Designing Democracy

SCIO 12th September 2022

THINKING SYSTEMS
An Organic Language of Harmony for Human Survival
ROBIN ASBY
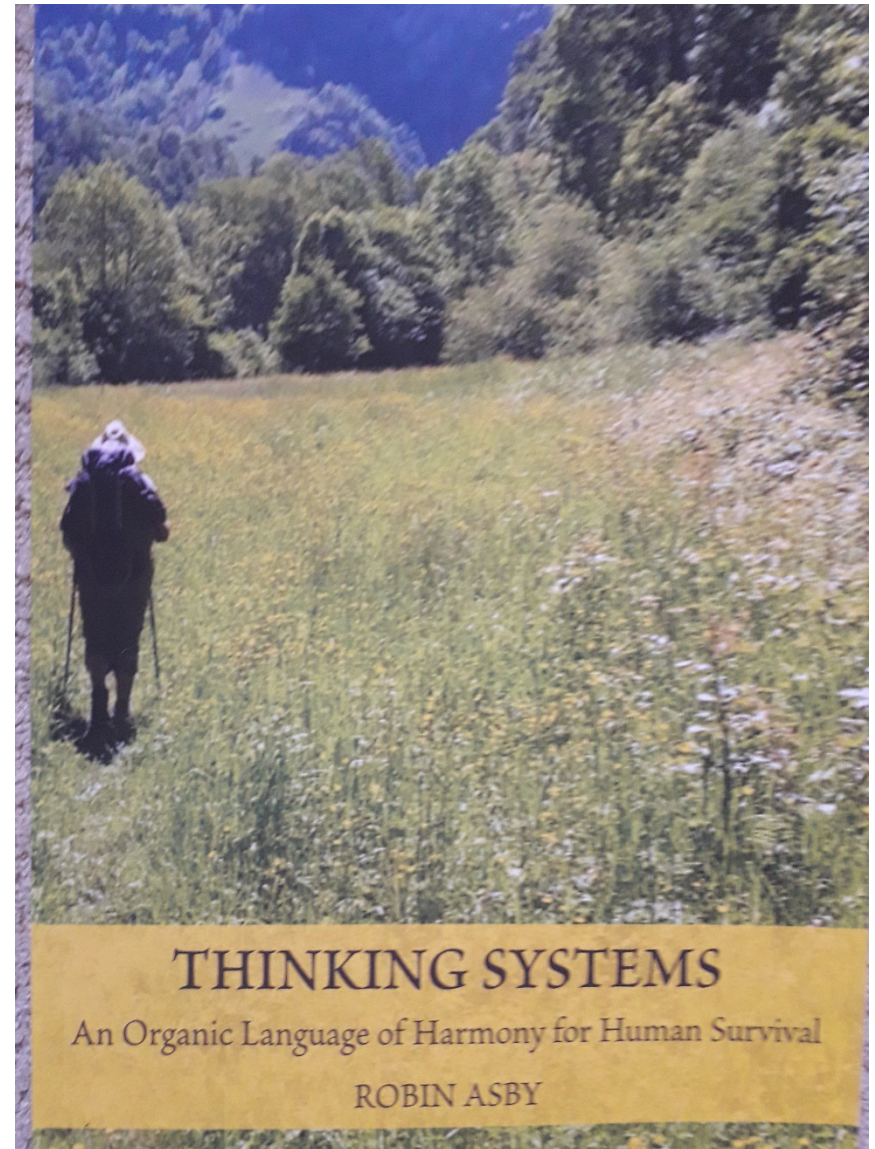
Designing Democracy

1. The Systemic Framework

2. Applying the VSM

3. Democracy – a working definition

4. Exploring the control systems System 5- 3

5. Exploring the complexity of System 2

6. A Remaining question

7. How do we get there from here?

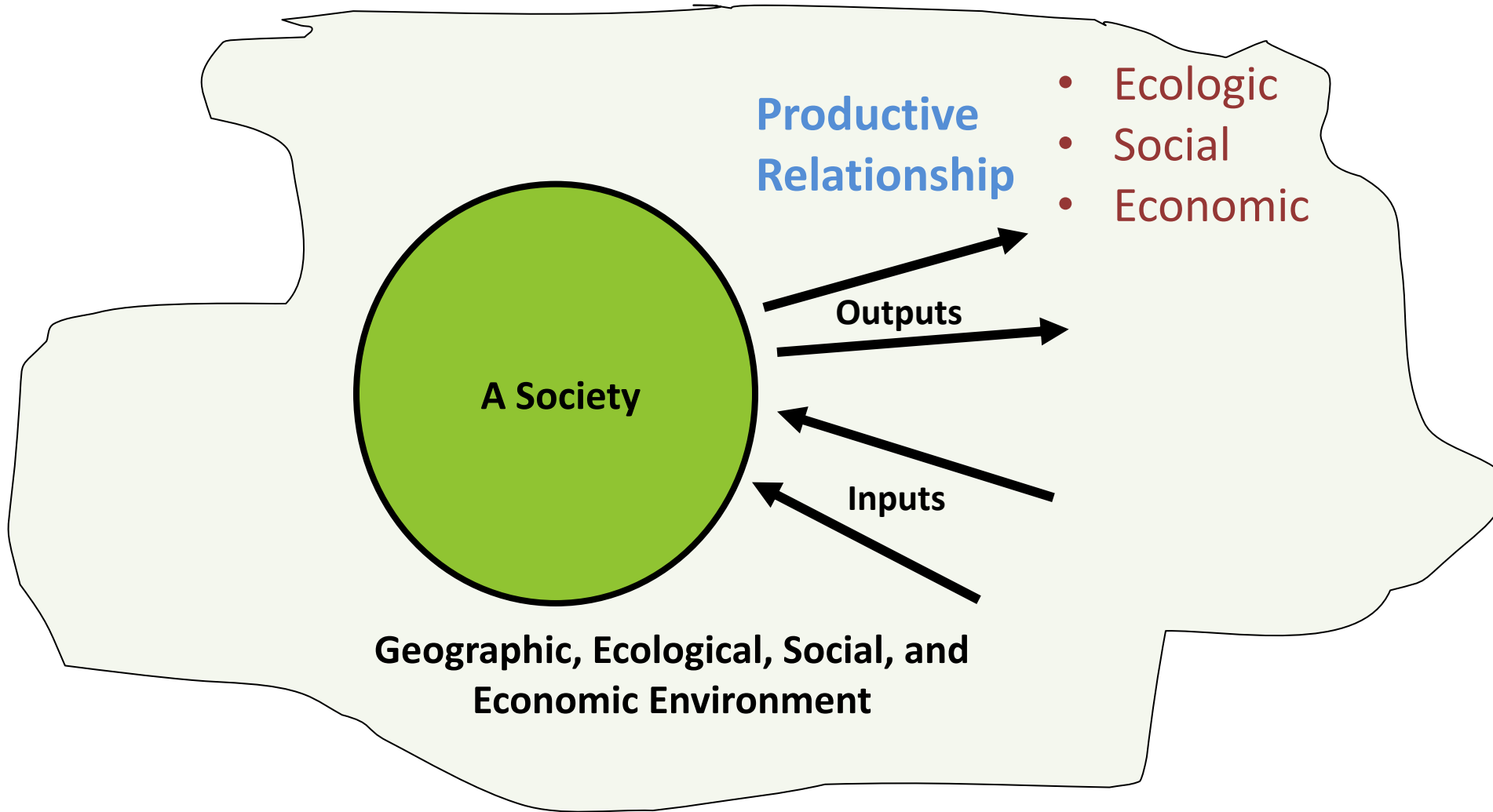# The Core Functions of Governing

1. Assurance of food supplies
2. Defence against external attack
3. Maintenance of internal peace
4. Imposition of its will throughout its territory
5. Enforcement of state wide laws
6. Promotion of an ideology to legitimise the political and social status quo

Levitt, M. (2019) Why did Ancient States Collapse?, Archaeopress

7. The role of the natural environment

Diamond, J. (2005) Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive, Allen Lane
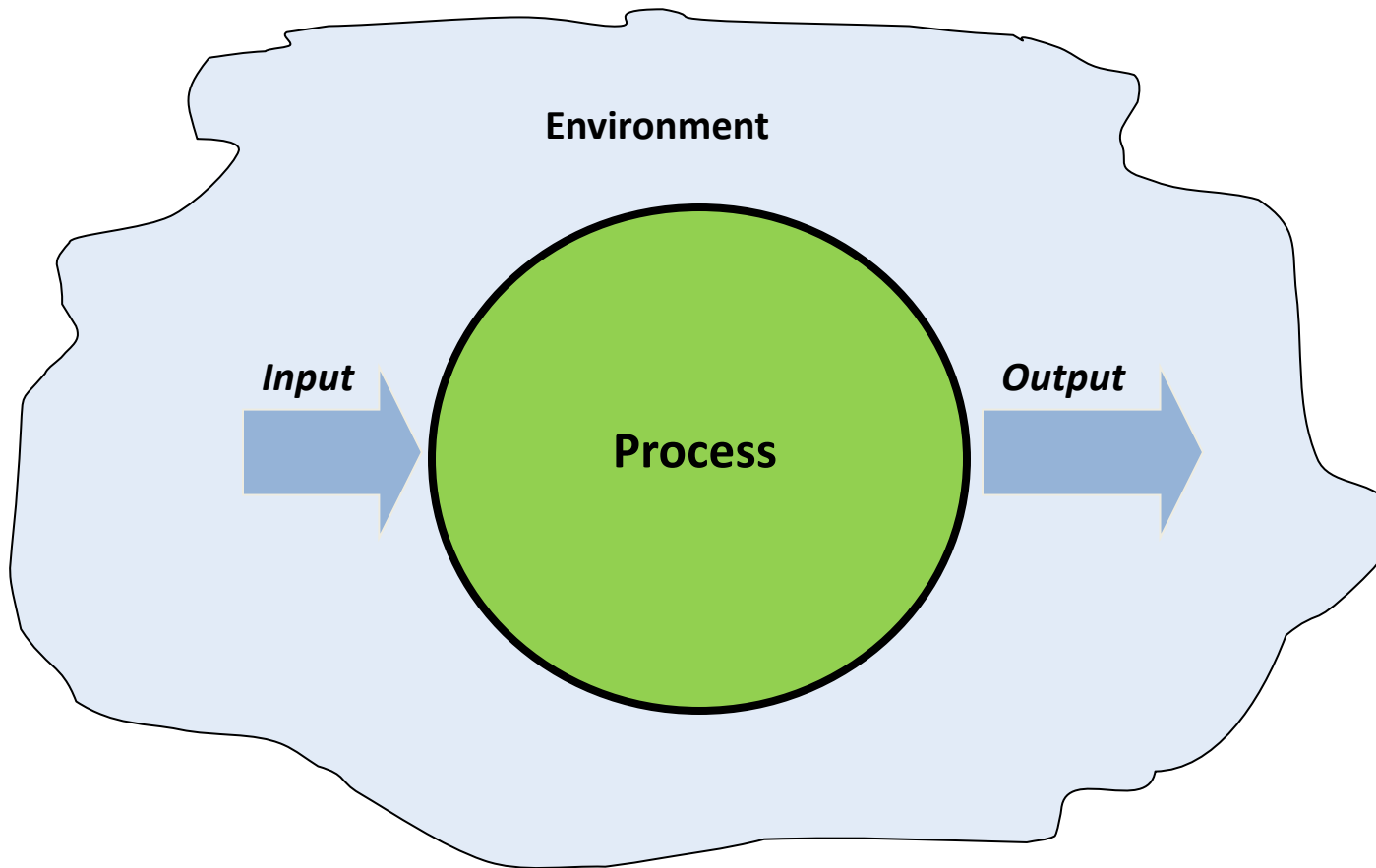
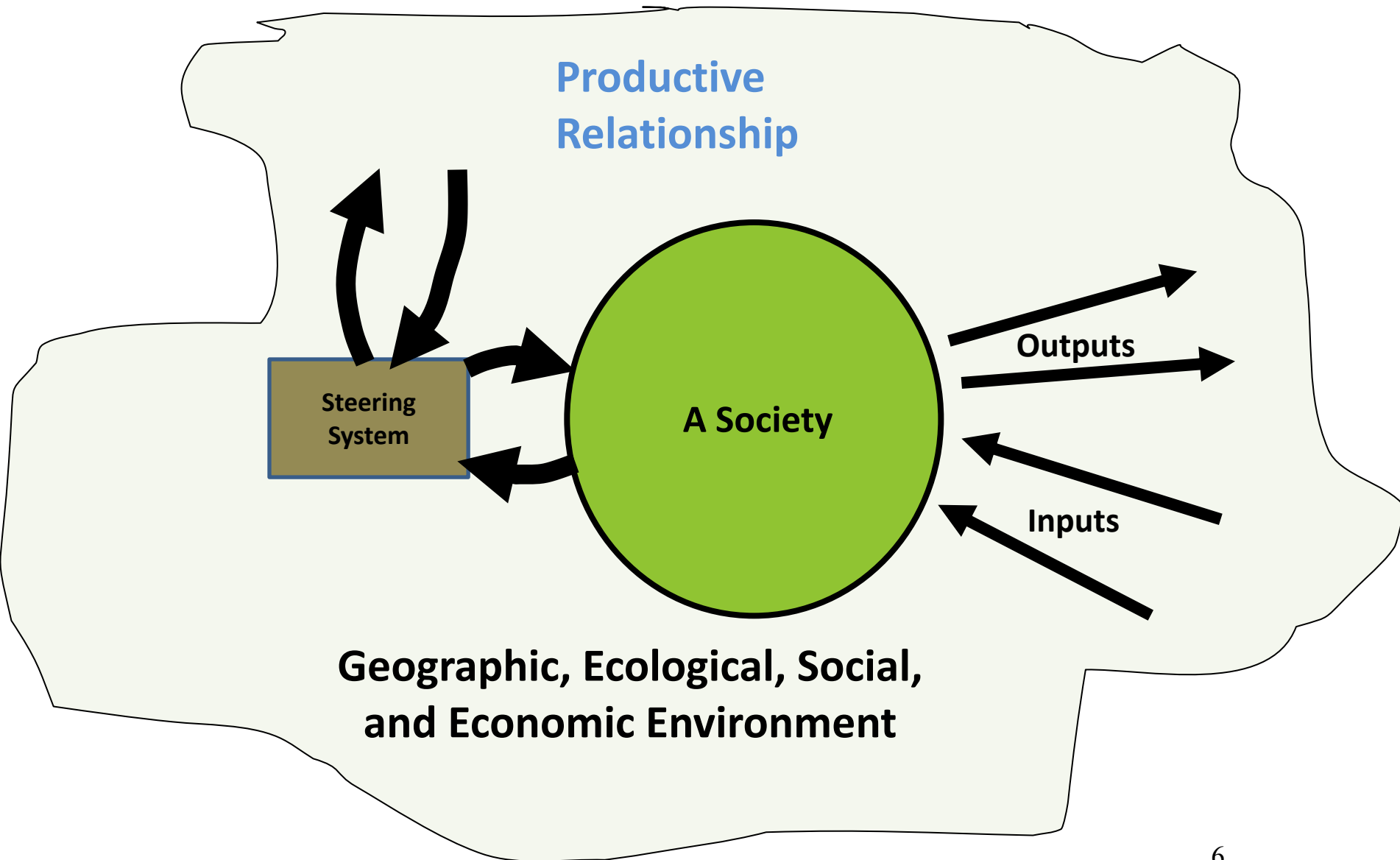# 1. The Systemic Framework

Productive Relationship

- Ecologic
- Social
- Economic

A Society

Outputs

Inputs

Geographic, Ecological, Social, and Economic Environment

A Society is a Dynamic Entity that Exists in a Dynamic World

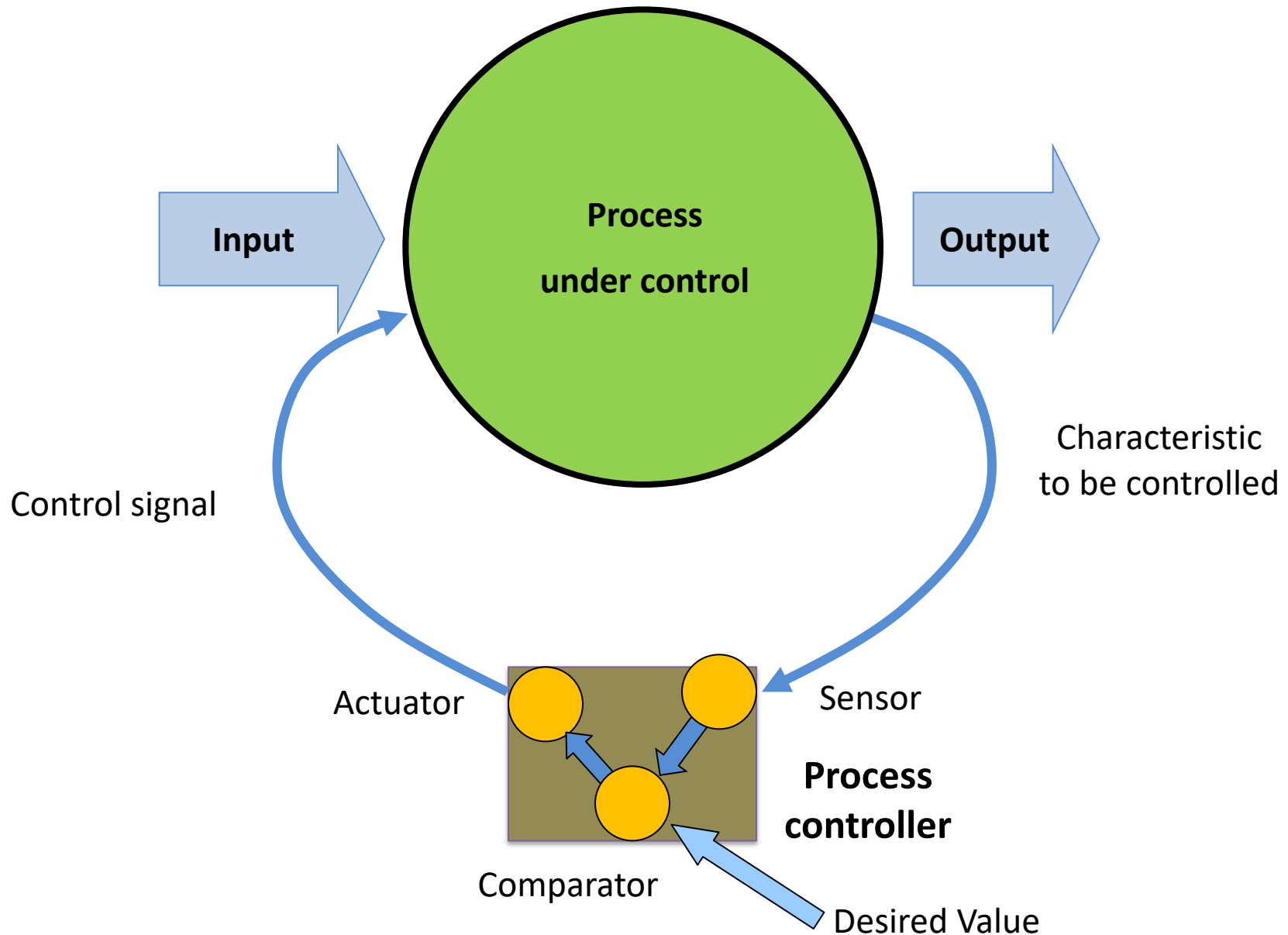# A Definition of System and 'Purpose'

A system is defined by its '**purpose**' that is the relationship that **the totality of its inputs and outputs** creates with the environment of the system.

Environment

Input

Process

Output

Steering a Community System

Productive Relationship

Steering System

A Society

Outputs

Inputs

Geographic, Ecological, Social, and Economic Environment

The Standard Cybernetic Feedback Control System

Input

Process under control

Output

Control signal

Characteristic to be controlled

Actuator

Sensor

Process controller

Comparator

Desired Value

Modelling Governing is to Model a Control System the Purpose of which is to Hold Aspects of a Dynamic Society Steady in an Evolving World.

The Mathematical Laws of Cybernetics

1. The Law of Requisite Variety

2. The Conant- Ashby Theorem
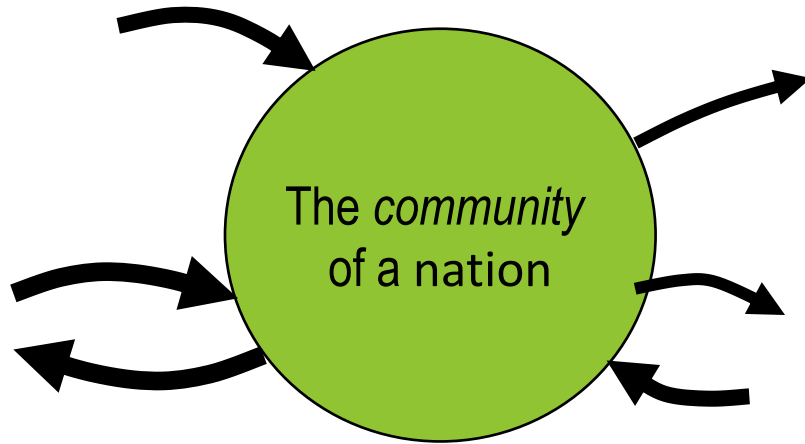
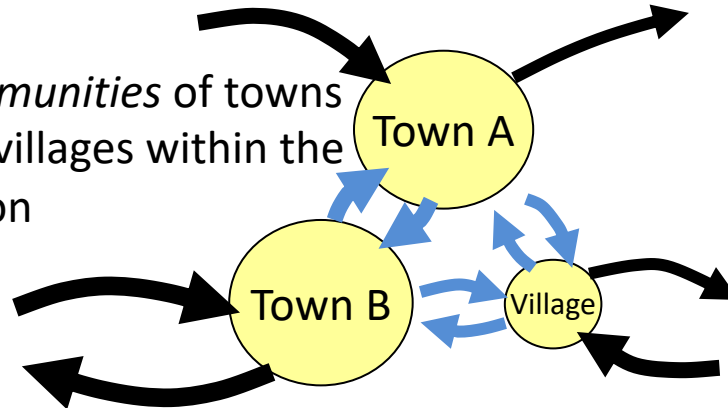3. The Sub-optimisation Theorem

2. Applying the VSM

Community A

Community B

Community C

1. Trading relations
2. West Lothian Question
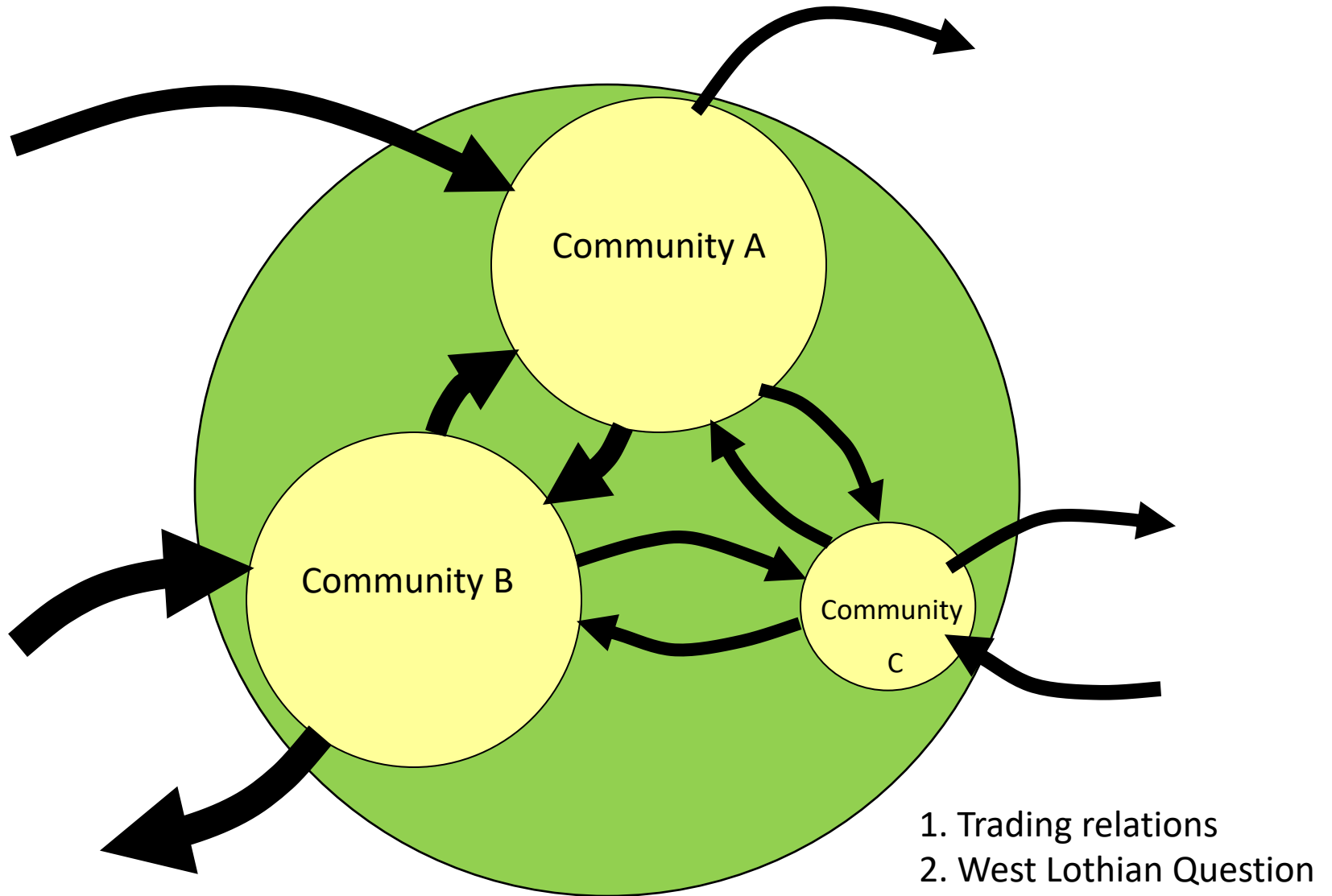
Recursion by Default

A Rough Picture

The *community* of a nation

1st Level Analysis

Communities of towns and villages within the nation

Town A

Town B
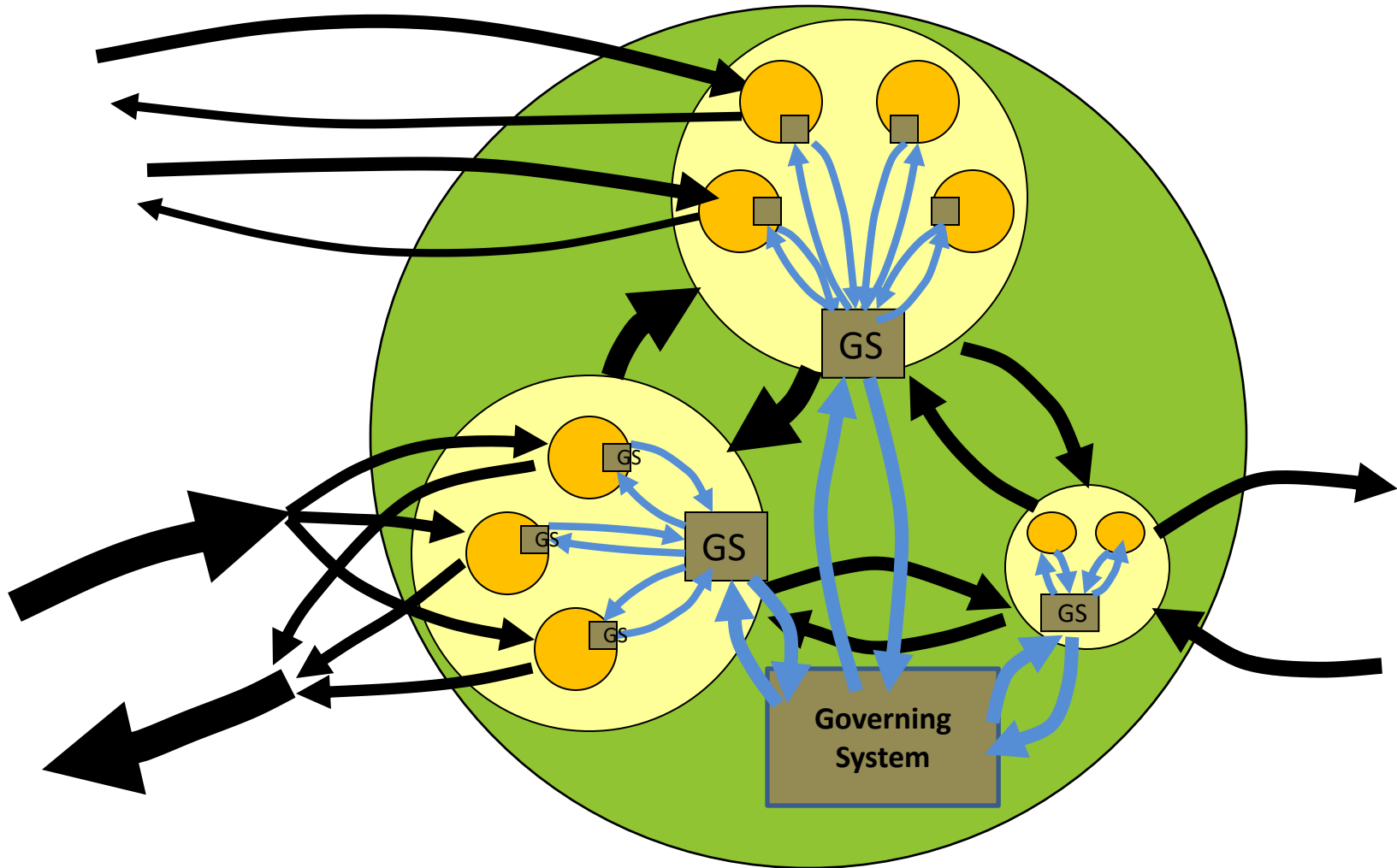
Village

2nd Level Analysis

3rd Level Analysis

Communities of neighbourhoods within the towns and villages within the nation
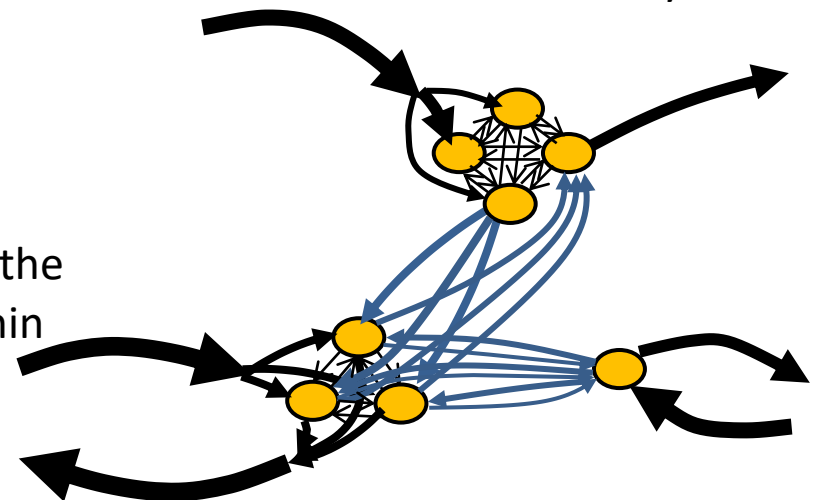
A Standard VSM Analysis

3. How do we define what we mean by Democracy?

The Conant-Ashby Theorem requires that the control model needed to maintain viability of a community is the best possible control model. Because of the complexity of any community, only by engaging all minds in that community can an effective model be brought to bear on the problem of controlling the community.

It is *through* the governing system that minds are brought to bear, and there are a multiplicity of ways in which the governing system can be structured to achieve this aim.

A working definition - Democracy is a system which as far as possible brings all minds in the community to bear on the problem of maintaining the viability of that community.

4.Using the VSM to Explore the Control System

System 5:

System 4:

System 3:
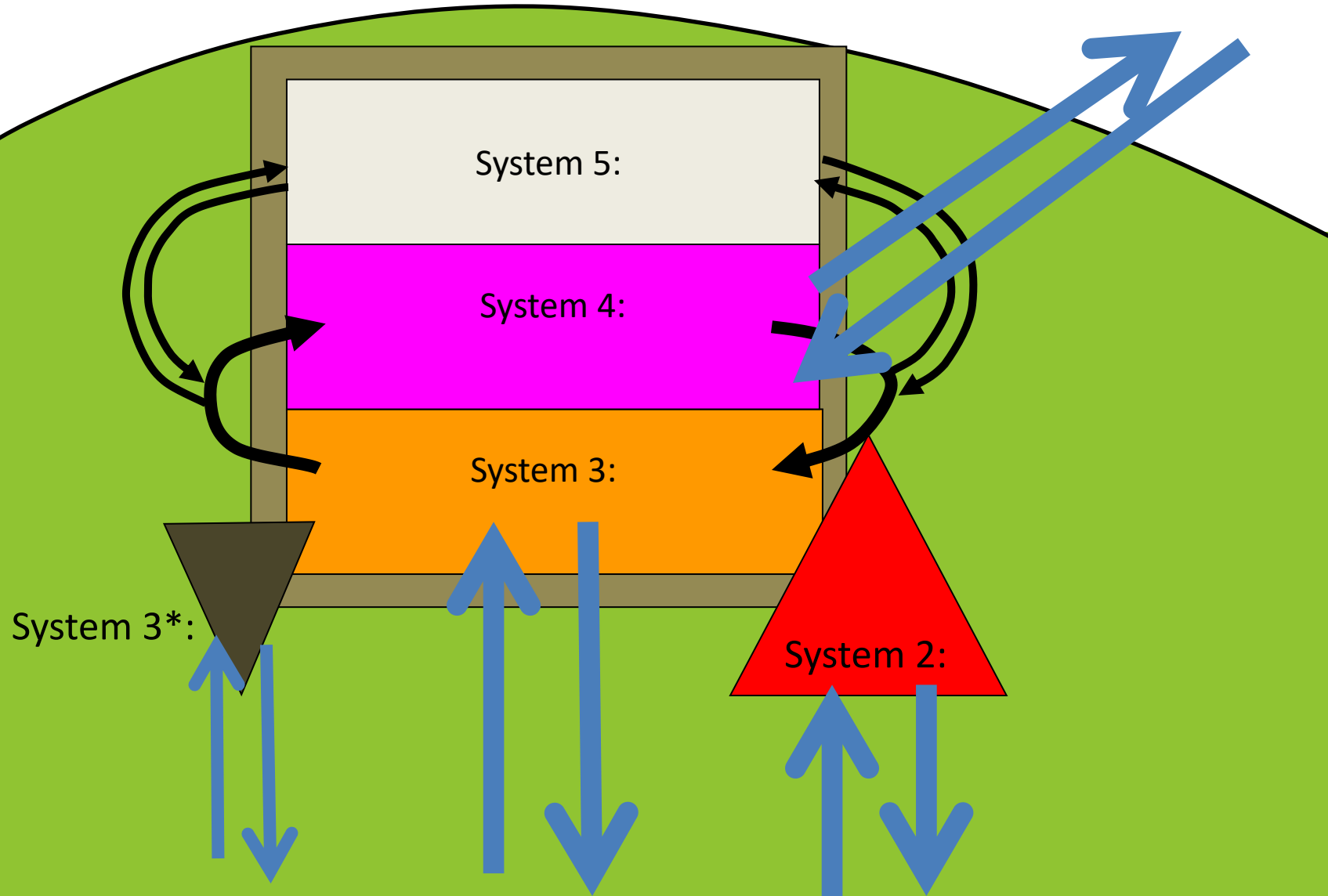
System 3*:

System 2:

The System 5 of the Community

System 5:

The purpose of System 5 is to embody the being of the community; it is the guardian of the identity and purpose of the community.

At the lowest Recursive Level – All members of that community

At higher levels –representatives of the **culture and attitudes** of the community – **A House of Representatives**

All decisions taken by a house of representatives must be decisions on matters pertinent to the whole community.

The System 4 of the Community

System 4:

The purpose of the System 4 is to monitor the environment in a learning feedback loop and propose changes that it feels are necessary for the continuing viability of the community.

Every person has skill and expertise and should be able to contribute to the viability of a community.

To better encompass the variety disposed by a community I suggest that a register of expertise constituencies should be constructed along the lines of the current UK register of current geographical constituencies. Note: the current SIC code register categorises companies by their activity purpose and has similarities to this proposed register.

System 4 - The House of Expertise

System 4:

Every person should be registered in an expertise constituency just as they are registered in geographic communities in the current electoral registers. People who would fall into more than one can chose the one in which they wish to be recognised.

I suggest that the House of Expertise should consist of: -

At the lowest Recursive Level – All members of a geographical community in their expertise constituencies

At higher levels of geographic communities – representatives elected from expertise constituencies

How do we ensure that the Houses of Representatives and Expertise maximise their variety of potential command?

System 5 - Representatives must have served as representatives for at least a term in their contained community at the next lowest level.

System 4 – Representatives must have served as representatives for at least a term in their contained expertise community at the next lowest level in the geographic community concerned.

How do we keep the evolution of the Houses in step with the evolution of the community?

The world evolves and therefore so should the Houses of Representatives and Expertise. All elections should be spread and not take place simultaneously at one moment in time.

# The System 3 and System 3* of the Community.
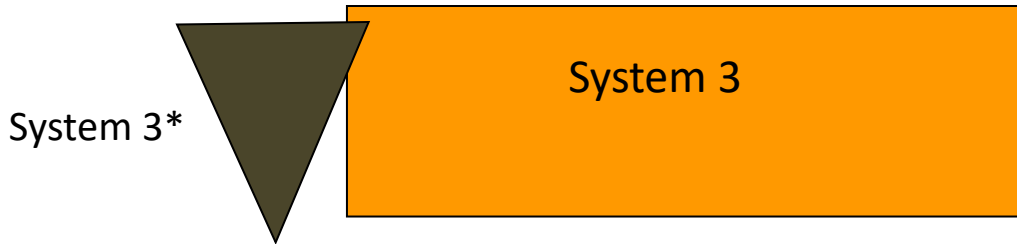
System 3

System 3*

The Purpose of the System 3 is to maintain a whole community view in engaging with and managing the sub-communities steering the internal system in line with the external requirements. It also contributes the whole system view to System 2 in establishing the social frame and engages with System 4 in feeding back the state of the sub communities –successes, and problems.

System 3 is **the Executive** arm of the governing system and I suggest the chief executive is appointed by the House of Representatives and is responsible to the House of Representatives.
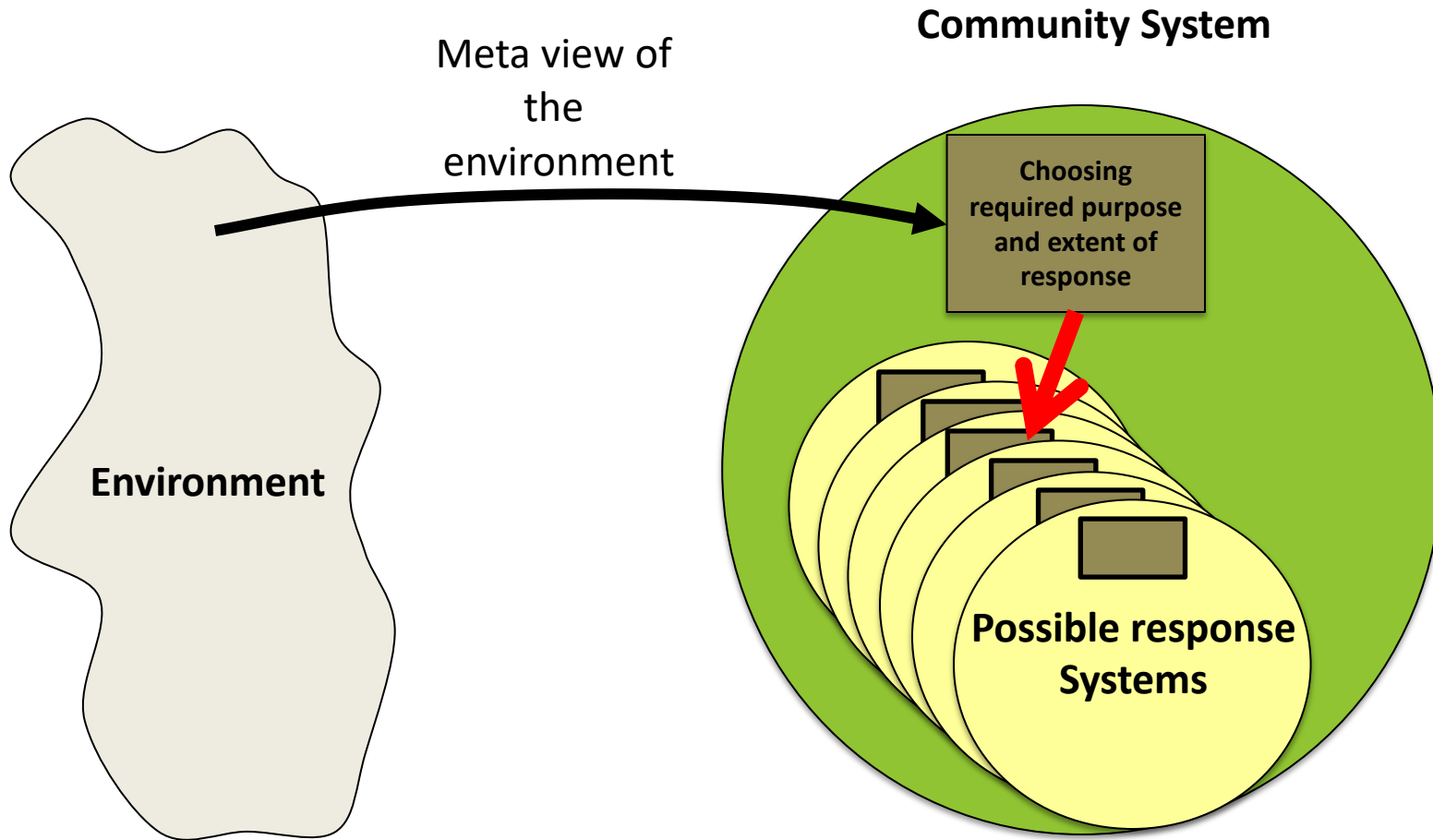
System 3* is the auditing arm of System 3.

The System 3 –System 4 Conversation of the Community

System 4:
The House of Expertise

System 3:
The Executive
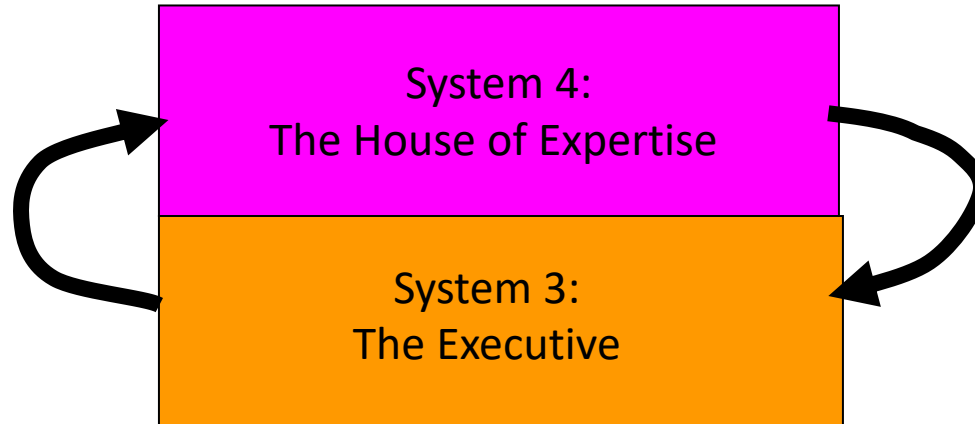
1. Beer's VSM envisages a continuing discussion between Systems 4 and 3 informing each other of the state of the viability of the community; are the efforts of the citizens aligned with the future evolution of the environment?

2. This is the heart of the feed forward control system whose purpose is to ensure that the community remains viable in a changing world. Proposals for necessary community change arise from this conversation and are proposed to System 5 for decision making.

The Feed Forward Control System

Meta view of the environment

Community System

Environment

Choosing required purpose and extent of response

Possible response Systems

Multiple processes constructing the required output for survival given the nature of the environmental input
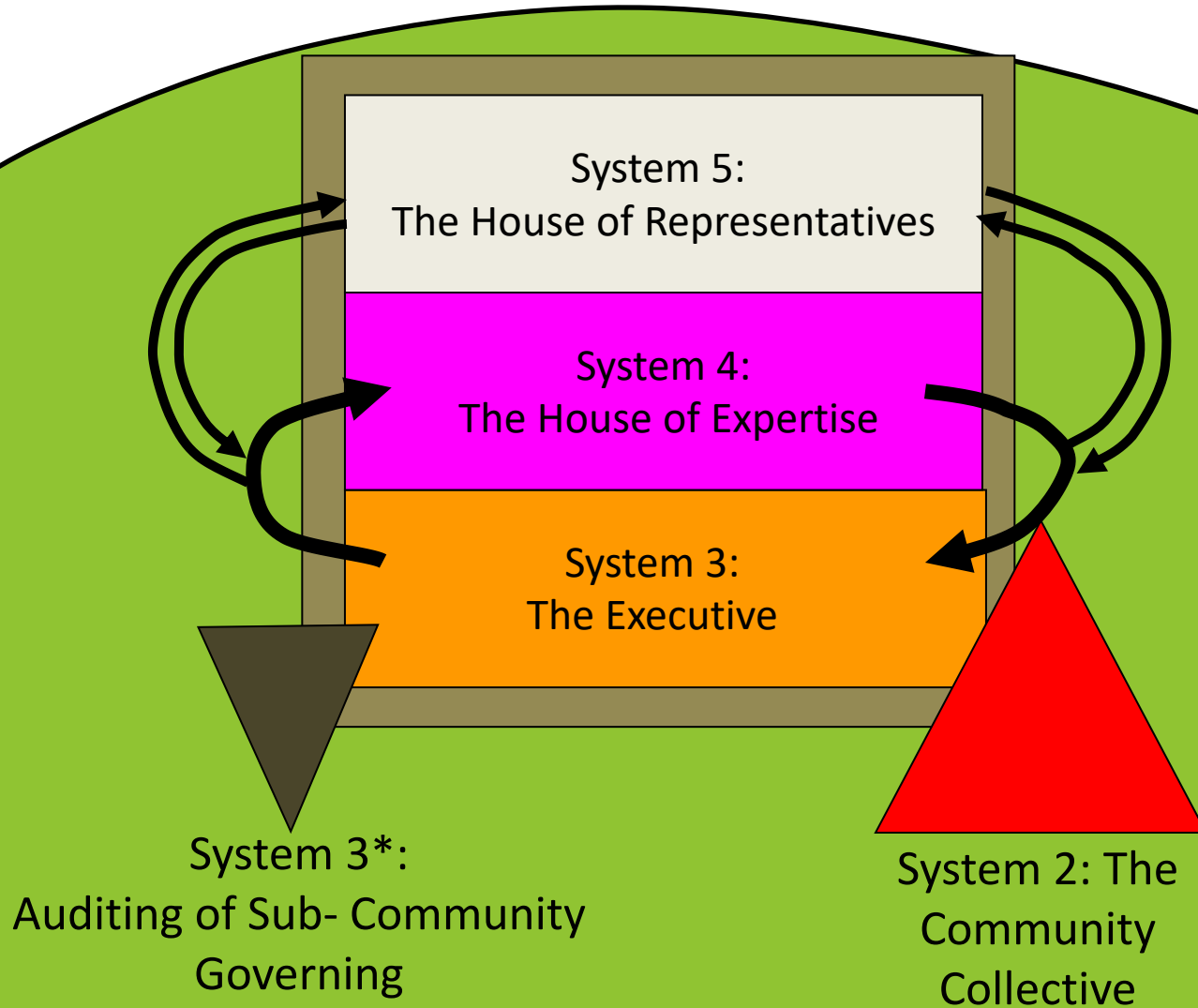
The System 2 of the Community
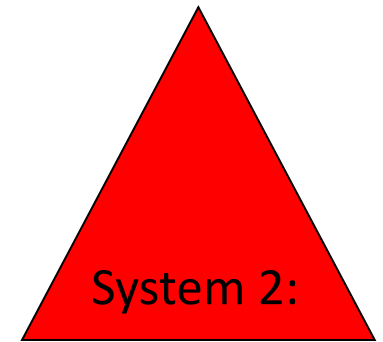
The Purpose of System 2 is threefold:

System 2:

1. Firstly to maintain the balance between the sub-communities that is ensuring that no community seeks to optimise itself destroying the overall balance.
2. Secondly to put in place any additional legal frame work required to maintain internal coherence and viability which facilitates:-
3. the third purpose, that is the appropriate support of the culture and values of that community.

The System 2 of the community is a body which consists of representatives of next lower level sub-communities appointed by the respective Houses of Representatives and of the current level System 3 – a **Community Collective**.

The Governing Systems

System 5:
The House of Representatives

System 4:
The House of Expertise

System 3:
The Executive

System 3*:
Auditing of Sub- Community
Governing

System 2: The
Community
Collective
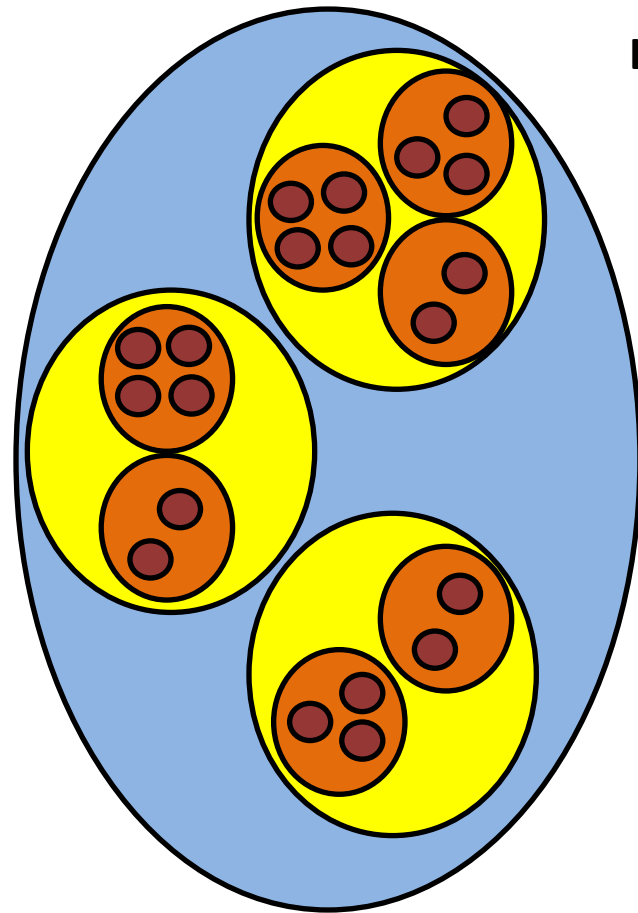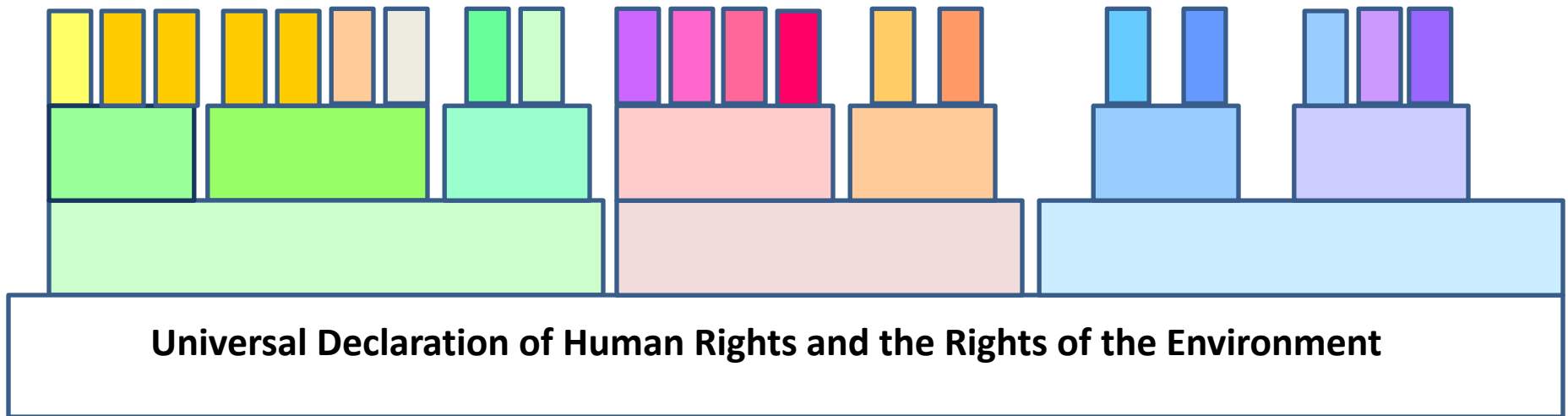
Managing the Community
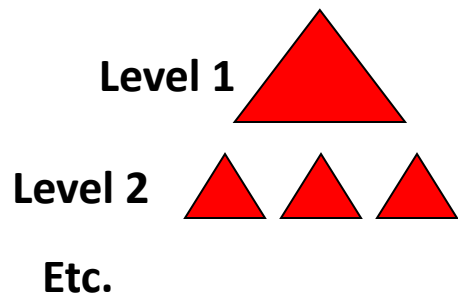
5. Exploring the Complexity of System 2
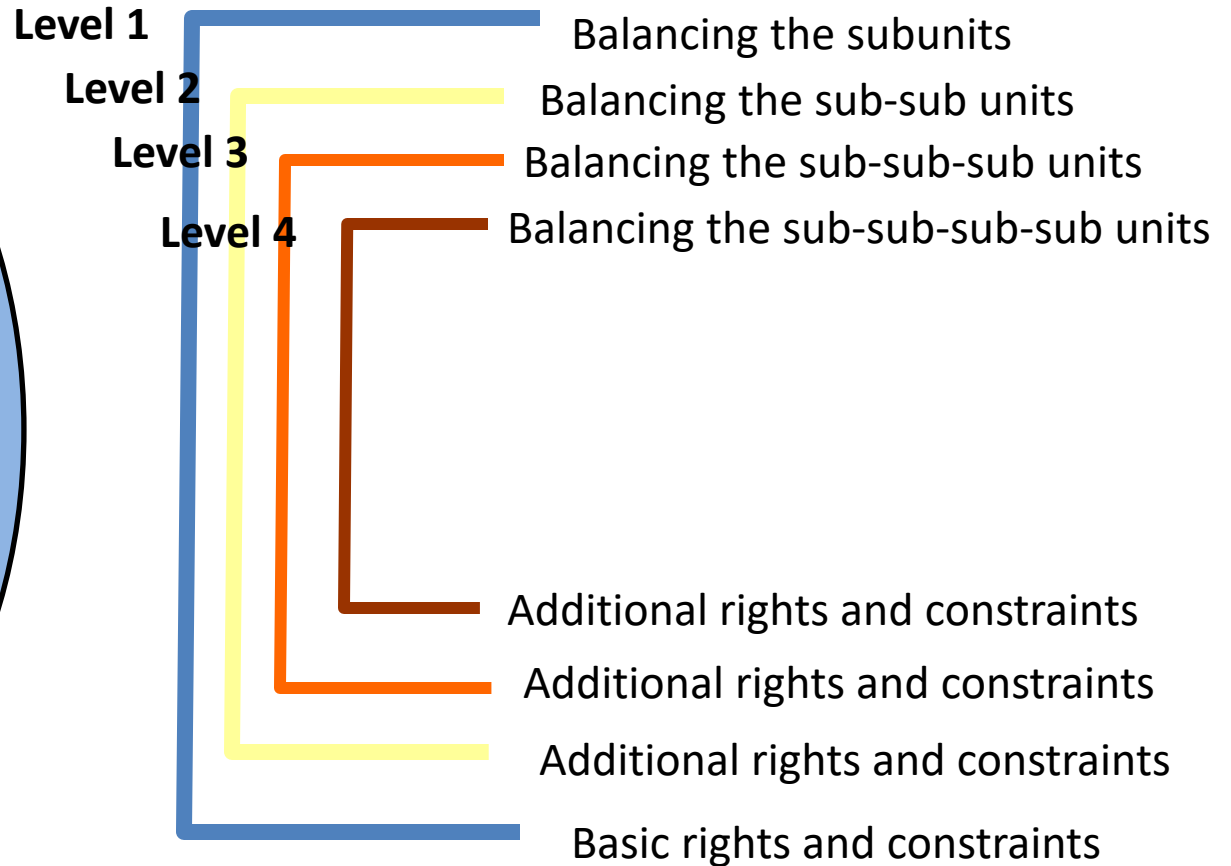
The Community Collective: purposes at each recursive level

Supporting Different Cultures

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rights of the Environment

Goff, K.A. (2020), Nested Nationalism: Making and Unmaking Nations
in the Soviet Caucasus, Cornell University Press

System 2
The Community Collective

Problems with current legal frameworks

System 5:

Current legal frameworks

1.Sensors

. Processes to sense behaviours in relationships

The Societal system: behaviours in relationships

the formal system:
e.g. the Police:
community level

2. Comparator

A process to compare behaviours to those considered acceptable

e.g. The court system: community level

3. Actuator

A process to change behaviours in relationships

The education system, educational aspects of social
services, prisons : part of the House of Expertise

Supporting the 2nd and 3rd purposes of the Community Collective: 1st level

S5-The Community House of Representatives

Actuator

Agreed changes

Amended legal framework

2. Comparator

Proposal for changes

A process to compare operation with legal meta framework

Legal framework

The system of the society: behaviours in relationships

S5s - Sub-communities Houses of Representatives

Sensors

S2- The Communities Collective

Problems

Supporting the 2nd and 3rd purposes of the Community Collective: 2nd level

6. A Remaining Question

The problem for the management of any human organisation is to constrain the variety of actions in the behaviour of those people involved within the organisation to those actions which fulfil the purpose of that organisation.

In many cases a community has no way in which to constrain actions of those who control organisations or property within that community.

Organisations can operate in many communities and change the economic, social , and natural environment of those communities. How can such organisations be regulated so that they do not destroy the viability of these communities?

7. How do we get to there from where we are?

1. Building from the bottom up?
    Bookchin, M (2015), The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy

2. Citizen Panels – a start on System 4?

3. The Role of Taxation?
    Piketty, T (2020), Capital and Ideology, Harvard University press