

# The Clash of Independence and Interdependence in Dysfunctional Organizations



Hazel Rose Markus & Alana Conner

Stanford SPARQ: Social Psychological Answers to  
Real-world Questions

February 6, 2016



# First-Gens

- 18% of Stanford students
- 30% of U.S. freshmen
- Interact less with professors
- Make fewer friends
- Get lower grades
- Drop out at higher rates



Why don't universities  
function well for first-gen  
students?

A culture clash between  
independence &  
interdependence,  
which drives dysfunction in many  
other organizations

**Independent**

Individual

Unique

Influencing

Free



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNzXze5Yza8>

## **Independent**

Individual

Unique

Influencing

Free

## **Interdependent**

Relational

Similar

Adjusting

Rooted

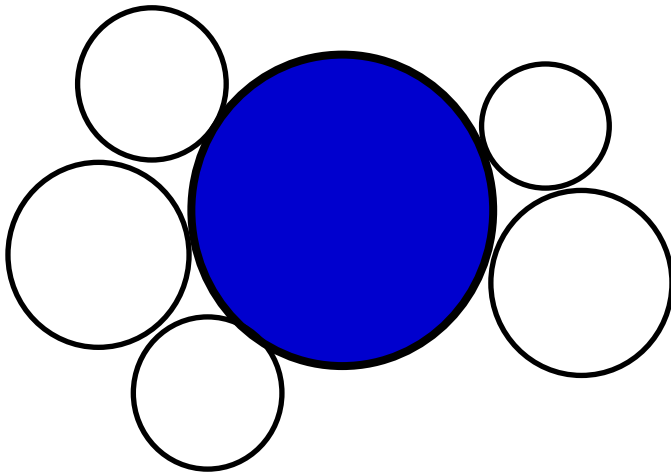




<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YygRiD7WOkQ>

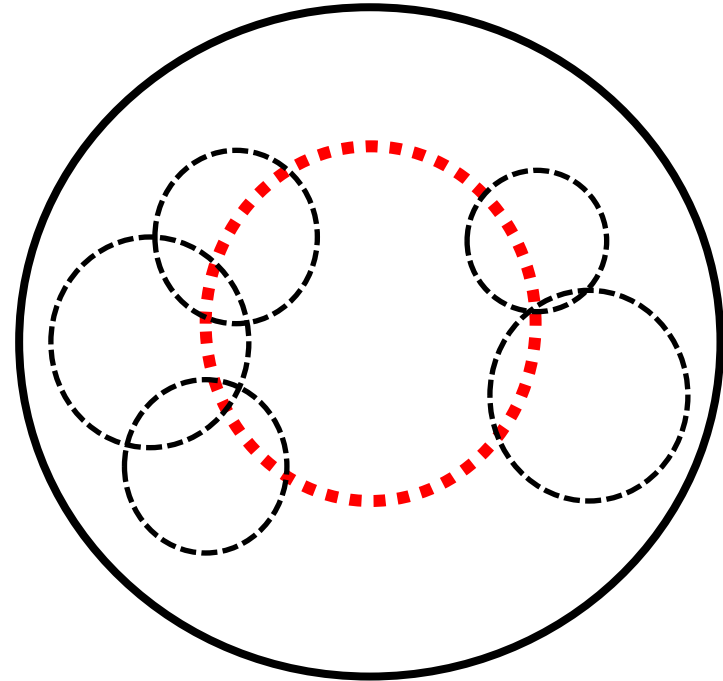
## Independent

Individual  
Unique  
Influencing  
Free



## Interdependent

Relational  
Similar  
Adjusting  
Rooted



Independence + Interdependence =  
CONFLICT

**"EVERYONE SHOULD READ THIS BOOK."**

—Carol S. Dweck, PhD, author of **MINDSET**

East  
vs.  
West

Coasts vs. Heartland

**HOW  
TO THRIVE IN A  
MULTICULTURAL  
WORLD**

Whites vs.  
People of color

# CLASH!

Global North vs.  
Global South

Rich vs. Poor

Men  
vs.  
Women

Conservative vs.  
Liberal religious groups

















Businesses  
vs.  
Governments  
and Nonprofits

**HAZEL ROSE MARKUS, PhD  
and ALANA CONNER, PhD**

# 8 Major Culture Clashes

**Independent**

















**Interdependent**

West			East
Men			Women
Whites			People of Color
Middle-Class			Working-Class
East & West Coasts			South & Midwest
Mainline Protestants, Atheists			Conservative Protestants, Catholics, Jews
Businesses			Nonprofits, Govts
Global North			Global South

# 8 Major Culture Clashes

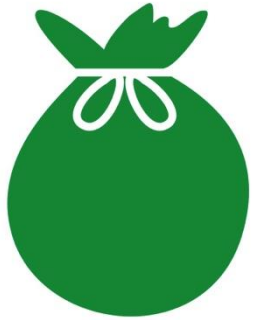
**Independent**

**Interdependent**

West 	 East
Men 	 Women
Whites 	 People of Color
Middle-Class 	 Working-Class
East & West Coasts 	 South & Midwest
Mainline Protestants, Atheists 	 Conservative Protestants, Catholics, Jews
Businesses 	 Nonprofits, Govts
Global North 	 Global South

# Today We Will Show

- How the clash of **independence** and **interdependence** drives conflicts across economic divides
- How to manage tensions between **independence** and **interdependence** to improve organizational functioning



Middle-class cultures, including universities, emphasize **independence**

VS.



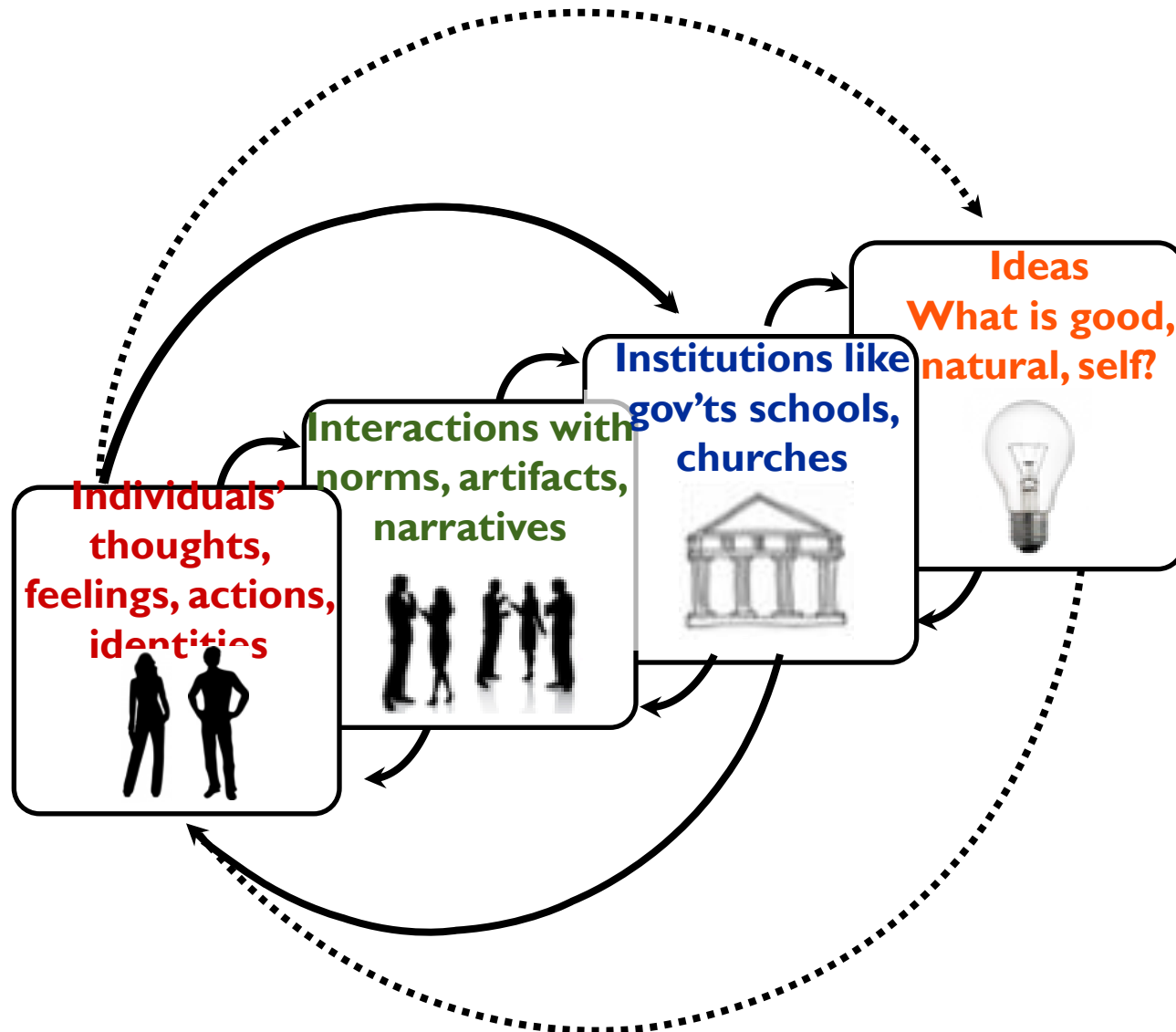
Working-class cultures, including those of many first-gen students, emphasize **interdependence**



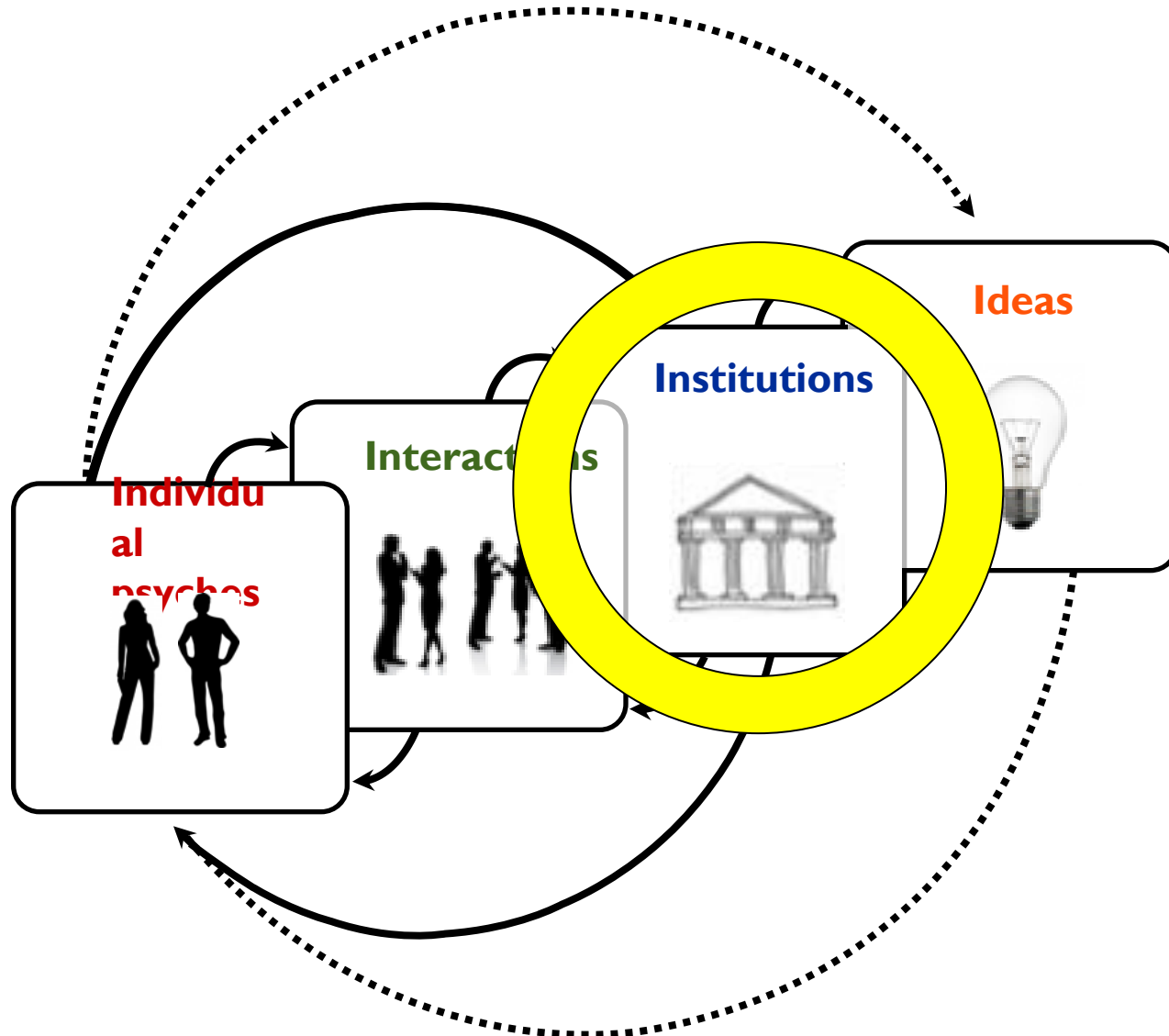
# What Is Culture?

The **i**deas, **i**nstitutions, and **i**nteractions  
that guide the thoughts, feelings, and  
actions  
of **i**ndividuals

# The Culture Cycle



# The Culture Cycle





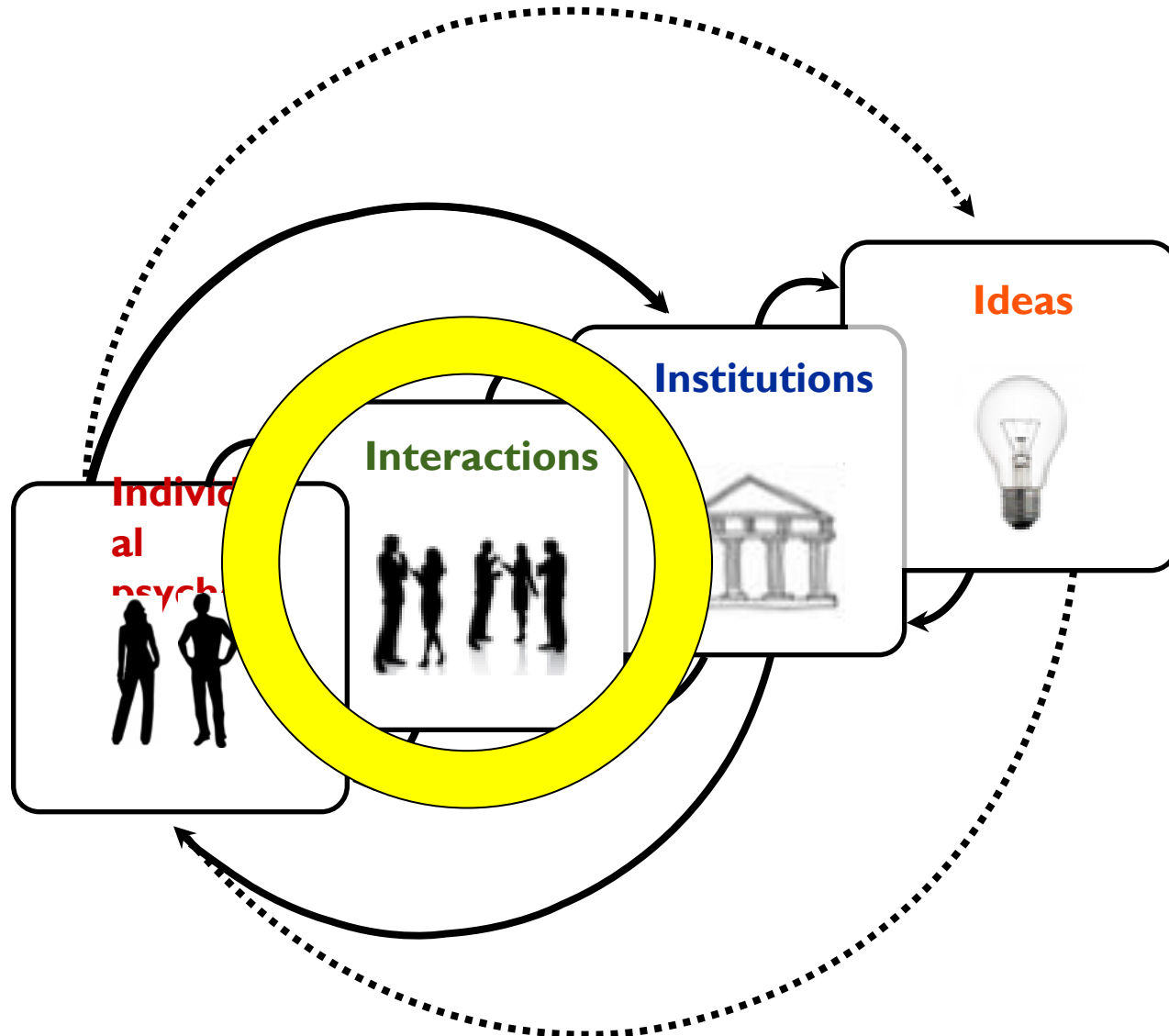
# Working-Class Institutions

- Jobs require less choice and control
- Military teaches soldiers to fit in, observe hierarchy, and follow traditions
- Religious organizations stress accepting doctrine, coping with adversity, following ritual, and contributing to the community



**Stanford's academic enterprise**—expressed by its motto, “the wind of freedom blows”—embodies the pioneering spirit of the American West. Here, high-achieving, risk-taking students come together in a culture known for its intellectual, athletic and artistic vitality

# The Culture Cycle





# Working-Class Interactions

- Earn less \$
- Rely more on family and friend networks
- Move less
- Get to make fewer choices, between less attractive options
- Face more negative consequences for bad choices
- Consume media with more **interdependent** themes



# Interactions

Middle Class prefers ROCK > COUNTRY

Working Class prefers COUNTRY > ROCK





# Interactions

Rock songs emphasize **choice, control, and freedom**

“If you choose not to decide you still have made a choice.” –Rush

Country songs emphasize **coping, self-control, and personal integrity**

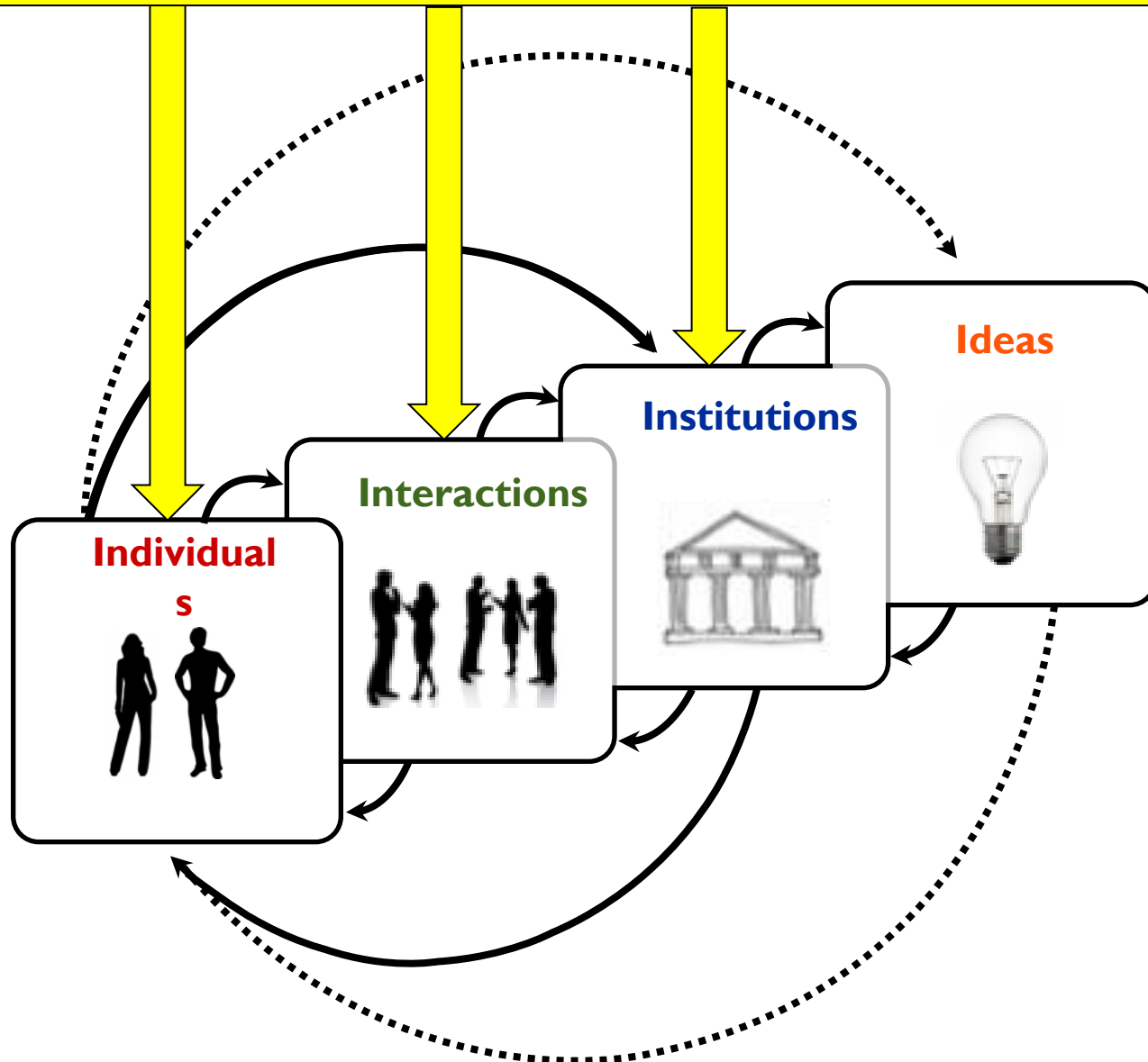
“Now I’m living and dying with the choices I’ve made.” –George Jones

Conner Snibbe & Markus, 2005, *JPSP*

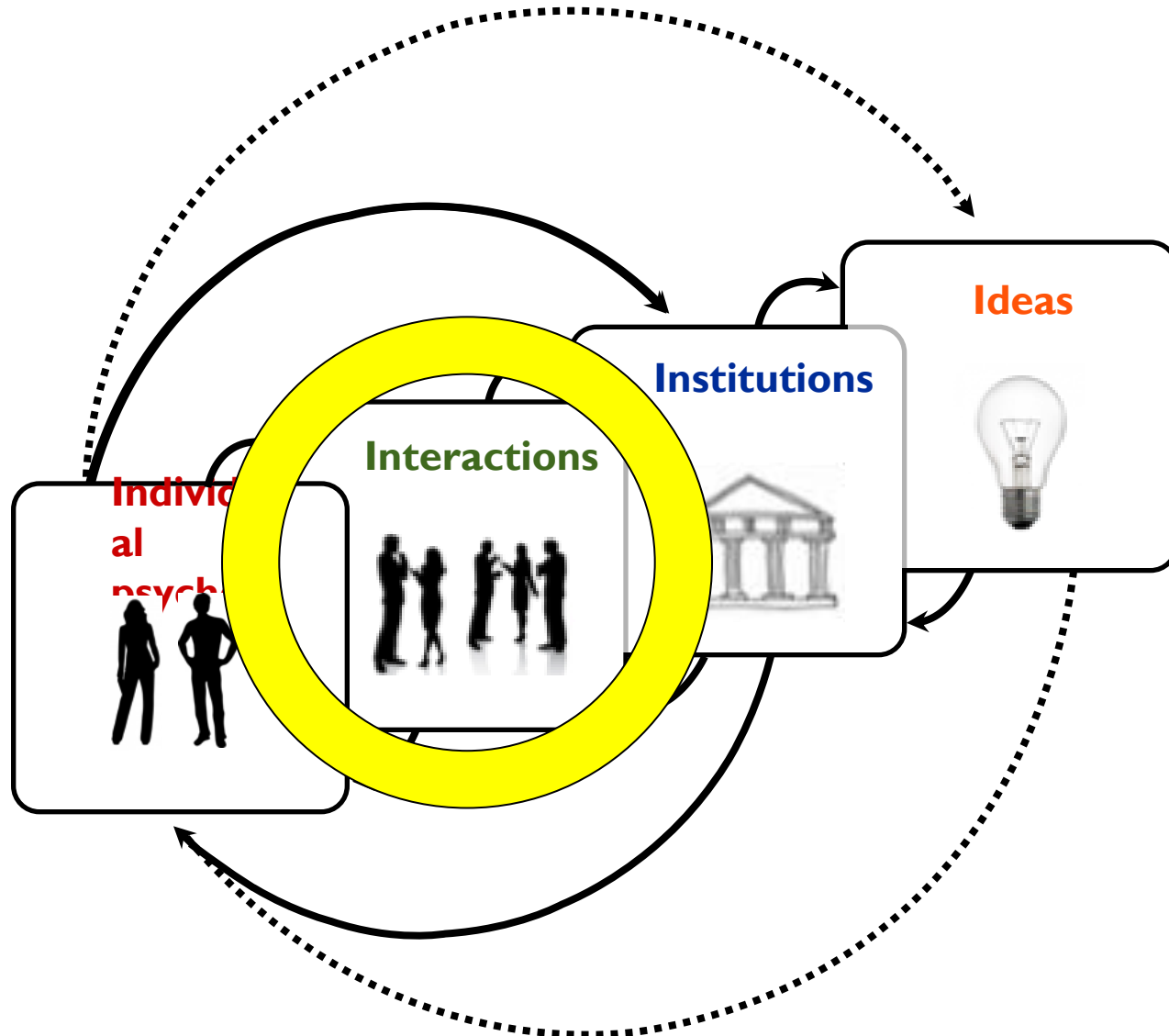
# How Can Universities Work Better for First-Generation Students?

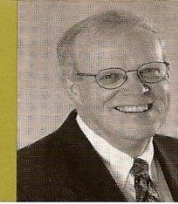
Use more interdependence throughout the culture cycle

# Coordinated, Multilevel Disruptions



# The Culture Cycle





# Welcome to Stanford University

I am delighted that you have decided to attend Stanford University. For the next few years, you will have many opportunities to explore new areas and to learn from our superb faculty and your fellow students.

As Stanford's 10th president and a faculty member for 27 years, I encourage you to make the most of your time here, and I offer you a few suggestions to get you started.

Stanford has one of the most accomplished faculties in the nation, and these teachers and researchers are here in large part because of you—the extraordinary students that Stanford attracts. From your first days on campus, I urge you to get to know our faculty. Stop by during office hours to continue a class discussion or to ask about research possibilities.

Stanford undergraduates have many opportunities not available at other institutions. The University's breadth—from the arts to the environment to athletics to the sciences—provides students with unparalleled freedom to cross departmental boundaries and discover intellectual and personal passions. You will have the chance to work with distinguished faculty members in small classes from your first days on campus. If you are interested in research, Stanford University offers undergraduates numerous avenues for pursuing student-initiated research or working on faculty projects.

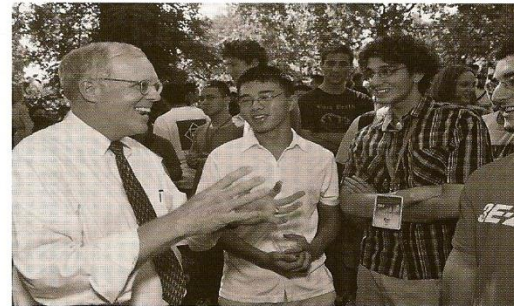
Stanford is an intellectually vibrant place, and your fellow students are a critical part of the community. Some of your most valuable experiences will be shared with your peers, whether you are working together to understand a difficult concept or getting to know more about another's background or culture. I often hear alumni say that they made lifelong friends while attending Stanford.

Stanford University has a tradition of boldness, and I hope you will challenge yourself while you are here. This is your time to attempt something new—whether it is in the classroom, in a laboratory, in a theater, or on the athletic field.

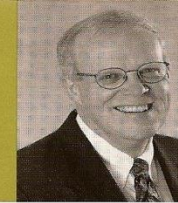
Above all, I urge you to enjoy the intellectual journey and pursue it with enthusiasm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John L. Hennessy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "J".

John L. Hennessy  
President



President Hennessy greets new freshmen at the President's Reception in 2003.



# Welcome to Stanford University

## **Independent** college frame:

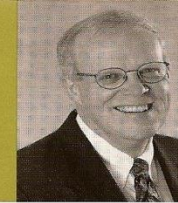
“I am delighted that **you have decided** to attend Stanford university and that **you think** Stanford is the right place for you.”

“For the next few years **you** will have many opportunities to explore new areas and to learn from our superb faculty and from your own **personal exploration** and **individual experiences** as a student.”

Stanford is an intellectually vibrant place, and your fellow students are a critical part of the community. Some of your most valuable experiences will be shared with your peers, whether you are working together to understand a difficult concept or getting to know more about another's background or culture. I often hear alumni say that they made lifelong friends while attending Stanford.



President Hennessy greets new freshmen at the President's Reception in 2003.



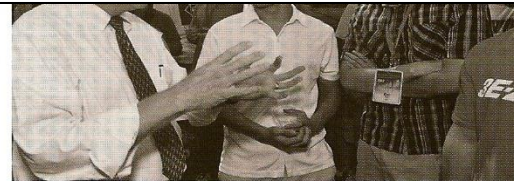
# Welcome to Stanford University

## **Interdependent** college frame:

“I am delighted that **you and your family** have decided that you should attend Stanford University and that Stanford is the right place for you.”

“For the next few years, **together with the Stanford community**, you will have many opportunities to explore new areas and to learn from your experiences and interactions **with your peers.**”

Stanford is an intellectually vibrant place, and your fellow students are a critical part of the community. Some of your most valuable experiences will be shared with your peers, whether you are working together to understand a difficult concept or getting to know more about another's background or culture. I often hear alumni say that they made lifelong friends while attending Stanford.



President Hennessy greets new freshmen at the President's Reception in 2003.

# Anagram Task

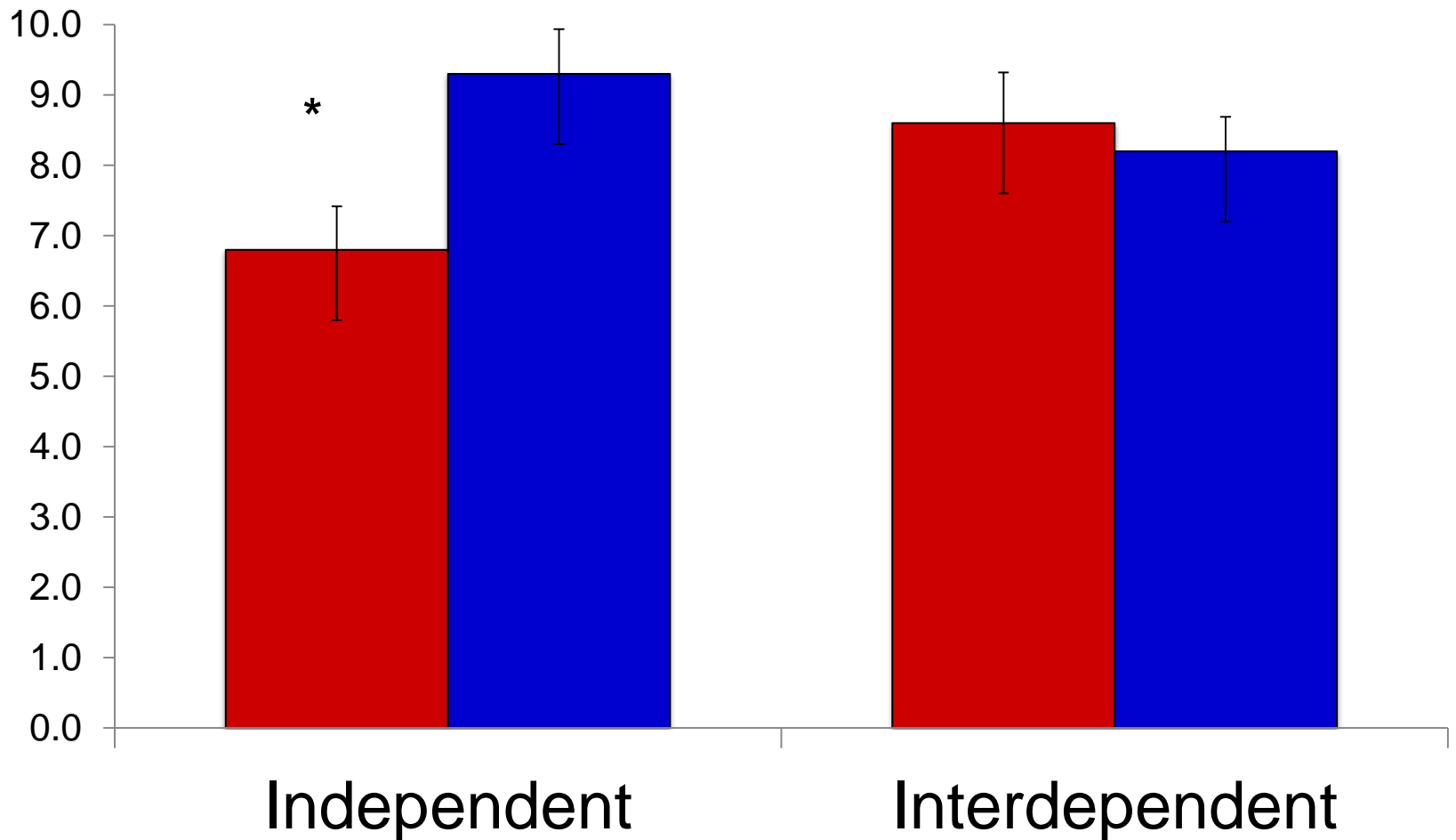
lasting      salting

swing      wings



# # Correct Anagrams

■ First-Generation ■ Continuing-Generation

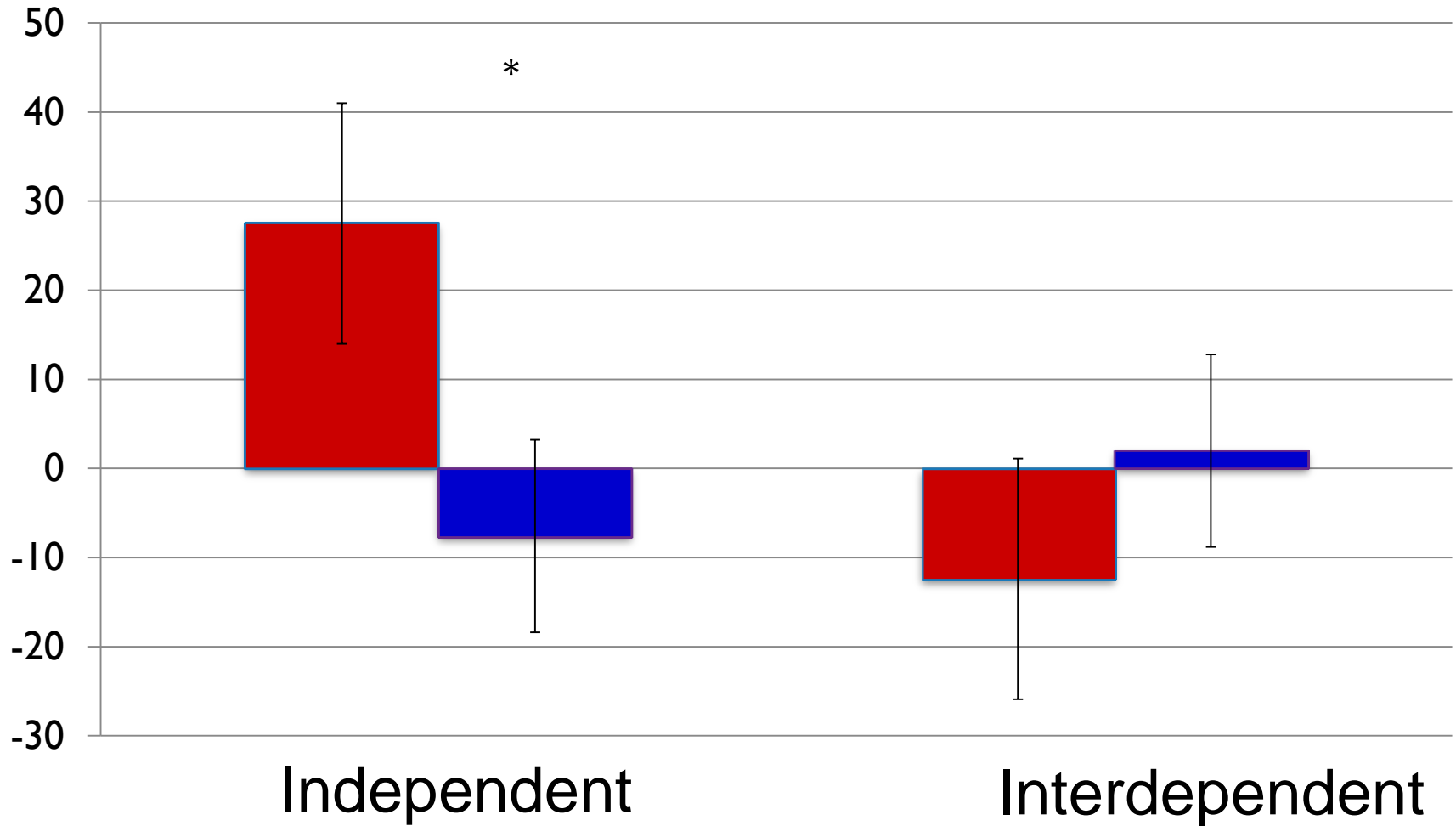


(Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012)

$F(1, 82) = 4.7, p < .05$

# % Increase in Cortisol

■ First-Generation    ■ Continuing-Generation

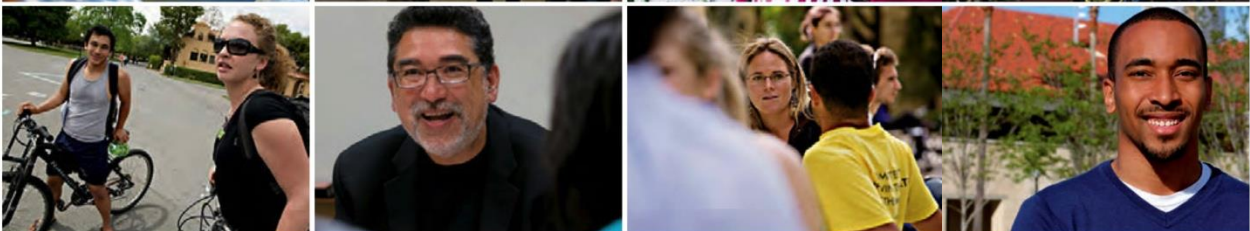




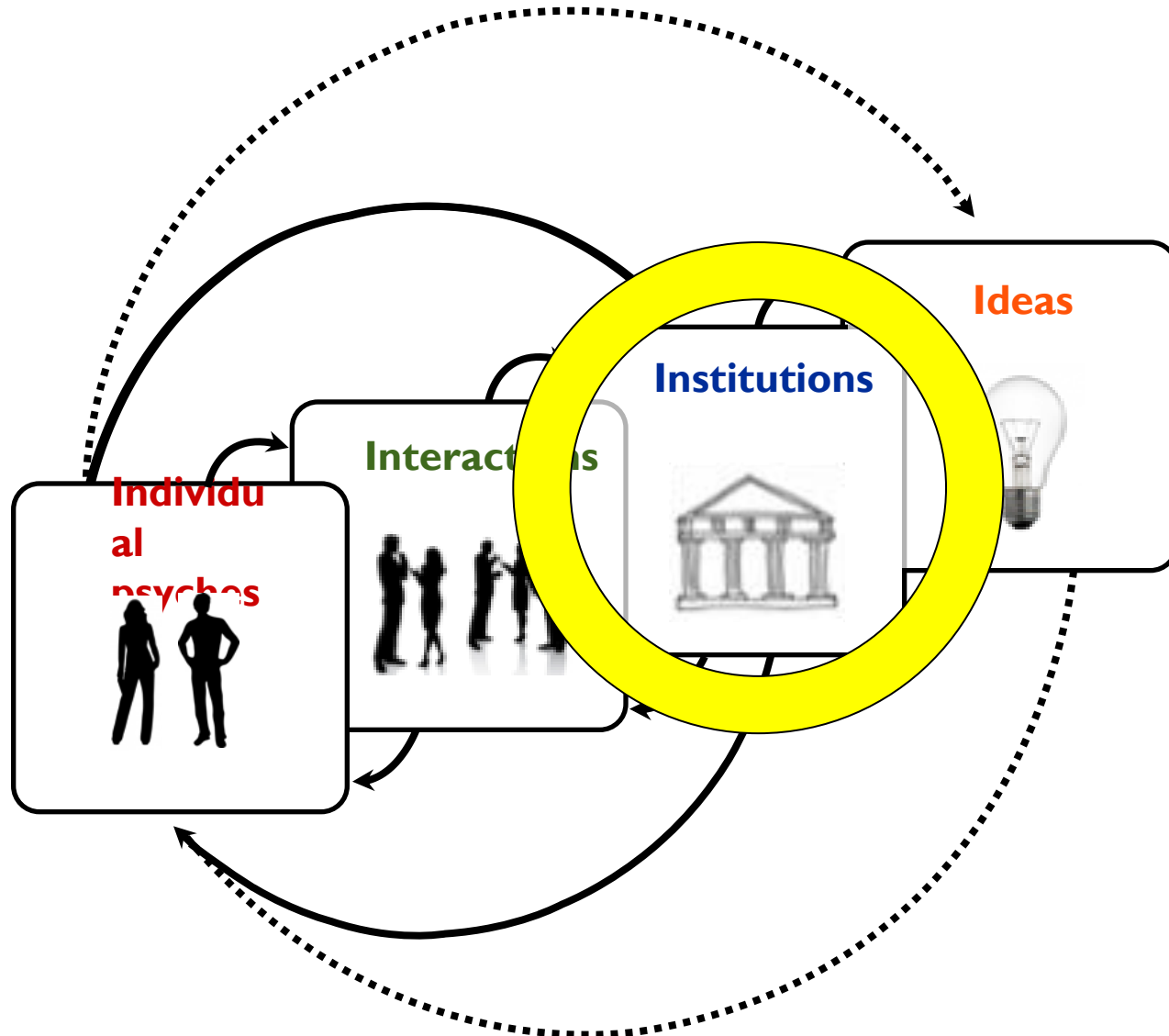
IT'S IN THE  
**PEOPLE**



**STANFORD STUDENTS AND FACULTY** come to campus from a vast range of backgrounds and from all over the world. Together, they form a community whose pursuit of excellence knows few boundaries. From academic passion to extracurricular invention, from social interaction to athletic devotion, students unleash their energies with enthusiasm and drive—supporting, influencing, inspiring and collaborating with one another in nearly every area of life.



# The Culture Cycle



## Vision

*The DGen office envisions equity, empowerment, and authentic engagement between all Stanford students*



## Mission

The DGen office provides campus leadership for students, faculty and staff to consciously and actively affirm intersectional identities and foster intergroup relationships. Through research, forums, classes and workshops, we build student capacity and confidence to experience a sense of belonging and develop authentic connections with people from different backgrounds. Within this mission is a special focus on enriching the experience of first-generation and low-income college students by supporting their academic and social transitions, empowerment and community building.

Students can meet with DGen staff members by **scheduling an appointment** or visiting daily drop-in hours: Monday-Thursday, 2-4 pm.

[Report an Act of Intolerance.](#)

## Connect



**Global  
North**



**vs.**



**Global  
South**

# Another word for “Global North”

Western

Educated

Industrialized

Rich

Democratic

# Another word for “Global North”

**Western**

**Educated**

**Industrialized**

**Rich**

**Democratic**

(Heinrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010)



Another term for  
“Global South”

*The Majority World*

**WEIRD  
World**

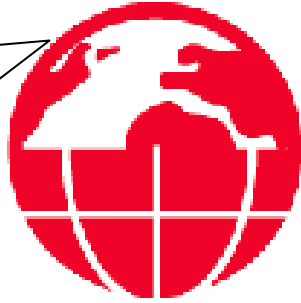


**vs.**



**Majority  
World**

You're  
corrupt,  
inefficient,  
and immoral



**VS.**

You're selfish,  
cold, and  
immoral





WEIRD World culture cycles  
emphasize **independence**

VS.



Majority World culture cycles  
emphasize **interdependence**



# Wasta

- “Who you know”
- Family organizations dominate business, politics, and religion

**Nepotism or  
Networking?**

# NEPOTISM

“Undue preference”  
for close others in  
hiring and  
promotion decisions

# NETWORKING

Individuals’ attempts  
to develop and  
maintain  
relationships that  
may assist them in  
their work

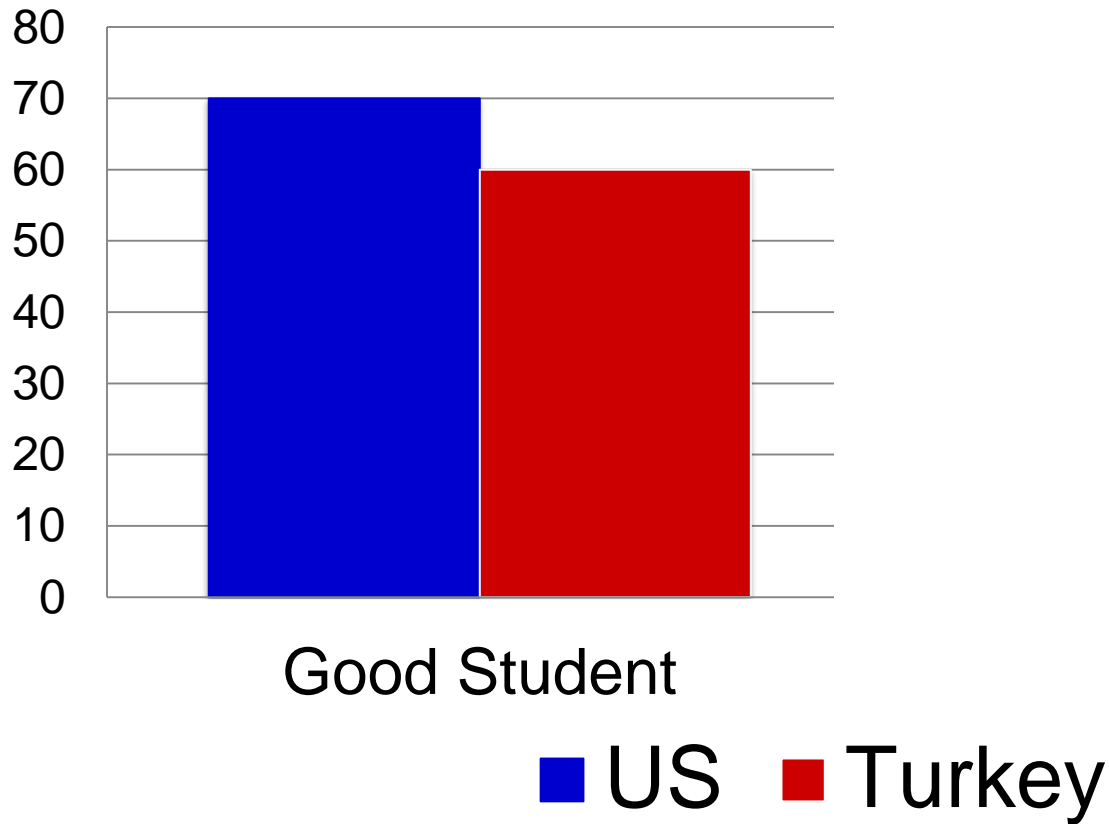




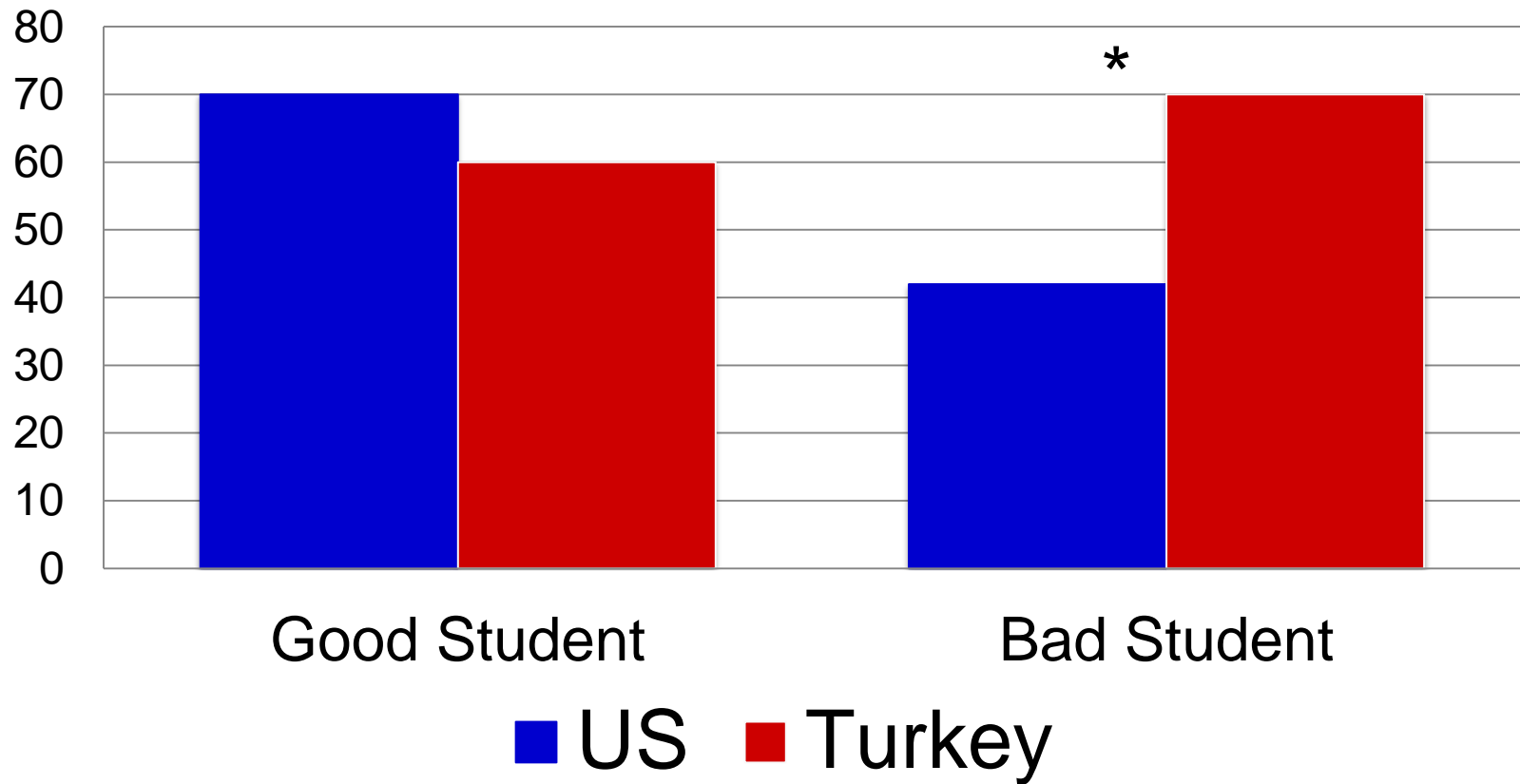


Would you ask your friend to arrange an internship for your sibling without an interview?

# Would you ask your friend to get your sibling an internship?



# Would you ask your friend to get your sibling an internship?



“I would do it because I am not selfish”

*--Turkish respondent*

“There is a world in which the **defining feature** of a man is that he has formed **a web of indebtedness, a network of obligations** that prove his capacity to maneuver in a world of relentless uncertainty.... Failure to service such attachments is thus regarded as **not only stupid, but corrupt.**”

(Rosen, 2010)

Community or Corruption?

# Ghanaian Entrepreneur

“We have an **extended family system** where almost everybody in the community are related to somebody, where **so much respect** [is given] to chiefs and elders. We have a case in our company where a security man stole a fridge. He was caught red-handed, and then handed over to the police to take it from there.... They told the chief about it. The chief came to us and **told us to forget about it.**”

“The problem that Americans are having in Africa is that they want to do it like America. It doesn’t work that way.”



# How To Make Majority World Institutions More Functional?

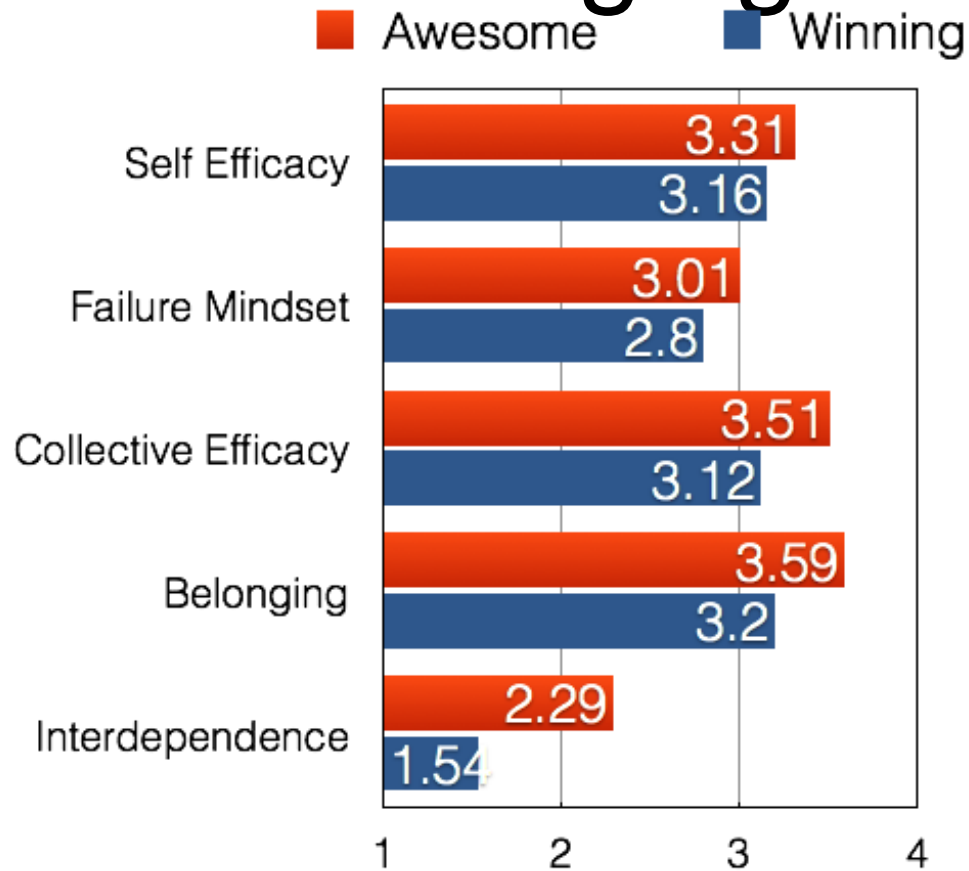
Use more interdependence  
at every level of the culture cycle



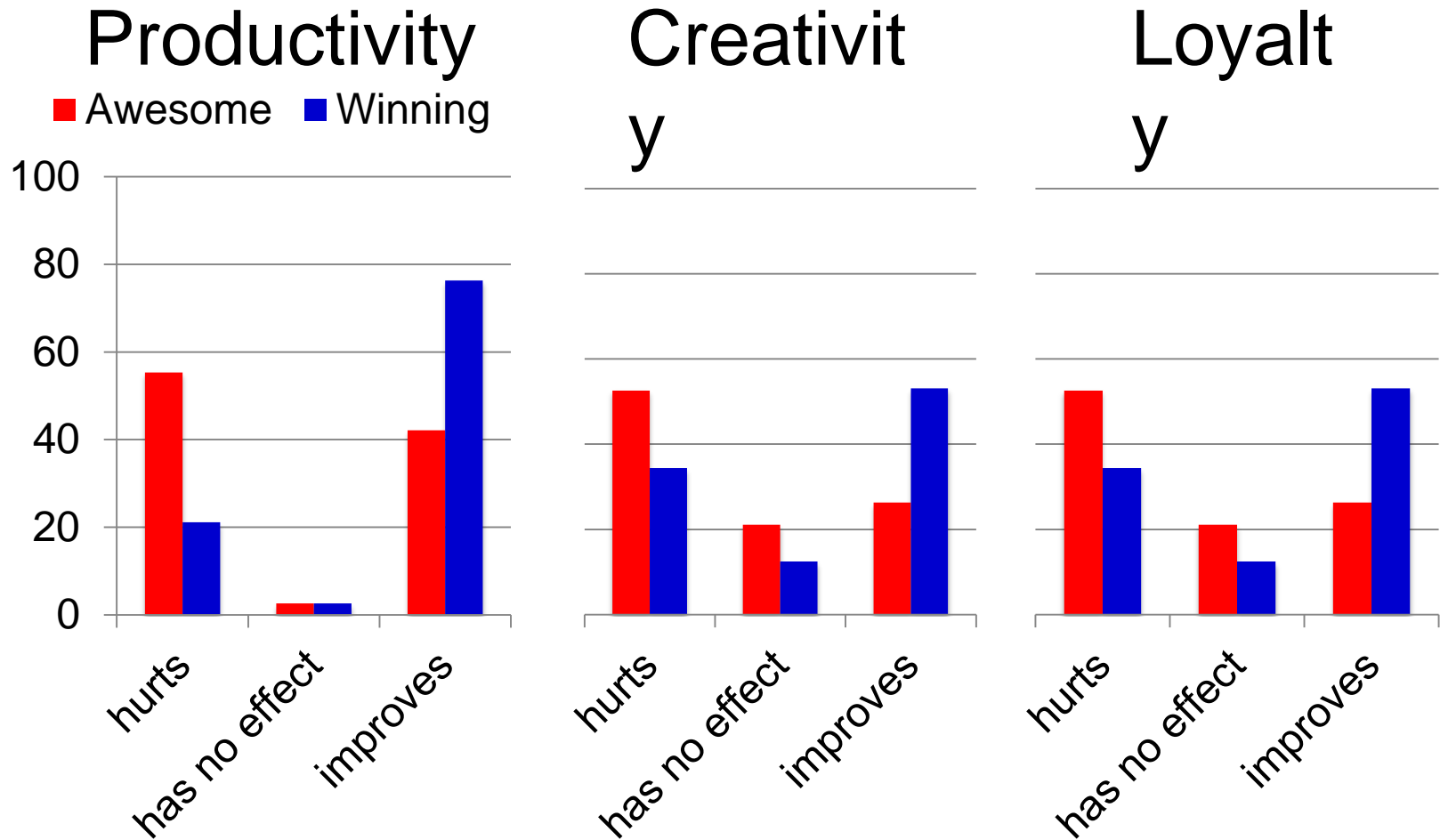
# A Tale of 2 Spinning Mills

	<b>AWESOME MILL</b>	<b>WINNING MILL</b>
Revenue (Aug-Apr 2015)	\$13.5 M	\$4.6 M
# Employees	1100	1000
Innovation Awards	15	0

# Awesome Workers Have Greater Efficacy and Belonging



# Effect of Scolding on...



# Awesome Managers Endorse More Interdependent Style

Items for which Awesome > Winsome &  
that correlate with interdependence:

I talk with employees about their families and homes

I tell my employees about my struggles and mistakes

I try to get to know each employee

When a problem arises, I encourage employees to explore possible causes

# The Problem

Managers at many Indian mills do not view workers as ingroup members, and therefore do not treat them interdependently

# The Solution: Interdependent Management Training

- Individual: Module presenting evidence that treating workers warmly and respectfully actually improves worker productivity and innovation
- Interaction: Structured design challenges that pairs managers and workers to solve workplaces problem together
- Institution: Policy and personnel changes to support greater collaboration



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—Carol S. Dweck, PhD, author of **MINDSET**

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Coasts vs. Heartland

**HOW  
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# CLASH!

Global North vs.  
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Rich vs. Poor

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**HAZEL ROSE MARKUS, PhD  
and ALANA CONNER, PhD**

# In Case of Dysfunction

- Don't assume people are corrupt or immoral
- Instead, assume you are experiencing a culture clash
- Apply **interdependence** throughout the culture cycle

# THANK YOU!



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@Culture\_Clashes