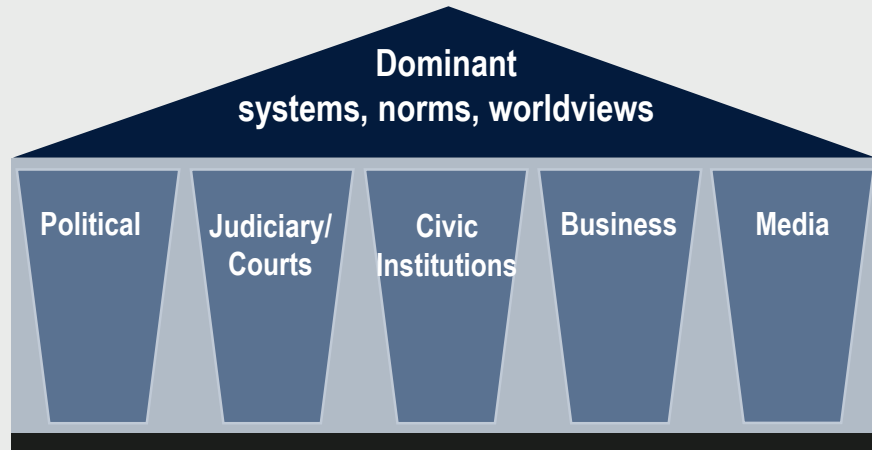# Social Movement Theory of Change

**Movement Vision**

Toppling, transforming, and/or absorbing the **institutional, cultural, and social pillars** that prop up the status quo.
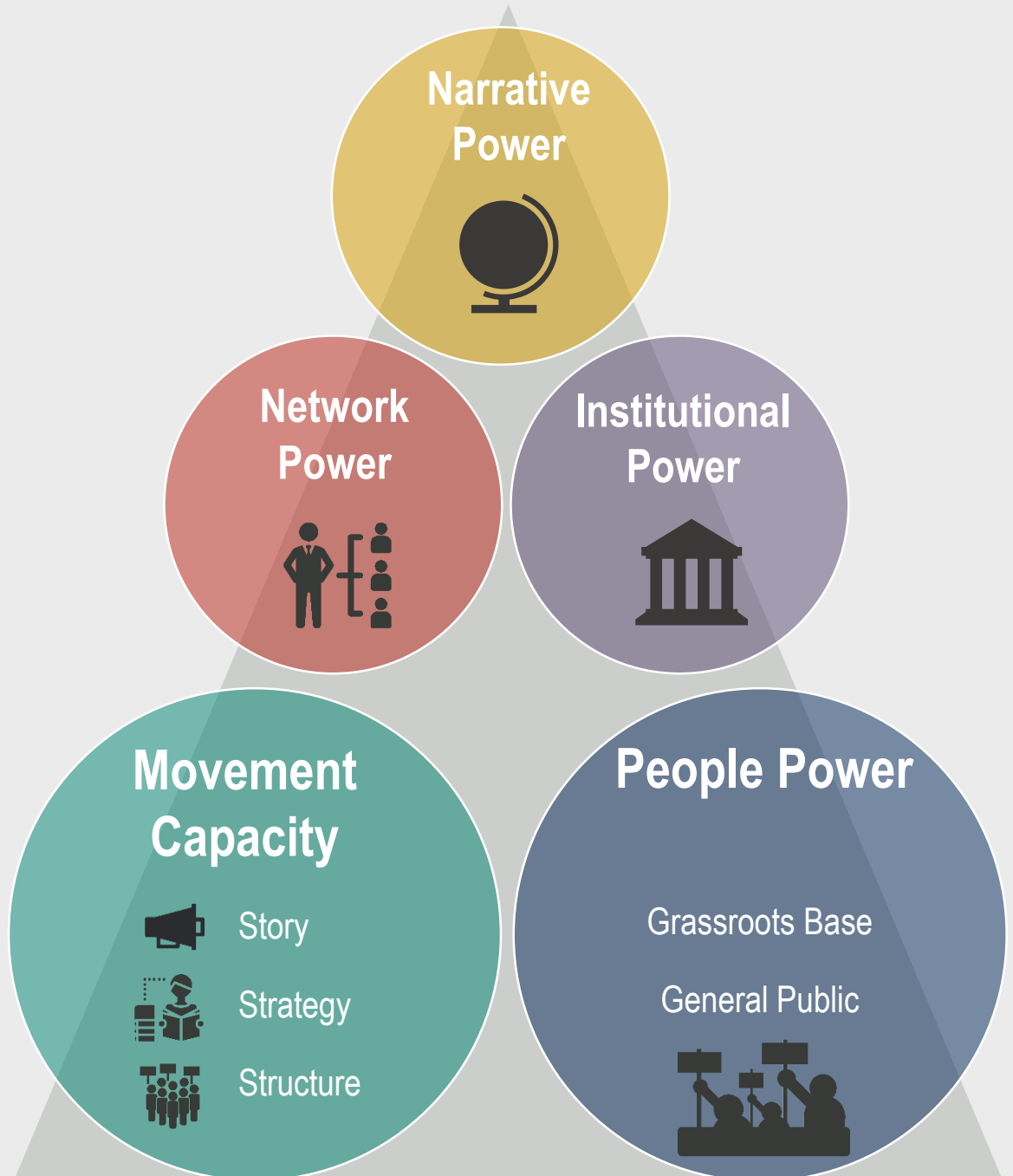
**Movement Impact**

Putting **Movement Power Base** into action.

**Movement Power Base**

Building a **foundation of power** for social movements.

Dominant systems, norms, worldviews

Political

Judiciary/ Courts

Civic Institutions

Business

Media

Narrative Power

Network Power

Institutional Power

Movement Capacity

Story

Strategy

Structure

People Power

Grassroots Base

General Public

## The Evaluation Challenge

Too often the success of social change initiatives is defined by the achievement of visible, concrete reforms or policies. However, **social movements may spend years building power and capacity before achieving any concrete reforms or policies.**

Existing resources provide evaluation guidance for assessing the health and capacity of movements. This framework provides a complementary resource to help funders, movement builders, and evaluators **understand and assess whether movements are making progress and building power to achieve transformational change.** This framework is not static and will look different for different movements.

## Narrative Power
*Power to transform and hold public narratives and ideologies and limit the influence of opposing narratives.*

- **Visibility:** Movement issues are increasingly visible in the media, popular culture, and among the public.
- **Alignment**: Increasing narrative alignment in the media and popular culture.
- **Adoption**: Movement narrative becomes the dominant public narrative.

## Network Power
*Power with a network of organizational allies that work toward a shared vision and goal.*

- **Connectivity**: Organizations are connected to and communicating with one another.
- **Alignment**: Organizations are aligned around movement goals and vision.

## Institutional Power
*Power to influence the who, how, and what of visible decision-making.*

- **Awareness**: Decisionmakers are aware of movement issues, goals, and actors.
- **Influence:** Decisionmakers are supportive of and responsive to the movement.
- **Reciprocity**: Decisionmakers are proactive champions of the movement issues and goals.

## Movement Capacity

- **Story:** Creation of narrative and vision. Development of narrative infrastructure with multiple pathways for narrative dissemination.
- **Strategy:** Organizing. Mass protest. Direction action/civil disobedience. Advocacy.
- **Structure:** Grassroots base. Leadership pipeline. Networks and alliances.

## People Power
*Power to build, mobilize, and sustain a grassroots base and large-scale public support.*

- **Active Grassroots Base**: Grassroots base is engaging in and leading the movement.
- **Action Public Support**: General public takes action in support of the movement cause.
- **Passive Public Support**: General public is supportive of the movement cause but not taking action.

## About the Social Movement Learning Project

Social Movement Learning Project (SMLP) is a field-building research and evaluation project by Innovation Network. SMLP seeks to **improve philanthropic support of social movements** by creating practical evaluation tools and guidance to help funders better understand and support movement power, progress, and impact.