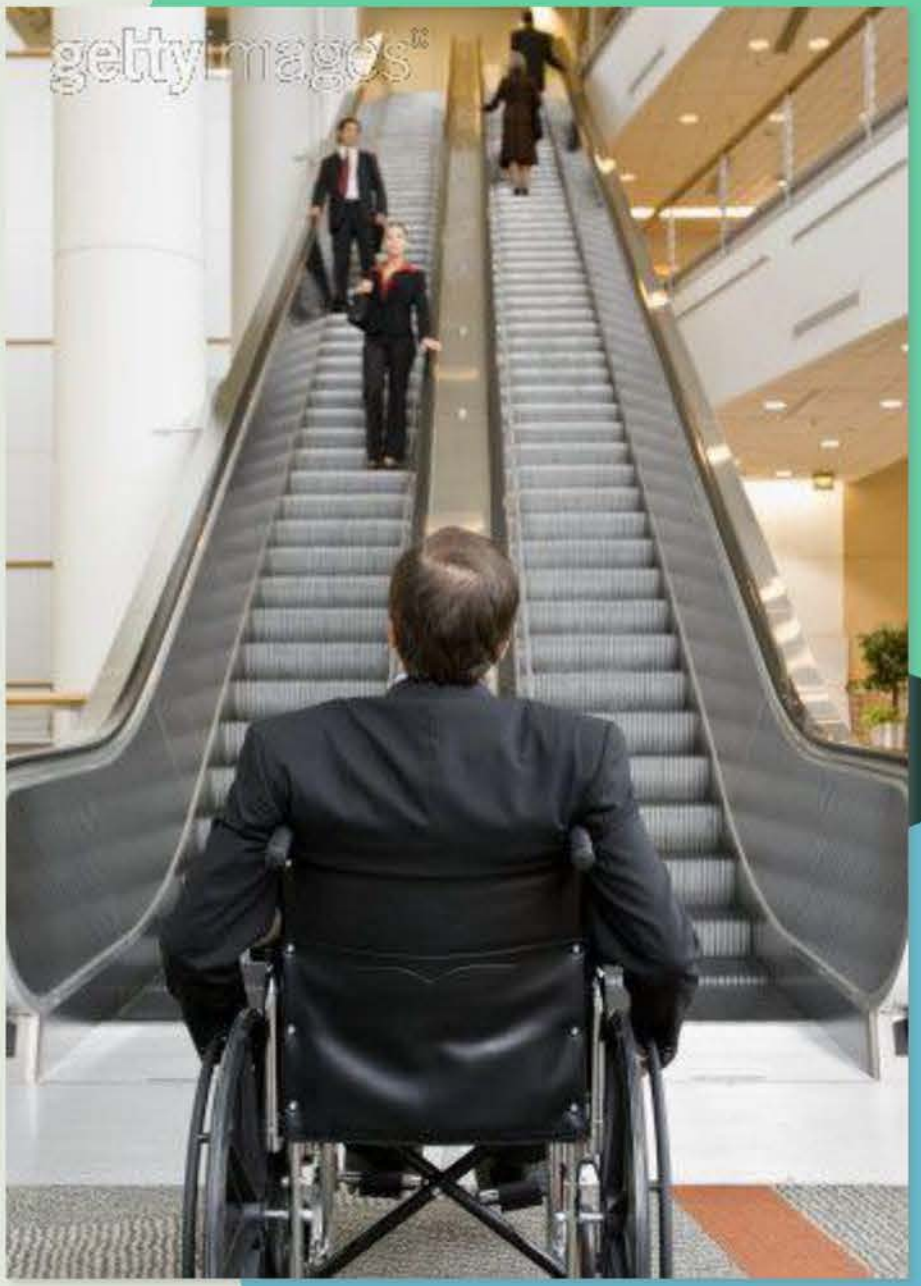
Power gives us greater positive access to structures and more ability to shape structures.

Structures do work (2/2)

Not only are people situated differently with regard to institutions, people are situated differently with regard to infrastructure.

People are impacted by the relationships between institutions and systems…

…but people also impact these relationships and can change the structure of the system.



Structures do work (1/2)

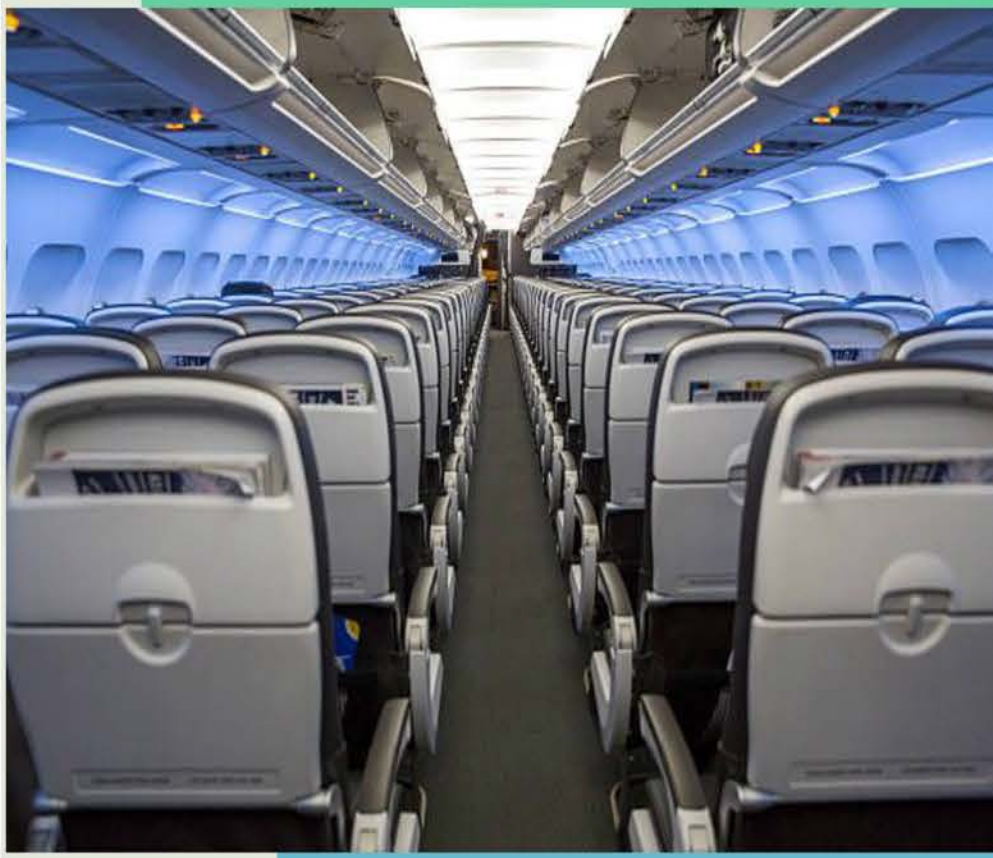
Structures are not neutral. They do work.

Think about the design of airplanes.

How might they be biased?

While most flight attendants and many passengers are female, the luggage bins are designed for tall people with plenty of upper body strength.

Airline seating is designed for smaller sized passenger bodies and bodies of average height.



Narratives of Othering and Belonging

Breaking: When a group turns inwards and explicitly pushes away from other groups who are seen as dangerous or a threat

Bonding: Connecting to people like you in some important way

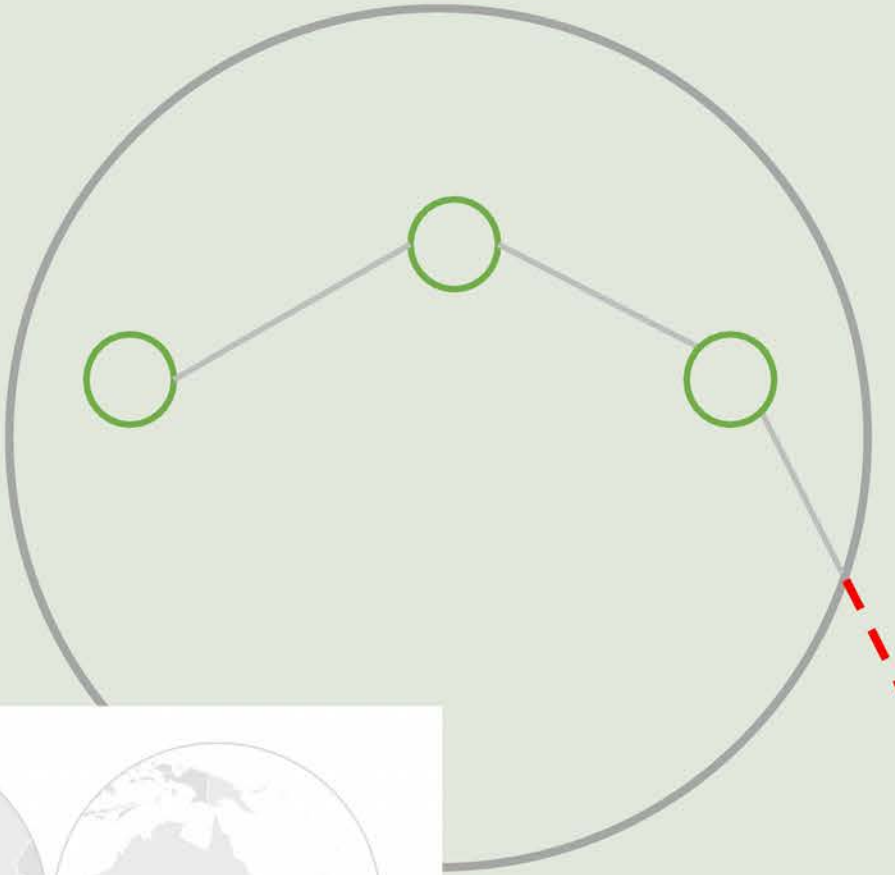
Bridging: Ties to people who are unlike you in some important way; stories, structure contact

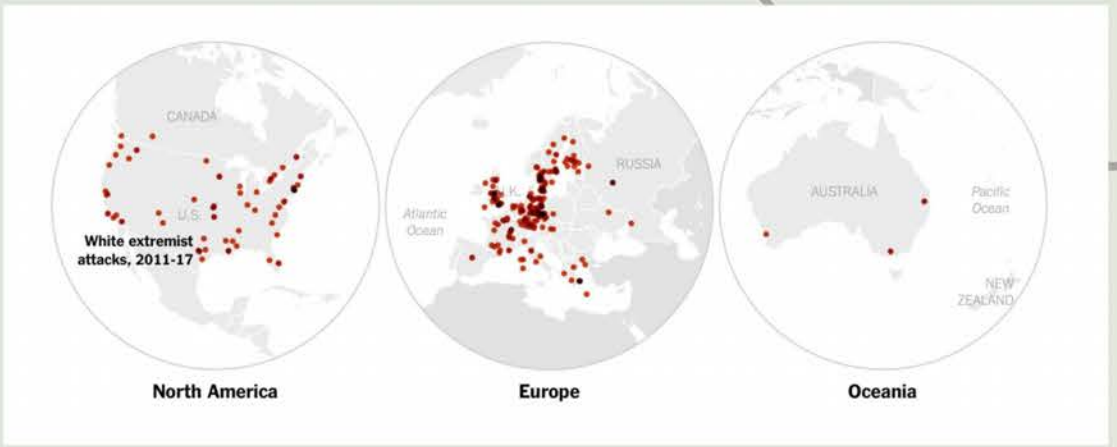
Examples of breaking:

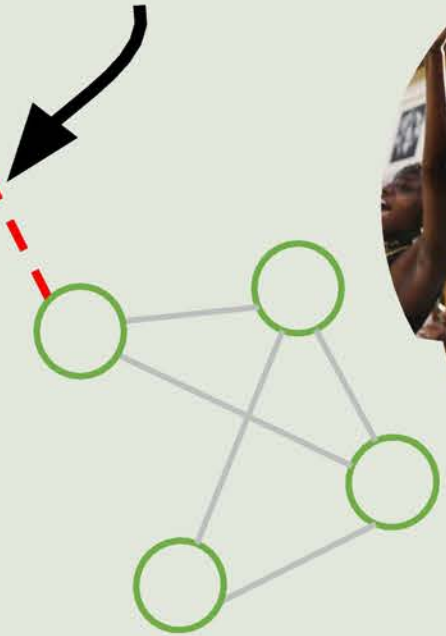
BREAKING:

Social ties among an exclusive group who explicitly push away from other groups who are seen as dangerous or a threat.

WHITE NATIONALISM

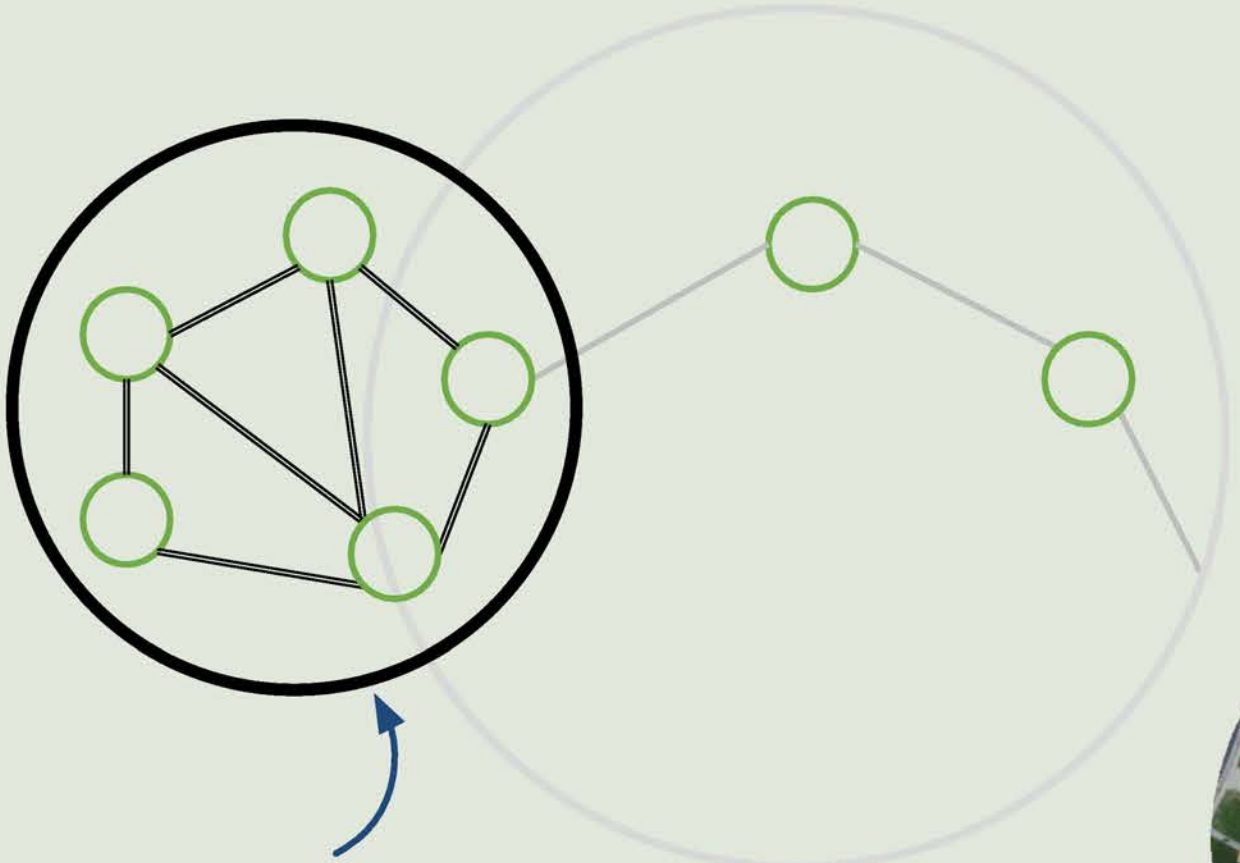






PROGRESSIVE INFIGHTING

Examples of bonding:



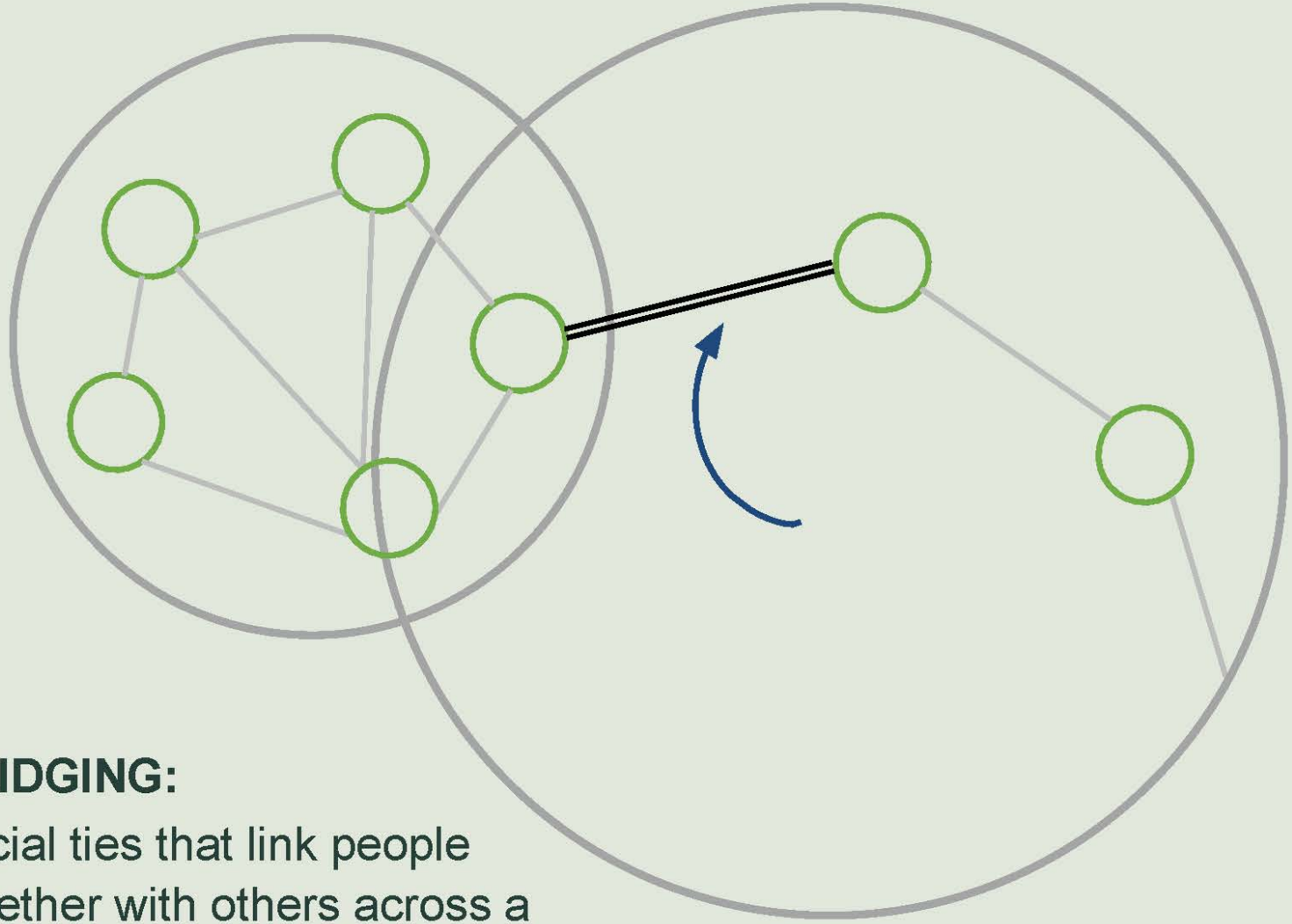
FAMIL
Y

NEIGHBORHOOD

BONDING:

Social ties that link people together with others who are primarily like them along some key dimension. These are genuinely easier to build than bridging social capital.

Examples of bridging:



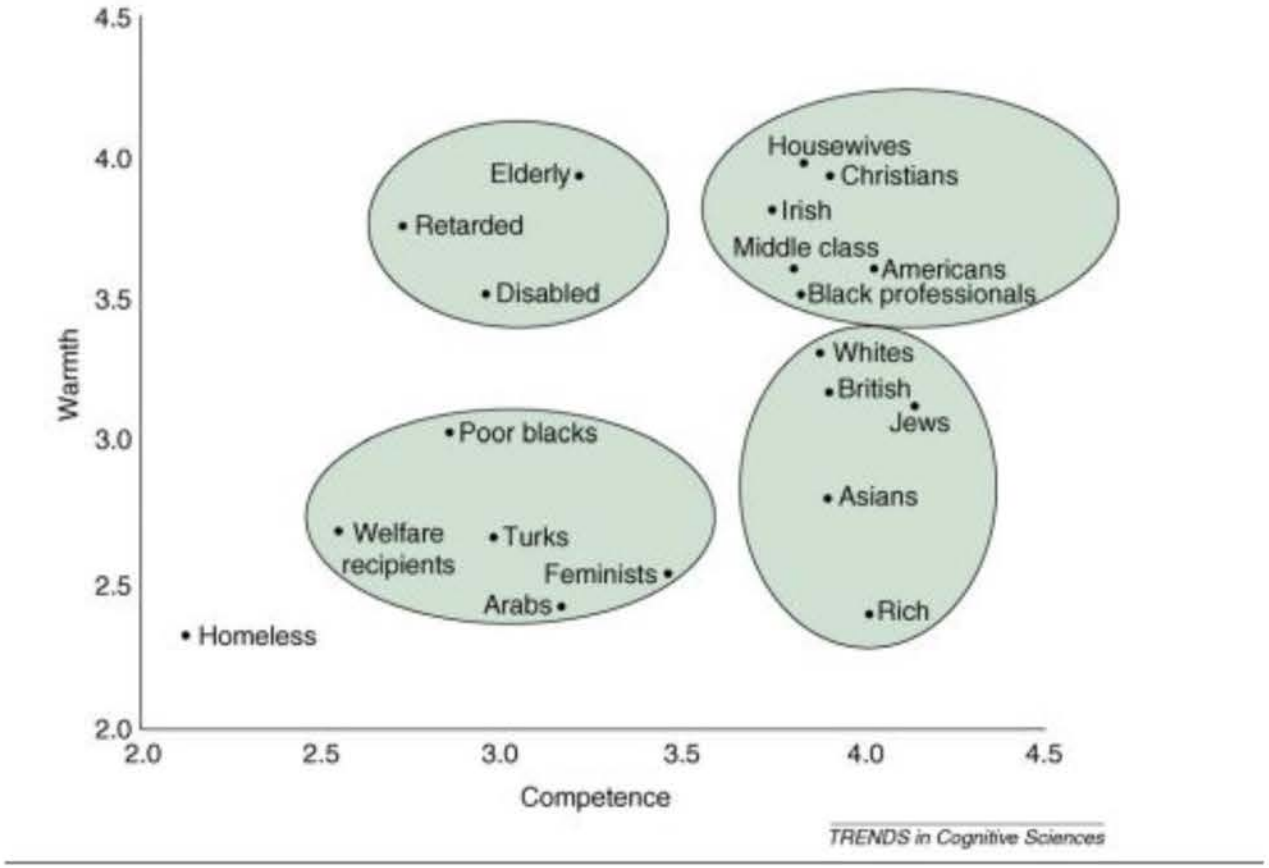
LGBT

MOSQUE IN NEW ZEALAND

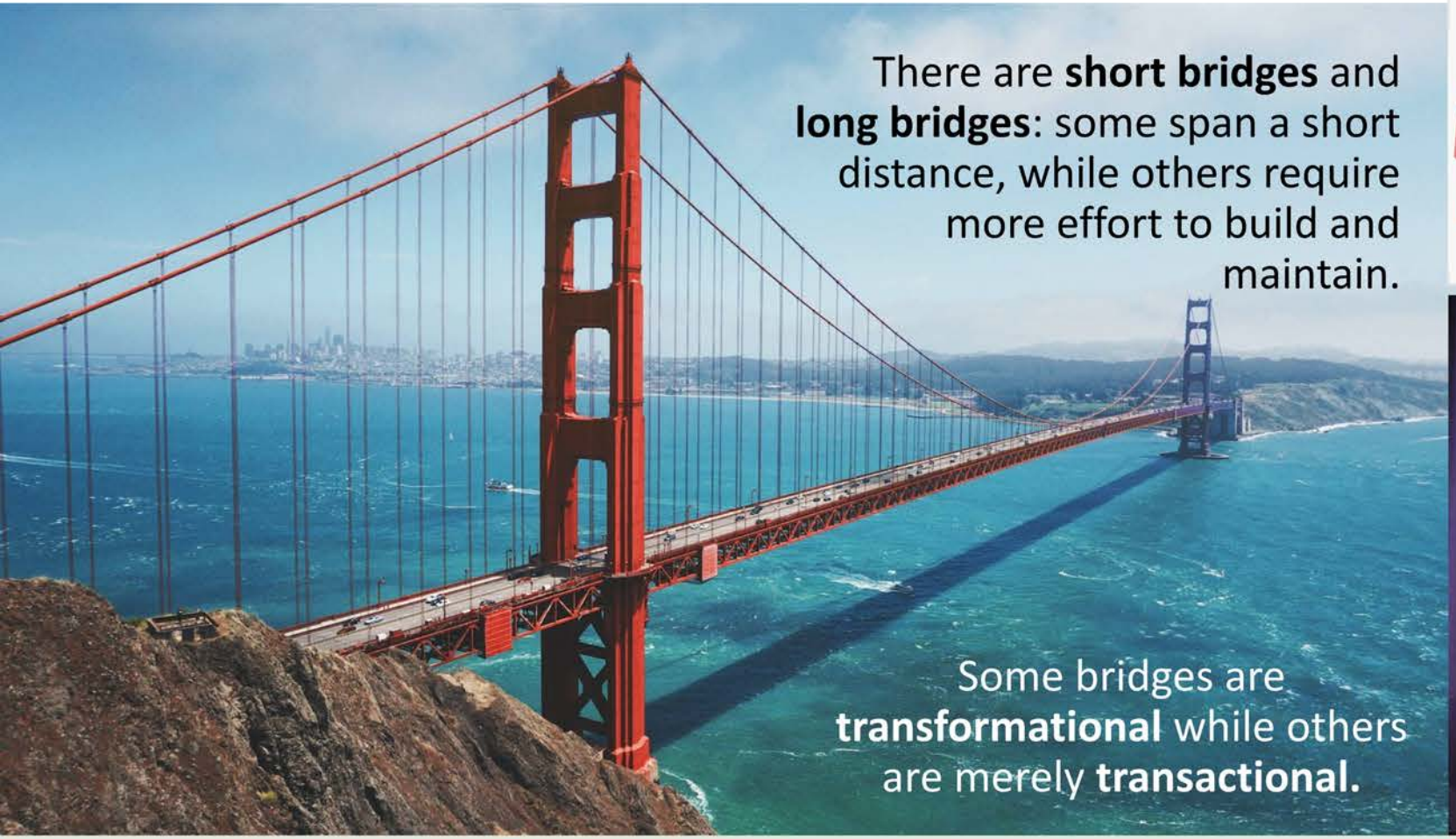
BRIDGING:

Social ties that link people together with others across a cleavage that typically divides society.

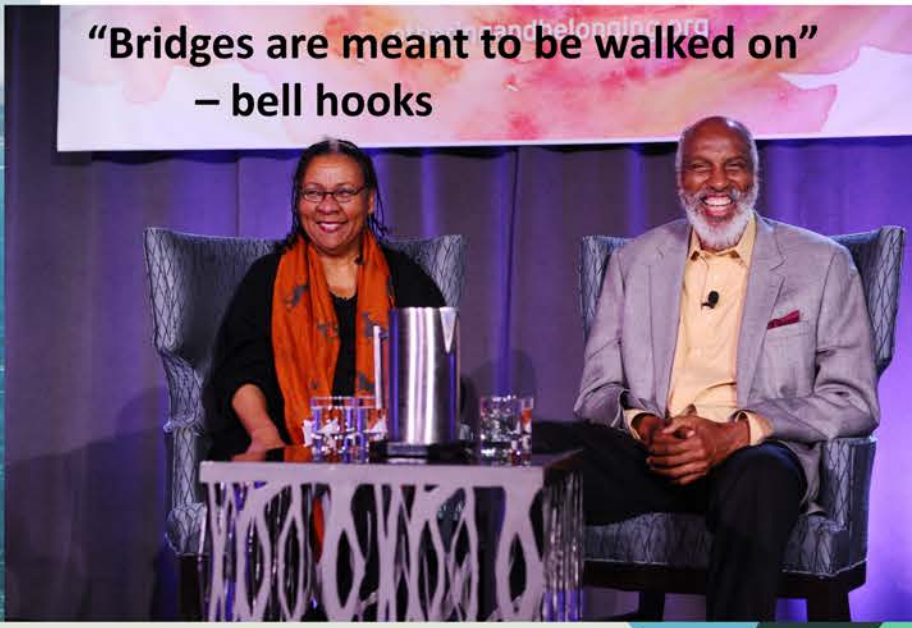
Universal Dimensions of Social Cognition (Susan Fiske et al.)



Bridging Varieties



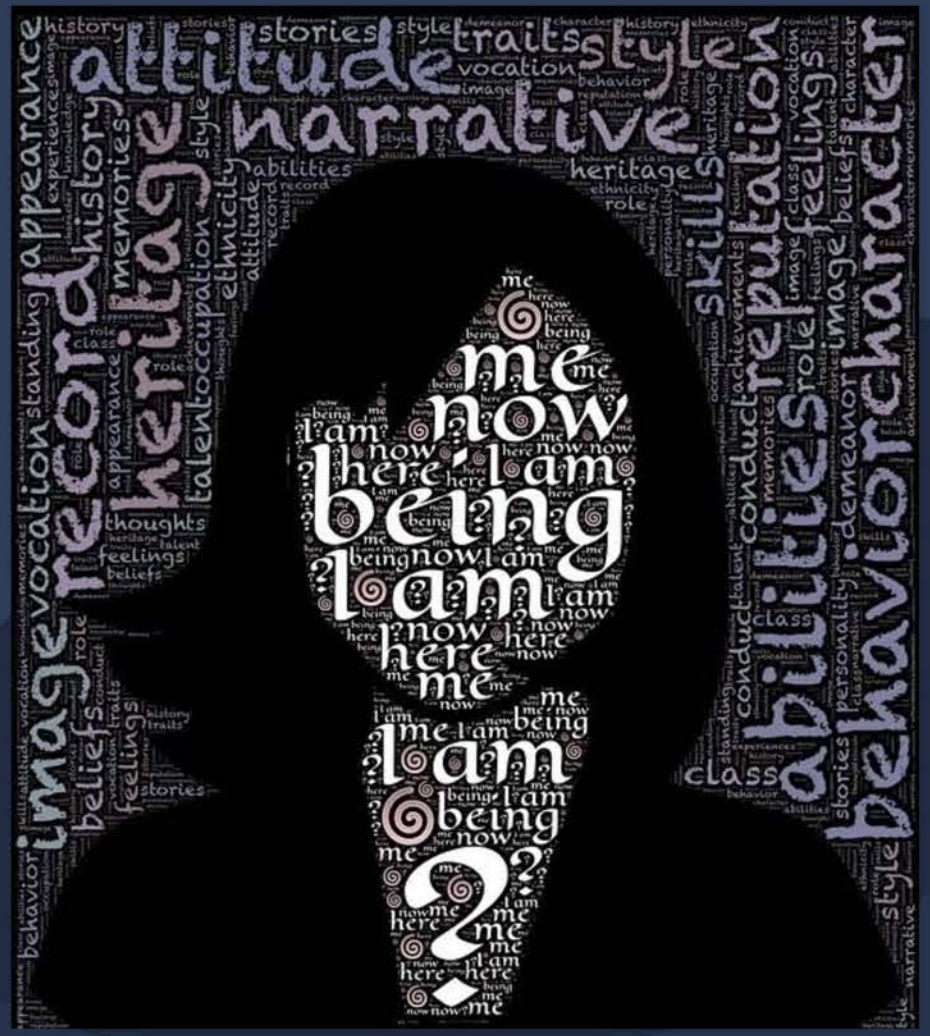
*Bridging happens not only between **individuals**, but between **groups** and **institutions** as well.*



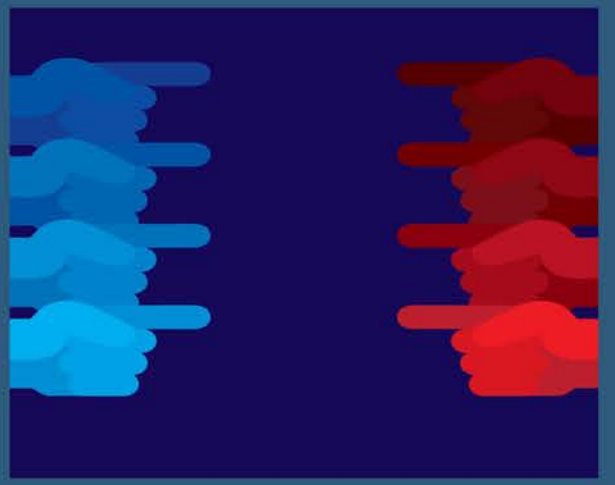
Our Multiple Identities

Create More Opportunities for Bridging

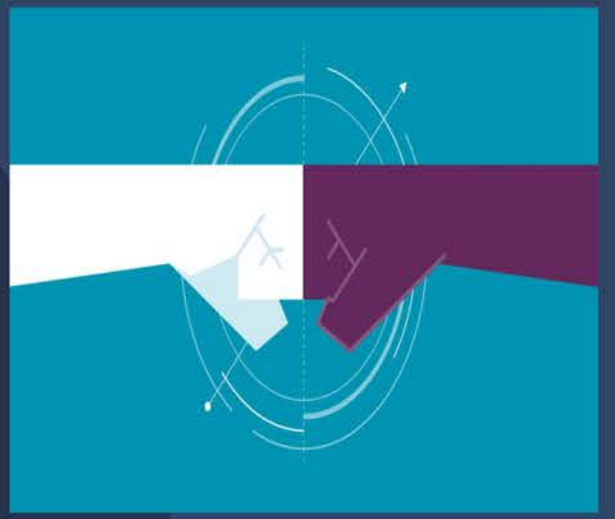
Identities



can increase polarization

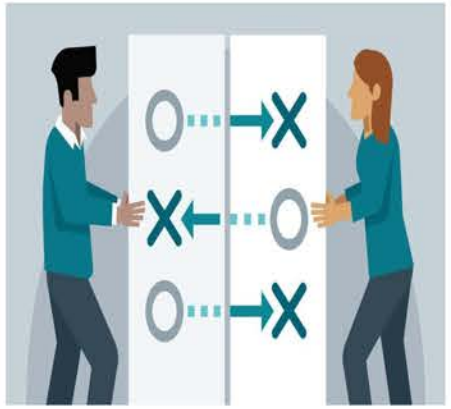


or decrease polarization



Levels of Trust

Personal



Strategic

Organizational

- Greater Good Science Center Bridging Playbook Guide – combines science and storytelling to provide bridging strategies
- They identify four types of bridgers – Explorer, Connector, Seeker, Mediator

- Bridging involves modesty - no one has a monopoly on the truth
- Sometimes bridging is about small shifts, or short bridges, and not always radical changes
- Bridging requires inner-work, it is as much a transformation of the self as it is about transforming relations
- That bridging involves risk taking and that not everyone is ready to bridge for reasons like personal trauma.

Important steps for organizational leaders

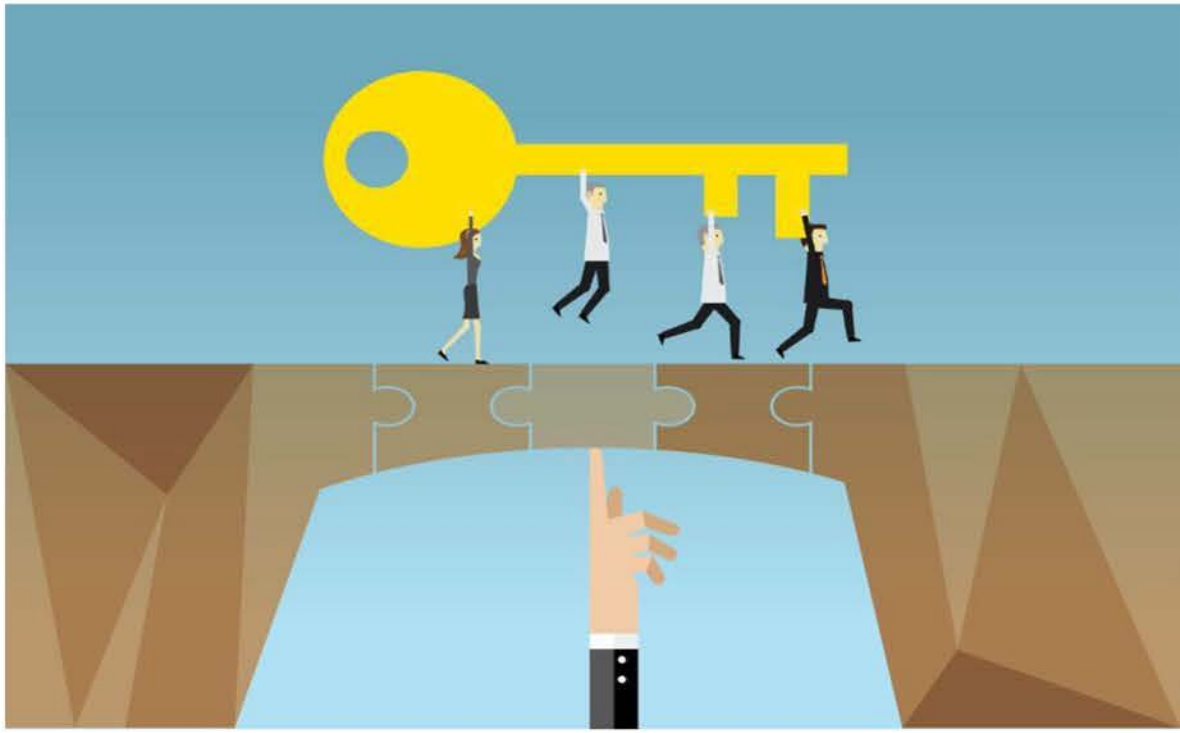
- Analyze the social network of the organization and make interventions.
  - Leader attends to the container and the story/value

- Value difference and similarities. We call that belonging without othering
  - Create space so that everyone can contribute, offer recognition. Address belonging uncertainty.

- Create structured and unstructured opportunities for bridging and linking
  - Achieve team objectives and build the social capital of team members.

Power Impacts Bridging

- Bridging work must consider power differentials and can look very different depending on the structural conditions within which bridging happens
  - Remember: power is positional, structural, and hierarchal.
- People can gain power through *linking* social networks and creating social capital.
  - Individuals can build relationships with institutions and individuals who have relative power to access resources.
  - Those with more power should carry more of the weight of bridging
- Power also shifts.
  - For example: people of color may have more power than whites in certain settings. (e.g., an anti-racism convening)
- Leaders can help redistribute power to foster belonging



Leading through Belonging

- **How do I welcome in my own and others' agency?**
- **How do I welcome shared power?**
- **How do I welcome multiple voices?**
- **How do I welcome shared responsibility?**
- ***What is the process for ensuring that practices are resonant, meaningful and accountable?***

Consider:

- Outreach materials
- Look, feel & sound of the space
- Accessibility of the space
- Accessibility of staff to people entering the space
- Who is there

Stories and Narratives

Who's in our stories? Who is represented? Who is left out?

How do we expand our circles to include everyone in our stories and narratives?

Multiple Identities and Multiple Stories

We all have multiple identities.

- Identity is fluid. When we organize around rigid identity or professional categories, our capacity to bridge is weakened.
- Emancipation is a collective endeavor. This does not mean abandoning identity but linking it in circles of solidarity.
- Our positions inform us but do not trap us.

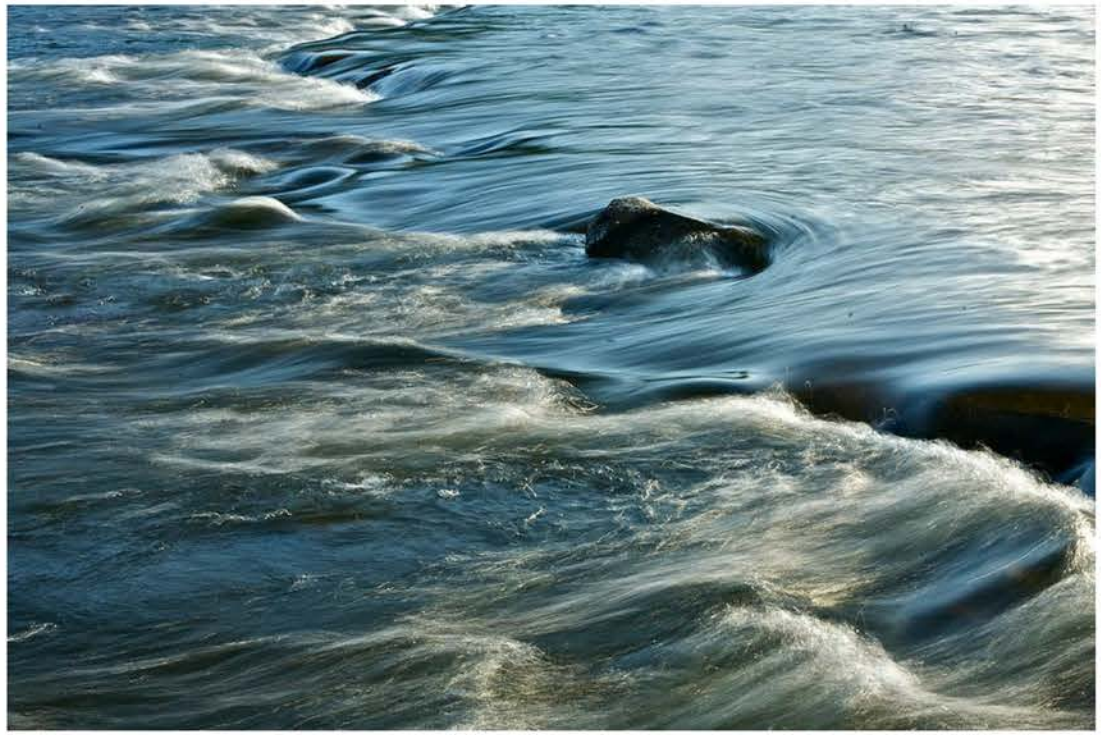
We all have multiple stories.

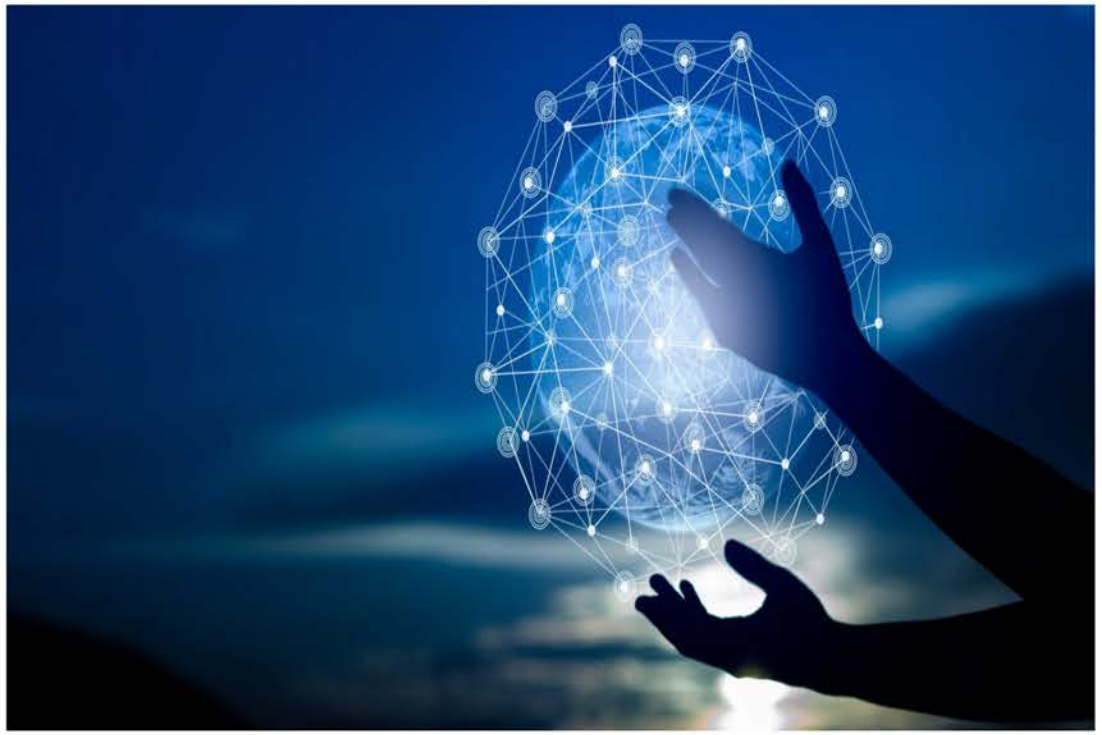
- Everyone has positive or negative stories.
- We often value the more negative story. While important, deciding which story to lead with will often set the tone for the rest of the discussion. Resist being stuck in a single story.

Our Multiple Identities Create More Opportunities for Bridging

(age group, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.)

Can we imagine new structures that honor our multiple fluid identities & belonging?





End of phase 1 presentation

Transition to: Ashley and Group Discussion

Part I discussion prompts

Did something from the talk resonate with you?
If so, what was it?

Did you find something from the talk inspiring?
If so, are you comfortable sharing?

Was there something shared that you find challenging or would like to learn more about?

Questions?