

Netherlands Elites, 2005

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Research Project

By major newspaper (*de Volkskrant*). Goal: Expose hidden power based on positions in boards, committees, etc., across all sectors.

Parts:

1. Data collection and network analysis of affiliations to all important boards, etc.,
2. Interviews with key informants,
3. Survey among the most central actors.

Today:

1. Initial results: how elites integrate social sectors,
2. Proposal for a longitudinal perspective.

Overlapping social sectors

‘What do interlocks really mean?’

- They help setting the political agenda and they facilitate political processes of change.

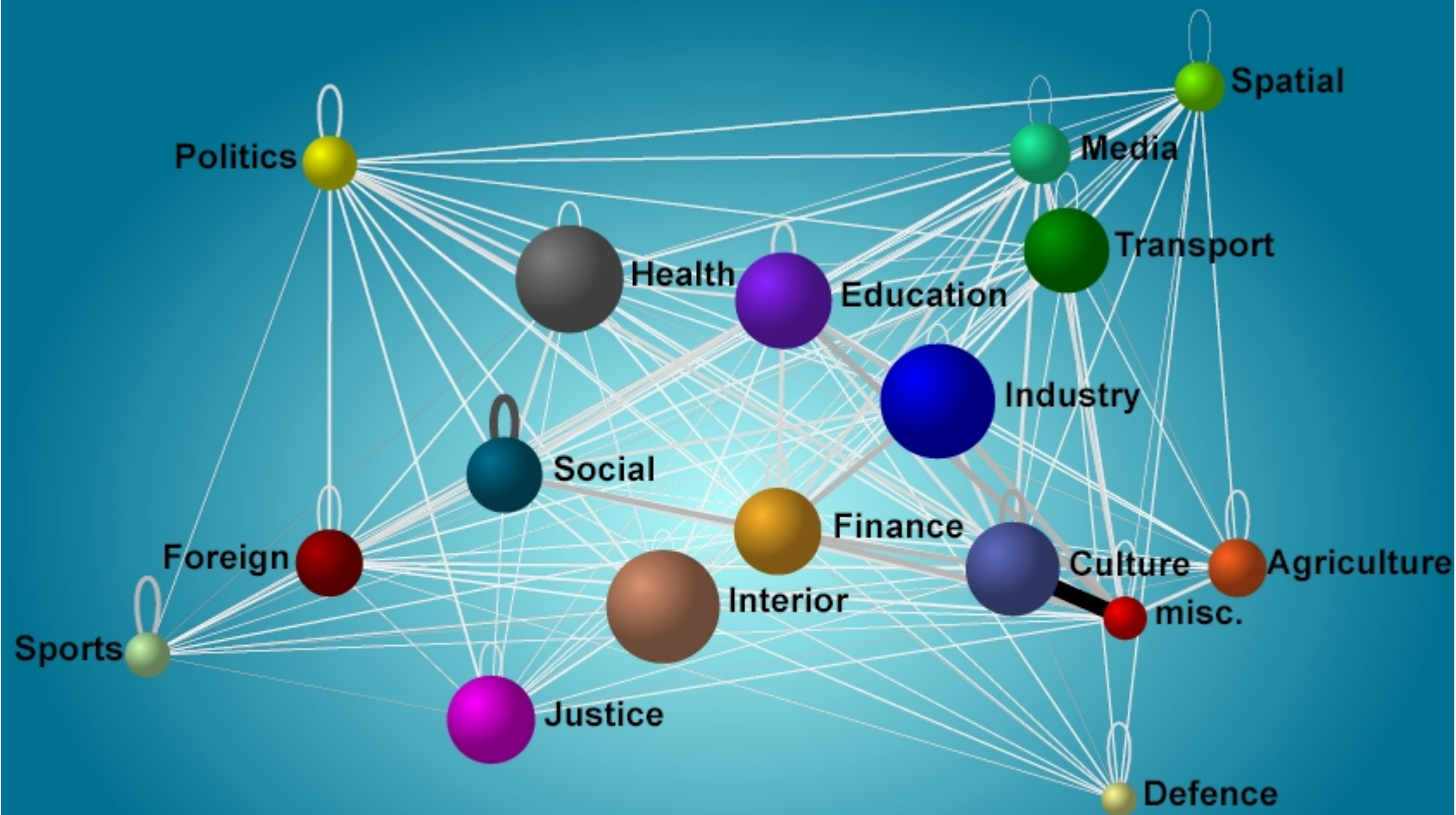
Special attention to links between politics/government and other sectors.

Network data:

1. The most important bodies/organizations in each policy domain ($n = 674$),
2. All members of these bodies ($m = 3,936$), yielding 5,471 memberships/functions (1 to 12 memberships pro person).

Table – Number of organizations by social sector (Ministry).

Social sector	# Organizations
Agriculture, Nature	22
Culture	54
Defence	8
Economic Affairs (industry)	85
Education, Science	58
Finance	48
Foreign Affairs	28
General Affairs (royal house, political parties)	18
Health, Welfare	75
Interior (local government, police)	83
Justice	49
Media	23
Social Affairs and Employment	36
Spatial Planning, Environment	15
Sport	13
Transport	47
Miscellaneous	12



Minimum average degree:



0



0.01



0.015

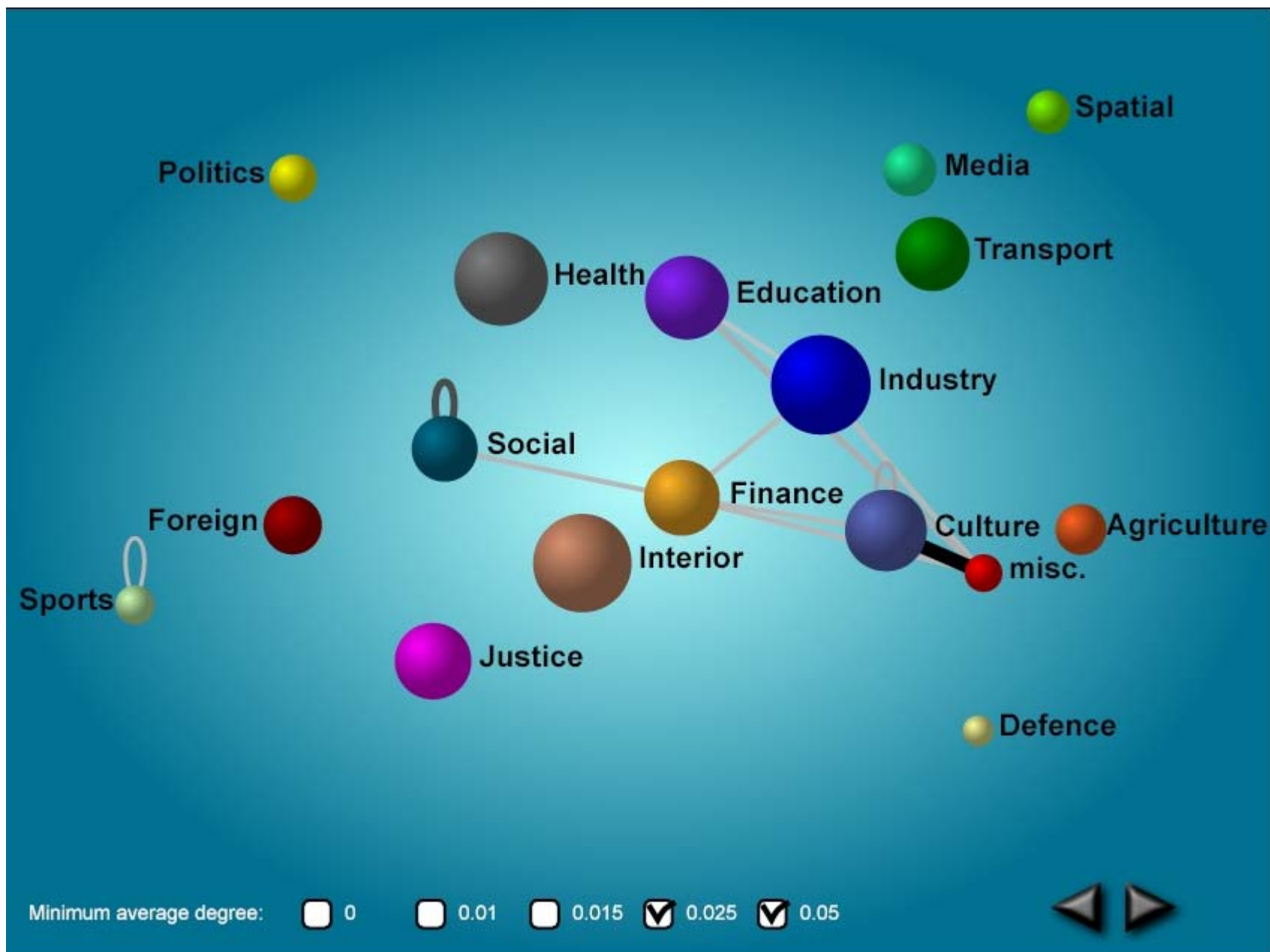


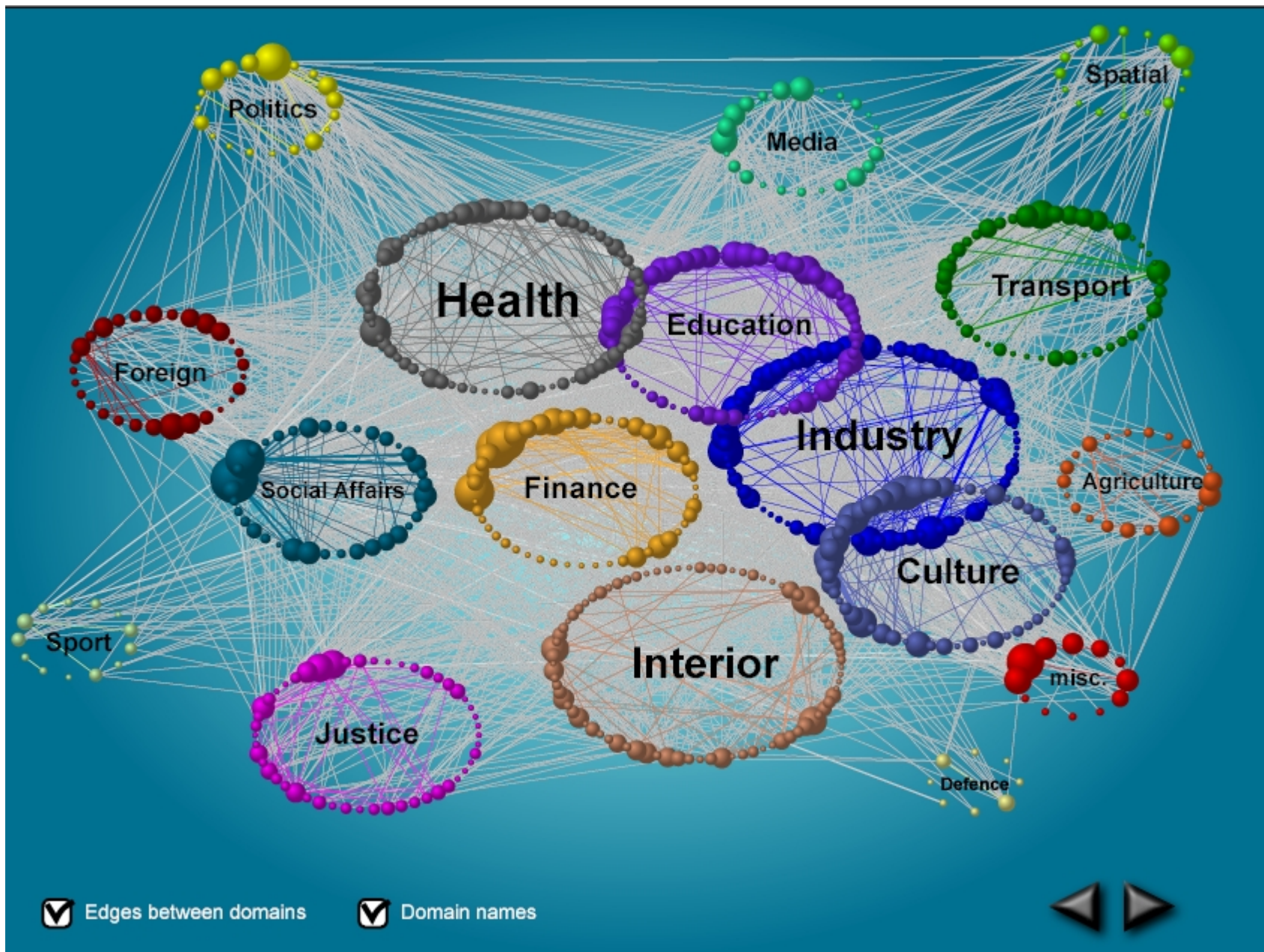
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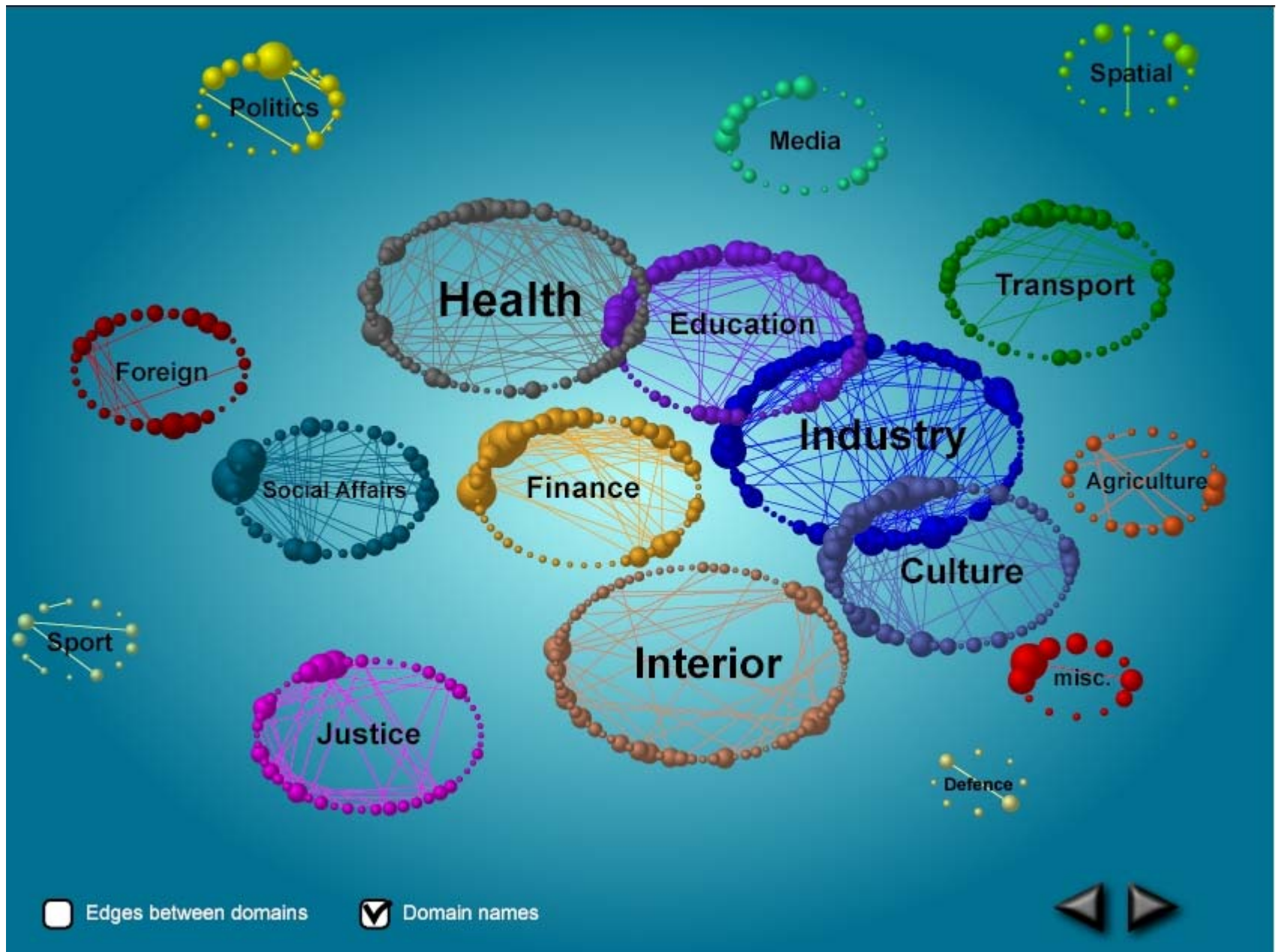


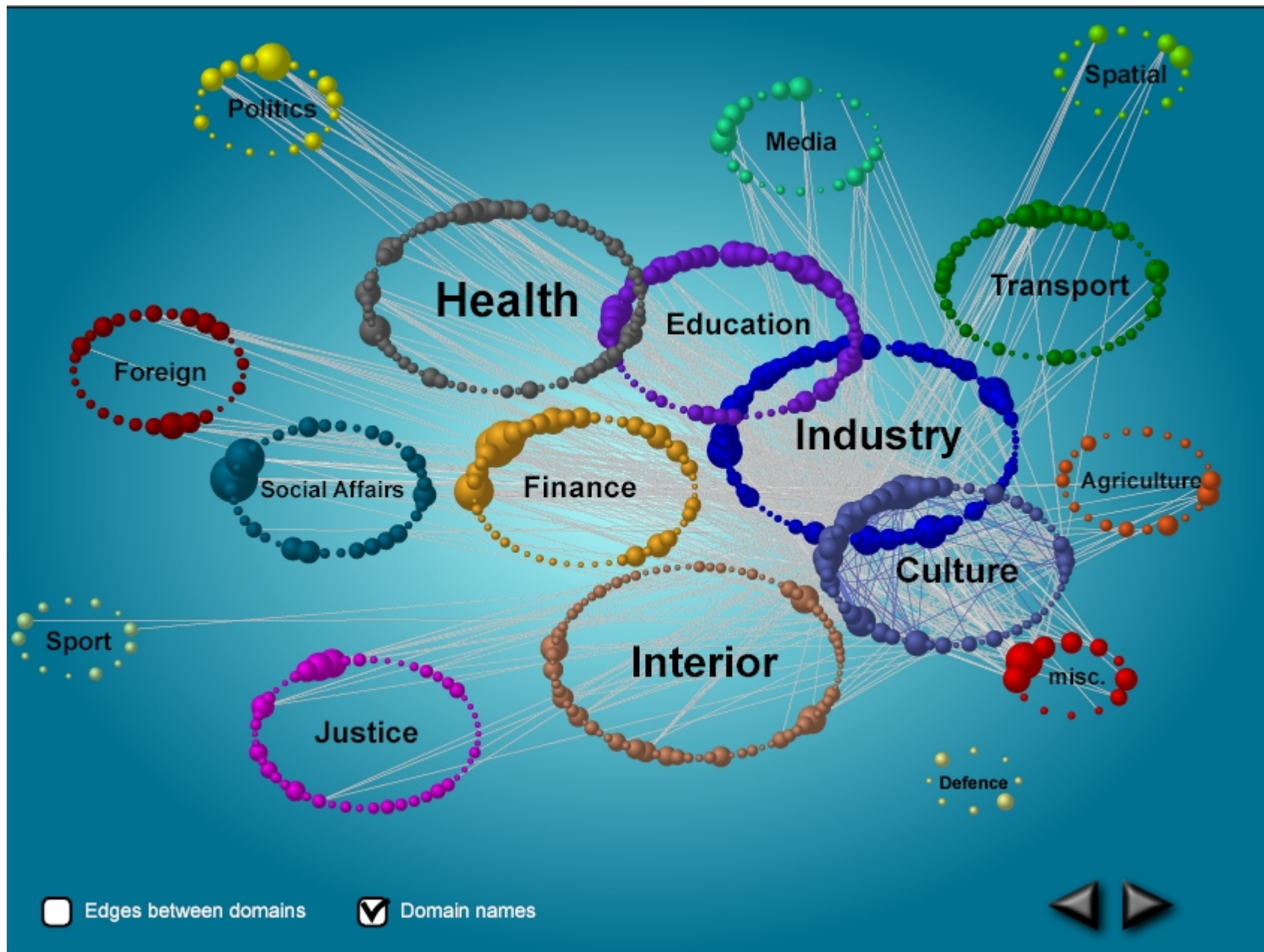
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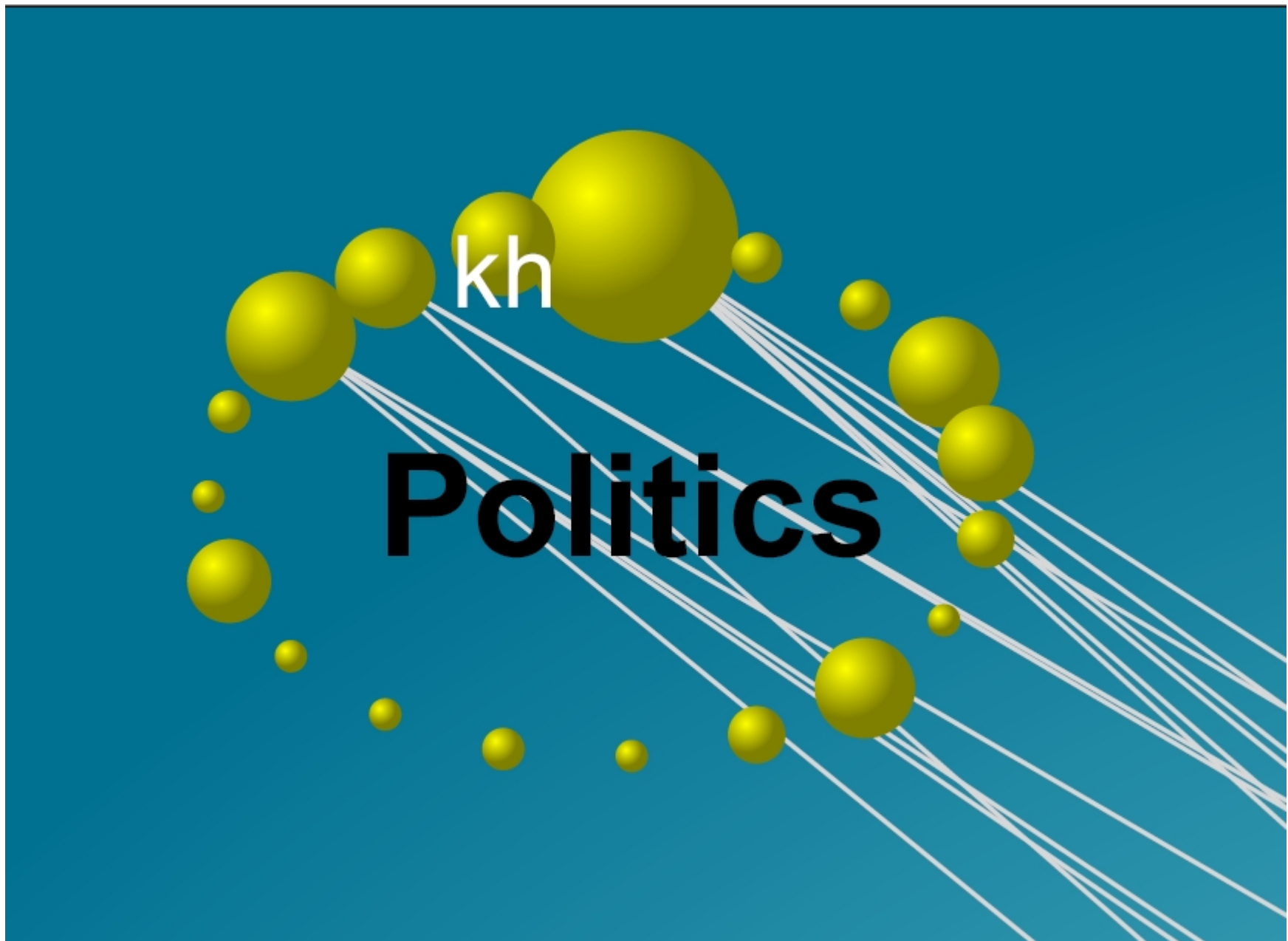












A longitudinal perspective

In the case of non-profit organizations, ‘What do interlocks really mean?’

- Social capital: contacts,
- Symbolic capital: prestige.

Importance to social and political change:

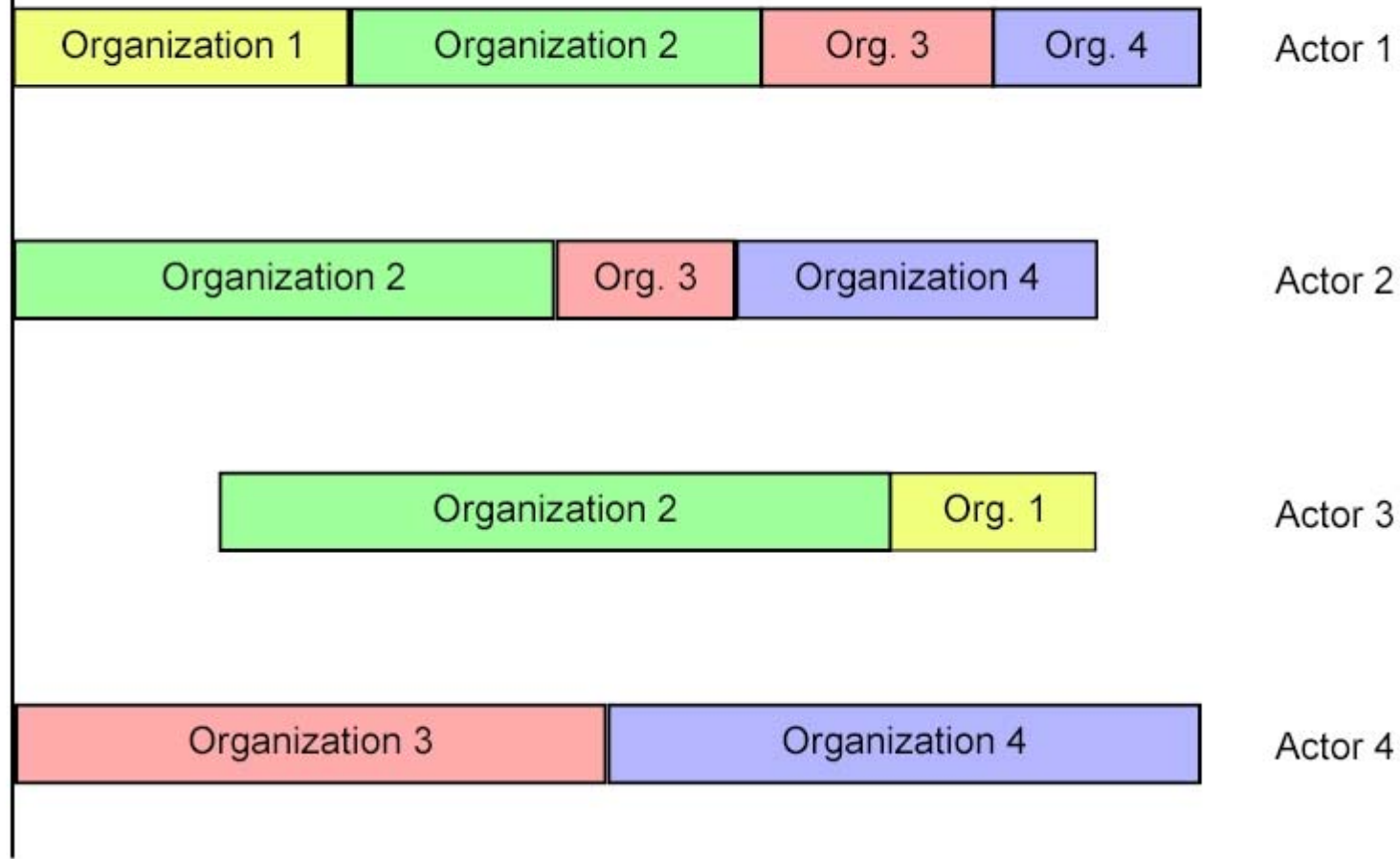
- Social capital: access to, persuasion, and activation of key players (‘you owe me’),
- Symbolic capital: authority to make people comply.
- Investigating both types of capital requires a longitudinal approach.

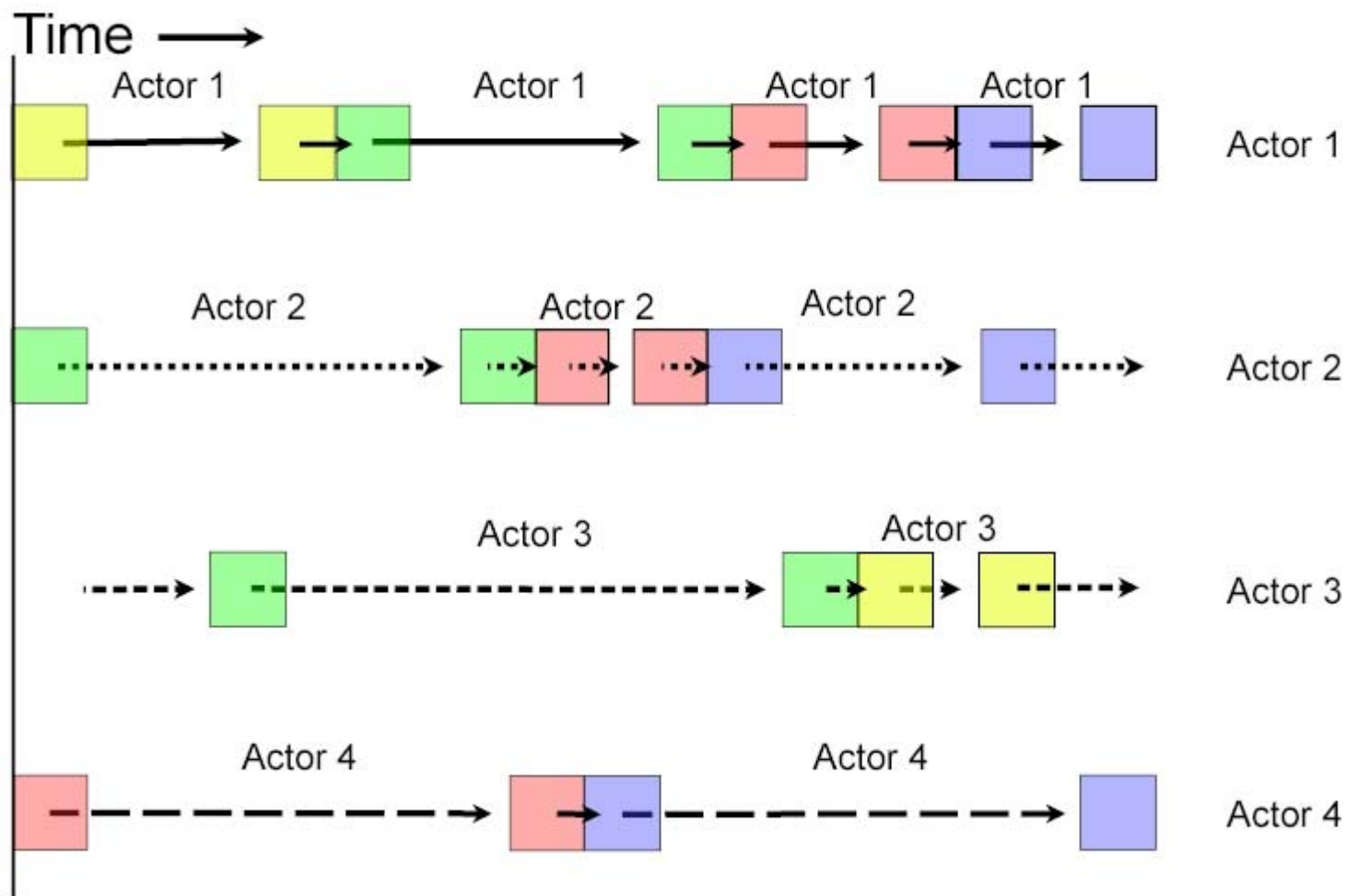
Social capital

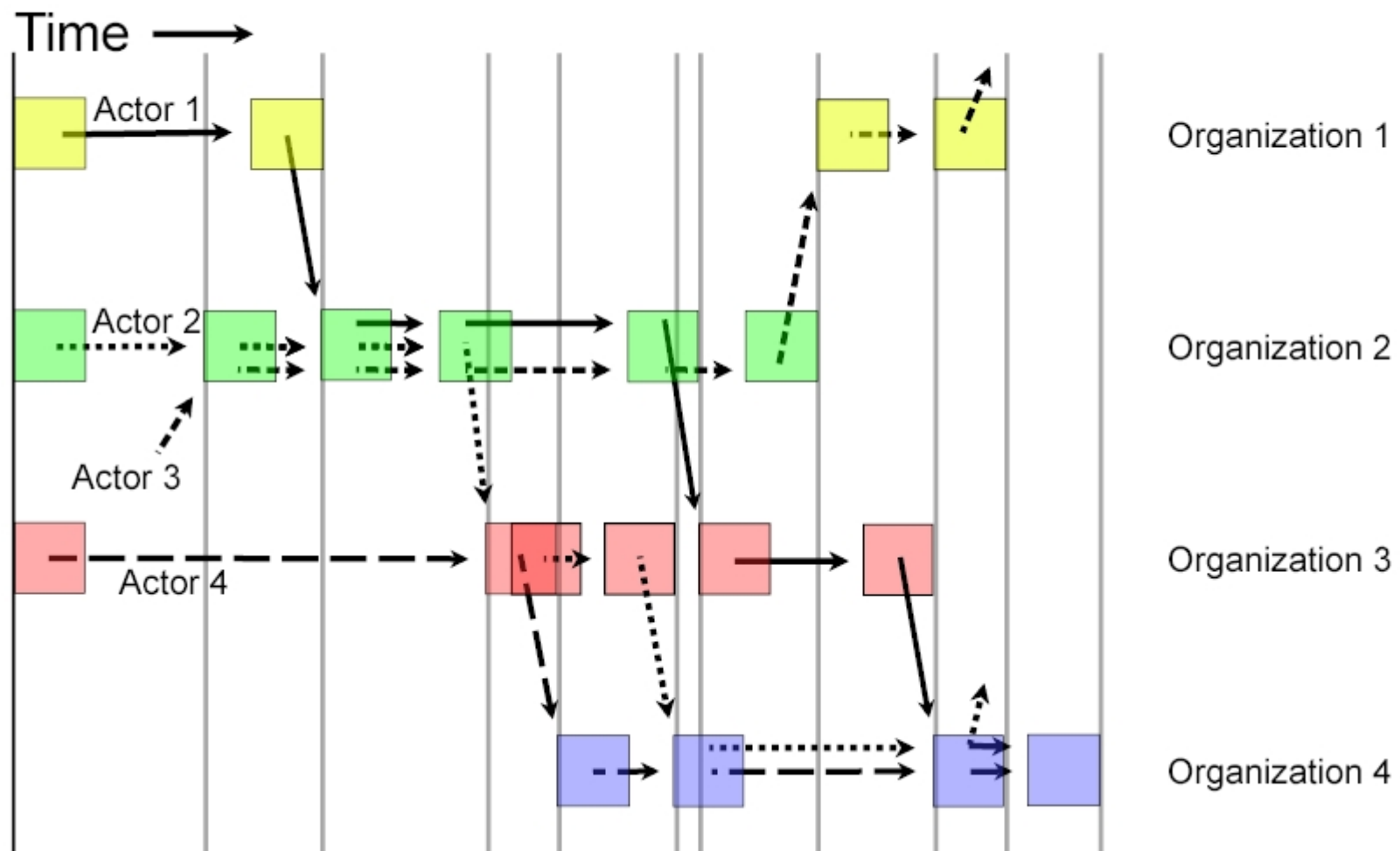
Previous contacts and collaborations matter probably more than present ones; a person who is not central (e.g., betweenness centrality) in the present network, may have the widest circle of contacts from previous affiliations.

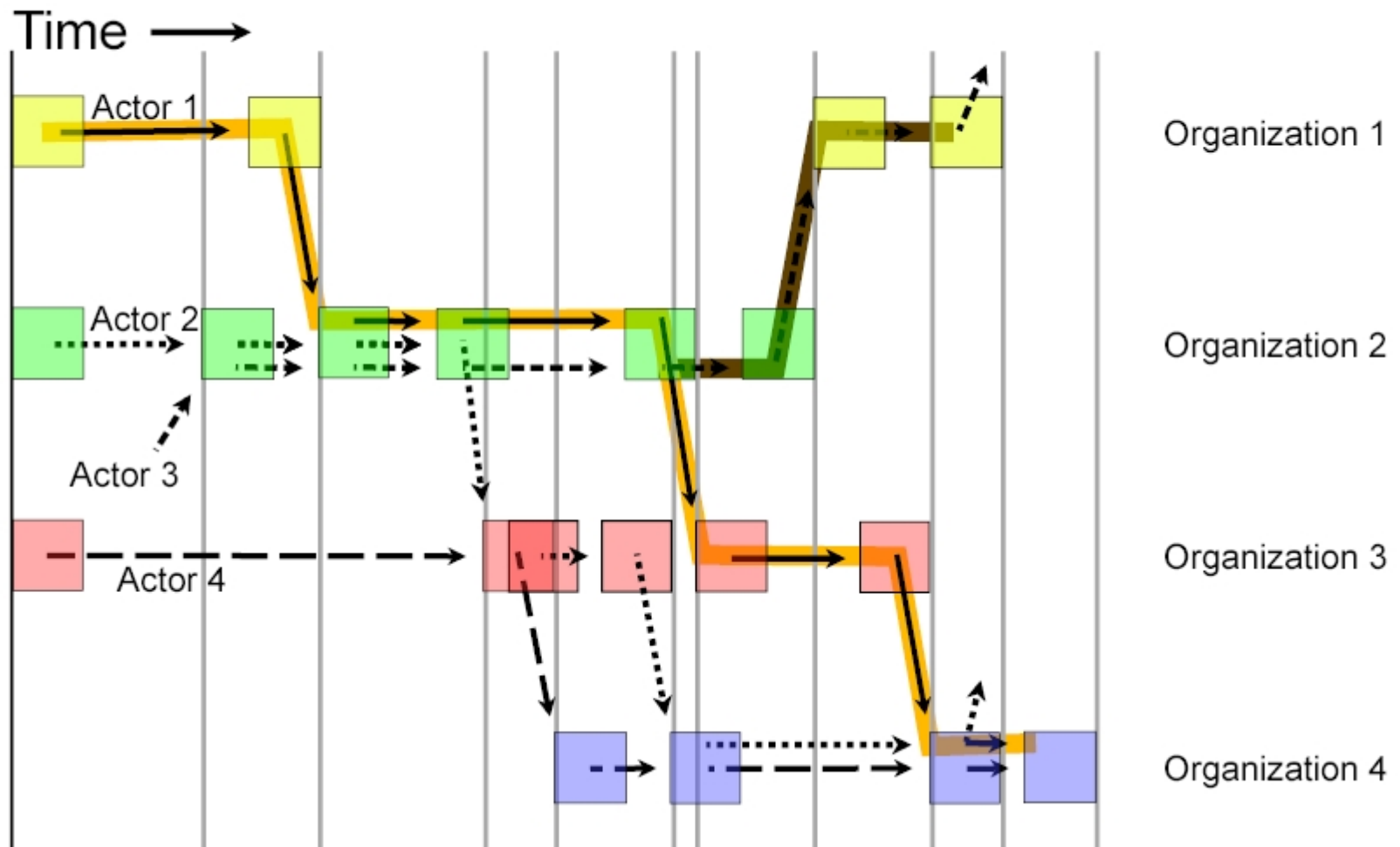
Network conceptualization: a career as a (directed) sequence of organizations to which a person was affiliated: dated changeovers.

Time →









Symbolic capital

Prestige: a perceived or attributed feature; stake and weapon in the struggle within a field.

Top management and administration as a relatively autonomous (sub)field.

Distribution of symbolic capital is governed by group processes: you want to have what is hard to get and what you have, you make hard to get.

Result: a matching process of persons and organizations according to symbolic capital.

Asymmetry: people tend to changeover to more prestigious organizations.

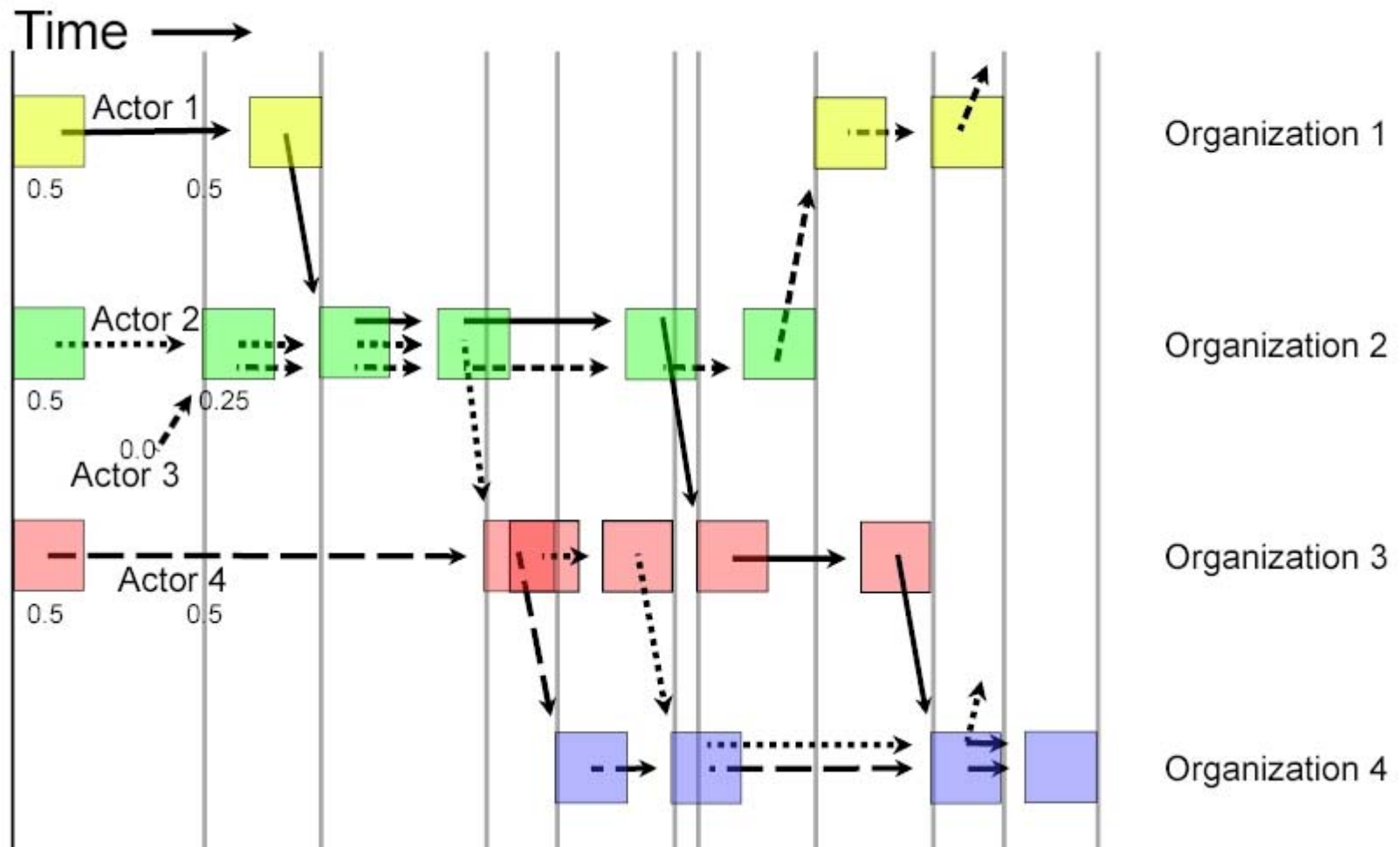
Dynamic prestige

Main principles:

1. Changeovers and continued affiliations transfer prestige between organizations,
2. Members without previous experience transfer minimum prestige (zero).

From (arbitrary) initial values, prestige scores can be calculated for organizations.

(See: 'Dynamics of artistic prestige' In: Poetics 30/3, 147-167)



Practical considerations

Main disadvantages of collecting career data:

1. Career data: available but not accurately dated,
2. Distinguish between main positions and sideline activities,
3. How many CVs are needed to obtain a network that is sufficiently connected?