

Well Grubbed, Old Mole!

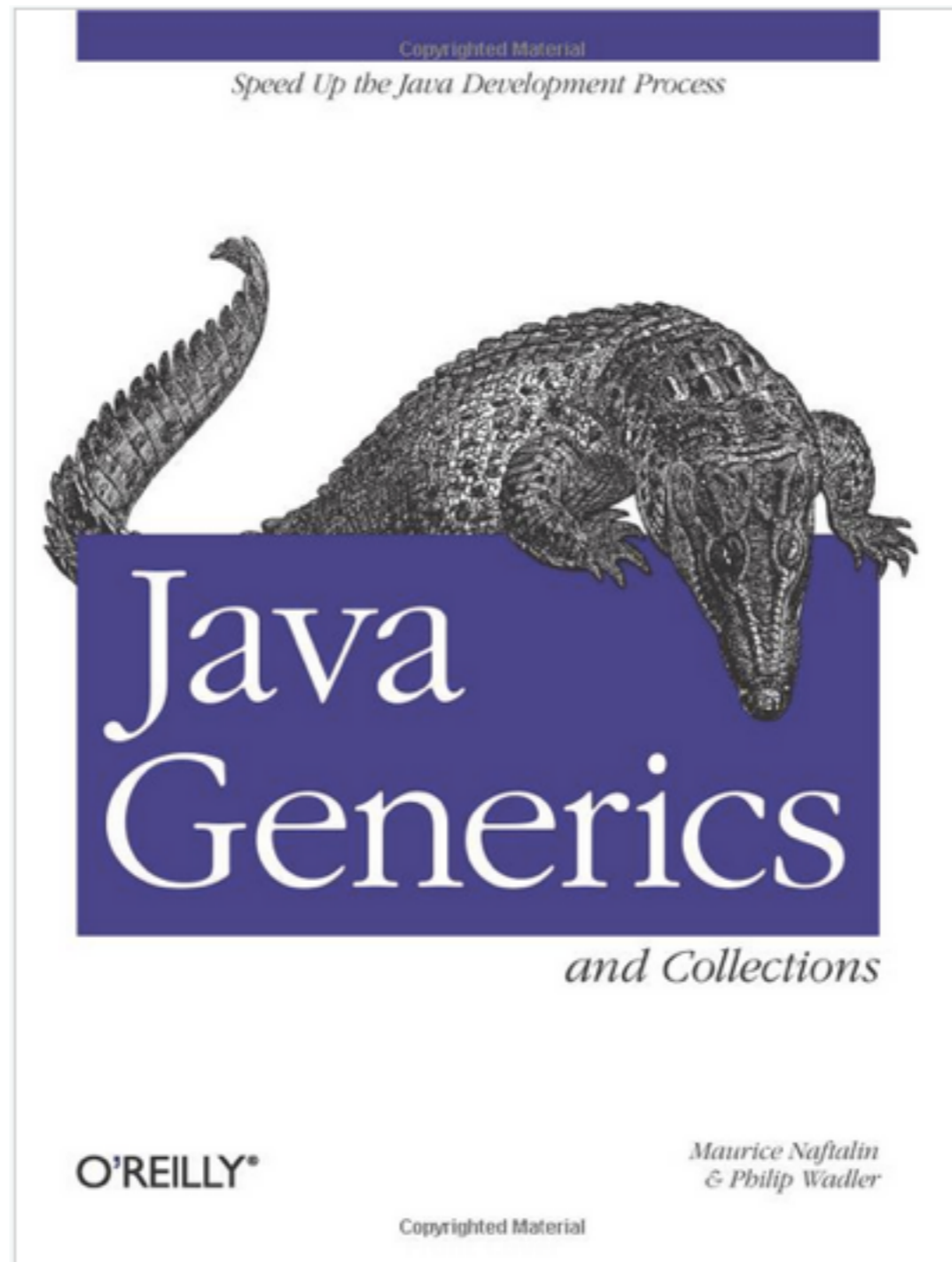
open source and the undermining of capitalism

Maurice Naftalin

Wadlerfest, Edinburgh, 12 April 2016

Why This Talk?

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We're Living in the Future

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 - ▶ 4½ Long Waves

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 - ▶ Info-Capitalism
 - ▶ Where Are We Going?

“Old Mole”?

*Europe will leap from its
seat and exultantly exclaim:
‘Well grubbed, old mole!’*

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire
of Louis Napoleon* (1851)

The Red Mole

Paper of the International Marxist Group No. 55 13th November 1972 Price 5p.

NIRC vs AUEW

The National Industrial Relations Court has fined the Engineering Union for refusing to re-admit a member who scabbed on his fellow workers during a strike. If the union fails to pay the fine, its funds will most probably be seized. If it pays the fine but refuses to re-instate the scab, then it will simply be fined again. Mr. Scanton's policy of 'neither war nor peace' with the NIRC is being put to the test.

At the TUC Conference, the AUEW proposed that unions should refuse to attend the court under any conditions and that a TUC fund should be established to pay the fines of unions under attack. Scanton may be tempted to argue now that the union could have fought the fine if only his resolution had been passed and the TUC fund had been established. When the T&GWU was fined in the Heaton's case last summer Jack Jones used exactly the same argument of lack of TUC backing to justify his capitulation to the court.

The issue is quite elementary. The working class knows only too well what to do with scabs: you get rid of them... by the easiest and swiftest means. If persuasion does not work, then force becomes necessary. And when the scab brings in friends to assist him, then you have to deal with his friends too — with equal firmness. But for the trade union bureaucracy, this case, when the scab's friend is a state institution, becomes apparently impossible to deal with.

The Court's chief, Sir John Donaldson, tries to present himself as a man in the middle. In his speech on the case he declared that "the referee's decision is seldom popular with both sides". This is a dangerous analogy for Donaldson to make. He may consider that the workers' struggle against the capitalists for a decent standard of living is a game, but it is a pretty nightmarish one when the employing class is able to make up the rules through Parliament as the game goes on; where the employing class chooses the 'referee', and where that referee insists that a worker who has been trying to 'throw the game by scabbing cannot be thrown out of the team!

The AUEW leadership has declared its desire to smash the Industrial Relations Act and the NIRC. The great mass of trade unionists have already shown their readiness to struggle on this issue in the repeated stoppages against it before it became law and in the great struggle to free the five dockers imprisoned by the NIRC. The issue in this case is equally clear cut: by lining up with scabs the NIRC has again revealed its true purpose and has thrown down a challenge to the entire trade union movement.

The AUEW leadership has had at least three months in which to prepare its own membership and the trade union movement for this fight. So far, Scanton has done nothing to prepare the fight. What is now required is for the Union to lead industrial action by the mass of workers to smash the Act. This is the task that faces the Union executive when it meets on 14 November. Given such an initiative from the engineers, every militant in every branch of industry must be immediately prepared to generalise the struggle against the Act.

If the engineers' leadership fails to move onto the attack, the consequence will be a very serious setback for the working class. No one should have any illusions on that score. And any talk from Mr. Scanton about his defeat at the TUC conference and lack of support from the TUC must not be allowed to obscure the truth: that unless the working class gains a leadership which is prepared to stand up and defend attacks come from, whether from an employer or from a court, from the newspaper barons or Parliament, then it is not going to be able to defend its own living standards and organisations.

PAY FREEZE HEATH'S LAST GAMBLE

By BOB WILLIAMS

The TUC has denounced the Government's pay freeze and refused further talks on incomes policy while the freeze is on. With this action, Victor Feather has noisily slammed the stable door just two days after the horse has bolted.

He and his friends on the General Council no doubt hope to regain some credibility within the trade union movement by this show of opposition. But the fact is that the single most important factor opening the door to any form of wage restraint was the TUC leadership.

In the Government's darkest hour after the freeing of the five dockers, it was Mr Feather who came forward to offer the hand of friendship, and begin a three month publicity campaign for an incomes policy. Without Feather's support the Government would not have been able to carry off its massive public relations exercise. This must not be forgotten in the months ahead when the General Council proclaims its opposition to the present freeze.

SHREWD

The effects of the TUC's policy on working class living standards were felt even before the freeze was introduced. Terrified at the prospect of having to stand-up to the Government or lose the support of their membership, the trade union bosses fell over each other in their rush to settle before the freeze became law.

Faced with claims outstanding from more than a million workers, the Government's tactics were quite shrewd. They first put a brake on all public sector negotiations, getting their lieutenants in the nationalised industries to say that nothing could be agreed until the pay talks between the Tories



Mr Heath and Mr Feather in relaxed mood after the introduction of the pay freeze

the CBI and the TUC had been concluded. Then when the Government came out with its proposal of a £2 limit, this was declared to be the ceiling by the management negotiators. Outcry appropriately followed from the trade union side. Then, at the 'last minute', before a total freeze was slapped on, the Government allowed its lieutenants to settle wage claims at levels slightly above the previously proposed £2 limit. The union bosses leapt at the offers with enthusiasm, seeing that they could tell their memberships that they had won more than the original government limit by settling before the total freeze stopped them getting anything!

The resulting picture is very much below what even the TUC considered to be the suitable limit for wage increases (£3.50):

ASTMS University Technicians	£2.71
Electricity supply workers	£2.65
Local government workers	£2.40
Government industrial workers	£2.60

The government is praying that the working

class will spare it another version of last year's miners' strike. A repeat performance of that victorious upsurge would break the last vestige of Heath's credibility, as the *Financial Times* made clear the other day. It pointed out that "Ministers are making such frantic efforts to create a climate of opinion in which an incomes policy will have a chance of holding because the government will not have a chance of winning another election unless it achieves it." And after explaining that the government did not feel strong enough to resist a determined challenge from the working class, the paper concluded that "a real crisis of nerve is in progress." At present the government's one chance lies in the union leaders' refusal to fight.

THE FRONT LINE

With the leaders of the strong sections of the working class running for cover, the full weight of the struggle against the pay freeze is at present falling on 250,000 hospital workers. The hospital auxiliary workers are amongst the lowest paid in the country. They lie 127th out of 129 in the national pay ladder. Many of them take home only £14 a week. In the past they have accepted the local government manual workers agreements as a standard for their own settlements. This would have given them a miserable £2.40 before the freeze. Now they are to be outlawed in a struggle even for that.

But there has been strong opposition from the rank and file to the £4 claim put forward by the union leaders. Strike action in support of an £8 claim has already occurred in Bristol and Gloucester, and this has found support elsewhere leading to the creation of a national Alliance of Stewards for Health Workers.

If the hospital workers do join battle with the government (officially or unofficially) then solidarity action must transform the struggle into a united working class upsurge with the objective of smashing the pay freeze. Such a policy, which must be applied to every wage struggle from now on, will start the death agony of the Tory government.

RED BERETS, GREEN PAPER

By GERY LAWLESS

As the fourth British strategy since 1969 for dealing with the Irish problem grinds to a halt, Whiteley's position as Gauleiter of the North becomes more and more insecure, the need to build a solidarity movement in support of the Irish struggle more and more urgent every day.

MAJOR CHANGE

Whiteley's speech on television in July which preordained the invasion of Free Derry was the announcement of the fourth major change of course for British imperialism in Ireland.

Since the establishment of Free Belfast and Free Derry in August '69, British imperialism has used a number of different policies for dealing with the crisis. All the policies were calculated in different situations and at different periods to serve the same strategic end — to protect British interests in Ireland. But exactly because it was dealing

with a real living crisis, different methods have had to be tried at different times to achieve this end, and have failed.

From August '69 until August '71 — despite some diversions, particularly with the introduction of the Public Order Act in 1970 and the invasion of the Lower Falls in July 1970 in the immediate aftermath of the Tory return to power — the basic policy was one of Containment and Reform.

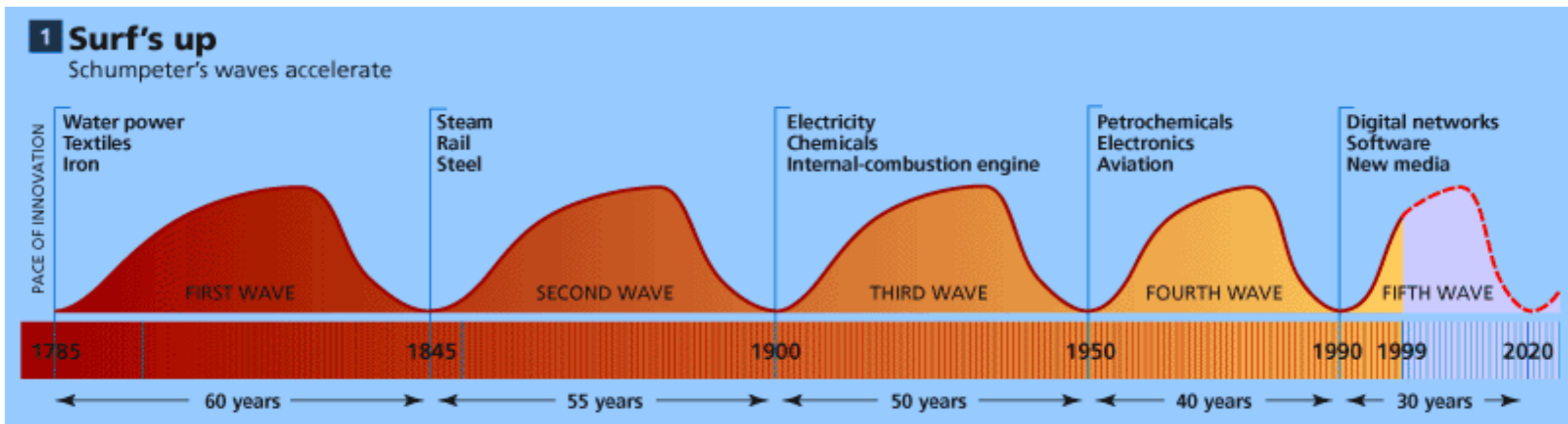
To avoid provoking a Southern backlash, and therefore endangering British interests in the South, the British policy was, not to smash militantly Free Derry and Free Belfast, but to use the British Army to contain the revolt in these two areas while the Stormont regime was nudged onto the road to reform. The theory was that the further Stormont was pushed towards reform, then the quicker would the contained revolt in the Catholic areas es-

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INDOCHINA WAR

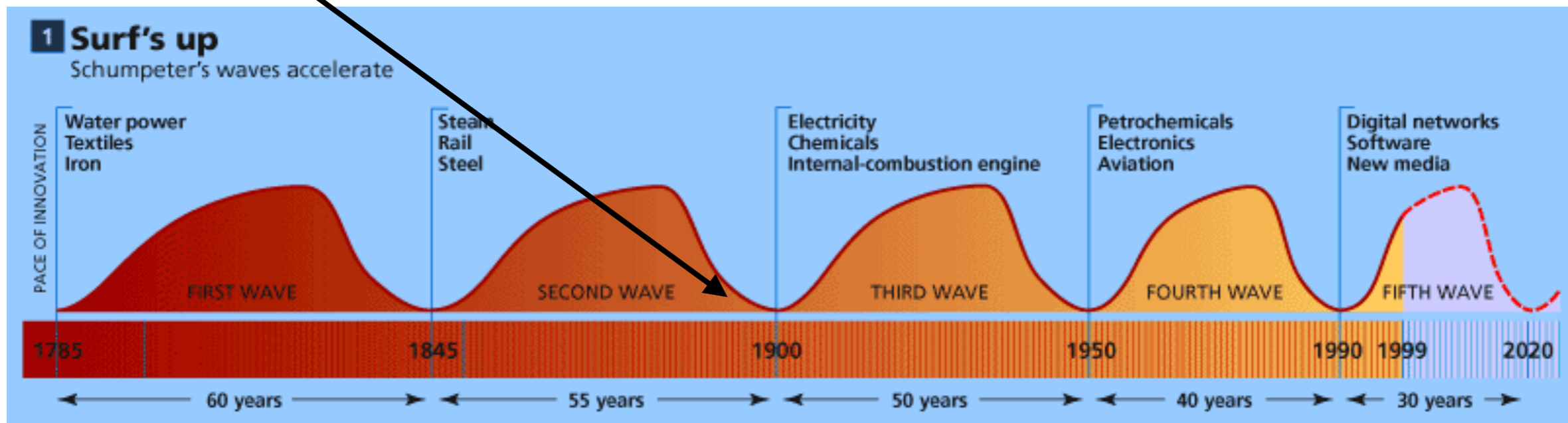
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4½ Long Waves



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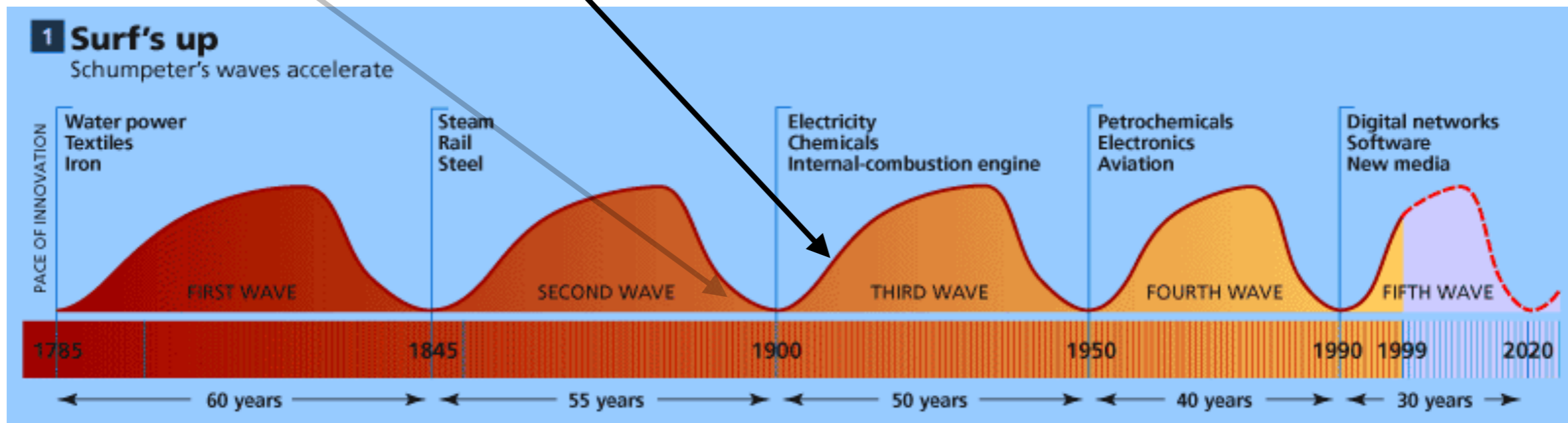
Capital
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4½ Long Waves

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And
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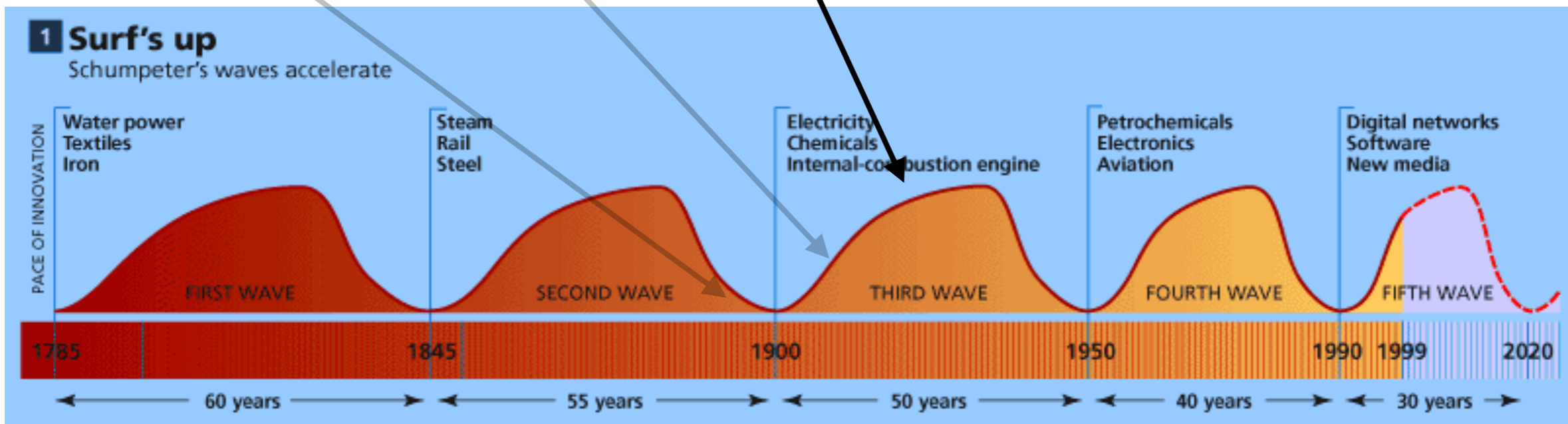


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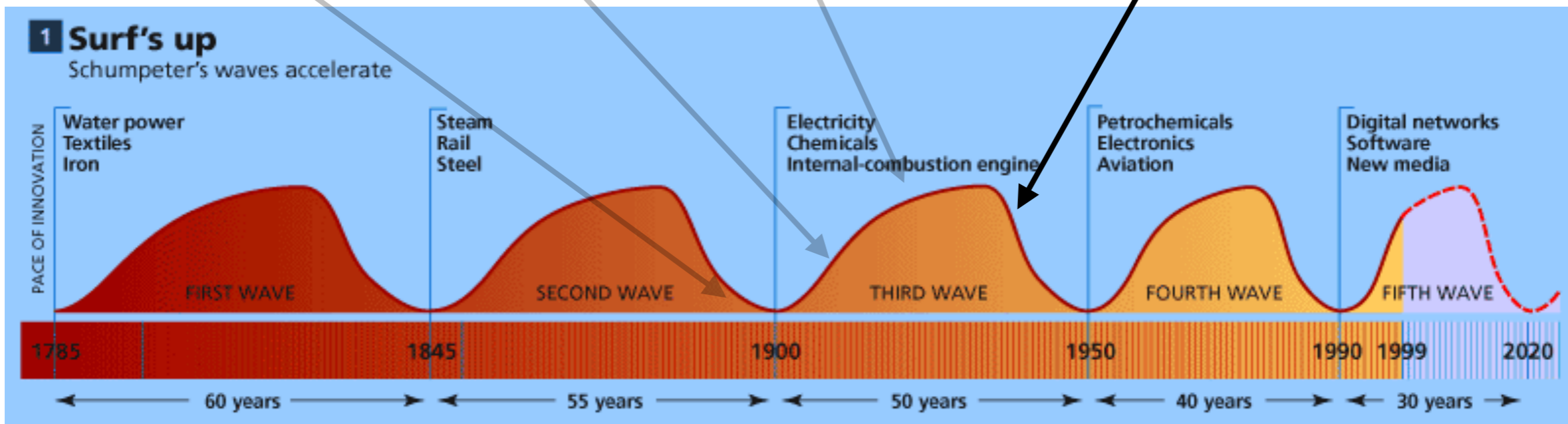
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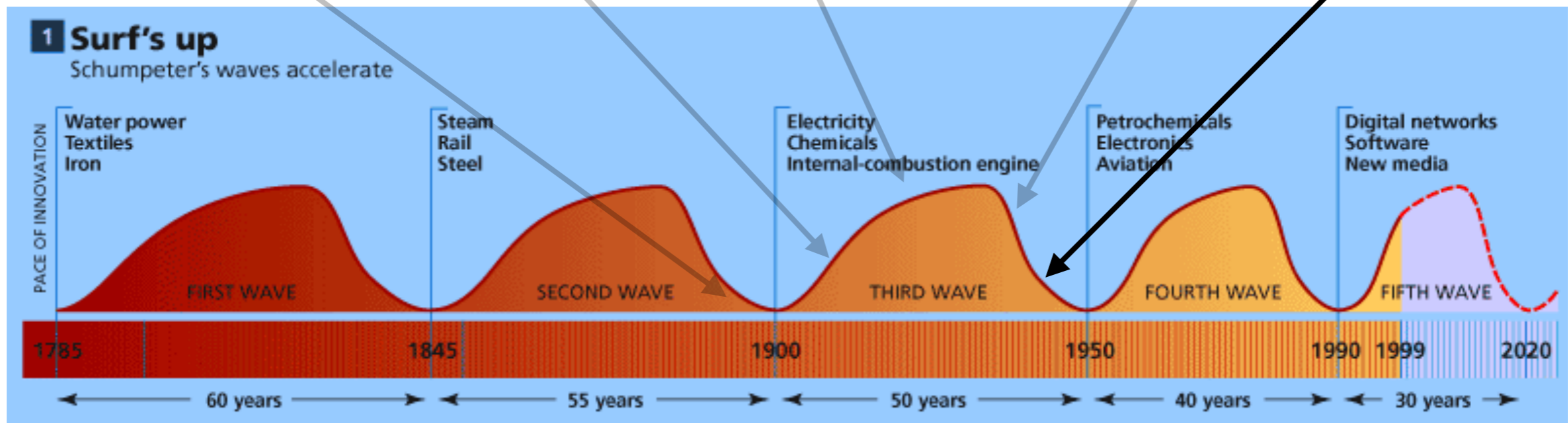
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Resistance
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The Stalled Fifth Wave

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 - falling profitability

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The Stalled Fifth Wave

Neoliberalism's central project:

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To break the economic
strength of organised labour

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Has it worked?

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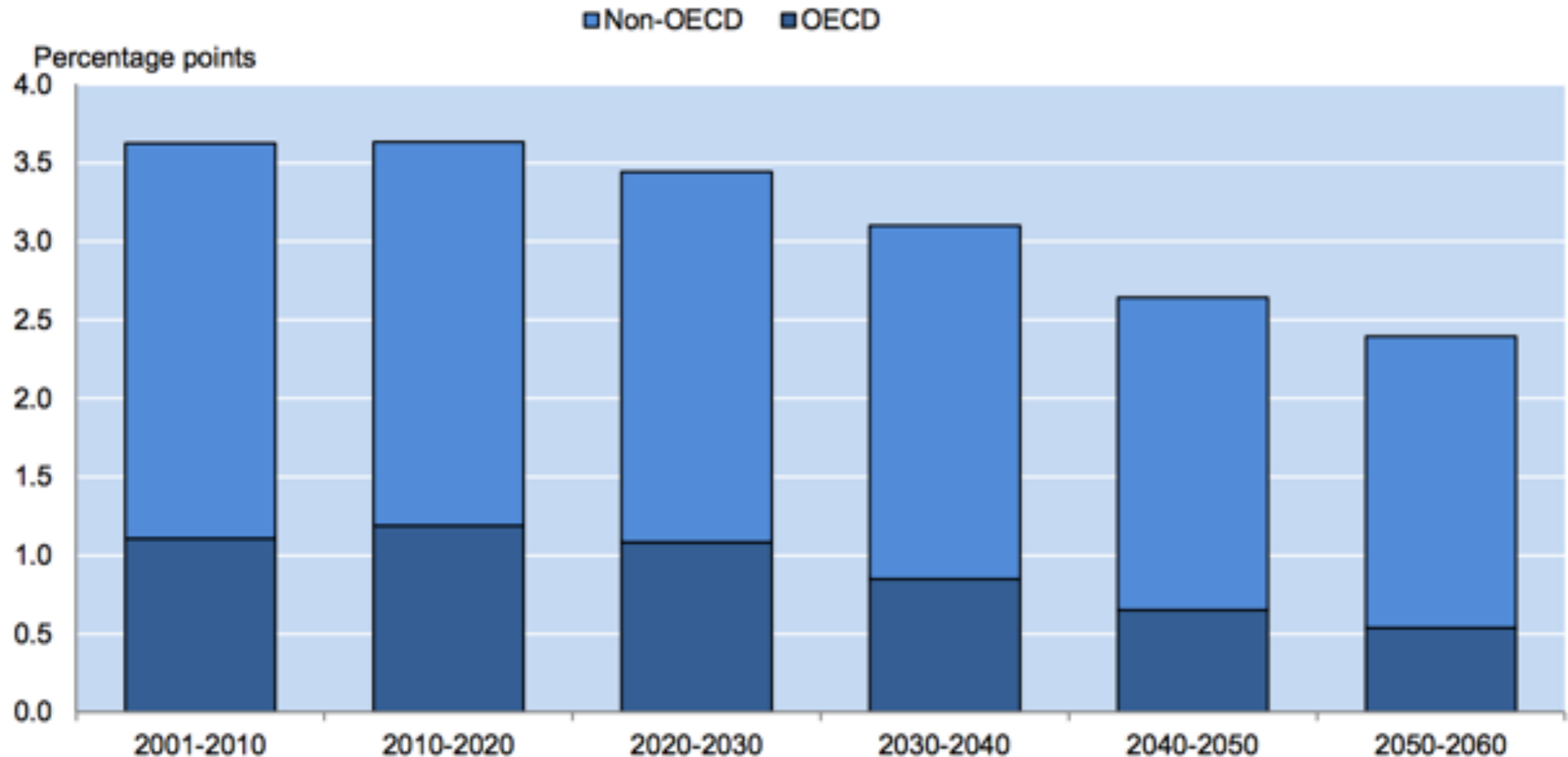
NO!!

increased global inequality
“weak” growth at least to 2060
assuming: huge migration
– & hugely greater productivity

OECD Expectations

Figure 1. Global GDP growth is set to slow down over the next 50 years, 2010-2060

Contribution of OECD and non-OECD to global GDP growth (annual average, constant 2005 PPP)

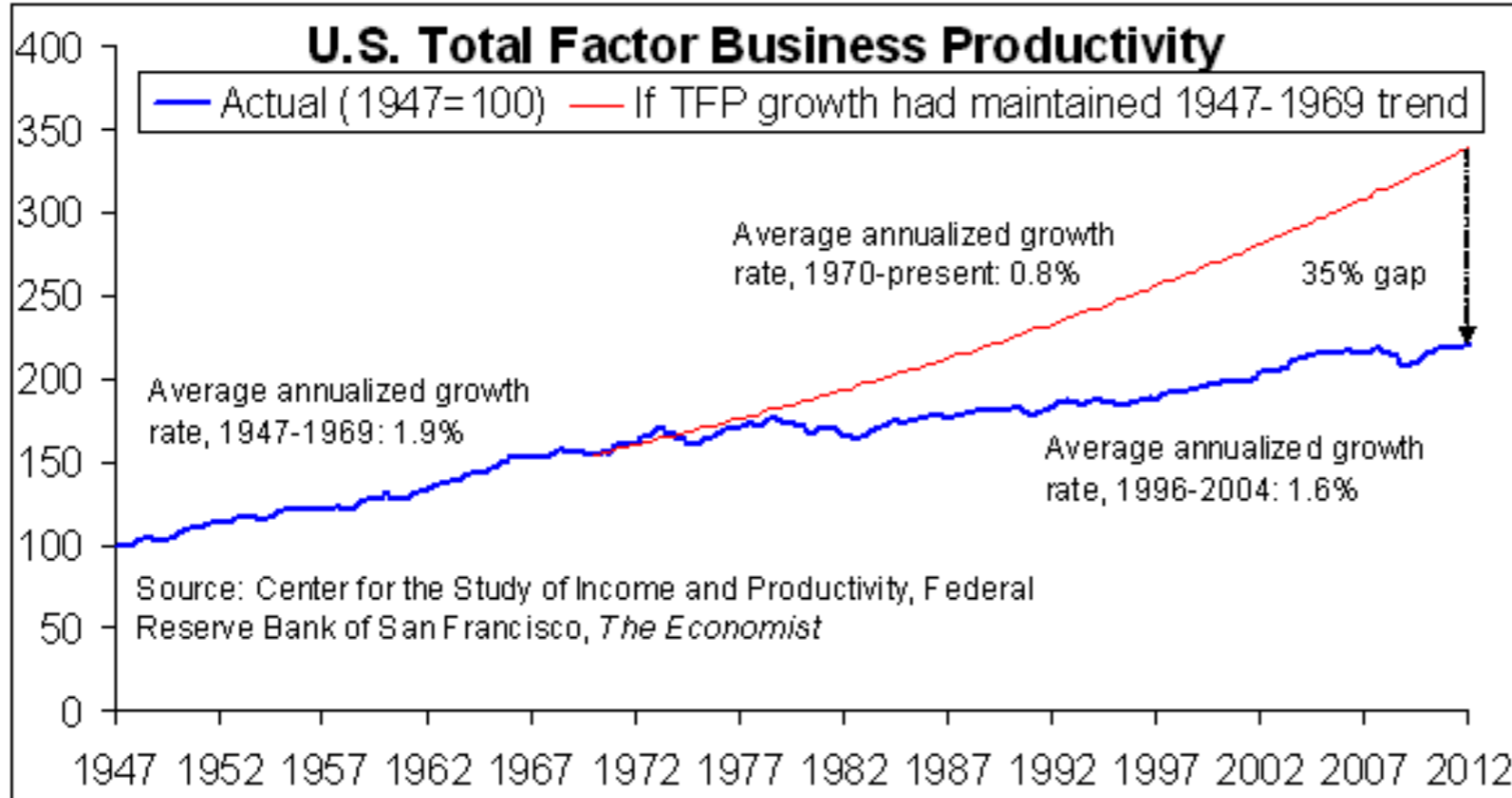


But We Have Innovation!

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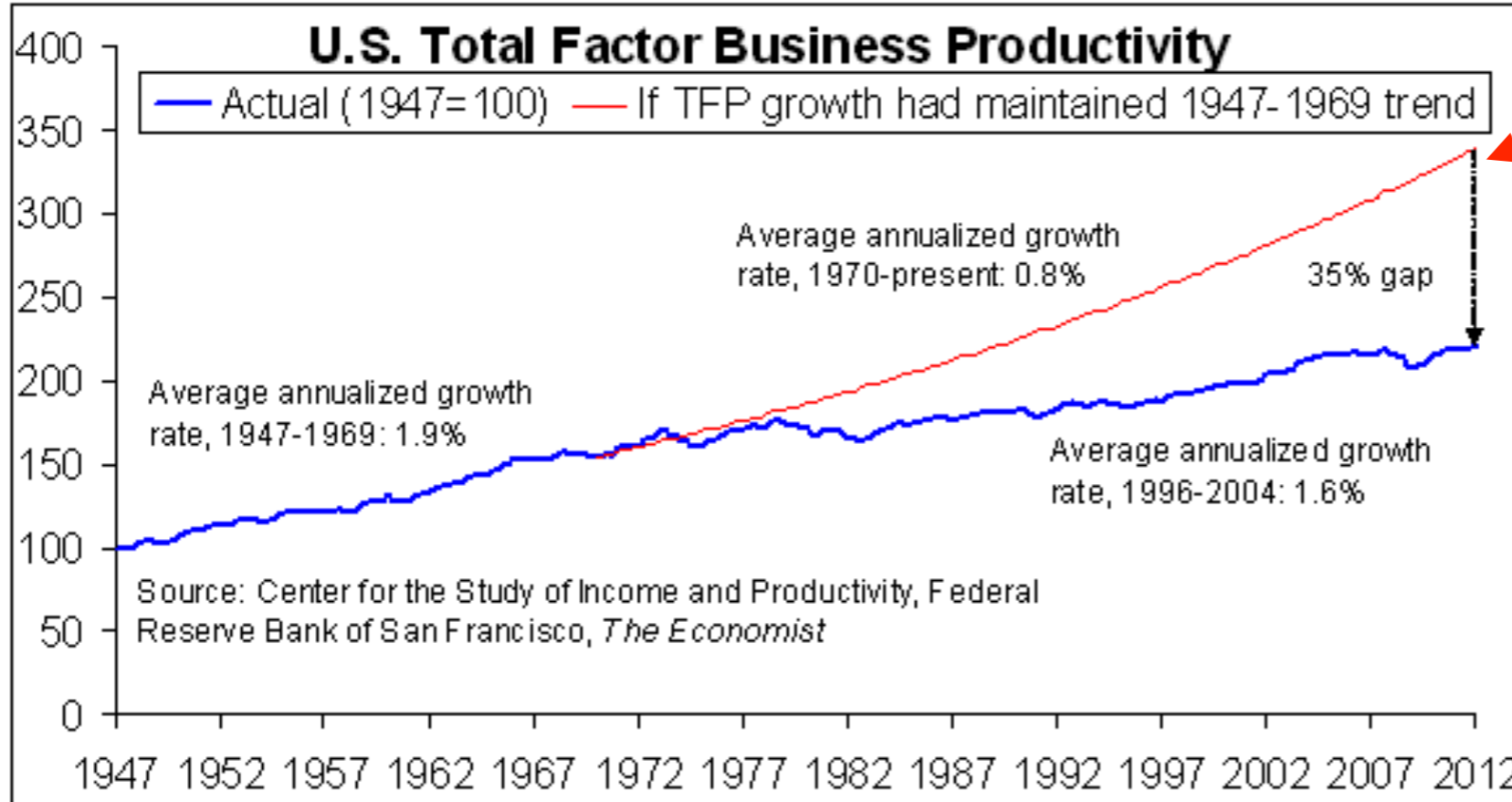
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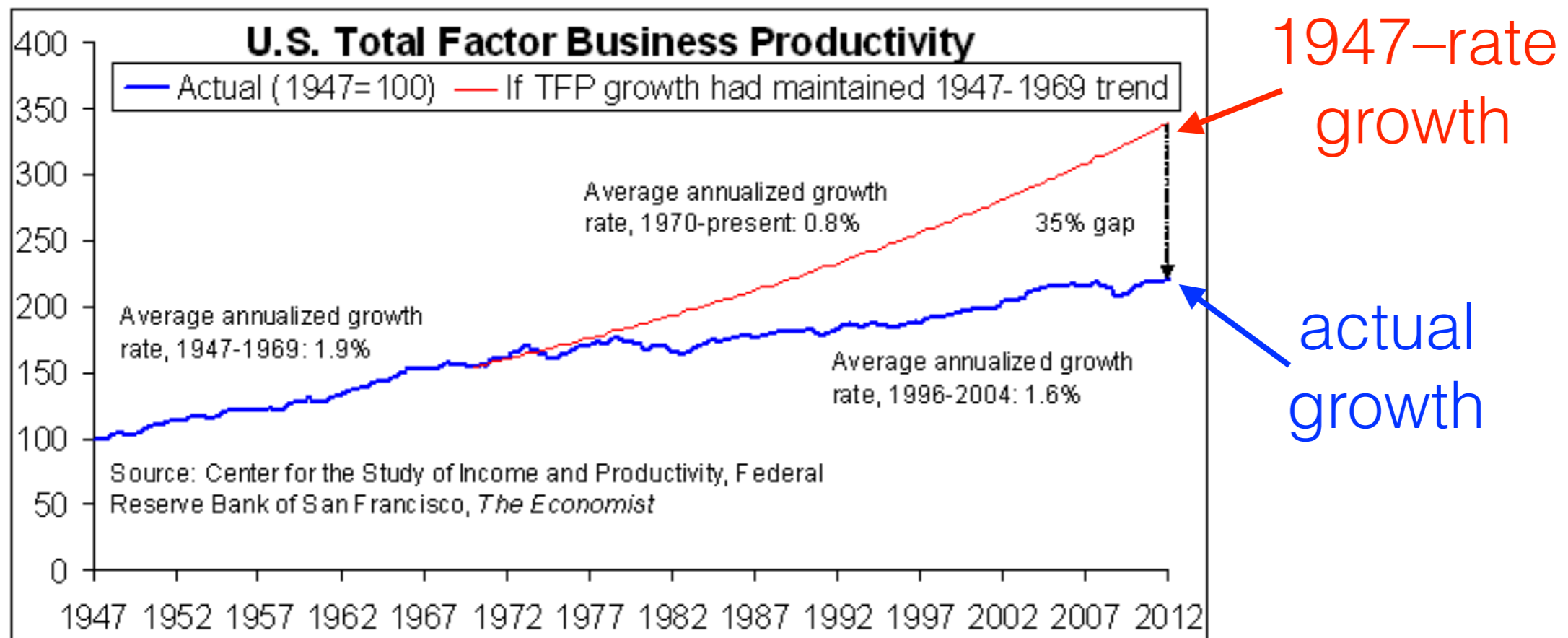
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1947-rate growth

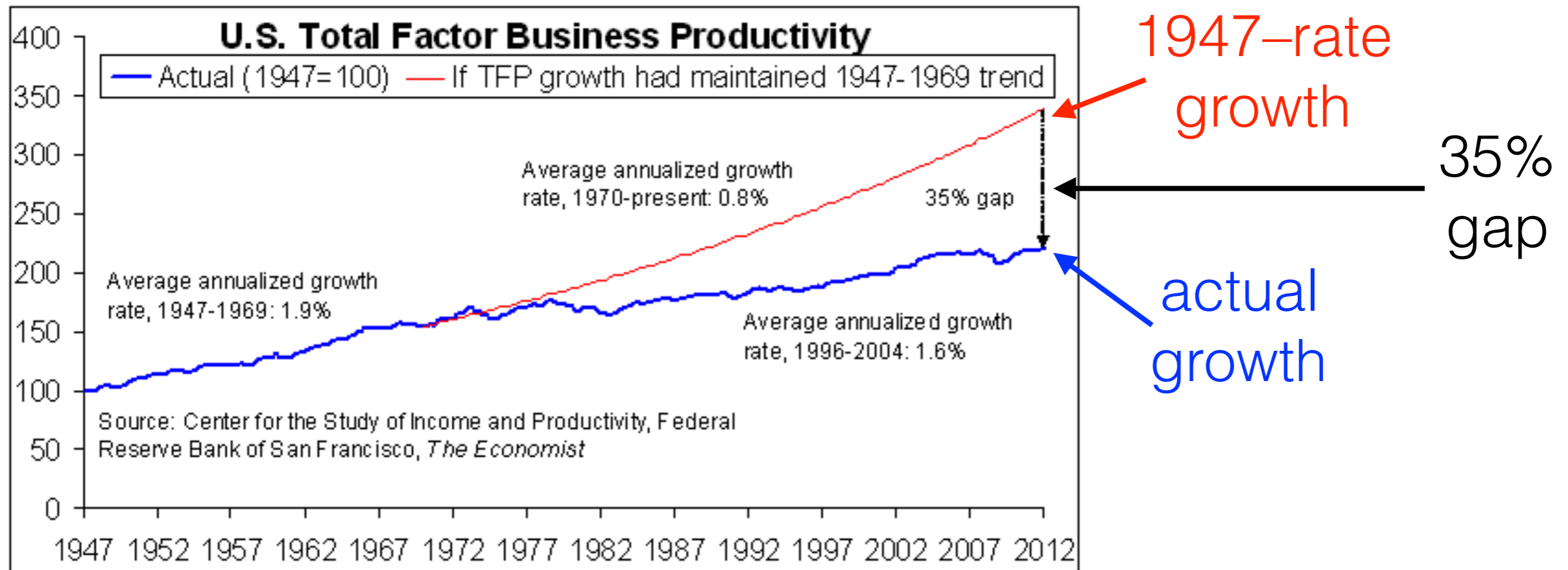
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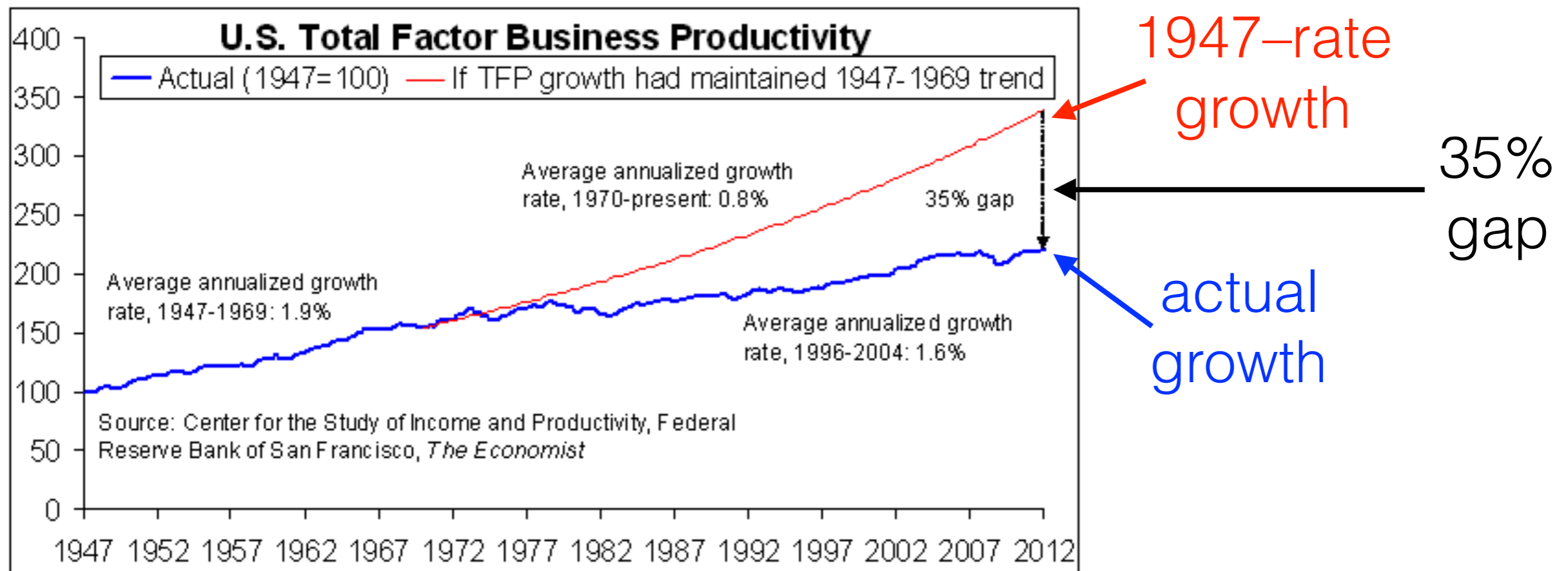
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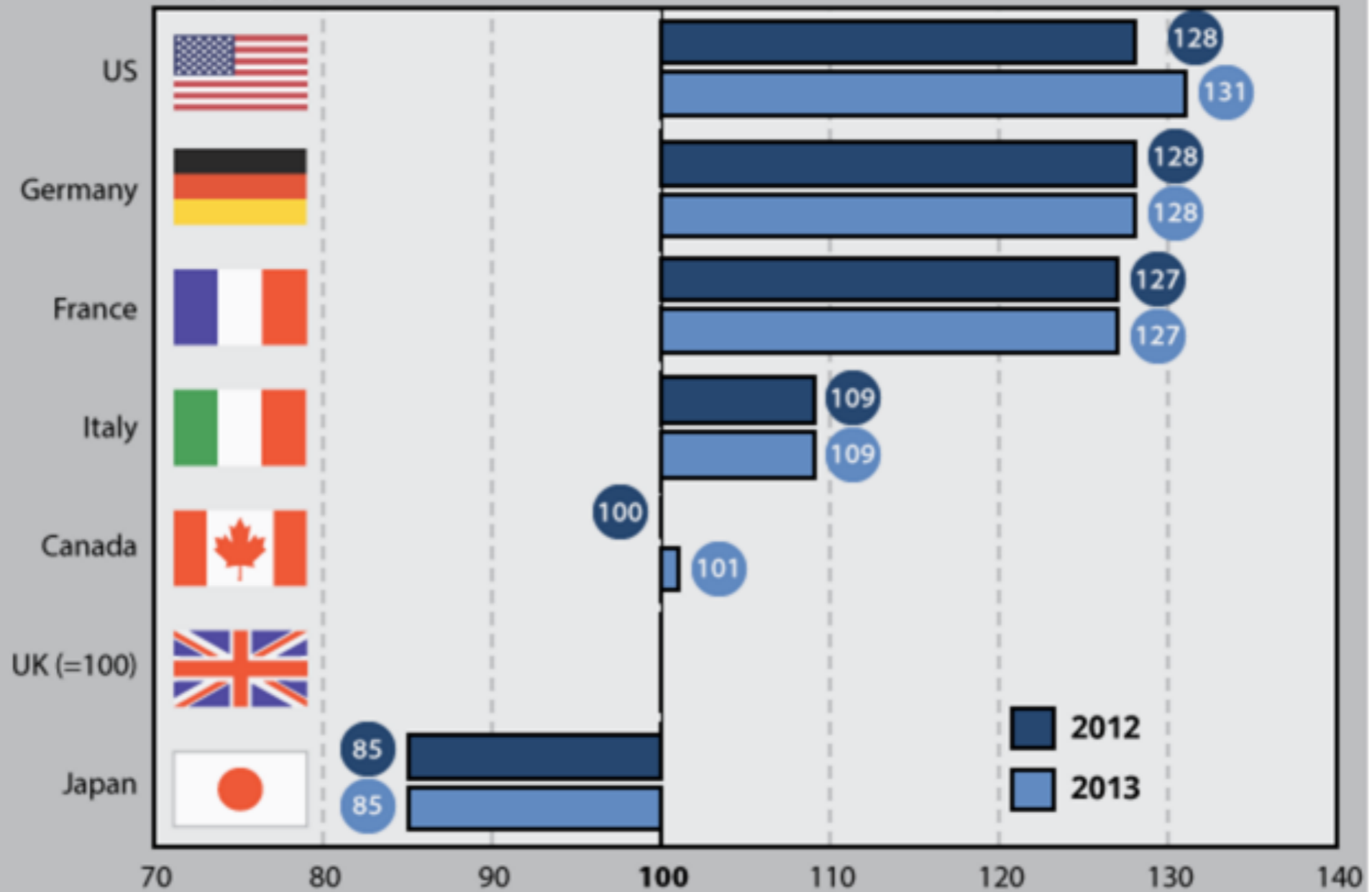
But We Have Innovation!

...don't we?



And Britain is far, far worse!

Output per Hour, index UK=100



Source: OECD, ONS

Final estimates for 2013 show that the **US**, for every hour worked, produced **31 per cent more** output relative to the **UK**.

Where's the Productivity?

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 - ▶ increasing proportion of the value of the most important goods and services
 - ▶ information has no marginal cost of production
 - ▶ can't be valued by classical economics

Was Marx Right After All?

“If machinery lasted for ever, if it did not itself consist of transitory material which must be reproduced... it would blow sky-high the system based on labour values.”

Fragment on Machines (1858)

Info-Capitalism Now

Neoliberalism + Information Technology =
“Info-Capitalism”

- Information price sustained artificially – monopolies, DRM
- Market forces pushed into new areas (social relationships, personal micro-services, financialization)
- Zero-hours contracts, portfolio careers – The Precariat
- Unprecedented and growing inequality
- Atomised society

Info-Capitalism – the Future

The Case for Rational Panic

Unprecedented systemic crises:

- ▶ climatic
- ▶ demographic
- ▶ financial

Is There An Alternative?

Systemic crises to late feudalism:

- ▶ Black Death, rise of banking, pillaging of Americas, printing press

Capitalism grew up ***inside*** feudalism

- ▶ Could we help shape something analogous?
- ▶ Our goals:
 - Sustainability
 - Material wellbeing
 - Reduced/meaningful work
 - Reintegrated society

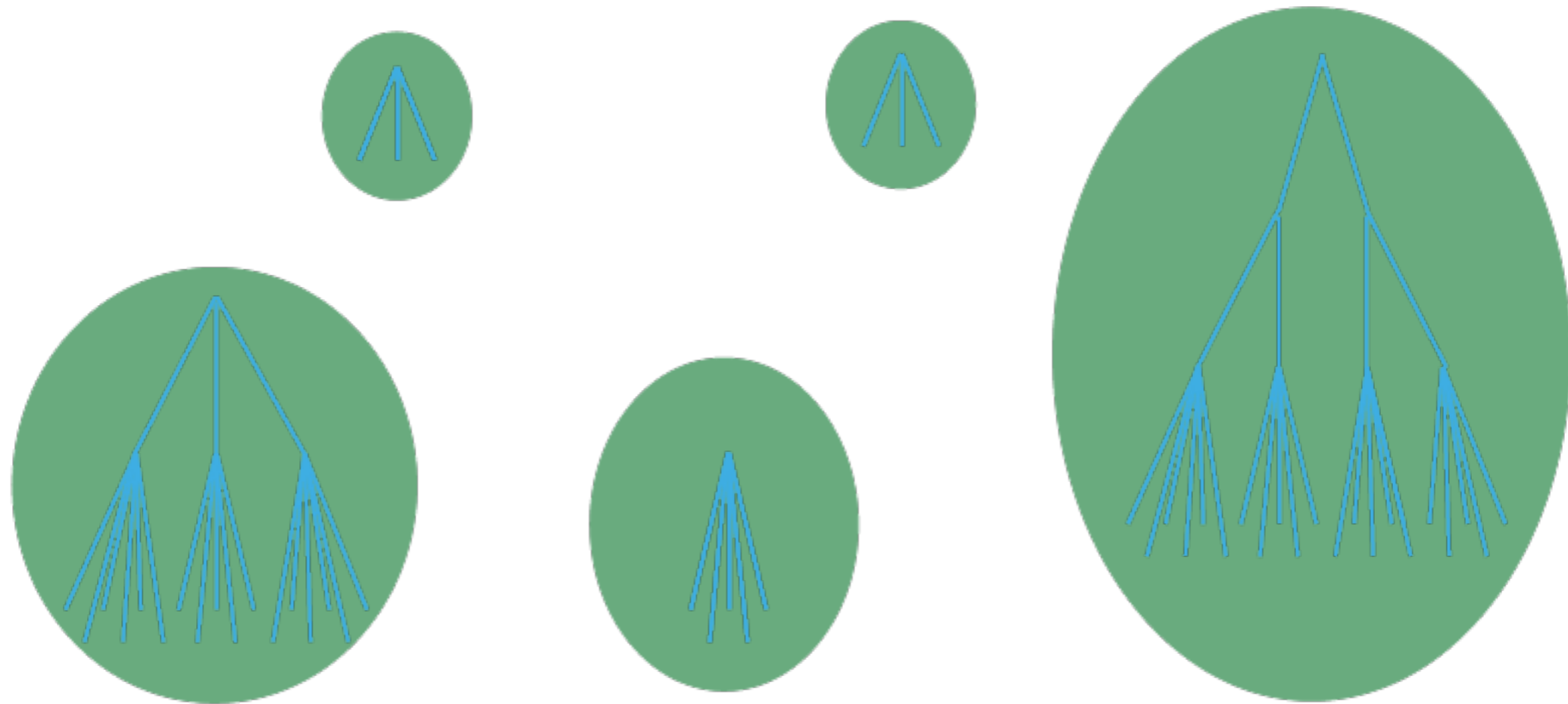
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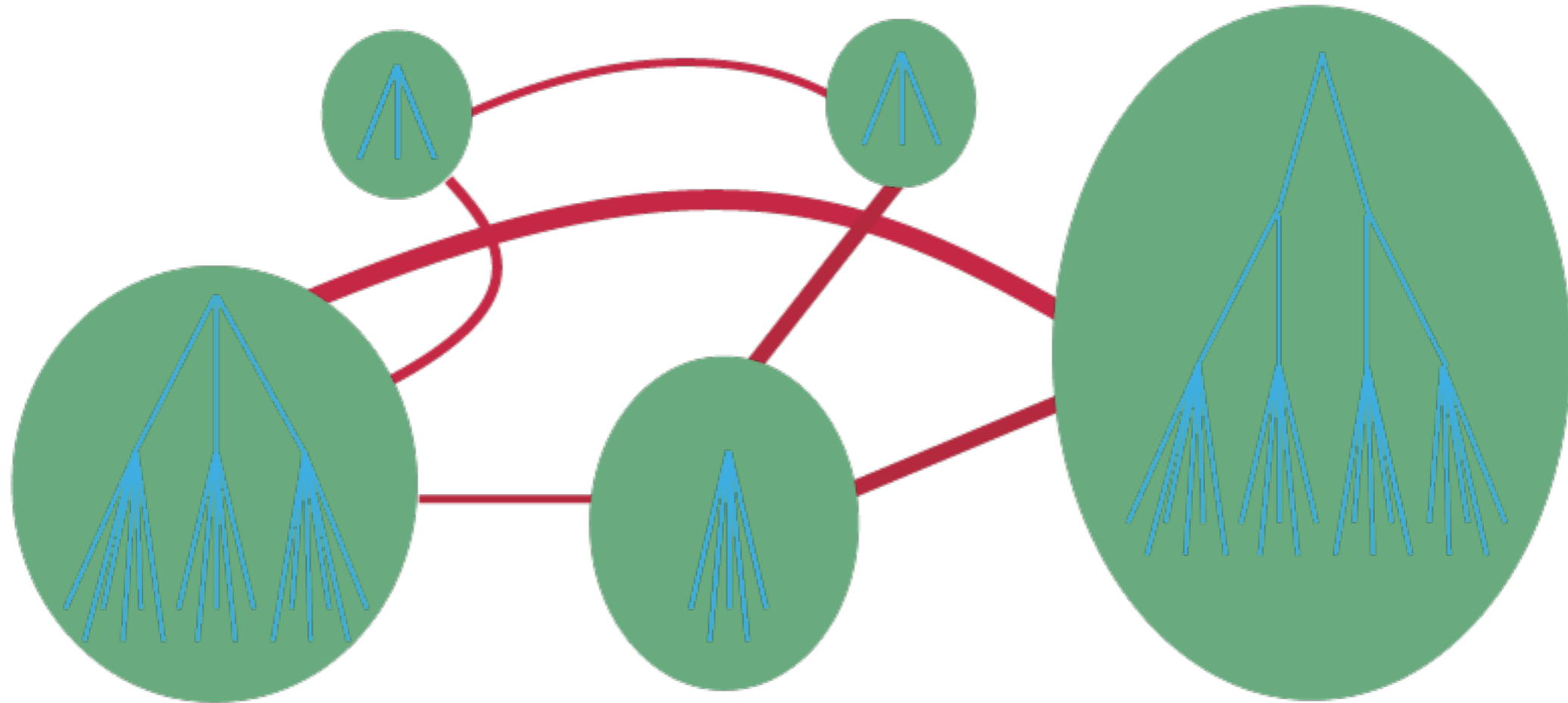
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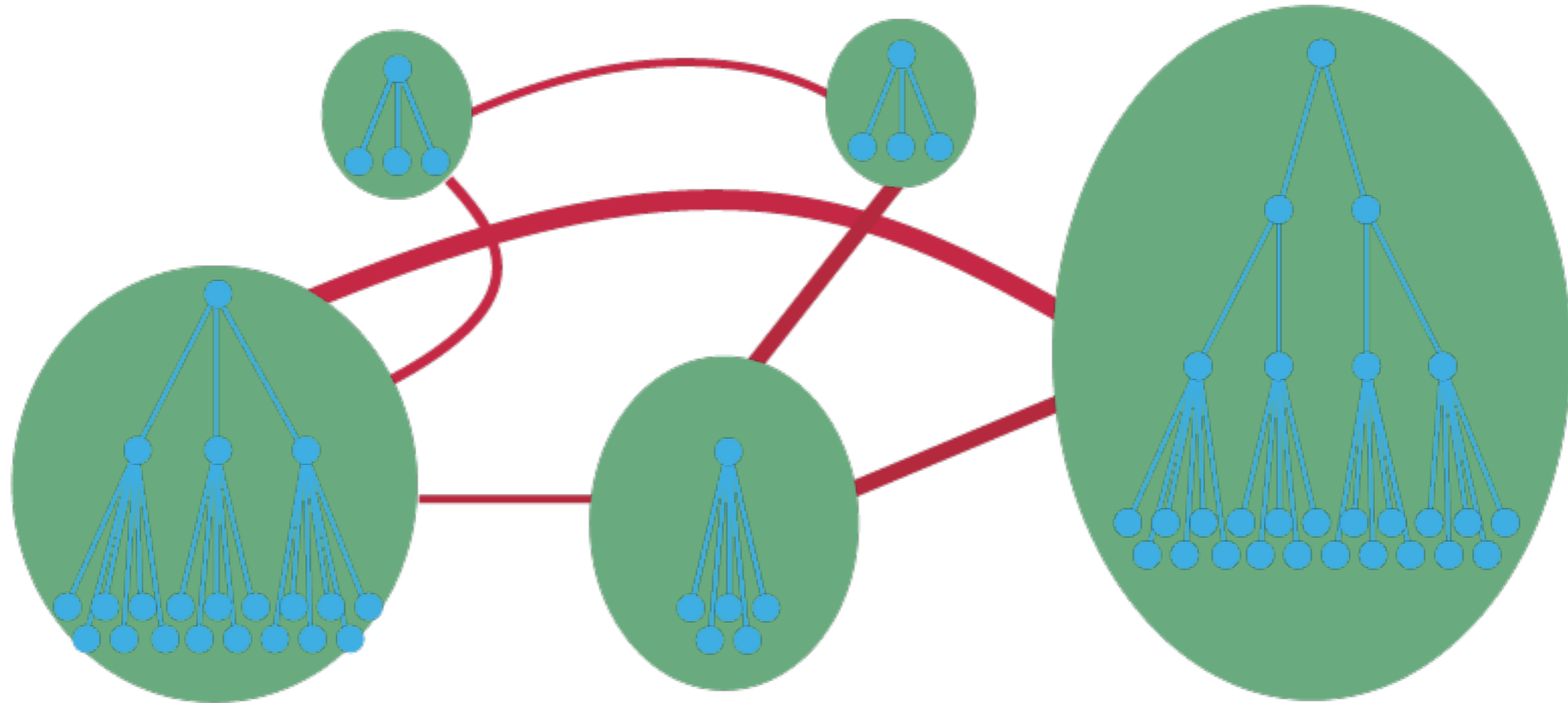
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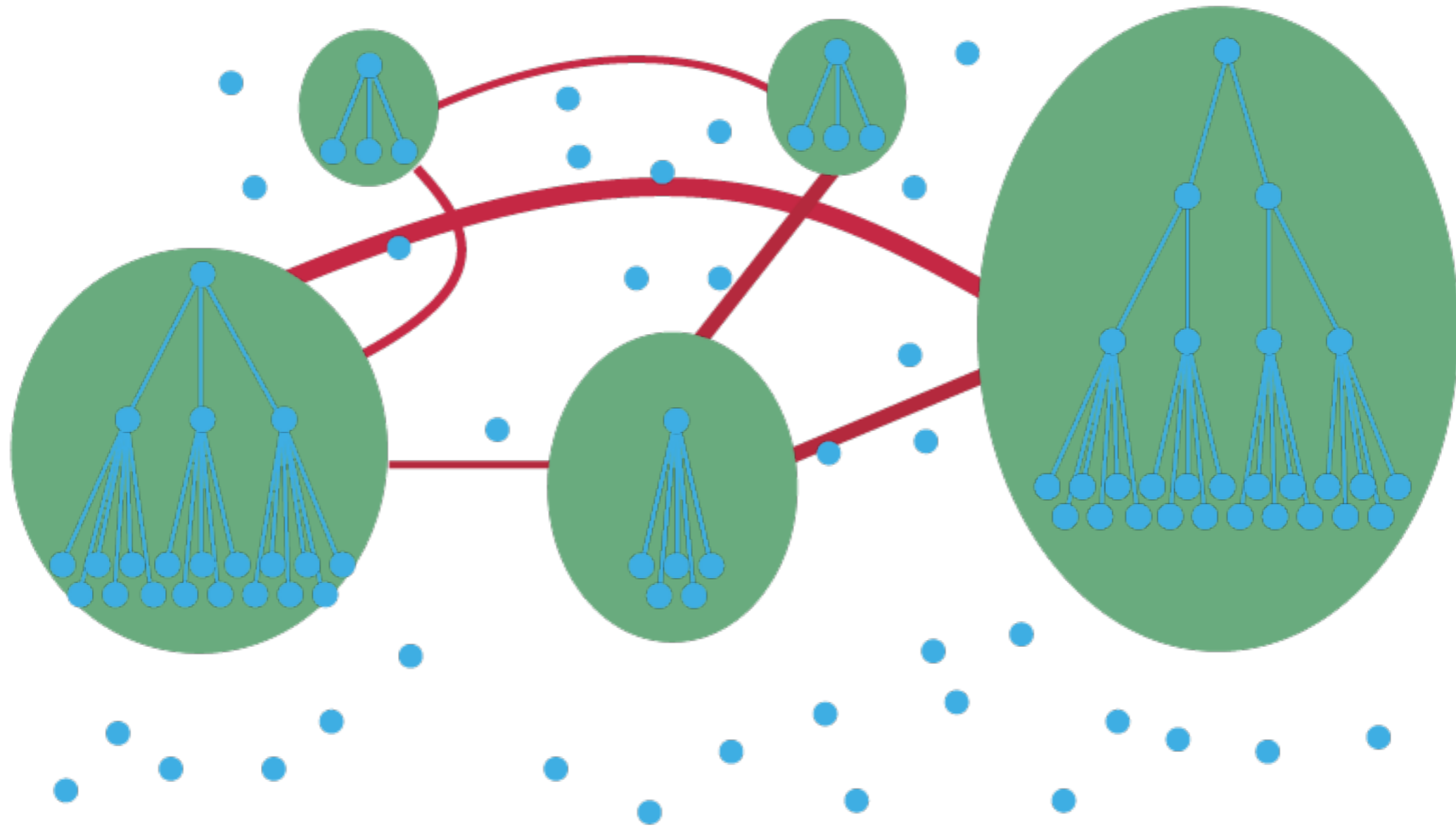
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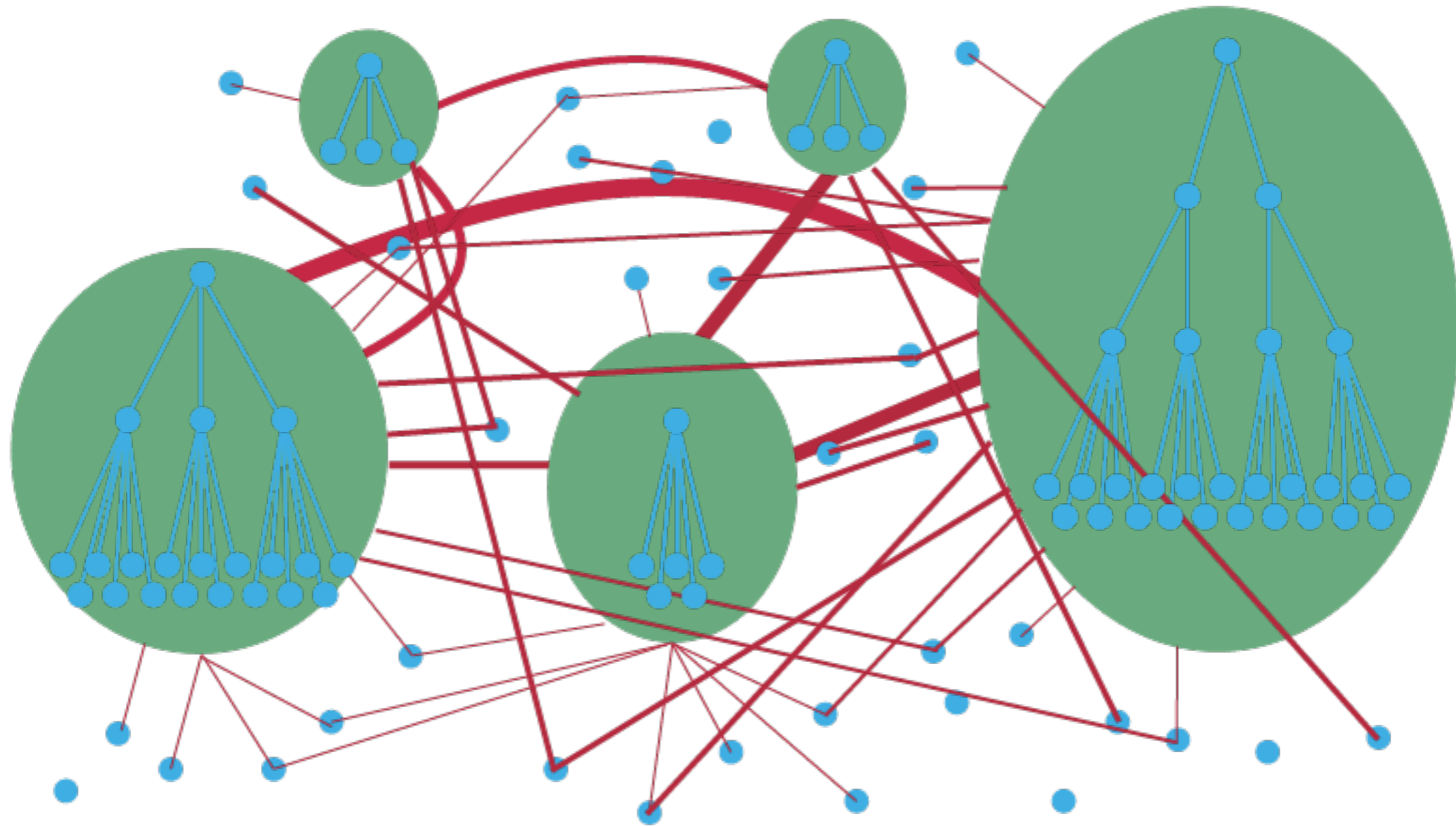
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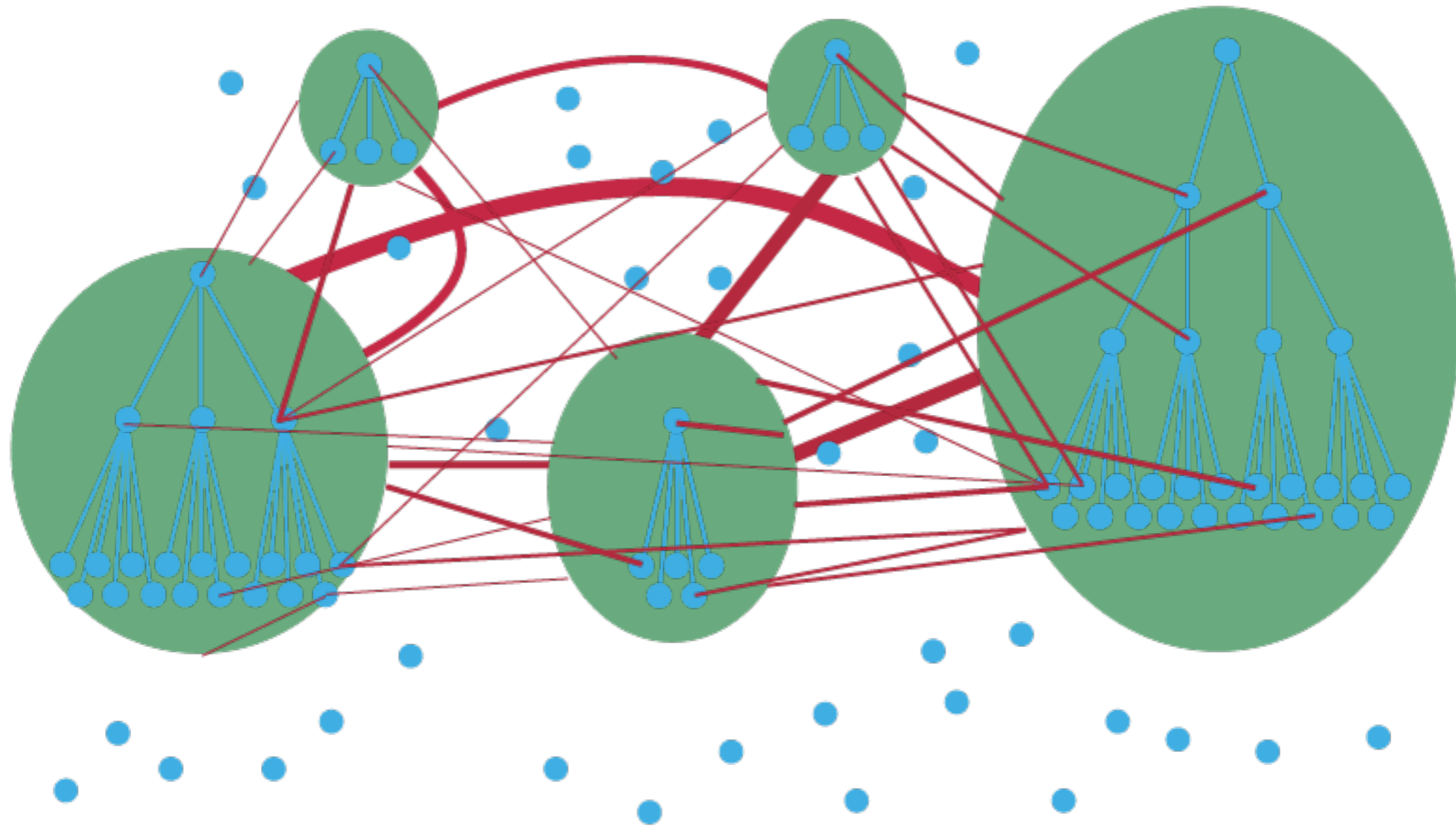
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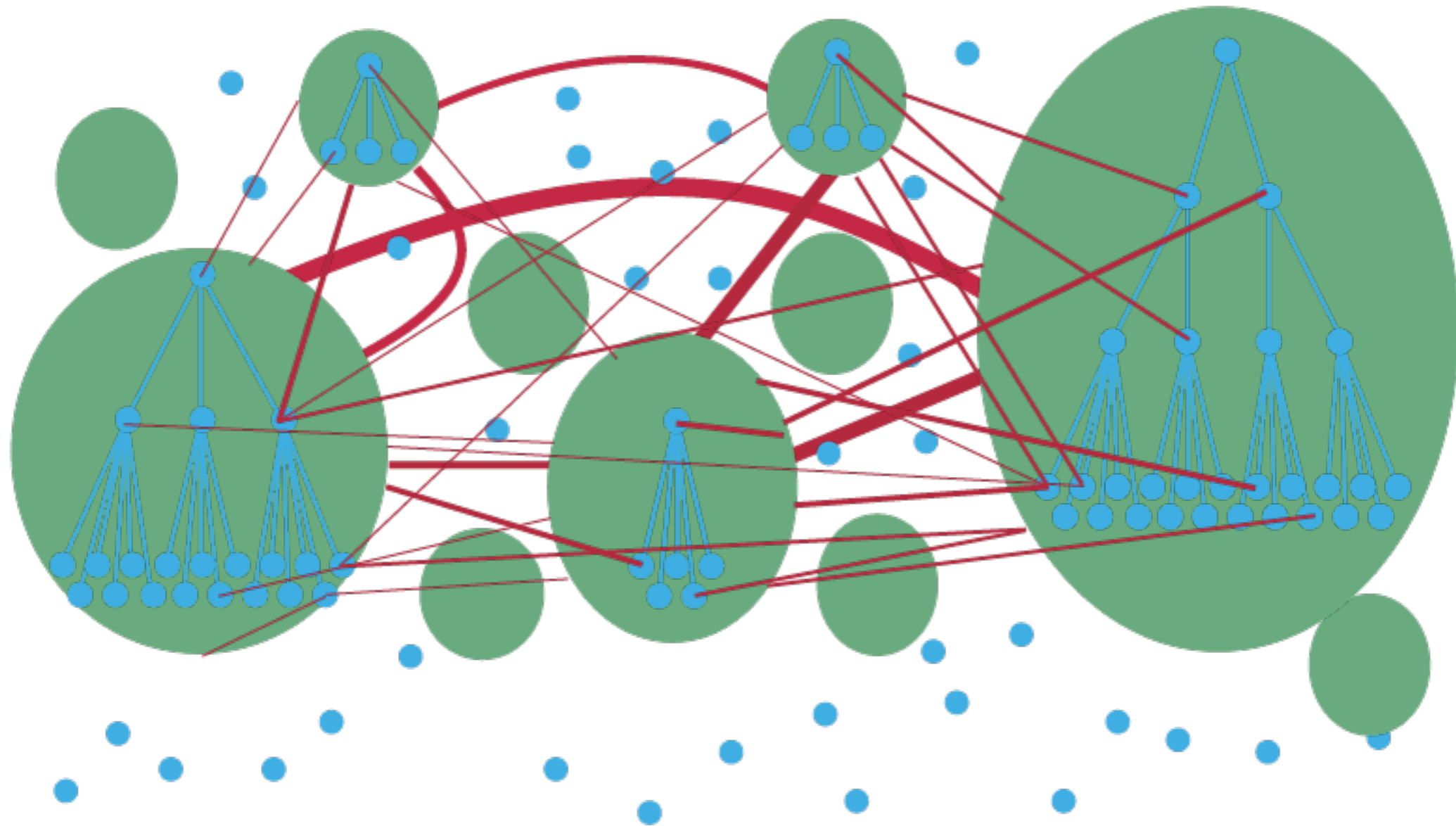
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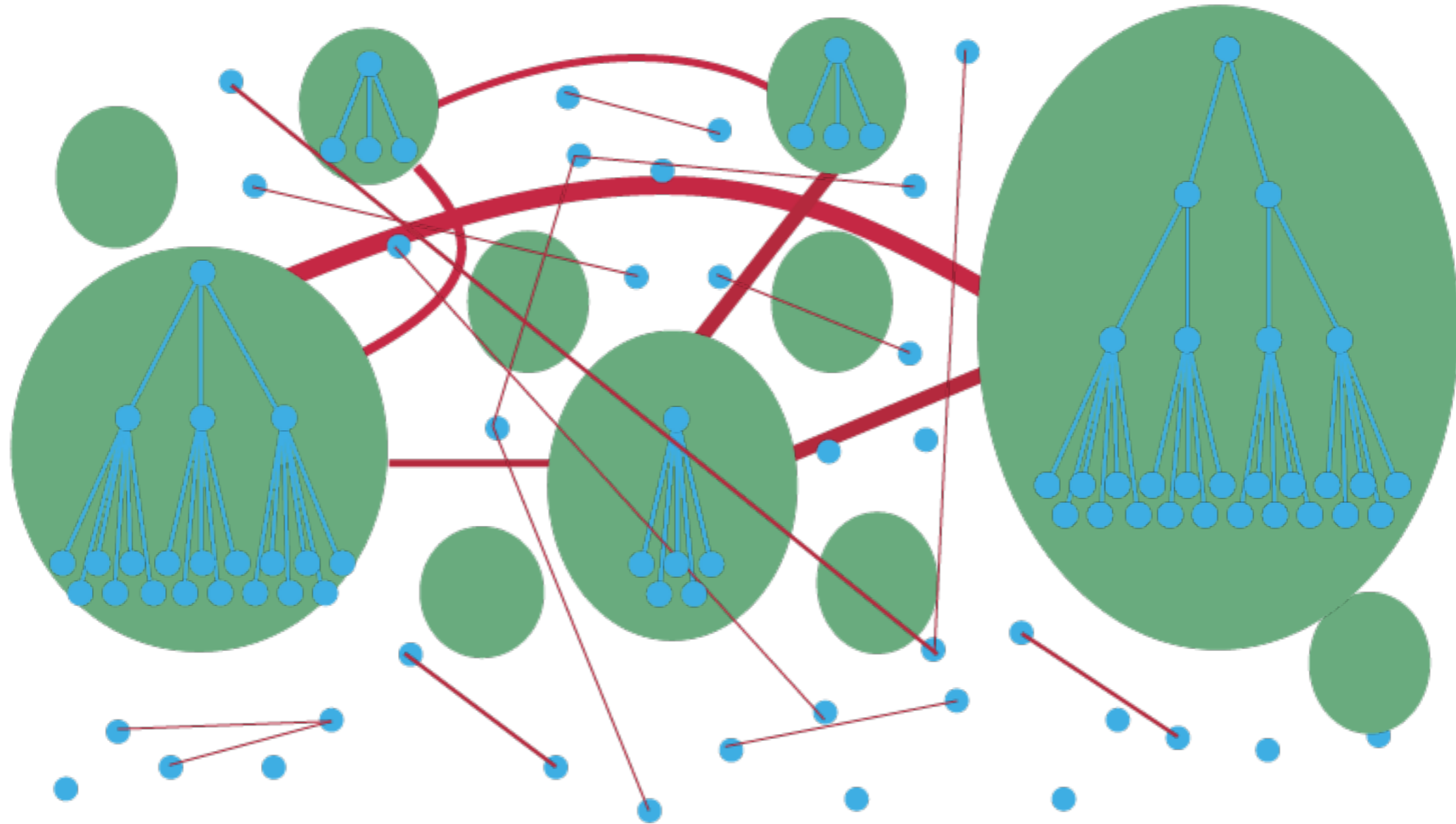
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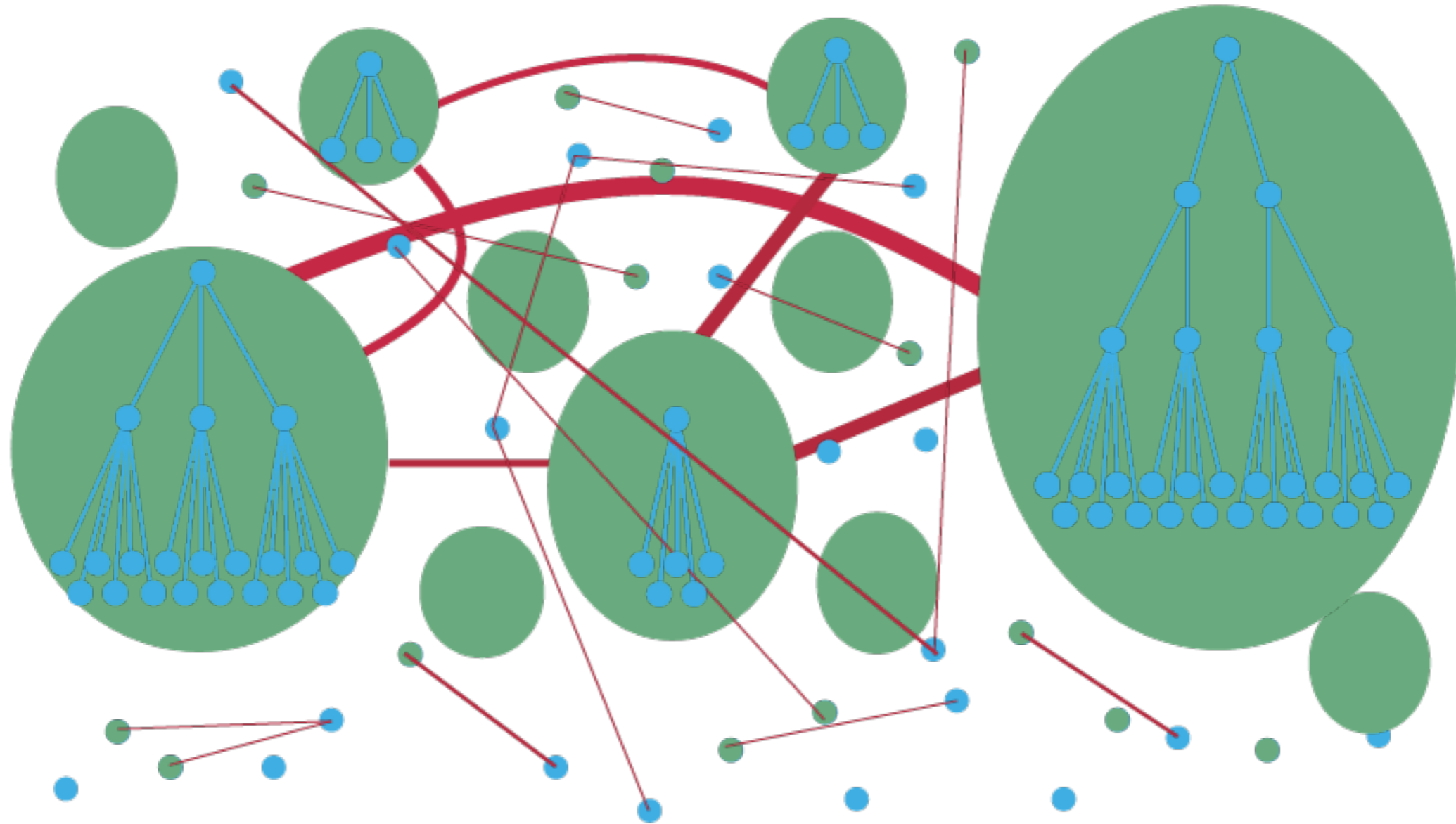
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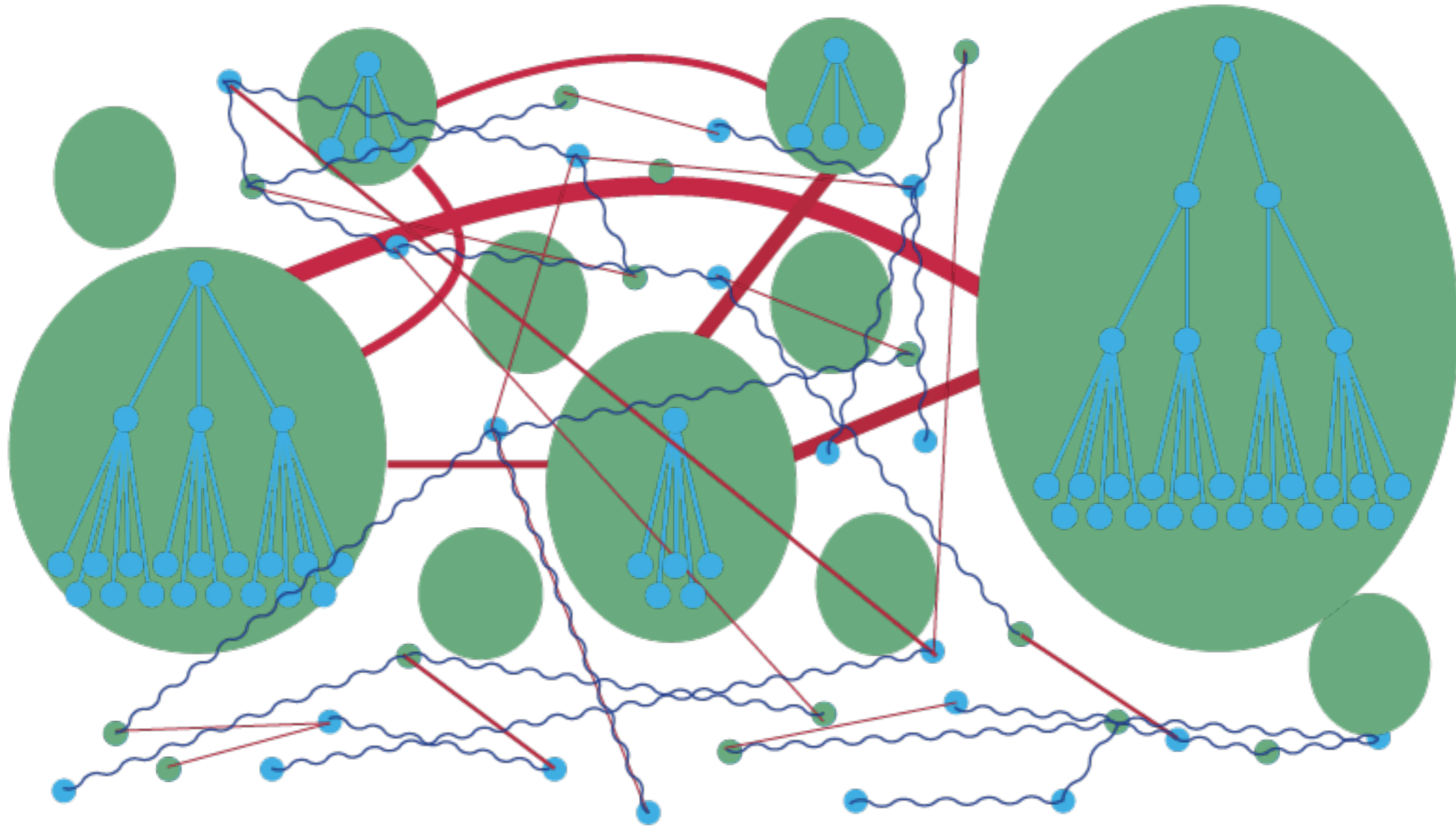
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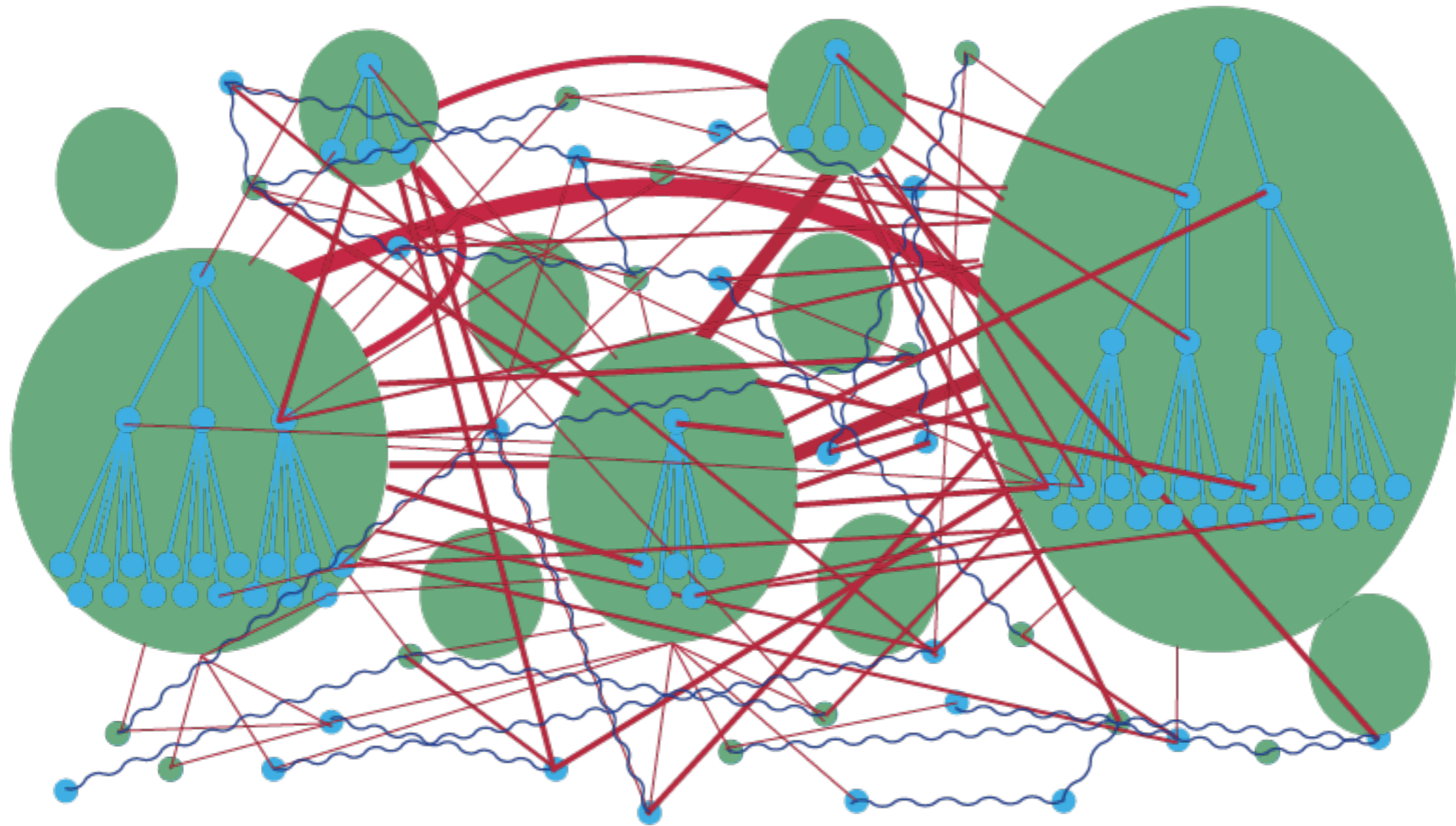
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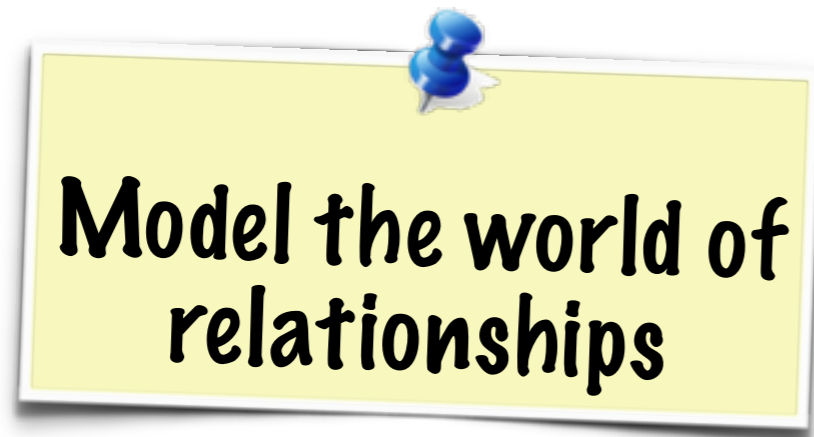
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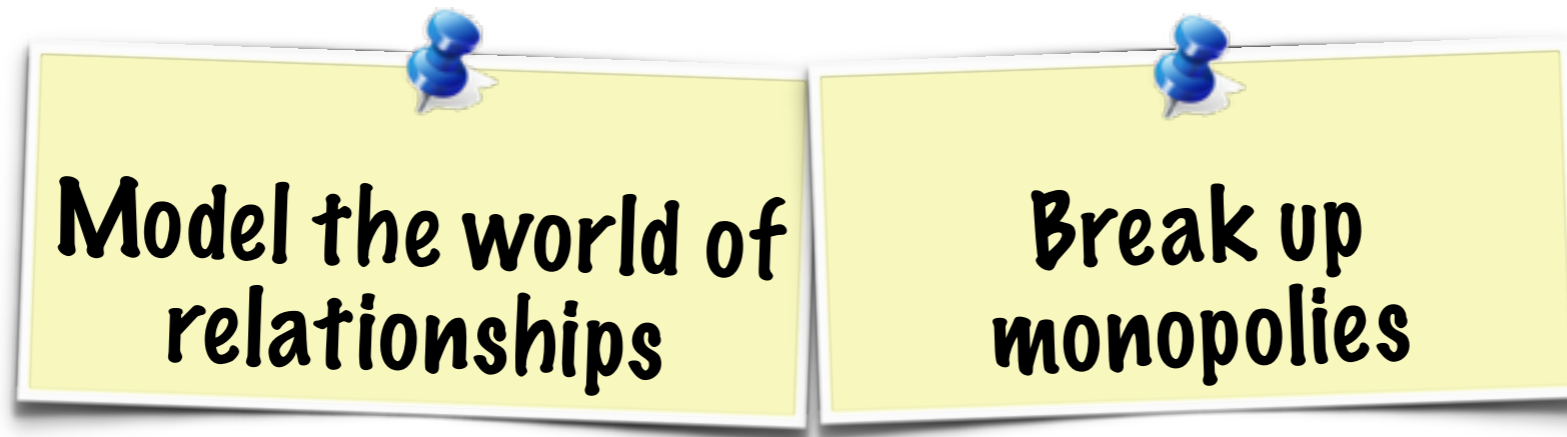


Notes Towards a Transition

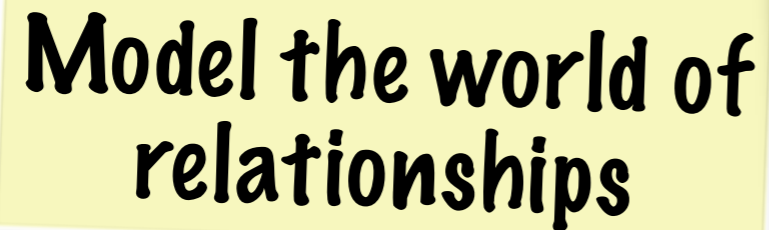
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**Model the world of
relationships**

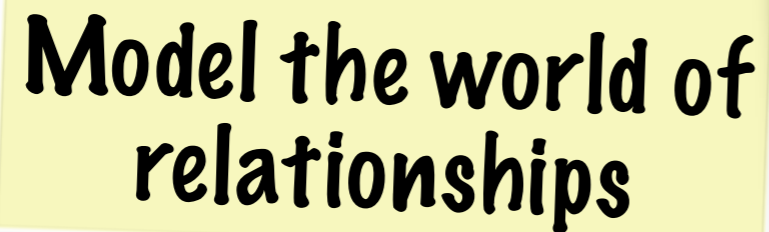


**Break up
monopolies**



**Socialize the finance
system**

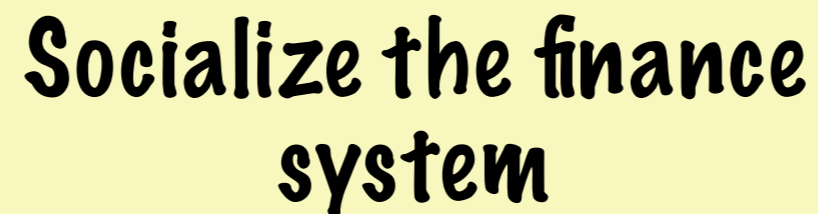
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**Introduce a
Universal
Basic Income**

Liberating the 1%

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“They may not welcome it, but they’ll be happier in a better world”

Liberating the 1%

“They may not welcome it, but they’ll be happier in a better world”

There is good news.
The 99% are coming to your rescue.
Postcapitalism will set you free.