

FROM CRITICAL THEORY TO POLITICAL PRACTICE

A companion to Beyond Common Sense - from critical reframing to political practice

YOU ARE ALREADY USING THEORY.

The moment we decide why a political problem exists and what should be done about it, we are making assumptions about how the world works. Critical theory makes those assumptions visible so they can be examined, tested - and changed through practice.

ONE PROBLEM. ONE METHOD.

Follow the reasoning from familiar response to revised practice.

1 THE PROBLEM

Mass demonstrations mobilize millions, yet political power and policy often remain largely unchanged.

2 THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

We need an even larger demonstration.

3 UNCOVER THE HIDDEN THEORY

This assumes that increasing the scale and visibility of public opposition will itself generate enough political pressure to produce change.

4 TEST THE ASSUMPTION

What actually converts millions of participants into sustained political power? What happens to that capacity the day after the demonstration?

5 WHAT IF THE THEORY IS INCOMPLETE?

If participation dissipates because it lacks durable organization, coordination, leverage and mechanisms for continued action, enlarging the next demonstration may reproduce the same limitation at a larger scale.

6 CHANGE THE PRACTICE

Keep demonstrating - but design mobilizations as part of a strategy that builds organization, coordination and continuing democratic capacity.

7 LEARN - REVISE - ACT AGAIN

Treat the result as evidence. What worked? What failed? Which assumptions need to change before the next round of action?

TRY THE METHOD YOURSELF

- **Authoritarianism threatens democracy** -> *Is the answer simply winning the next election?*
- **People aren't responding to our message** -> *Is the answer simply finding a better message?*
- **Democratic organizations share many of the same goals** -> *Why does common purpose so rarely produce coordinated action?*

When familiar strategies repeatedly fail, the practical response is not simply to do them better. It is to reconsider the theory that made them seem practical in the first place.