

**Nov. 3**

1. Social Change
2. Collective behavior
3. **Social movements**

# Defining Social Movements

## Collective behavior and social change

- Collective behavior
  - Very broad category
  - Groups coordinating action  
(not necessarily deliberately or toward a goal)
  - Variety of causes and consequences
- Social change
  - Very broad category
  - Change in institutions, norms, culture, values  
(not necessarily through deliberate action)
  - Wide range of causes
- Social movements incorporate both
- ***Deliberate*** push for social change through collective action (of non-elites)  
Successful or unsuccessful

# Social movements



# Social movements

## Broad(er) definition

- Any collective force working to change society
- Examples abound throughout history
  - Revolution
  - Mass violence
  - Coalitions forcing change

## Narrow(er) definition

- Specific form of institutionalized political activity (Charles Tilly)
- “Social movements” are defined by organizations or groups of organizations—*campaigns*
- Repertoire of *actions*
  - Rallies; marches; petitions; public statements; vigils; ...
- Historically specific form
  - Emerged in 18th century
  - Specific to modern democratic ideals and “civil society”

# Theories of Social Movements

# Social movement theories

## What is there to explain?

- **Emergence**  
Why do social movements arise?  
What conditions favor a concerted, collective effort to change the status quo?
- **Success**  
How do social movements achieve their goals?  
What increases a movement's chances of
- **Persistence**  
Why do social movements last?  
What helps certain social movements maintain relevance?

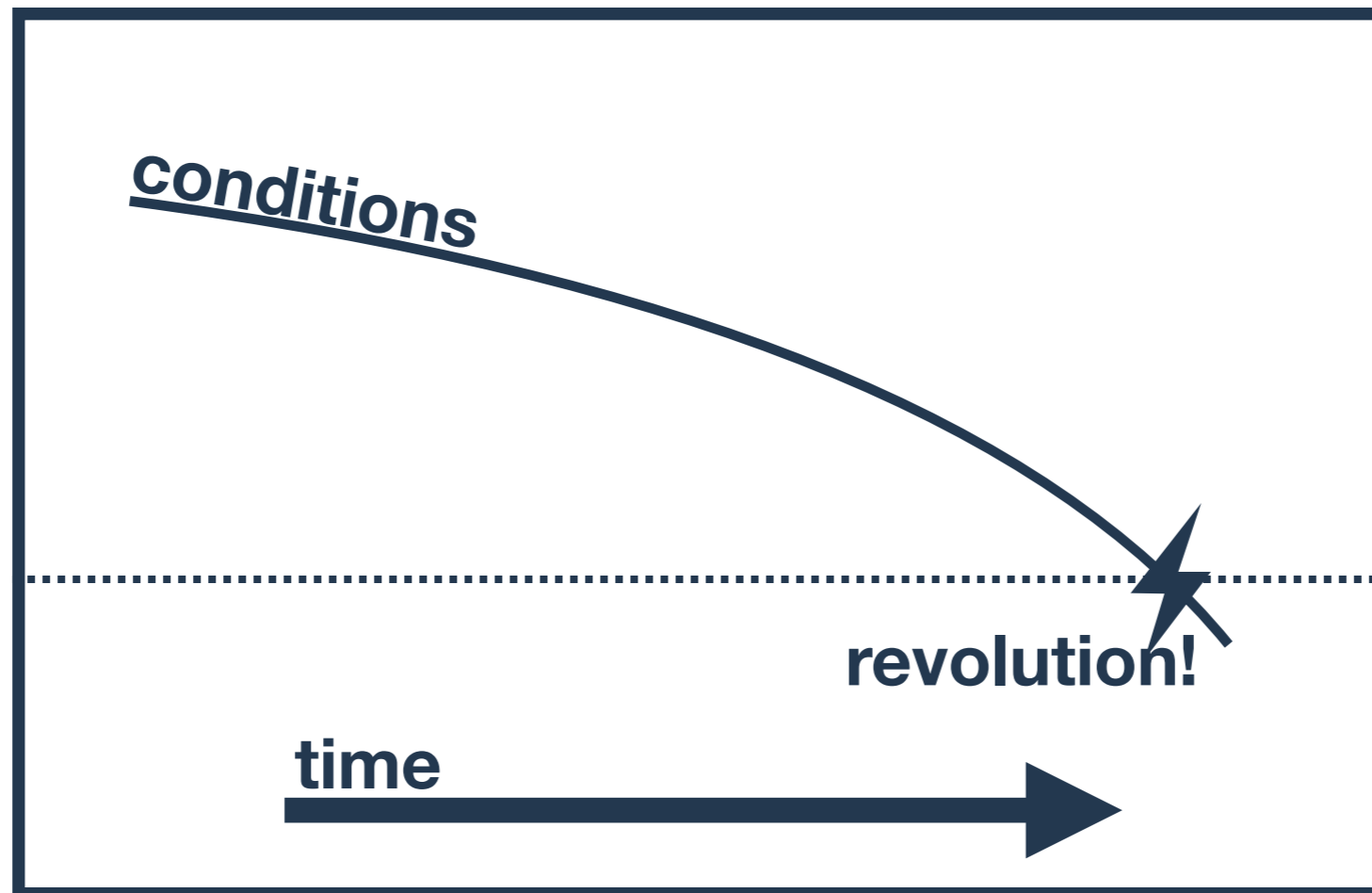
## Explanatory theories

- Many, many theoretical approaches to the study of social movements
- We will discuss four prominent sociological perspectives

# Social movement theories

## 1a. (*Absolute*) deprivation theory

- Aims to explain the *emergence* of social movements
- People will organize against oppression if material conditions fall below breaking point
- Marx & Engels  
Capital accumulation will lead to absolute deprivation of workers, resulting in revolution

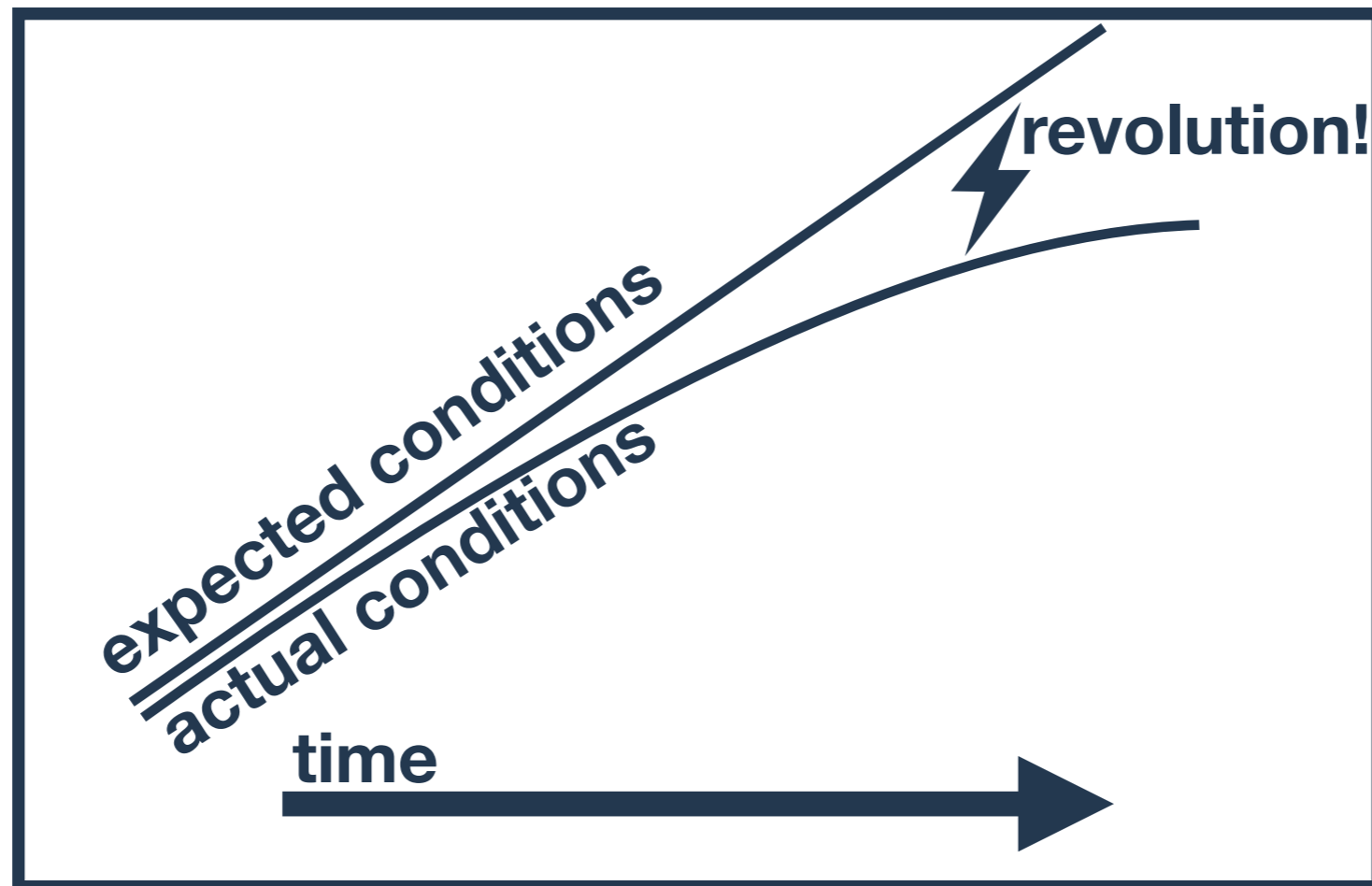




# Social movement theories

## 1b. *Relative deprivation theory*

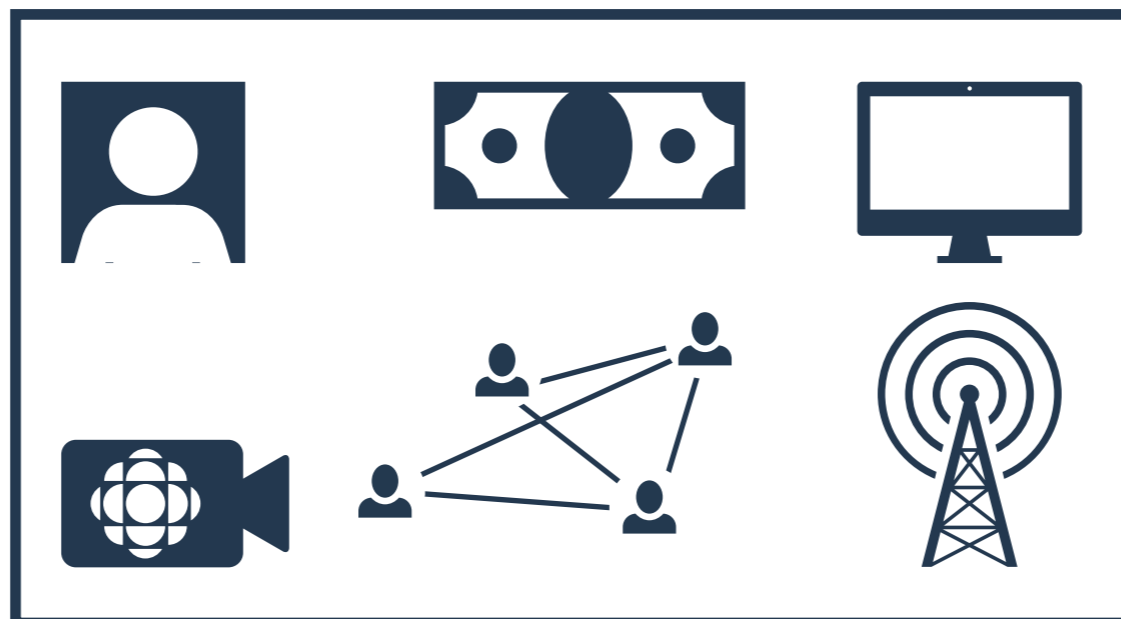
- Revolts occur even when people have the basic requirements for survival
- Important factor is the difference between actual conditions and expectations



# Social movement theories

## 2. Resource mobilization theory

- To *emerge, succeed, and persist*, social movements need resources.  
Money; leadership; people; networks; attention; ...
- Many causes have large numbers of supporters, but *not* all causes build successful movements.
- Movements exist because they are able to acquire resources *and* mobilize those resources actively and strategically.
- Approach focusses on *organizations* and their *administration*.



## 3. Political opportunity theory

- Emergence and success of social movements depends on the political context.
- Some dimensions of political opportunity:
  - **Access:**  
(Perceived) ability to affect policy processes
  - **Instability:**  
Disruptions of existing coalitions (party politics)
  - **Allies:**  
Sympathetic and influential political actors
  - **Elite conflict:**  
Schisms and discord among political actors
- Focus on *interplay* between state and movements.
- State action has sway over movement outcomes.  
Changes in voting laws may change types of political allies  
Changes in governance structure may lead to elite conflict

## 4. Frame theory

- Application of frame analysis (symbolic interactionism)  
Frames are clusters of basic, contextual expectations about roles, behavior, responses, *relevant criteria of judgement*
- Frames provide legitimacy, encouraging participation in social movements.
- Movements are not just about resources, specific grievances, or political goals
- Value orientations, expectations of social structures, ideas about tactics, etc. can be at odds even if broad grievances are the same  
E.g. liberal versus radical feminist movements
- Frame matters as much as content  
Opposition to genetically modified food can be framed in terms of health, environmental justice, anti-capitalism, ...

# Social movement theories

## Some types of frames:

(David Snow et al.)

- **Diagnostic frame**  
What is the problem that needs to be addressed?
- **Prognostic frame**  
What should be done about it?
- **Motivational frame**  
Why should I get involved?

## Frame alignment

- Frames can explain alliances between movements and social movement organizations.
- “Compatibility” can exist outside of end goals .
- E.g. Why do alliances form between movements with drastically different ends?  
American Zionists and Evangelical Christians may share a *prognostic* frame

## Types of frame alignment

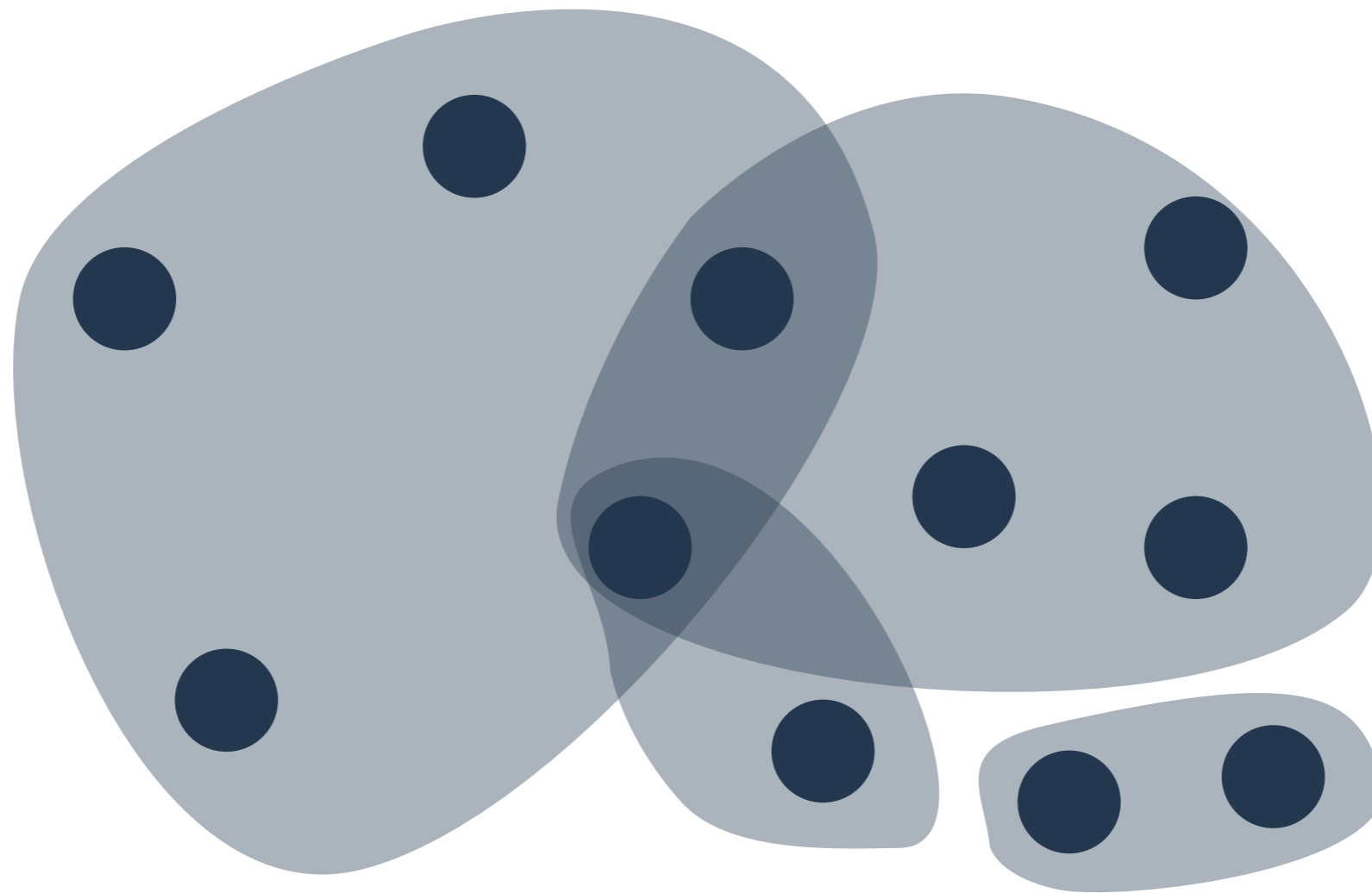
- **Bridging:**  
Previously unconnected individuals or groups unite through common frame  
Often involves groups being subsumed under umbrella group  
E.g. small, local groups organizing under the national banner of Black Lives Matter
- **Amplification:**  
Movements state goals in multiple frames to amplify appeal  
E.g. animal rights activists utilizing environmental and health frames
- **Extension:**  
Broaden frame to encompass other movements  
E.g. Civil rights groups promoting feminist ideals as in alignment with their own
- **Transformation:**  
Adopt new frame in place of existing frames  
E.g. Mothers Against Drunk Driving shifting focus to other drugs and teen drinking

# **Social Movements and Social Relations**

# Movements and relations

## Network perspective

Individual movement participants and their relationships

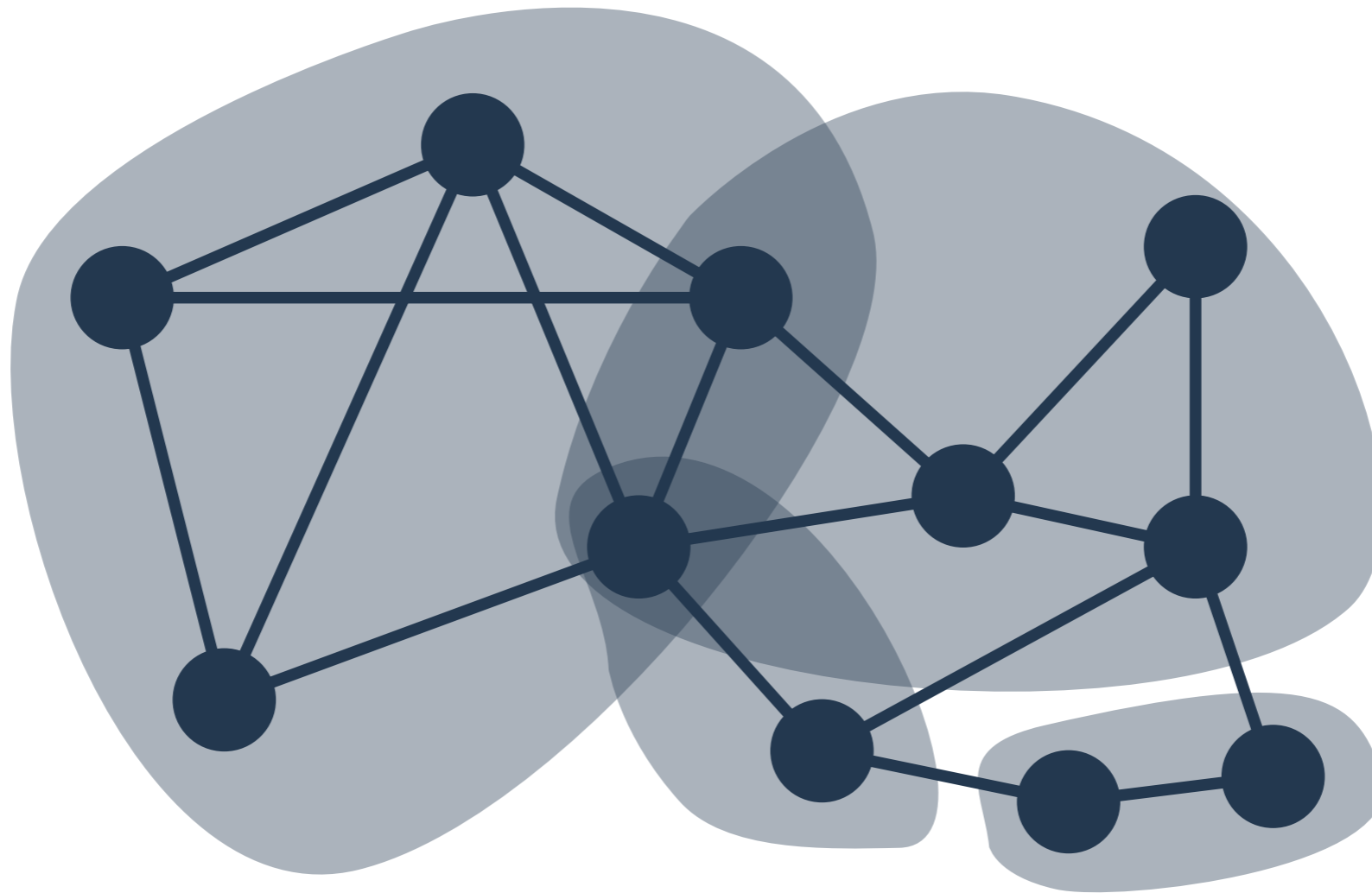




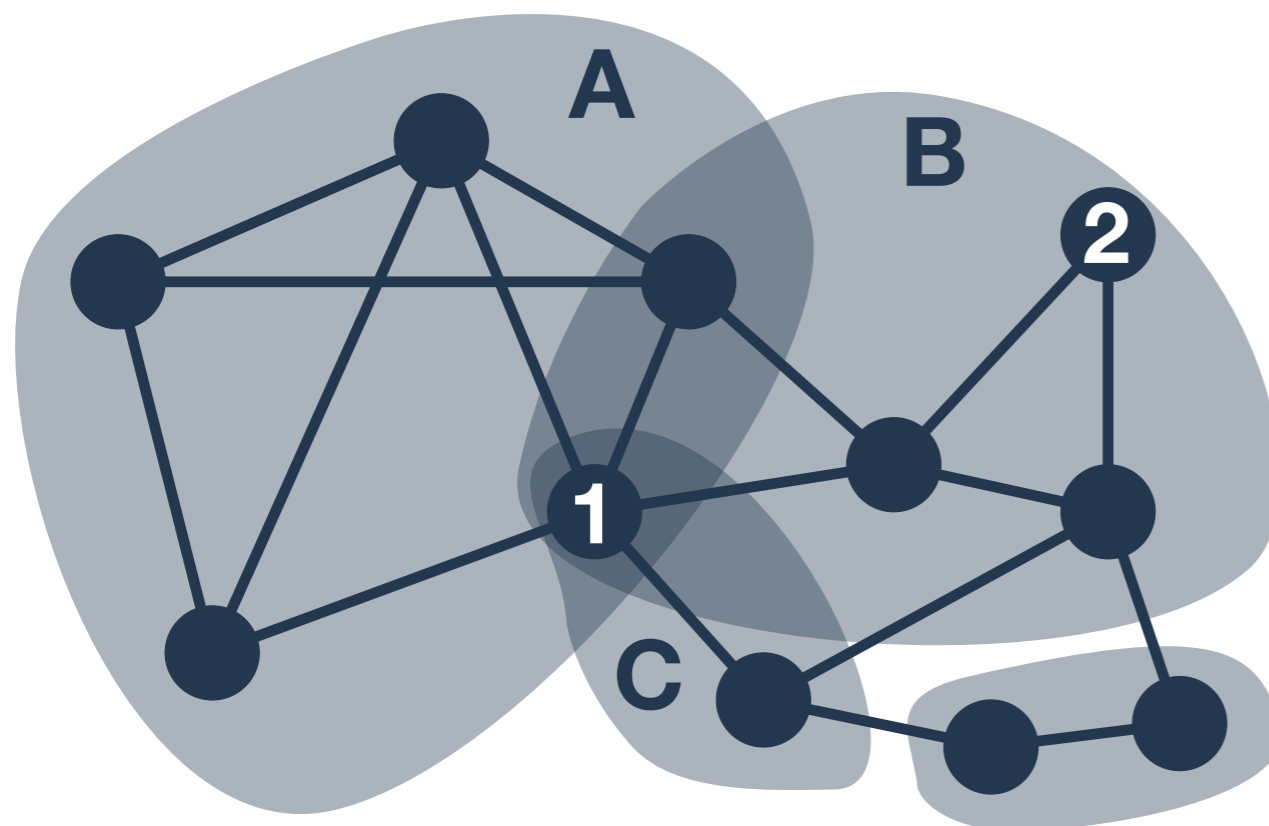
# Movements and relations

## Network perspective

Individual movement participants and their relationships



# Movements and relations



## **Group cohesion**

Group A may have a clearer sense of collective identity than group B

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## **Transmission**

Identities, repertoires, and frames can be spread through networks

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## **Overlap**

People like 1 can bridge groups through multiple membership, while people like 2 have a more unitary role

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# Image credit



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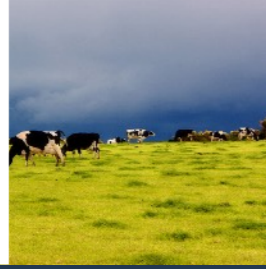


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