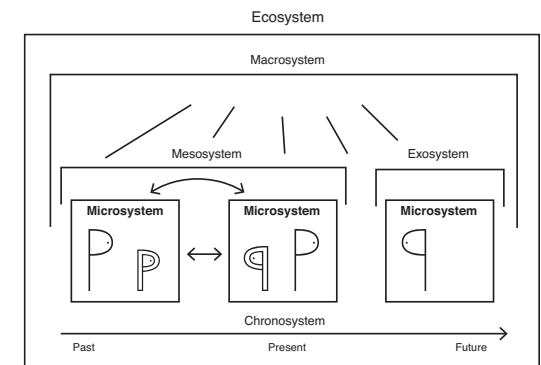


Graphic Representations of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Framework

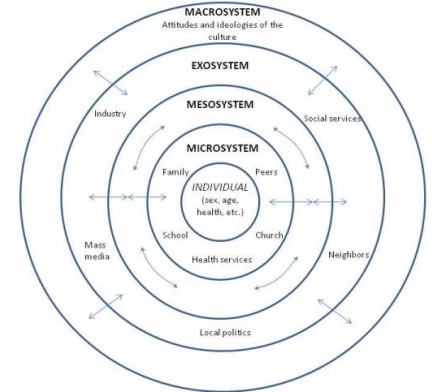
Lawrence G. Shelton
Human Development & Family Studies
University of Vermont



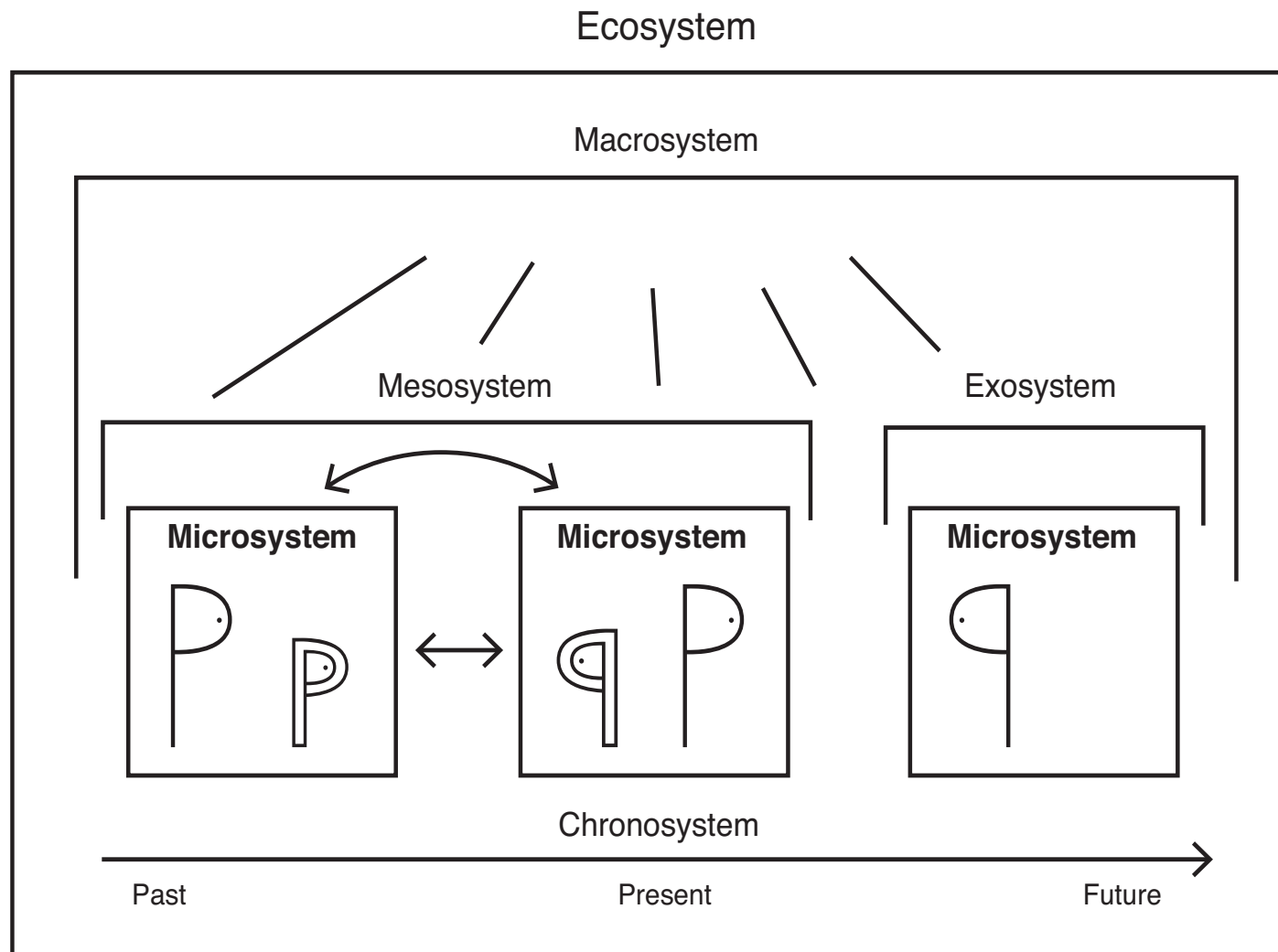
The University of Vermont
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES



Graphic Representations of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Framework by Lawrence G. Shelton



- Graphic representations are essential to helping students comprehend almost any complex concept. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework is particularly difficult for students to grasp. The illustrations suggested by Bronfenbrenner [Russian nesting dolls] and those typically presented in textbooks [concentric circles] are not adequate to the task, and in fact are misleading.
- These new representations were designed to illustrate the unique character of each element of the ecosystem and how they are related to each other. Presented in sequence, they guide students to construct a working model of the ecosystem. They will appear in the forthcoming book: *The Bronfenbrenner Primer: Introduction to Devel ecology* [Routledge Press].



A Developing Person



People Develop by Adapting to Ecosystems

Adaptation

Ecosystem

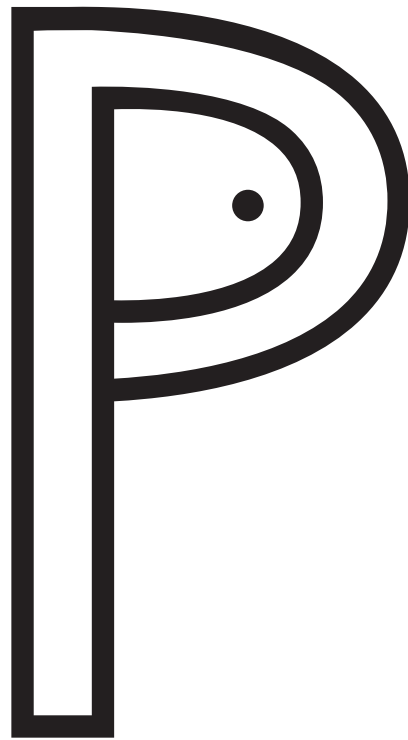


Understanding
Motivation
Skills

Explore
Maintain
Improve

Development

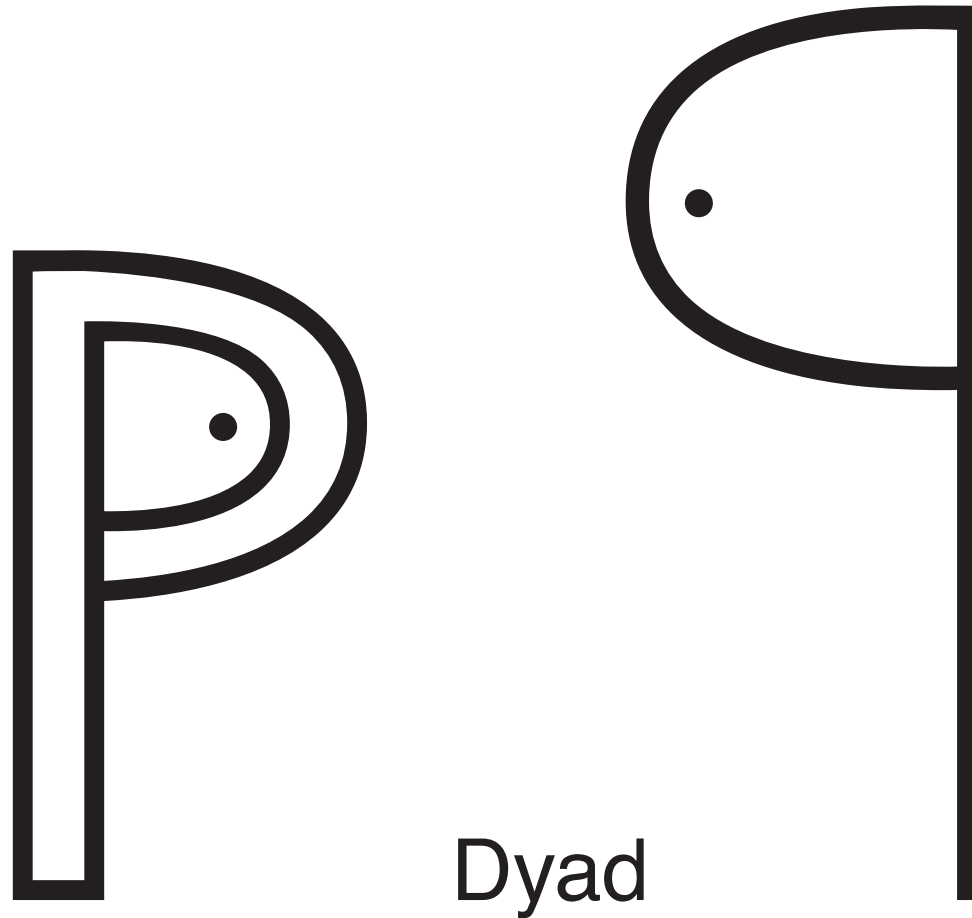
People Engage in Activities



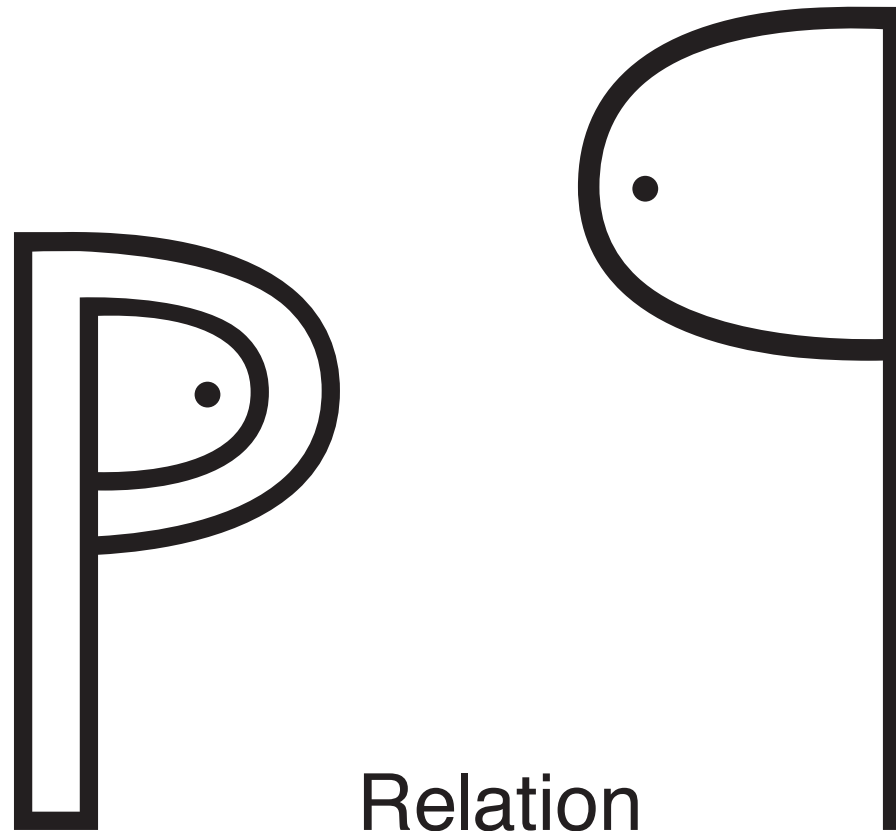
ongoing
momentum
intent

Activities

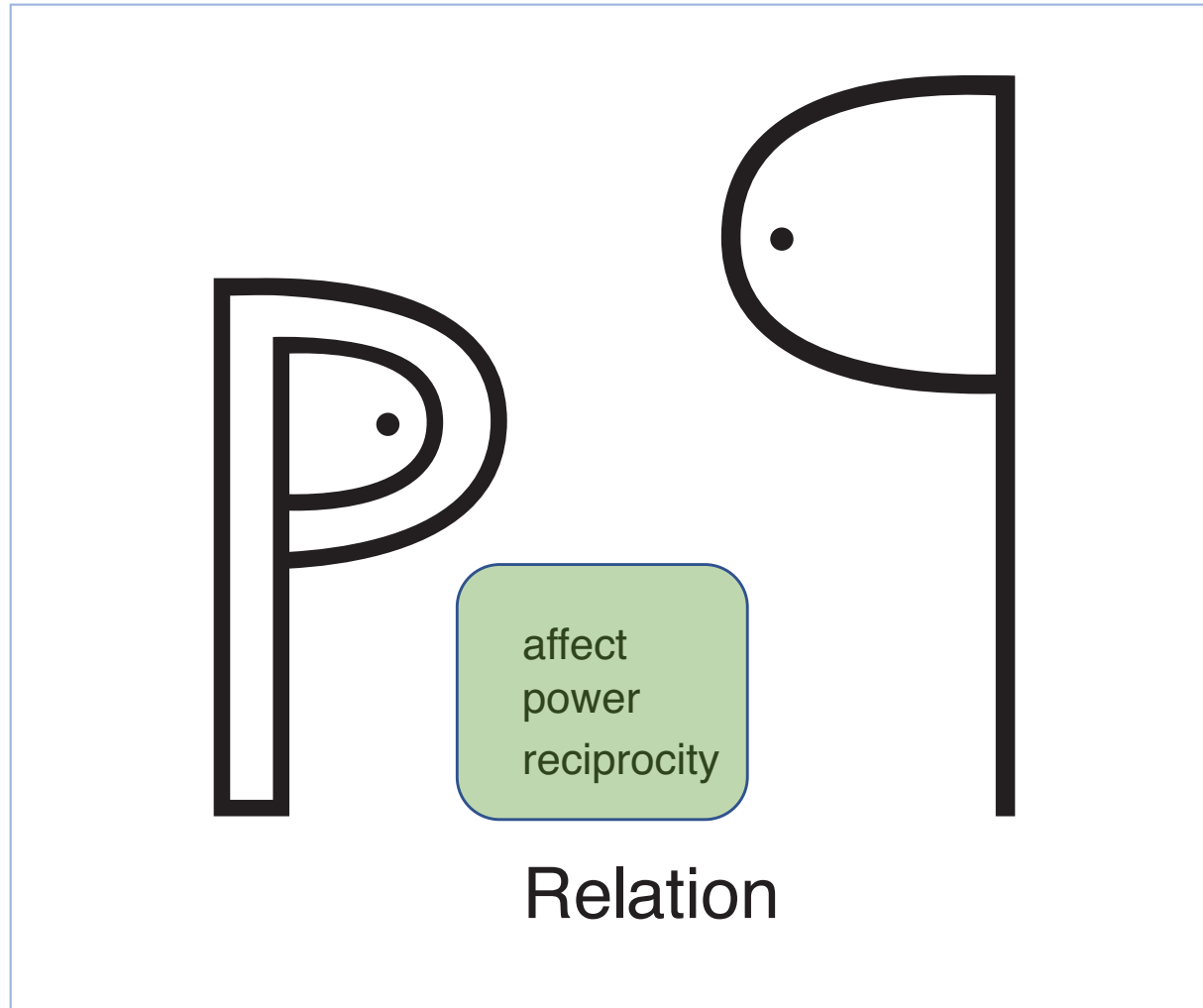
Two People Form a Dyad



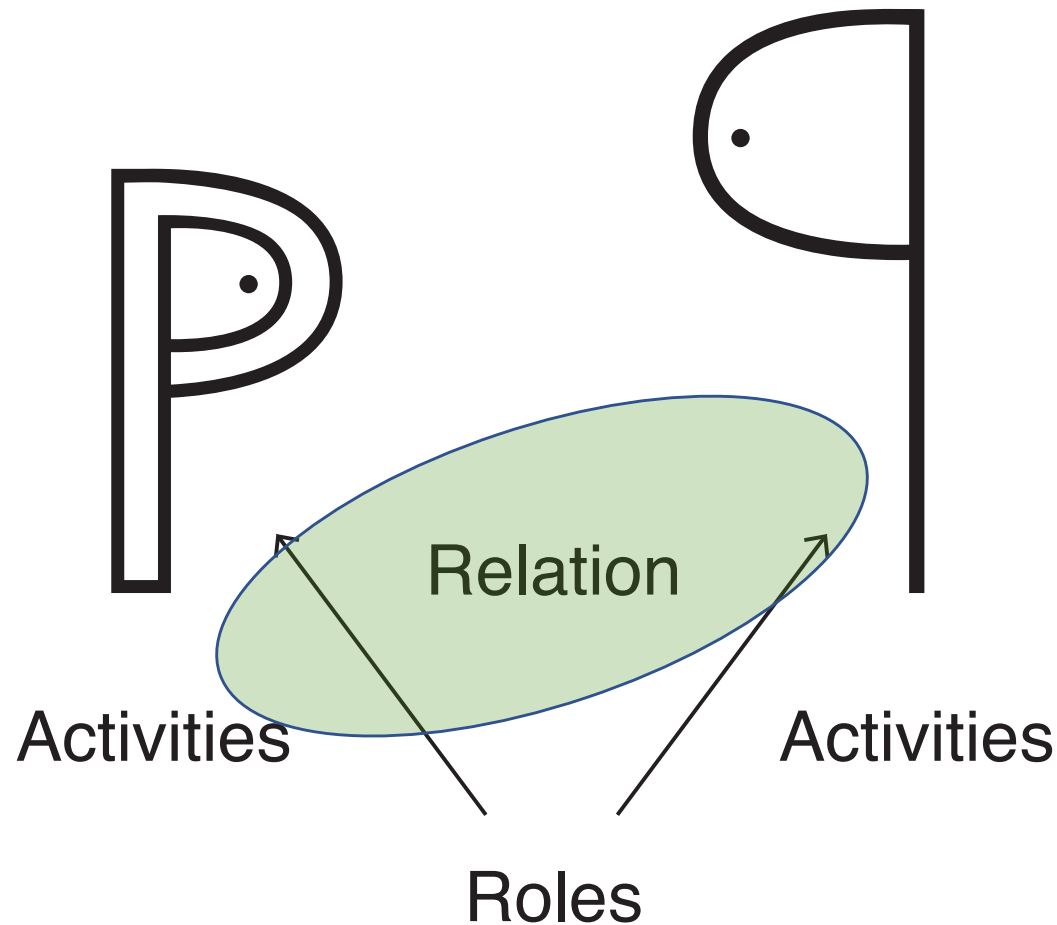
People in Dyads Create Relations



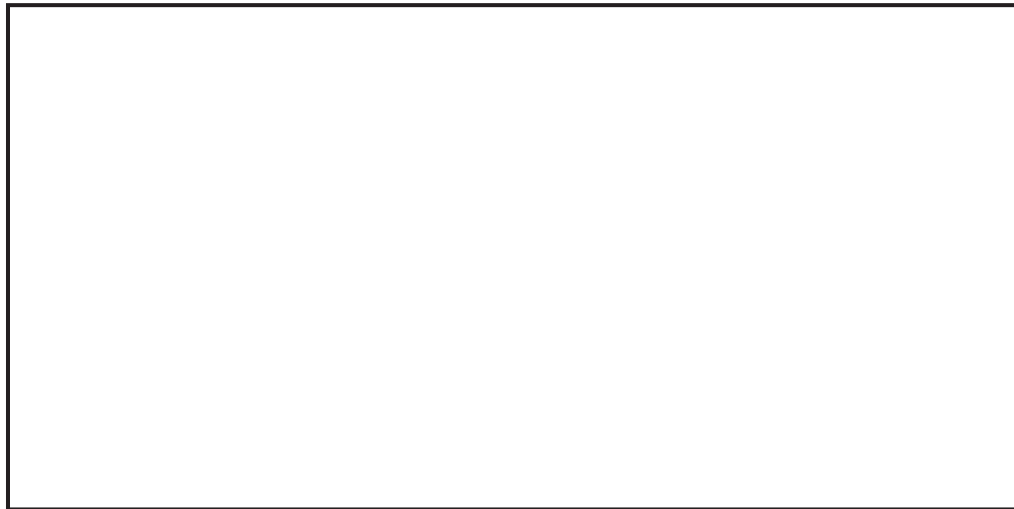
Important Characteristics of Relations



People Fill Roles, Defined by Expected Activities and Ways of Relating

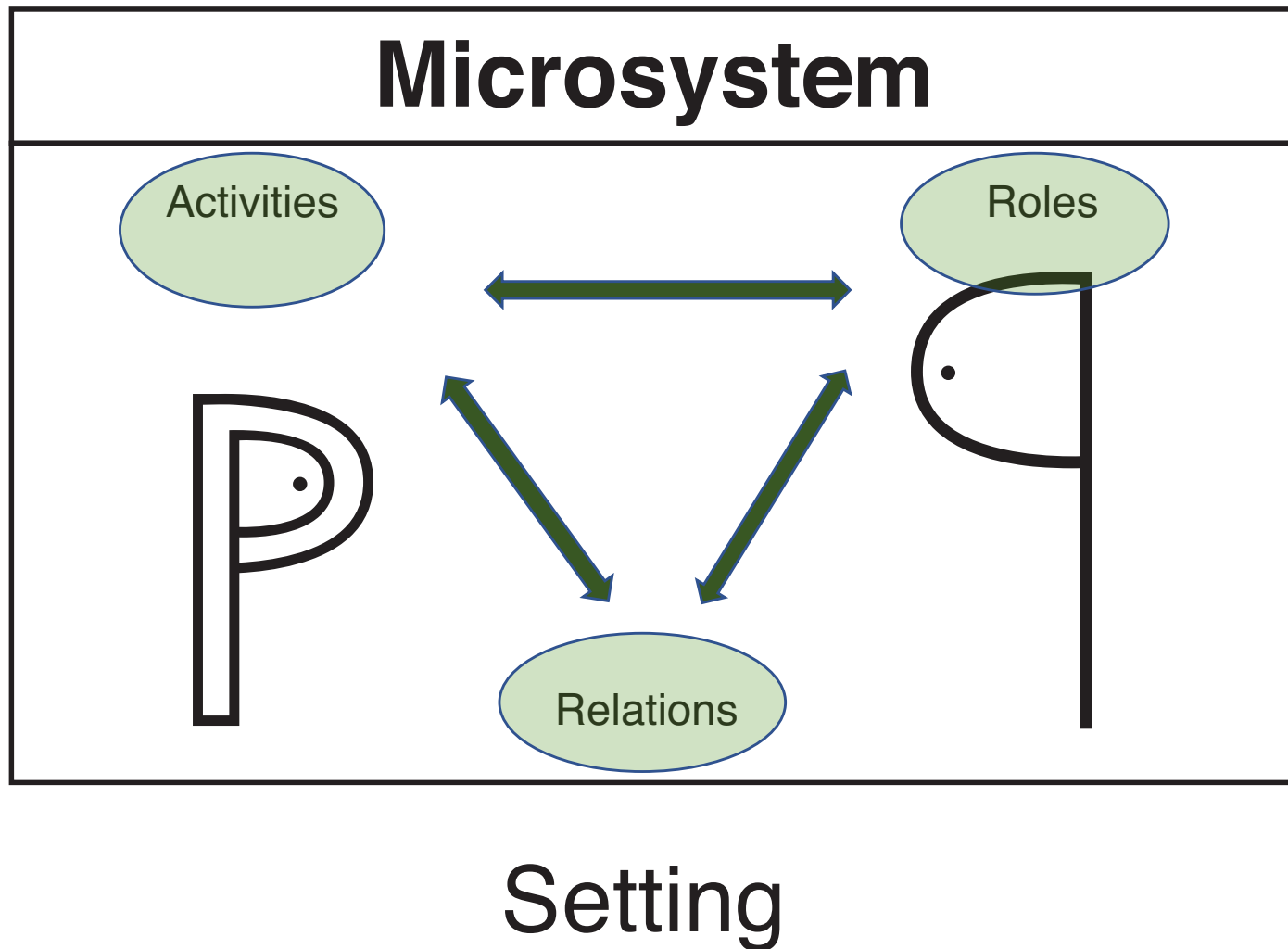


Settings are Places Where People Can Interact

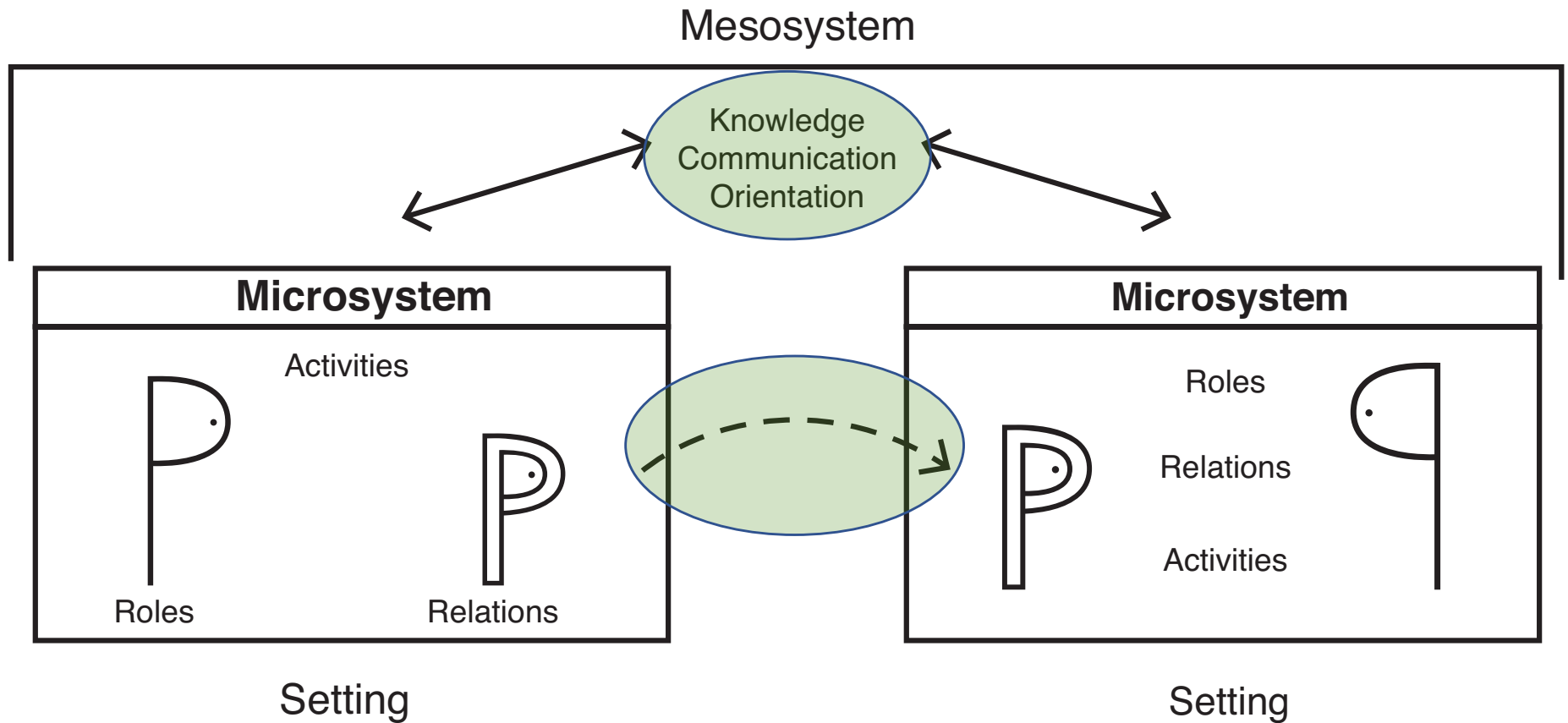


Setting

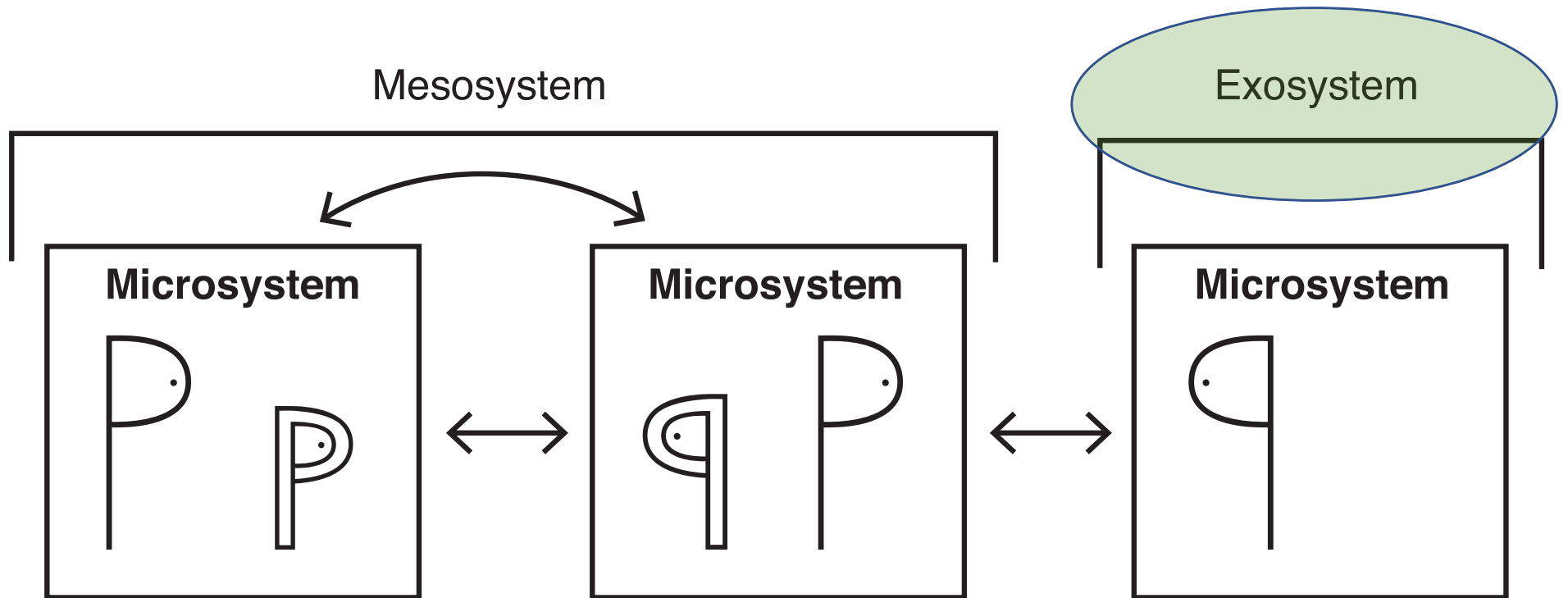
A Microsystem in a Setting



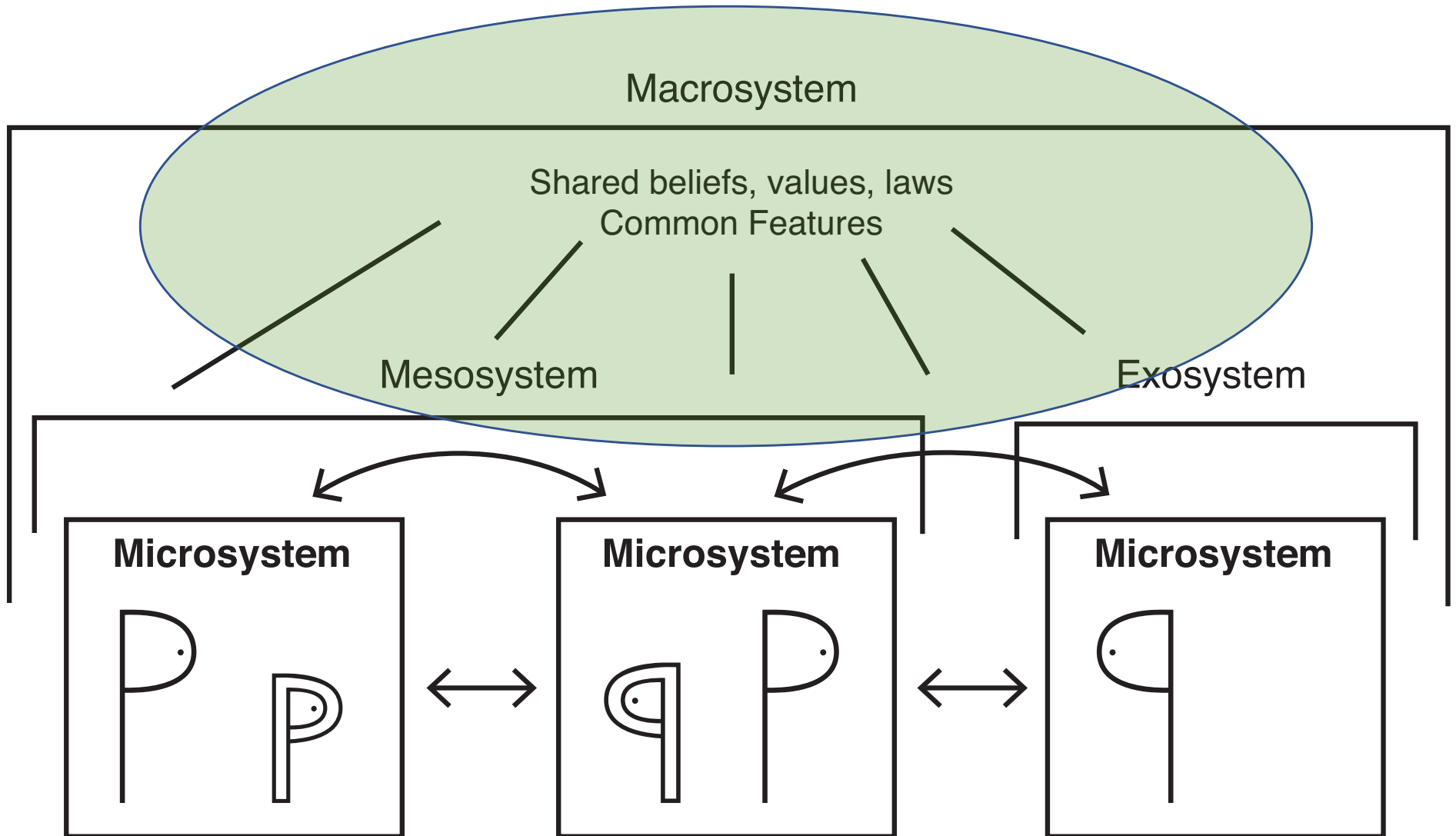
The Mesosystem: Connections Between Settings



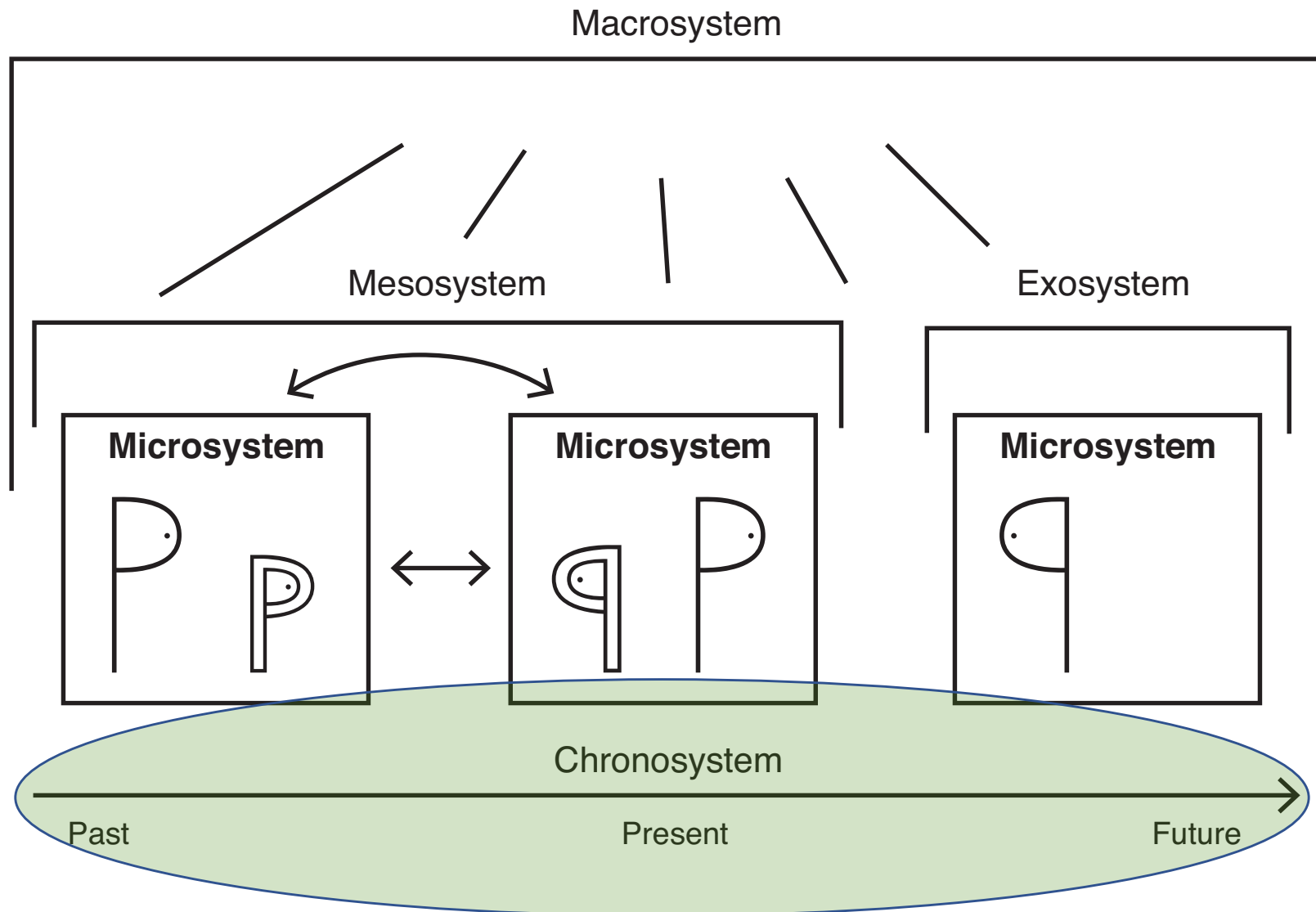
Exosystem Added



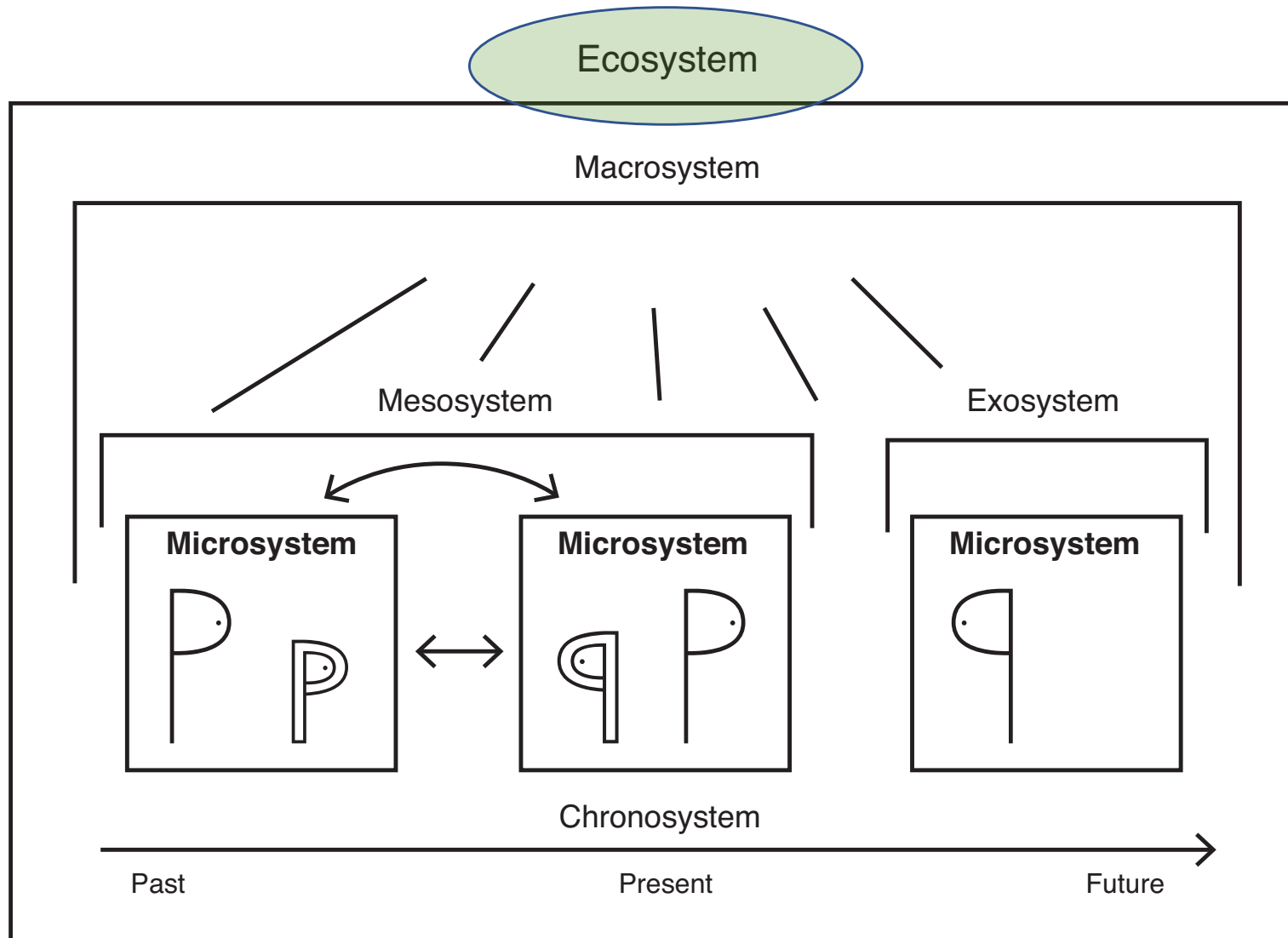
The Macrosystem Added



The Chronosystem Added



The Complete Ecosystem Framework



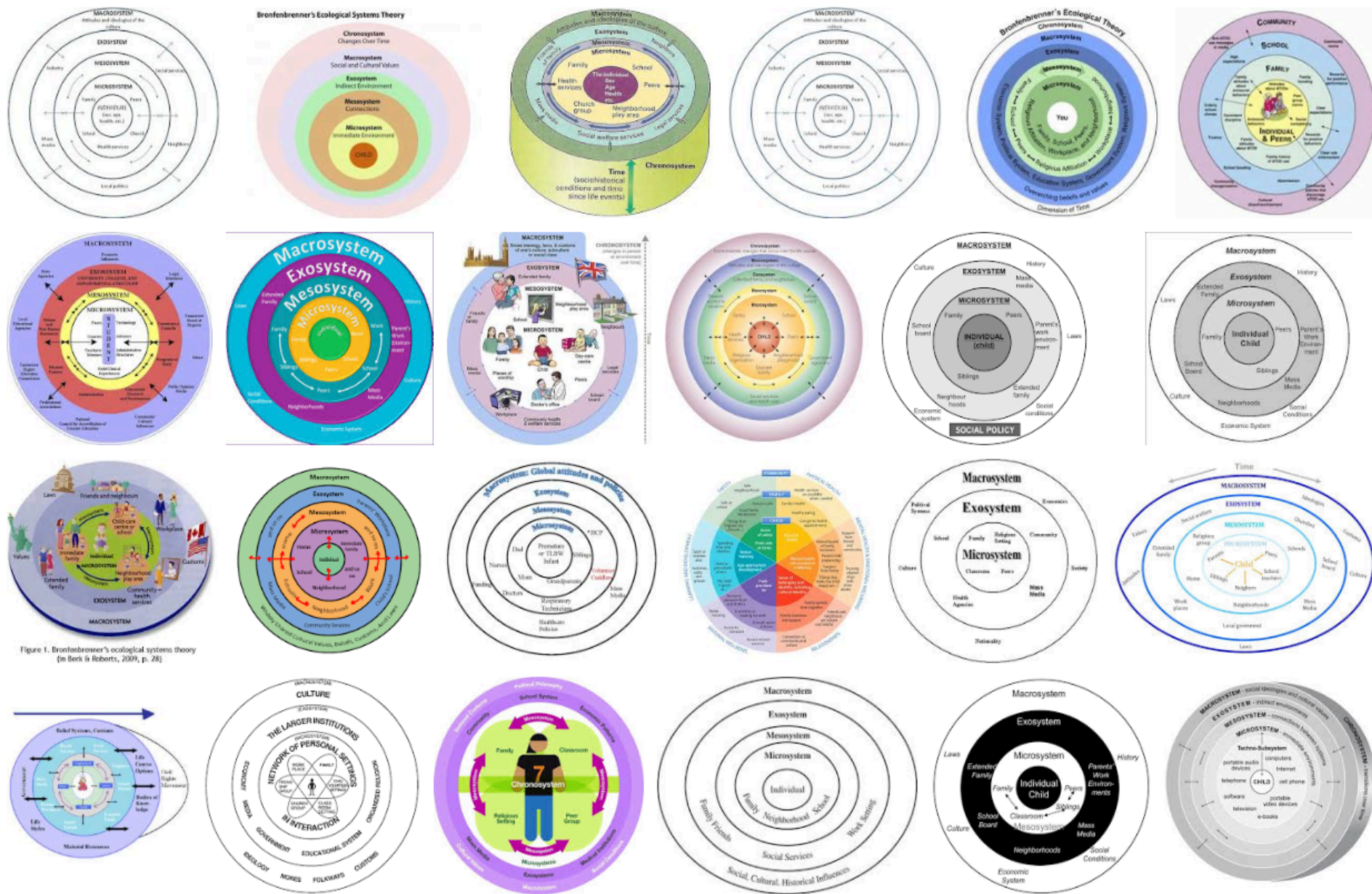


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (in Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 28)