

Thinking Regionally, Acting Locally for Sustainable Growth

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Overview

- What's race got to do with it? The Geography of opportunity and Structural Racialization
- A “False Choice”: Equity and Sustainability
- Bringing People Together: Lessons from Portland
- Changing the Geography of Opportunity

The Geography of Opportunity and Structural Racialization

WHAT'S RACE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Opportunity Matters....

- “Opportunity” is a situation or condition that places individuals in a position to be more likely to succeed or excel.
- Opportunity structures are critical to opening pathways to success:
 - High-quality education
 - Healthy and safe environment
 - Stable housing
 - Sustainable employment
 - Political empowerment
 - Outlets for wealth-building
 - Positive social networks



But, opportunity is also....

Racialized...

- In **1960**, African-American families in poverty were **3.8** times more likely to be concentrated in high-poverty neighborhoods than poor whites.
- In **2000**, they were **7.3** times more likely.

Spatialized...

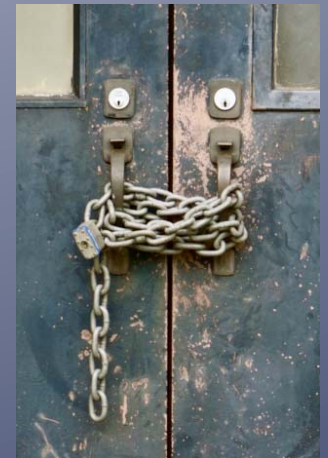
- marginalized people of color and the very poor have been **spatially isolated** from opportunity via reservations, **Jim Crow, Appalachian mountains, ghettos, barrios, and the culture of incarceration.**

Globalized...

- Economic globalization
- Climate change
- the Credit and Foreclosure crisis

Neighborhoods & Community Matters...

- Neighborhoods are critical to understanding access to opportunity
 - Does your community provide pathways to opportunity and success?
 - Safe environment, good schools, positive peers and role models, employment
 - Or does your community present you with barriers to opportunity and success
 - Unsafe environment, failing schools, poor peers and role models, no employment



A Tale of Two Neighborhoods...

Low Opportunity

- Less than 25% of students in Detroit finish high school
- More than 60% of the men will spend time in jail
- There may soon be no bus service in some areas
- It is difficult to attract jobs or private capital
- Not safe; very few parks
- Difficult to get fresh food

High Opportunity

- The year my step daughter finished high school, 100% of the students graduated and 100% went to college
- Most will not even drive by a jail
- Free bus service
- Relatively easy to attract capital
- Very safe; great parks
- Easy to get fresh food

In other words,



Some people ride the “Up” escalator to reach opportunity

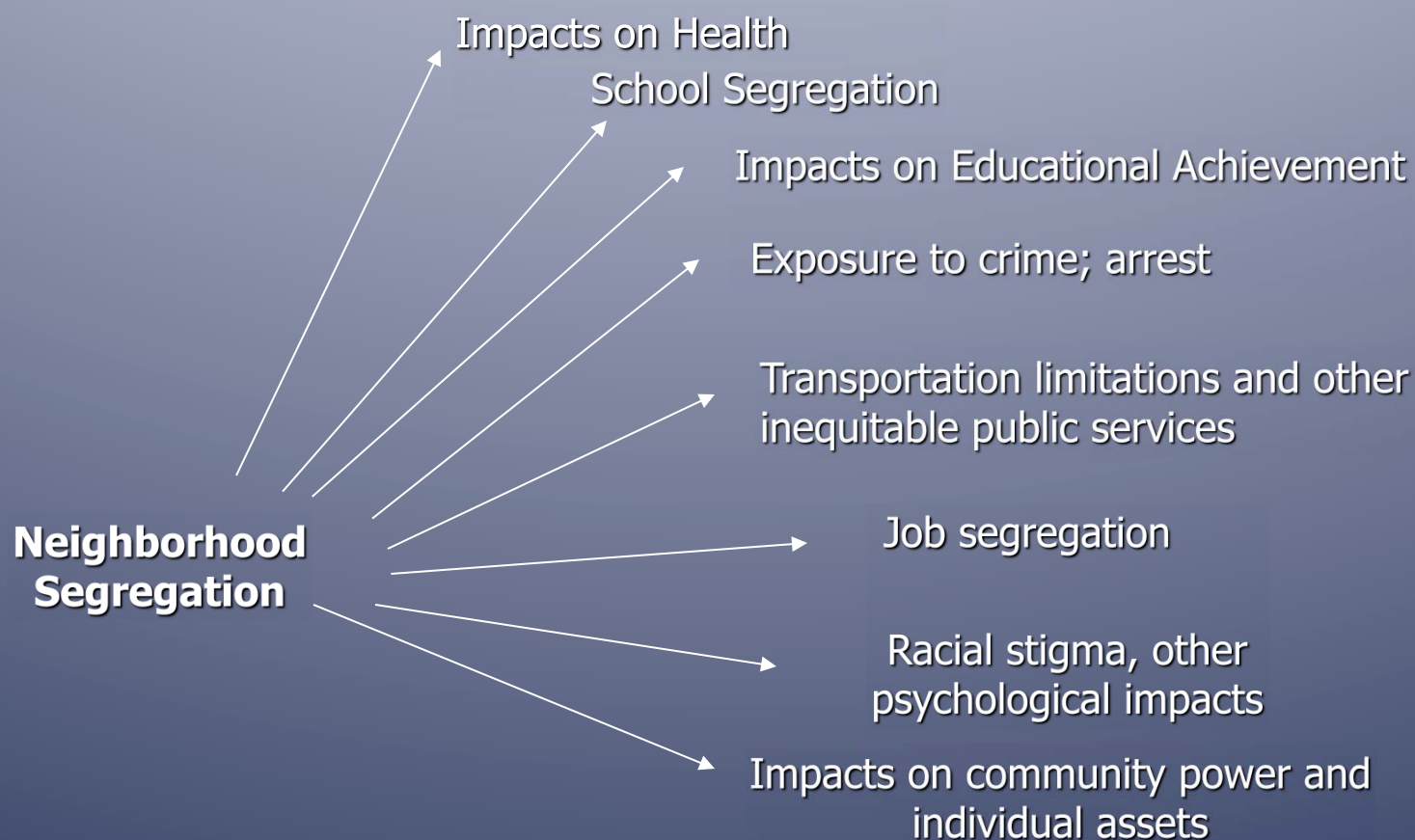
Others have to run up the “Down” escalator to get there

Structural Racialization

- Our opportunity-shaping institutions and structures interact in ways that produce racialized outcomes for different groups.
- This kind of *systems*level analysis looks at the range of meaningful choices available to an individual/group.

The Cumulative Impacts of Spatial, Racial and Opportunity Segregation

Segregation impacts a number of life-opportunities



Adapted from figure by Barbara Reskin at: <http://faculty.washington.edu/reskin/>

Equity and Sustainability

A “FALSE CHOICE”

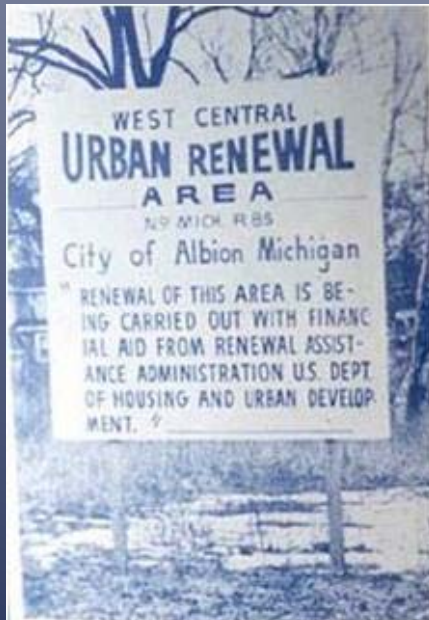
Where we stand today...

- Development of parallel movements
 - “environmental justice” and “sustainability”
- Each movement addresses pieces of our collective environment, inc. social, natural, and built, but not addressing as a holistic set of issues.
- History of mistrust; different orientations in the paradigms



Traditional planning approach to Sustainability

- Equity as an afterthought
- Advocacy organizations used as “consultants” not as key drivers in decision-making process



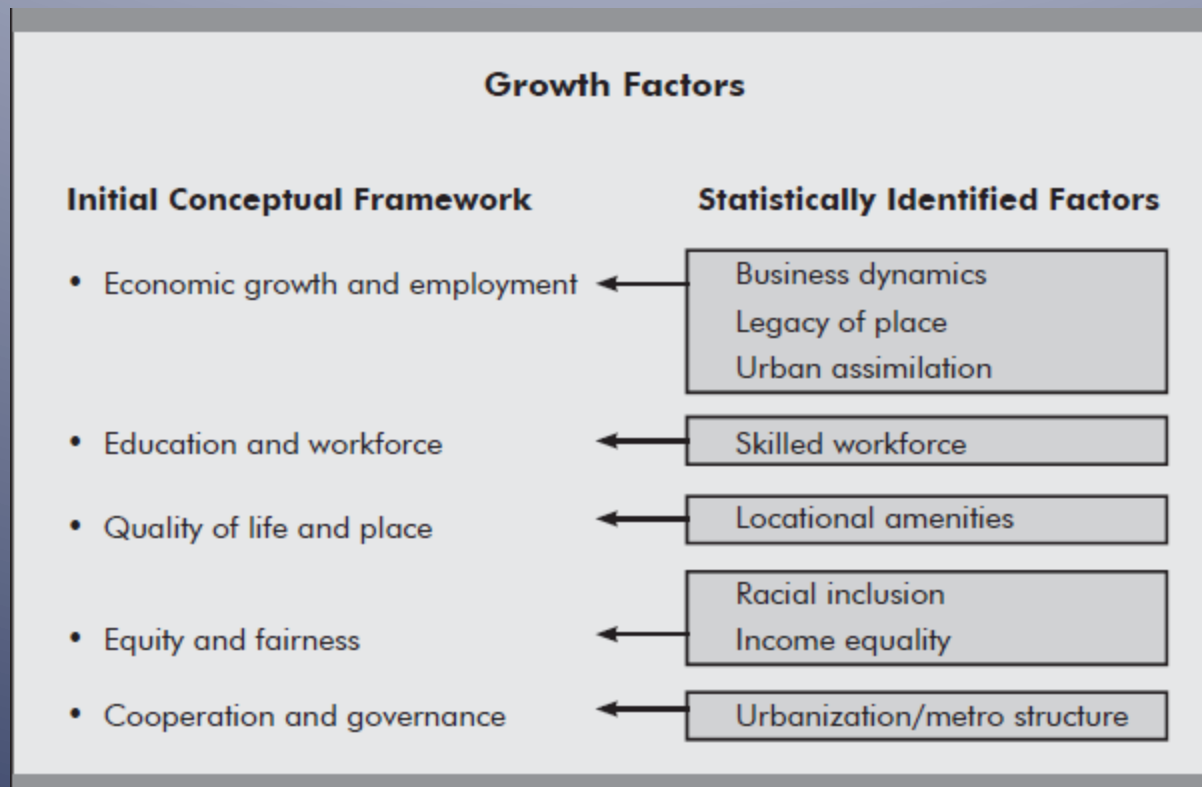
“False Choice”

- Smart growth focuses on the built environment, and its impact on the natural environment, but humans are part of that environment
 - *How* we grow
 - *Where* we grow
 - *Who* wins and loses
- Taking care of the environment is important, but it can't be on the backs of marginalized communities



Regional equity matters

- A 2006 Federal Reserve study found that a skilled workforce, high levels of racial inclusion and improved income equality correlate strongly and positively with economic growth.



Eberts, Randall, George Erickcek and Jack Kleinhenz. 2006. "Dashboard Indicators for the Northeast Ohio Economy: Prepared for the Fund for Our Economic Future." in *Working Paper 06-05*. Cleveland, OH: Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

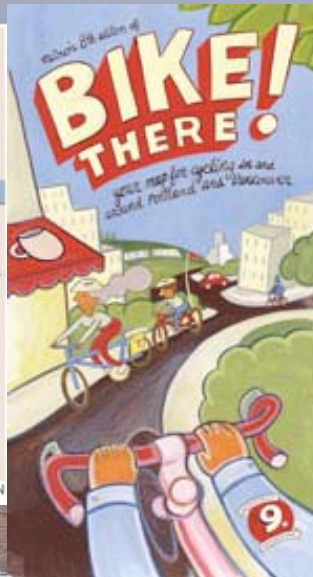
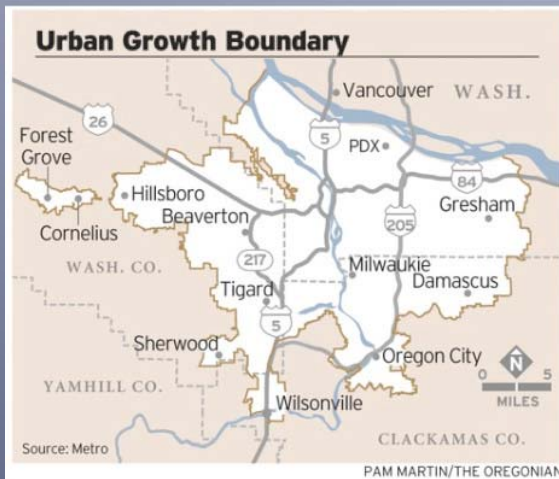
How do we grow opportunity for everyone in a region? Let's talk about Portland...

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

The Portland Way

A leader in regional, sustainable development

 **Metro** | *People places. Open spaces.*



40 years of progressive land use planning



Portland and the RPSD grant process

- Background:
 - History of exclusion, both *within* the process (no seat at the table, little consultation) and *as a result* of the process (i.e. displacement)
 - Regional planning was largely driven by environmentalists and environmental frame.



Mis-trust and Mis-communication...

“ You care more about your spotted owl....”



Stuck in the “Disparities” Frame

“Here, it’s as if partially they say “I know – so what” and partially they seem to say, “now that you know I know, you don’t have to rub my nose in it.” And lastly, it’s like they say “why do we have to talk about this all the time?” And the ones who insist it’s talked about are “do-gooders” and often times ostracized...”

What we found:

- Regional planning groups are unfamiliar with how to incorporate equity along several dimensions:
 1. in terms of process (i.e. bringing equity advocates to the decision-making table),
 2. as a concept (many officials had a more abstract notion of equity, and are not sure how to operationalize it),
 3. and in terms of outcomes (how we invest in terms of people and places influences outcomes).

But there are collective concerns for the region...

- There are challenges that are burdening everyone in the community and region, but there are also uneven effects across groups, especially across the following domains:
 - Education
 - School poverty
 - Achievement gaps
 - Proficiency gaps
 - Housing
 - Affordability
 - Fair credit
 - Homeownership and wealth
 - Economic
 - Income disparities

Change our systems and structures

HOW DO WE CHANGE THIS GEOGRAPHY?

Strategies for Growing Together...

- Think in new ways
- Talk in new ways
- Act in new ways

Thinking in New Ways: Transformative Thinking

- transformative thinking to **combat structural racialization**; we need to find **new approaches**.
- **personal and social responsibility** are important: we should maintain them in our advocacy and analysis
- approaches should **consider the structures and systems** that are creating and perpetuating these disparities and work to reform them for lasting change.

Transforming Race Today: Structural Racialization, Systems Thinking, and Implicit Bias

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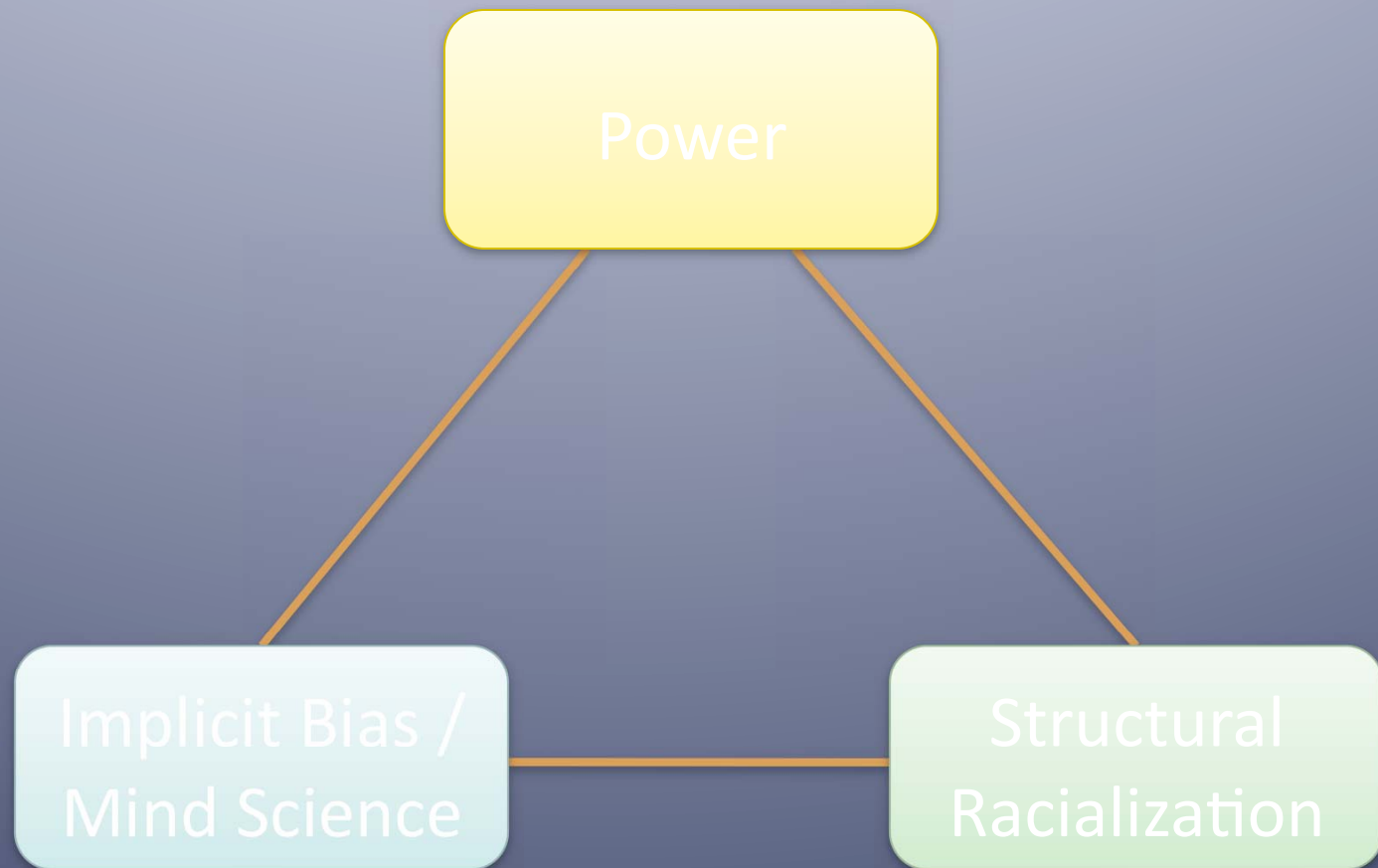


Exploring Race: Building an Inclusive Community

Thursday, August 19, 2010

Rochester, MN

Race in Action

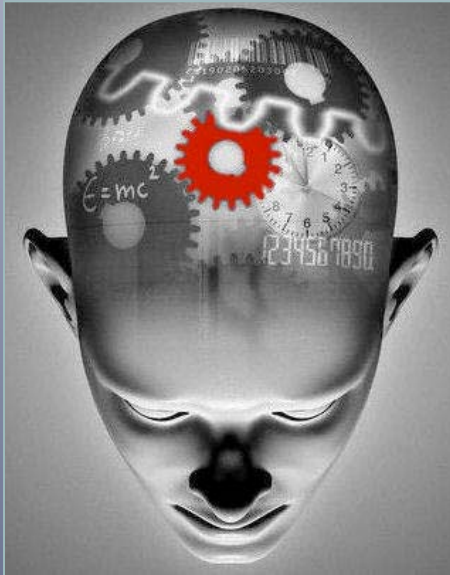


MIND SCIENCES

More than just asking people what they think, we need to understand the processes behind how they think.



Implicit Bias



We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.

- People are **meaning**-making machines.
 - Individual meaning
 - Collective meaning
- Only **2%** of emotional cognition is available to us consciously
- Racial bias tends to reside in the **unconscious** network

Our Unconscious Networks

- What colors are the following lines of text?

1. **Vqeb peow ytro**
2. **Cvur zxyq brrm**
3. **Vhrn wwte zytn**
4. **Xoc jbn i oew mne**
5. **Zre ytu vee mkp**

Our Unconscious Networks

- What colors are the following lines of text?

1. **Sky**
2. **Grass**
3. **Dirt**
4. **Sunshine**
5. **Stop sign**

Our Unconscious Networks

- What colors are the following lines of text?

1. **Dirt**
2. **Sunshine**
3. **Sky**
4. **Grass**
5. **Stop sign**

Our Unconscious Networks

- What colors are the following lines of text?

1. **Green**
2. **Blue**
3. **Brown**
4. **Red**
5. **Yellow**

Our Unconscious Networks

- What colors are the following lines of text?

1. **Red**
2. **Blue**
3. **Yellow**
4. **Green**
5. **Brown**



Awareness Test



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrqrkihlw-s>

Talking in New Ways

- I. How do we talk about race?
- II. Targeted universalism—a new frame for dialogue (beyond disparities)

I. How to Talk about Race

- Speak on **structures and systems** rather than explicit individual action/reaction
- Speak on the **subconscious**—the **implicit bias** that is stored within the mind
- Speak on **relationships**—build **collaborations** and engage in real **discussion**

II. Targeted universalism as **communication** strategy

- Moves beyond the disparities frame
- Focuses on the universal goals shared by all the communities while being sensitive to the targeted strategies that are responsive to the situation of marginalized communities



Acting in New Ways

- I. Engagement and inclusion
- II. Targeted universalism as policy
- III. Opening access through people, places, and linkages

I. Engagement and Inclusion

“That historically disadvantaged communities, especially communities of color and those living in poverty have a voice and are represented in all decision making to assure that the benefits and burdens of growth and change are distributed equitably.”

“While this consortium of regional partners is initially designed to develop the Housing Equity and Opportunity Strategy, the intent is to have the consortium develop a governance structure to oversee the implementation of regional housing and equity measures on an on-going basis.”

“Grant funding will be used to involve community-based organizations (as well as local governments) in specific tasks and decision-making related to the regional housing strategy with the objective of having increased capacity and capability to engage in decision-making beyond the duration of the grant.”

From Vision Statement and Declaration of Cooperation

II. Promote Universal Policies in Targeted Ways

- There is no “one size fits all”
- “One vision, many paths”
- Process:
 - What is the goal?
 - How do we tailor strategies to different groups, who are differently situated, to lift them to that goal?



Advocacy Lessons Learned

- You must participate in the system to change it. The more familiar you become with the system, the more capacity you have to manipulate it.
- Seek out uncommon allies: take the risk by reaching out but also recognize that the other team is taking a risk.
- “Connect up”—get involved in large scale investments.
- Bring more than one equity leader to the decision-making table to ensure their voices don’t get lost, and multiple perspectives are present.
- Search for shared values and don’t get stuck on disparities alone.

Lessons learned contd.

- Use the data to assess opportunity context and to develop targeted strategies to reach common goals/benchmarks.
- Stick it out—trust comes with time and must be earned. Look for small wins early, and build from these.
- Expand your own focus: don't get pigeon-holed, or pigeon-hole yourself. *Be concerned for the whole region, but in a way that your constituents don't get lost.*
- Engagement activities must be budgeted for and in a meaningful way—what outreach will be most effective for different demographic groups? What tools? Make sure these activities have monetary and technical support.
- Be functionally-focused, not just geographically-focused.

Remaining concerns from consortium members:

- A lot of government representatives are involved, but how can we also utilize the leadership from communities of color to lift us all up?
- We want to figure out new ways to partner with communities of color/marginalized communities to build *both* our capacities and to be sustainable beyond this initiative. How do we do this?
- We have a fragile level of trust. Have we built enough trust? Are we really going to do this together?

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