

The Cultural Dynamics Map: Exploring the Arts Ecosystem in the United States

Version 1.0, March 2005

The Cultural Dynamics Map is an on-going attempt to apply the methods and modeling language of systems thinking to the world of arts and cultural production, consumption, support, and experience in the United States. Building on the first conversations of an October 2003 meeting on systems thinking and the, a smaller project team developed this map in close consultation with systems consultant Steve Peterson.

The goal of this map is *not* to build a predictive model of arts and cultural activity in the country. Rather, it is an effort to more thoughtfully and overtly explore the close and dynamic interconnections among the various elements of our arts ecosystem (audiences, funders, organizations, and such). We believe that such a process can serve to inform our arts policy, expand our understanding as arts professionals, guide and contextualize existing and future research on the field, and drive more thoughtful funding initiatives among those seeking to support and evolve this complex system.

To read and explore this map, you will need a basic understanding of the elements of systems mapping. You can find a quick overview of these stocks, flows, connectors, and converters on our project website.

NOTE: The map includes four panels that should be assembled end-to-end into a single diagram. You may need to trim the edges of each page to allow the lines between panels to connect.

What is Systems Thinking?

The discipline of systems thinking represents both a mindset and a methodology for exploring and understanding the behavior of systems—social systems, physical systems, mechanical systems, biological systems, and so on. In short, systems thinking is a 'package' of tools, comprising:

- A framework and language for representing systems and dynamic processes;
- A simulation toolset for thinking through dynamics, processes, and policies;
- A communication vehicle for sharing insight and understanding, and for helping people (often from disparate groups) to get on the "same page."

The Cultural Dynamics Working Group

The Cultural Dynamics Map is an on-going effort of the Cultural Dynamics Working Group, a project launched in October 2003. With funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the project convened 13 leaders from across the country in Madison, Wisconsin, for a two-day intensive conversation about systems thinking and the arts.

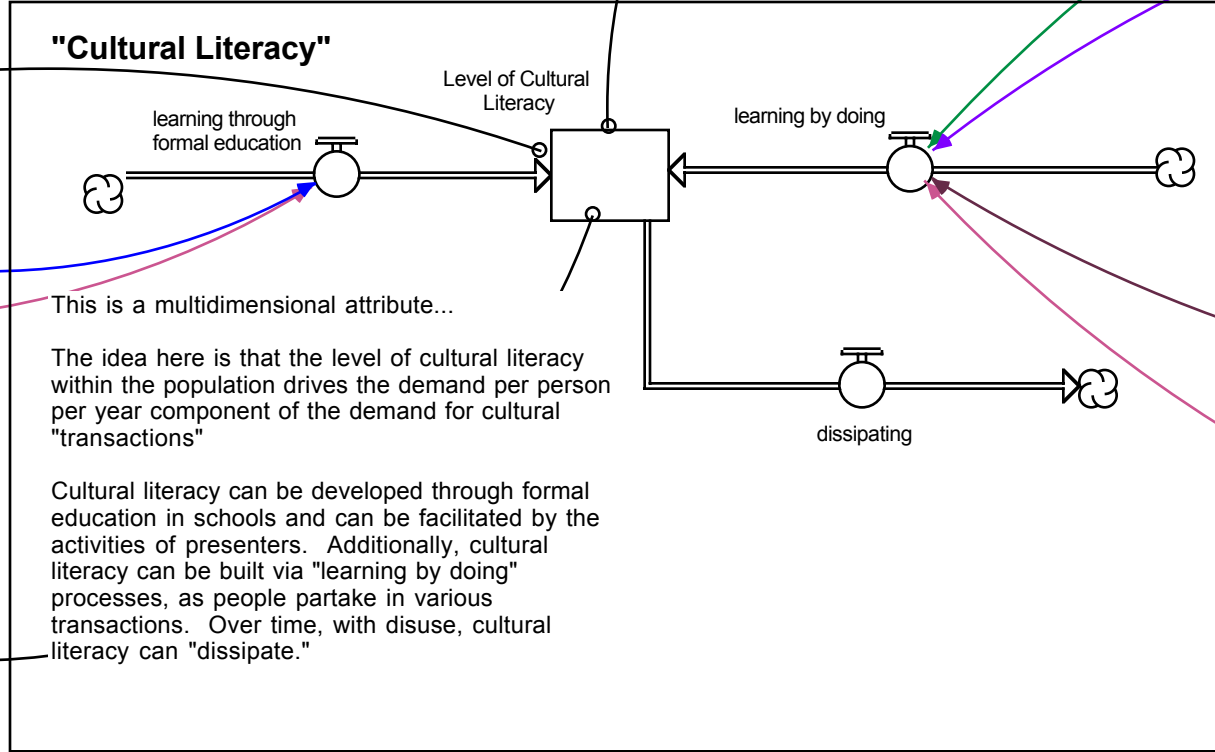
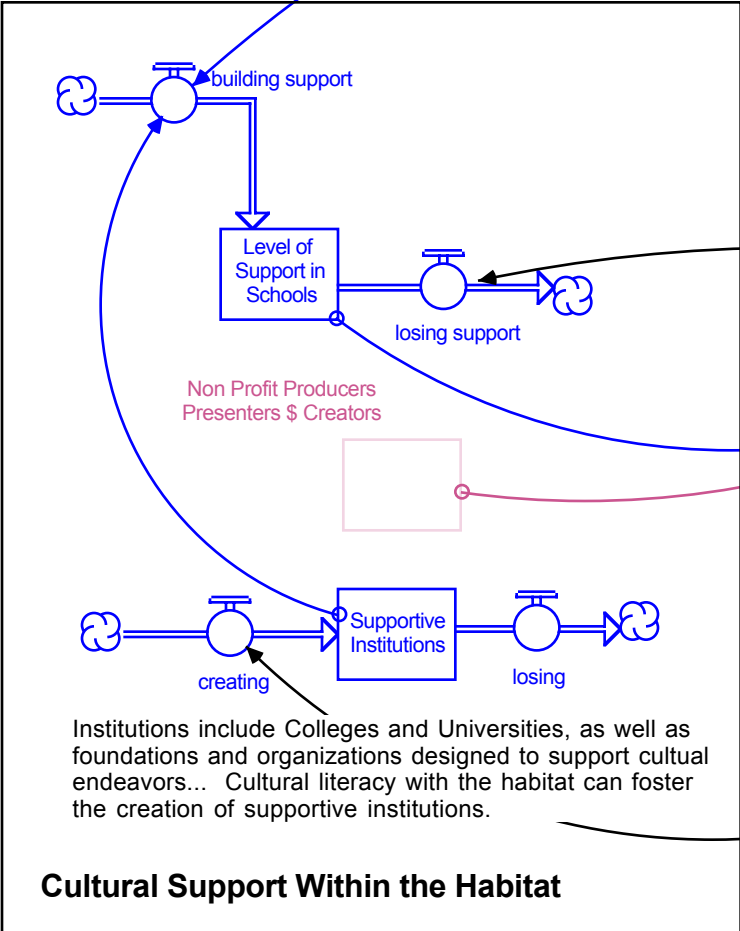
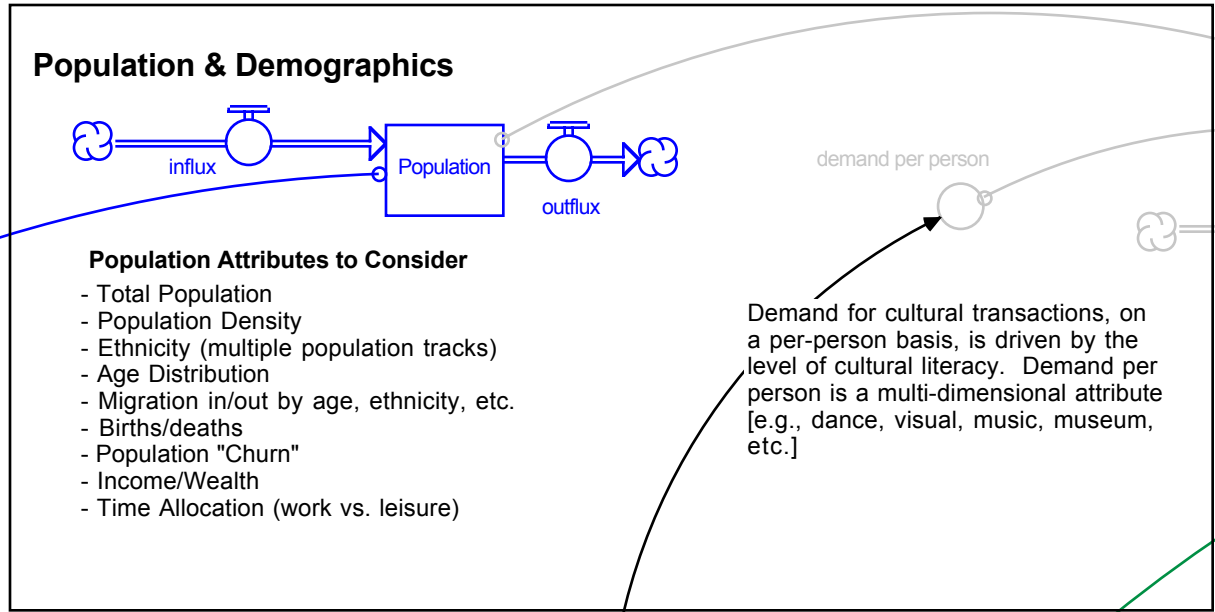
In the months that followed, this map was developed by a smaller project team (see web site for full details).

The Cultural Dynamics Project is a collaborative effort of:
The Bolz Center for Arts Administration (www.bolzcenter.org)
National Arts Strategies (www.artstrategies.org)
Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley (www.ci-sv.org)

For more information, visit our project web site:
<http://www.culturaldynamicsgroup.org/>

The Cultural Habitat

The habitat is the physical backdrop against which cultural dynamics play themselves out. Probably can view this at micro or macro level...

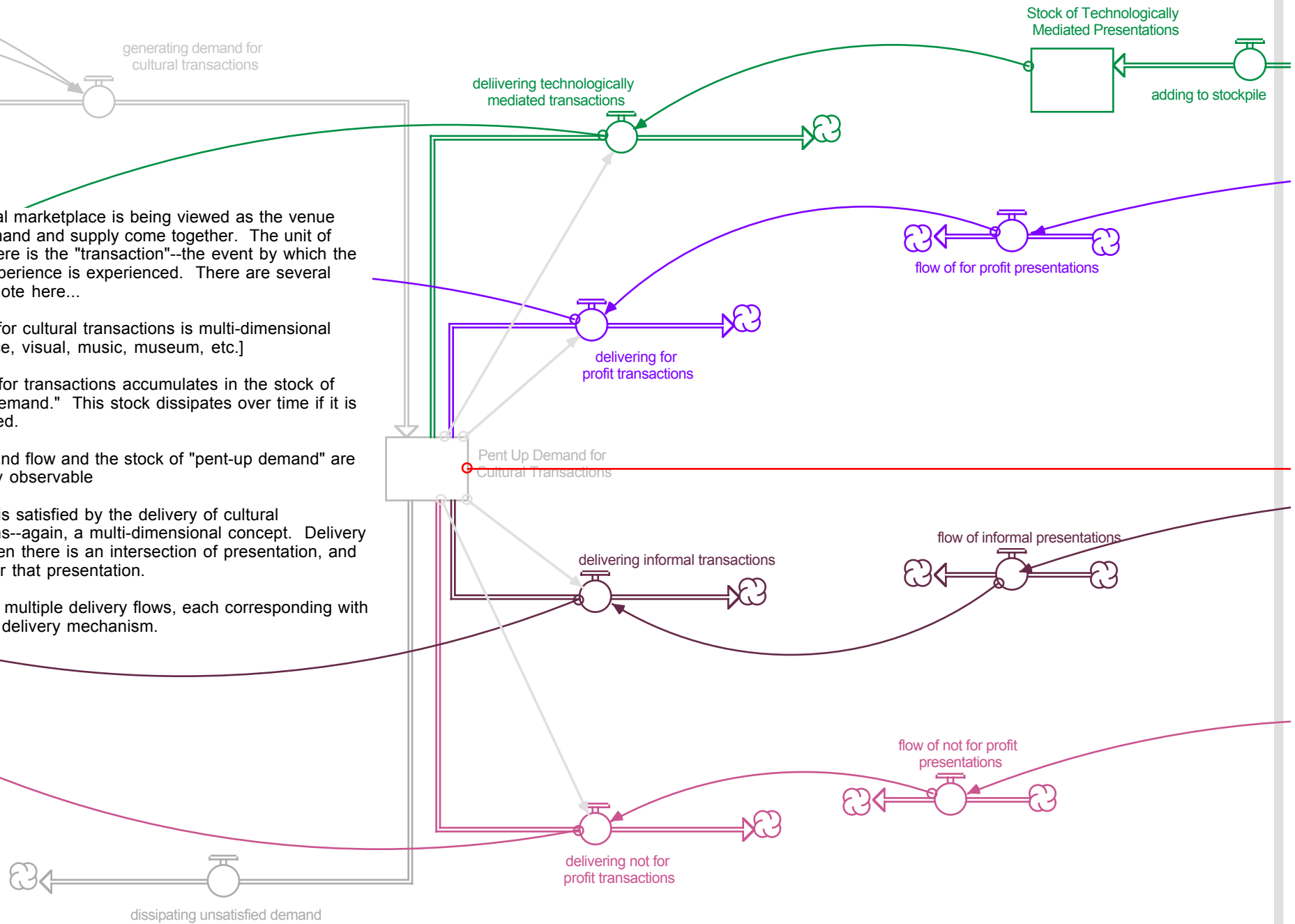


The Cultural "Marketplace"

Overview

The cultural marketplace is being viewed as the venue where demand and supply come together. The unit of analysis here is the "transaction"--the event by which the cultural experience is experienced. There are several things to note here...

- demand for cultural transactions is multi-dimensional [e.g., dance, visual, music, museum, etc.]
- demand for transactions accumulates in the stock of "pent-up demand." This stock dissipates over time if it is not satisfied.
- the demand flow and the stock of "pent-up demand" are not directly observable
- demand is satisfied by the delivery of cultural transactions--again, a multi-dimensional concept. Delivery occurs when there is an intersection of presentation, and demand for that presentation.
- there are multiple delivery flows, each corresponding with a different delivery mechanism.



Presenters, Producers and Creators

As a first pass, consider that in the for profit world there is some "perception" of demand out there that motivates the influx of new presenters, producers, and creators. Similarly the exit from the marketplace is driven by perceived demand.

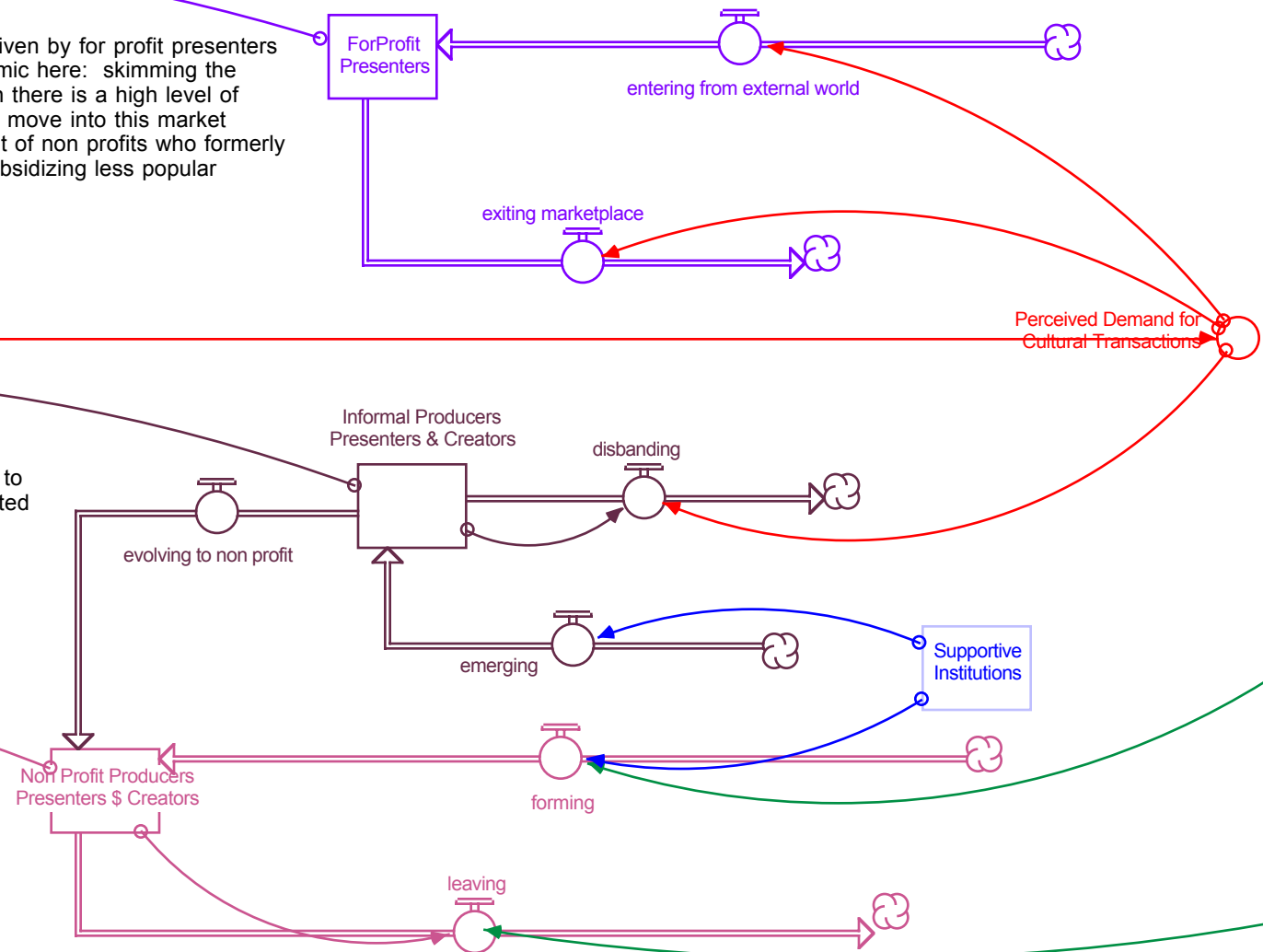
For under the radar and non profit presenters, producers, and creators, the "felt need" that motivates the emergence flows is likely to be something different than a market demand signal. Note the emergence of under the radar and non-profit orgs is facilitated by the existence of supportive environment, here proxied by the stock of "supportive institutions." And for non profits, formation is facilitated by a perception of sufficient organization \$ to support activities.

Technologically mediated presentations are "out there" and so are immediately available to satisfy demand for a cultural transaction. Examples: Videos of "The Three Tenors" and Web sites providing "Virtual Museum Visits." Issues here around intellectual property.

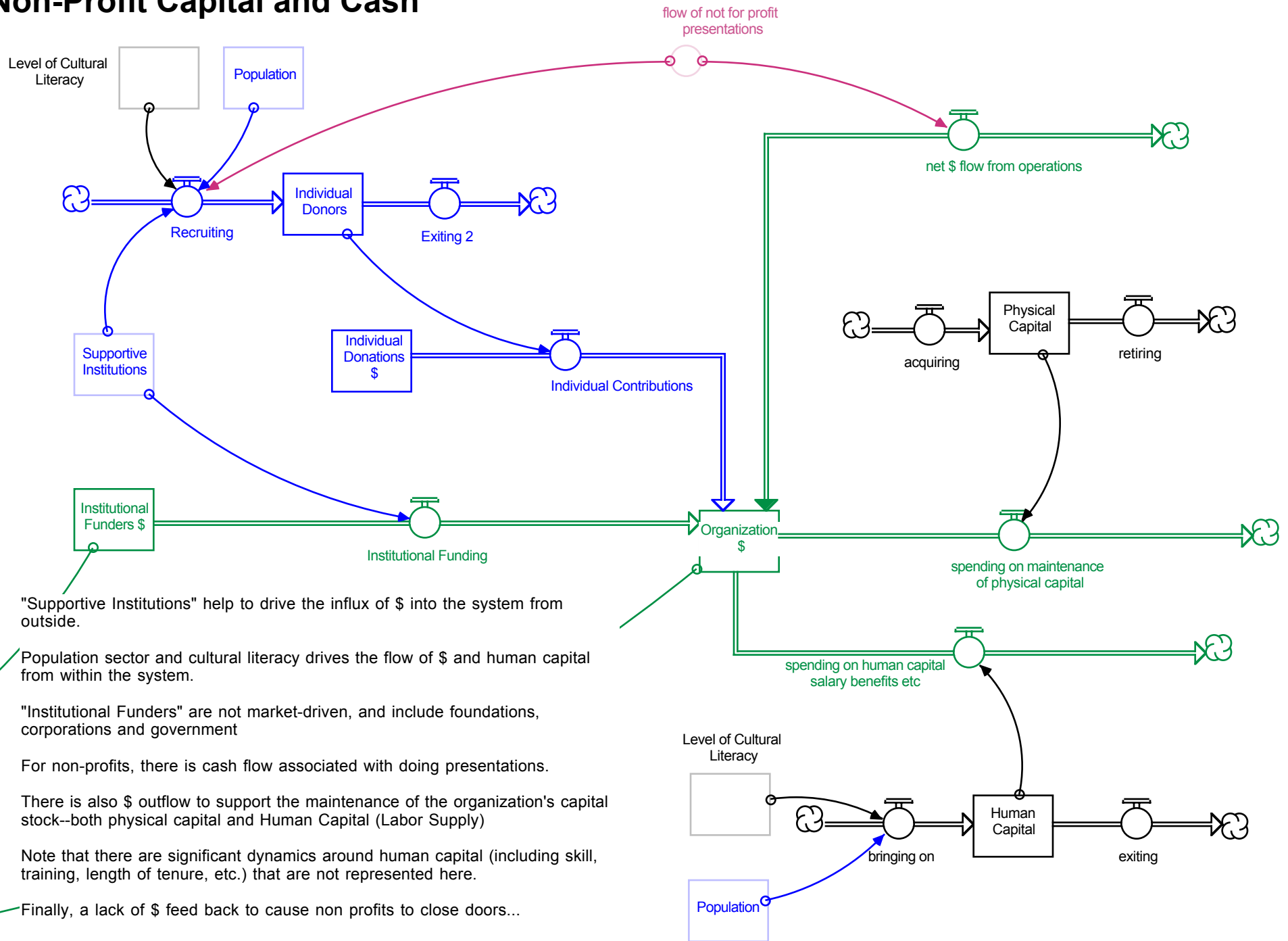
The flow of "for profit" presentations is driven by for profit presenters are in the area. Important potential dynamic here: skimming the demand for cultural transactions for which there is a high level of demand/willingness to pay. As for-profits move into this market niche, there is a potential for crowding out of non profits who formerly used high-grading as a mechanism for subsidizing less popular presentations.

"Informal" Presenters & Producers are included to capture the notion of presentations that generated more spontaneously and informally.

Not for profits generate the flow of not for profit presentations. They can be formed directly, or as the result of the evolution over time of "under the radar" organizations.



Non-Profit Capital and Cash



"Supportive Institutions" help to drive the influx of \$ into the system from outside.

Population sector and cultural literacy drives the flow of \$ and human capital from within the system.

"Institutional Funders" are not market-driven, and include foundations, corporations and government

For non-profits, there is cash flow associated with doing presentations.

There is also \$ outflow to support the maintenance of the organization's capital stock--both physical capital and Human Capital (Labor Supply)

Note that there are significant dynamics around human capital (including skill, training, length of tenure, etc.) that are not represented here.

Finally, a lack of \$ feed back to cause non profits to close doors...