Building Belonging in a Time of Othering

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Chicago and Inequality
The problem of “Othering” is the problem of the 21st century

And the possible demise of the nation state as we know it
STOP "OTHERING" ME!

WHAT'S "OTHERING"?

YOUR KIND COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND.
**Othering** is a generalized set of common processes that engender marginality and group-based inequality across any of the full range of human differences.
The opposite of Othering is not sameing but belonging.
Not Belonging Has Consequences

A Black Yale Student Was Napping, and a White Student Called the Police

The Yale campus. A graduate student in the university's African studies program said she was harassed for taking a nap in a common area. Drew Sanders for The New York Times

Starbucks C.E.O. Apologizes After Arrests of 2 Black Men
As diversity grows, so does anxiety.

Change
G/D/T/E/E

Increase in anxiety

Break

Leadership,
Meta-
Narrative

Fear, anger,
othering

Empathy,
belonging,
inclusion

Bridging
Two Competing Visions

• The first vision is of a smaller, and more hierarchical “We”
  ➢ This is based on fear, control, and purity, and one that dominates and controls the “other” and the earth.

• The second vision is of a more inclusive, and larger “We.”
  ➢ This vision is one where we learn to share the earth and love and care for one another.

• These visions are competing with each other across the globe.
Putnam’s Theory of Social Capital

- Bonding
- Bridging
- Linking
- Breaking
Examples of breaking social capital:

**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 social capital:

**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 social capital:

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

LGBTQ

Mosque in New Zealand
WE NEED TO CREATE A CULTURE OF BELONGING.

*Sawubona:* Zulu greeting “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
The Circle of Human Concern
A Beloved Community
Dr. King’s Legacy is a Call for Belonging
Belonging connotes something fundamental about how groups are structurally positioned within society as well as how they are perceived and regarded. There’s an affective component.

Belonging is more than joining a club – it is about co-creating and co-owning structures to belong.
Belongingness Intervention

• **UT-Austin Intervention** - Targeted messages seemed to help individuals overcome doubts about belonging and their academic potential.

• **Effects of the Intervention**
  • Tripled the percentage of African-American students who earned G.P.A.s in the top quarter of their class, and it cut in half the black-white achievement gap in G.P.A.
  • Significantly decreased the number of health visits by African-American students.

Vanessa Brewer
Many studies show that belonging and group identity impacts performance. There is a direct correlation between students belonging and doubts about their ability to perform well in academic settings. This doubt creates an incentive to drop out of school, thus continually perpetuating the cycle of “othering” in the nation’s collegiate system.

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.
We are all situated within structures but not evenly.

Structures are not neutral.

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

These structures interact in ways that produce a differential in outcomes.
Structures limit and enhance opportunity

We can define opportunity through access to:

- EDUCATION
- ECONOMIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- FOOD
- HOUSING
- JUSTICE
- HEALTHCARE
- COMMUNICATIONS

This is an issue of membership and belonging.
Concentrated Poverty

- Poverty is racialized

- Only 12.3 percent of white children and 10 percent of white adults live below the poverty line, compared to 37.1 percent of black children and 22.6 percent of black adults

- Poverty is not simply lack or lowness of income, it is also a lack of capacities
• Using 2007-2011 census estimates, 3 out of 4 persons living in high-poverty neighborhoods or neighborhoods of concentrated poverty were non-white. Concentration of poverty is highest for blacks; half of all people living in concentrated poverty in the United States are black.

• Among white families who experience poverty in the US, two-thirds are poor for only three year or less, and only 2 percent are impoverished for more than 10 years. For example, many people report low or negative income when they enroll in college or become graduate students, or as they open or start businesses. In contrast, 17 percent of African-Americans are poor for ten or more years.

• While only 44 percent of poor people will be poor for the next 4 to 10 years, for blacks, that number is 61 percent.
Moving to Opportunity – Raj Chetty
Revises Findings
Black Boys and Social Mobility – Raj Chetty’s Research

Most white boys raised in wealthy families will stay rich or upper middle class as adults, but black boys raised in similarly rich households will not.

Source - NYTimes
Geographies of Consequentiality

- People traverse space in everyday life and space organizes everyday life.
- These spaces are not neutral but consequential.
- The focus is on the spatial nature of social interaction and the inequalities that are produced through spatial relationships (see Soja on “spatial justice”).
Black Homebuyers and Predatory Lending
Structural Marginalization, Allostatic Load, and Telomere Length
Equality – Equality is equal treatment, even if outcomes are unequal.

Equity – Interventions allow different, but fair treatment.

Inclusion – Allowing members of excluded groups to participate in institutions or organizations.

Equitable Inclusion – Allowing members of excluded groups to participate in a fair and equitable manner in institutions.

Belonging - 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.
Belongingness interventions communicate not only that someone belongs, but it shapes how they **feel about and regard the thing to which they belong to.**

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Each element represents a different piece of the full human experience. Addressing only one or two of these falls short on gaining, what I think is the full human experience—a sense of belonging.

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Image Source: https://www.aug.co/blog/belonging-a-conversation-about-equity-diversity-and-inclusion

Belonging includes the power to co-create.
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.
Why Targeted Universalism
Equity efforts can be directed towards transactional or transformative change. Both are sometimes needed, but we should not confuse the two.

**Transactional Change:** A change *within* existing structures.

**Transformative Change:** A change *to* existing structures

**What might this look like in a clinic setting?**
Perhaps given certain structures, to enact transformative change, we must change our strategies: pursue State court claims instead of higher courts that uphold discriminatory structures.
Why T/U?
People are differently situated

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.
Deaths of Despair

Death Rate of Middle-Aged White People – Source, NPR
DYING OF WHITENESS

HOW THE POLITICS OF RACIAL RESENTMENT IS KILLING AMERICA'S HEARTLAND

JONATHAN M. METZL
The Epidemic of Loneliness
Social Isolation and Suicide among Veterans

VETERAN SUICIDE IS A NATIONAL CRISIS

20 veterans die by suicide every day—we can’t wait any longer.

- 10.6 Veterans Not Using VHA
- 6.1 Veterans Using VHA
- 3.8 Active Duty or Non Activated Guard/Reserve

www.BeThereForVeterans.com

Dept. of VA
New Minister for Loneliness

GBOOMER.CO.UK
Supporting the fight against Loneliness
Belonging in Barking and Dagenham

1 London Borough
5 Years
250 Projects
100 New Businesses
25,000 People Participating

Source – Participatory City Foundation
Belonging without Othering
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological
- Safety
- Belonging
- Esteem
- Self-Actualization
For more information, visit:
http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/catalog/806639

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