



Othering & Belonging
Institute at UC Berkeley

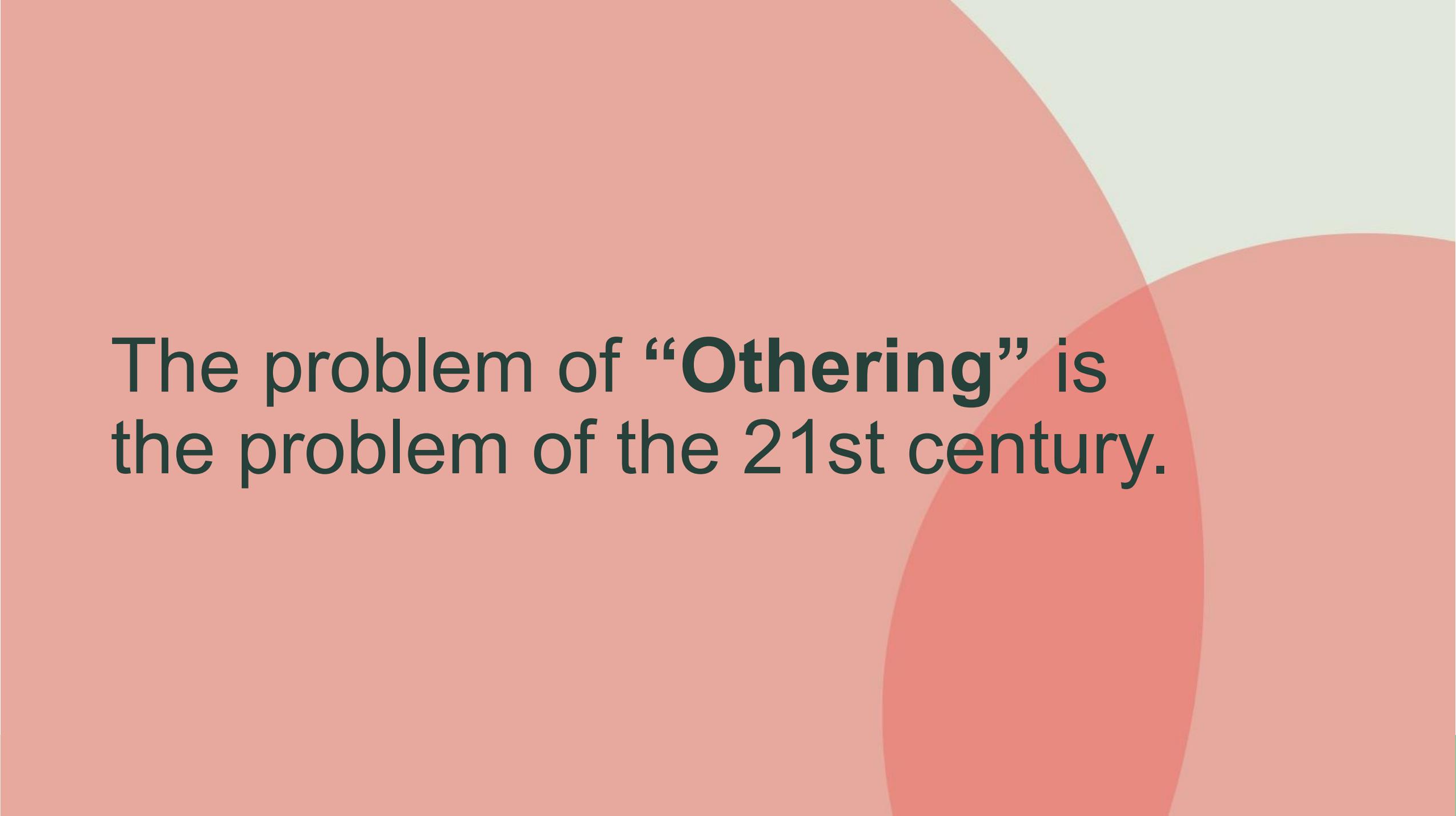
Bridging to Belonging: understanding power and creating connections

DATE

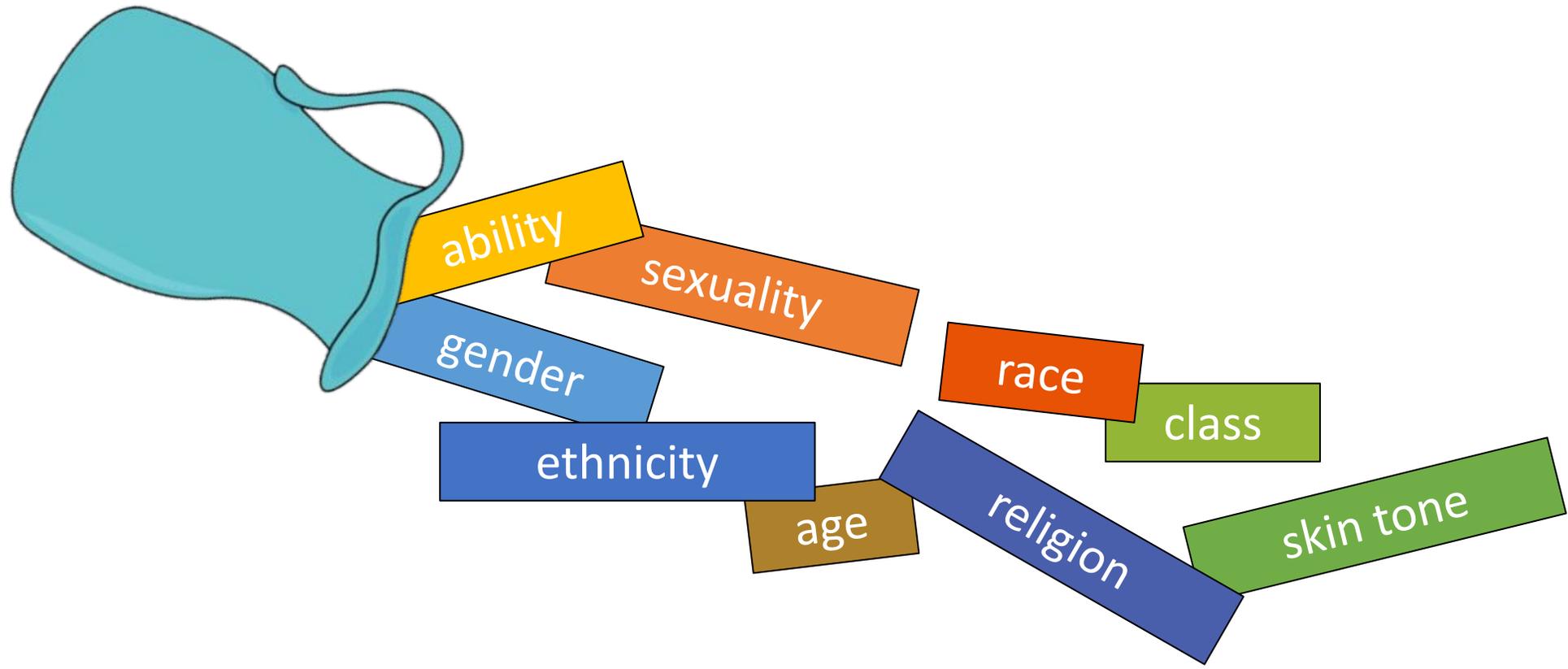
December 8, 2021

PRESENTER

john a. powell, Director
Othering and Belonging
Institute

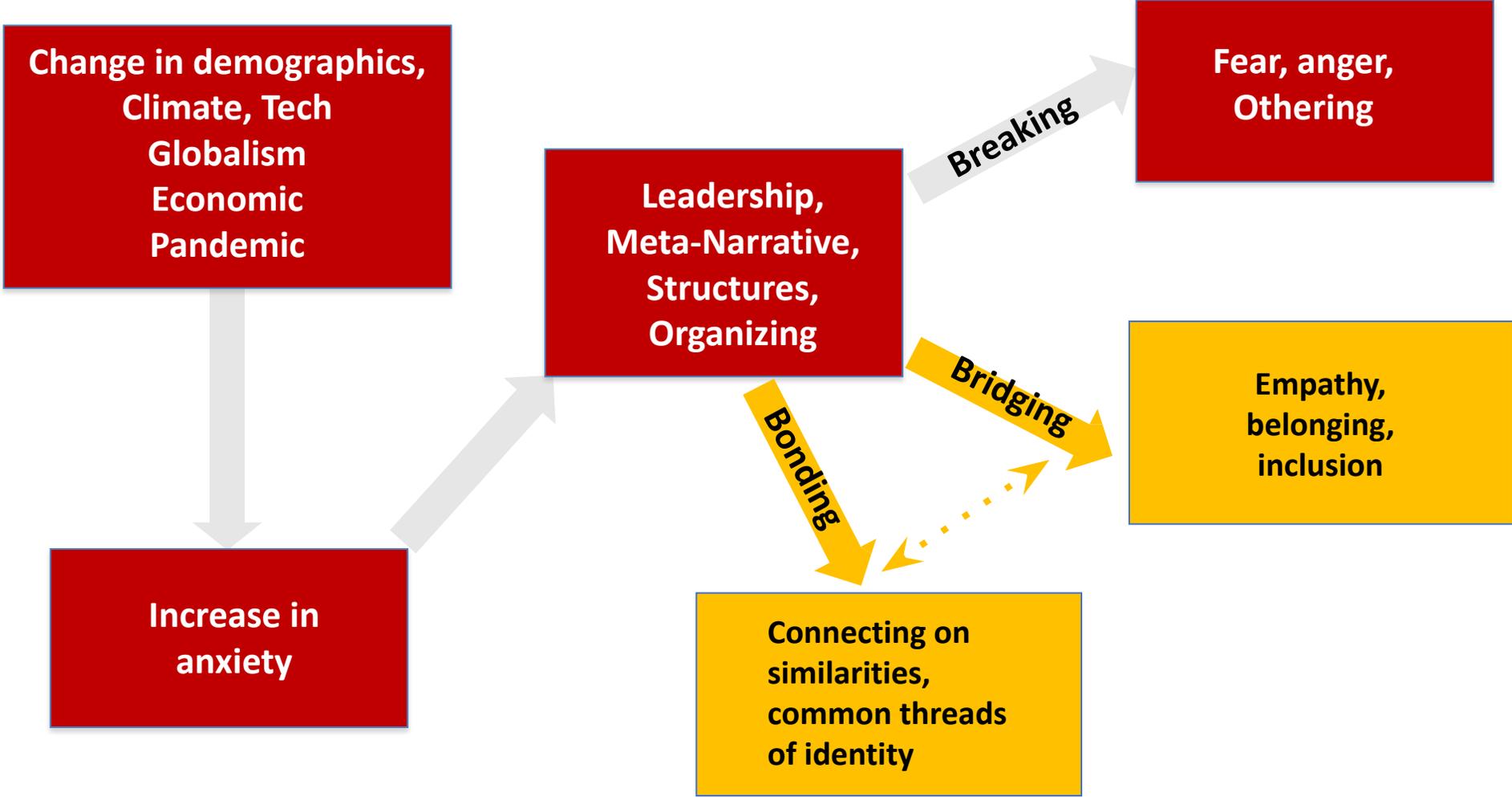


The problem of “**Othering**” is
the problem of the 21st century.



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

Situated in anxiety and polarization



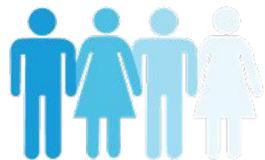
Narratives of Othering and Belonging



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

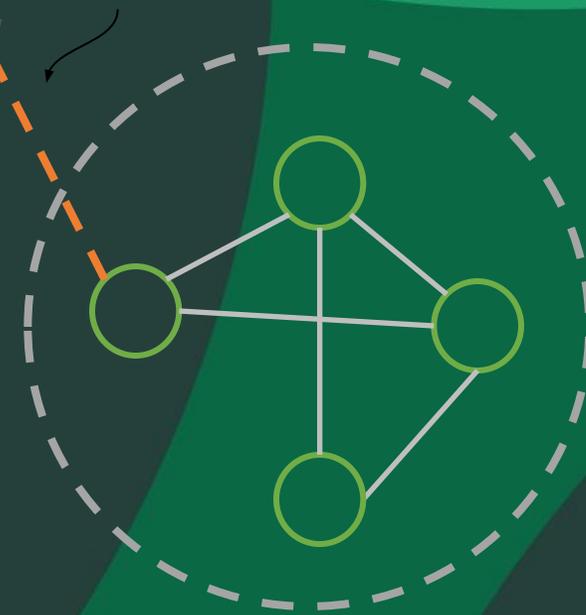
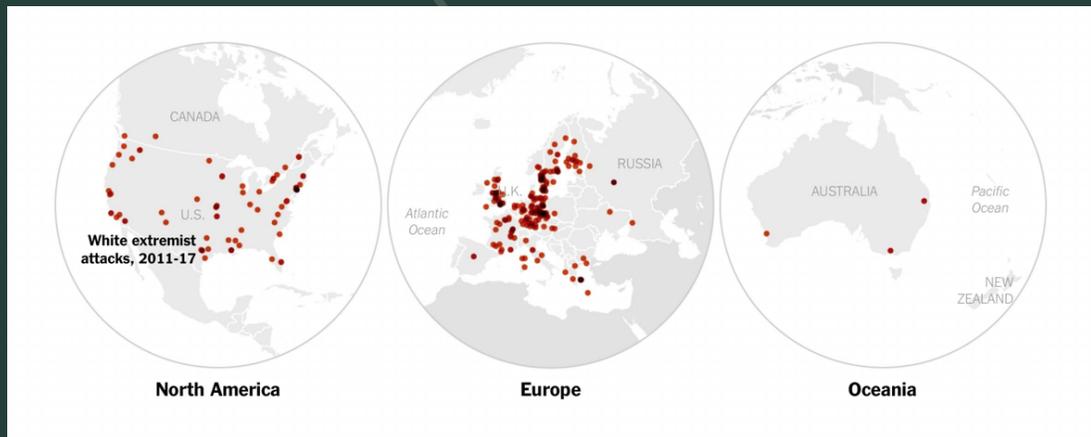
Examples of breaking

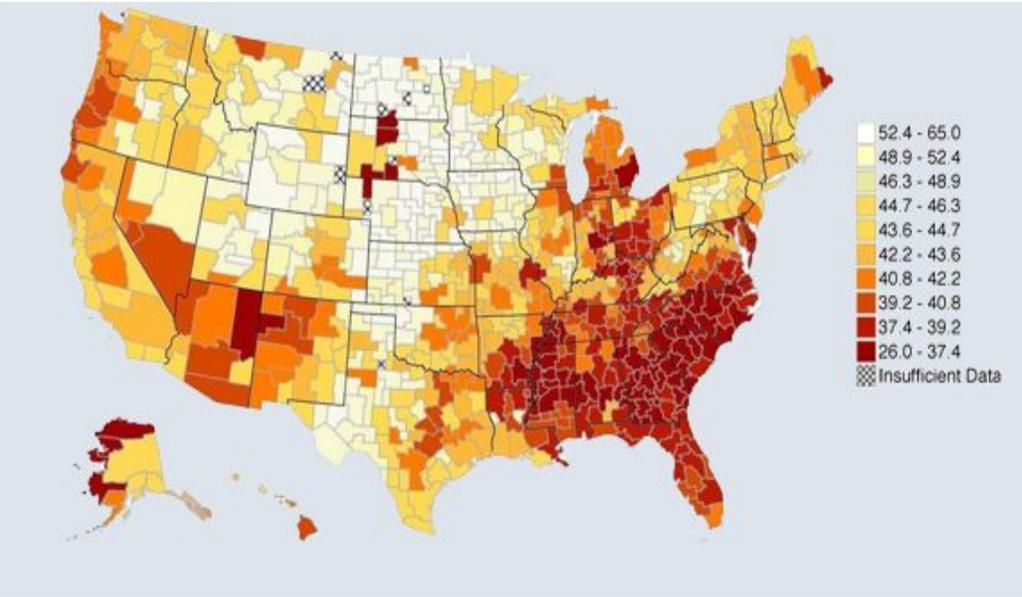
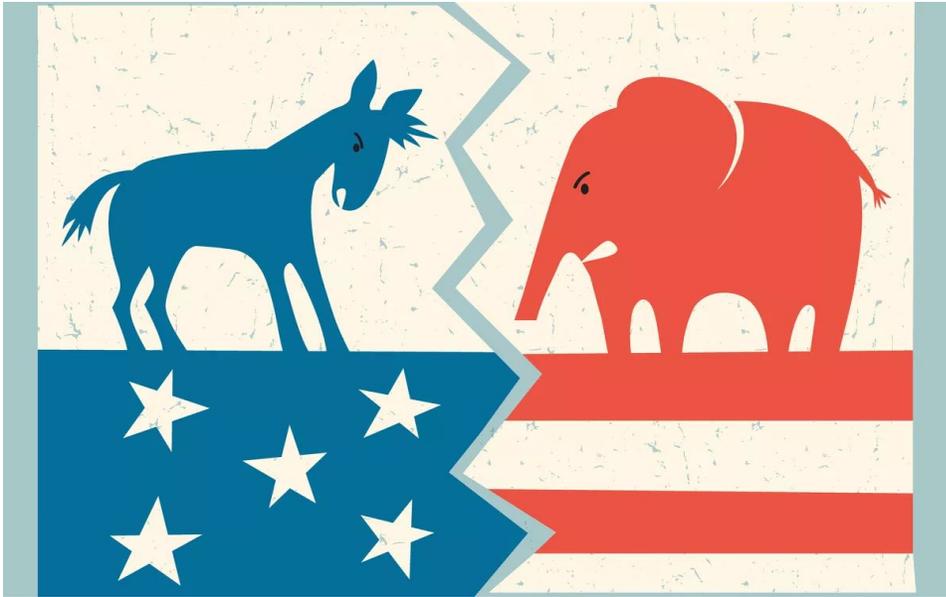


WHITE NATIONALISM

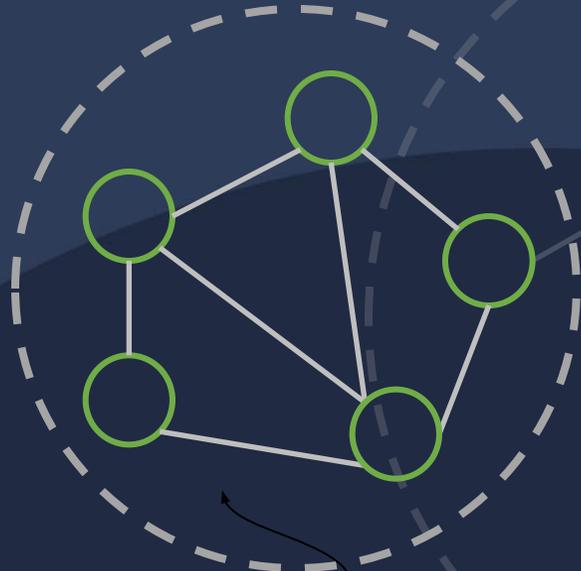
BREAKING

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





Examples of bonding



FAMILY

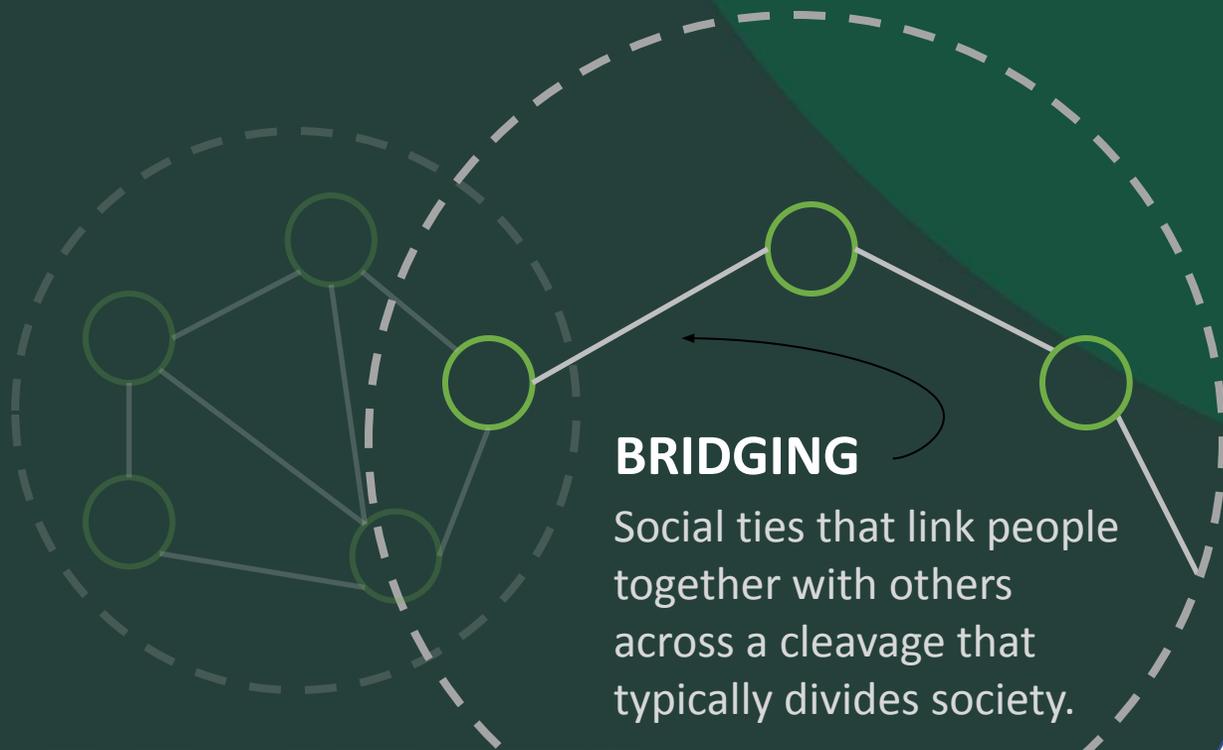
BONDING

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.



NEIGHBORHOOD

Examples of bridging



LGBTQ



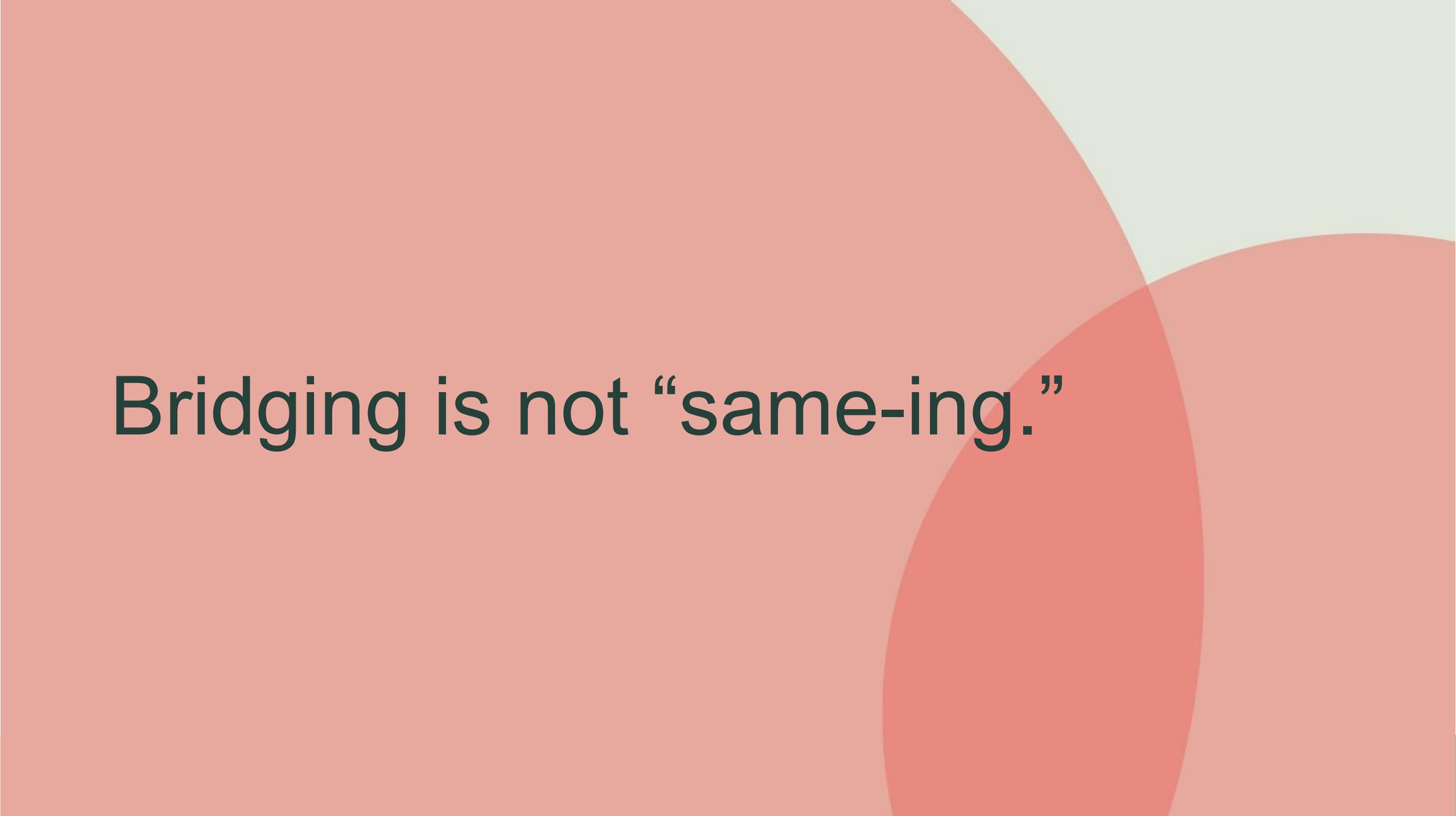
MOSQUE IN NEW ZEALAND



If bridging is the
opposite of
breaking what is
the opposite of
belonging?

Bridging expands
the circle of human
concern and builds a
larger, more
inclusive “We”





Bridging is not “same-ing.”

Bridges contain multitudes

There are **short bridges** and **long bridges**. Some bridges require more effort to build and maintain. Others are a short distance.



As bell hooks reminds us, bridges are walked on.

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



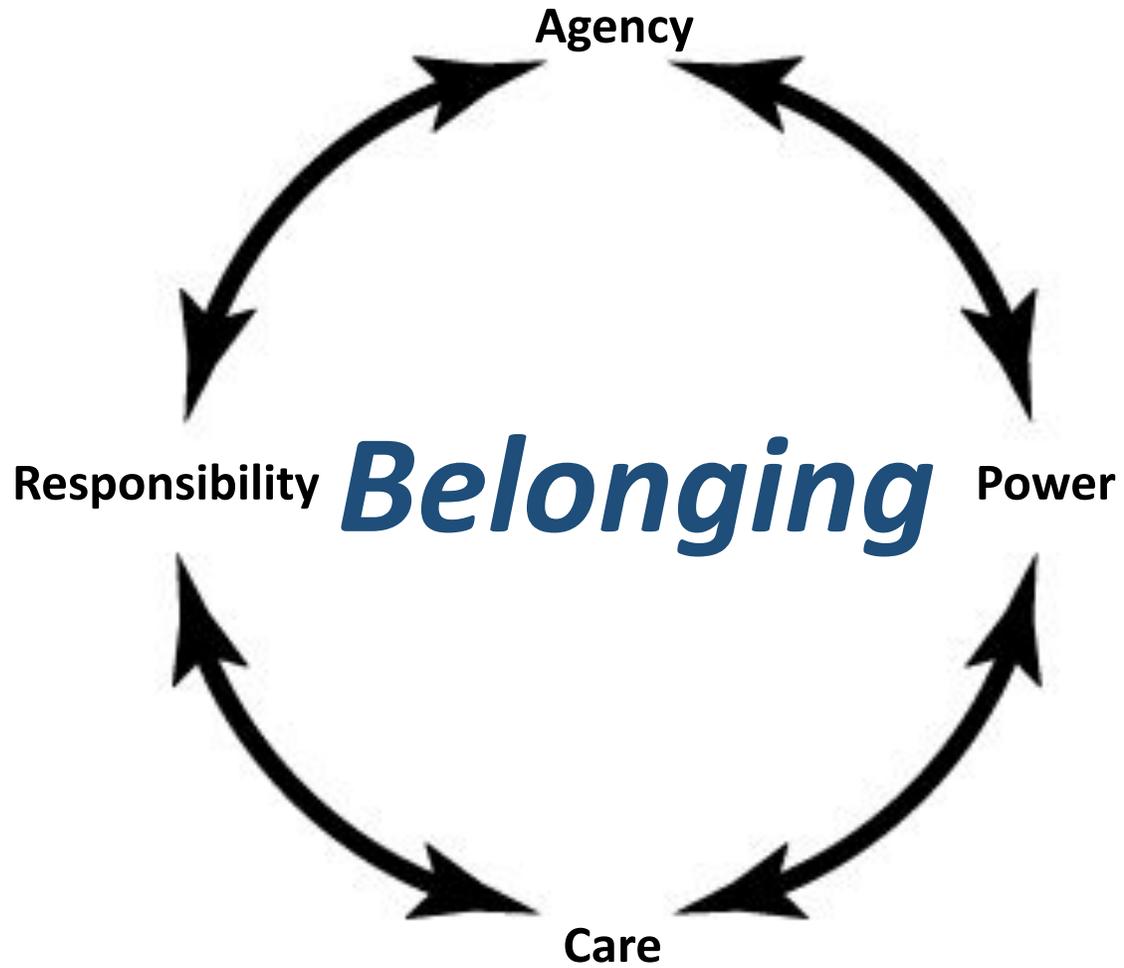


How do we bridge in a polarized environment?



We are the polarized
environment.

The leader must attend to the
environment



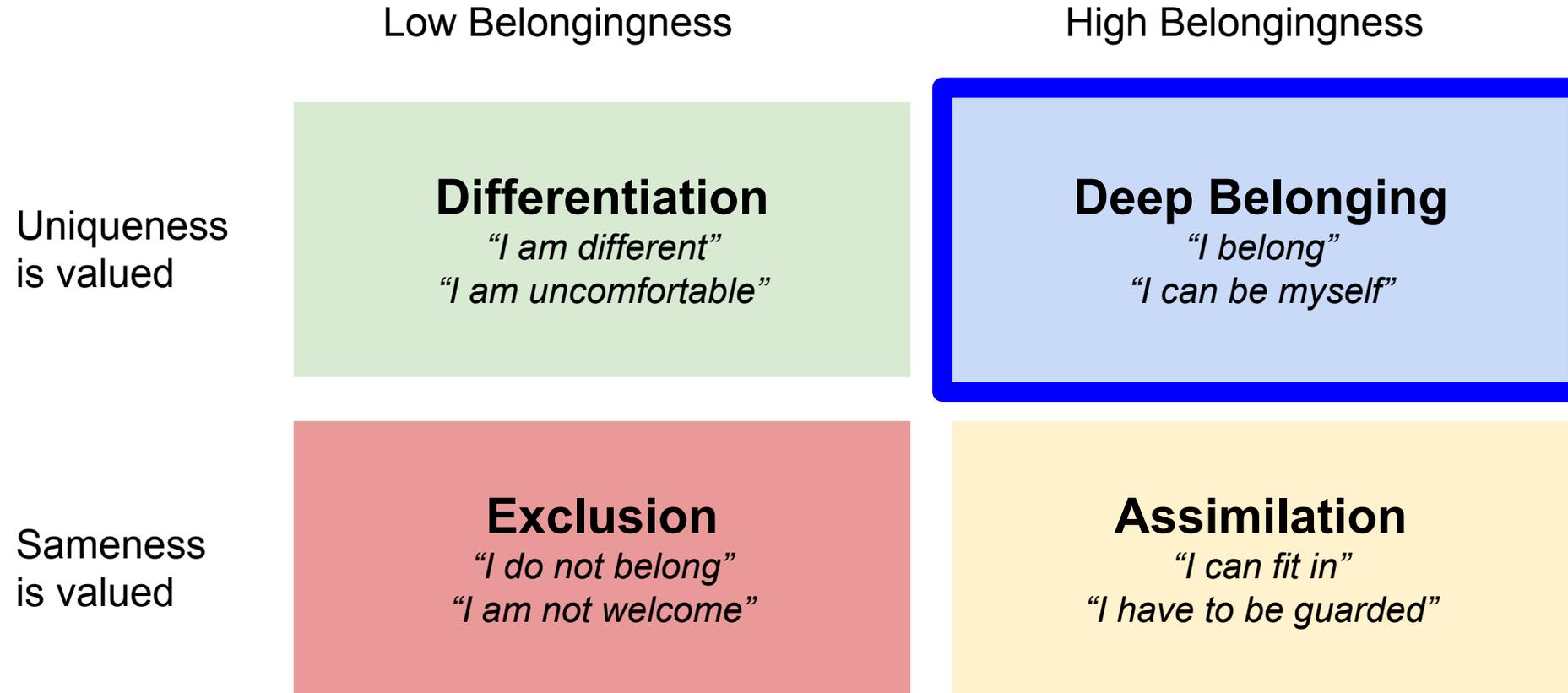
**Belonging is about
co-creating and
co-owning
structures to
belong.**

Deep Belonging

Belonging connotes something fundamental about how groups are structurally positioned within society and how they are perceived and regarded. There's an ***affective*** component.



A Framework for Belonging





How do we foster deep
belonging?



Leaders play a critical role

Cracked containers

When there's a crack in the container--when the context in which we live is broken--everyone feels othered and our solutions need to be more radical.

Leaders can help create a container where we all belong.



Leadership is dynamic

- Leadership is distributive and situational
- There are different types of leaders
 - A bonding leader is different from a bridging leader
- There may be “sticky points” when leaders do not differentiate between bonding, bridging, and breaking

Power & position matter

- Power is positional, structural, hierarchical and situational
- People are situated differently with regard to institutions and 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.



Power impacts bridging

- Bridging work must consider power differentials and the structural conditions within which bridging happens
- Those with more power should carry more of the weight of bridging, and yet the less powerful are often called upon
- Leaders can help redistribute power to foster belonging



Addressing power to foster belonging

- **Consider:**
 - Who has the most power in the room?
 - Who has the most space?
 - Who has the most authentic voice?
 - How is power being used?
 - What are each parties' sacred symbols?
 - Whose perspectives shape both the “problem” and the “solution”?
- How can leaders reinforce marginalized voices and ideas?
- How can we bridge and link despite power differentials?



Leadership characteristics for belonging

**Visible
commitment**

**Awareness of
Bias**

**Curiosity of
Others**

**Psychological
Safety**

Leaders tell stories

- Stories help us deal with the anxiety of rapid change
- Stories change the narrative of who belongs, help us identify common values and encourage deep communication, bridging, and belonging
- Do we even need a villain in our story?
- May experience resistance/pushback when bridging and changing the narrative
- Adds complexity and allows for multiplicity of experience and identity



Designing an operating model for belonging

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

TECHNOLOGY

PROCESSES



Othering & Belonging
Institute at UC Berkeley

Putting Targeted Universalism into Practice for Belonging

The Learning Community Presented
by Social Impact Exchange

DATE

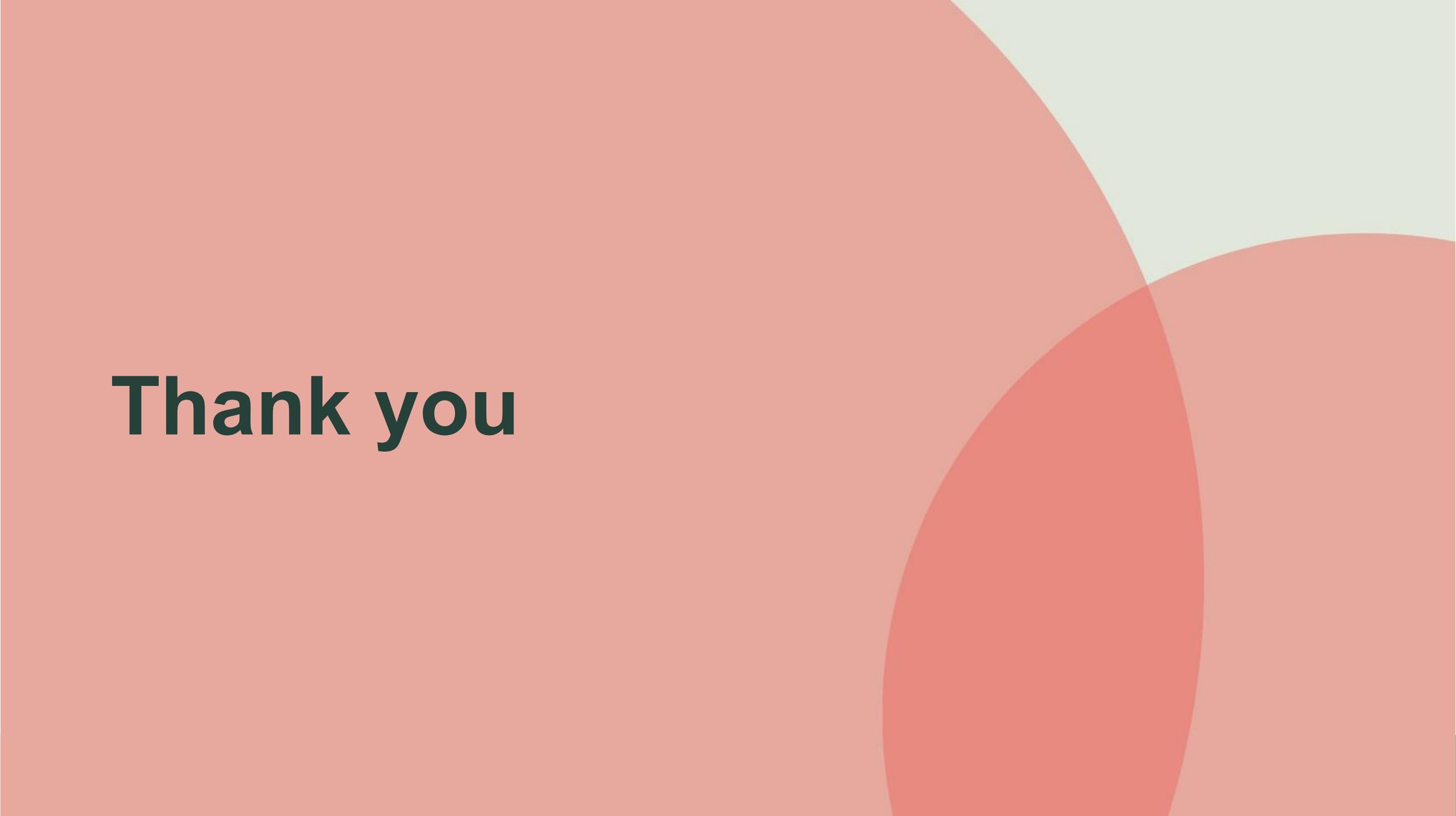
June 4, 2021

PRESENTER

john a. powell

AUTHORIAL SUPPORT

OBI Staff



Thank you



Appendix

O&BI Bridging Examples

How the OpEd was as an Effort to Bridge

Bridging and Breaking



Across our communities, regions, states, we are witnessing increased anxiety, much of it related to an increase in a perceived “Other.” The 2016 election is a crystallized version of this, one with major consequences that we are witnessing unfold daily. Tapping into it can take us in two directions: towards **breaking** where we turn inward, only to what we know and who we know. This path leads ultimately to a politics of isolation. The other direction is **bridging**, where we turn outwardly to connect and explicitly work with other groups and seek ways to build common ground. This path ultimately takes us towards belonging and empathy.

Opinion Editorial Piece by john a powell & Arthur Brooks

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CITYLAB

America Can't Fix Poverty Until It Stops Hating Poor People

A bipartisan plea to stop “othering” those living on the economic margins.

john a. powell and Arthur Brooks
October 10, 2017, 9:09 AM EDT

A photograph of a person wearing a dark hoodie and a black beanie, sitting on the ground. They are holding a red bowl in front of them, which is placed on a cardboard box. The person's face is obscured by their hands and the beanie. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Creating the Conditions for Belonging and Breathing in a Toxic Environment
@ Bioneers 2020 Conference

VIDEO    

January 15, 2021

 john a. powell – Creating the Conditions ... 



5:00 / 17:16   YouTube 

The background features a solid light red color. On the right side, there are two overlapping circles. The top circle is a lighter shade of red, and the bottom circle is a darker shade of red. A portion of the top circle overlaps with a light green area in the top right corner.

Appendix Explainer Videos

Explainer Video Series: The Circle of Human Concern
URL Link

