

SIMCO
Social
Identity
Model of
Co-Design

A process model of
generative
collaboration

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This programme explores co-design
through Social Identity and group
process perspectives, examining how
co-design methods shape
participation, collaboration, and
collective creative work across
complex health systems.

At the centre of the programme sits the
guiding question:

“How might we make co-design in
health research easier to understand,
evaluate, and confidently use within
diverse groups and complex systems to
support better collaborative and
generative outcomes?”



LINK TO PROJECT WEBSITE
co-designclarity.org

RESEARCH PROGRAMME - ADVANCING CO-
DESIGN CLARITY (AC-DC*)

A) MAPPING METHODS AND FRAMEWORKS

Mapped co-design methods and
frameworks, leading to an eight-level
taxonomy.

B) PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS MAPPING

Mapped methods by the shared
identity, participation, and collective
creative work processes they activate.

C) PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWS

Qualitative interviews exploring
facilitation, legitimacy, tension, and
collaborative dynamics in practice.

D) DEVELOPING SIMCO

Articulating a Social Identity process
model of collaborative trajectories in
co-design.

E) REAL-WORLD TESTING

Future empirical testing across applied
health and implementation settings.

KEY OUTCOME

Social Identity-informed tools for
understanding and shaping
collaborative trajectories in health co-
design.



TRY THIS!!
LINK TO AI MEDIATED
EXPERIMENTAL TESTING
DASHBOARD
Claude.ai



Co-design is increasingly prescribed in health
research, yet the social and creative mechanisms
shaping collaborative outcomes remain hidden
within a “black box”, invisible and untestable.

Until now...

1 INTRODUCTION

Co-design is widely and increasingly
used to improve legitimacy, innovation,
implementation, and reduce research
waste. Yet collaborative success is often
assumed rather than explained, with
limited understanding of how methods
shape facilitation, participation, and
group dynamics, and how these shape
collaborative and creative outcomes.

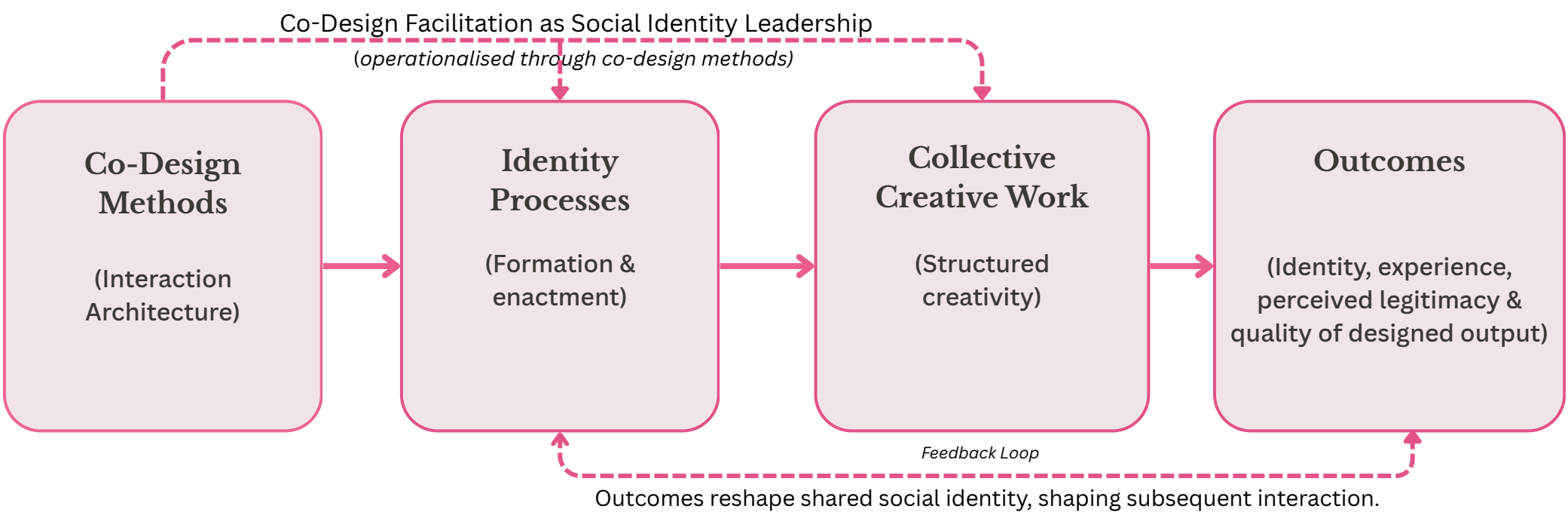
2 PROPOSING SIMCO

A process model of collaborative
dynamics explaining how co-design
methods (interaction architecture) and
facilitation structures shape shared
identity, participation, and collective
creative work. SIMCO makes the social
processes underpinning collaborative
success more explicit, testable, and
comparable across collaborative settings.

3 PILOT TEST

Five AI-mediated co-design conditions were
tested, ranging from highly structured and
identity-supportive collaboration (Alpha) to
minimally structured collaboration
(Gamma). Three additional conditions
selectively weakened identity support,
participation structure, or creative challenge.
Collaborative trajectories were mapped using
a 2x2 Safety x Challenge framework.

4 SOCIAL IDENTITY MODEL OF CO-DESIGN (SIMCO)

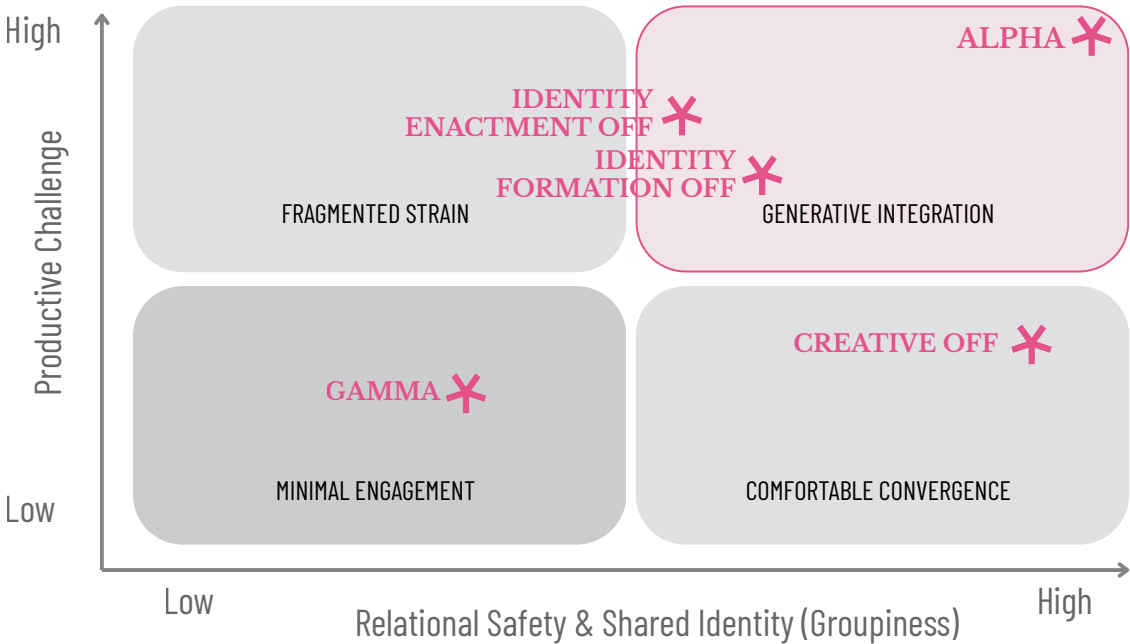


5 FINDINGS FROM THE PILOT TEST

Distinct collaborative trajectories emerged across conditions.
Alpha (high support across domains) produced the strongest
generative integration, while Gamma (minimal support across
domains) produced flat and minimally engaged collaboration.
Identity Off, Enactment Off, and Creative Off produced distinct
developmental trajectories within the Safety x Challenge
framework.

Key points

- Alpha → strongest generative integration
- Gamma → flat/disengaged collaboration
- Identity Off → weakened cohesion/integration
- Enactment Off → uneven participation/influence
- Creative Off → cohesive but narrowed creativity



A model for making visible the group
processes shaping generative collaboration