



What is community?

Exploring power and politics in local development

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Local development: what is the role of communities?

1

What and where is community?

2

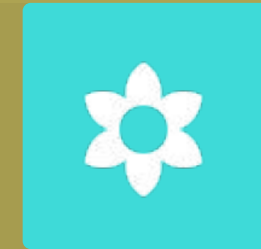
How does change happen at the local level

3

Working with the complexity of local power and politics

COMMUNITY AS A SIMPLE THING

ASSUMPTIONS



HOMOGENOUS AND ORDERED
Clear 'traditional' leadership structures



RESOURCEFUL AND KNOWLEDGEABLE
Capacity to deliver and manage resources and services



SELF-CONTAINED
Clear boundaries and characteristics



A PLACE OR IDENTITY
Defined and unified

Community is a concept not a thing

Colonial creations of community
development

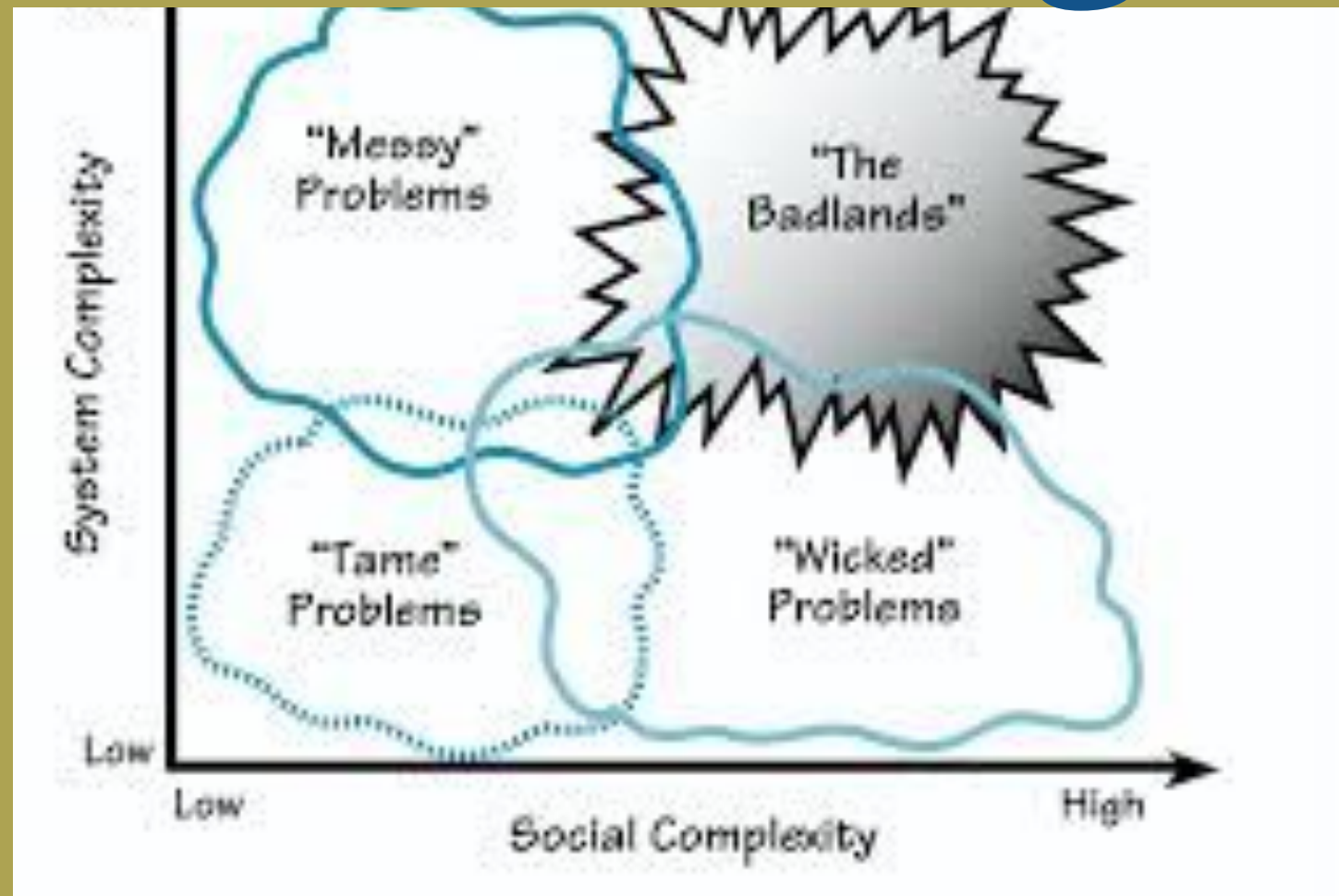
Often carried into post-colonial governance:
community development is for the poor and 'backward'

Community as collective local
governance

Useful idea for neoliberal governance- pass
responsibility from the state

Community (collective action is a
product of individual social relations,
institutions and norms.

Therefore it is complex and layered with power and politics





Actors and factors which could constitute someone's "life as a system" that creates the outcome of wellbeing (or not)

Actors

Factors

The person themselves

Their family and friends

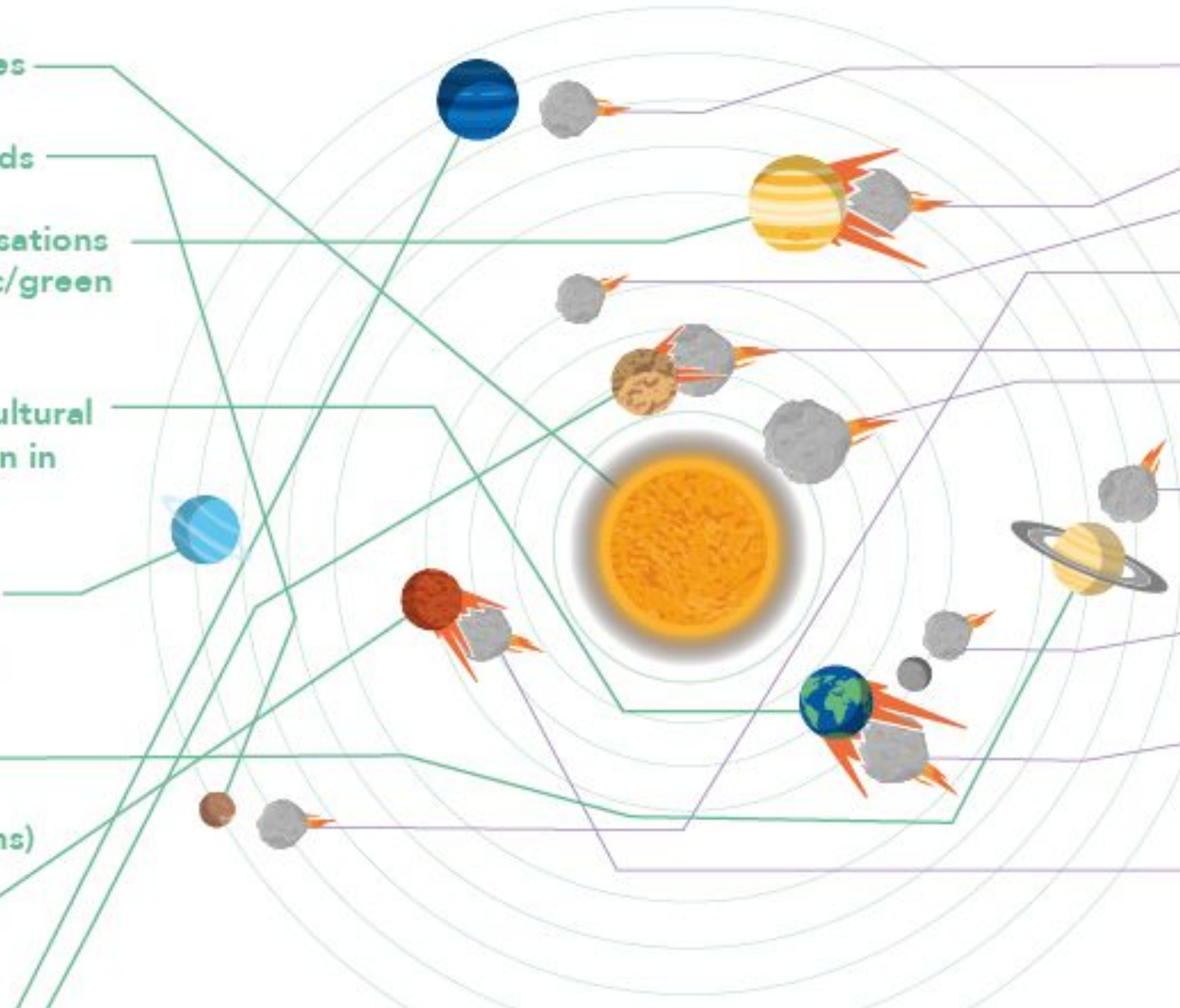
The people or organisations responsible for public/green space near to them

Those who provide cultural and sporting provision in their place

Their neighbourhood association and community centre(s)

The health service (in all its local and national manifestations)

Welfare/benefits agencies



Income/wealth

Employment status

Education and skill levels

Participation in neighbourhood activities

Participation in democratic processes

Participation in hobbies/interests

Relationship to dominant culture(s)

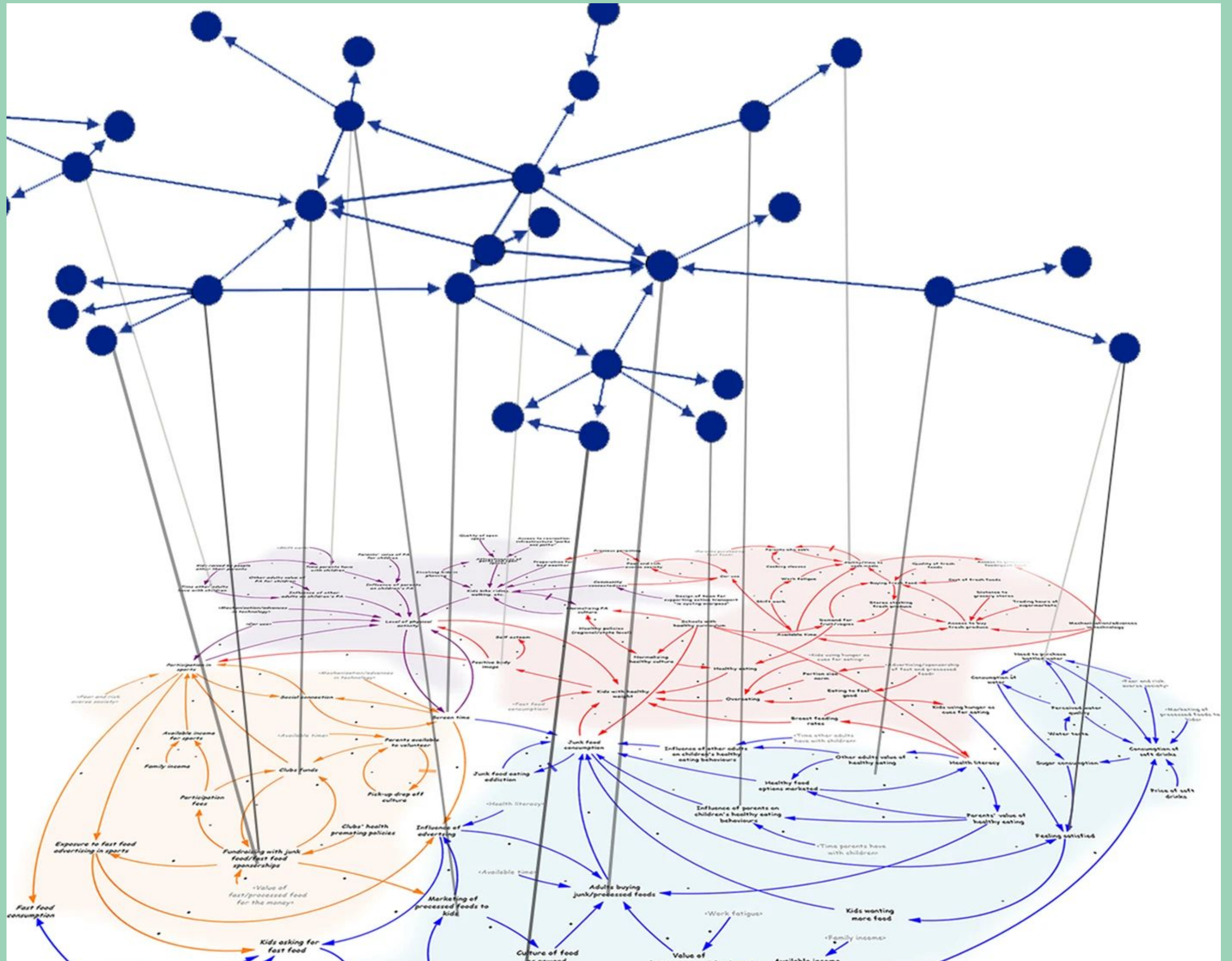
Housing and neighbourhood conditions

Health

Ability to exercise agency

Imagine layers of social connection and interconnection.

In action for local development we work through organisations and institutions but these are complex and dynamic





(mis)Understanding community in Uchira 1996-2024



Understanding levels of participation in collective life

Collective life is:

Village government

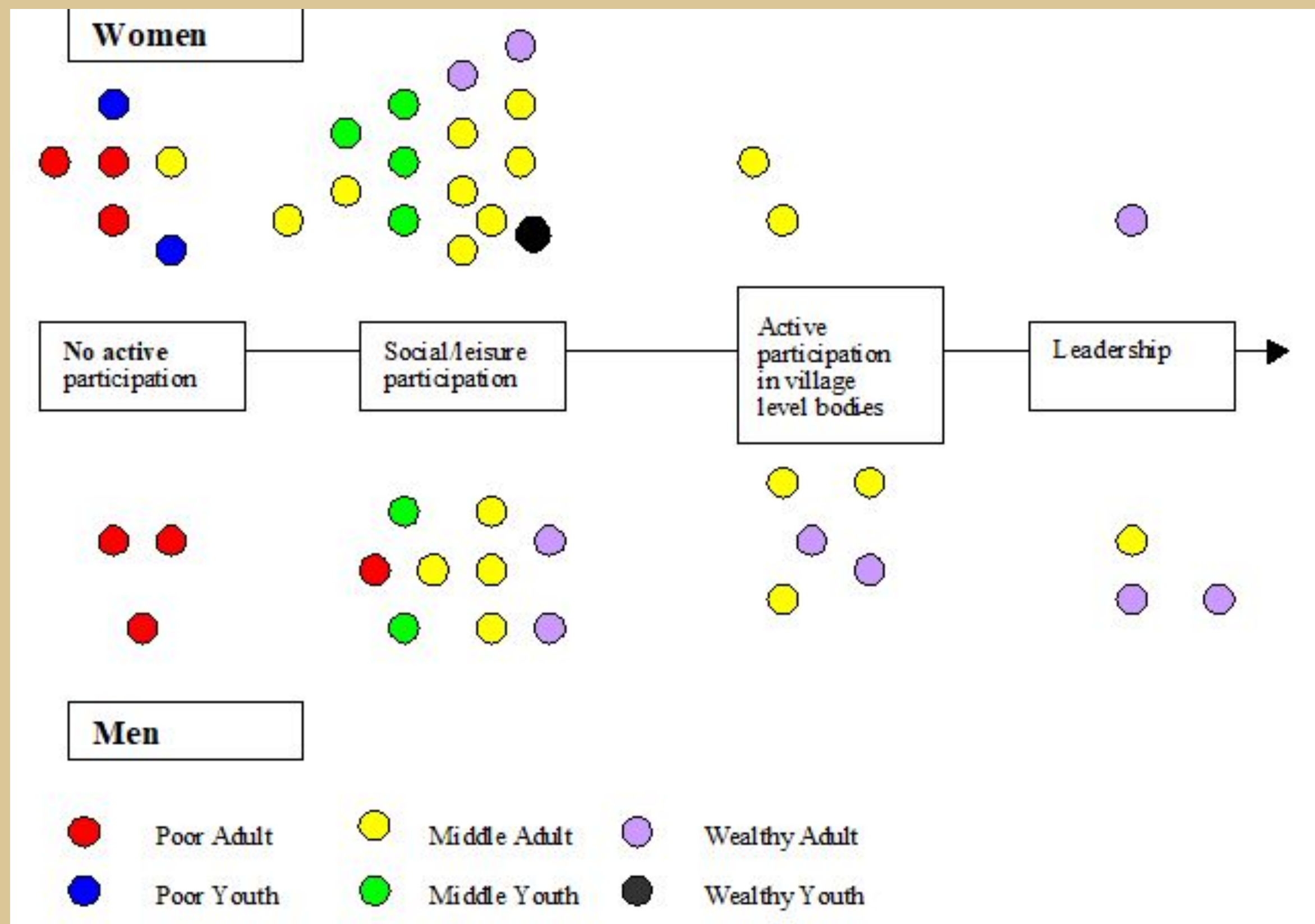
District government and institutions

Religious organisations

Self-help groups (business, savings)

Non governmental organisations

Kinship



Community-Driven Development- Uchira Water Users Association



Elite capture

Communal labour, water pricing in favour of private taps and wealthier residents



No strategic regional planning

Competing for water sources



Improved water supply but participation is expensive
Professional technical skills are necessary

Migration and connection

**Agricultural decline/stagnation and
urban growth- land sales**

**Education, employment, enterprise
and access to services, and
remittances**

**High levels of mobility for young of
both genders**

Extended kin/ethnic networks

highly significant





Perceptions and pressure

Weddings and funerals



The extended family and social network
Affection, obligation and resource flows

Building and investment



Health



Education



Extended family networks are critical to local development in Tanzania but often ignored or misunderstood

**Local
Development
is always
political**

The Toilet Wars in Bingley





bid to lift bills by up to 44%



BATHING WATER STATUS SECURED

FOR WETHERBY RIVERSIDE

Follow Wetherby and Villages Clean River Group for more updates and next steps



□ **Conclusions**

Be alert to vague use of 'community'.....

What is actually happening at the local level ?

Be specific about structures, organisations, institutions

Analyse who has power (but don't generalise)

Whose agendas are being served by 'community'?

Work with and from complexity