The Self-Organisation of the Information Society 4:
The Great Bifurcation

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- Global Sustainable Information Society
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- Antagonisms of Informatisation
  Technology. Environment. Society in the narrower sense. Economy. Polity. Culture.
  Dialectical View. Evolutionary Systems Theory View. Critical Social Systems Theory View. Critical
  Information Society Theory View.

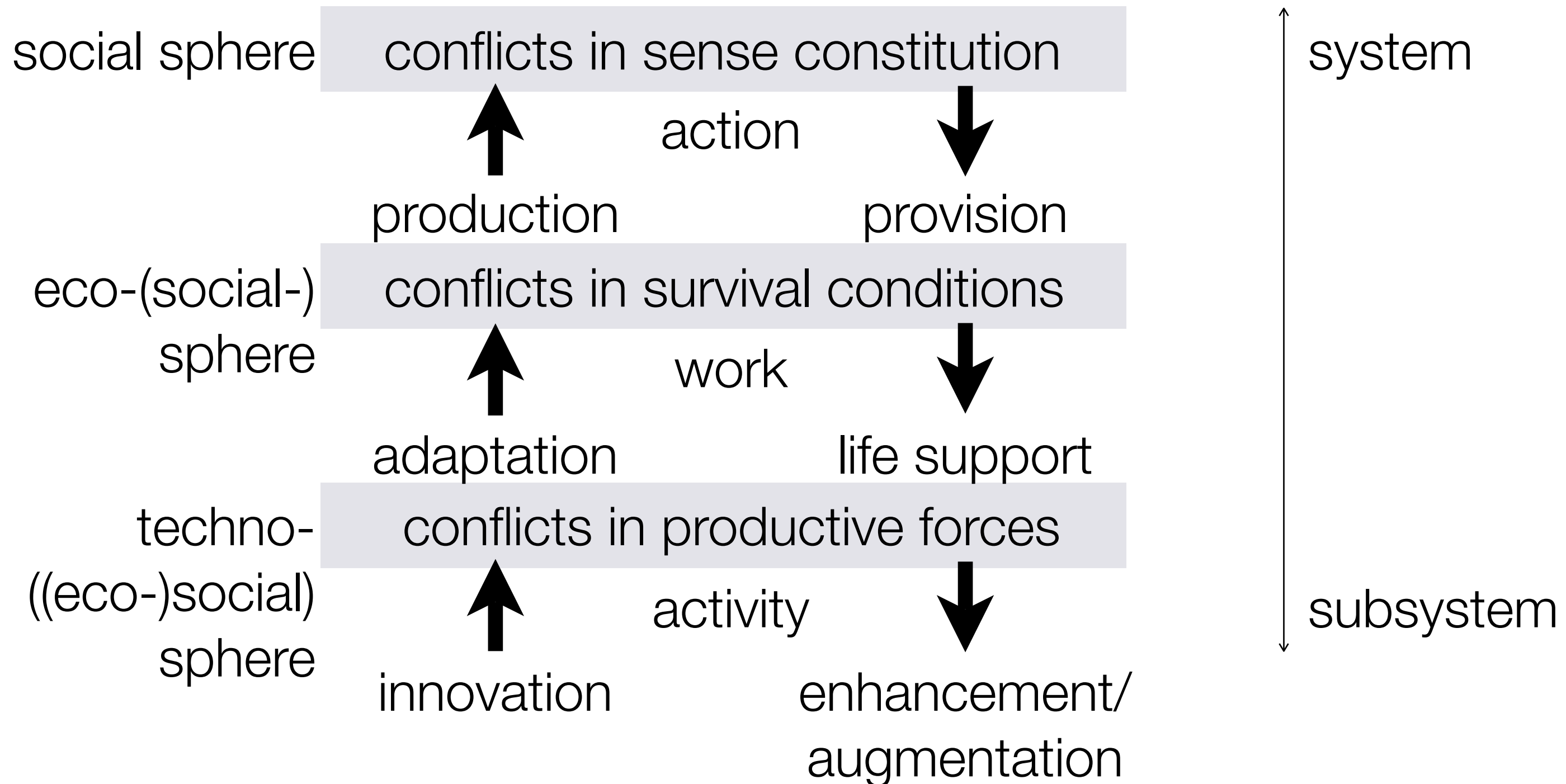# Global challenges

Global challenges =def. challenges that

– affect (the survival of) all humanity (objective factor) and
– can successfully be treated only by humanity as a whole (subjective factor).

They are owed to disparities in the relationships

– among humans (between humans and society),
– between humans and nature (environment) and
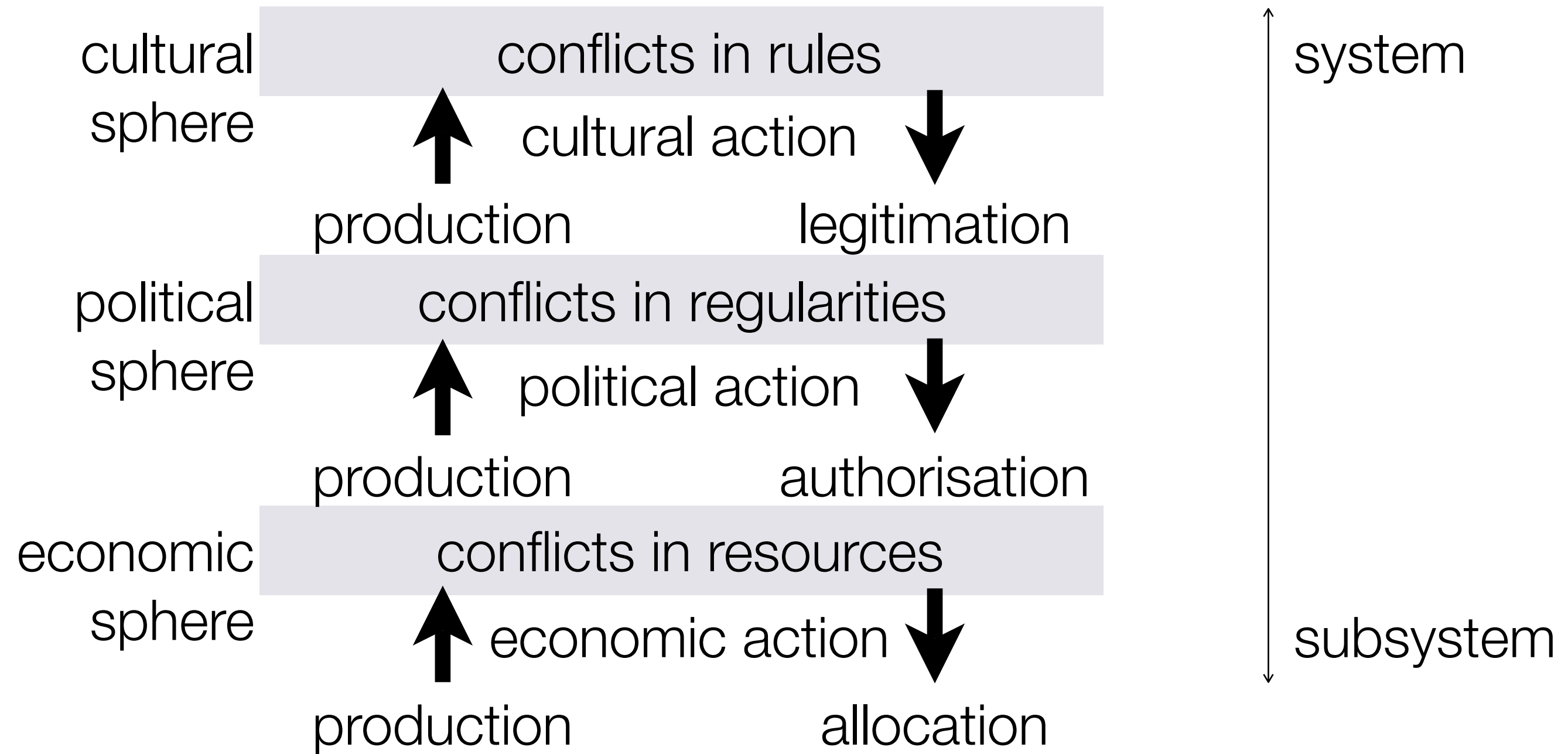– between humans and technology.

Global challenges

social sphere   conflicts in sense constitution   system

action

production   provision

eco-(social-)   conflicts in survival conditions
sphere

work

adaptation   life support

techno-   conflicts in productive forces
((eco-)social)
sphere

activity   subsystem

innovation   enhancement/
augmentation

Global challenges

cultural sphere	conflicts in rules	system
	cultural action	
	production legitimation	
political sphere	conflicts in regularities	
	political action	
	production authorisation	
economic sphere	conflicts in resources	
	economic action	subsystem
	production allocation	

Global challenges

- dark side:

  imminent breakdown of interdependent societies
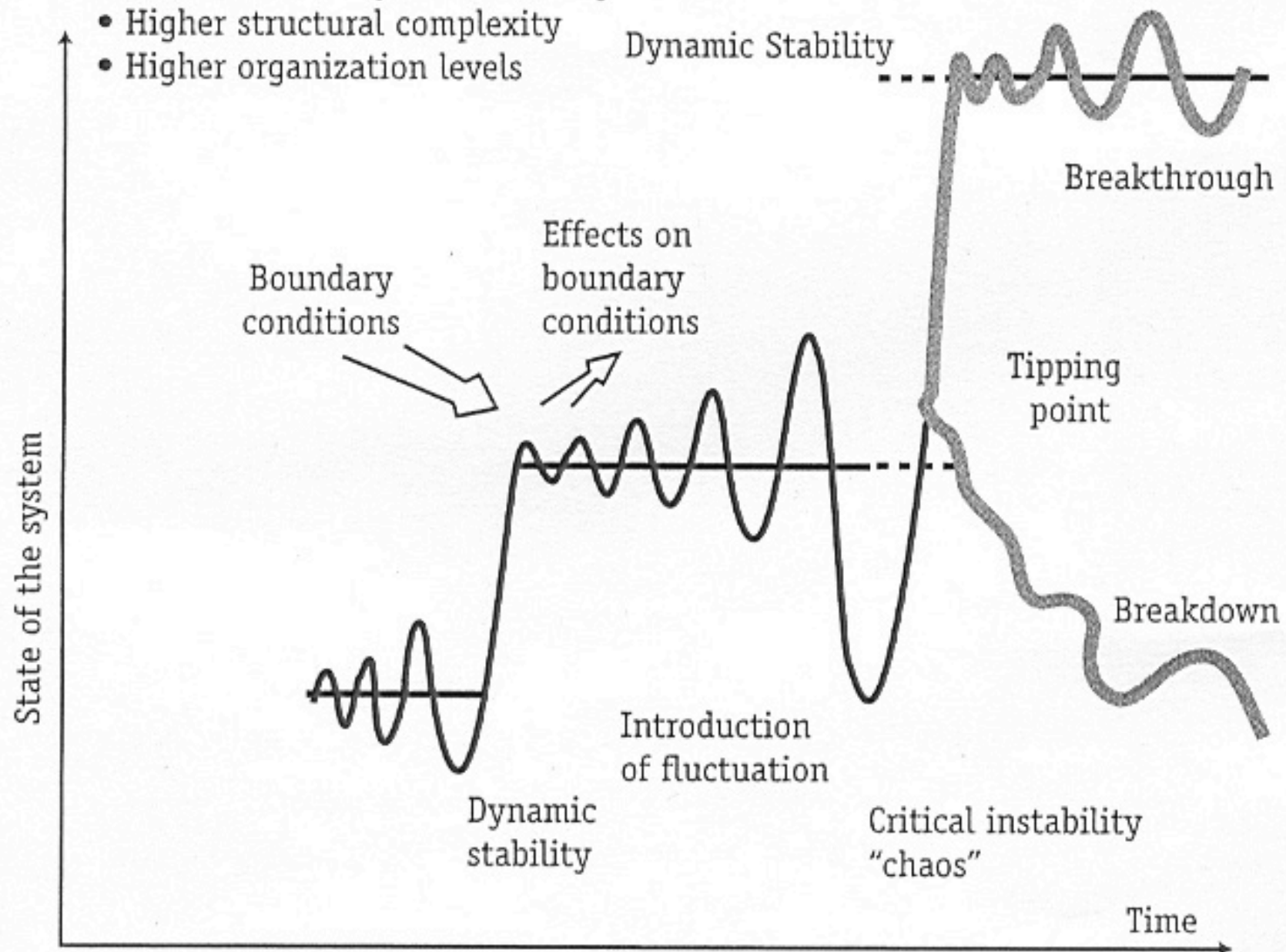 – extermination of humanity

- bright side:

  possible entrance to a new stage of evolution of humanity
  – self-organisation of a humane world society

Global challenges

- More effective use of information
- Greater free-energy efficiency
- Greater flexibility and creativity
- Higher structural complexity
- Higher organization levels

THE CHAOS POINT

THE WORLD AT THE CROSSROADS

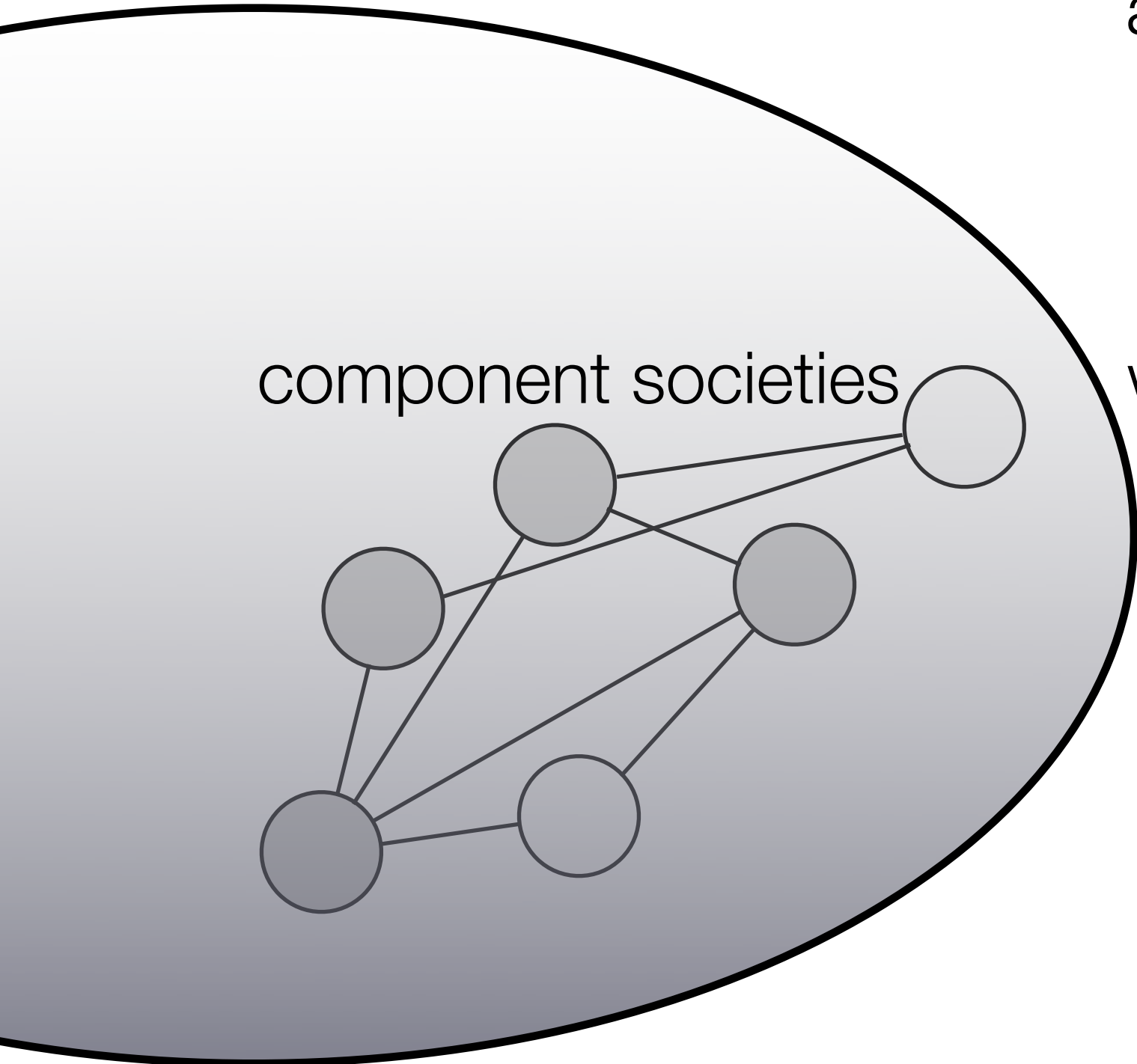Seven Years to Avoid Global Collapse and Promote Worldwide Renewal

ERVIN LASZLO
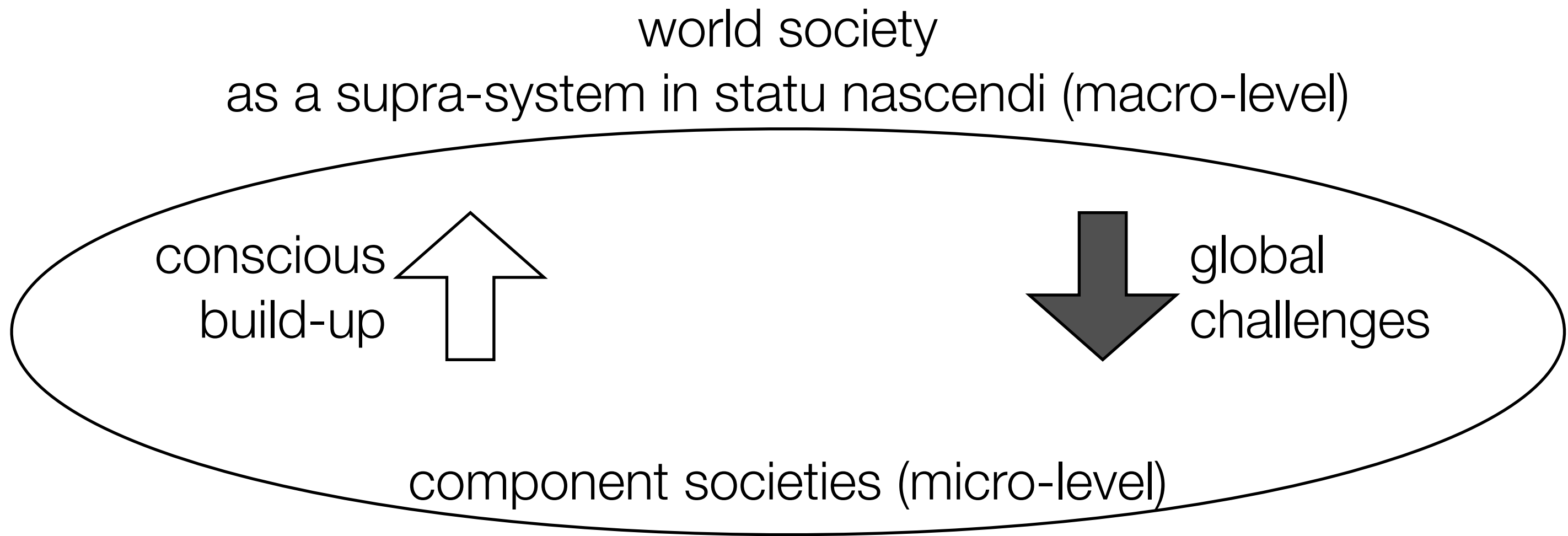
Foreword by Sir Arthur C. Clarke

Global challenges

a meta-system transition

component societies   world society

Global challenges

world society
as a supra-system in statu nascendi (macro-level)

conscious build-up

global challenges

component societies (micro-level)

Global challenges

- Self-organisation of the information society =def. (build-up of another) social formation mediated by means of ICTs
  such that the global challenges can be met

- "Great Bifurcation"– choice between two options:
  either a Global Sustainable Information Society
  or extinction!

Global Sustainable Information Society

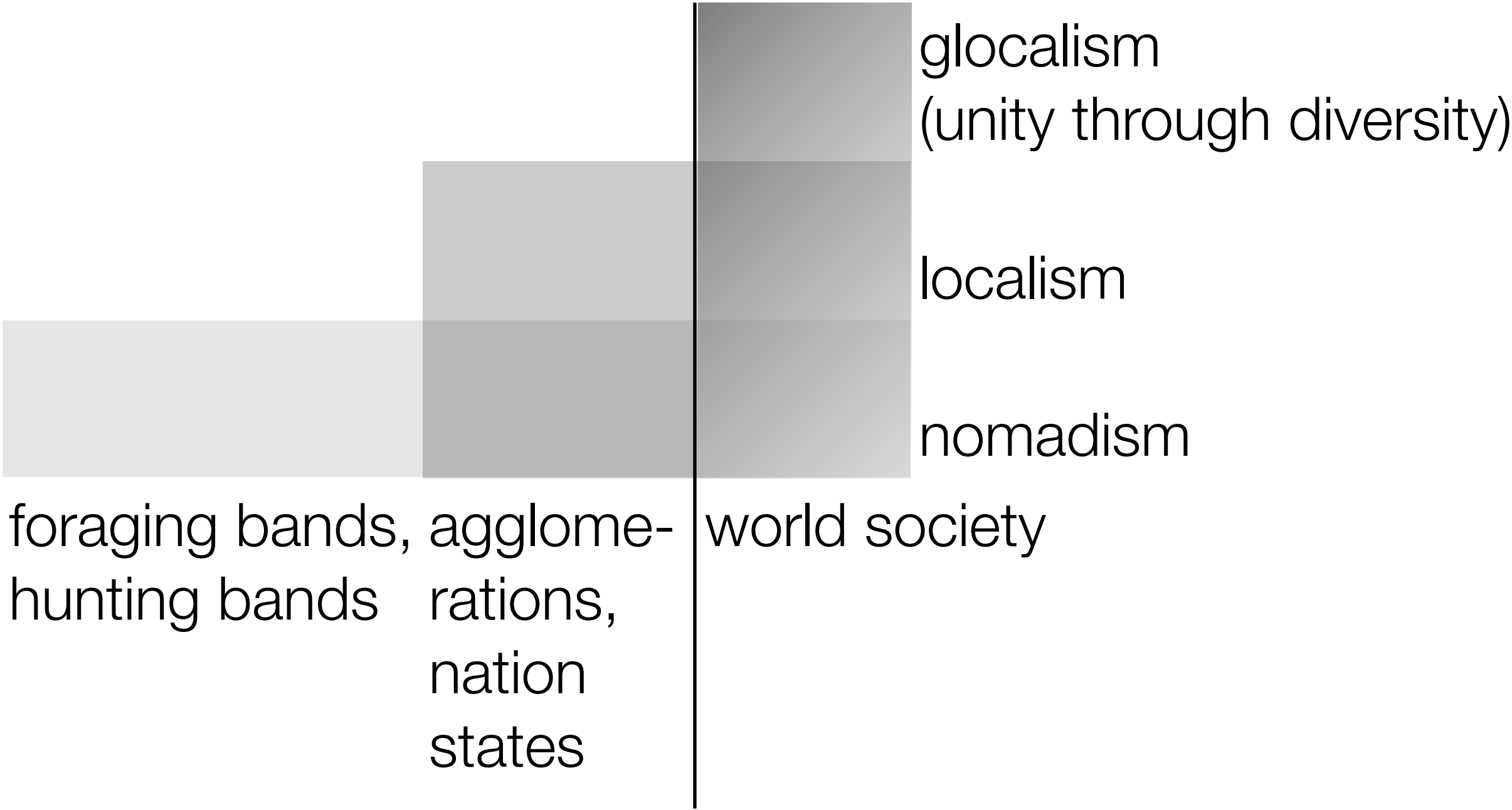- Globalisation

- Sustainabilisation

- Informationalisation

Globalisation: definition

Globalisation =def. process of forming of world society by establishing/strengthening interdependencies of the component societies (globality) and by integrating them (glocalisation)

Globalisation: spatio-temporal evolution

glocalism
(unity through diversity)

localism

nomadism

foraging bands, hunting bands

agglome-rations, nation states

world society

Globalisation: from localism to glocalism?

from localism:	to glocalism:
actions have large-scale and long-term effects that can be externalised	actions affect virtually any other actor on earth (globality) and require new rules of conduct (gobalism) if social life shall be sustained

Globalisation: from localism to glocalism?

Globality needs to be transformed into a globalistic organisation:

– an **organisation** of social life in which actions don't threaten the maintenance of the component societies of the emerging world society but **sustain** social life;

– an organisation of social life led by a state of awareness of the actors that provides knowledge to do this – **global consciousness of informed actors**
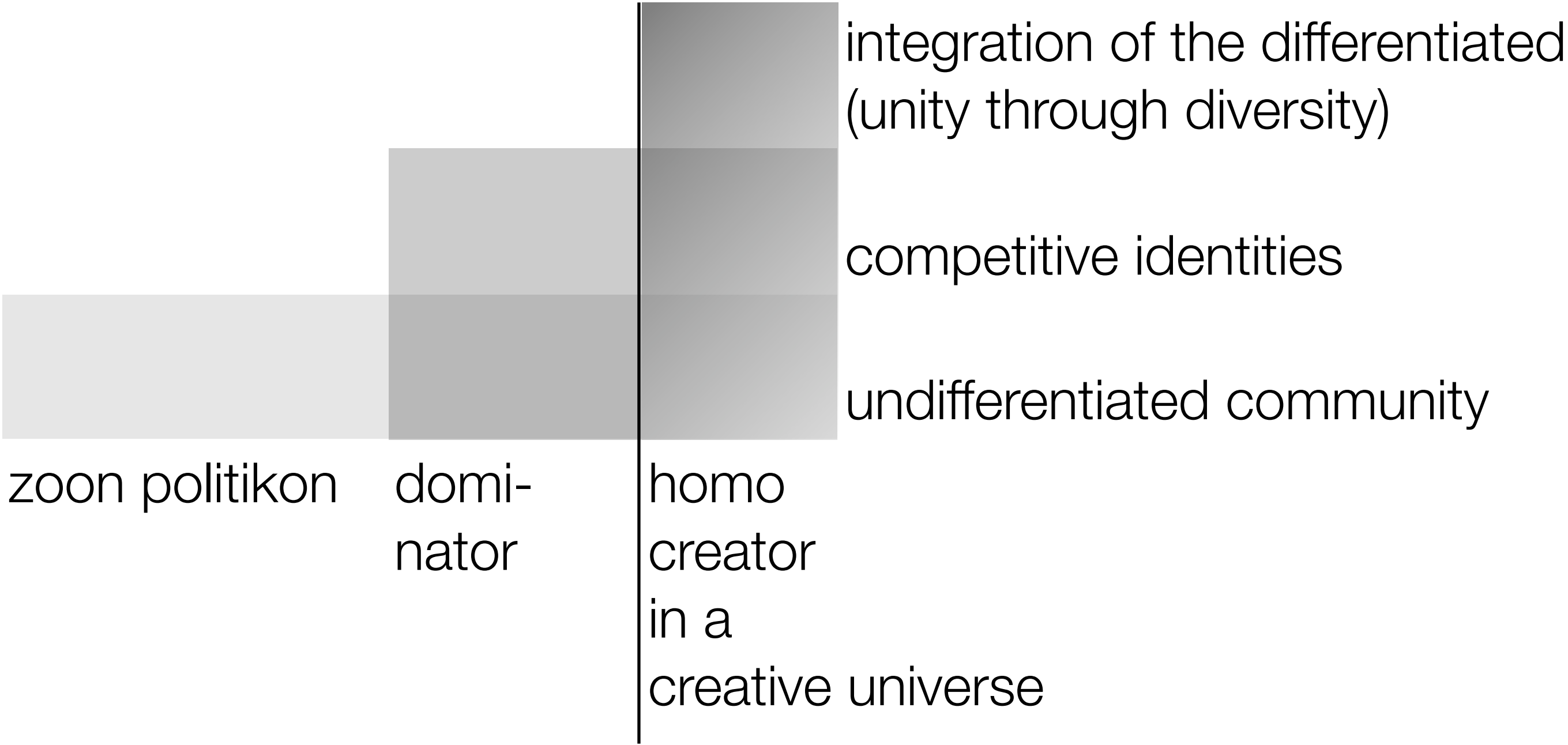
Sustainabilisation: definition

Sustainabilisation =def. process of putting society in a position to avoid anthropogenic breakdown and safeguard a stable path of development (sustainability) by keeping social disparities below the threshold of endangering the maintenance of society

Sustainabilisation: organisational evolution (individual-society relation)

integration of the differentiated (unity through diversity)

competitive identities

undifferentiated community

zoon politikon

domi-
nator

homo
creator
in a
creative universe

Sustainabilisation: from domination to partnership (after Riane Eisler)?

from the domination model:	to the partnership model:
– ranked	– networked
– coercive	– collaborative
– rigid	– flexible
– (fe)male-dominant	– egalitarian
– war-centred	– nonviolent
– private-ownership-oriented	– commons-oriented (W.H.)

Sustainabilisation: from domination to partnership (after Riane Eisler)?

The domination model needs to be transformed into a model that lives up to the **re-creative potential** of society when promoting **deliberate influences on the conditions of society's own existence** (conscious evolution of society)
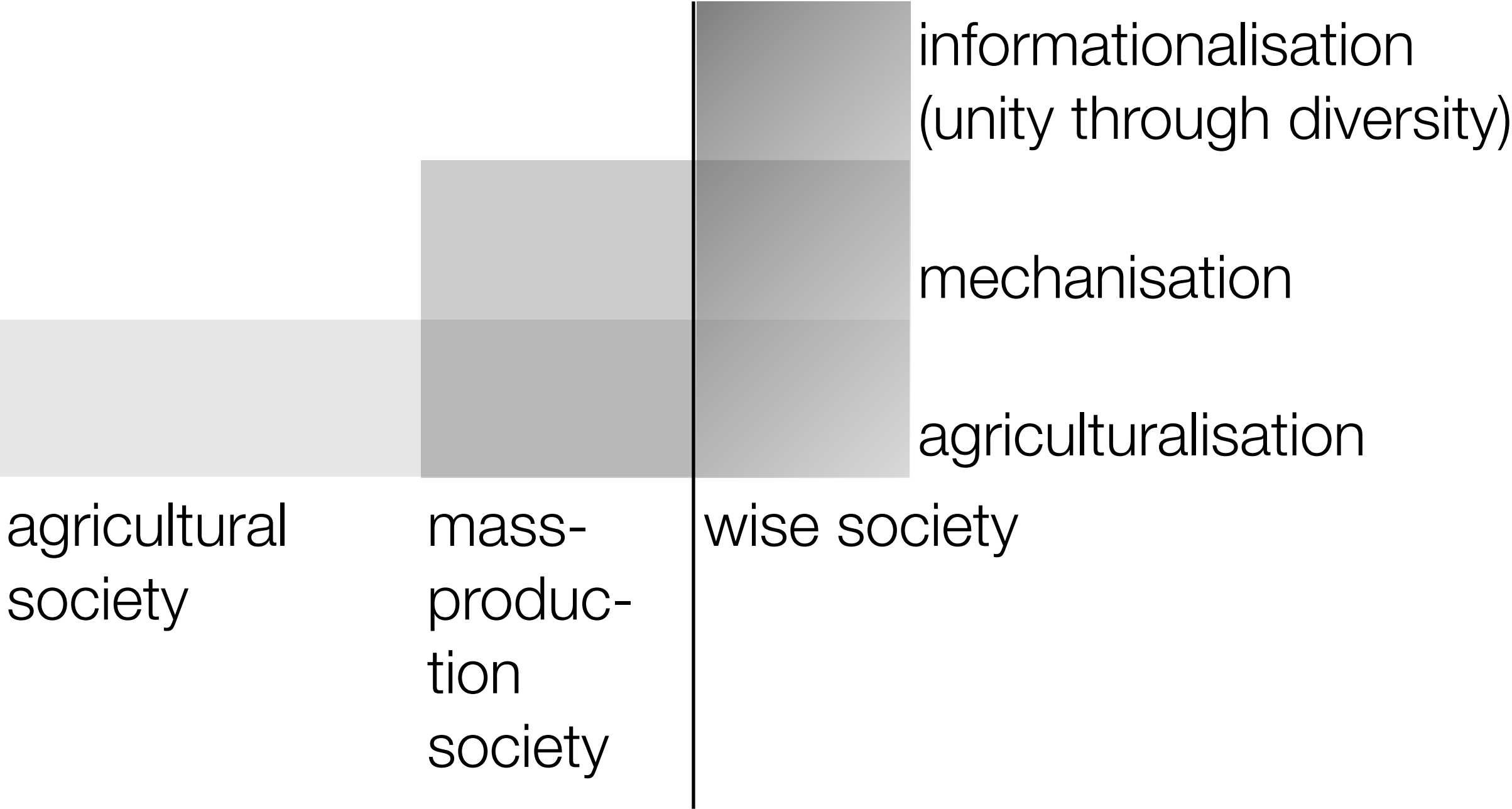
Informationalisation: definition

Informationalisation =def. process of raising the problem-solving capacity of world society to a level of collective intelligence that allows for successfully tackling the problems that arise from society's own development;

this process is based upon technology that makes society more and more responsive to information (informatisation)

Informationalisation: techno-social evolution

informationalisation
(unity through diversity)

mechanisation

agriculturalisation

agricultural
society

mass-
produc-
tion
society

wise society

Informationalisation: from industrial to informational mode?

from the industrial mode of (re-)production of society:	to the informational mode of (re-)production of society:
due to social antagonisms ever more vast amounts of matter and energy are cycled through all levels of society accepting a high degree of frictions	collective intelligence becomes the key for reducing the frictions – among human systems, – between human and natural systems – and between human and technological systems

Informationalisation: from industrial to informational mode?

Informatisation needs to be transformed into a means of reducing frictions.

However, in order to realise the potential of informatisation informationalisation needs the generation of **information that enables societies to trigger their reorganisation into a world society on a sustainable path**.
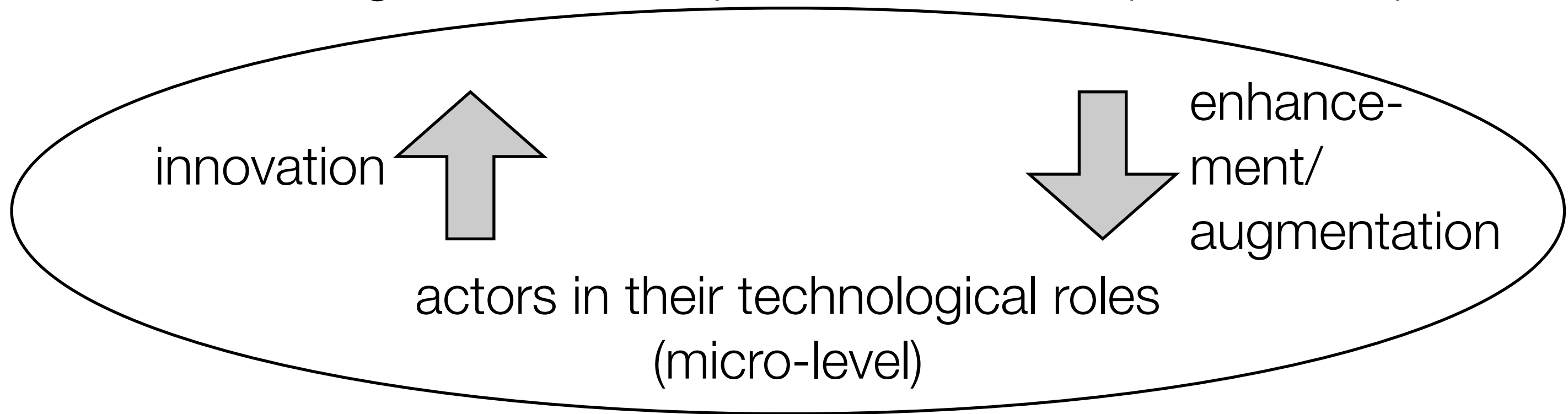
Antagonisms of Informatisation

Informatisation

– reinforces existing social disparities, quantitatively

– triggers new social disparities, qualitatively

– marks another period in capitalist development unless the new potentials for informationalisation are realised (information capitalism vs. Global Sustainable Information Society)

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Technology

automation
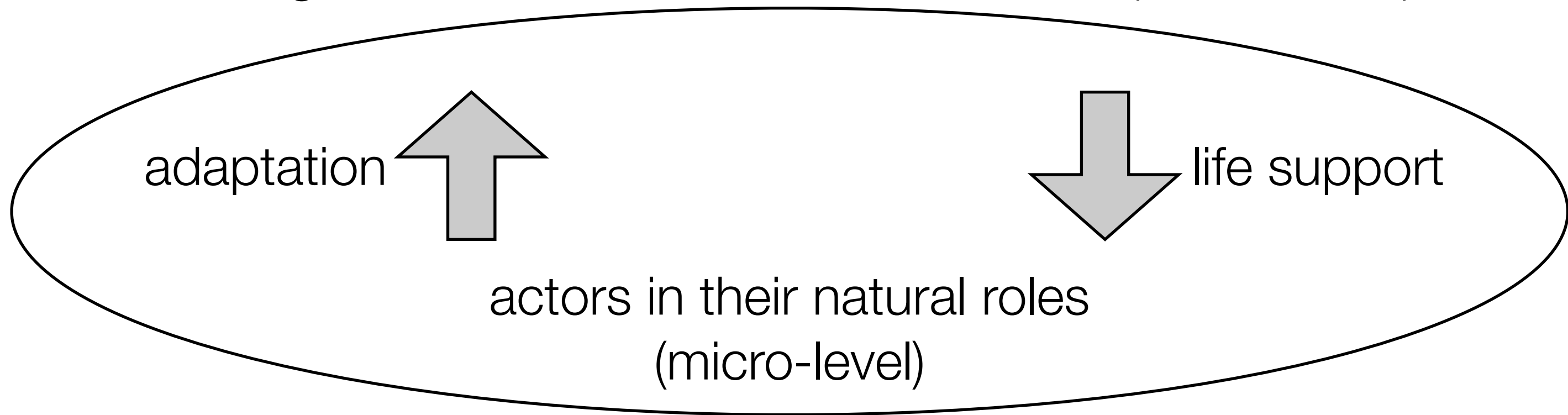
technological structure: productive forces (macro-level)

innovation ⬆ ⬇ enhance-ment/ augmentation

actors in their technological roles
(micro-level)

raising technological compatibility
vs. raising the vulnerability of the information society

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Environment

control revolution

ecological structure: conditions of survival (macro-level)

adaptation   ↑   ↓ life support
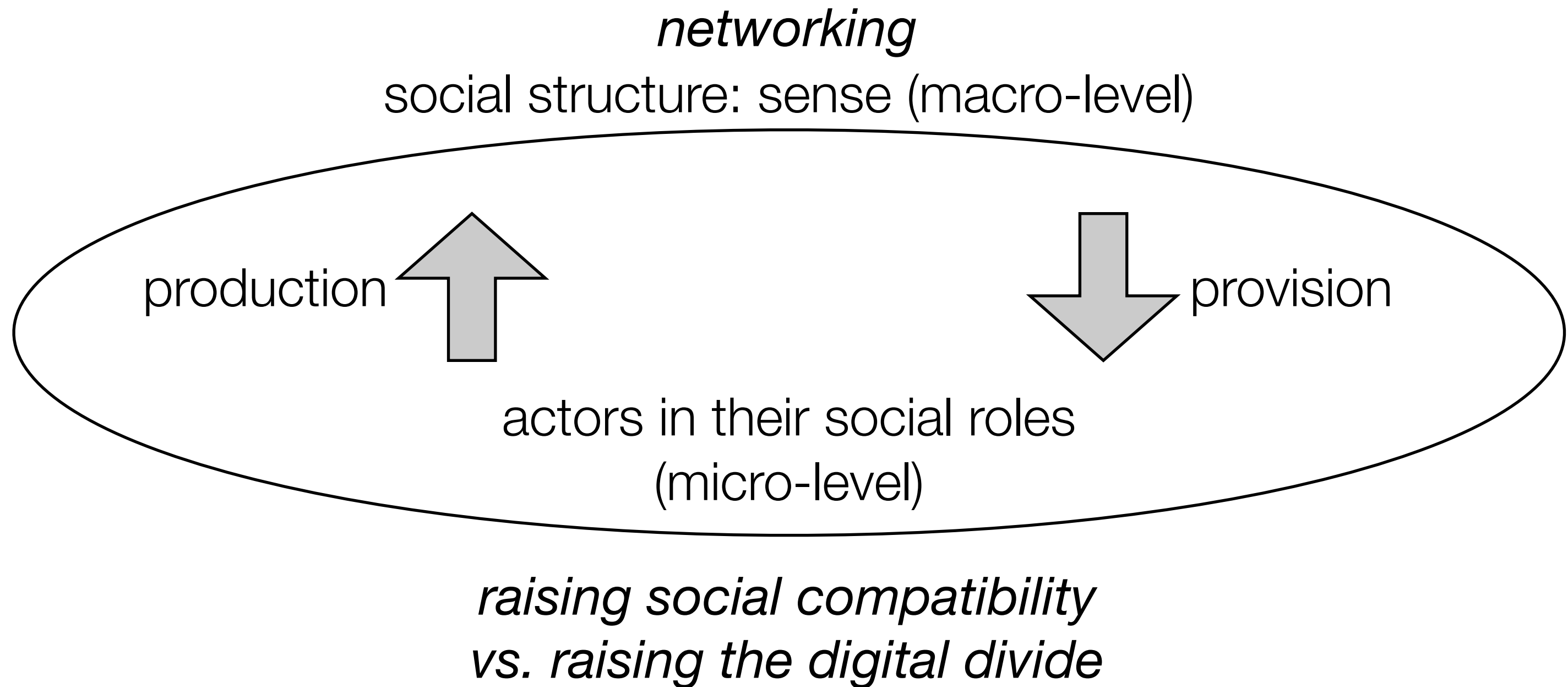
actors in their natural roles
(micro-level)

raising environmental compatibility
vs. raising the computer-aided degradation of the environment

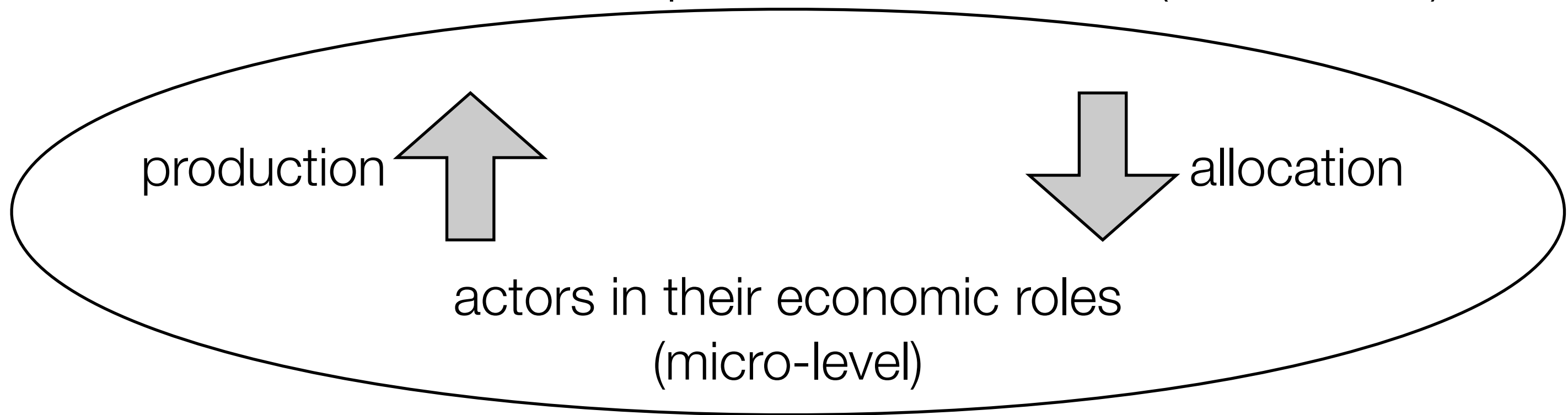# Antagonisms of Informatisation: Society in the narrower sense

networking

social structure: sense (macro-level)

production   provision

actors in their social roles
(micro-level)

raising social compatibility
vs. raising the digital divide

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Economy

mining knowledge

economic structure: disposition of resources (macro-level)

production ⬆️ ⬇️ allocation
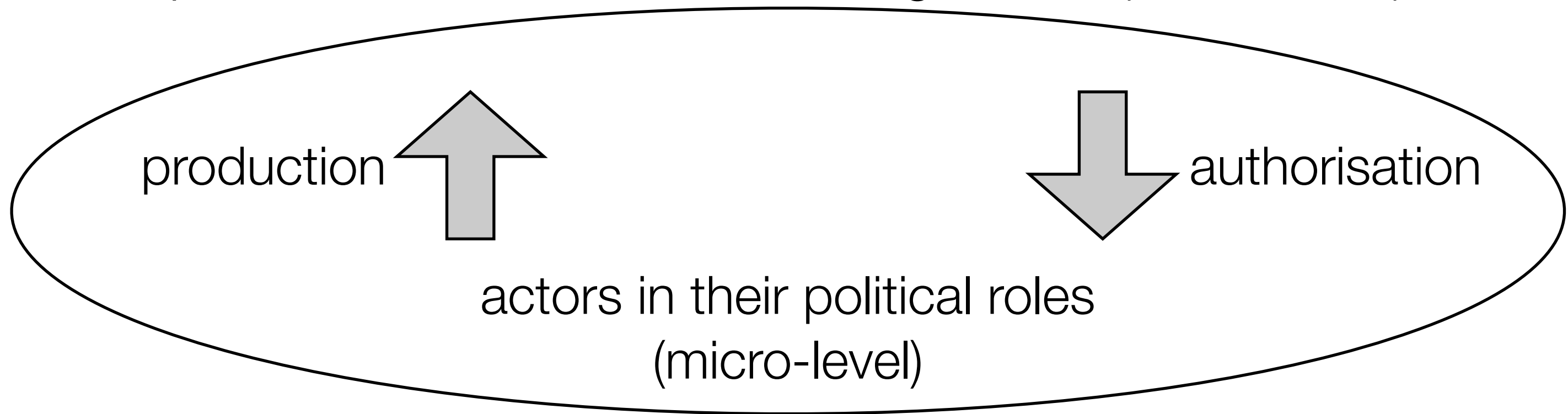
actors in their economic roles
(micro-level)

respecting the knowledge commons
vs. commodifying/commercialising information

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Polity

establishing the agora of noopolitik
political structure: decision on regularities (macro-level)

production

authorisation
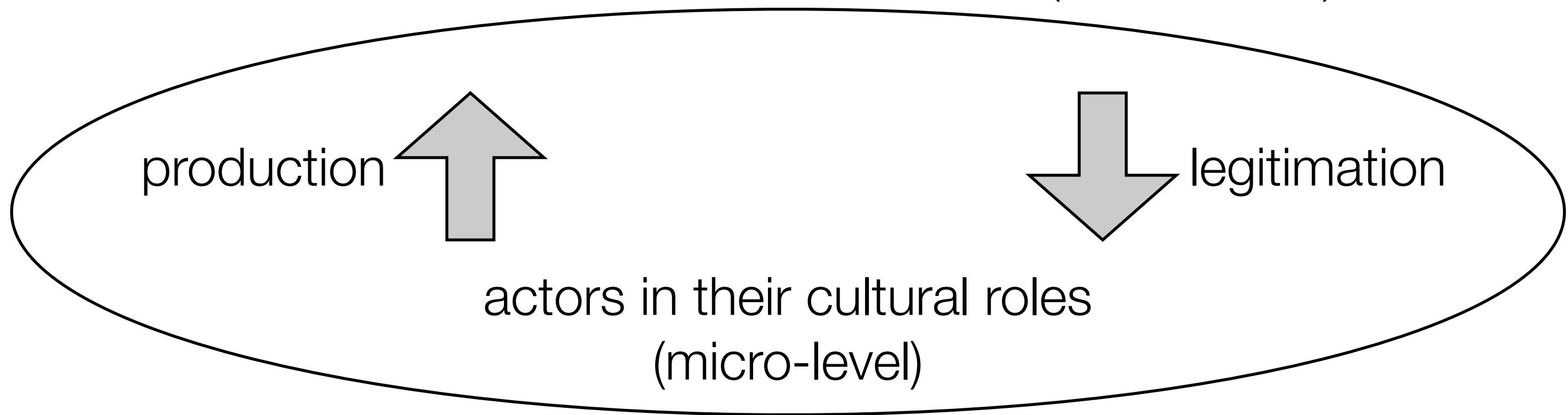
actors in their political roles
(micro-level)

empowering
vs. extending the control over citizens and waging infowars

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Culture

making everyday life scientific
cultural structure: definition of rules (macro-level)

production

legitimation

actors in their cultural roles
(micro-level)

*working towards the noosphere
vs. spreading disinfotainment*

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Dialectical View

	parts-whole relationship …	… at the cost of some parts …	… threatening integrity
dialectic	dialectic of the one and the many	contradiction of the one and the many	antagonism of the one and the many

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Evolutionary Systems Theory View

	self-organisation …	… producing external effects …	… reaching a critical value
		contradiction of …	antagonism of …
systemic evolution	interplay of elements and the system	sustainability and self-made perturbation	breakthrough and breakdown

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Critical Social Systems Theory View

	human self-organisation …	… under domination …	… globally challenged
systemic evolution of humanity	interplay of individuals and society	contradiction of …	antagonism of …
		inclusion and exclusion	the multitude and the "empire"

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Critical Information Society Theory View

	human self-organisation …	… under domination …	… in information capitalism
		contradiction of …	antagonism of …
systemic evolution of humanity	interplay of individuals and society	inclusion and exclusion	information rich and information poor

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Critical Information Society Theory View

	human self-organisation …	… under domination …	… in information capitalism
	interplay of …	contradiction of …	antagonism of …
society in the narrower sense	self-actualisation and the power to constitute sense	fairness and alienation from other humans	humans and the "Net"
environment	self-preservation and the power to survive	harmony with and alienation from nature	humans and "Gaia"
technology	self-actuation and the power to produce and use	safety and security and alienation from technology	humans and the "Megamachine"

Antagonisms of Informatisation: Critical Information Society Theory View

		human self-organisation …	… under domination …	… in information capitalism
		interplay of …	contradiction of …	antagonism of …
society in the narro-wer sense	**culture**	self-expression and the power of definition	equality and lacking influence	reason and mediated mass manipulation
	polity	self-determination and the power of decision	freedom and powerlessness	empowerment and the panspectron
	eco-nomy	self-realisation and the power of disposition	solidarity and expropriation	cosmopedia and information monopolies

Readings

- About the Global Sustainable Information Society:
  (2010) ICTs for a Good Society. In: Eriksson, D., Mirijamdotter, A. (eds.), Festschrift for Gunilla Bradley [forthcoming]

¡Muchas gracias por vuestra atención!