

ACROBATS AND SAFETY NETS

Problematizing Large-Scale Agile Software Development



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Assumptions in Large-Scale Agile Literature

Assumption 1:

Agile and plan-driven methods are perceived to be mutually exclusive.

A CONCERN THAT THE PROJECT WOULD **LOSE DISCIPLINE** IF AN AGILE APPROACH WERE INSTITUTED...

[Batra et al. 2010]

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Assumption 2:

Self-organization and hierarchical coordination are perceived to be mutually exclusive.

TOP-DOWN PLANNING REFERS TO A MECHANISTIC, CENTRALIZED APPROACH. BOTTOM-UP ADJUSTMENT, **ON THE OTHER HAND**, IS LARGELY ORGANIC AND DECENTRALIZED ...

[Bick et al. 2016]

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Assumption 3:

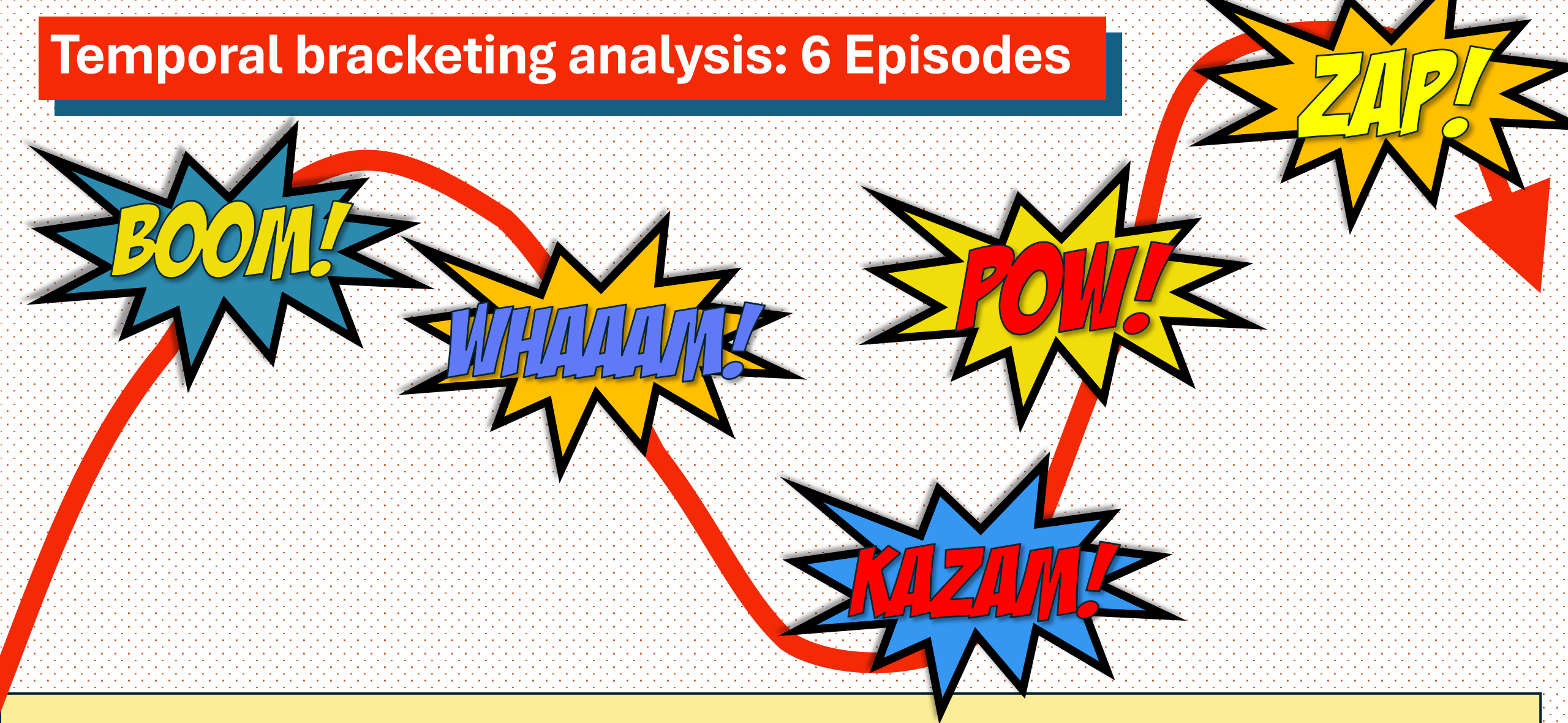
Scaling of agile methods is seen as a linear composition.

THE DAILY **SCRUM OF SCRUMS** IS A DAILY MEETING FOR SMS FROM MULTIPLE SCRUM TEAMS ...

[Cho et al. 2006]

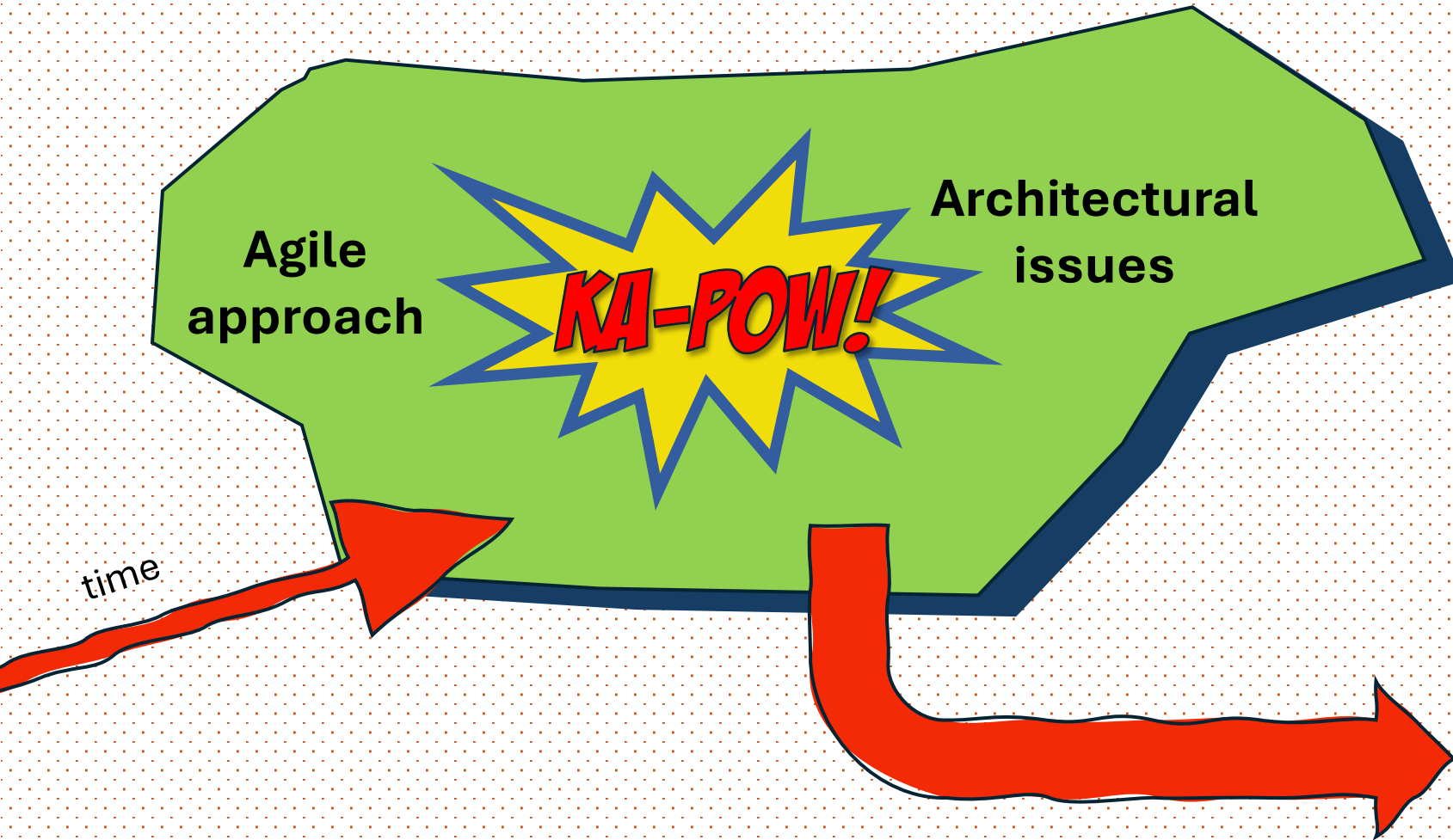
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Temporal bracketing analysis: 6 Episodes



- Critical events—**perturbations**—cause tensions, requiring a response.
- Emergence of new **plan-driven** or **agile** practices to reduce tensions.

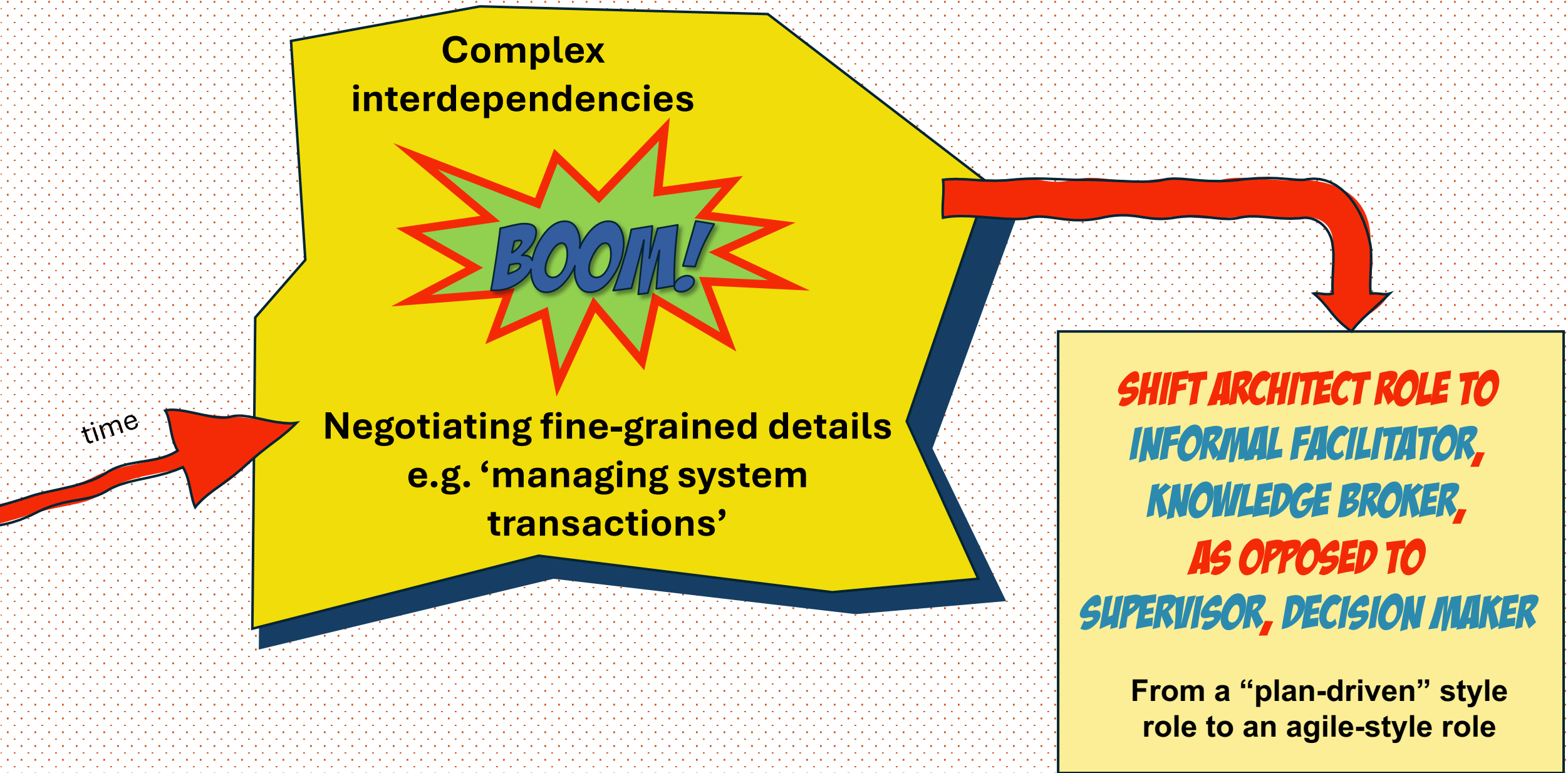
Results of temporal bracketing analysis: Episode 1



New plan-
driven routine:
TORNADO MEETINGS



Results of temporal bracketing analysis: Episode 5



Alternative Assumptions for Large-Scale Agile

NOT:

**Agile and Plan-Driven
Methods as Mutually
Exclusive**

BUT:

**Agile and plan-driven practices as
mutually enabling**

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NOT:

Hierarchical organizing and
self-organizing teams as
mutually exclusive

BUT:

Hierarchical organization and self-
organization have reciprocal impact on
teams

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NOT:

Scaling of agile methods as
a linear composition

BUT:

Scaling requires both stability and
change simultaneously, and also
involves downscaling

