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**BUILDING CAPACITY  
FOR GLOBAL LEARNING**

**NAFSA**

Association of  
International Educators

# **Identity, Contact and Intercultural Engagement: What Research Might Suggest**

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Juniata College

# I. 21st Century Global Citizens The Context



## **Global Citizens with Global Competence**

- **relate to others in the world**
- **value or “approve” of “other’s” way of life**
- **communicate effectively with people from other cultural backgrounds**
- **develop a global perspective, knowledge about the world and the ability to see one’s own culture from the perspective of others**
- **Empathize with others**
- **Engage in perspective taking**
- **Be self-reflexive about one’s own culture**
- **Interrogate power and privilege**
- **Explore questions of equity and justice**



# Peace Education/Peacebuilding

- To create a "just" peace
  - Nonviolent transformation of conflict
  - Pursuit of social justice
  - Creation of cultures of sustainable peace

" a dynamic state of affairs where violence is minimized, conflicts settle, grievance addressed and new relationship that reflect equality, respect for human dignity, and attention to the common good are created" (Ledearch and Appleby 2010, pg., 24)

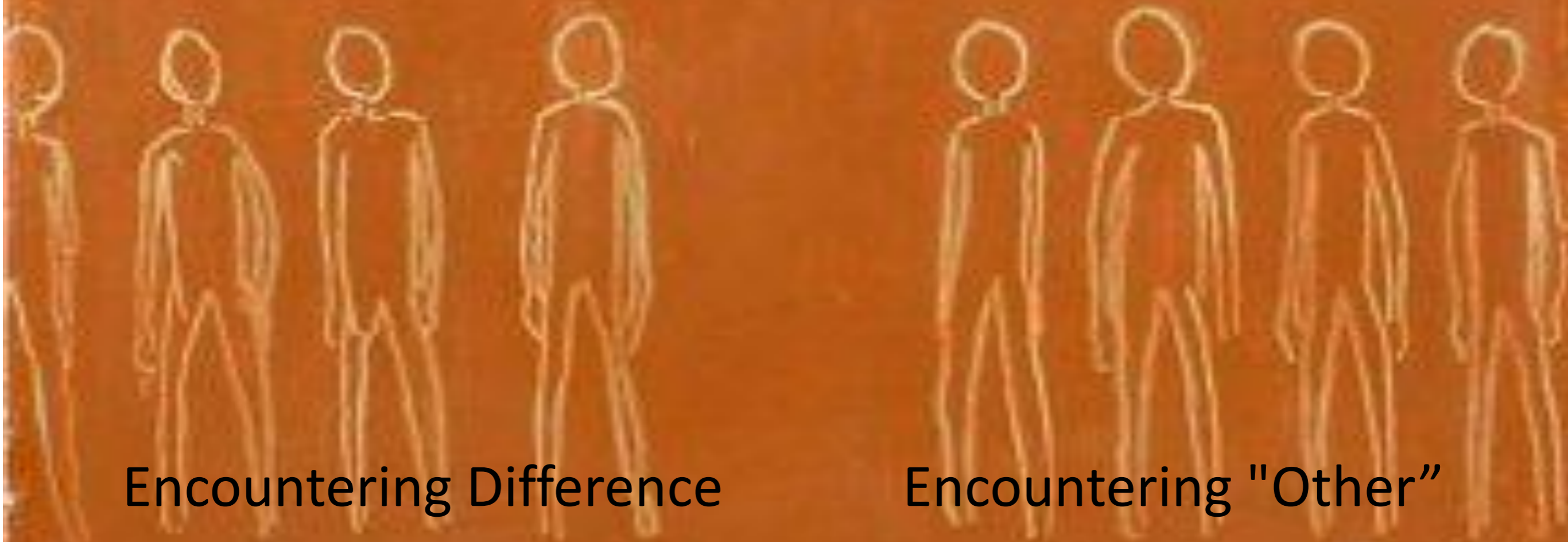
# Key Overlaps

- ✓ Live and work with diverse others
  - Engage with others to solve problems, create social change, and resolve differences
- ✓ Value Differences
  - Value and/or approve of other's way of life
- ✓ Create narratives of self and other that can co-exist – that create space for divergent and shared histories
- ✓ Take responsibility for one's own actions
- ✓ Understand the impact of power and privilege
- ✓ Address issues of inequality and injustice

# INTERCULTURAL (CONFLICT) COMPETENCE

US

THEM



Encountering Difference

Encountering "Other"

Encountering Self

CHILLER

## II. The Research

# Social Identity Theory ----- “US” and “THEM”



## Identity:

How we know and experience our self in the world


## Social Identity:

Aspects of our sense of self that comes from our membership in groups

## Identity Salience -- Categorization

- Socially constructed
- Time and place specific
- Fluid and moving





*identity “... starts by reflecting a perfectly permissible aspiration, then before we know where we are it has become an instrument of war”*

Amin Maalouf (2000) *In the Name of Identity* pg.. 32

# IDENTITY CATEGORIES

## “US” and “THEM”

- Salience
- Depersonalization
- Intergroup Accentuation
- Ingroup favoritism – attribution error, stereotype bias
- Depersonalized Ingroup trust = Depersonalized mistrust/suspicion of the Outgroup
- Mobilize for intergroup positive distinctiveness
- Intergroup Competition
  - Threat to Group: Realistic conflict or subjective and symbolic
  - Moral Superiority
  - Power Politics
- Violence

CONTACT

# CONTACT



- ✓ reduces intergroup prejudice
- ✓ increases cooperation and helpfulness
- ✓ breaks down barriers
- ✓ makes boundaries more permeable
- ✓ see members of the outgroup as more like “us”
- ✓ perceive “other” as fair and trustworthy
- ✓ produces optimism about the potential for mutual problem solving

# INTERCULTURAL (CONFLICT) COMPETENCE

US

THEM

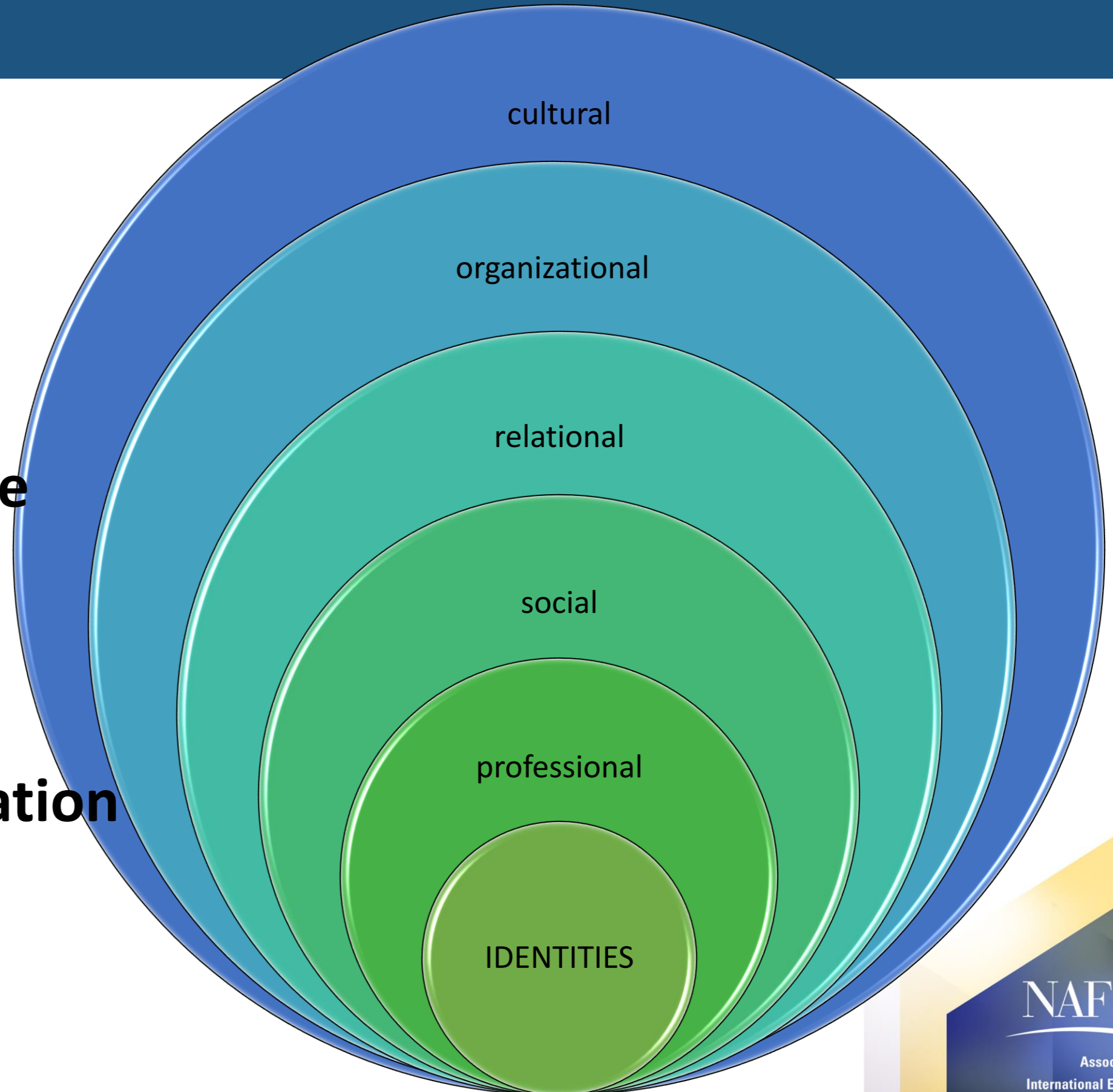
**THE WHO: ENTREPRENEURS OF IDENTITY**  
**THE HOW: CONTACT**

GALLER

# Entrepreneurs of Identity

## Identity Categories

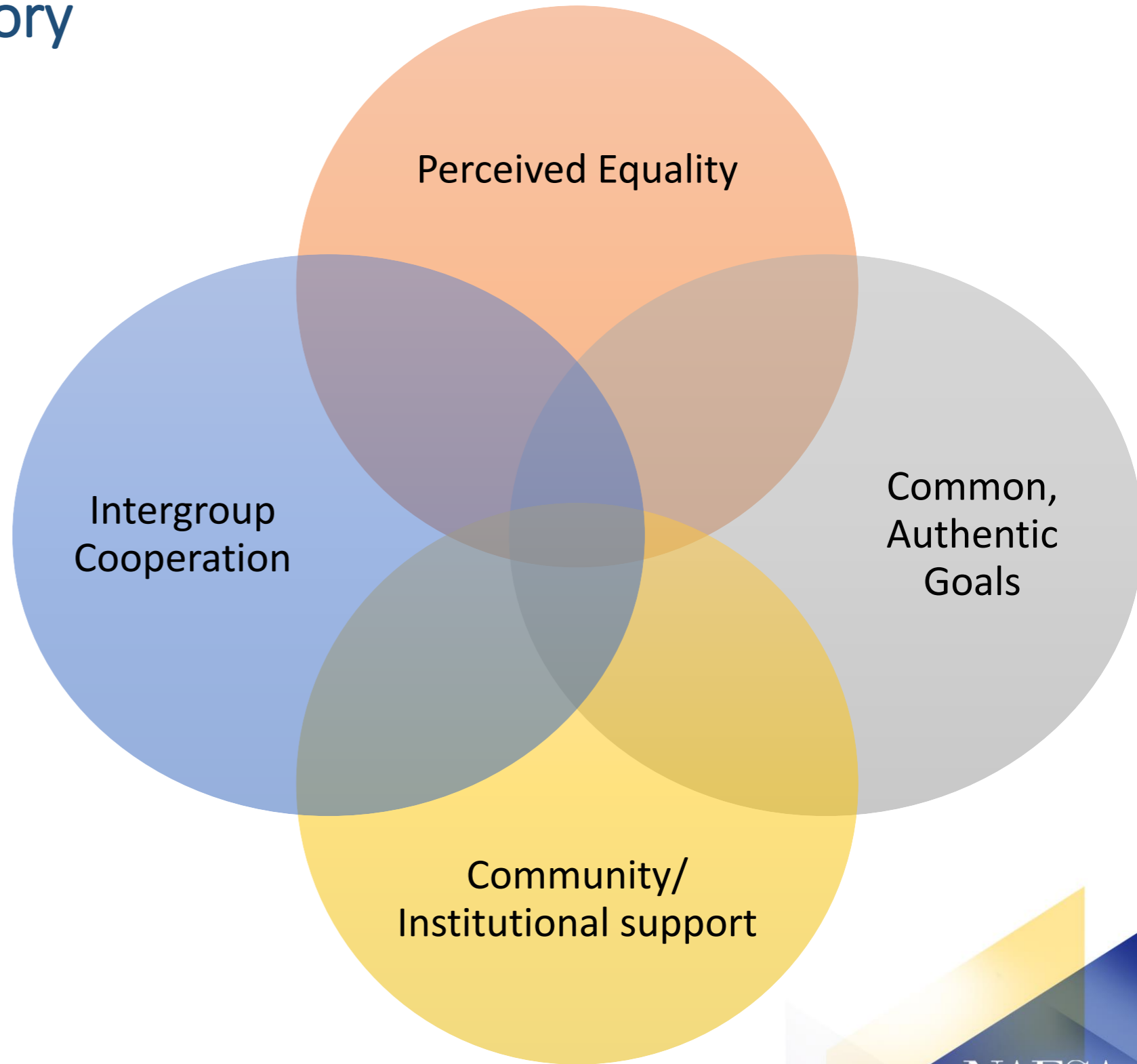
- **Superordinate Identity**
- **Dual Identity Model**
- **De-categorization**



# Allport (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory

## ***Optimal Contact***

*Contact can, under optimal conditions, reduce intergroup prejudice.*





# THE BAD NEWS



# “ENCOUNTERING AN AMERICAN SELF”

Nadine Dolby, 2004





Allport (1954)  
Intergroup Contact Theory

***Optimal Contact***

*Contact can, under optimal conditions, reduce intergroup prejudice.*



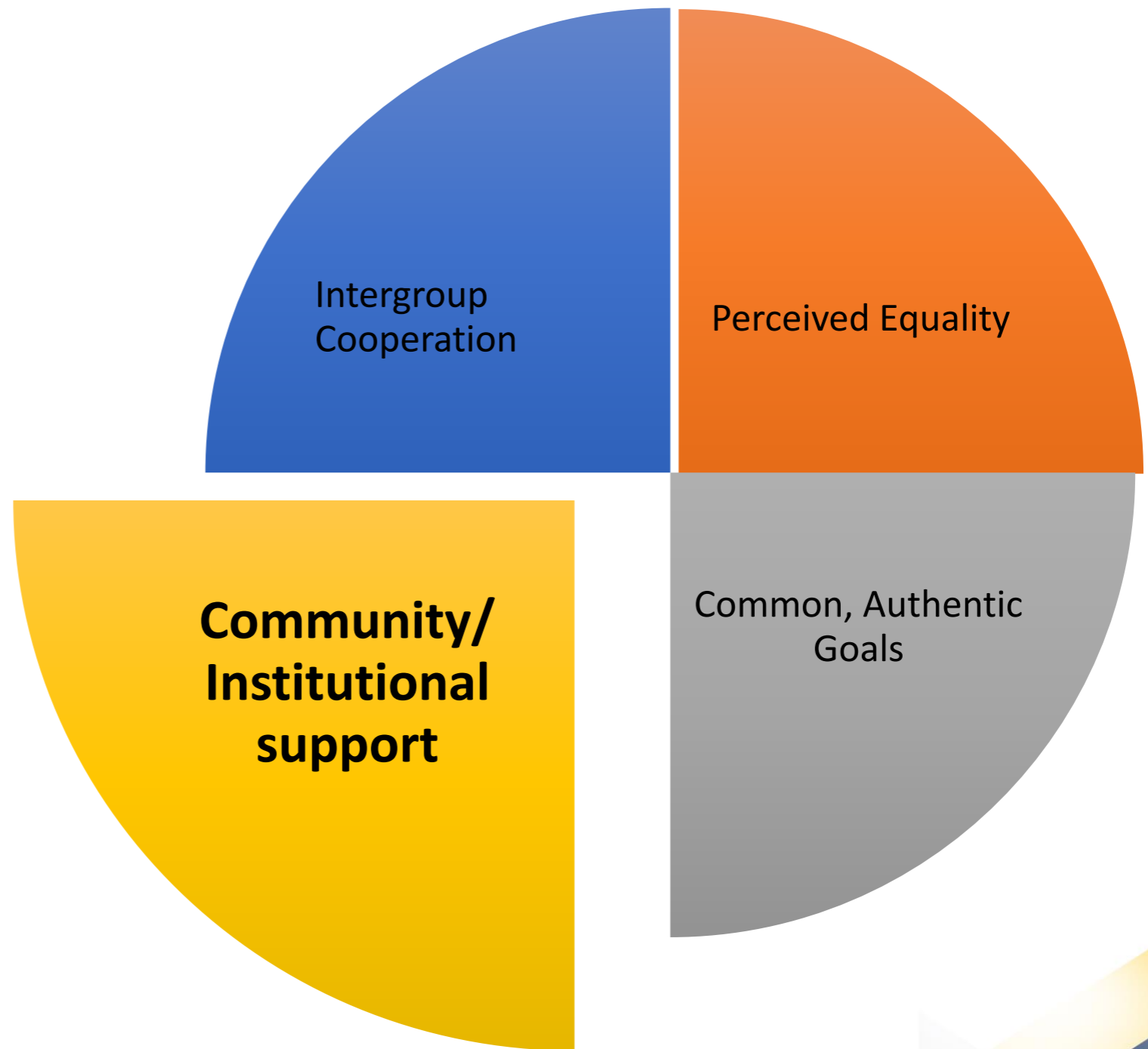
# Challenges

***Polarization***

***Discourse of Division***

***Racism***

***Homophobia***



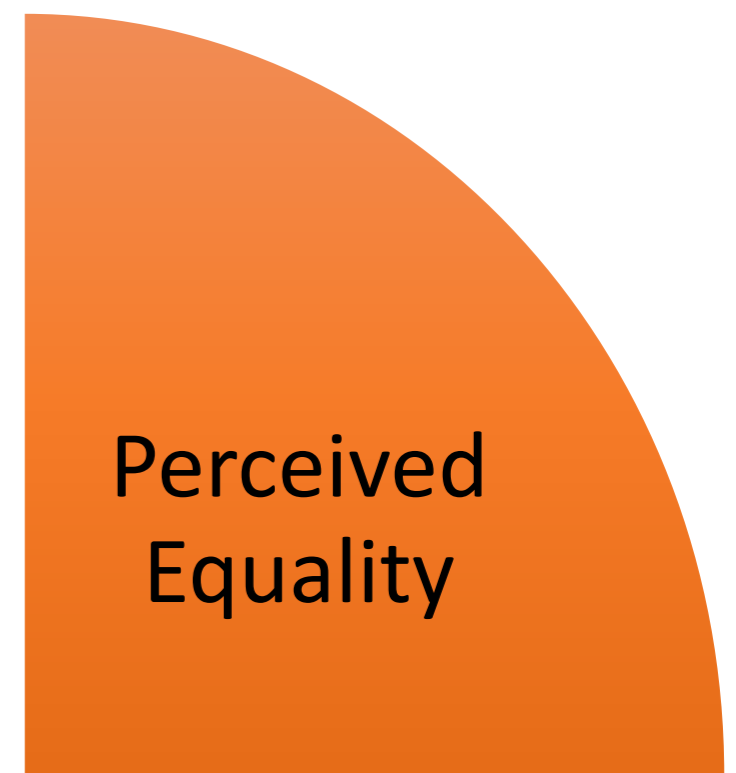
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# Opportunities

*Places we have control :*

- ❖ *Program design*
- ❖ *Curricular integrity*
- ❖ *Student preparation*
- ❖ *Course assignments*



# Intercultural Encounters

- Kinds of Contact
- Power Relationships
- Status Equality or Inequality
- Structured communication
- Self awareness: What Identities? What Attributes?
- Prepare for comparisons: theirs and others
- Awareness of “threat” or challenge
- Practice empathy
- Maintain salience of dual identities



# Program Structure

- Building deeper relationships
- Host families
- Mixed groups (silo programs problematic)
- Doing things together – just talking about a problem or issue may seem patronizing
- Everyone's input is valued
- Support from community (host, home, and other travelers)
- Assignments that require interaction with hosts to succeed – cooperative problem solving



# Student Preparation

- Have students set clear goals for themselves
- Opportunities to process expectations about the experience, and their role in it
- Help them understand motivations (intrinsic desire to know vs. extrinsic)
- Particularly important to explore links to home (how connected and in what ways) and Openness to the Other



# Identity Conversations

- *What do **Challenges** to identity, or even a **THREAT** to identity look like or feel like?*
- *Look for **complexity** -- pay attention to a developing sense of rigidity ... or singularity in their own sense of self – and in how they see others*
- **Interrogate Identities**
- Teach our students how to see identities as **Projects** and **Products** we participate in “filling” up with meaning and significance.
- How do they get filled up?
- How do they come to have meaning and significance in any given context?
- How has that changed over time?
- **Whose voices** contribute to the meanings attributed to the identity? Whose voices are left out – or shut out?

“For it is often the way we look at other people that imprisons them within their own narrowest allegiances. And it is also the way that we look at them that may set them free.”

Amin Maalouf (2000)  
*In the Name of Identity*

