



Faculty of Design

2020

## Transforming Public Organizations into Co-designing Cultures

Aguirre Ulloa, Manuela

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# **Transforming public organizations into co-designing cultures**

A study of capacity-building programs  
as learning ecosystems

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Associate Professor in Service Design, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO)

RSD9 2020 | National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India





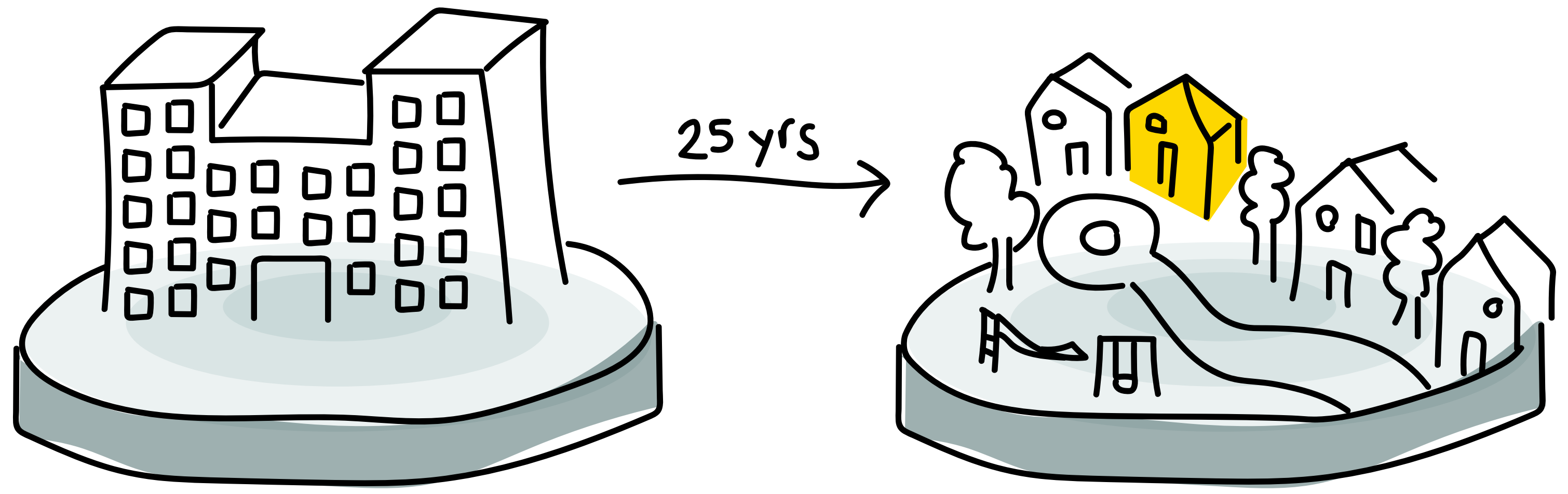


“Imagine living in a place where you don’t get to choose your roommates, you have to live with them forever.

If they beat you up, you have to stay there; if you’re with staff and don’t like them, you have to stay there.

**You have no choice.**

—Barrett 2015, 1  
(in Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 112)

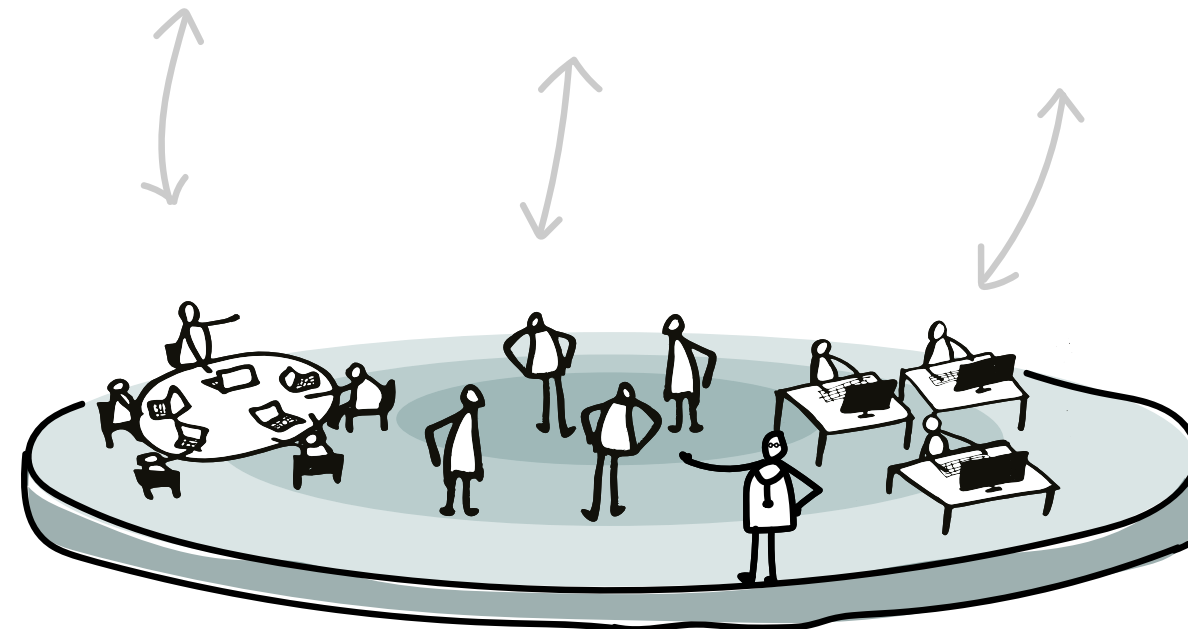


# Toxic work cultures are a **systemic issue**

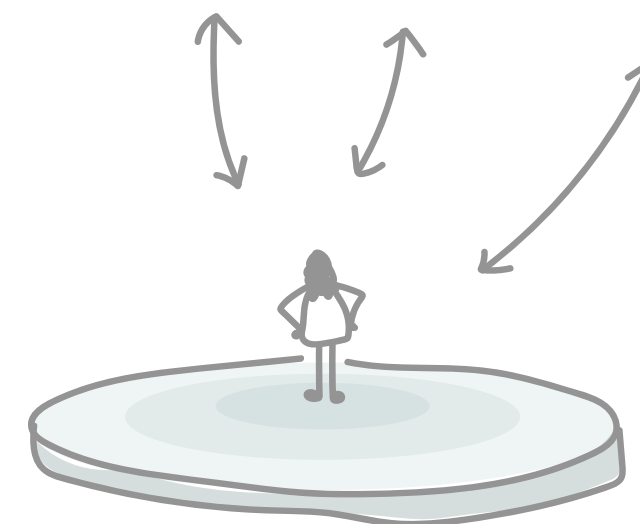
**Societal** level



**Organizational** level



**Individual** level

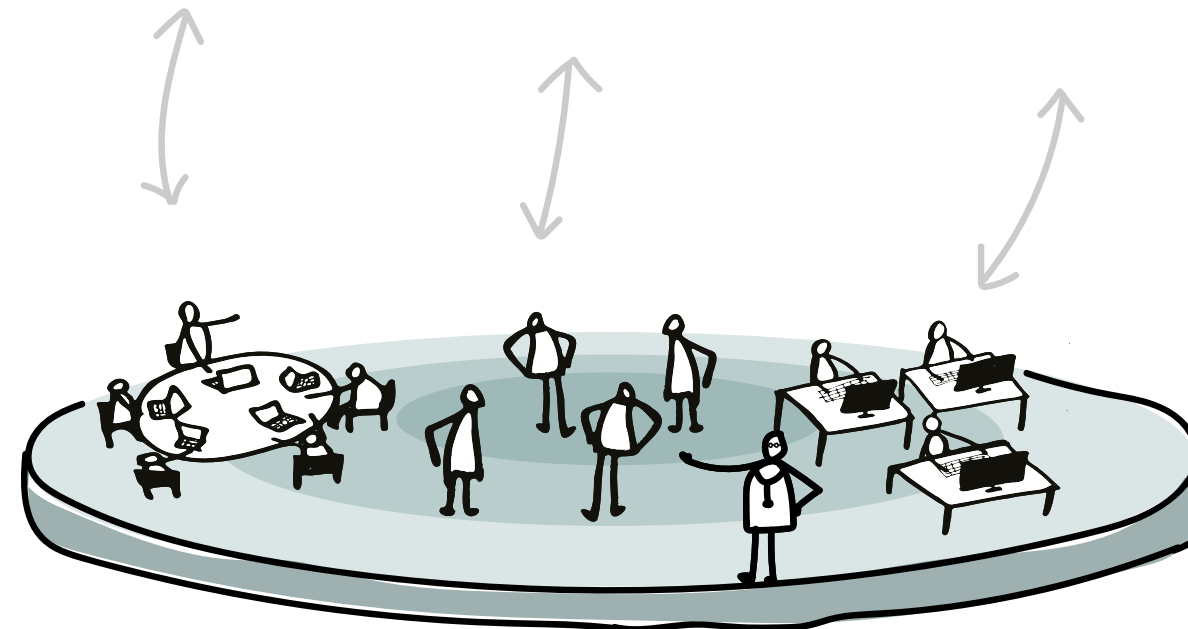


# Toxic work cultures are a **systemic issue**

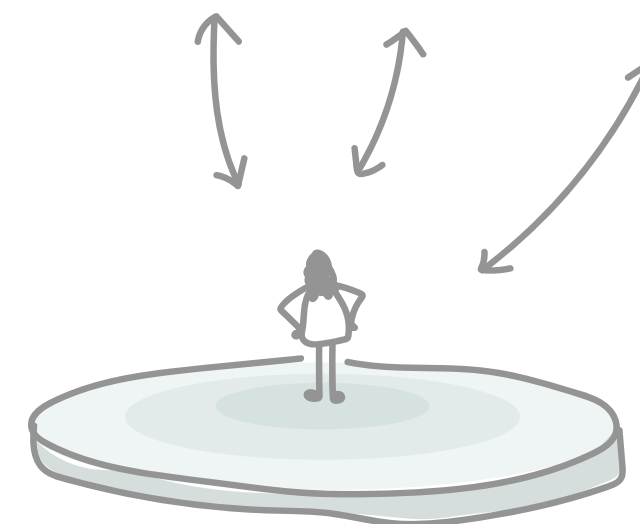
**Societal** level



**Organizational** level



**Individual** level



## Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital: Babies and mums died 'amid toxic culture'

19 November 2019



Rhiannon Davies campaigned for an independent inquiry after her baby, Kate, died in 2009

Babies and mothers died amid a "toxic" culture at a hospital trust stretching back 40 years, a report has said.

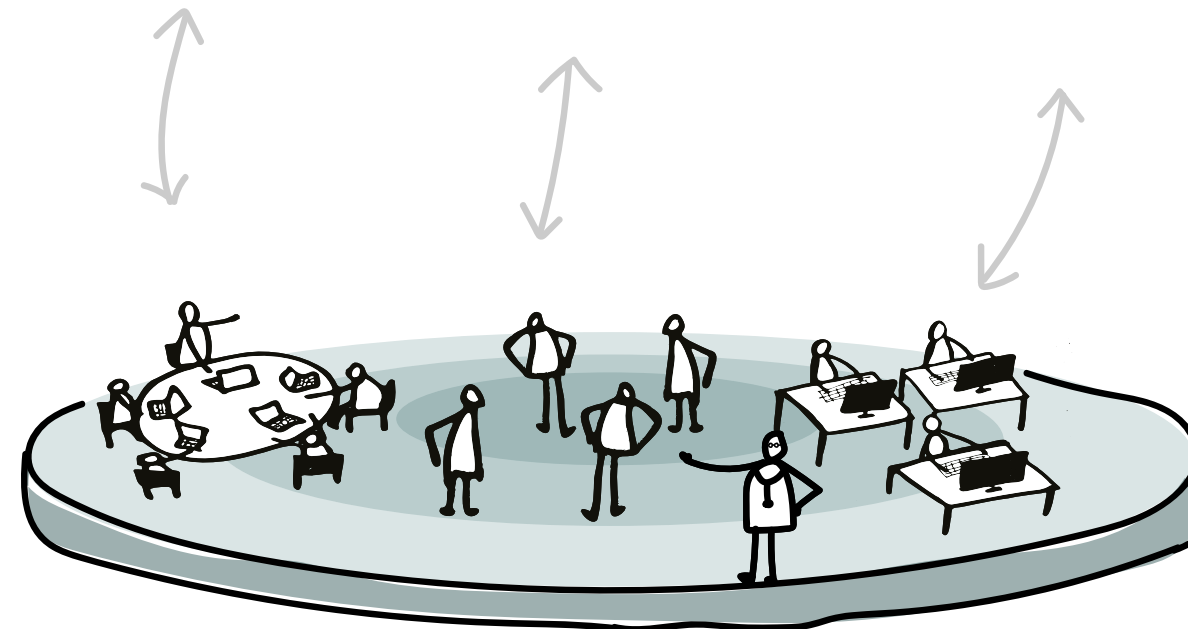


# Toxic work cultures are a **systemic issue**

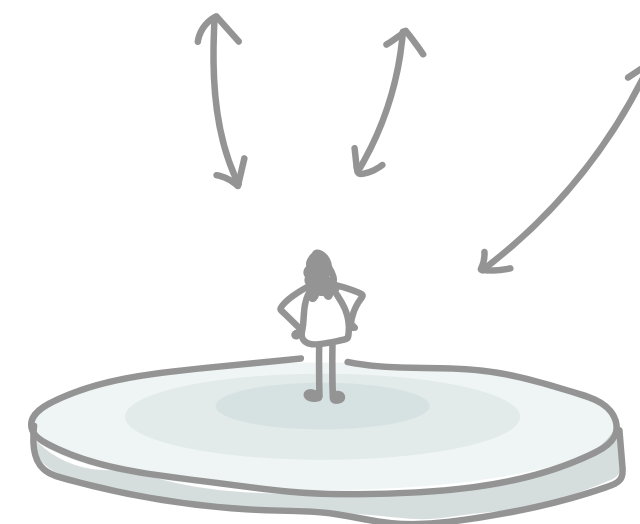
**Societal** level



**Organizational** level



**Individual** level



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# The Guardian

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle



*i*

Universities must overhaul  
the toxic working culture for  
academic researchers

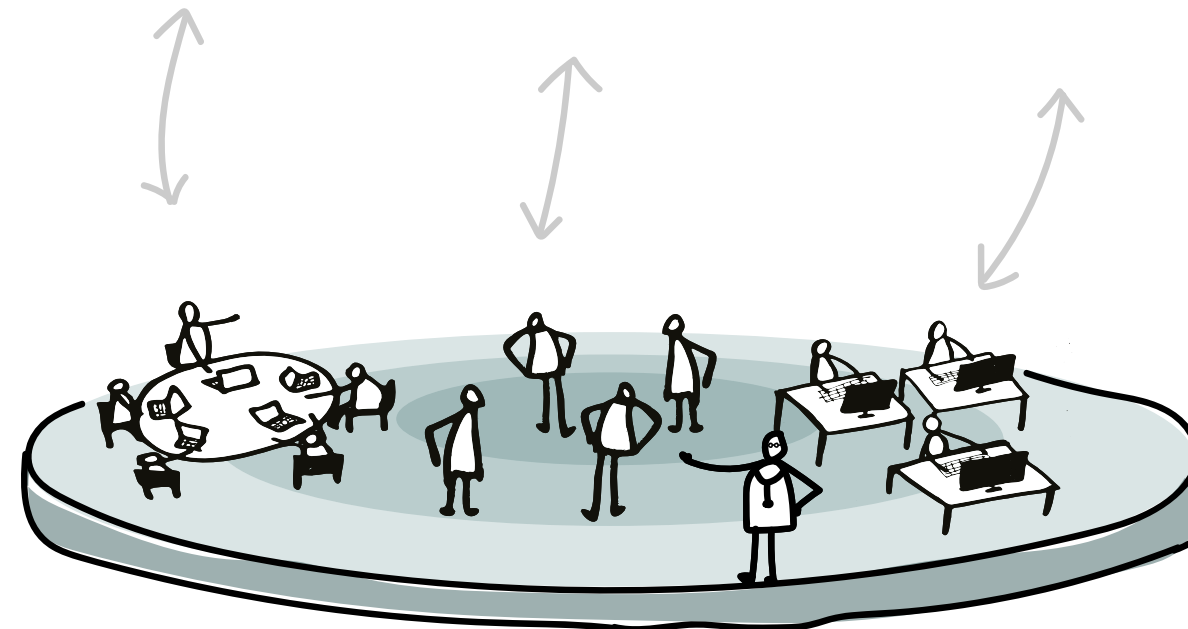
*Anton Muscatelli*

Toxic work cultures  
are a **systemic issue**

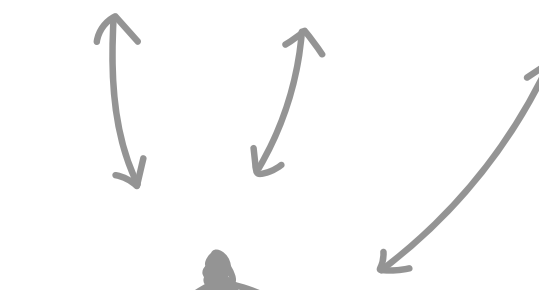
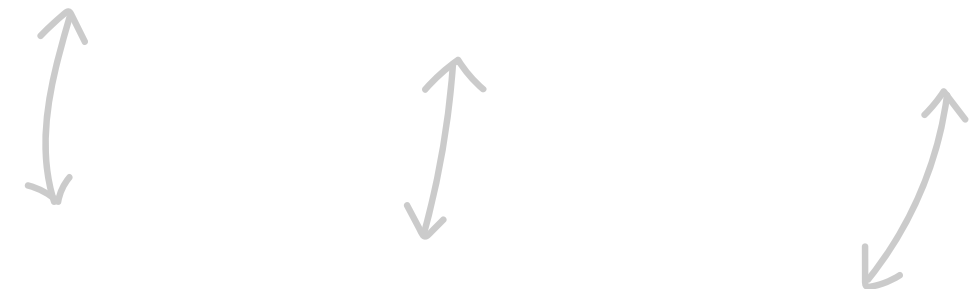
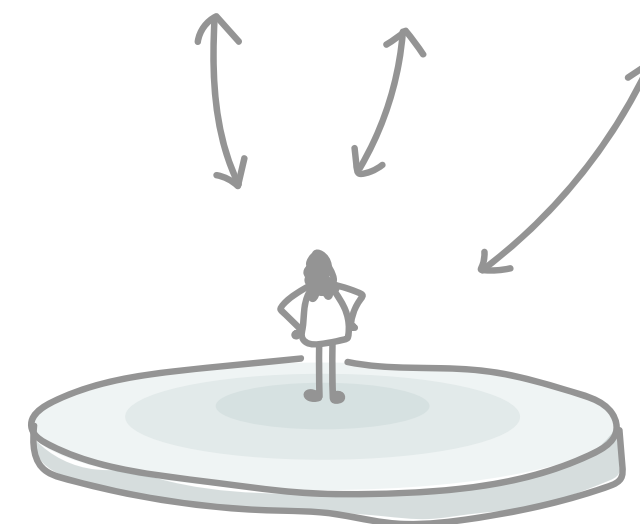
**Societal** level



**Organizational** level



**Individual** level



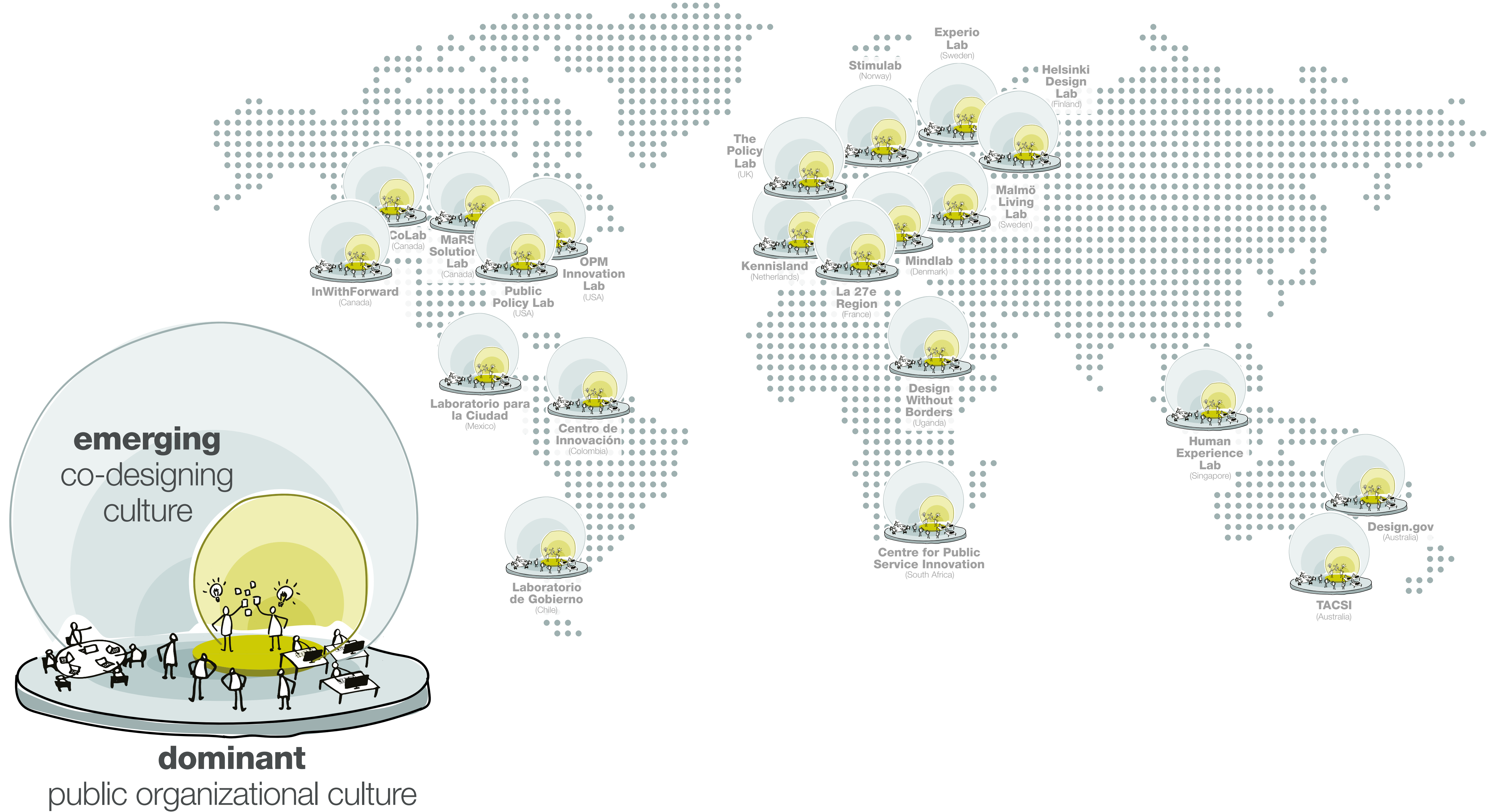
A screenshot of an MSNBC news article. At the top, the MSNBC logo is visible. Below it, a video player shows a night scene in Minneapolis with a timestamp of 11:05 PM. A red banner below the video reads "BREAKING NEWS MINNEAPOLIS PROTESTS CONTINUE FOR 4TH NIGHT" with the MSNBC logo. The main headline in large white text reads "George Floyd killing highlights toxic police culture". At the bottom, there are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email, along with the text "SHARE THIS".

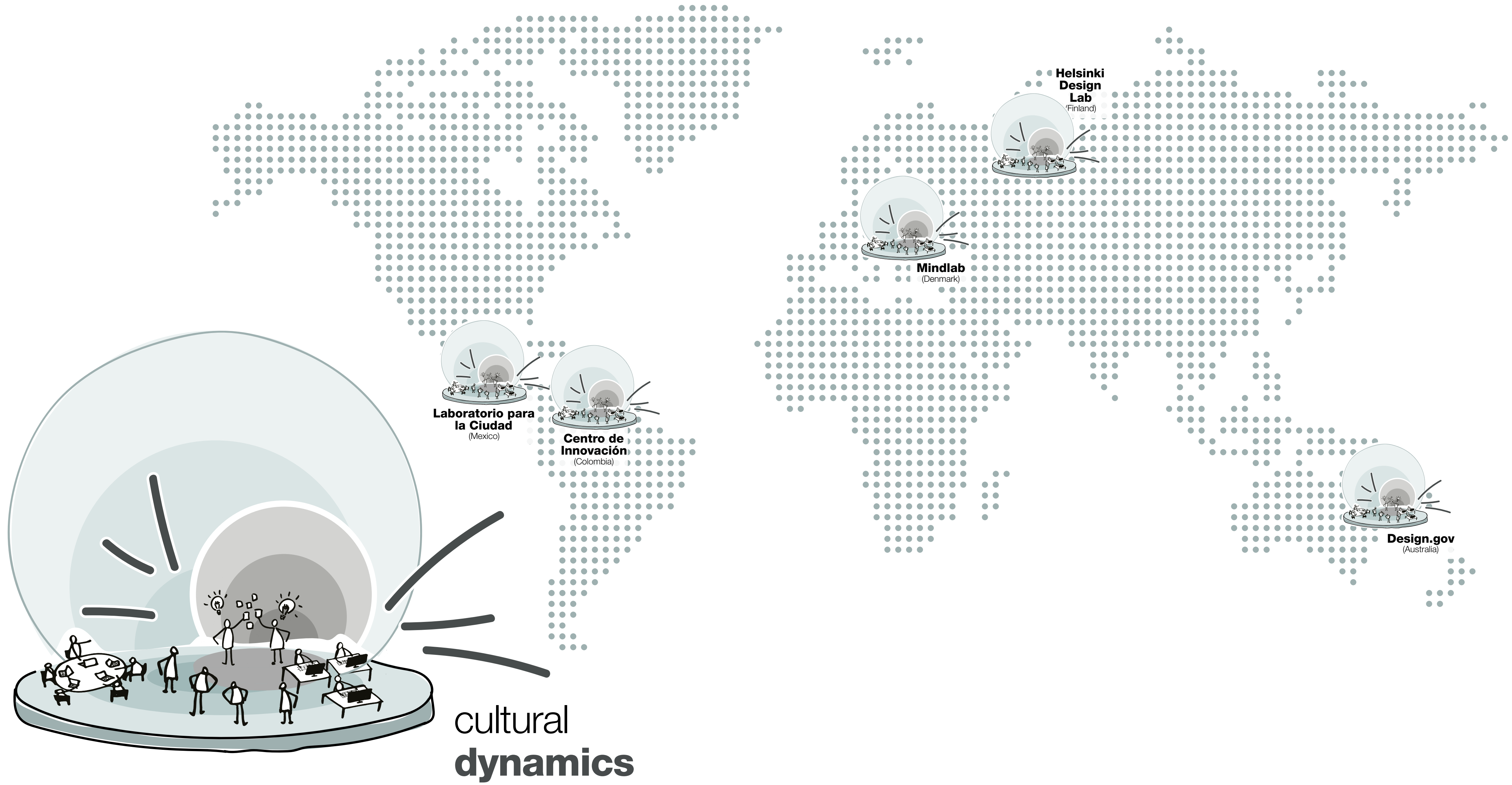




**dominant**  
public organizational culture







# **Transforming public organizations into co-designing cultures**

A study of capacity-building programs  
as learning ecosystems



# Transforming public organizations into co-designing cultures

A study of **capacity-building programs** as learning ecosystems



**Program for social service organizations**

Burnaby, province of BC, Canada

January - July 2015

3 social service organizations (same sector)



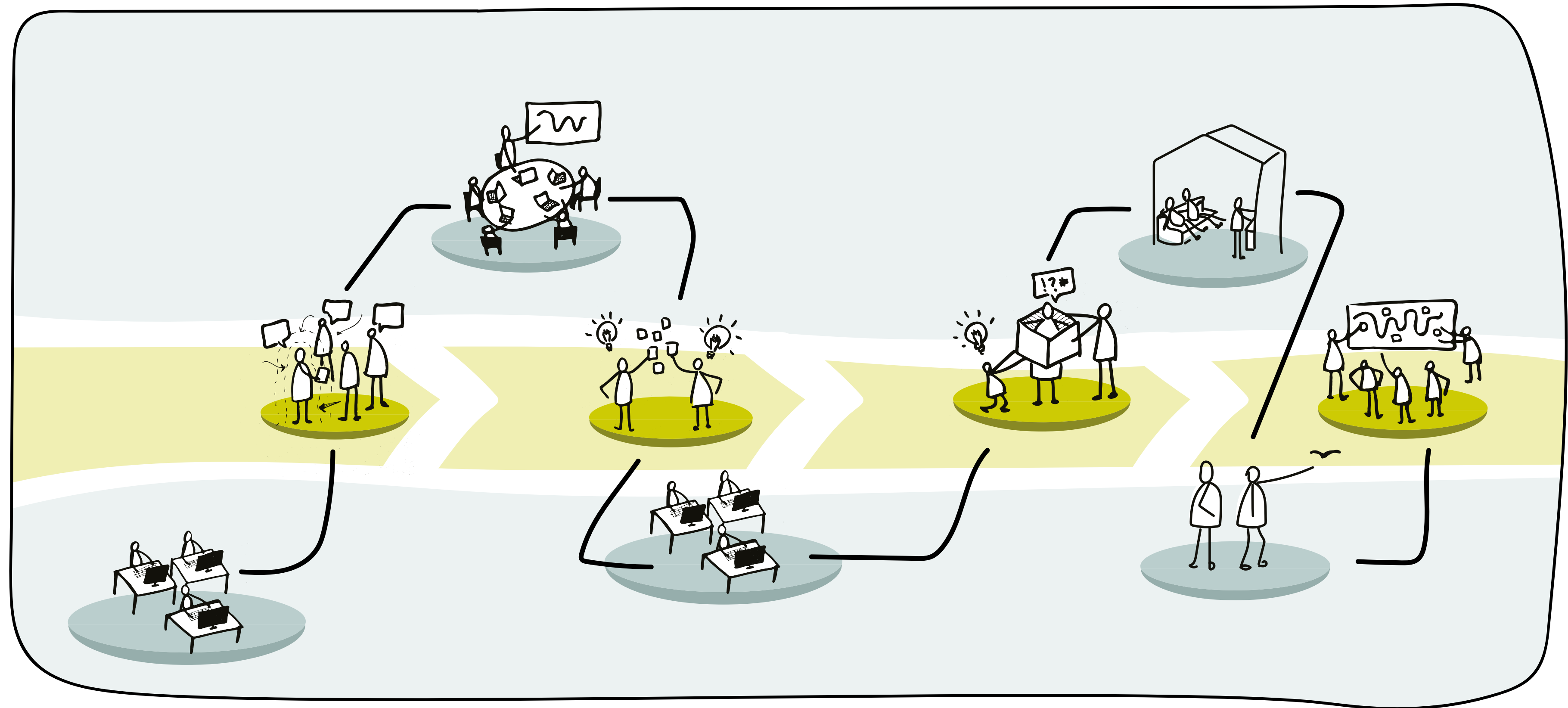
**Program for public sector organizations**

Santiago/Concepción, Chile

Aug 2016-June 2017 / Sept2016-Aug 2017

12 public organizations (mixed sectors)

# Experiential learning for nurturing co-designing capacities



○ Dominant public organizational culture

● Emerging co-designing culture

**RQ1**



In the context of embedding co-designing capacities in public organizations,  
**how might the phenomenon of organisational culture be addressed?**

**RQ2**



How might a systemic design view support  
**the emergence of co-designing cultures beyond the public organisation's** capacity building program?

**RQ1**



In the context of embedding co-designing capacities in public organizations, **how might the phenomenon of organisational culture be addressed?**

**RQ2**



How might a systemic design view support **the emergence of co-designing cultures beyond the public organisation's** capacity building program?

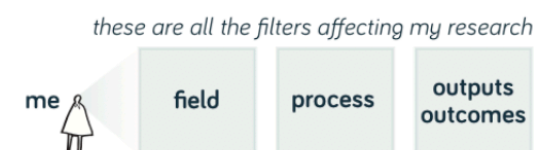
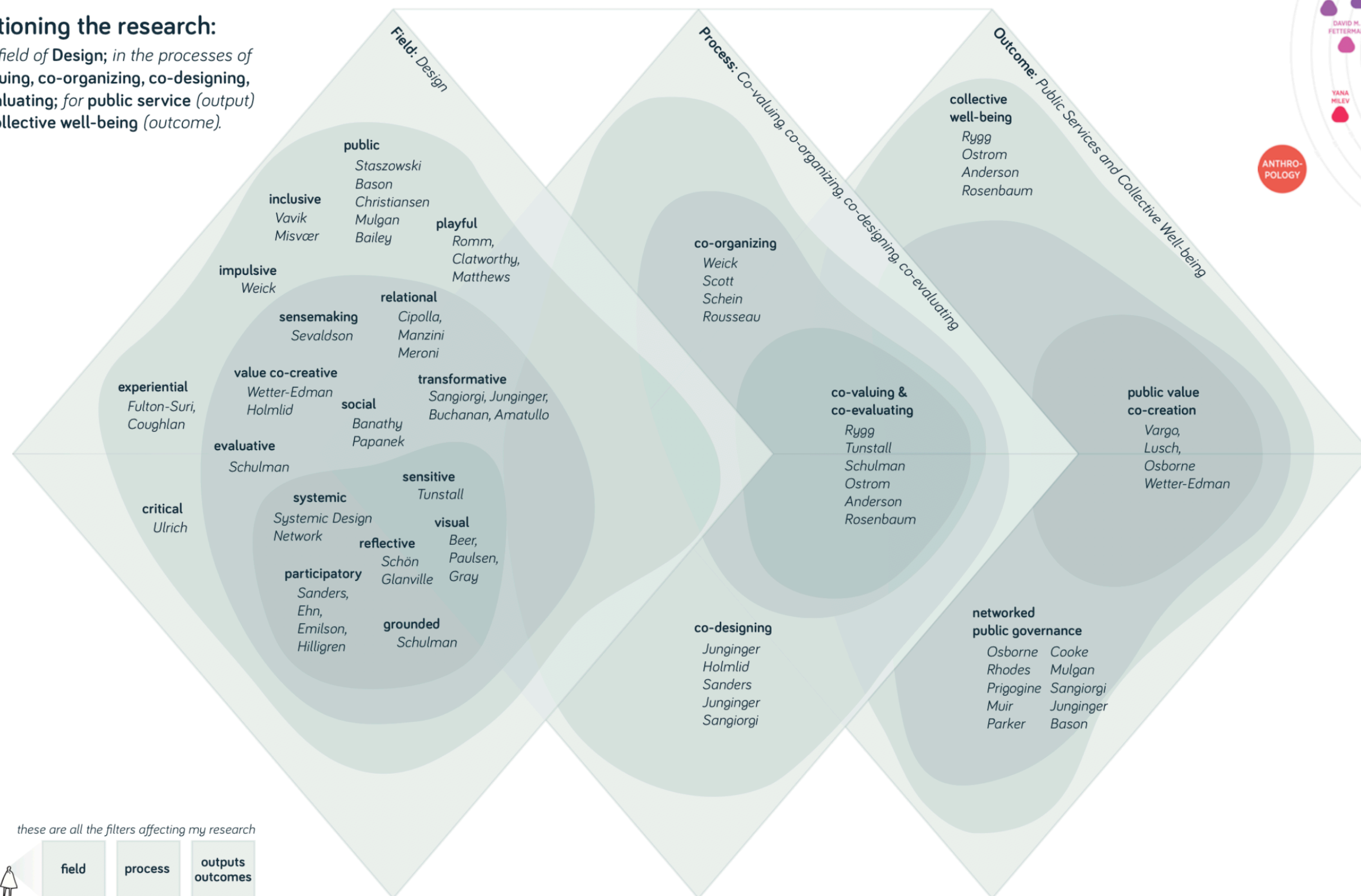
# Research **approach**



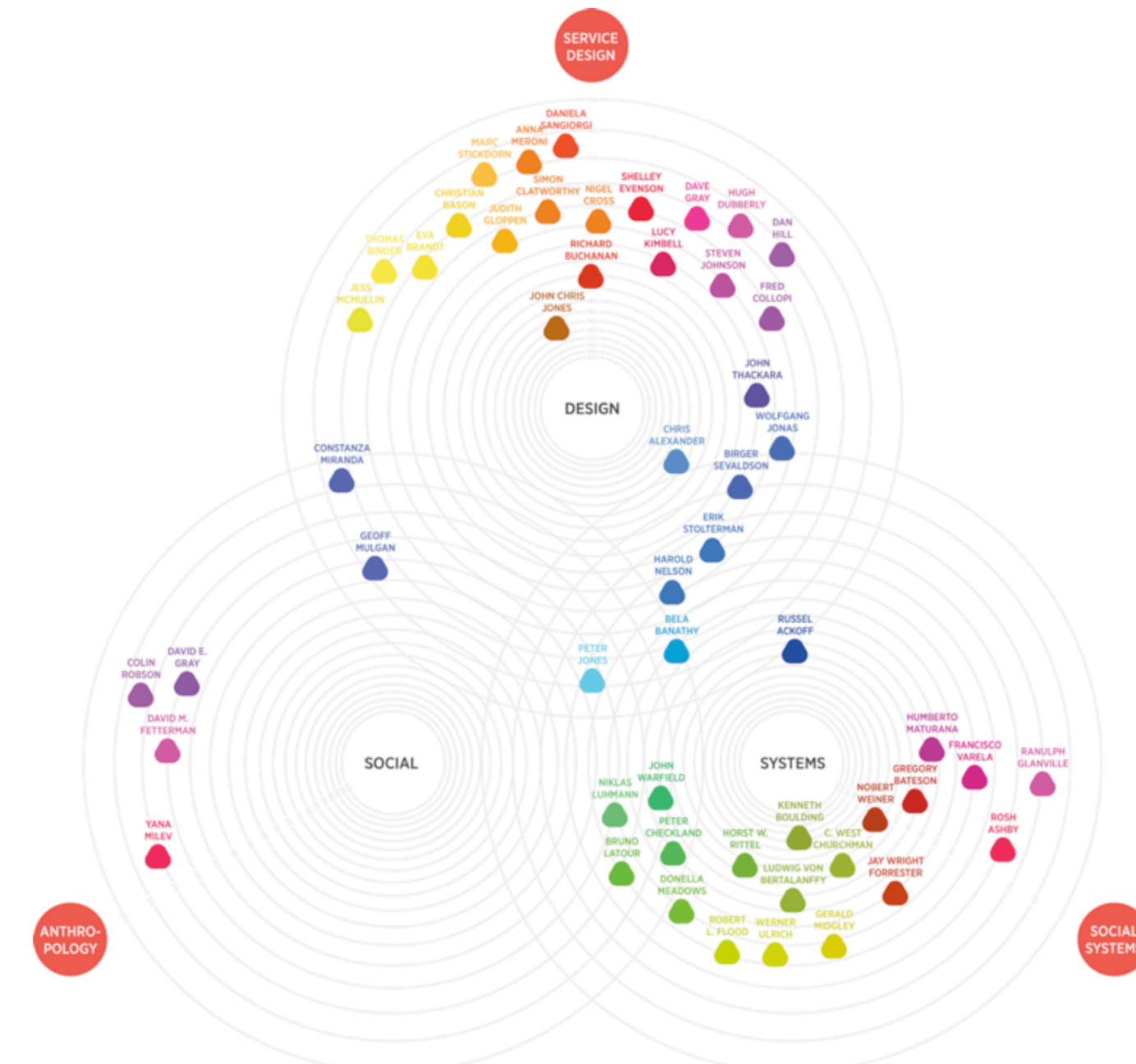
# Positioning exploration

## Positioning the research:

in the field of Design; in the processes of co-valuing, co-organizing, co-designing, co-evaluating; for public service (output) and collective well-being (outcome).



—Aguirre Ulloa, 2020, 91

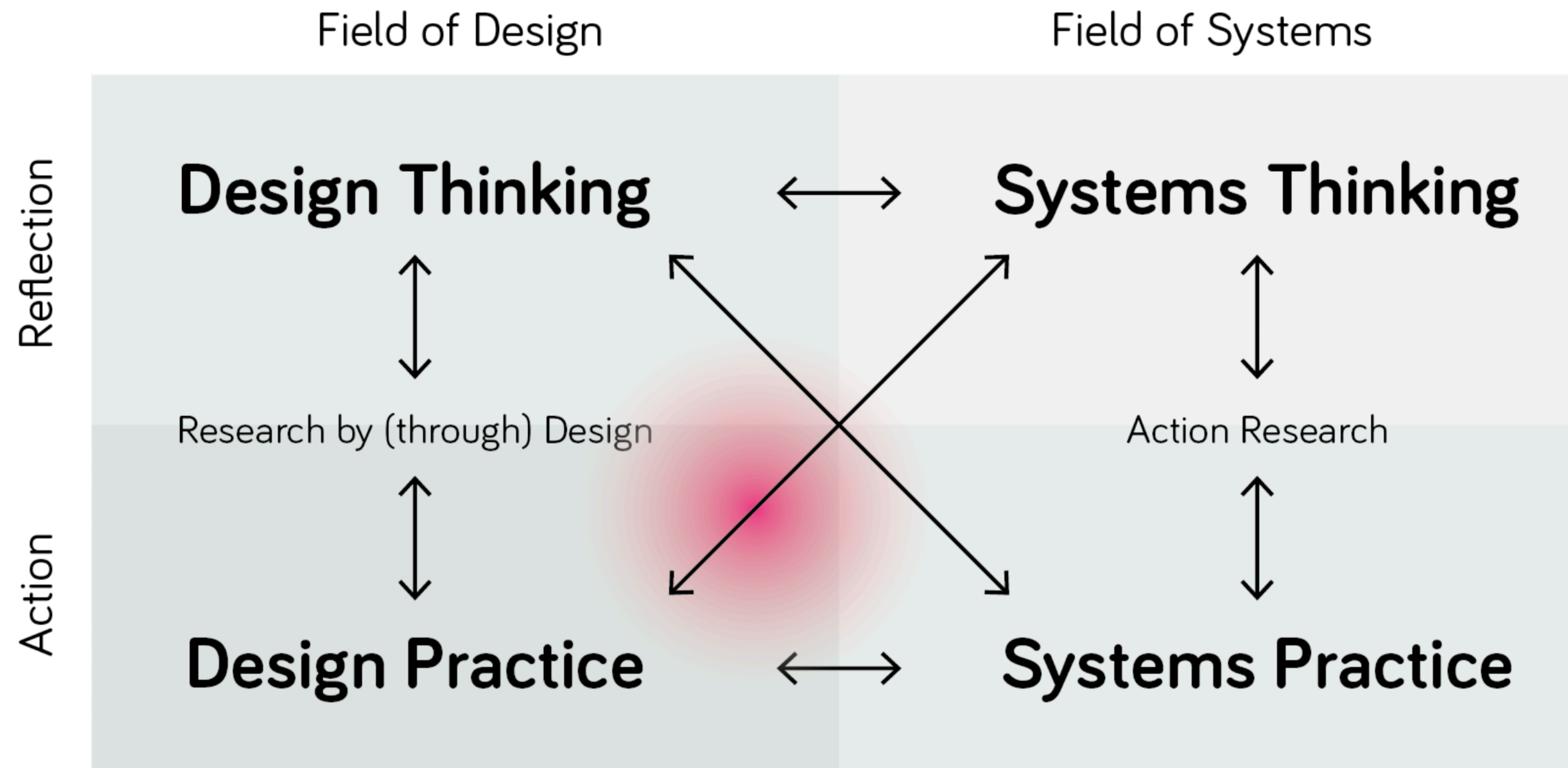


—Aguirre Ulloa, 2020, 75-76





# Systems Oriented Design



**Systemic Design**

(Sevaldson, Nelson, Jones, Ryan)

**Soft Systems Methodology**

(Checkland)

**Critical Systems Thinking**

(Ulrich, Midgley)

**Gestalt Psychology**

(Koffka)

**Visual Thinking**

(Arnheim)

**Second order cybernetics**

(Glanville)

Fields SOD draws from

## *Systems Oriented Design (SOD) as an umbrella to bring disparate disciplinary fields together*

**Systemic:** "Everything is part of a system and everything is a system" (Sevaldson 2017 n.p.).

**Relational:** "Look beyond the object, and shift the attention from the object to relations" (ibid.).

**Dynamic:** "What seems stable just moves very slowly" (ibid.).

**Holistic:** The whole is other than the sum of its parts (ibid.; Koffka 1963)

**Consequential:** We design our understanding of systems, which, in turn, changes the system of inquiry.

Fields I draw from through a SOD lens

**Co-Design**

(Banathy, Sanders & Stappers, Ehn, Björgvinsson, Hillgren, Steen )

**Organisational Design**

(Burns et al., Sangiorgi, Junginger, Buchanan)

**Organizational culture**

(Schein, Levy, Hofstede)

**Interdisciplinary & intercultural relations**

(Kimbell, Barry et al)

**Panarchy adaptive cycles**

(Holling et al)



# Systems Oriented Design

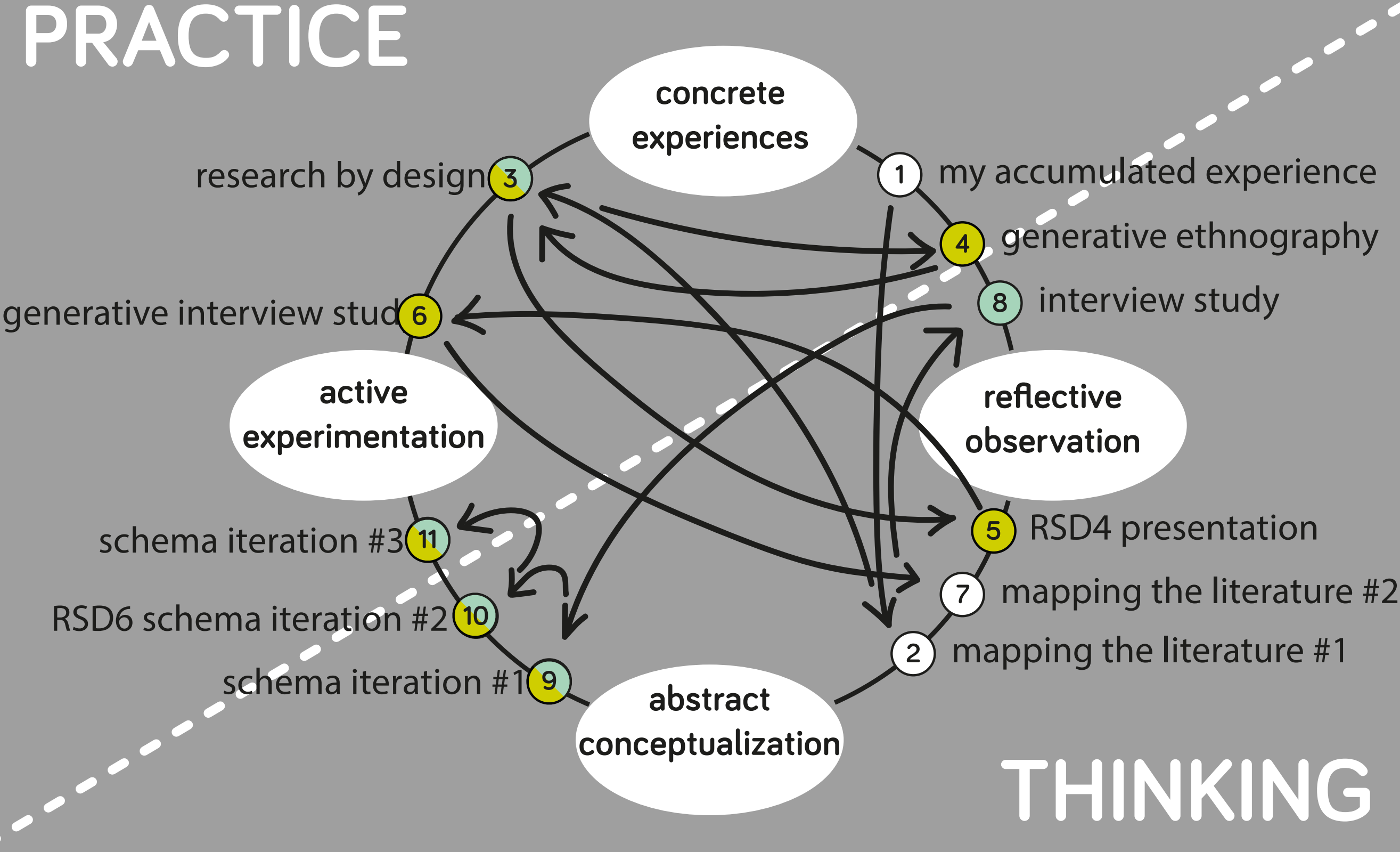


## Research by design



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## PRACTICE

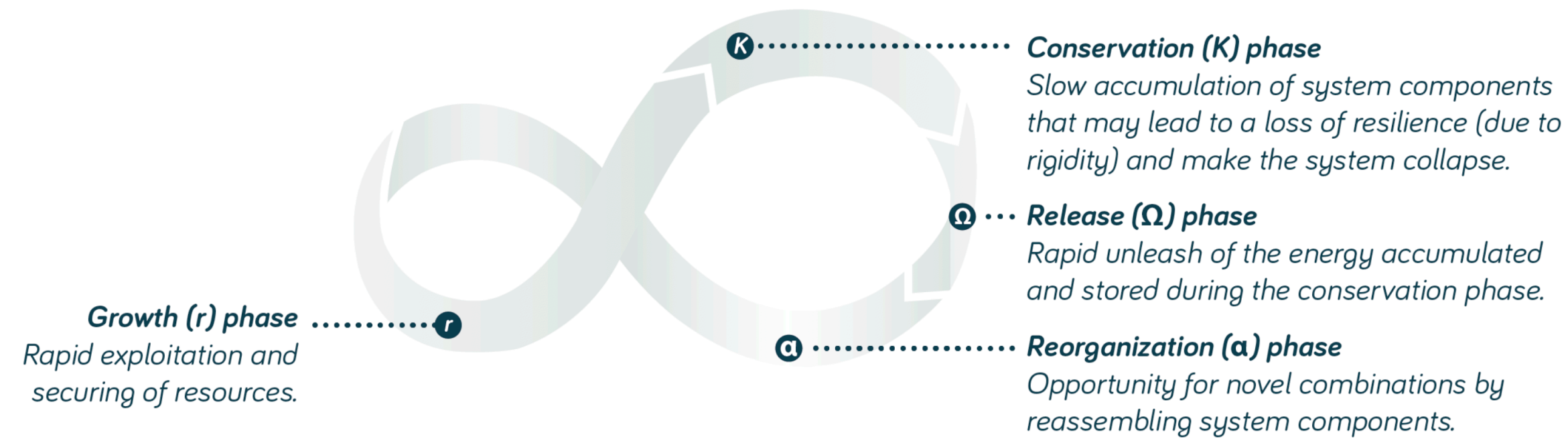
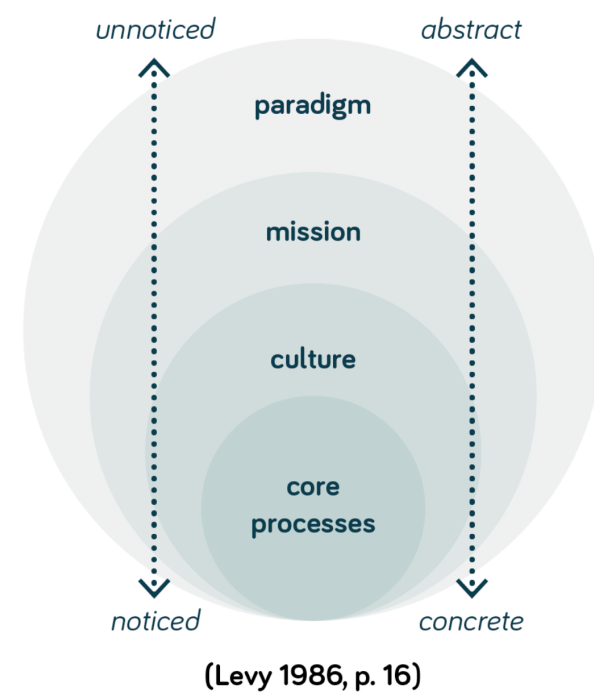
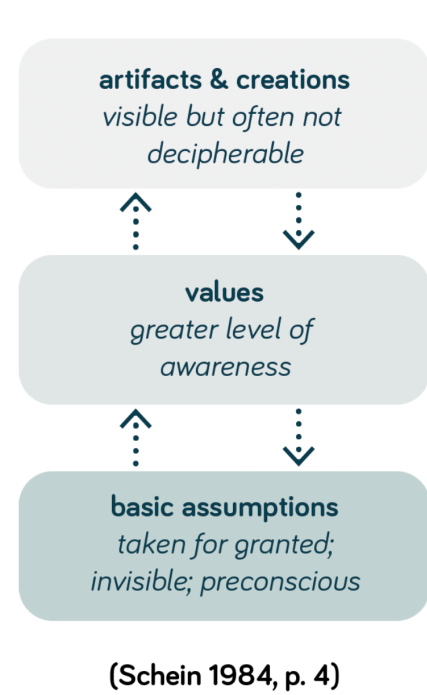
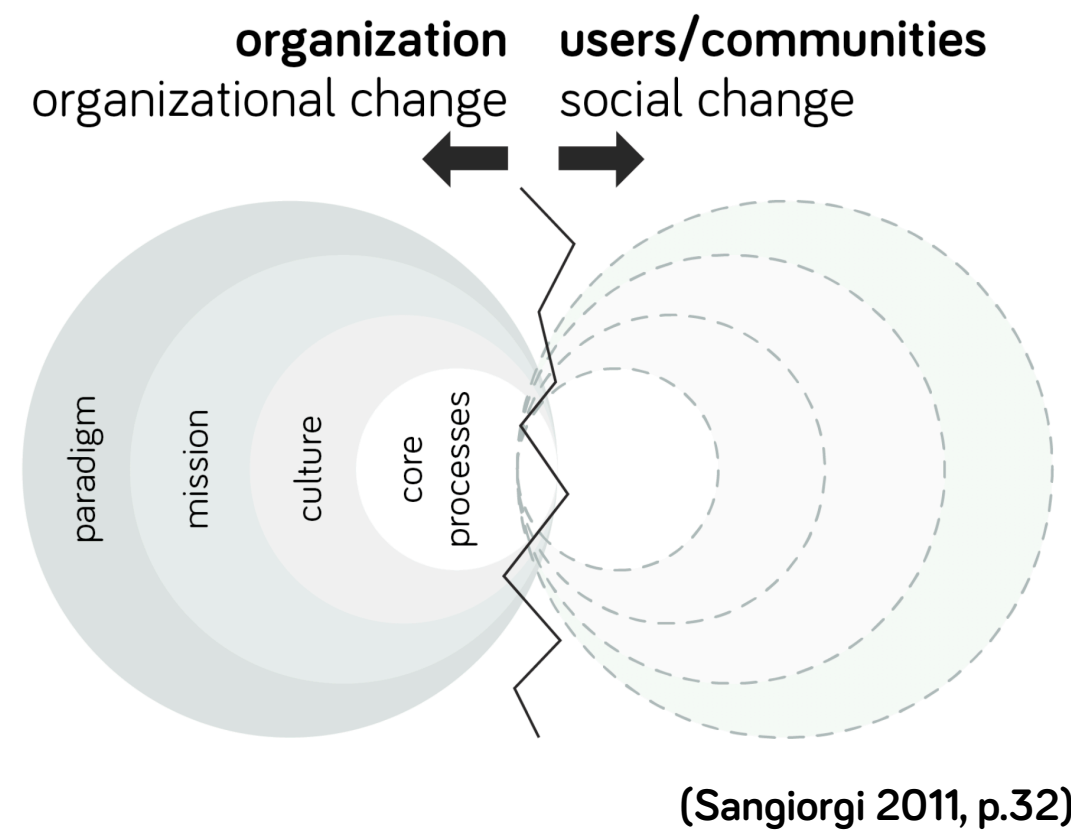


## THINKING

—Aguirre Ulloa, 2020, 64 (based on Kolb 1984, 2015)

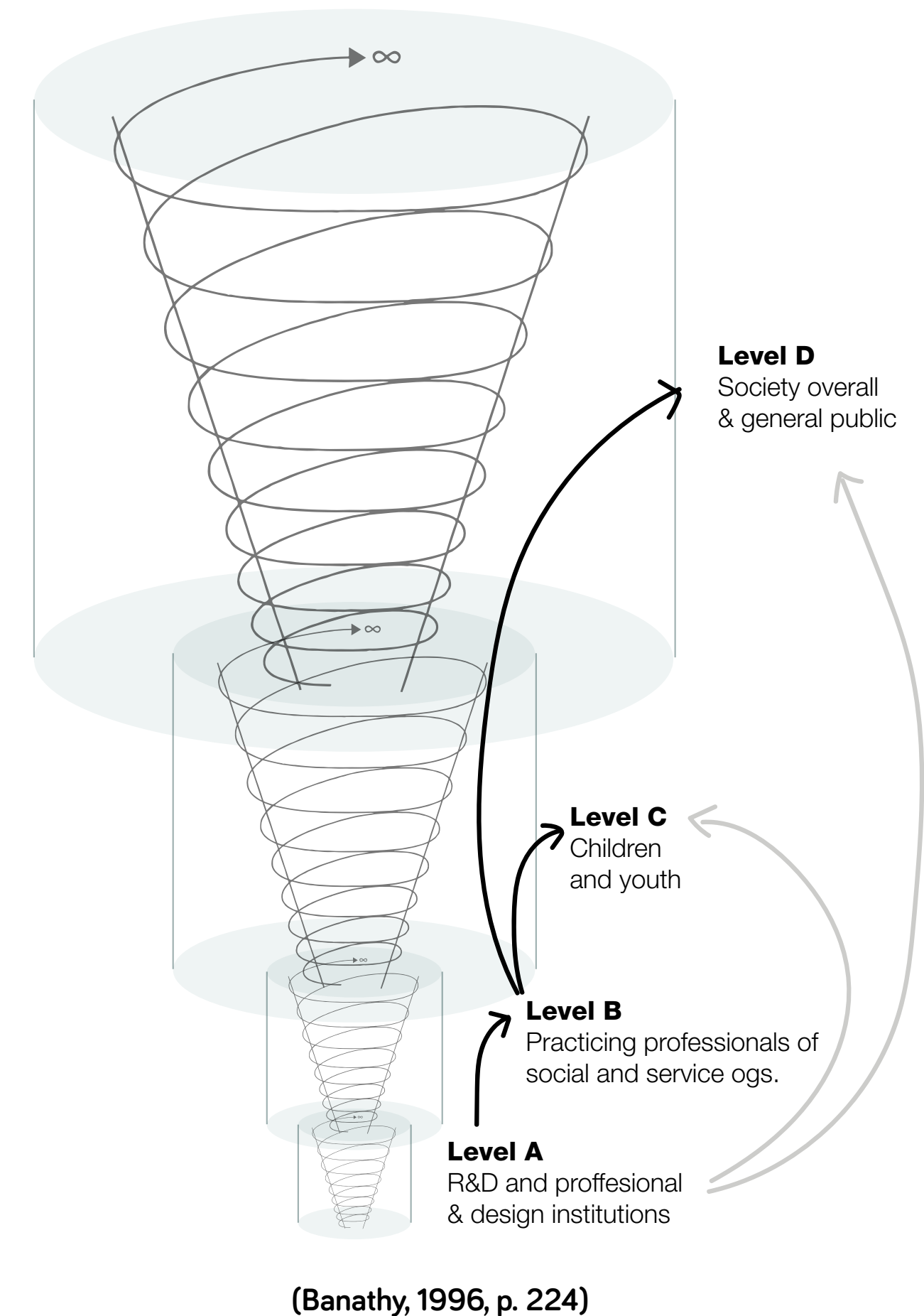


# Theoretical assembly



(C.S. Holling et al., 2002; Allen et al., 2014)

	 <b>accountability</b> <i>disciplinary autonomy</i>	 <b>innovation</b> <i>disciplinary integration</i>	 <b>transformation</b> <i>disciplinary emergence</i>
<b>Barry et al. (2008)</b>	subordination-service mode	integrative-synthesis mode	agonistic-antagonistic mode
<b>Kimbell (2015)</b>	service mode	partnering mode	challenging mode
<b>power</b>	[ + ] positive assymetry	[ + ] positive symmetry	[ + & - ] unstable oscillations
<b>relationship</b>	one discipline serves the other	disciplines partner together	disciplines challenge each other
<b>disciplinary characteristics</b>	disciplinary autonomy	disciplinary integration	disciplinary emergence
<b>motivations for joining-up</b>	accountability	innovation	radical re-ordering
<b>example in relation to design</b> (Kimbell, 2016)	design used as styling	design partners for new hybrid ways of doing things	design enables the conditions to reflect on fundamental assumptions



Tools for understanding  
**cultural dynamics**

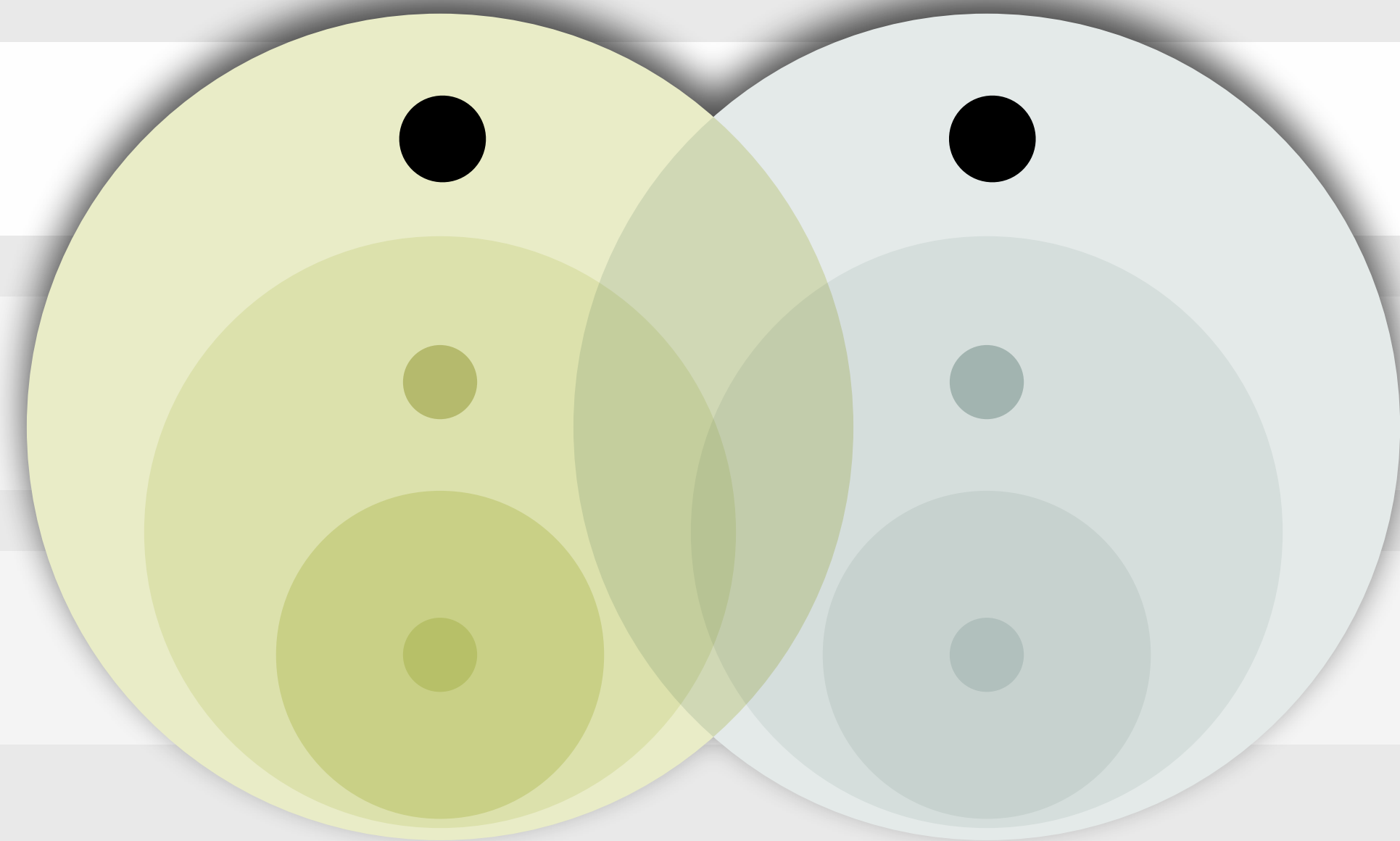
# Rippling Model



**emerging culture**  
co-design

**dominant culture**  
public organization

# Rippling Model



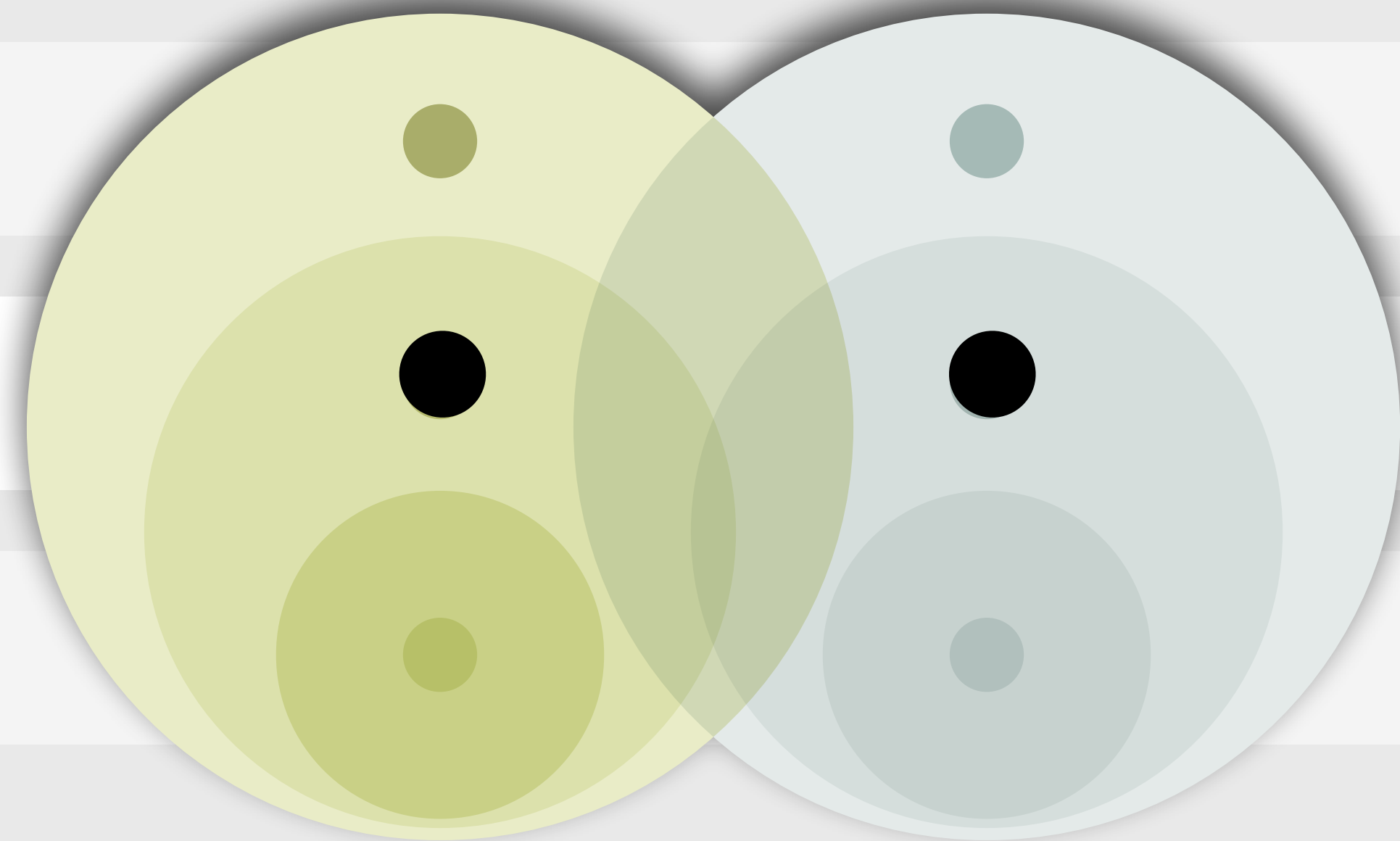
**Physical** surface dimension

**emerging culture**  
co-design

**dominant culture**  
public organization



# Rippling Model

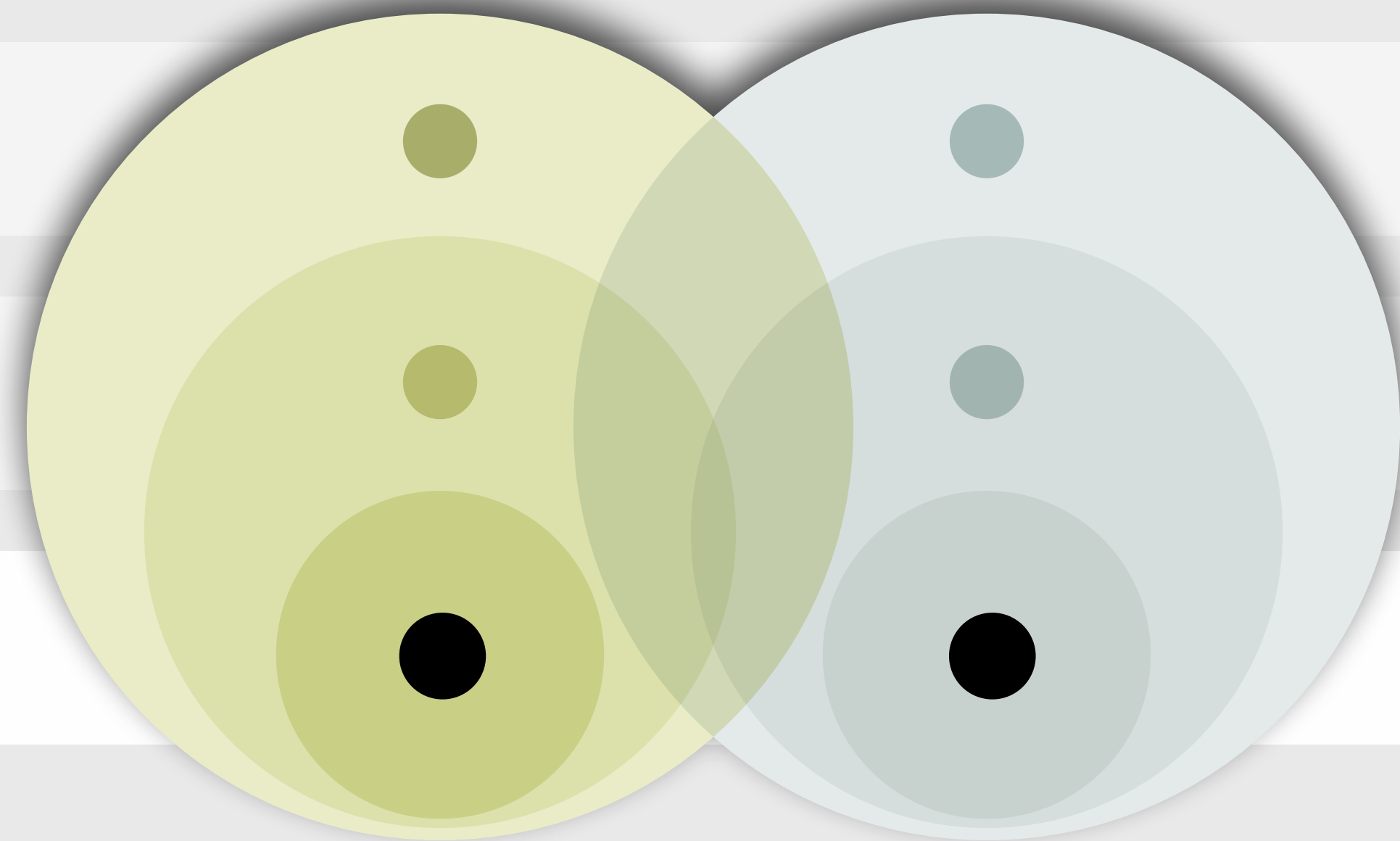


**emerging culture**  
co-design

**dominant culture**  
public organization

**Pactice** inner dimension

# Rippling Model

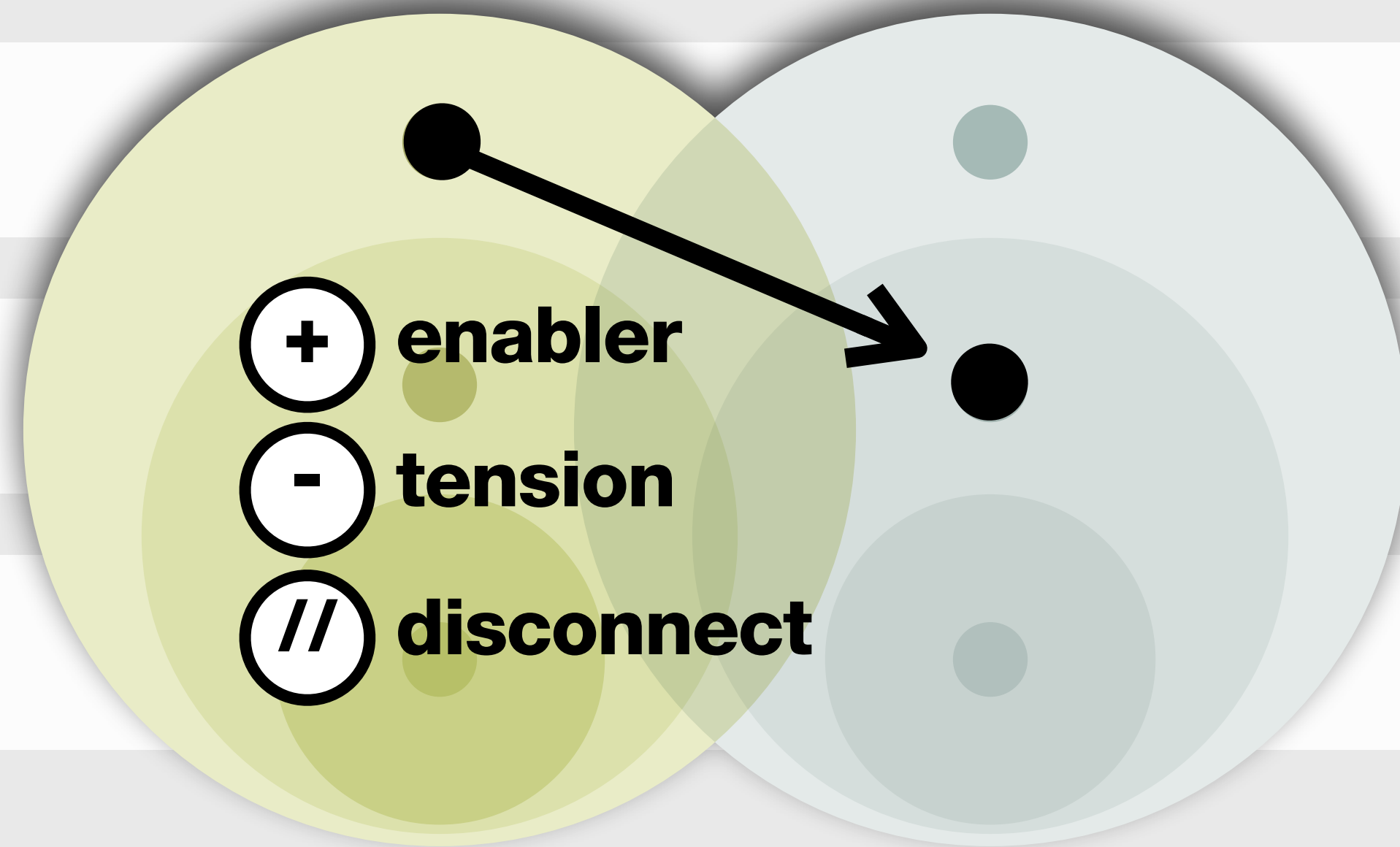


**emerging culture**  
co-design

**dominant culture**  
public organization

**Paradigm** core dimension

# Rippling Model



**emerging culture**  
co-design

**dominant culture**  
public organization

**Physical** surface dimension

**Practice** inner dimension

**Paradigm** core dimension

# Rippling Model

**Physical** surface dimension



**emerging culture**  
co-design

**dominant culture**  
public organization



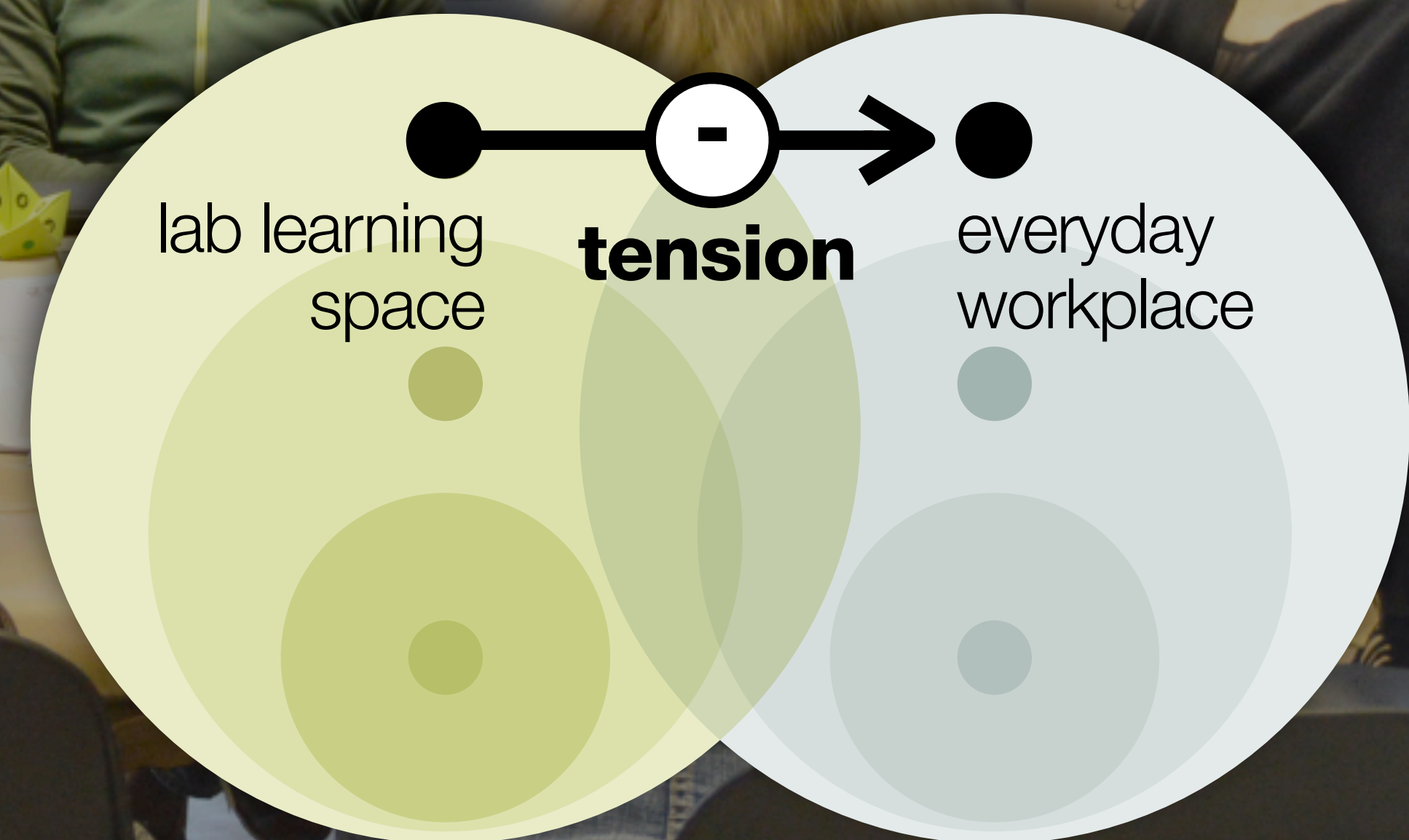
physical dimension

# Rippling

“ Fifth Space was like a bubble not connected to reality.

*(Authorizer, Fifth Space)*

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**emerging**  
co-designing culture

**dominant**  
organizational culture

—Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 178



physical dimension

# Rippling

Fresh business cards for your **new role** as a Fifth Space Fellow

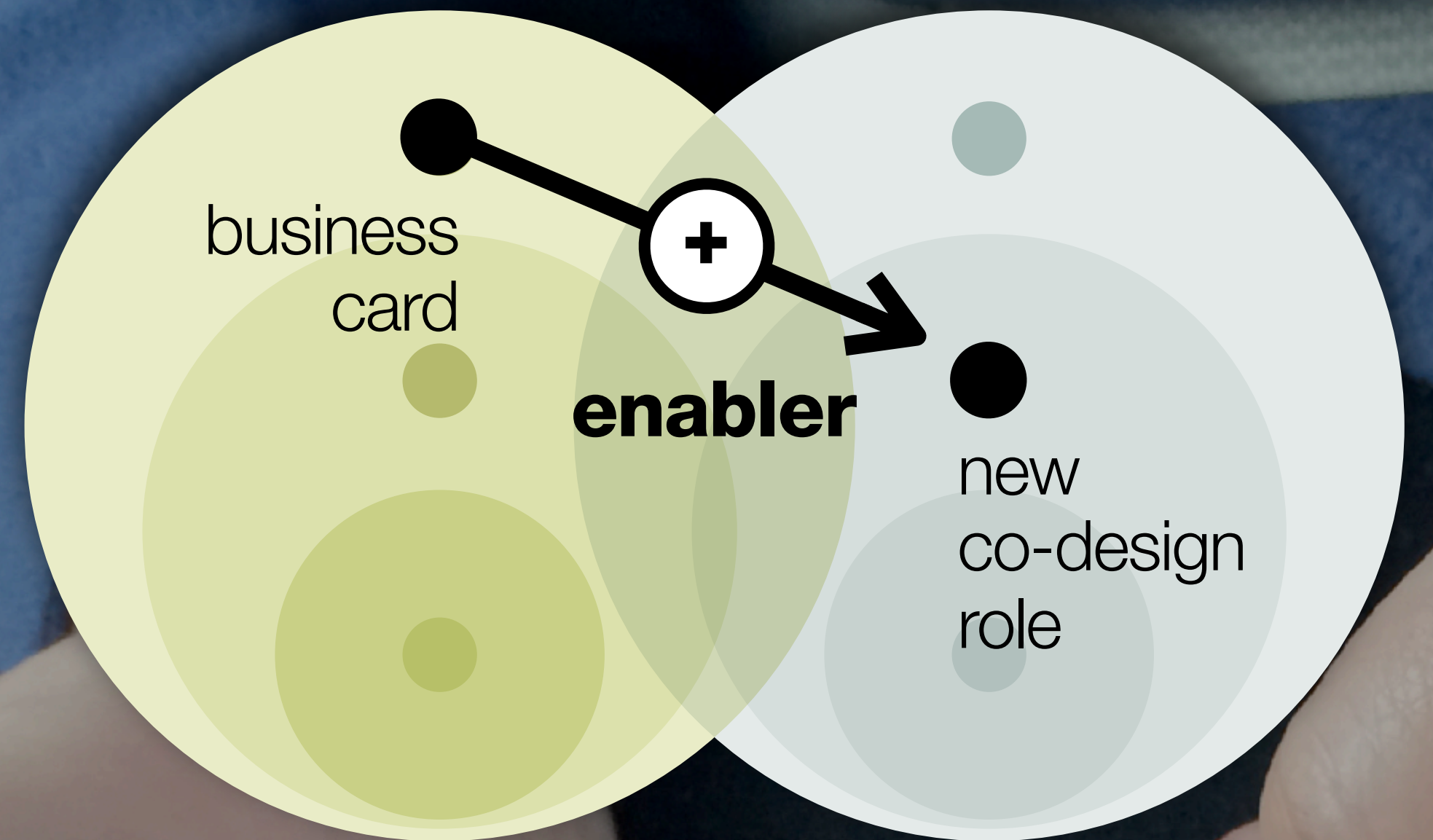
Dear Lisa,

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**You've been accepted into the Fifth Space, and we are incredibly excited to have you!**

whole new role & function. Whoa!

**It's a chance to make things happen!**



**emerging**  
co-designing culture

**dominant**  
organizational culture

—Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 176

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# Rippling Model



**emerging culture**  
co-design

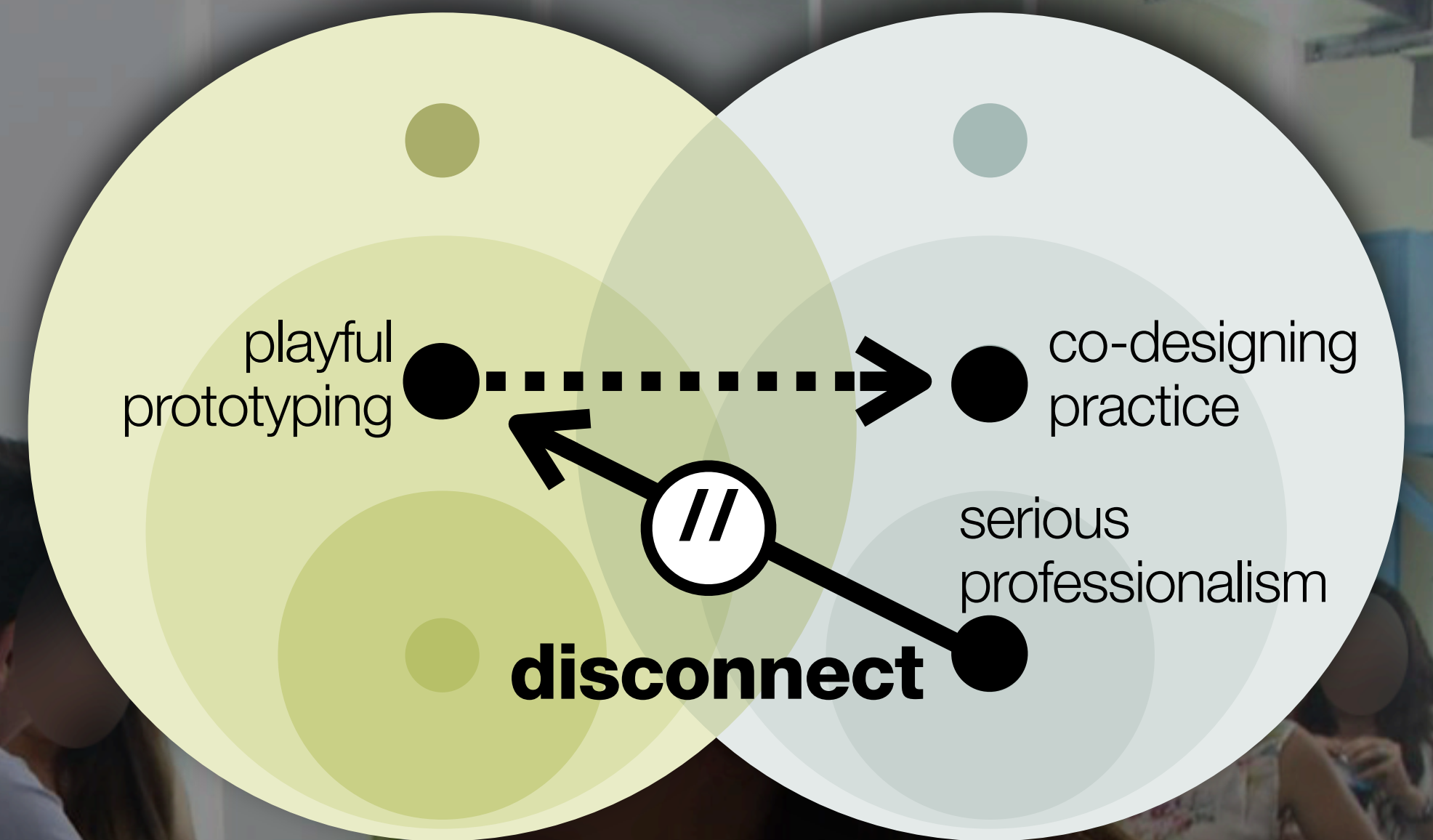
**dominant culture**  
public organization

**Pactice** inner dimension



practice dimension

# Rippling



**“ This is childish and we’re working with a sensitive topic. I’m a public servant, a serious person; I cannot be playing around like this.**

*(Lab team member about a participant, Experimenta)*

**emerging**  
co-designing culture

**dominant**  
organizational culture

—Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 183

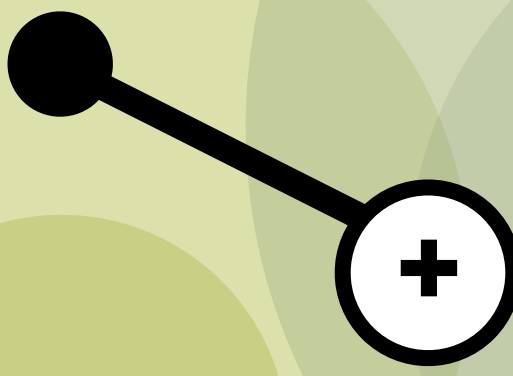


practice dimension

# Rippling



collective  
contrasting  
experience



**enabler**

co-designing  
mindset

**emerging**  
co-designing culture

**dominant**  
organizational culture

—Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 181

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# Rippling Model



**emerging culture**  
co-design

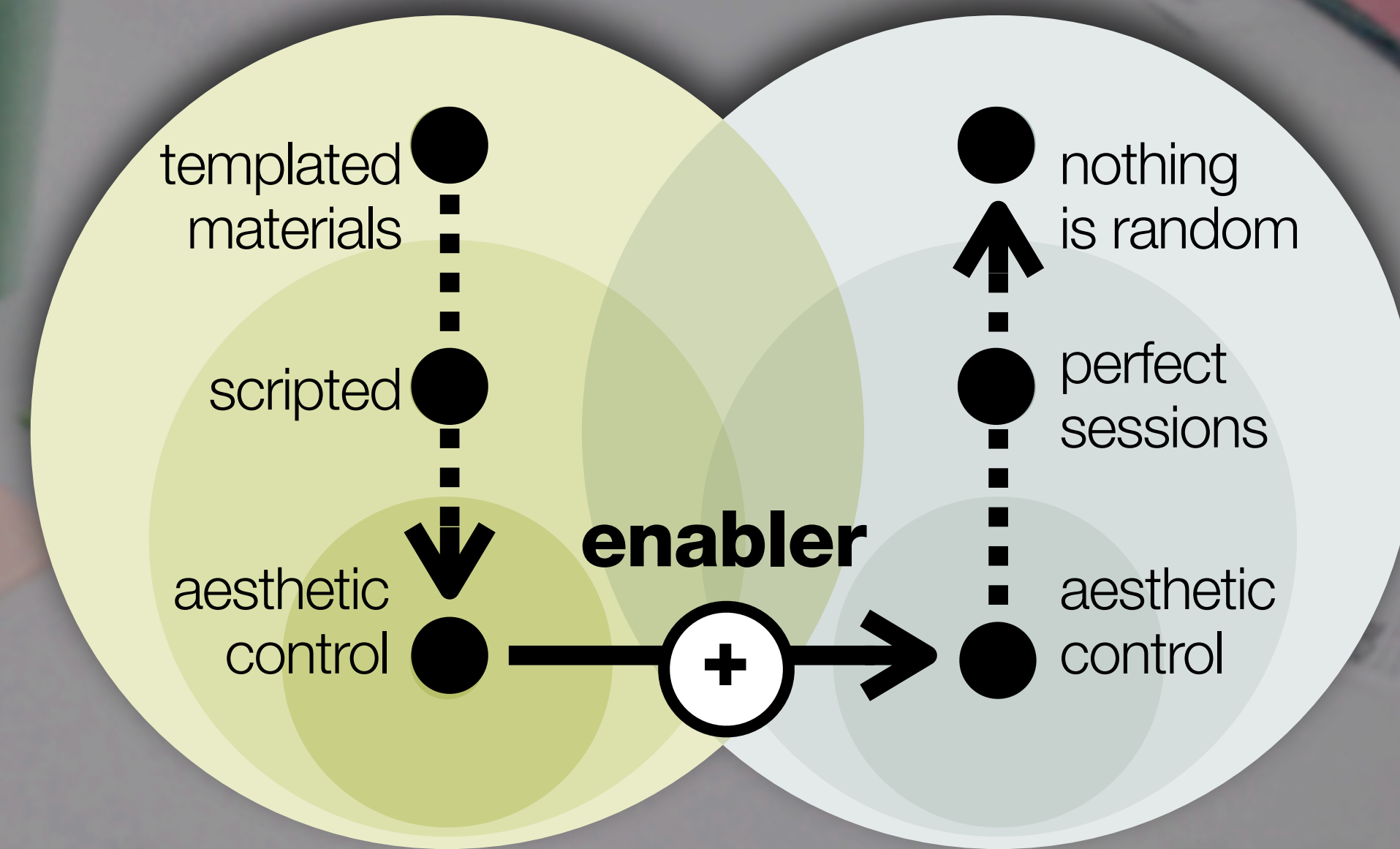
**dominant culture**  
public organization

**Paradigm** core dimension



# Ripppling

paradigm dimension



**emerging**  
co-designing culture

**dominant**  
organizational culture

—Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 187



**RQ1**



**RQ2**



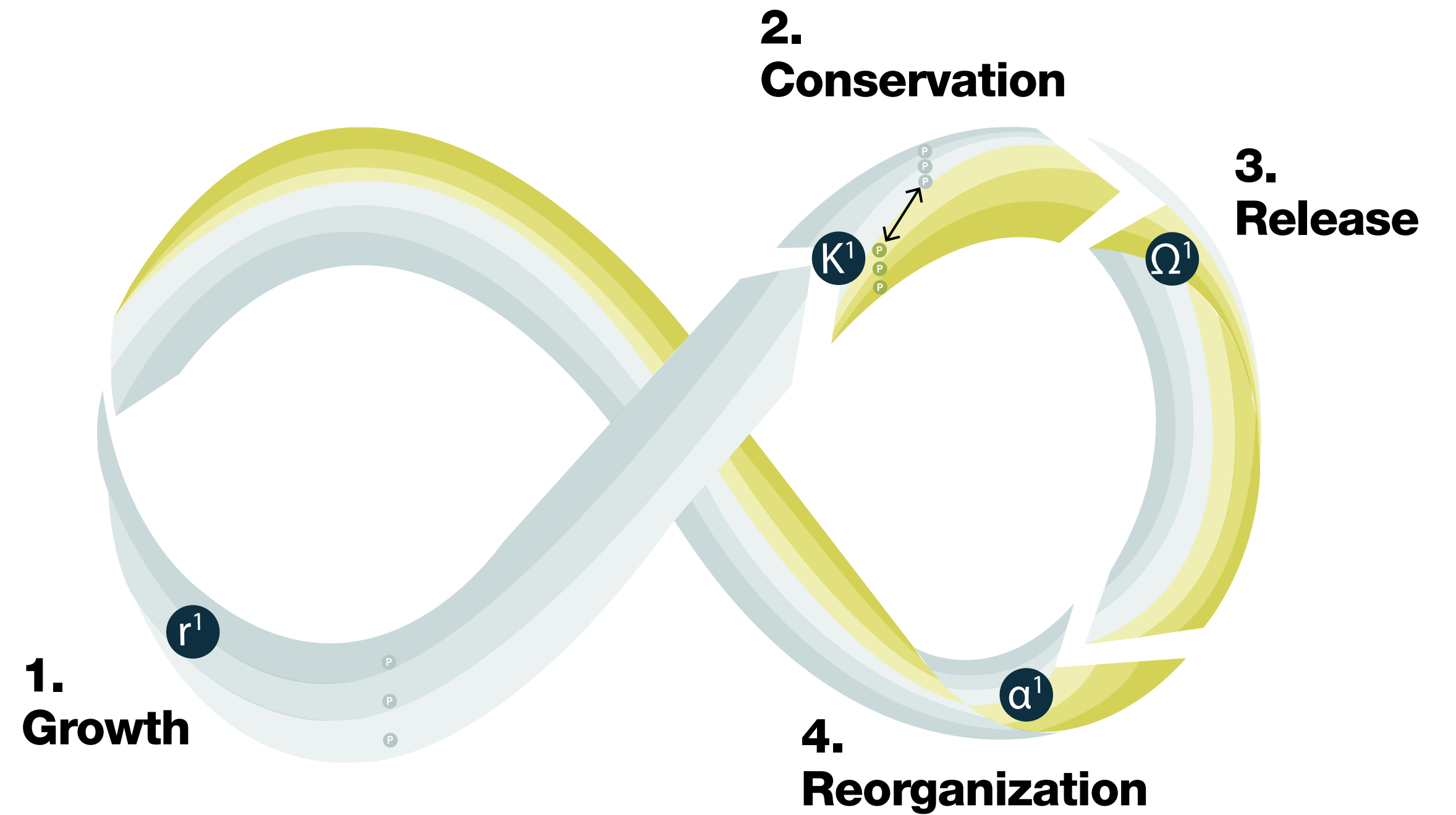
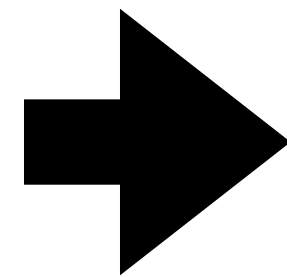
# Rippling Ecosystem

From static to dynamic



**emerging culture**  
co-design

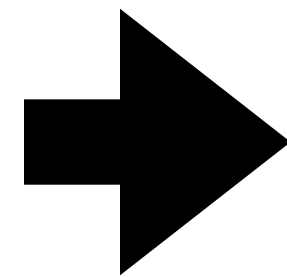
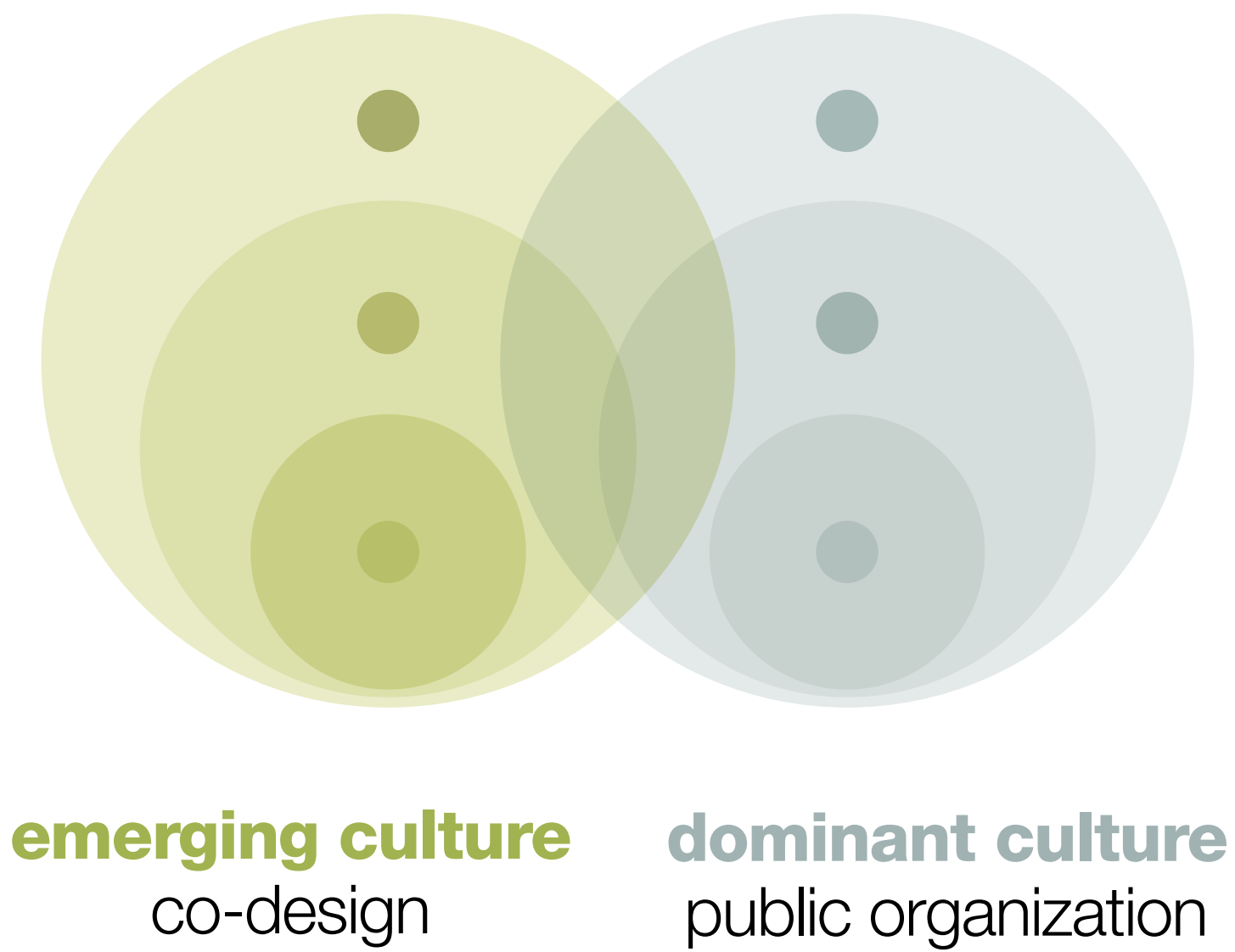
**dominant culture**  
public organization





# Rippling Ecosystem

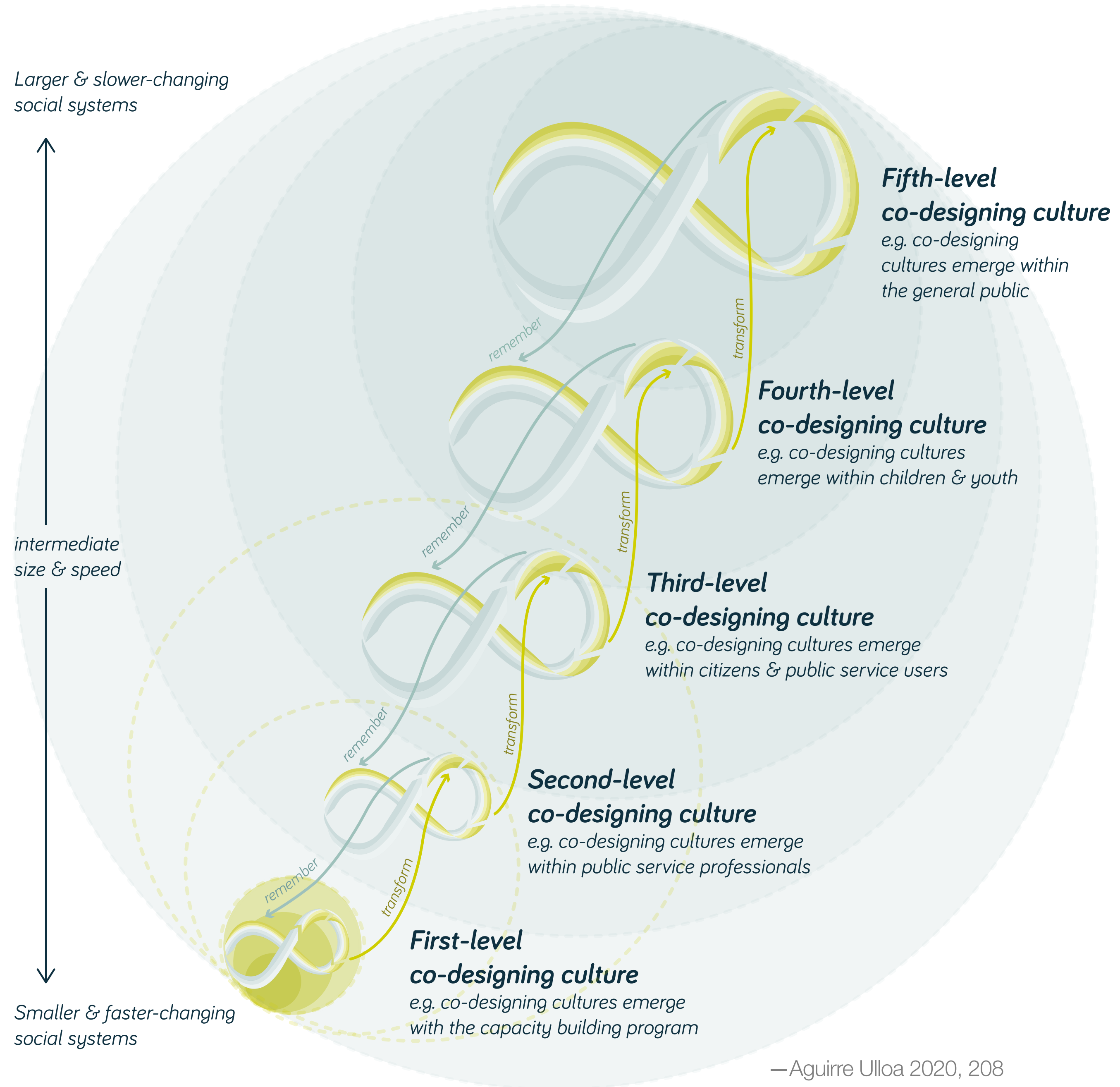
From binary to embedded



Larger & slower-changing  
social systems

intermediate  
size & speed

Smaller & faster-changing  
social systems

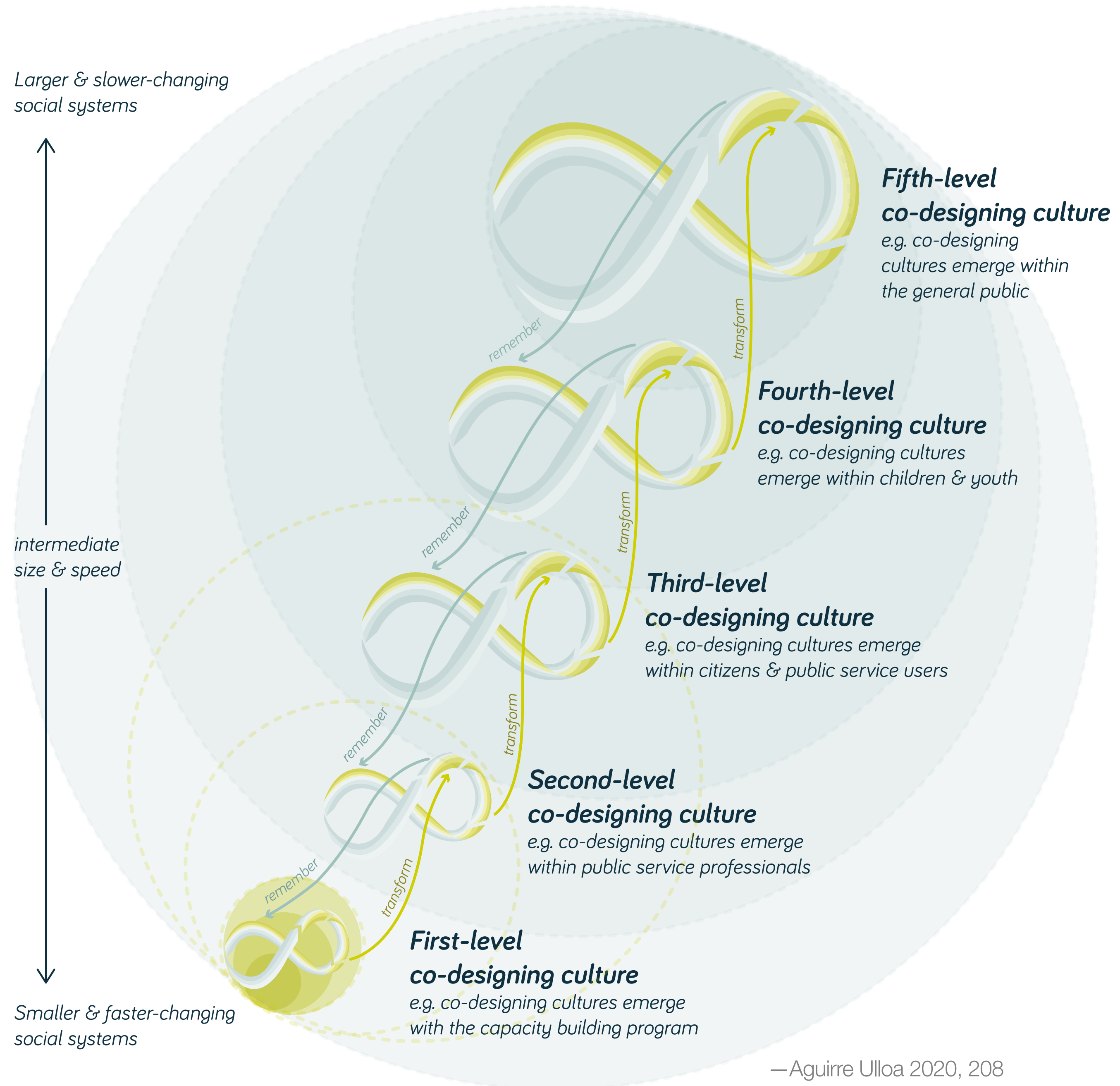
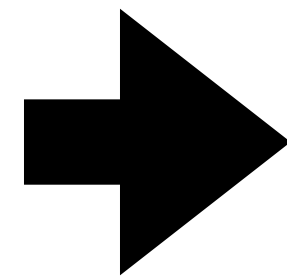


# Rippling Ecosystem

From serving “others” to our multiplicity of roles

“ We, designers, public service providers, service users, and citizens are the roles from which we, the system, affect the systems that affect us.

—Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 215

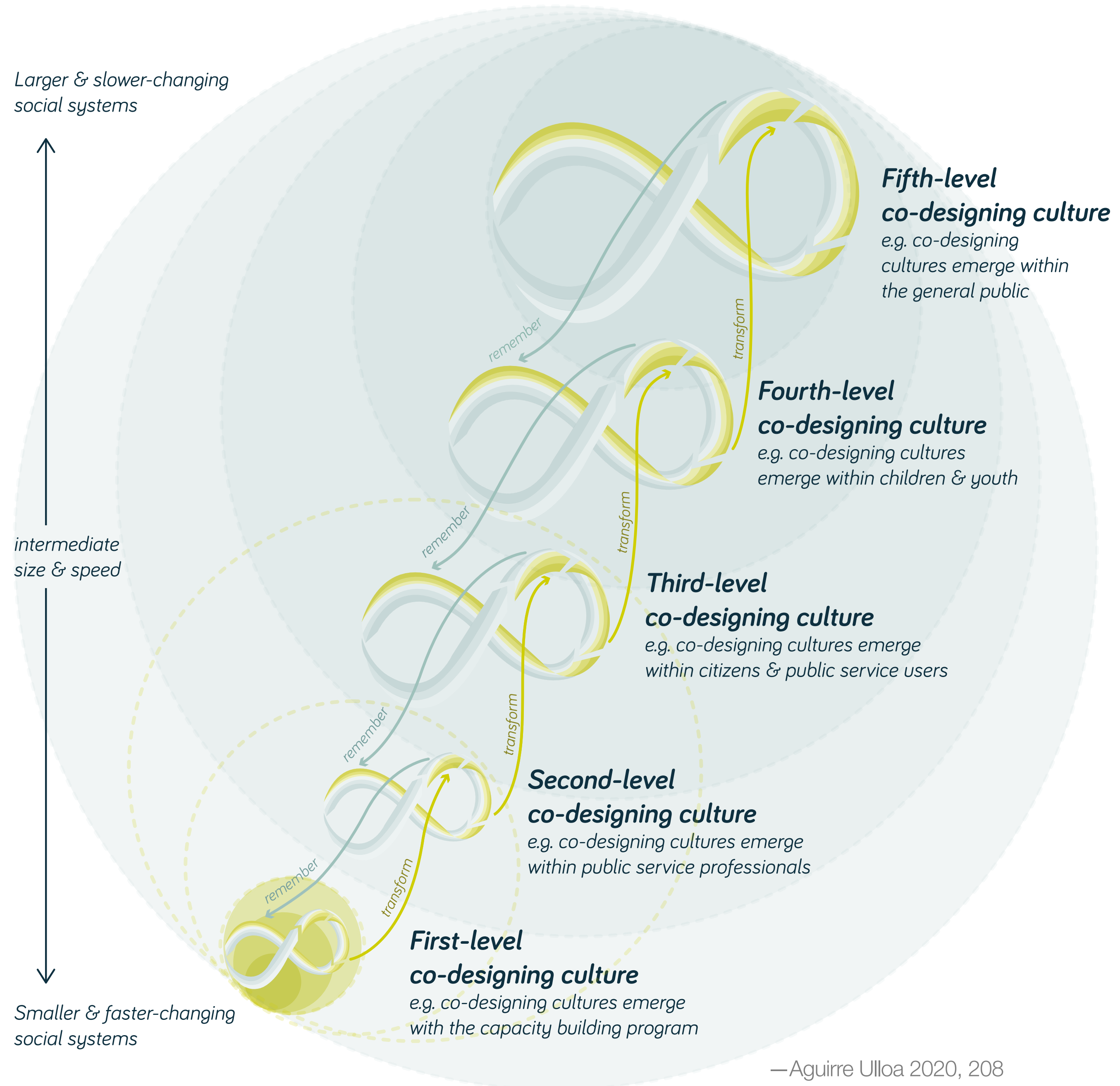




# Rippling Ecosystem

**Transform:** Bottom-up emerging influence that allows for renewal and innovation in the ecosystem

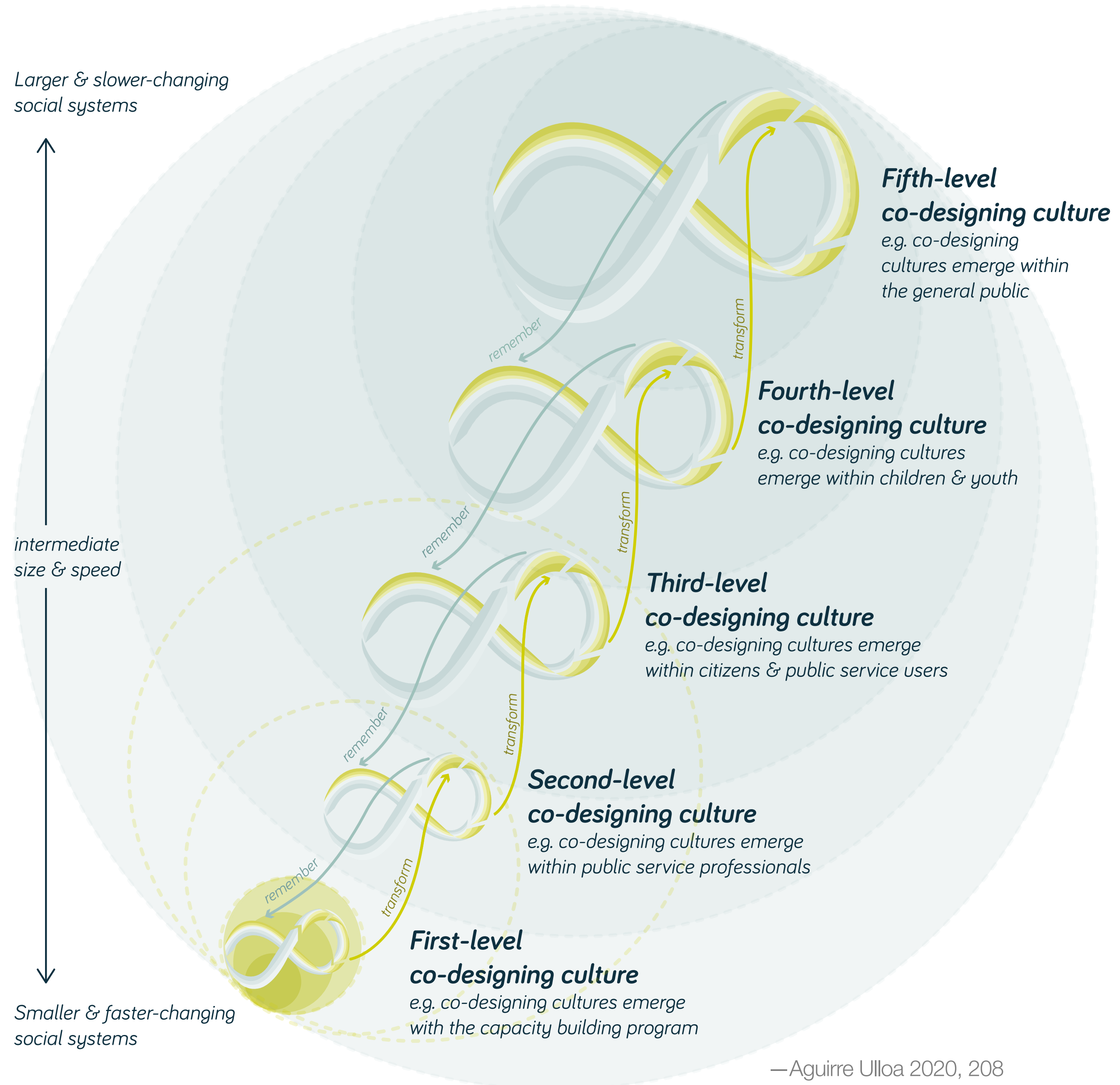
**Remember:** Top-down dominant influence that allows for stability & continuity in the ecosystem



# Rippling Ecosystem

“ A dynamic multilevel model of culture as a means for social transformation, one that intertwines the **spreading of emerging cultures** with the **remembering of dominant cultures**.

—Aguirre Ulloa 2020, 214

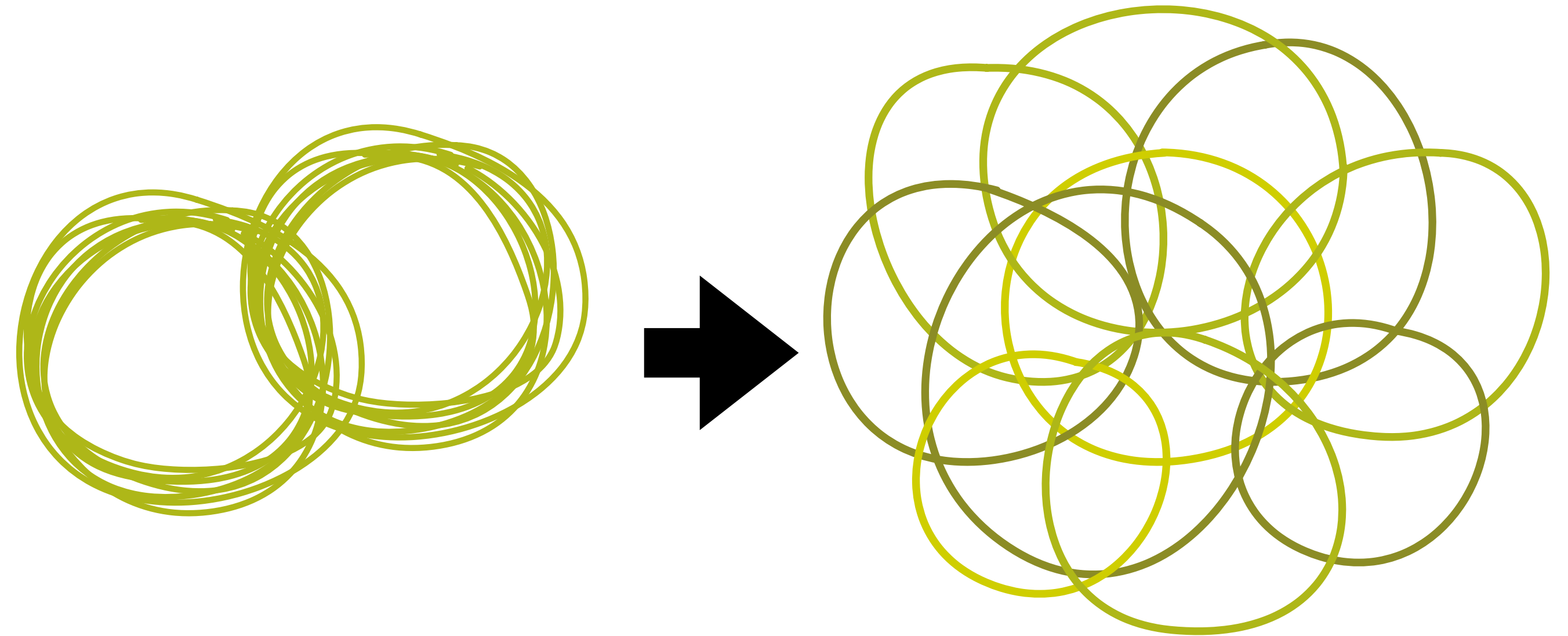




# Future research to keep exploring...

How might a co-designing  
community productively sustain a  
**plurality of paradigms?**

How might we leverage the practice  
dimension more in design to **expose**  
**and contrast** paradigms?



**Thank you!**



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