



Faculty of Design

2020

Rethinking innovation labs for complex adaptive systems going through release and reorganization

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Rethinking innovation labs for complex adaptive systems going through release and reorganization

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**Waterloo Institute for Social
Innovation & Resilience**

University of Waterloo

October 2020

- **change lab** e.g. Westley, Goebey & Robinson, 2012
- **social lab** e.g. Hassan, 2014
- **living lab** e.g. European Network of Living Labs
- **design lab** e.g. Westley, Goebey & Robinson, 2012
- **social innovation lab** e.g. Westley et al., 2015
- **systemic innovation lab** e.g. Zivkovic, 2018

A lab is “a process, one that is intended to support multi-stakeholder groups in addressing a complex social problem.”

Westley et al., 2015

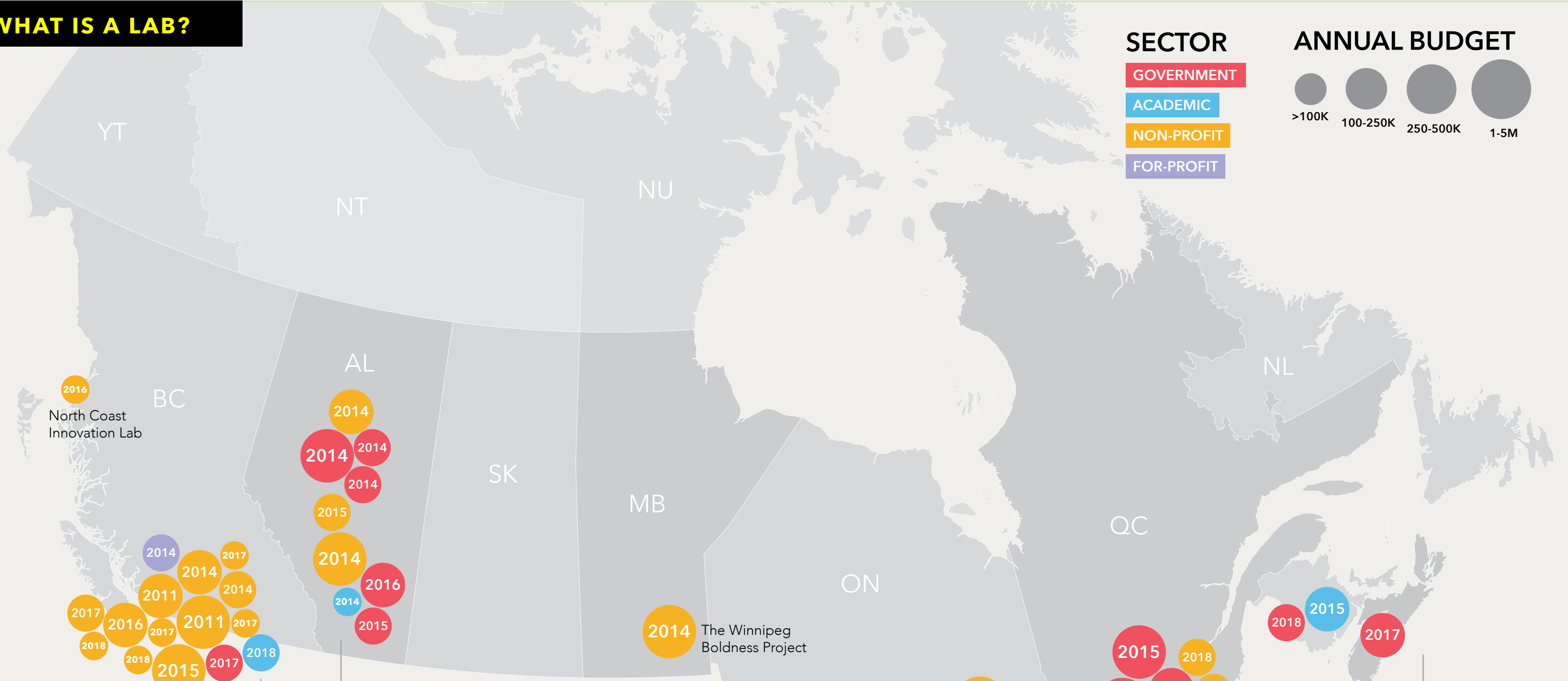
- **complex social challenges**
- **dialogue and sensemaking**
- **diverse stakeholders**
- **participatory design, design thinking, systems thinking**
- **in-person convenings**

WHAT IS A LAB?

SECTOR

- GOVERNMENT
- ACADEMIC
- NON-PROFIT
- FOR-PROFIT

ANNUAL BUDGET



VANCOUVER CLUSTER

- + CityStudio Vancouver
- + Local Economic Development Lab
- + Leverage Lab
- + Kudoz
- + Community, Economy and Place Initiative
- + City of Vancouver Solutions Lab
- + Share Reuse Repair Initiative
- + Overdose Prevention Site Lab (OPS Lab)
- + reFRESH Water Lab
- + Supply Gap Solutions Lab
- + Beyond Borders: Refugee Livelihood Lab
- + Neighbour Lab

ALBERTA CLUSTER

- + Alberta CoLab
- + Reforming the Family Justice System
- + Trico Changemakers Studio (hosts SI labs)
- + Alberta CoLab (Alberta Energy)
- + Action Lab & Shift Lab
- + Energy Futures Lab
- + Civic Innovation YYC
- + Design Lab
- + Project Blue Thumb

ONTARIO CLUSTER

- + Green Change
- + WoodGreen Innovation Hub
- + MaRS Solutions Lab
- + Hack - A New Way of Thinking
- + London Life Solutions Lab
- + Waterloo Social Innovation Lab
- + Overlap Innovation Programs
- + Food Systems Lab
- + MINDS of London-Middlesex
- + SE Futures (Toronto)
- + SE Futures (Markham)
- + Making the Shift Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab
- + Guelph Lab
- + Nourish
- + Engineering Change Lab
- + Housing Action Lab

EASTERN CLUSTER

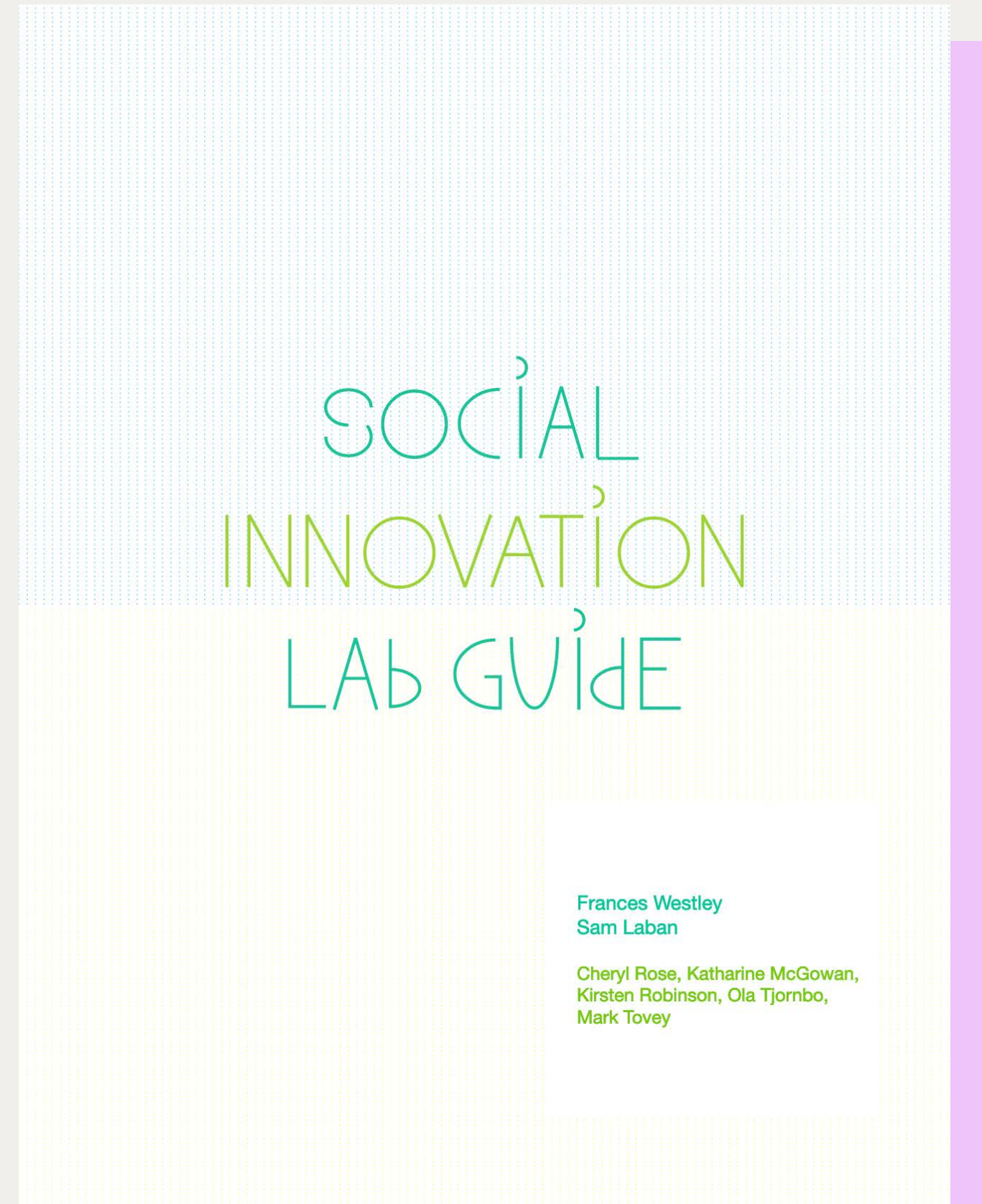
- + Digital Collab Division
- + FCM Innovation Network
- + Inclusive Culture Lab
- + Canada School of Public Service Innovation Lab
- + Smart Commons
- + ESDC Innovation Lab
- + NouLAB
- + Laboratoire d'innovation sociale de la PALC
- + NS GovLab

RADIUS, 2018

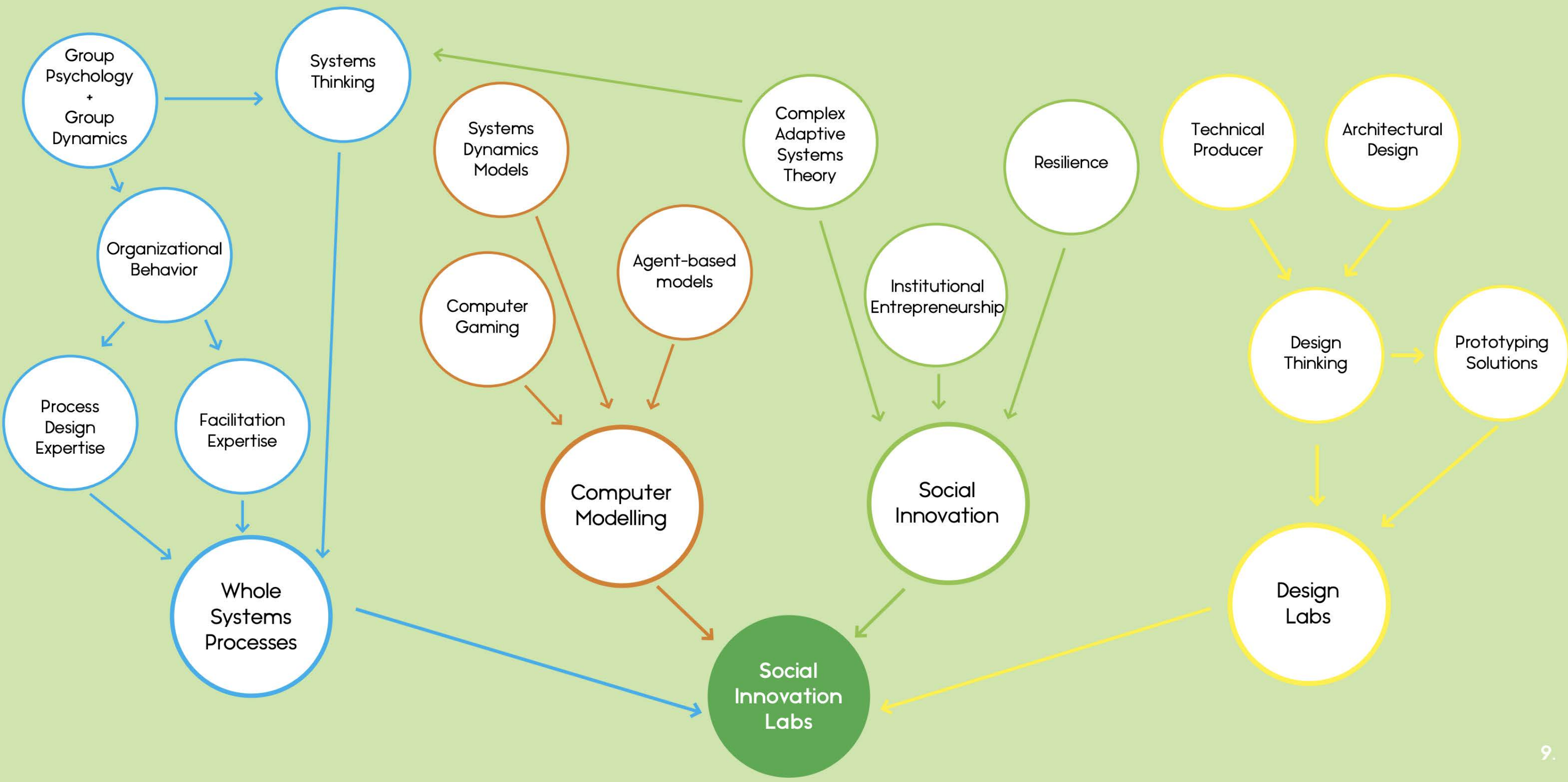
Seeing the system

Designing

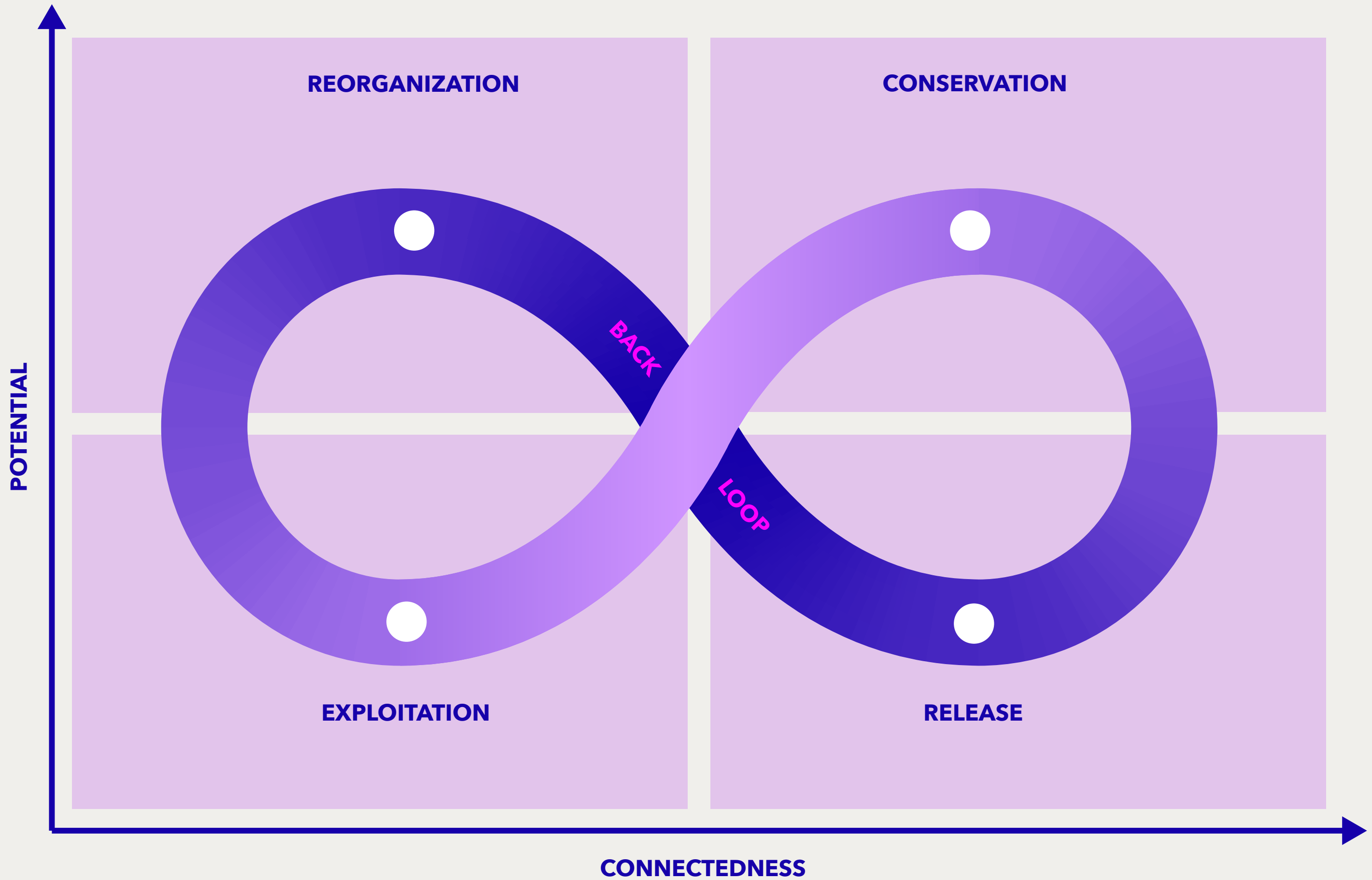
Prototyping

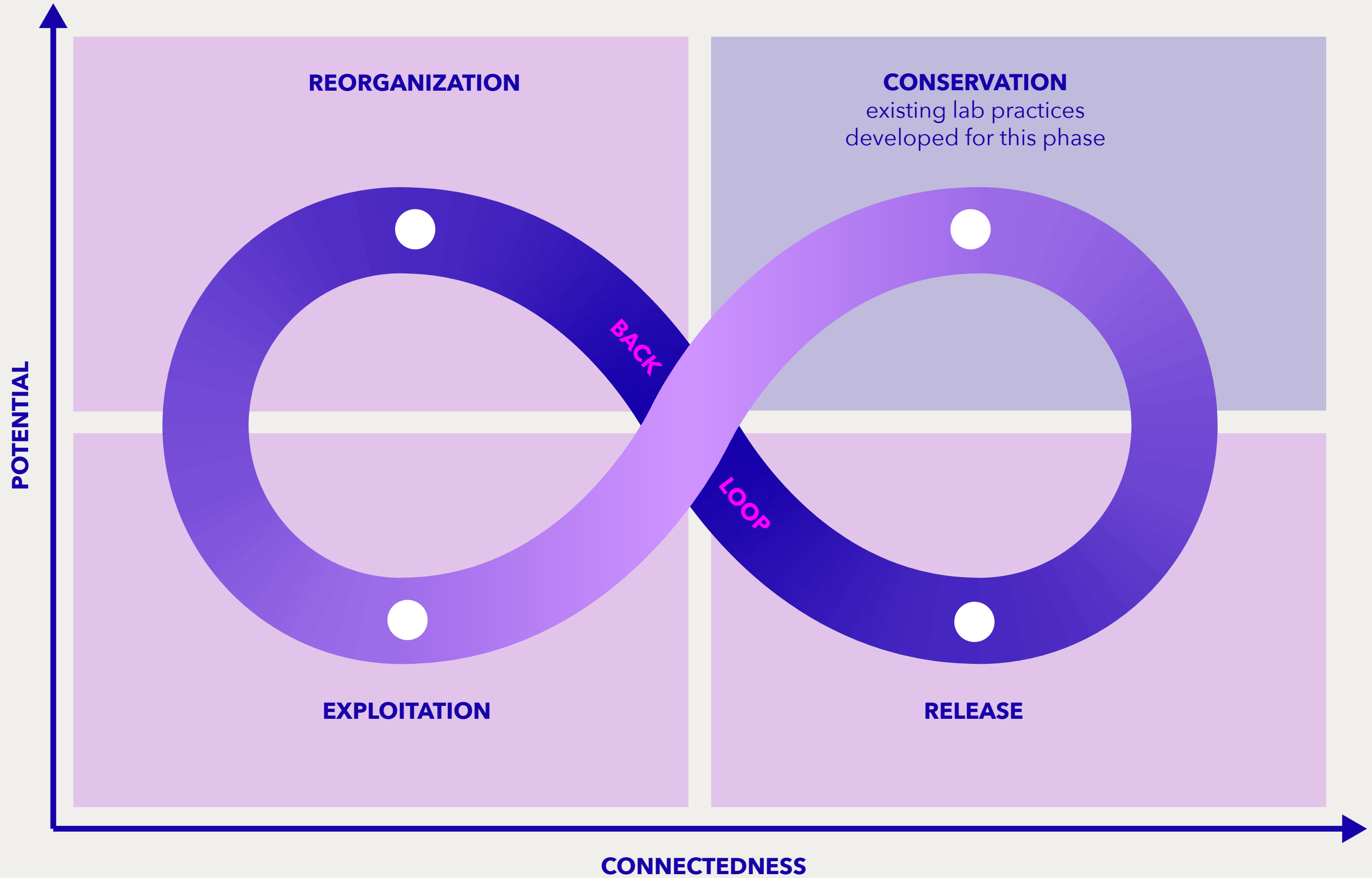


Westley et al., 2015



Westley et al., 2015



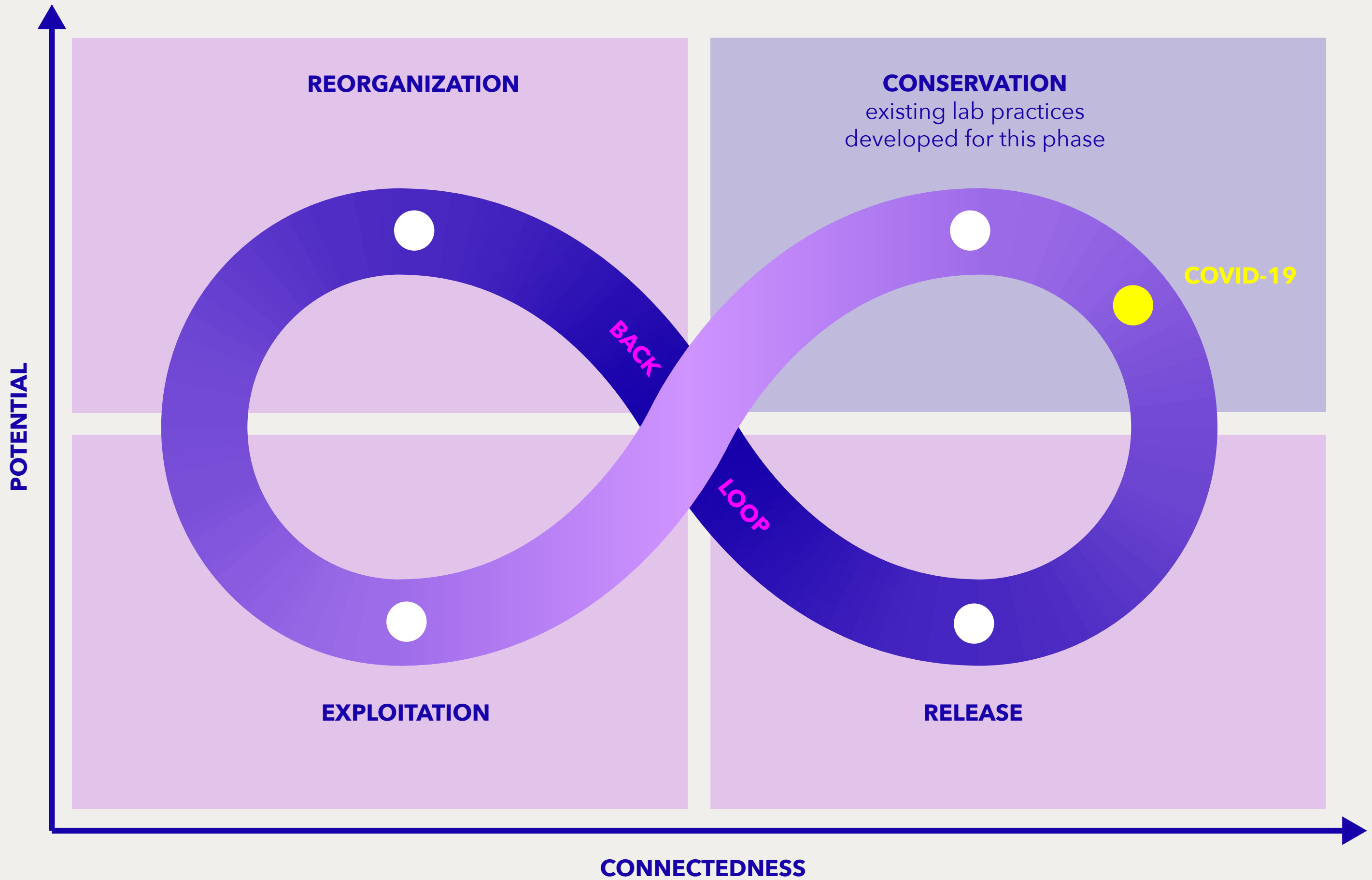


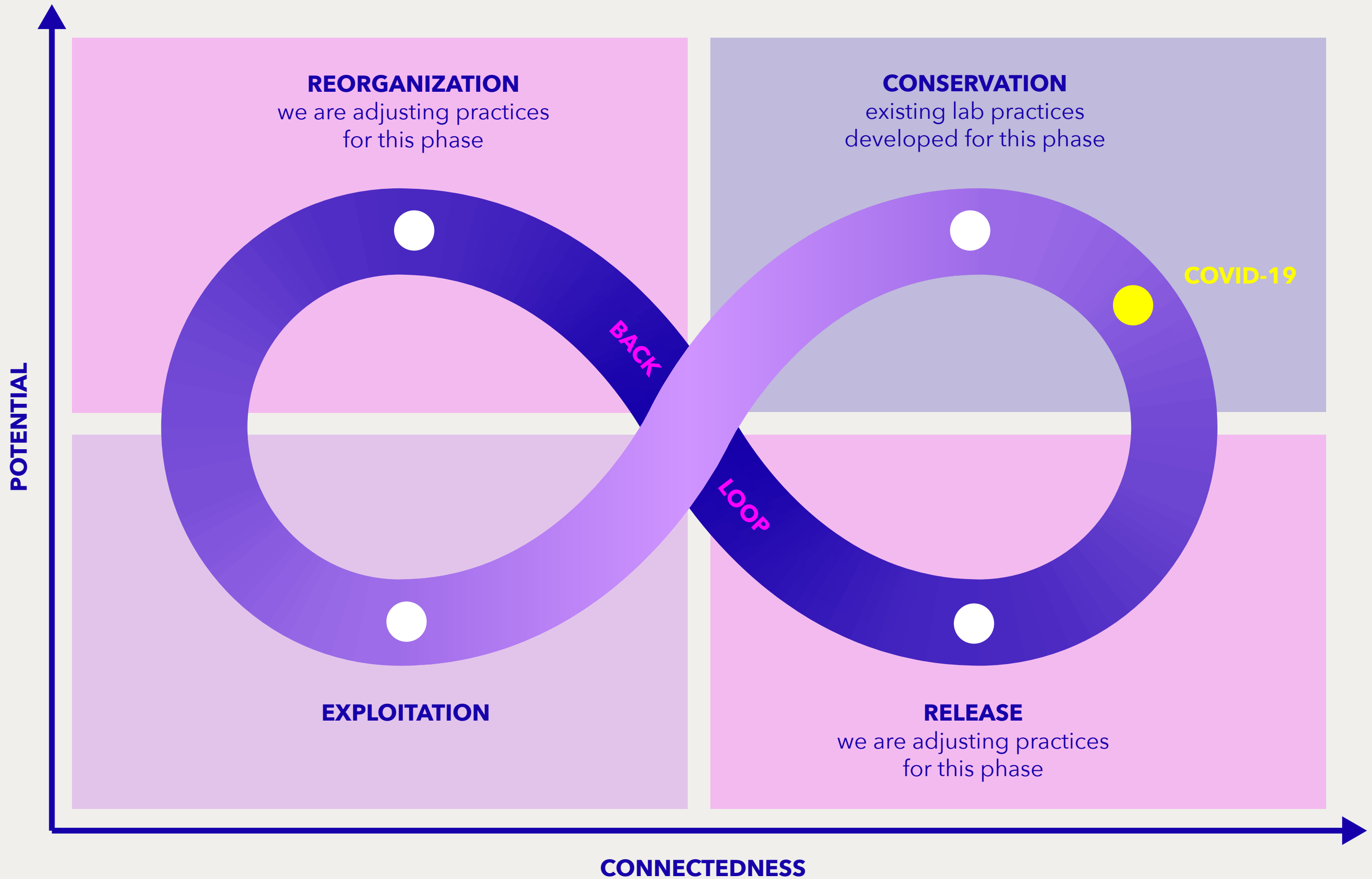
Assertion: lab practices were formed to drive innovation in the conservation phase, when systems are "over-connected and increasingly rigid."

Holling, 2001

The goal of these labs in conservation phase systems is to escape the rigidity trap of the conservation phase by building shadow networks that illustrate the possibility of alternatives.

Westley et al., 2011





**Assertion: the COVID-19
pandemic has moved the
system we are operating within
into the back loop.**

see Geobey & McGowan (2019) or Westley & McGowan (2017) for similar examples

Collapse leads into “a period of rapid reorganization during which novel recombinations can unexpectedly seed experiments that lead to innovations in the next cycle”

Holling, 2001

In the back loop, previously
“adjacent possibles” are now
potentially competing basins of
attraction.

Question: when working within a complex adaptive system going through the release and reorganization phase of the adaptive cycle, how should innovation lab practices shift?

Legacy Leadership Lab



Legacy Leadership Lab home

L3 Community & Streams >

Legacy Leadership Lab - L3

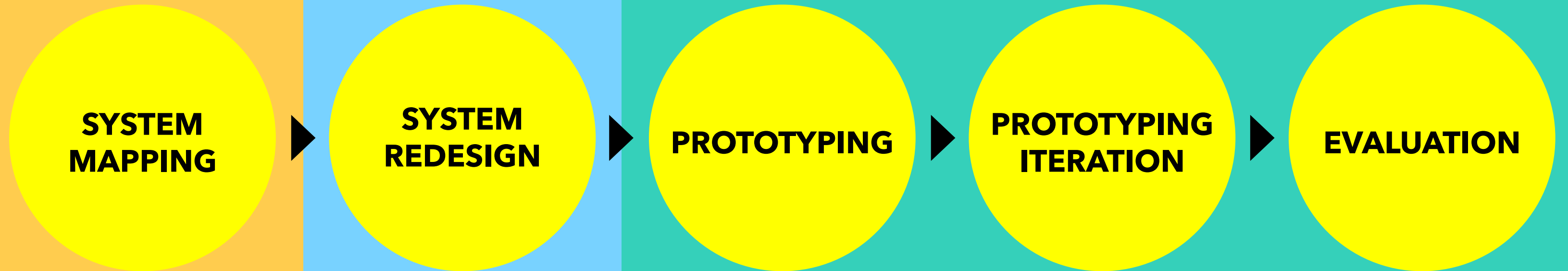




**SEEING THE
SYSTEM**

DESIGNING

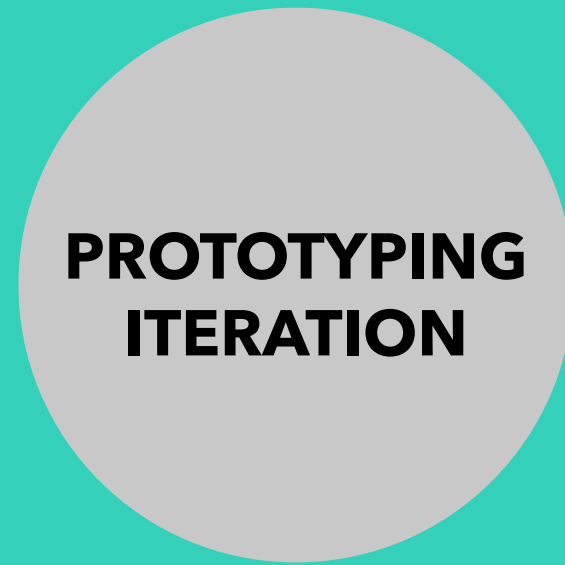
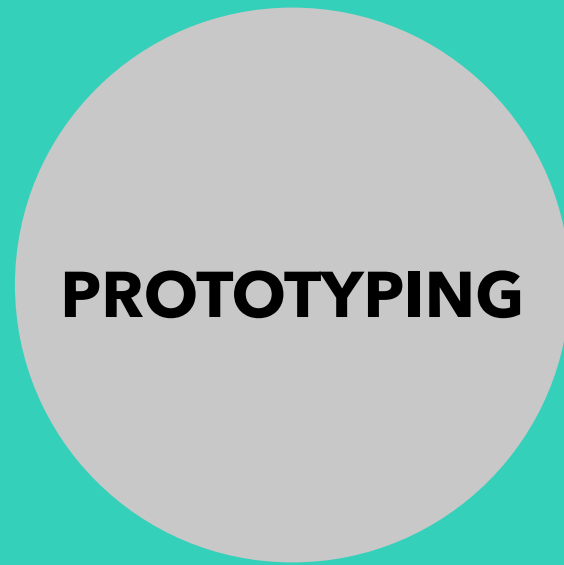
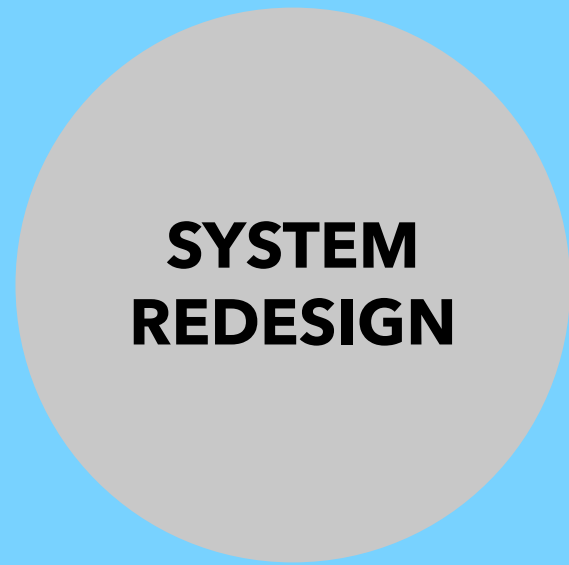
PROTOTYPING



**SEEING THE
SYSTEM**

DESIGNING


PROTOTYPING








Changes in our process are due to systems collapse *as well as* social distancing foreclosing the possibility to gather in the same room.


OUR CASE

 <p>Laurie</p>	 <p>Tara Campbell (L3 Team)</p>	 <p>Brian Bedford</p>	 <p>Sean Geobey</p>	 <p>Lee Herrin</p>
 <p>Maureen Glenn</p>	 <p>Meg Ronson</p>	 <p>Elvezio Del Bianco</p>	 <p>Wendy Keats</p>	 <p>John Kay</p>
 <p>Shane.King</p>	 <p>Karen Miner</p>	 <p>Lili Camacho</p>	 <p>Sarah</p>	 <p>Andy Horsnell in NS</p>
 <p>Alex Szaflarska</p>	 <p>ken Lewenza</p>	 <p>Heather Co-operatives First</p>	 <p>Peter</p>	 <p>Garrick Ng</p>
				




Legacy Leadership Lab 

#events  Add a topic  10  


 **Tara (she/her)** 12:22 PM
set the channel description: Share events here th **Thursday, August 13th** the L3 Community


 **Emeline Le Guen - Scale** 1:45 PM
joined #events along with Luis Patricio.


Thursday, August 20th

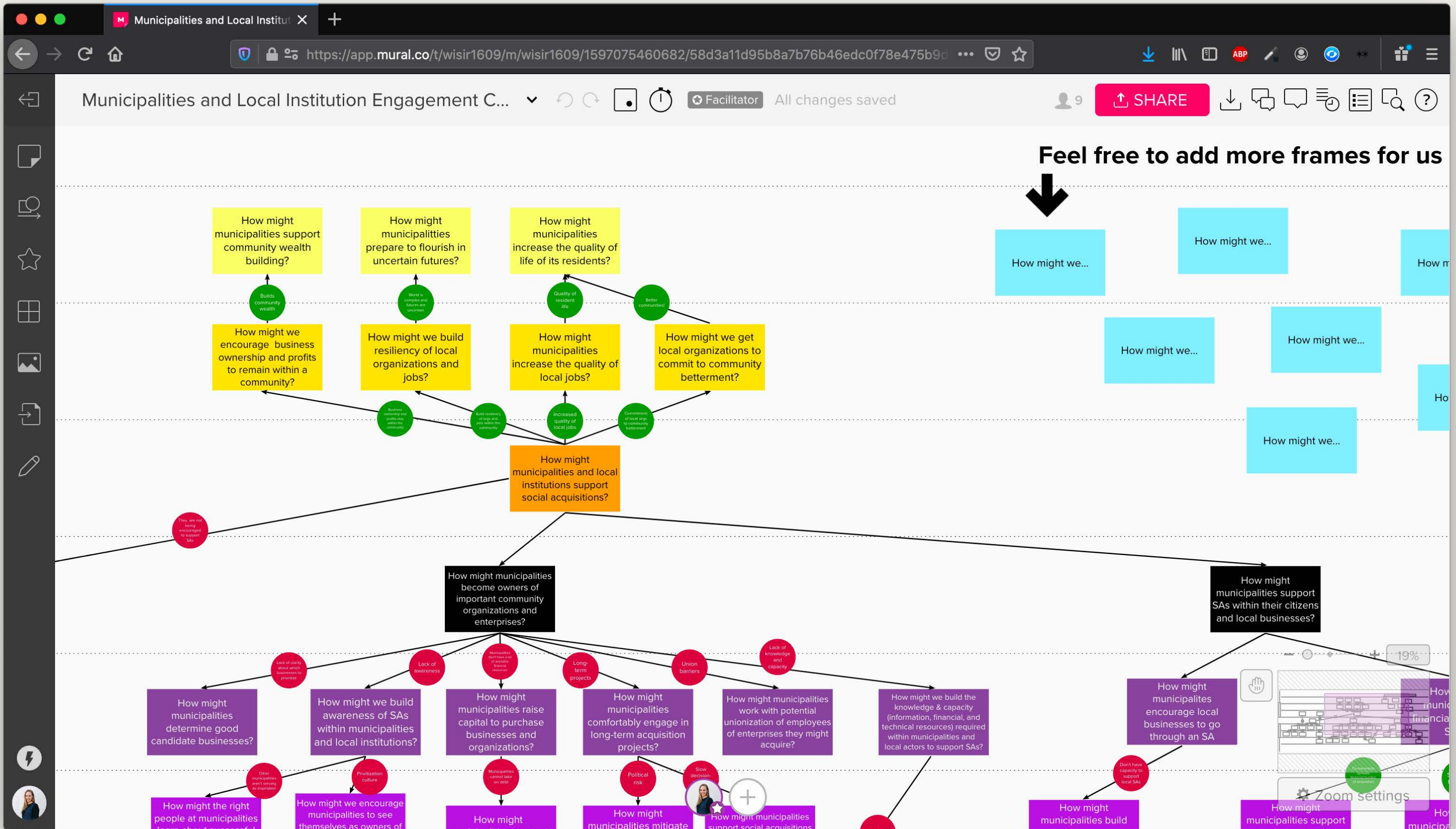
 **Luis Patricio** 7:07 PM
I keep a list of events here:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cJJAOGbEtGrccwCViyOqMuER5z8dYMyuCZb7tF7B53o/edit?usp=sharing>
 2 

Monday, August 24th

 **Meg Ronson** 11:49 AM
Here is the registration page for the September Community Event - Sept 17 11am-12:30pm EDT
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/legacy-leadership-lab-september-community-event-tickets-117981661325>

 **Eventbrite**
Legacy Leadership Lab September Community Event
An event to reconvene the L3 Community, check in with Activation and Design streams & build new bridges to advance Social Acquisitions (48 kB)





The screenshot shows a Google Docs interface for a document titled "L3 SABR Hub". The browser address bar shows the URL: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-tAXQahZzIEVHJa-1yhAjA7vKYnlcK4oQdpj1CCp/>. The document's menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Insert", "Format", "Tools", "Add-ons", and "Help". The toolbar shows various editing tools, including undo, redo, bold, italic, underline, text color, and list creation. On the left, a navigation sidebar lists sections: "LEGACY LEADERSHIP LAB", "MISSION", "DISCLAIMER", "HOW TO USE THE HUB", "NAVIGATION", "WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FO...", "HELP OTHER SPECIALISTS FIN...", "READ & CONTRIBUTE", "WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO FI...", "LINK DROP", "Have a link you want to add a...", "RESOURCE LIBRARY", "SOCIAL ACQUISITION EDUCATI...", "Types of Social Acquisitions", "Social Acquisition Papers, ...", "Exit to Community: A Com...", and "Success Stories". The main content area features a header image of a hand holding a green sticky note with a lightbulb icon. Below the image, the title "LEGACY LEADERSHIP LAB" is displayed in large, bold, black font, followed by "SABR HUB" in a smaller, regular black font. A section titled "MISSION" is highlighted in a light green box. The text below reads: "The L3 SABR Hub is a crowdsourced library for small business service providers, civic organizations, public and private institutions, researchers, and specialists of all kinds working on **Social Acquisitions for Business Recovery (SABR)** ideas, products, services, and projects. Its design is directly inspired by [The Coronavirus Tech Handbook](#)." Below this, a paragraph defines SABR: "Social Acquisitions for Business Recovery (SABR) is a term that encompasses all efforts by communities, business owners, and stakeholders to transition a conventional business into a socially driven form for the purposes of:" followed by a bulleted list:

- sustaining a valued local business through economic hardship or distress;
- reviving some or all elements of a valued failing or failed local business; or
- transitioning a conventional business's form, model or structure to another for the purposes of

Instead of a smaller number of
consistent participants all going
through the same process...

Instead of a smaller number of consistent participants all going through the same process...
... there are many different entangled groups, meeting at different frequencies around specific areas of interest.

Instead of a lab process clearly
laid out by us at WISIR...

Instead of a lab process clearly
laid out by us at WISIR...
... we ongoingly monitor
and evaluate our lab with
participants and adapt our
process based on principles.

Instead of retreating after
workshops to create tidy
knowledge products...

Instead of retreating after workshops to create tidy knowledge products...

... we have an open document infrastructure that anyone can edit or add to.

Instead of waiting for concrete
pilots before reaching out to
broader networks...

Instead of waiting for concrete pilots before reaching out to broader networks...

... we are organizing around spreading awareness of the opportunity that is of interest to the lab.

**In release and reorganization,
we are trying to increase
collective sensemaking, and
expand beyond the traditional
'shadow network' to a larger
arena that might potentially
seed experiments.**

Elinor Ostrom's 8 Principles for Commons Governance

- 1. Define clear group boundaries.**
- 2. Match rules governing use of common goods to local needs and conditions.**
- 3. Ensure that those affected by the rules can participate in modifying the rules.**
- 4. Make sure the rule-making rights of community members are respected by outside authorities.**
- 5. Develop a system, carried out by community members, for monitoring members' behavior.**
- 6. Use graduated sanctions for rule violators.**
- 7. Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution.**
- 8. Build responsibility for governing the common resource in nested tiers from the lowest level up to the entire interconnected system.**

We want to connect with other lab practitioners to learn how they have been adapting their lab practices.

We want to connect with other lab practitioners to learn how they have been adapting their lab practices.

We want to build a greater appreciation from a systems perspective of what this shift means for lab practices.

Tara Campbell (she/her)

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@tara_campbell

L3

uwaterloo.ca/legacy-leadership-lab

WISIR

 easier to just search this