Momentum-Driven Organising

Presentation at By 2020 We Rise Up European meeting, 4-8 March 2020

TWO DOMINAT TRADITIONS

Structure Based Organising

&

Mass Protest

Saul Alinsky

Structure Based Organising

Ella Baker

Key Features of Structure Tradition

- Deep Leadership Development and 1on1s
- Concrete, winnable demands targeted at decision makers
- Strong organisations → organised people and organised money

Frances Fox Piven

Mass Protest

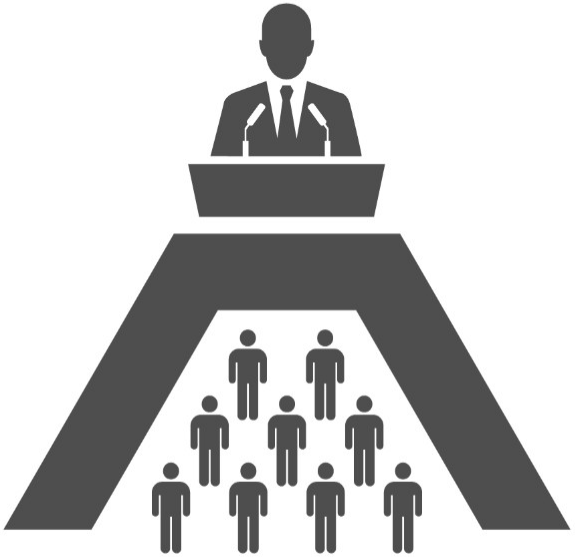
Martin Luther King Jr

Key Features of Mass Protest

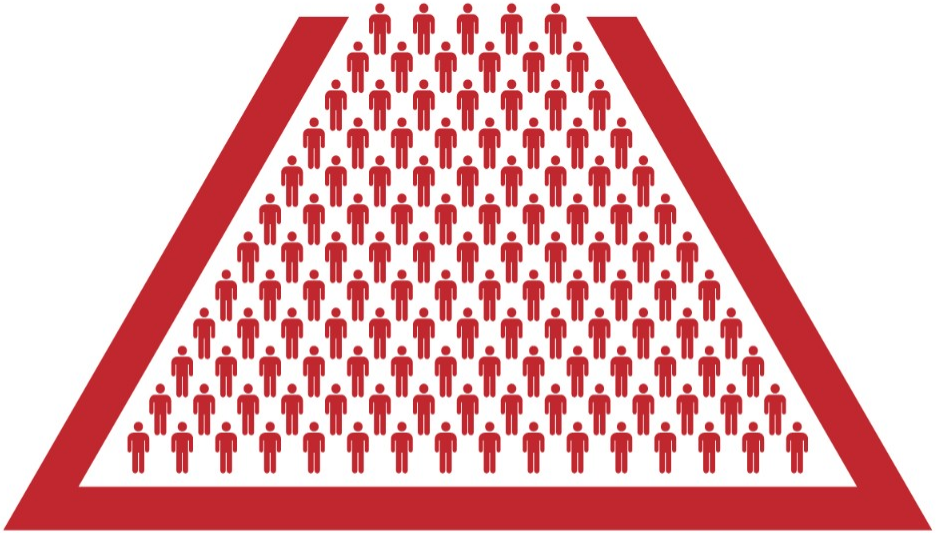
- Grows through moments of the whirlwind, and sometimes also fizzles quickly
- Broad demands that speak to high ideals that are not necessarily “winnable”
- Mass escalating, nonviolent direct action

Two Views of Power

Monolithic Power



Social Power



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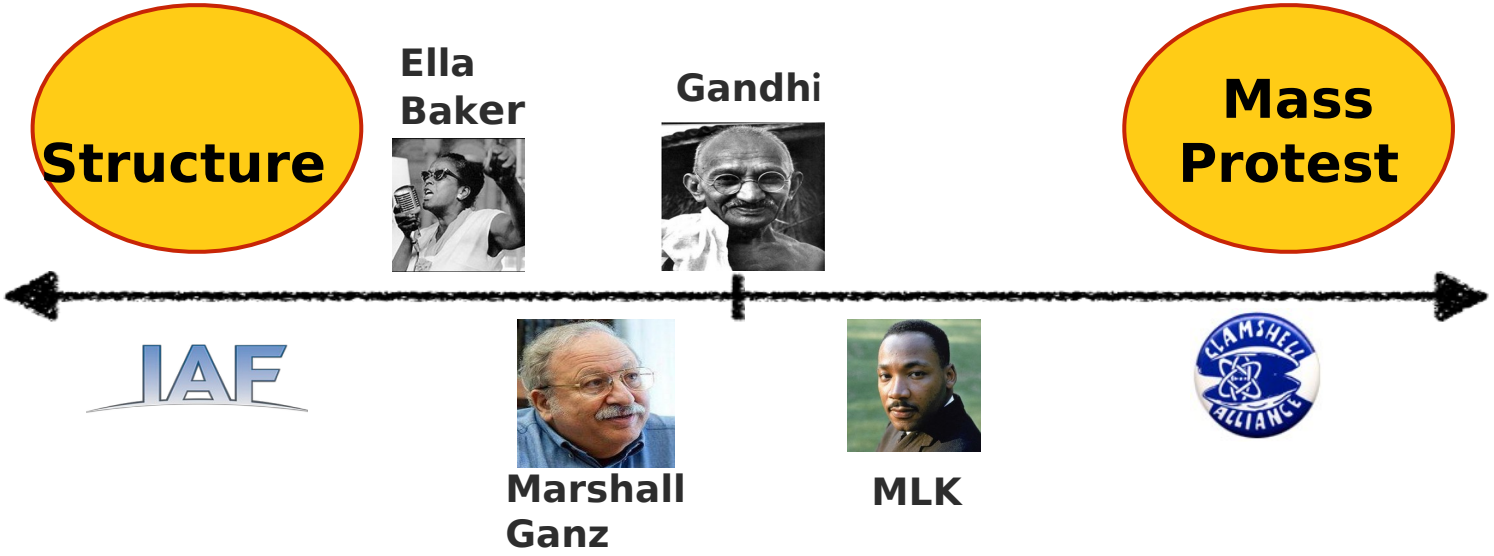
STRUCTURE	MASS PROTEST
Theory of Change	
We leverage the power of a base over decision-makers to win concrete reforms & quality of life over the long term.	By engaging in mass disruption to the status quo, we create a crisis and change the political weather.
Tactics + **Demands**	
Lower risk, gradual escalation (if any); focused on building leadership and capacity; **Demands:** Specific & actionable	Mass civil disobedience & escalated action **Demands;** Popular demands that appeal to a broad public & change what is winnable.
Organization	
1-on-1 relationships; leadership comes from within the community	Mass trainings & anyone who is compelled can join -- as many people as possible should take action!
Measuring Success	
Incremental reforms that bring concrete improvement in people's lives.	Large shifts in public opinion.

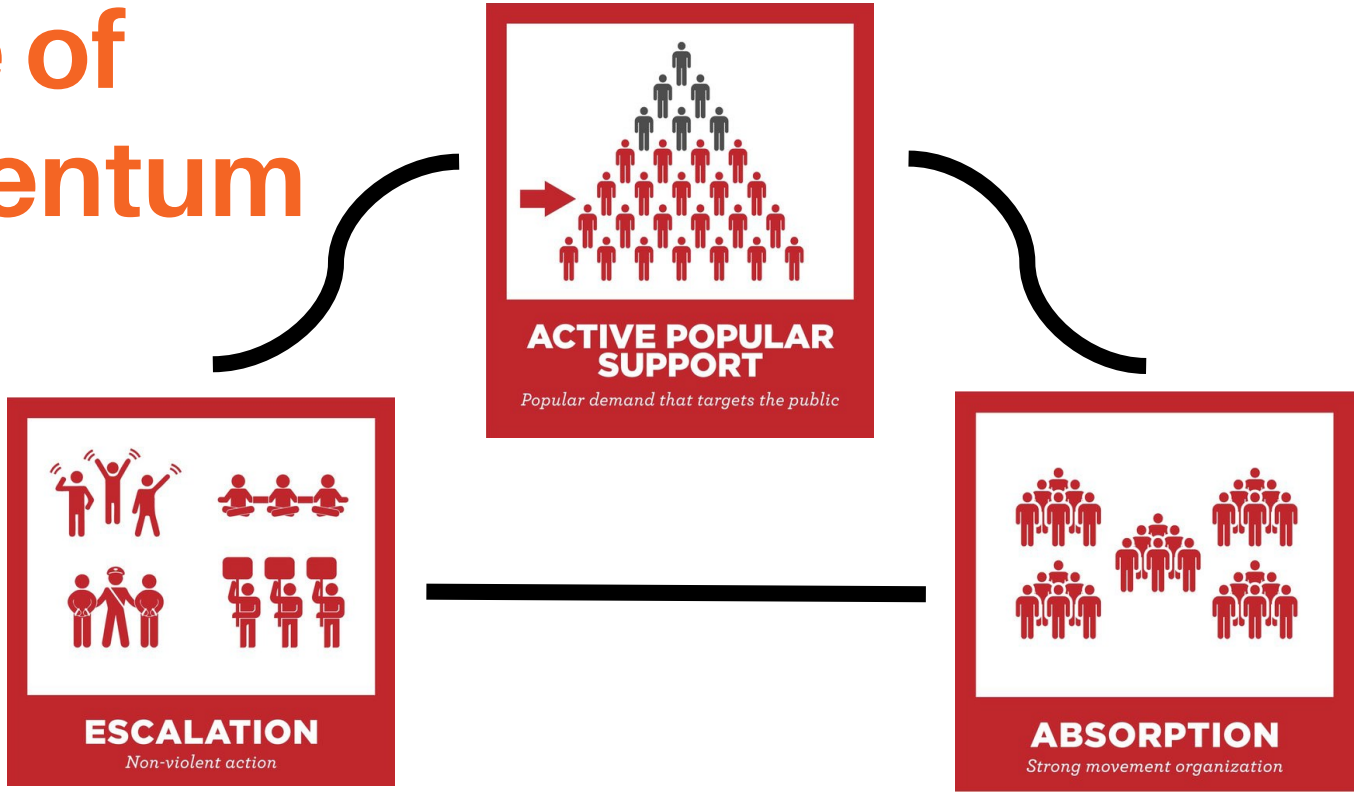

Structure
Ella Baker
Gandhi
Mass Protest
IAF
Marshall Ganz
MLK
CLAMSHELL ALLIANCE

MOMENTUM

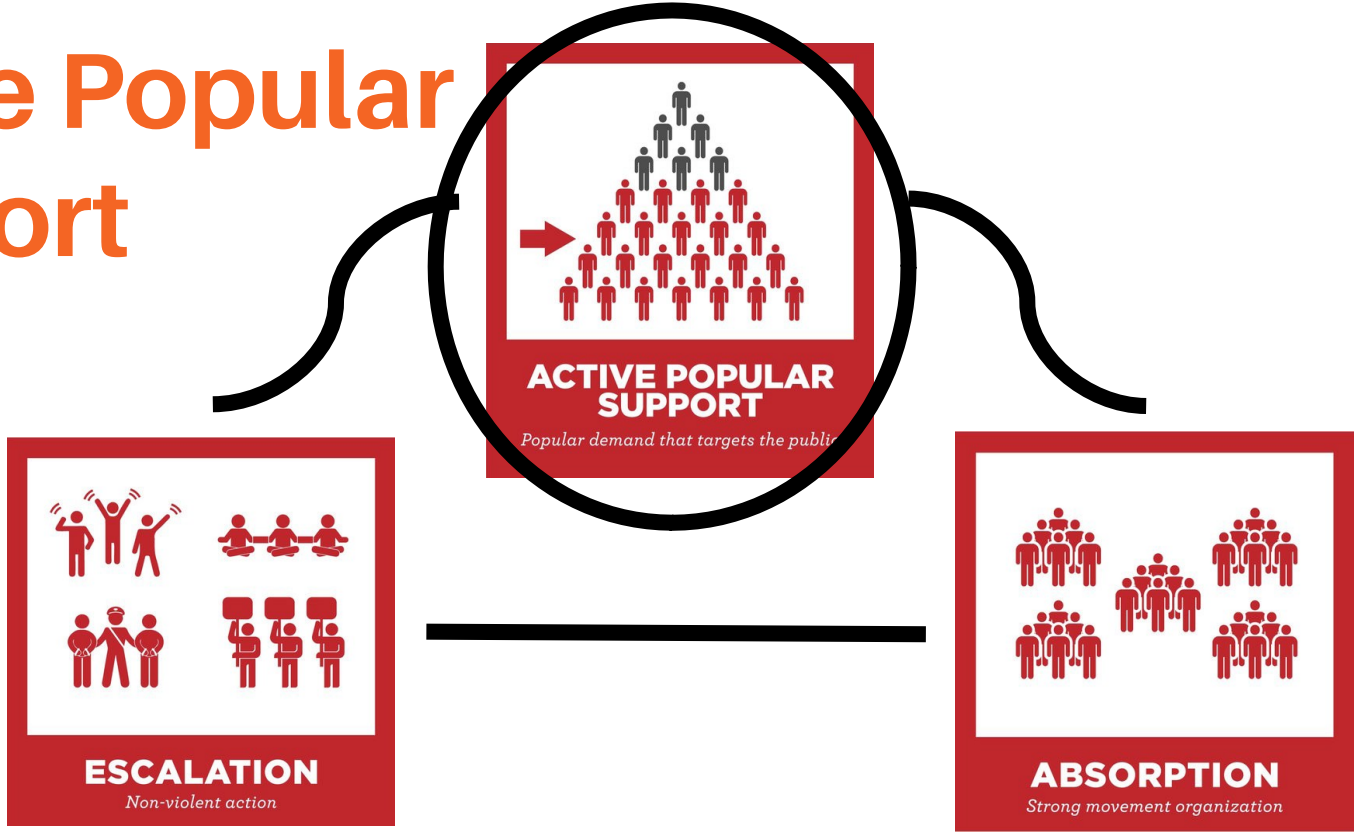
Momentum Driven Organising

By integrating the best of structure-based organising and mass protest we can build movements that can scale up and win big!

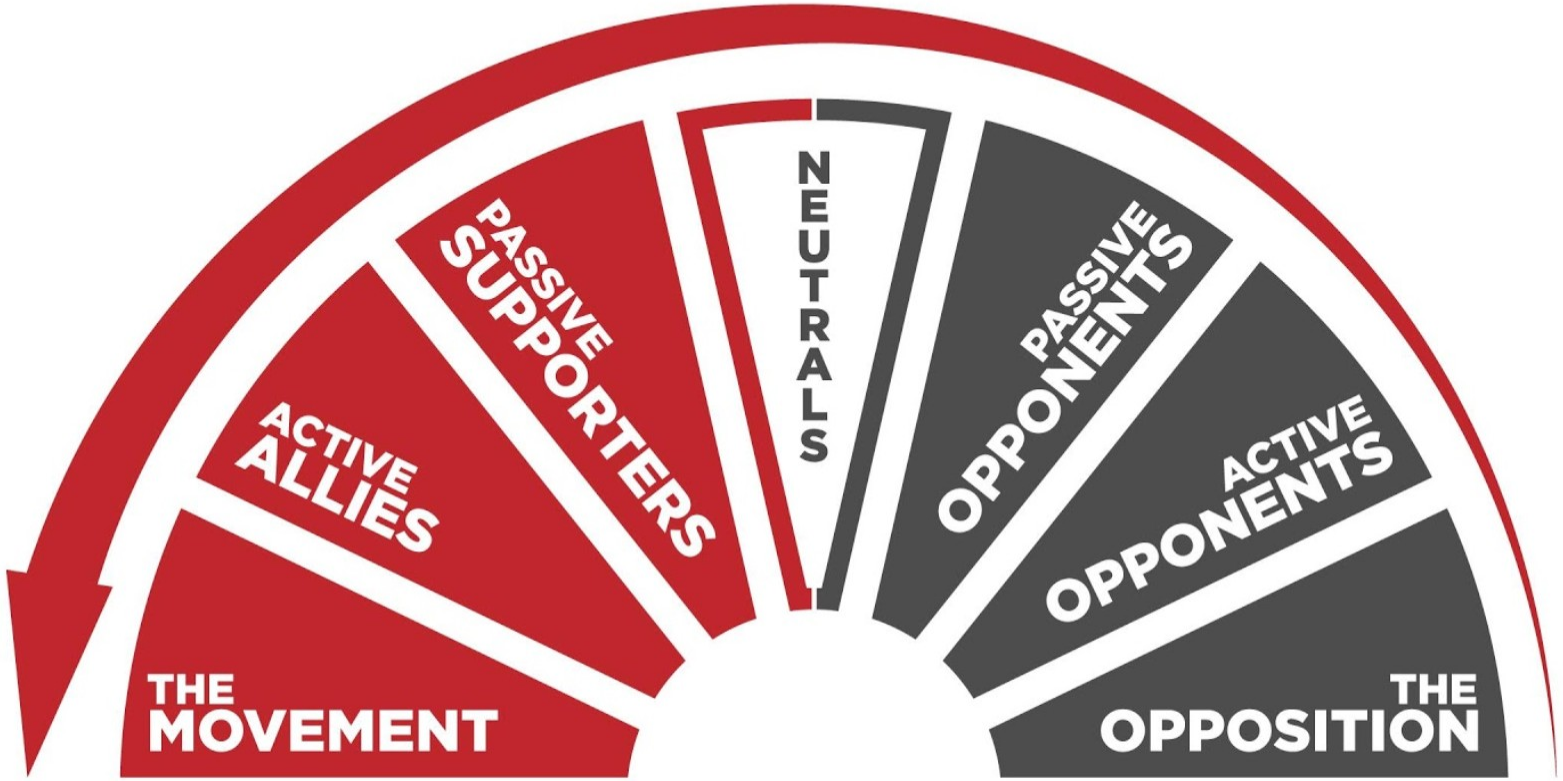
Cycle of Momentum



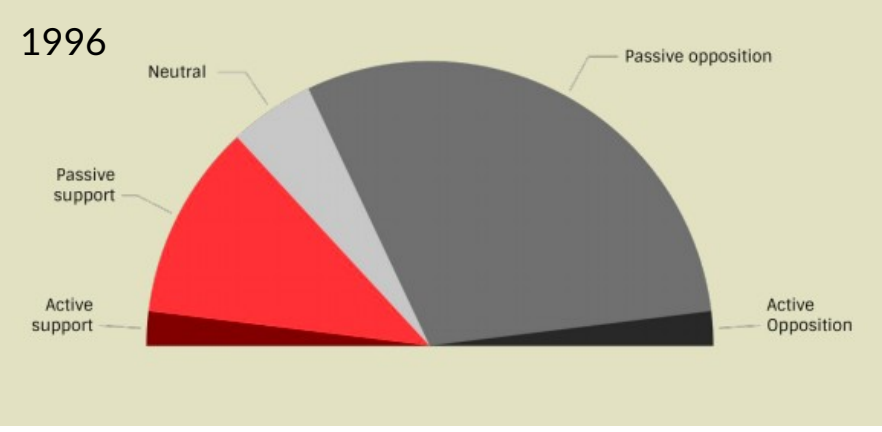
Active Popular Support

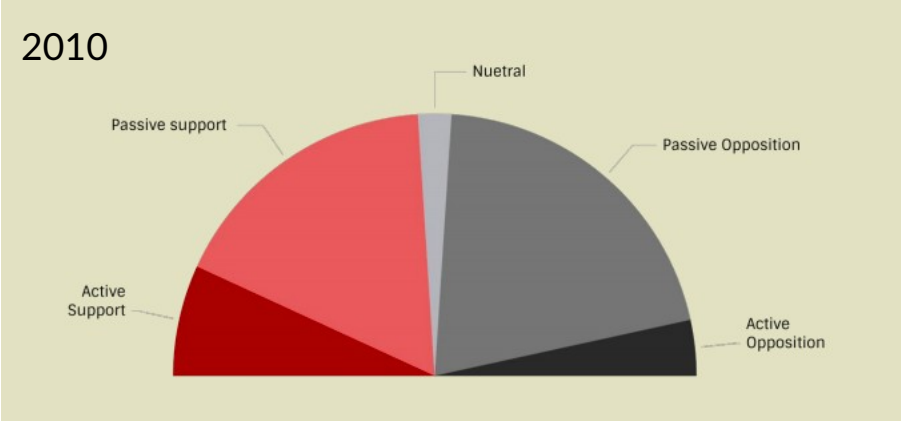


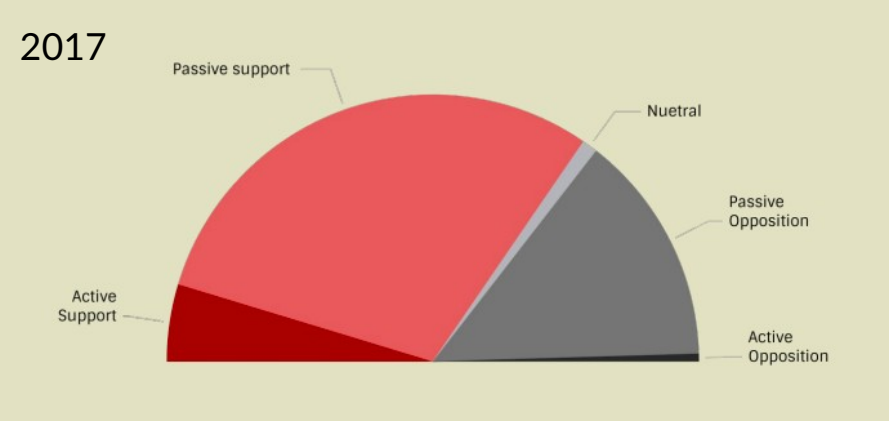
The **SPECTRUM** *of* **SUPPORT**

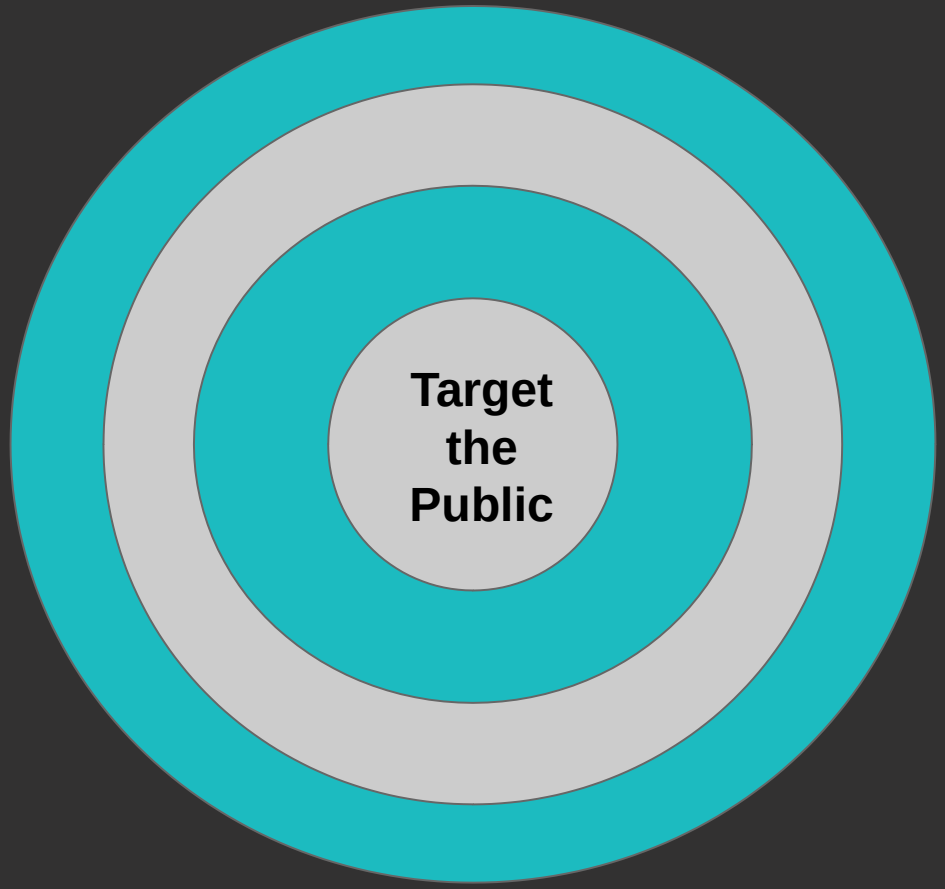


Case Study: Same Sex Marriage (US)








Target
the
Public

Which side are you on?
Nashville, 1960

3.5%

“Outcomes of over 300 nonviolent and violent campaigns worldwide from 1900-2006, none of the cases failed after achieving the **active and sustained participation** of just 3.5 percent of the population -- and some of them succeeded with far less than that.” - Erica Chenoweth

Based on movements against dictatorships, for secession or against occupation

=> Few from “democratic” regimes more capable of coopting opposition

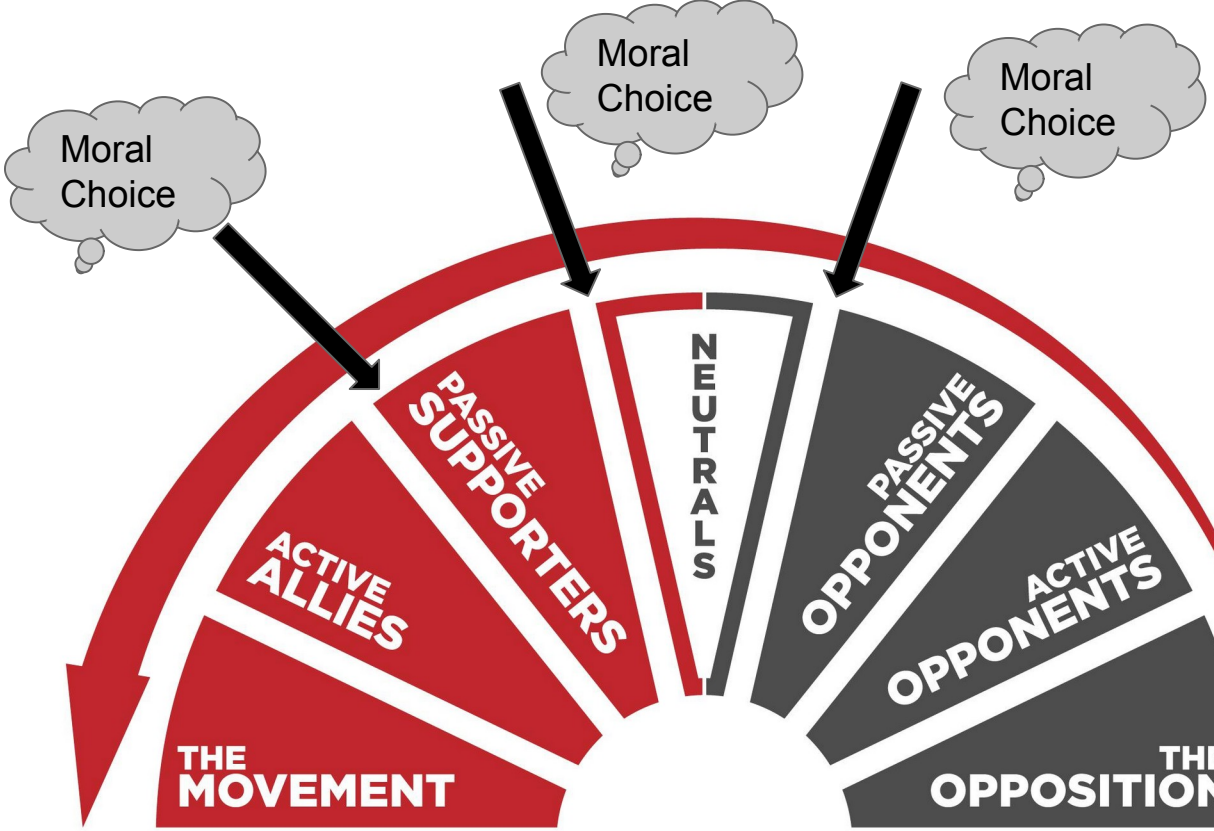
Two Essential Elements of Popular Support

Win the **support & sympathy of the majority of the public.**

Passive

Sustained participation in the movement.

Active



Polarisation

Movement across this spectrum isn't always the result of conscious decision making.

Often, people shift because an effective action reframes the basic moral questions behind an issue that is otherwise seen as too abstract or complex. It makes people emotionally connect to the issue and choose sides.

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Polarisation is how you target the public

Keys to polarisation:

1. Make it simple
2. Make it matter

“Activists assume that because something is true, it will be meaningful to the people we’re trying to reach. But in fact, the opposite is often the case: *if something is meaningful, people believe it to be true*”

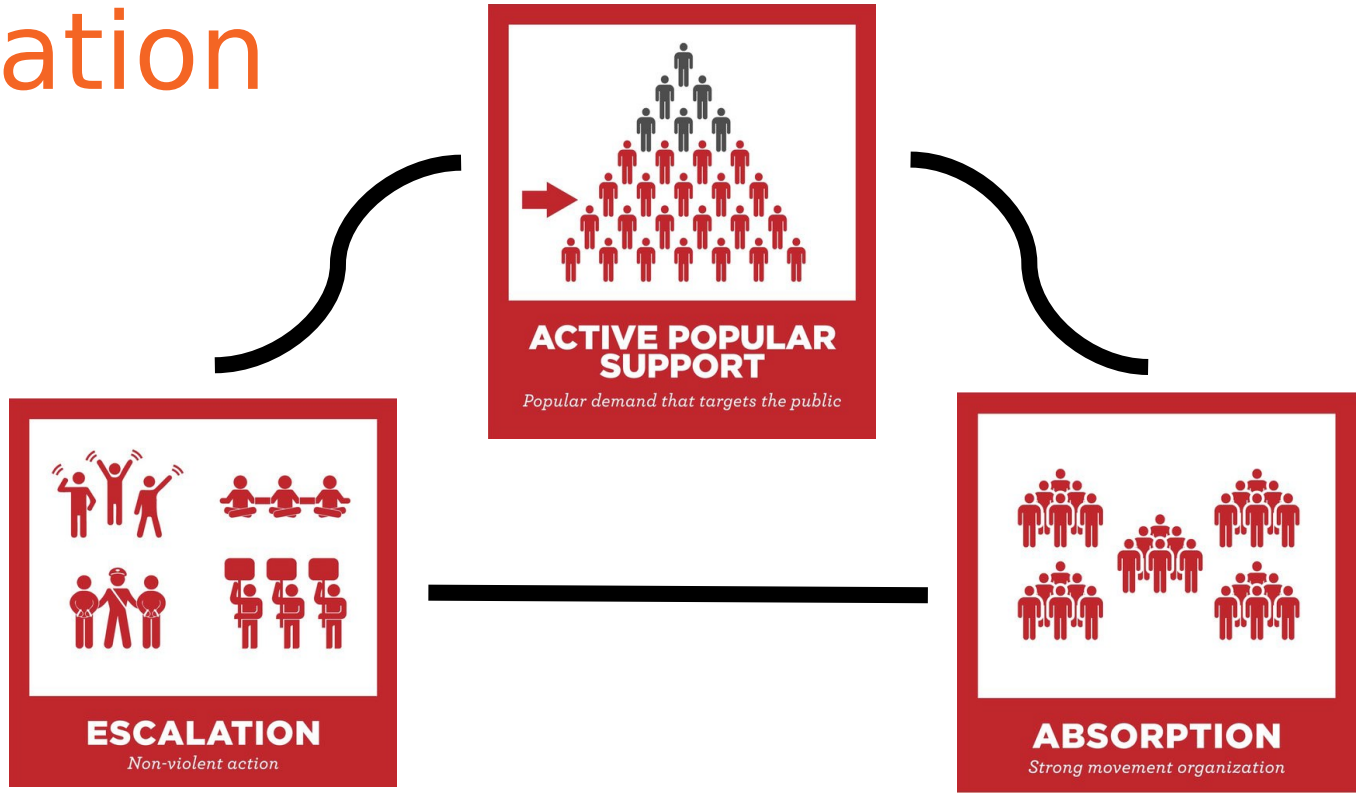
Instrumental demands: What is **winnable** with the leverage we have? Can we force a concession? What is deeply felt only by our members? Is there a clear solution?

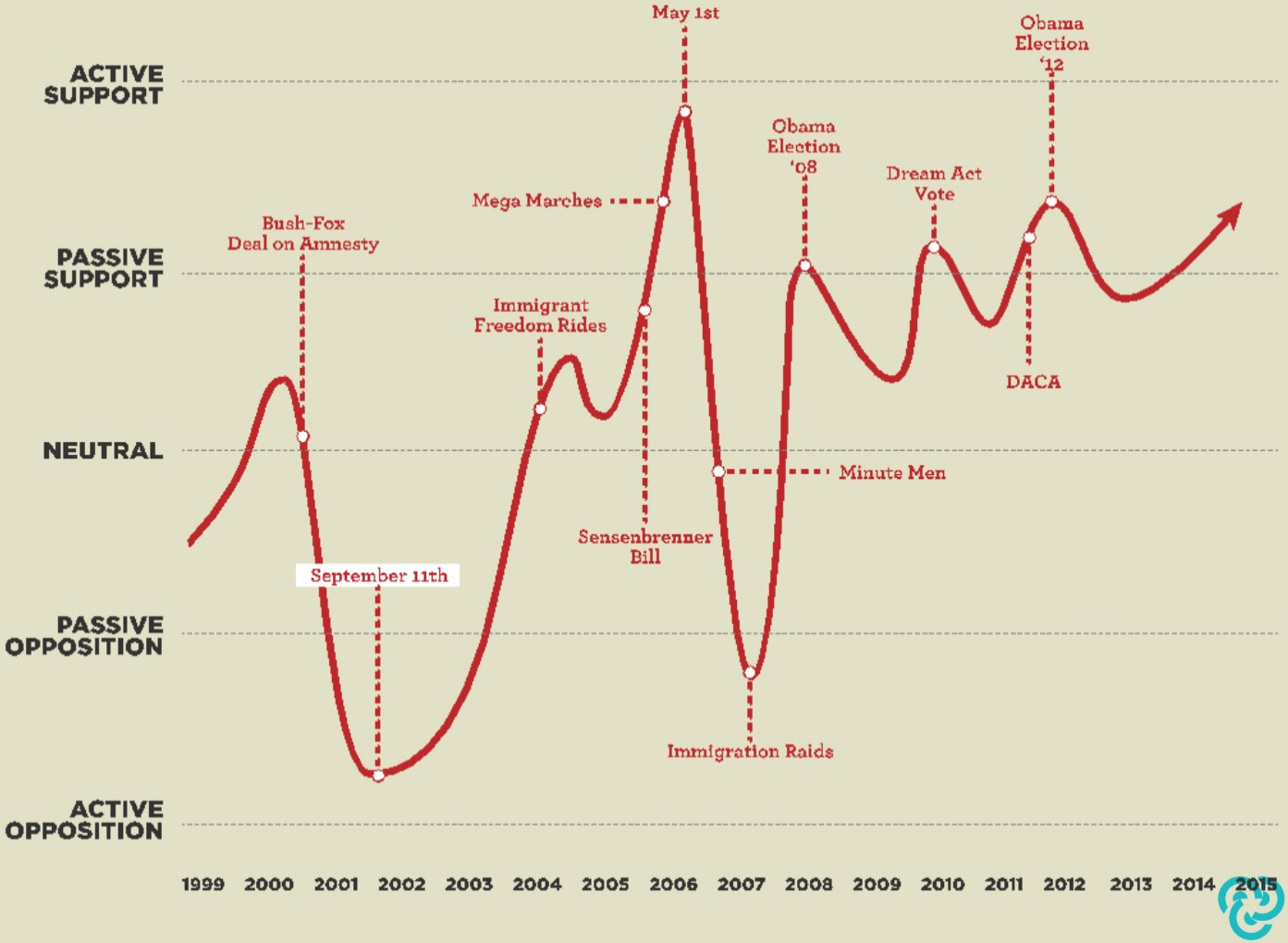
Symbolic demands: What are the most **popular** issues around our movement? What is deeply felt by our active+passive supporters? What will **polarise** the public and **dramatise a social problem**?

Why symbolic demands?

- Open up room for instrumental wins
- Create wiggle room for experimenting with different solutions
- Give people a standard they can measure proposals against
- Reach more people

Escalation


ACTIVE POPULAR SUPPORT
Popular demand that targets the public
ESCALATION
Non-violent action
ABSORPTION
Strong movement organization


ACTIVE SUPPORT
PASSIVE SUPPORT
NEUTRAL
PASSIVE OPPOSITION
ACTIVE OPPOSITION
May 1st
Obama Election '12
Obama Election '08
Dream Act Vote
Mega Marches
Bush-Fox Deal on Amnesty
Immigrant Freedom Rides
Sensenbrenner Bill
Minute Men
September 11th
DACA
Immigration Raids
1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015

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DIFFERENT SCALES OF ESCALATION:

1. Small actions
    a. Dilemma & symbolic actions
    b. Replicable distributed actions
2. Trigger events
3. Moments of the whirlwind

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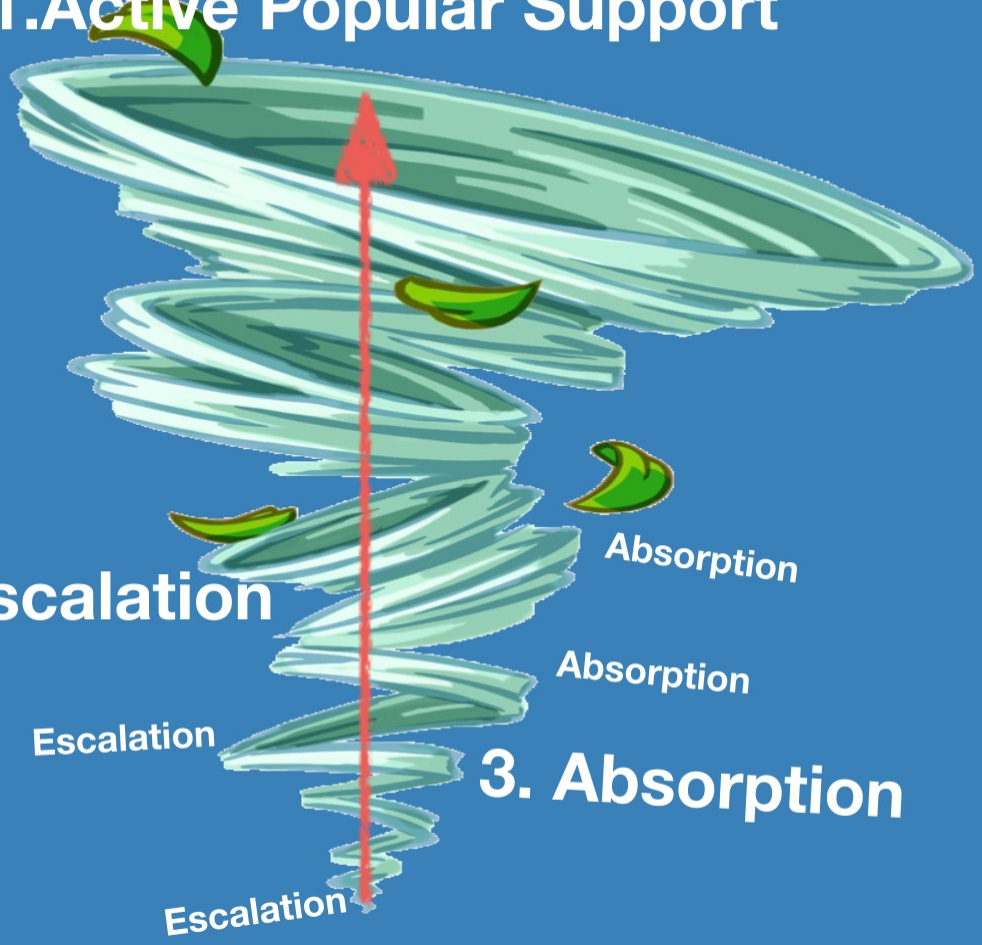
Trigger event: a highly publicised incident that dramatically reveals a critical social problem to the public in a vivid way.

It focuses the public's attention on the issue in a way that enables polarisation.

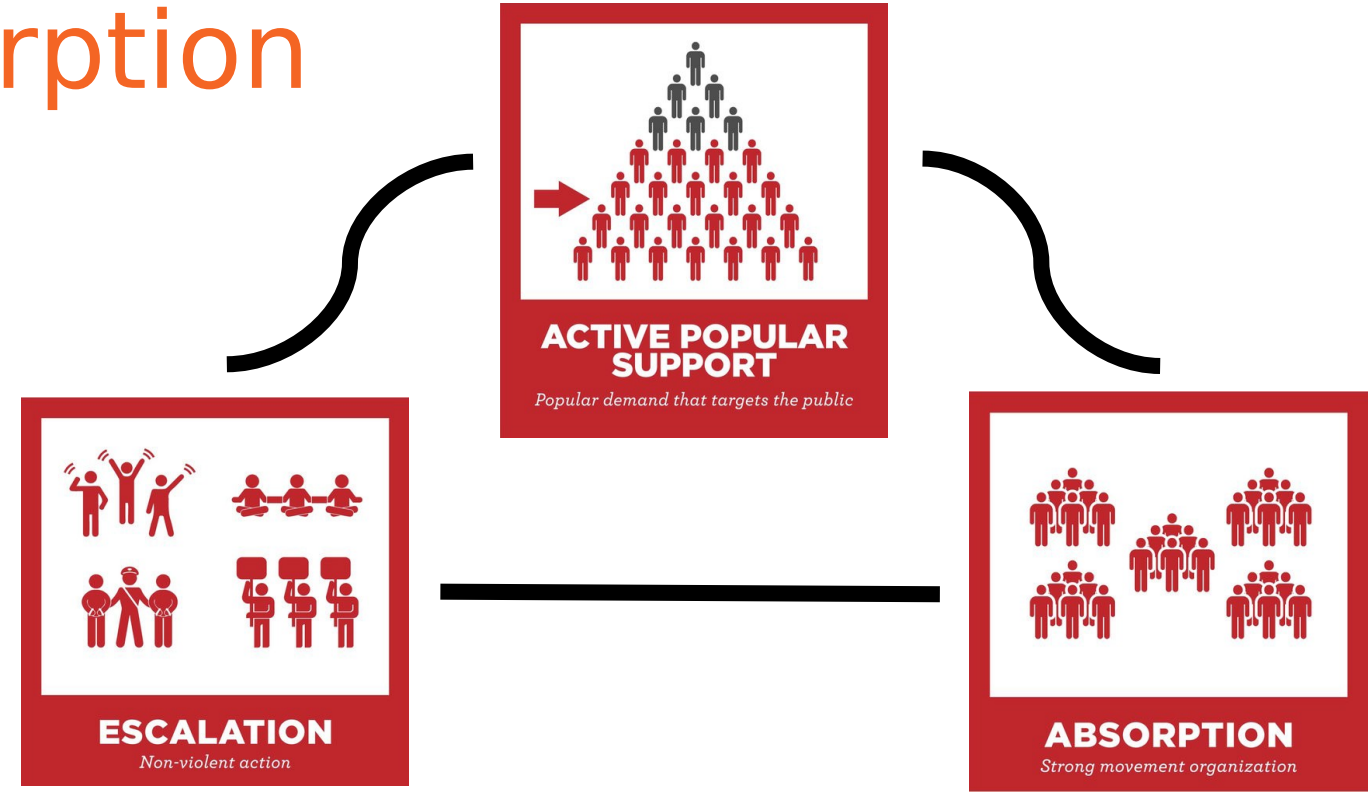
Can be external to the movement or created by the movement.

Ferguson, BLM

1.Active Popular Support



Absorption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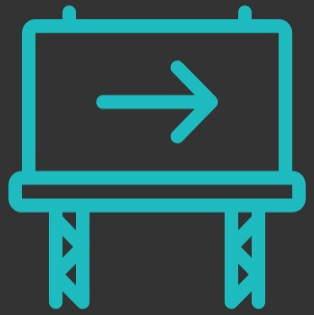

Giving people a next thing to do.

Mass
Training
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BRINGING PEOPLE IN AT SCALE

- Mass Training
- SWARM → Role allocation
- Email lists/social media/Messaging apps
- And others...

MAJOR KEYS FOR ABSORPTION

- Have as few layers to your structure as possible
- Enable people to take action as quickly as possible
- Have DNA- principles

Note on Structure

Roles Principles

1. Everybody has a role and you need to hold your role
2. Your role is flexible
3. All roles are about support

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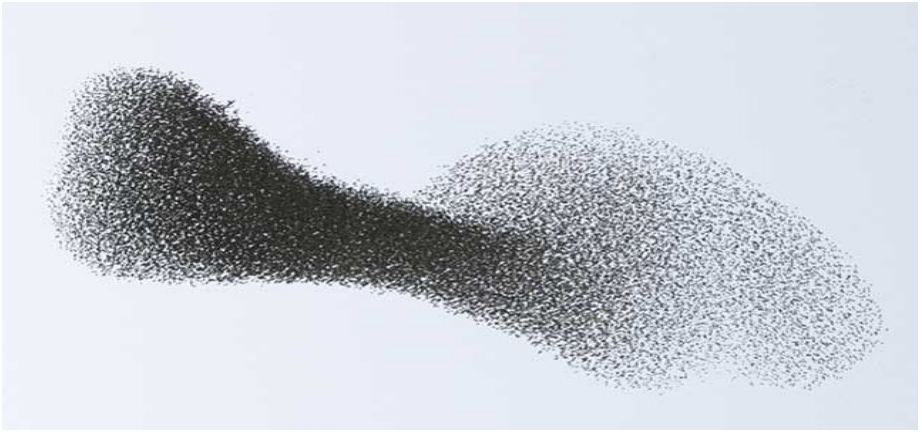
Centralised vs. Decentralised

Structure

Decision-making and communication are top-down

Mass Protest



Coordinated by shared strategy, not top leadership

Spectrum of Decentralization

Occupy General Assemblies

Otpor,
Extinction Rebellion

Obama Campaign Teams

Union Worker Committee

Military

Decentralized — **Centralized**

Decentralized Organization with Weak Principles

Decentralized Organization with Strong Principles

Centralized Command with Decentralized Components

Centralized Command with Centralized Components

Centralized, Ultra Rigid

ayni

Relational Culture

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast”

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Culture: Principles

OUR PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

All are welcome who want to adhere to our principles and values

1. **WE HAVE A SHARED VISION OF CHANGE**
   Creating a world that is fit for generations to come.
2. **WE SET OUR MISSION ON WHAT IS NECESSARY**
   Mobilising 3.5% of the population to achieve system change - using ideas such as "Momentum-driven organising" to achieve this.
3. **WE NEED A REGENERATIVE CULTURE**
   Creating a culture which is healthy, resilient and adaptable.
4. **WE OPENLY CHALLENGE OURSELVES AND OUR TOXIC SYSTEM**
   Leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.
5. **WE VALUE REFLECTING AND LEARNING**
   Following a cycle of action, reflection, learning, and planning for more action. Learning from other movements and contexts as well as our own experiences.
6. **WE WELCOME EVERYONE AND EVERY PART OF EVERYONE**
   Working actively to create safer and more accessible spaces.
7. **WE ACTIVELY MITIGATE FOR POWER**
   Breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation.
8. **WE AVOID BLAMING AND SHAMING**
   We live in a toxic system, but no one individual is to blame.
9. **WE ARE A NON-VIOLENT NETWORK**
   Using non-violent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change.
10. **WE ARE BASED ON AUTONOMY AND DECENTRALISATION**
    We collectively create the structures we need to challenge power. Anyone who follows these core principles and values can take action in the name of Extinction Rebellion.

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Cosecha: Principles

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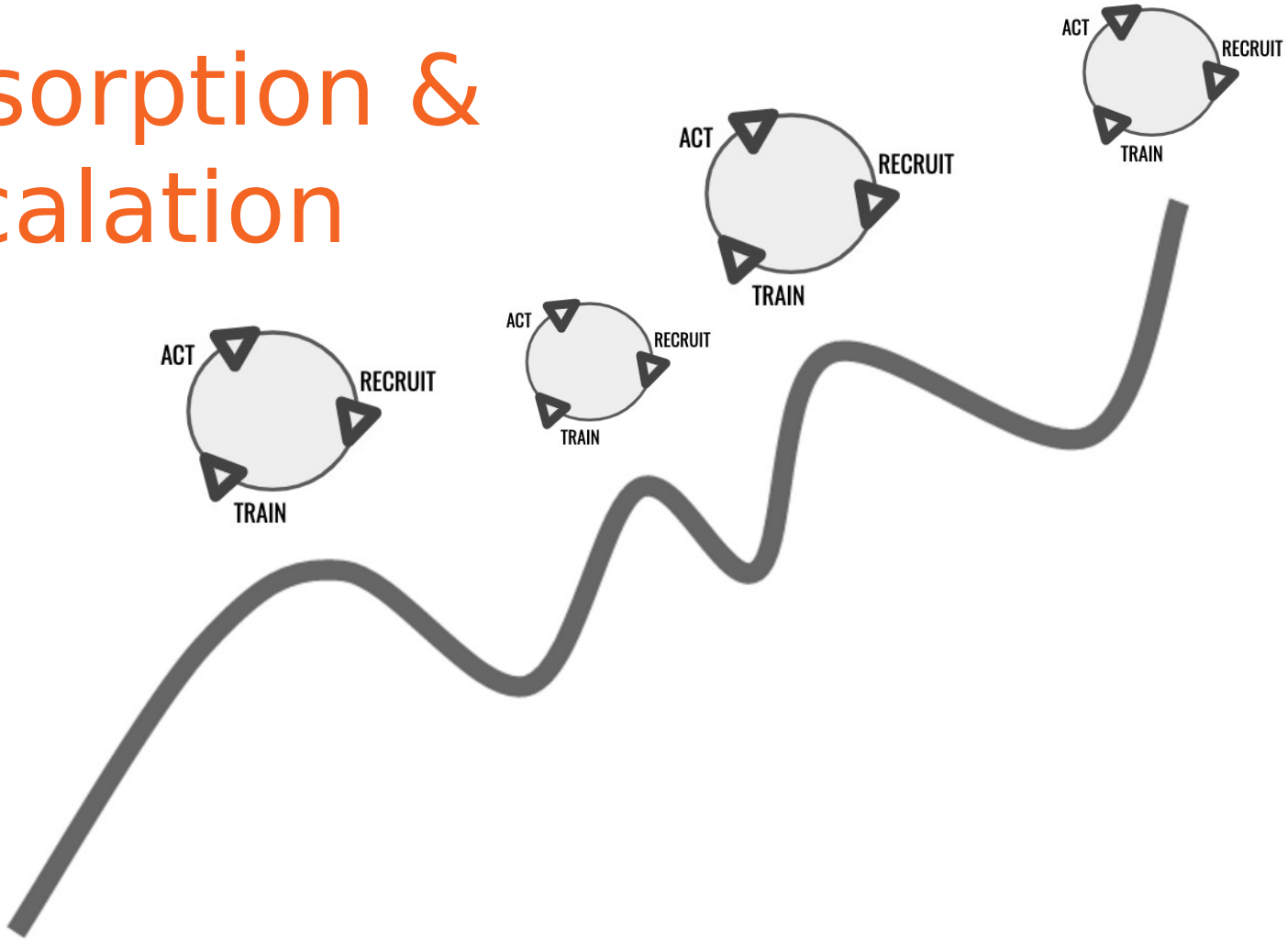
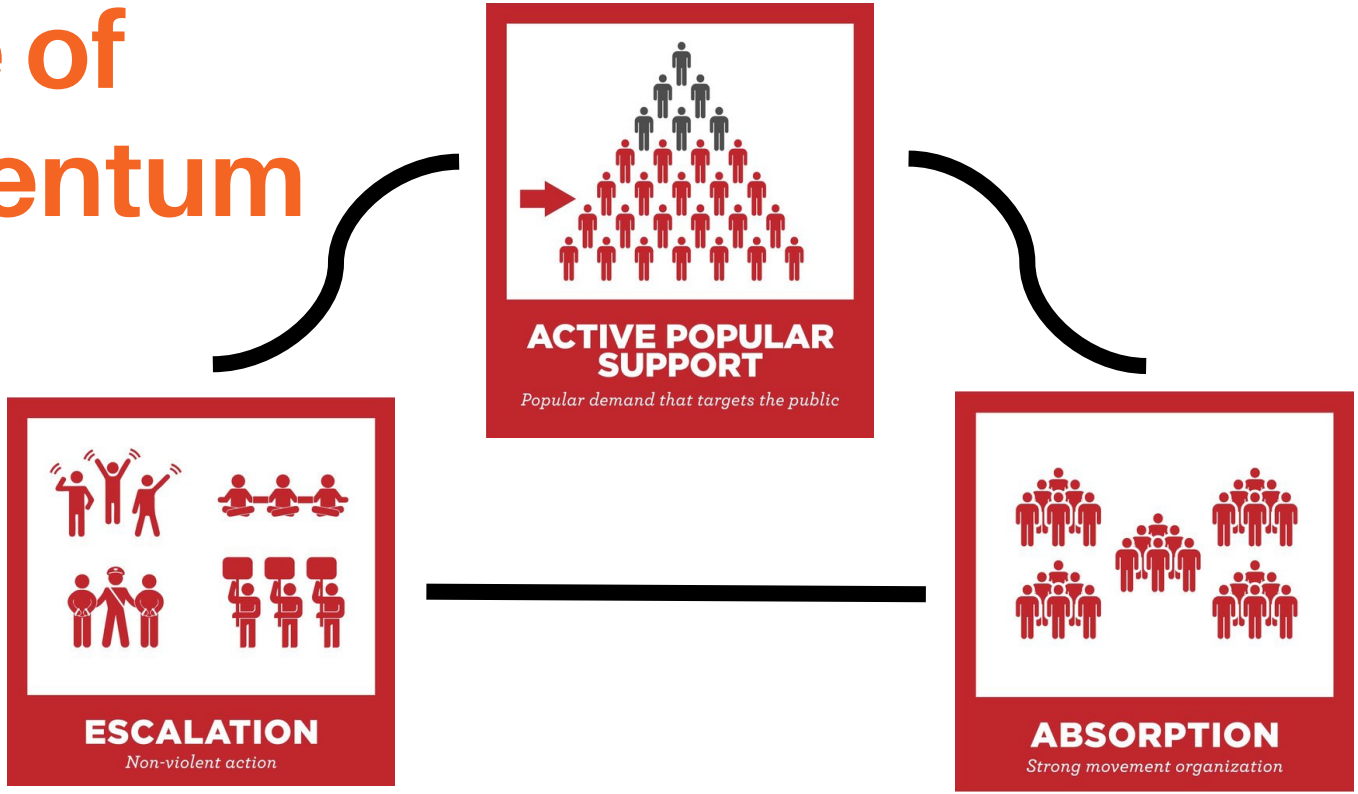
Absorption & Escalation



Cycle of Momentum