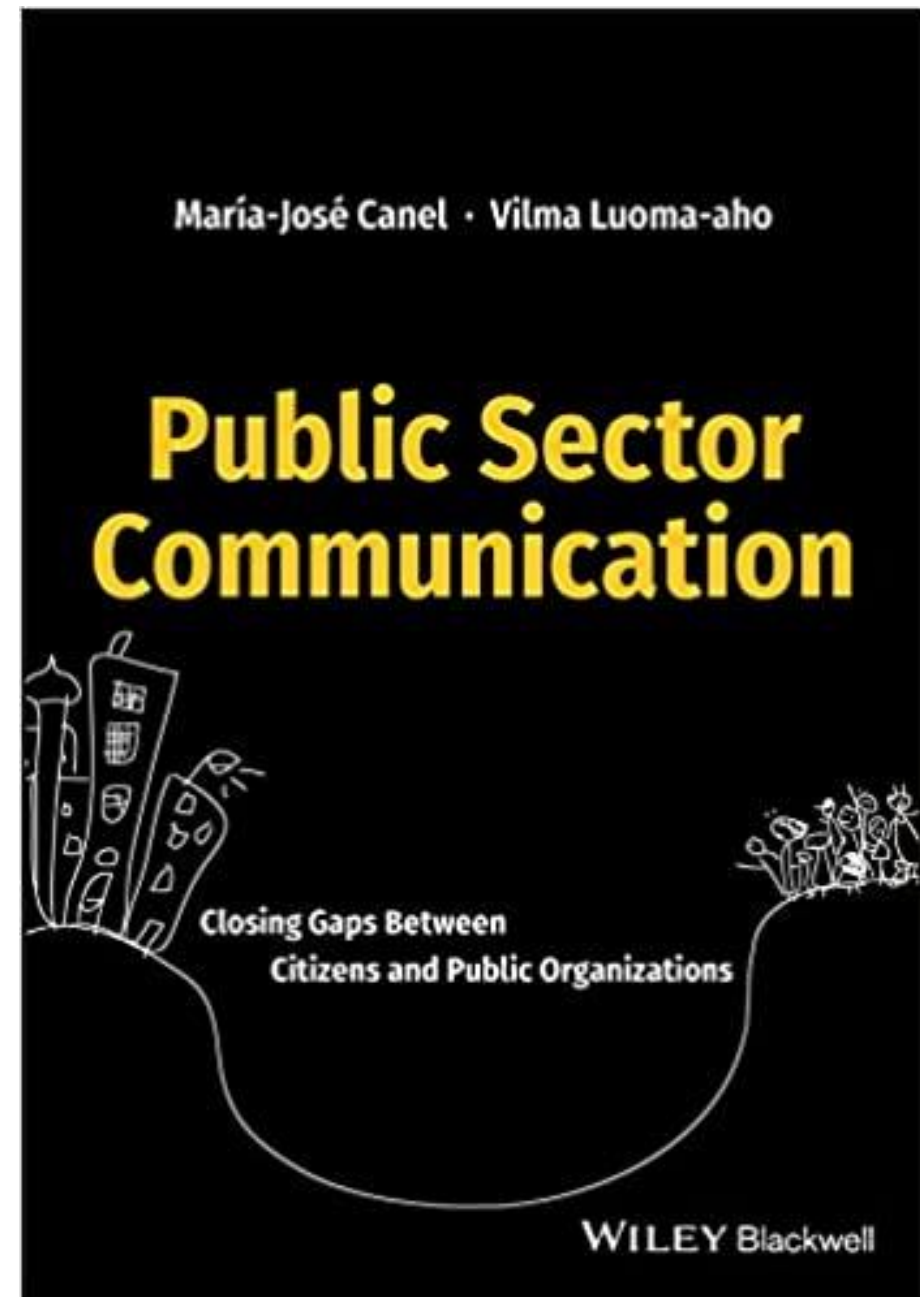
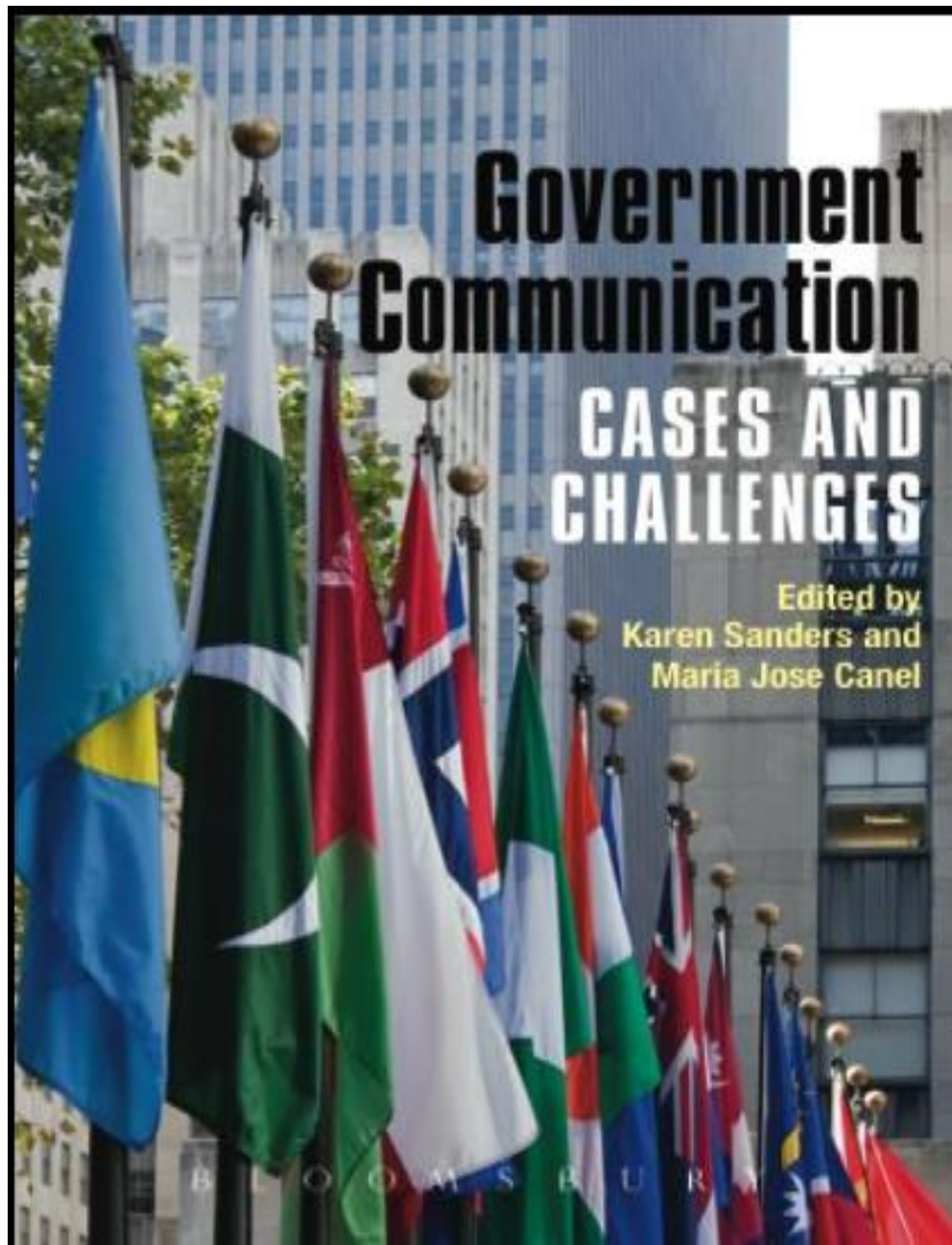




Listening to the plurality of contemporary voices. What can be learned from the public sector?

María José Canel

University Complutense Madrid, Spain



What is common?

Listening for communicating the Christian message



Listening for communicating the Public Sector

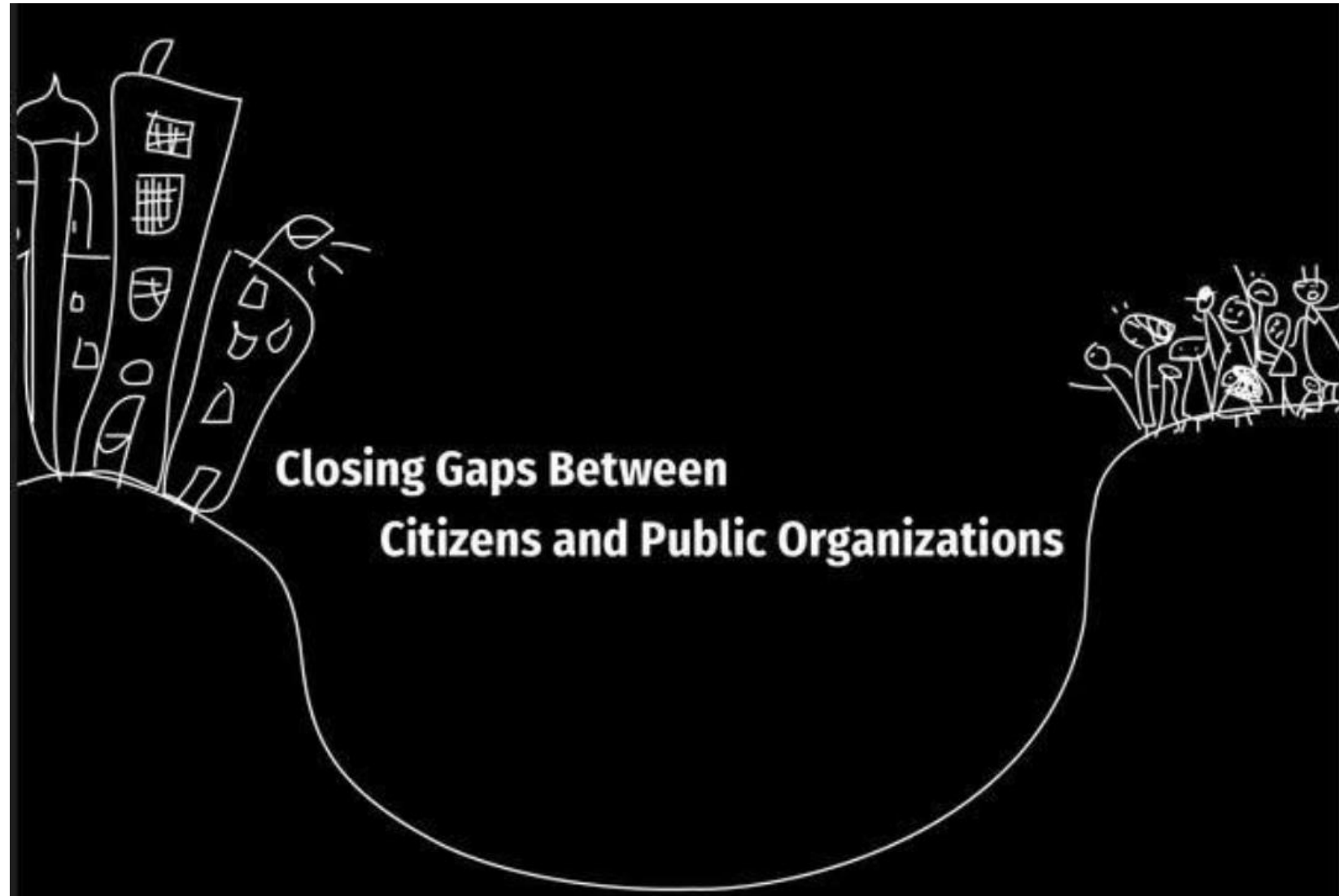




**Closing Gaps Between
Citizens and Public Organizations**



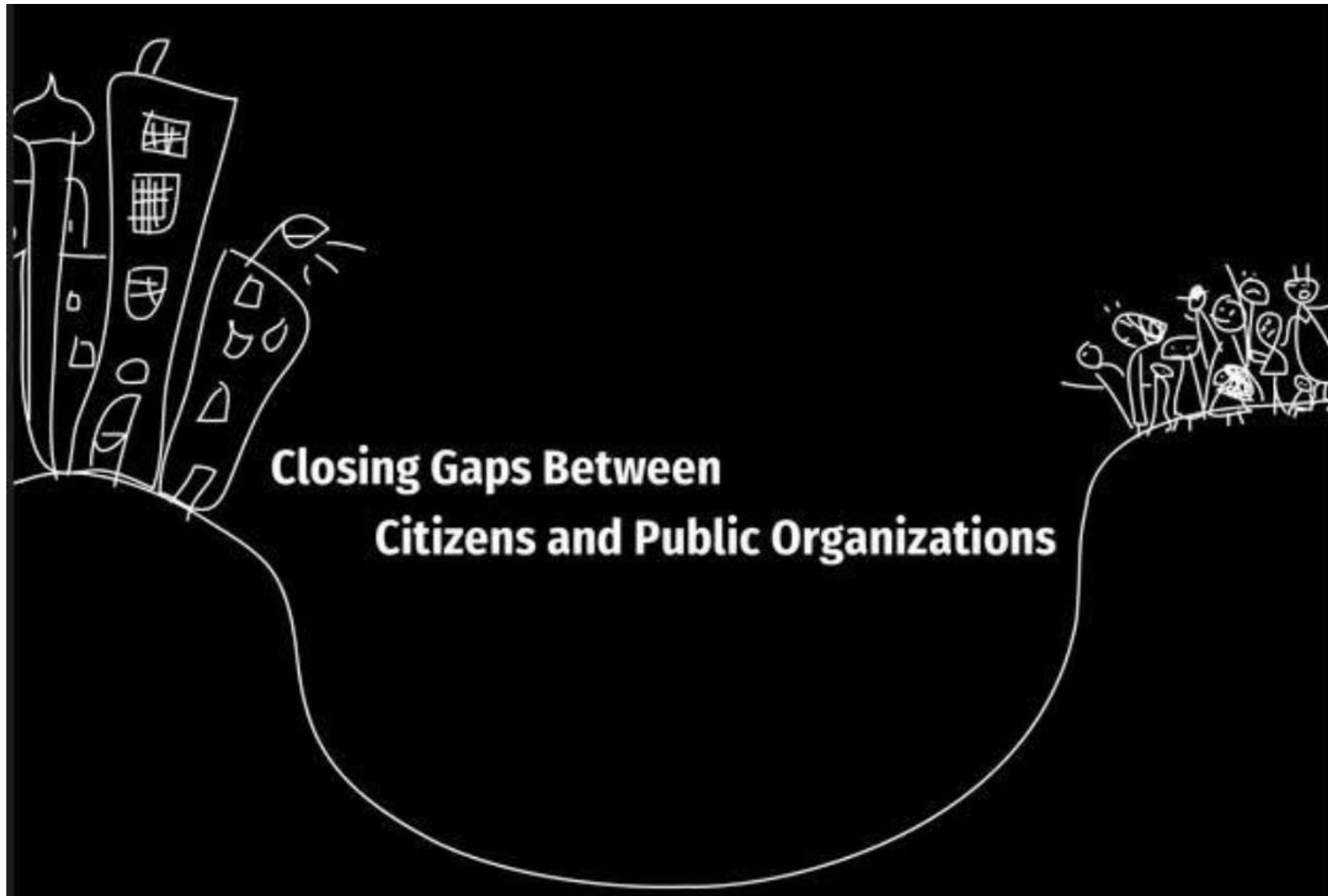
“The hearts of society
are far away from us!”
(public leader)





Closing Gaps Between Citizens and Public Organizations

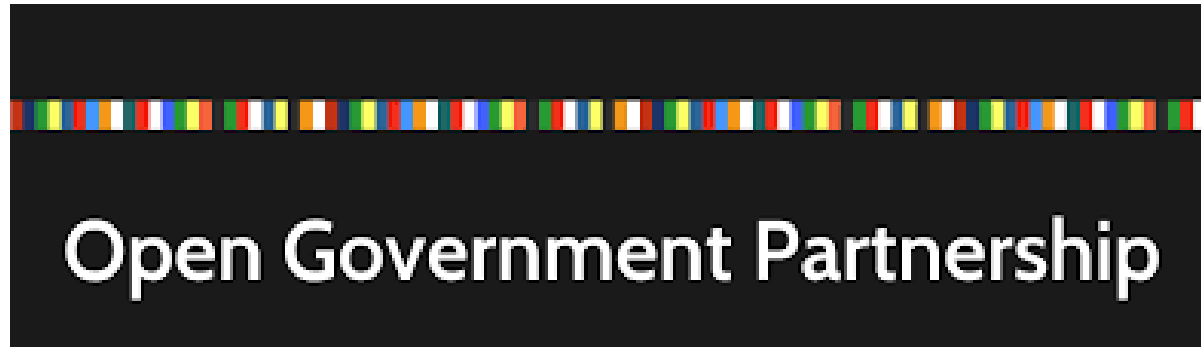
- There is an **imperative need** for organizations to **close gaps** with stakeholders



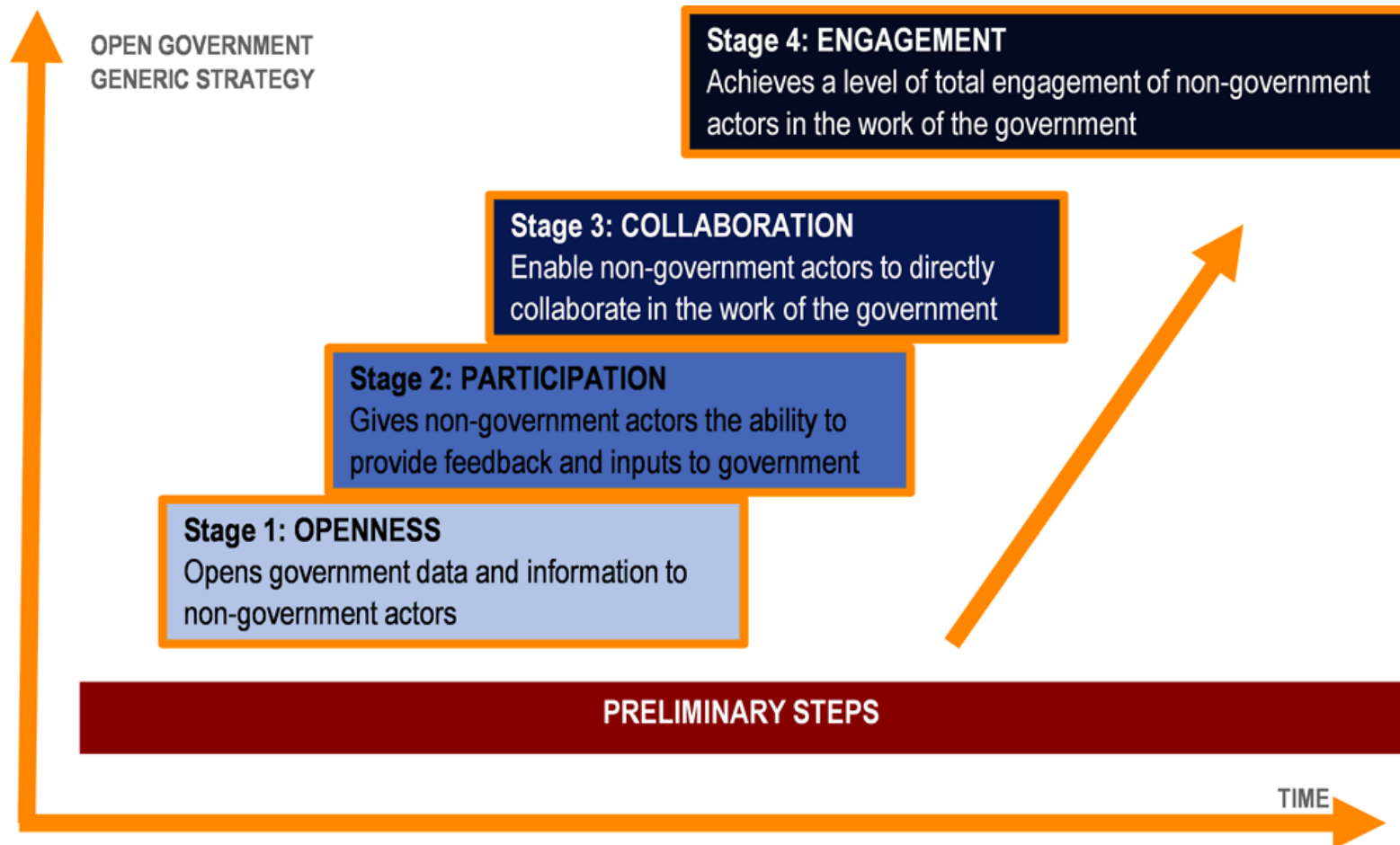
➤ There is an **imperative need** for organizations to **close gaps** with stakeholders

➤ Which implies an **imperative need** for organizations to **listening** to stakeholders

The imperative need to listening in the public sector



The challenge: not only about listening



<https://n9.cl/q0t3s>

The challenge:

Listening

To involve

The challenge:

Listening

To involve

What for?



What is common? The challenge

Refining the challenge



Refining the challenge



Relevance ***versus*** Listening?

Refining the challenge

Relevance *versus* Listening?

To what extent are listening data relevant for self-identity?





What is common? Common problems

There is organizational resistance to change

COMMON PROBLEMS

Organizational resistance to change

- Listening is costly
- Inertia
- What is heard includes contradictory voices
- Difficulties to make sense of listening data
- **Fears of undermininig self-identity**



The public sector:
fears of loosing power

The Christian message:
fears of trivializing
christianism

Stakeholders' resistance to speak

COMMON PROBLEMS

Stakeholders' resistance to speak

- Low participation: 3%
- Skepticism: What is this government looking for with this listening process?
- Frustration: “They didn’t hear me”
- Distrust caused by a listening process

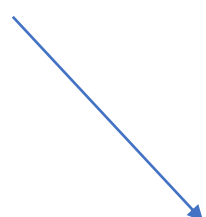
Frustration



Listening enhances accountability, consensus, legitimacy, social capital and trust

(Coursey, Yang, & Pandey, 2012; Bovaird et al., 2015; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Yang & Pandey, 2011)

Mixed
evidences
about listening
outcomes



There is suspicion about what it is attempted to with listening (Rhodes, 2003; Head, 2007; Head, 2008)

If politized, there is skepticism (Sanders & Canel, 2015)

Expectations are disappointed, and with it, satisfaction and trust go down (Font & Navarro, 2013)

There are communication gaps

COMMON PROBLEMS

Communication gaps

REALITY

- What we do

Facts
Deeds
Achievements

AUDIENCES

- What people perceive

Surveys
Polls
Vote

GAP

There is a problem of communication

Luhoma-aho, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Canel et al., 2010; Luoma-aho & Canel, 2021

The problem of listening in postruth times

COMMON PROBLEMS



2016





In post-truth:

“Objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”
(Oxford dictionaries)

Emotions carry more weight than evidence: There is “a certain relativism where personal values, beliefs and emotions take precedence” (Ihlen et al. 2019, 2).

Content is trivialized: informed analysis are presented on the same footing as bombastic claims or rumors.

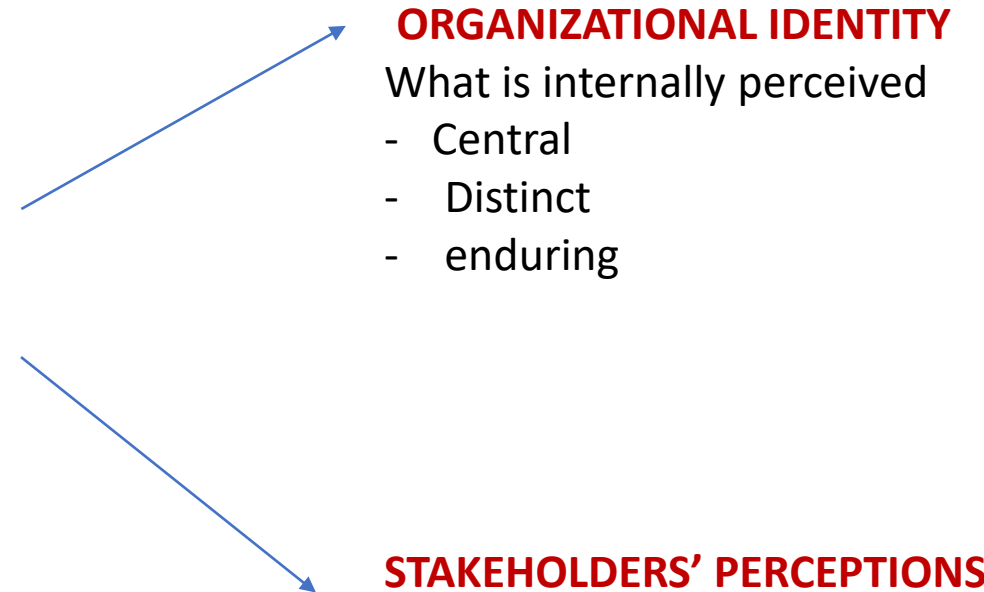
How to process listening data which are based on emotions over evidences without diminishing self-identity?

What to do with your
stakeholders' perceptions?

The concept of “identity resilience”

“Identity resilience”

“Organizational identity resilience represents the **dynamic maneuvering** of organizational members between:

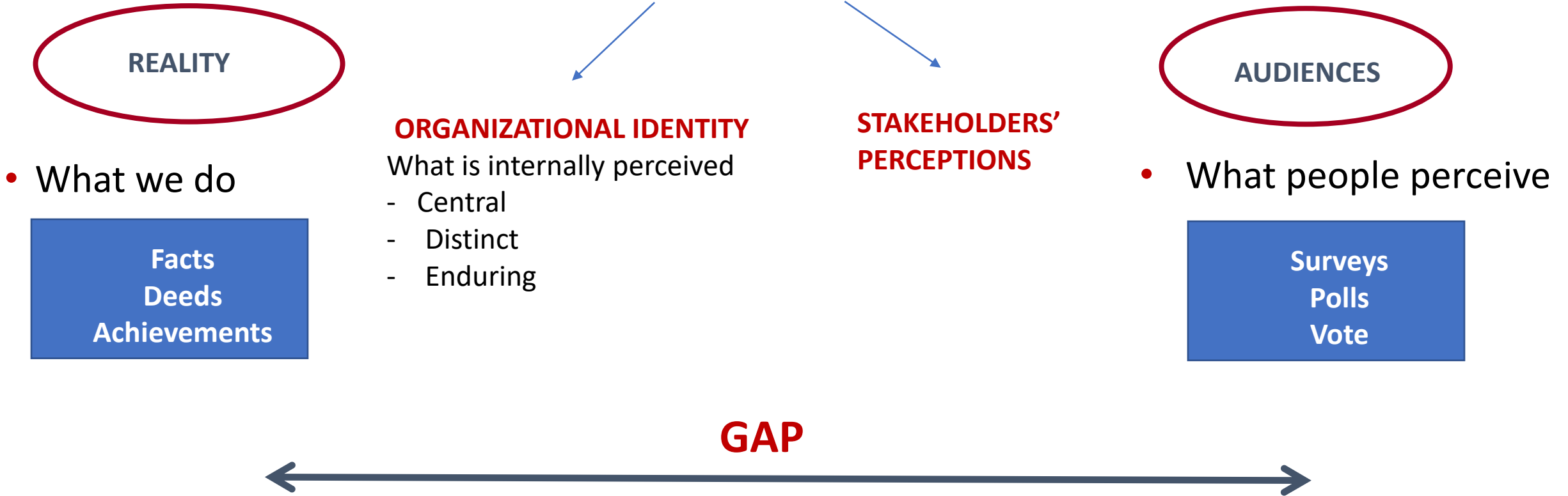


that **over time positively distinguishes what the organization is and will remain”**

(Anderson & Jones-Bodie, 2022)

Managing the tension at the communication gap

Dynamic maneuvering



There is a problem of communication

Luhoma-aho, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Canel et al., 2010; Luoma-aho & Canel, 2021

SOME PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS TO BUILD YOUR “IDENTITY RESILIENCE”

Listen to monitor and address
your communication gaps to
avoid “post-communication”

Am I post-communicating with
the Christian message?

Possible 'post-communication'

REALITY

- What we do

Facts
Deeds
Achievements

AUDIENCES

- What people perceive

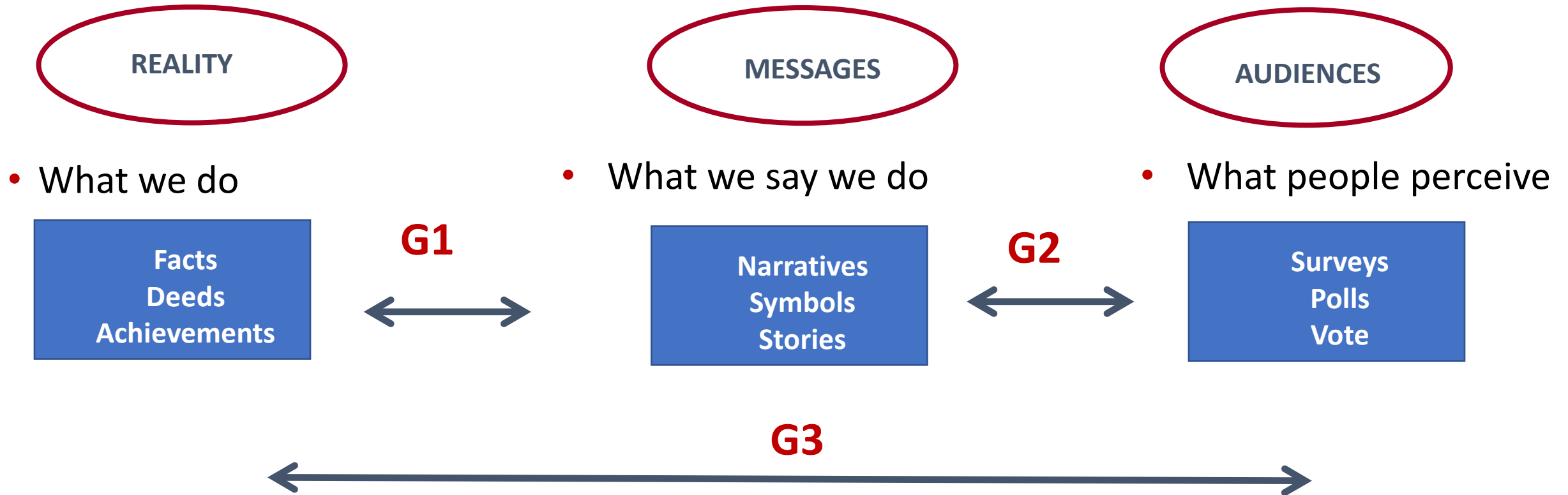
Surveys
Polls
Vote

GAP

There is a problem of communication

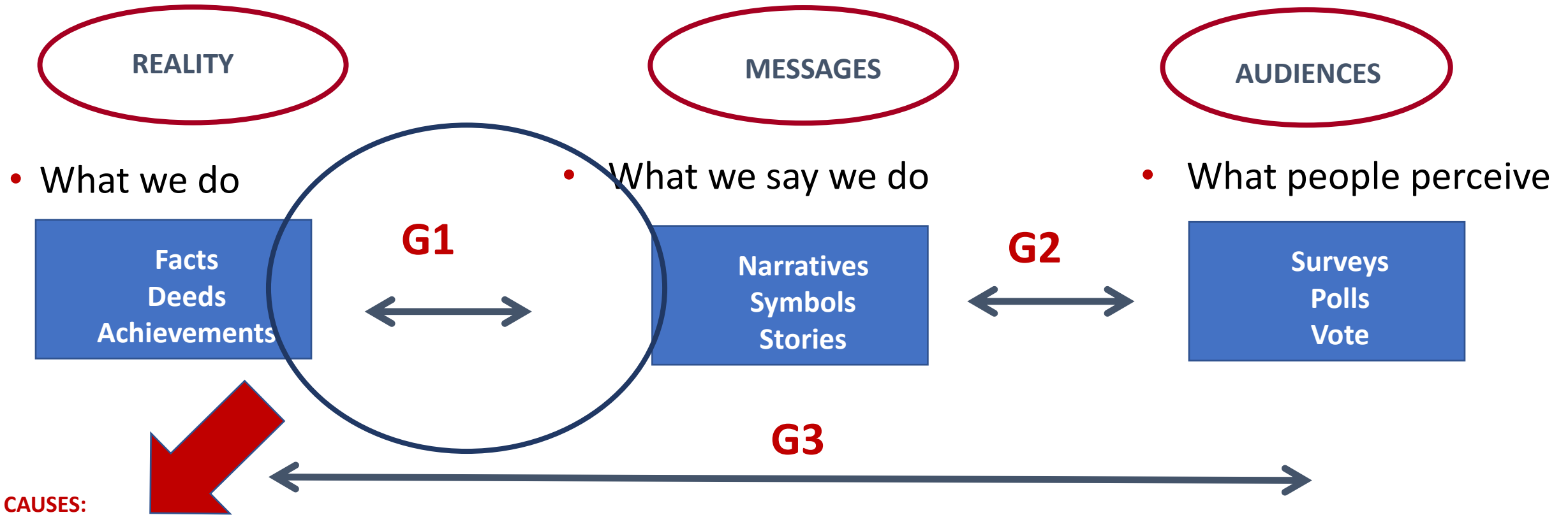
Luhoma-aho, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Canel et al., 2010; Luoma-aho & Canel, 2021

Possible 'post-communication'



Luhoma-aho, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Canel et al., 2010; Luoma-aho & Canel, 2021

Listen to plot the gap



Non-defined identity

Deficient strategy

Deficient coordination

Luhoma-aho, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Canel et al., 2010; Luoma-aho & Canel, 2021

A deeper cause for my 'post-communication':

Am I really on my reality?

Am I really on my reality?

- **Possible drivers for my 'post communication':**
 - **Lack of listening data:** my self identity is defined without stakeholders' participation
 - **Too prescriptive approaches for strategic communication:**
The comfort of deliberation *versus* the “mud” of action

The challenge

Relevance *versus* Listening?

What is the value you attribute to your stakeholders in defining your identity?



Reassure fearing bosses

BUILDING IDENTITY RESILIENCE

Reassure fearing bosses

- Facilitate internal consensus about key attributes
- Build spaces for jointly make sense of listening data

Challenge too confident bosses

BUILDING IDENTITY RESILIENCE

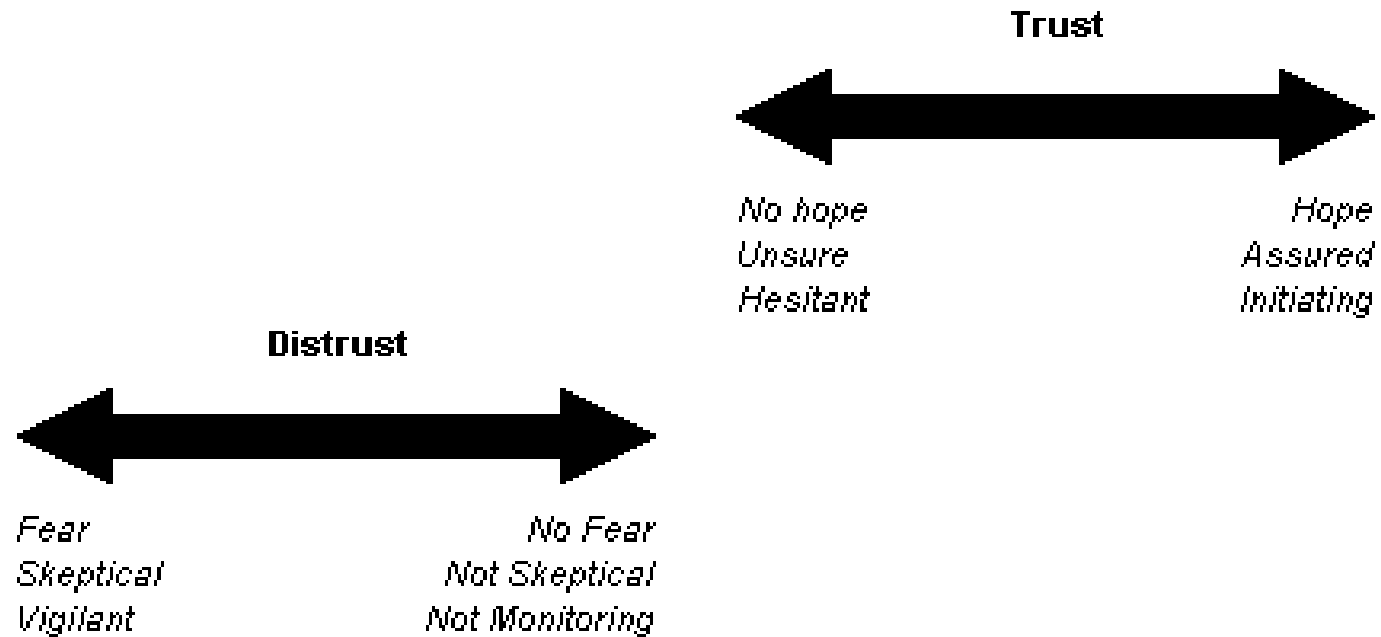
Challenge too confident bosses

- Make sure your boss gets in front of the mirror: Do you really know what our stakeholders perceive of us?
- Do you really acknowledge your stakeholders' contribution?
- Are you really willing to listen?
- Are you open to share power?
- Do we have clear listening policies?

Learn about working with hostile audiences

BUILDING IDENTITY RESILIENCE

Distrust \neq Low trust



Tomlinson & Roy, 2003, https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/trust_overview



The paradox of trust: perceived risk and public compliance during COVID-19 in Singapore

Trust in a competent government should not lead one to assume that little or no individual action is required to manage risks. Our team found that high levels of public trust in Singapore during the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with lower levels of compliance and a belief that individual action was not required for effective risk management.

Read the full journal article by the Lead Scientist, Olivia Jensen and Research Fellow, Catherine Wong from the LRF Institute for Public Understanding of Risk (IPUR) at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13669877.2020.1756386>

- COVID-19: high levels of public trust results in lower levels of compliance and a belief that individual action is not required to manage the risks effectively.

Wong, C. M. L., & Jensen, O. (2020). The paradox of trust: perceived risk and public compliance during the COVID-19 pandemic in Singapore. *Journal of Risk Research*, 23(7-8), 1021-1030.

Distrust \neq Low trust

Functional Distrust	Functional Trust
Disfunctional Distrust	Disfunctional Trust

(Oomsels, 2017)

Trusting works better than asking for trust

BUILDING IDENTITY RESILIENCE

What about your authenticity
when listening?



**Closing Gaps Between
Citizens and Public Organizations**

