Unconscious Design Bias
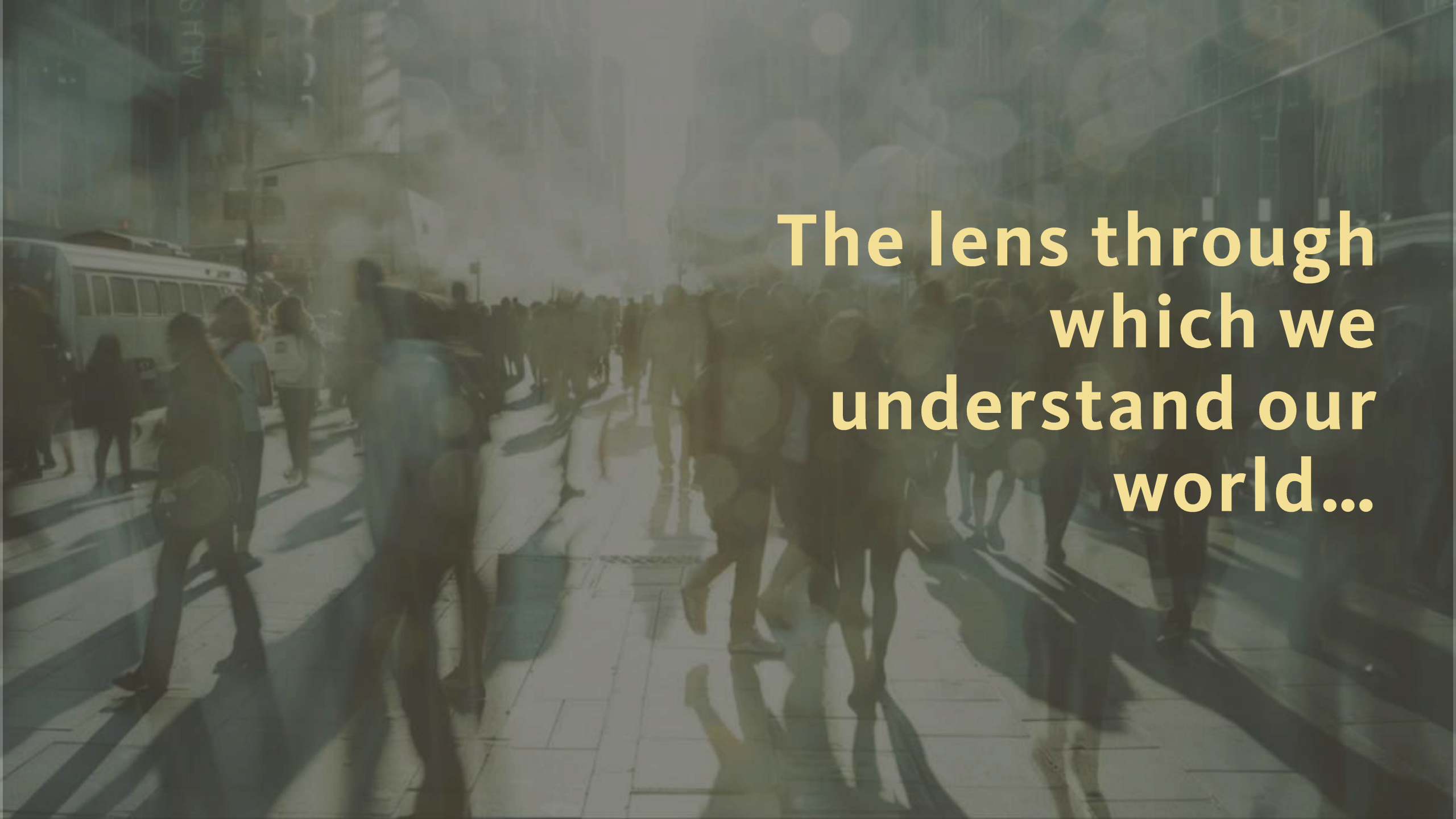
Arnold Levin & Bonnie Toland | Gensler | 2024

The lens through which we understand our world…

… defines how we work together and within organizations

The way we design organizations reinforces our worldview

Consider how biases affect OD frameworks, such as the Star Model

Field Dependence **Object Fixation** **Time** **Ritual & Hospitality** **Privacy & Respect** **Order** **Agency & Control** **Managing Meaning**

DESIGN BIAS:
FIELD DEPENDENCE

Object - Context

Interconnectedness

Individual - Collective

This bias might influence how we understand the elements in the Star Model and their interconnectedness

How else might Field Dependence affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect **recruitment and retention**?

How might it affect **incentives and rewards** for performance?

Might it affect **structural preferences**?

DESIGN BIAS:
OBJECT FIXATION

People, places, things

Museumization

Static - fluid

This bias may affect our organizational structures and management styles

How else might Object Fixation affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect **recruitment and retention**?

How might it affect **processes and workflow**?

Might it affect how **goals and measures of success** are determined?
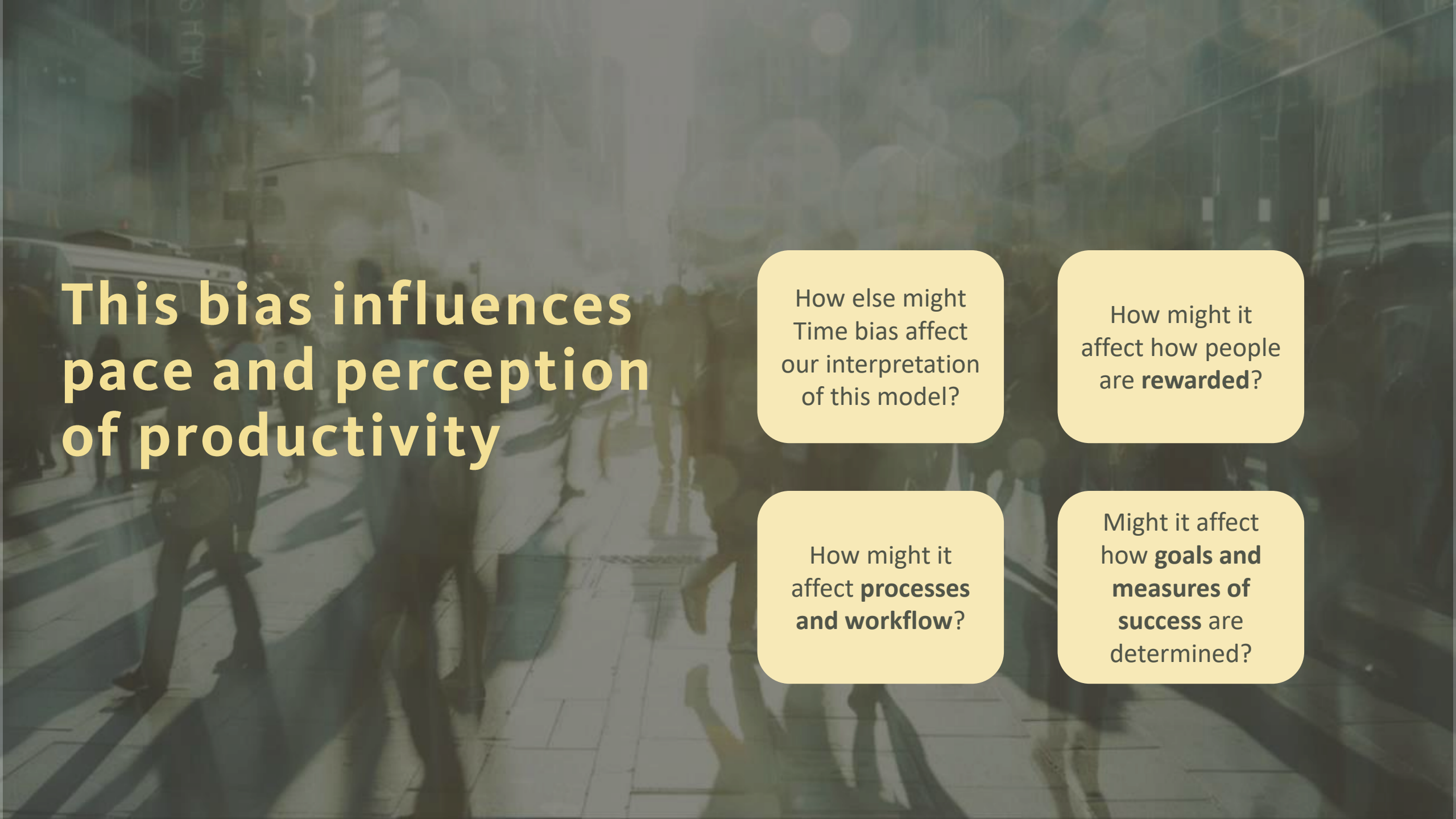
DESIGN BIAS:
TIME

Sun - clock

Rhythm & speed

Time hegemony

This bias influences pace and perception of productivity

How else might Time bias affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect how people are **rewarded**?

How might it affect **processes and workflow**?

Might it affect how **goals and measures of success** are determined?

DESIGN BIAS:
RITUAL & HOSPITALITY

Hosting & Guesting

Greetings & Farewells

Rituals & Practices

This bias influences how organizations welcome new-comers, come together, and relate to outsiders

How else might Ritual & Hospitality affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect how people are **rewarded**?

How could this impact **recruitment, training, and retention**?

Might it affect **policies and protocols**?

DESIGN BIAS:
PRIVACY & RESPECT

Public - Private

Boundaries & Delineations

Expression of Respect

Code Switching

This bias influences how organizations define hierarchy, formality, and decision-making

How else might Privacy & Respect affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect **communication patterns**?

How could this impact **recruitment, training, and retention**?
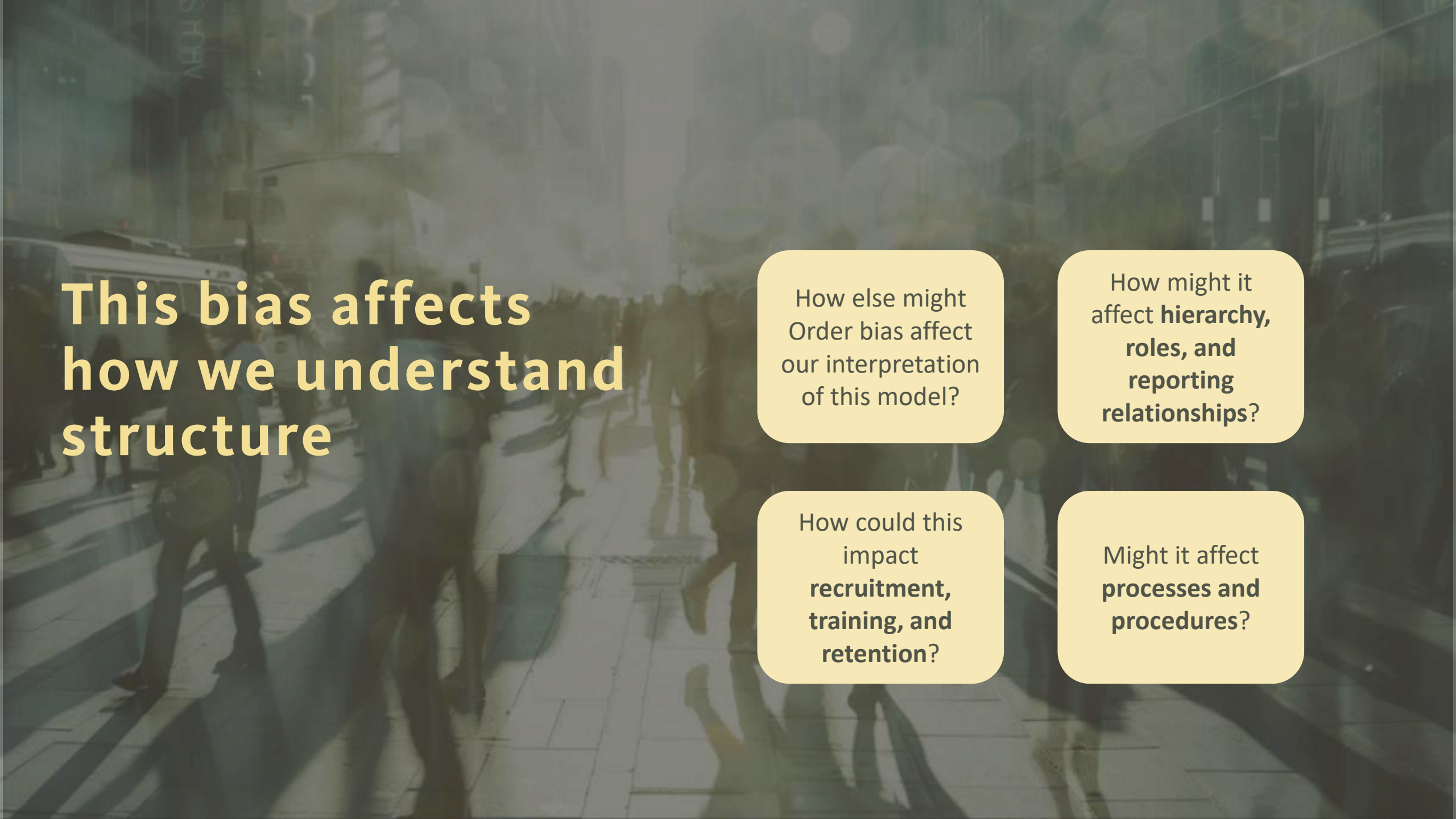
Might it affect **reporting structures**?

DESIGN BIAS:
ORDER

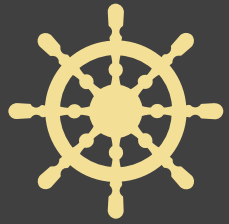Perception of chaos

Macro to micro

Frameworks and systems

This bias affects how we understand structure

How else might Order bias affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect **hierarchy, roles, and reporting relationships**?

How could this impact **recruitment, training, and retention**?

Might it affect **processes and procedures**?

DESIGN BIAS:
AGENCY & CONTROL

Autonomy

Choice

Dynamism

Matrix – network

Buy-in and adaptation

This bias influences organizational departmental relationships

How else might Agency & Control affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect **hierarchy, roles, and reporting relationships**?

How could this impact **the prescriptive nature of an organization**?

Might it affect **processes and procedures**?

DESIGN BIAS:
MANAGING
MEANING

Branding
Symbols
Identity
Change Management

This bias affects how communicate and develop transformation programs

How else might Managing Meaning affect our interpretation of this model?

How might it affect **values and mission statements**?

How could this impact **recruitment, training, and retention**?

Might it affect **rewards systems**?

The way we design organizations reinforces our worldview

Context
Humility
Inclusive Process

Make the Unconscious Conscious