

Global civil society networks and the SA Aids response

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Background

Central question

- Does vigorous civil society mobilisation contribute to an effective Aids response?

Context

- Aids in South Africa is highly politicised
 - scale of the epidemic
 - poor national response
 - obstructive president and health minister
- Most prominent Aids activist group in the world

Activism

- Relatively small organisation (claim about 10 000 members)
- Notable successes against strong actors and vested interests (state, pharmaceutical companies)
 - PMA (1998-2001)
 - PMTCT
 - National roll-out of ART

Methodological considerations

- Preliminary study
- Problems of case study methodology
- Topic of Aids activism cuts across disciplines, is complex, under-theorised, significant variation

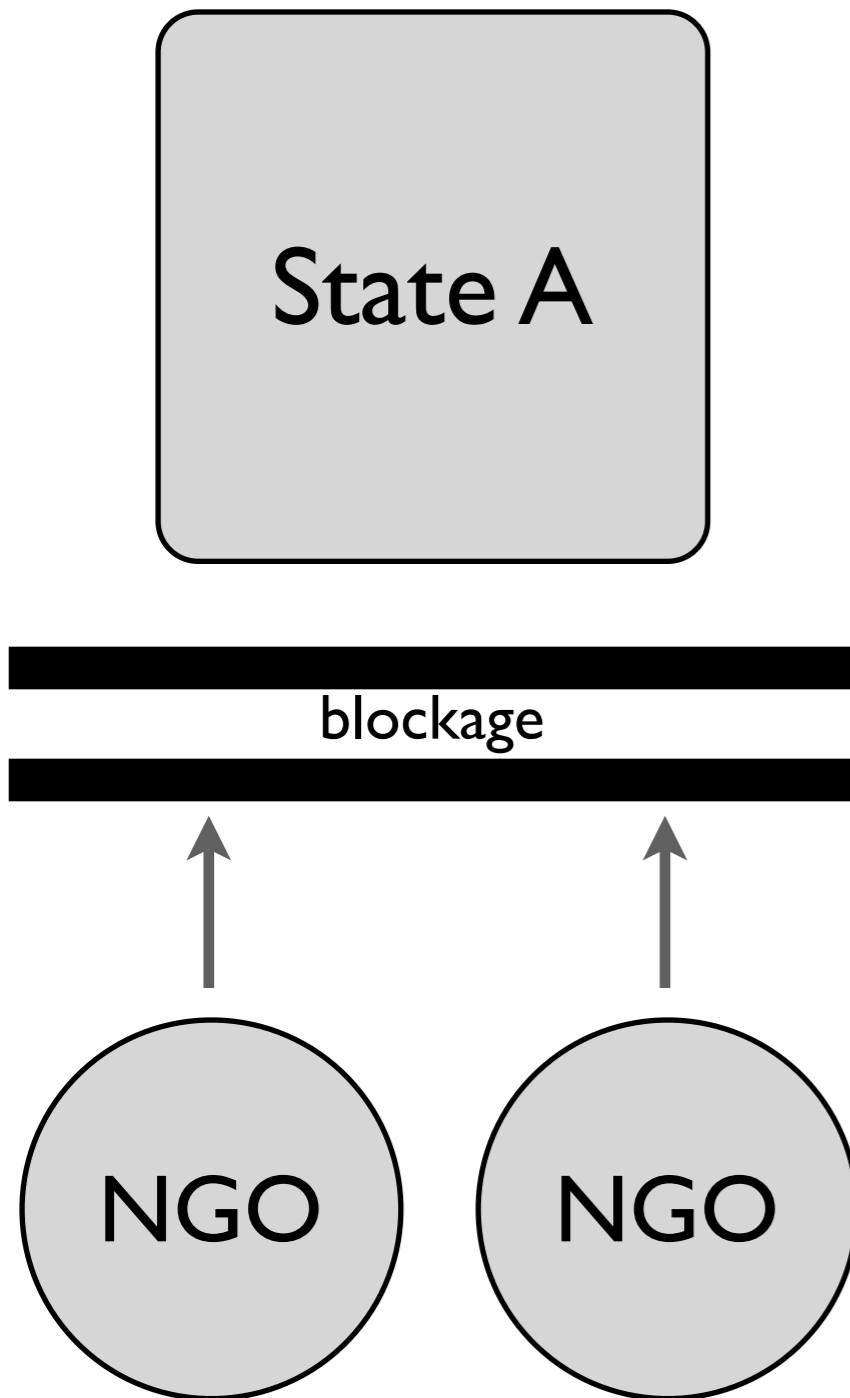
Theoretical considerations

- Sociological models
 - social movement theory (McAdam)
 - new social movements (Touraine)
- Problems:
 - state-centric view
 - does not take moral claims of participants seriously (motivations reduced to 'interests')

Theoretical considerations

- Alternatives
 - theories of civil society
 - network model of political contention
- Transnational social movements
- Transnational advocacy networks (Keck & Sikkink)

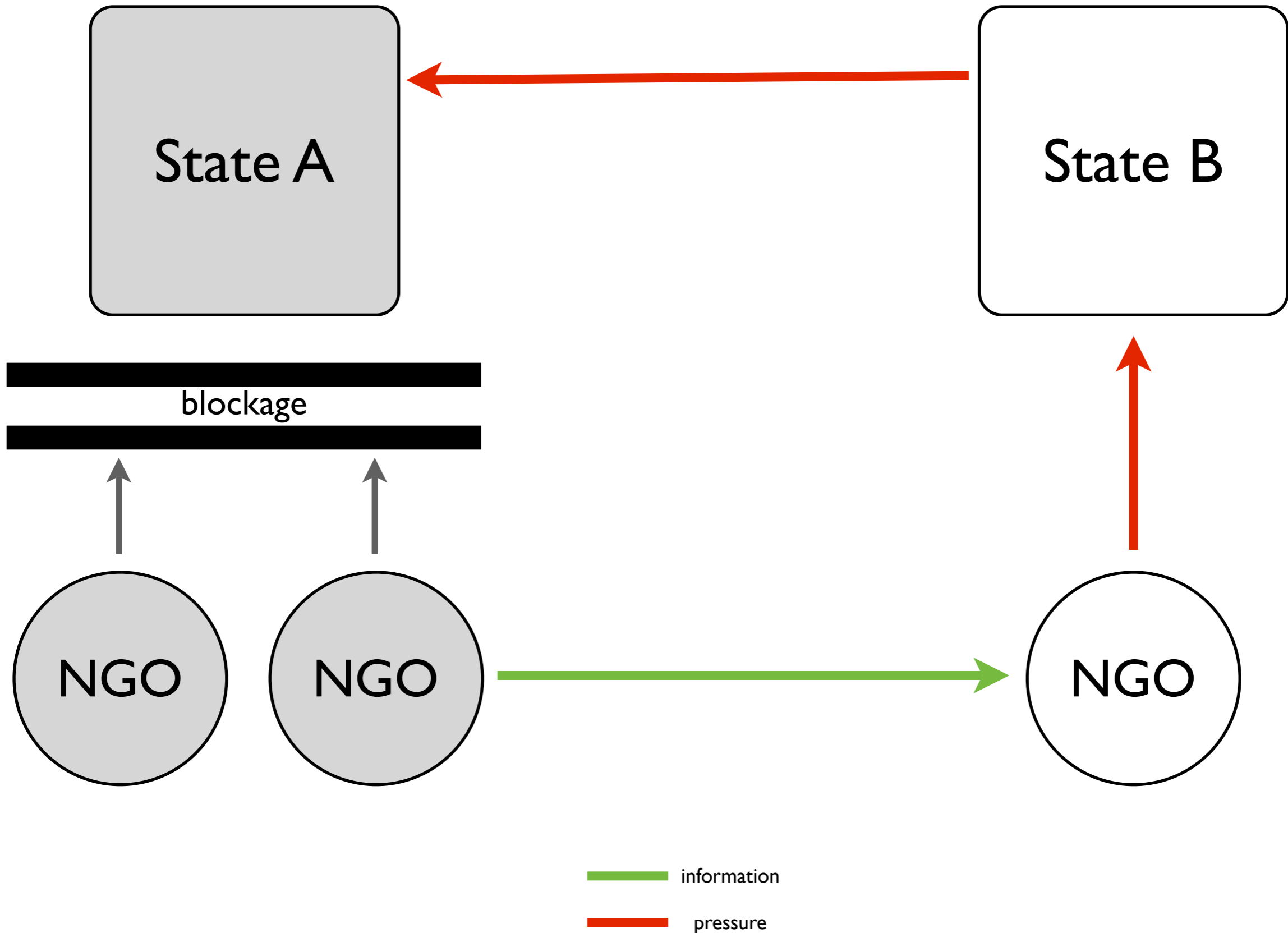
'Boomerang pattern'



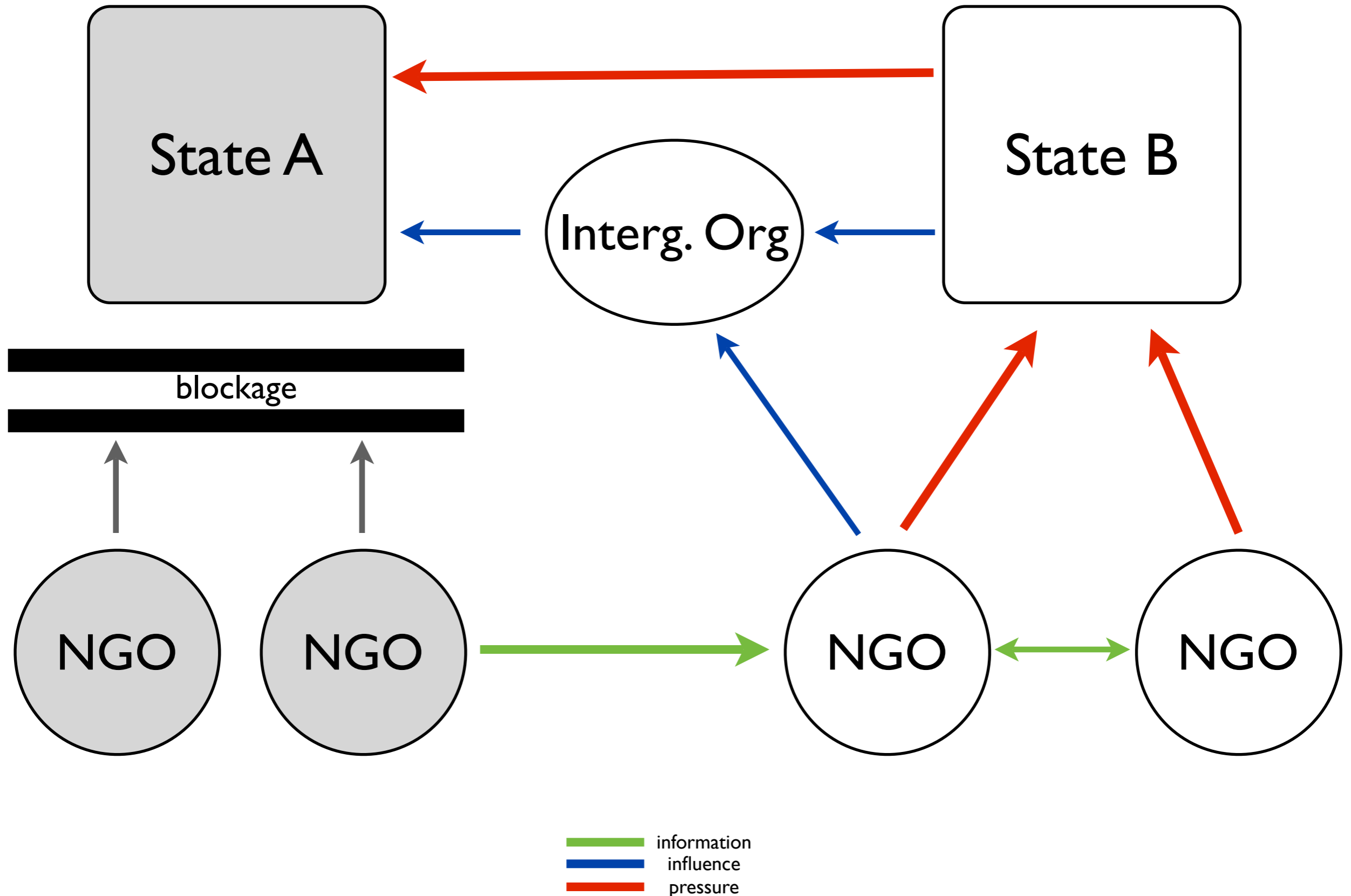
— information

— pressure

'Boomerang pattern'



'Boomerang pattern'



Treatment Action Campaign

- Politics of moral consensus
- Human rights discourse
- Historical roots
 - anti-apartheid struggle
 - gay rights activism
 - North American Aids activism

Struggle heritage

- political style — creative re-appropriation of locally embedded political symbols, songs and styles of the anti-apartheid struggle (Robbins, 2004)
- strategy & tactics
- legitimacy (Friedman & Mottiar, 2006)

Role of individuals

- ‘Institutional’ memory of struggle
(‘Trotskyist’ politics and mass mobilisation)
- Pre-existing ties of trust, loyalty and affection
- Networks built and maintained by individuals

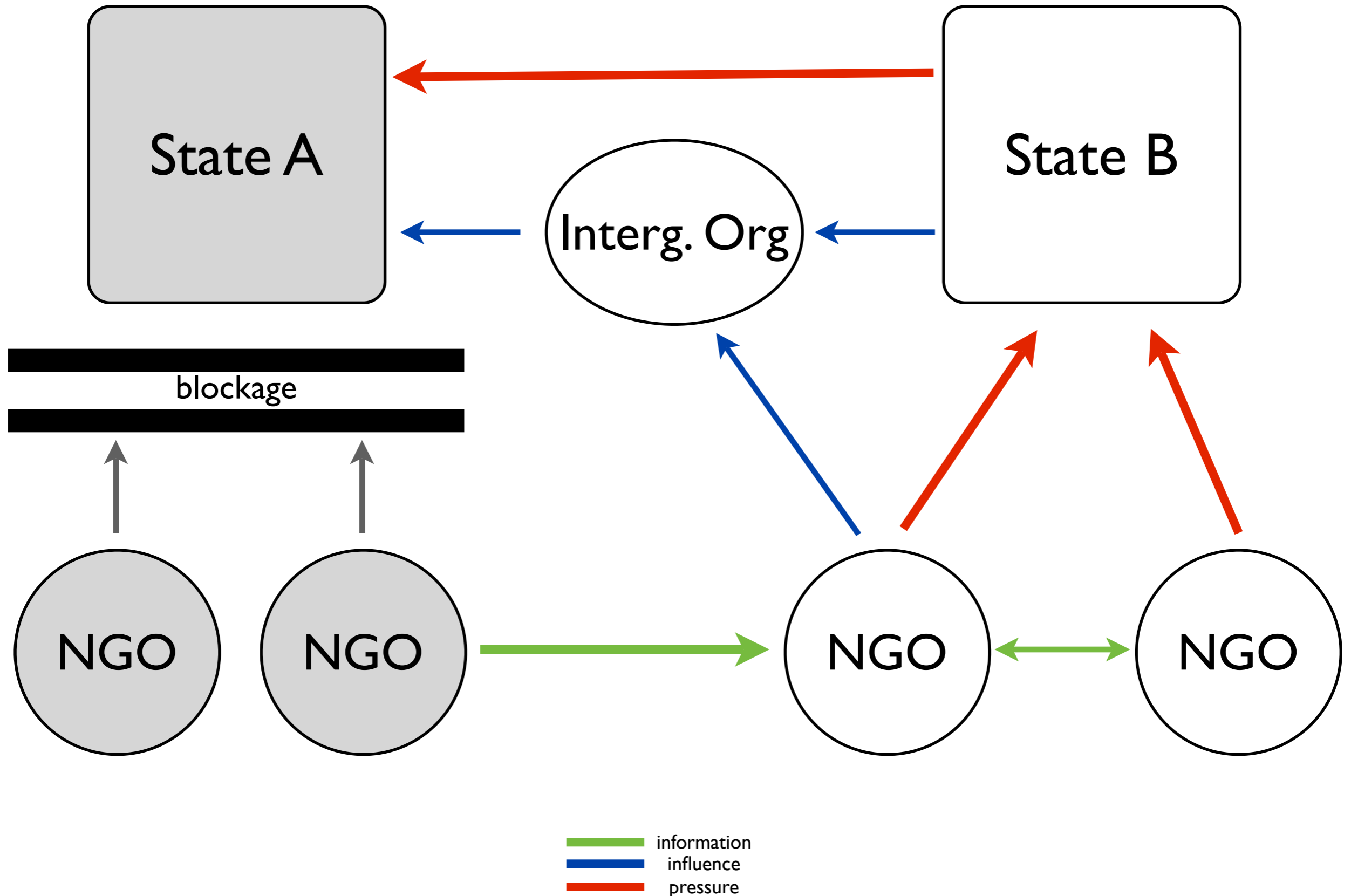
Networks

- Durban conference in 2000
 - broad coalition of SA civil society supporters
 - international (largely American) activists
 - Durban declaration (scientists)
- Individuals (e.g. Gregg Gonsalves, Mark Harrington) provided the link

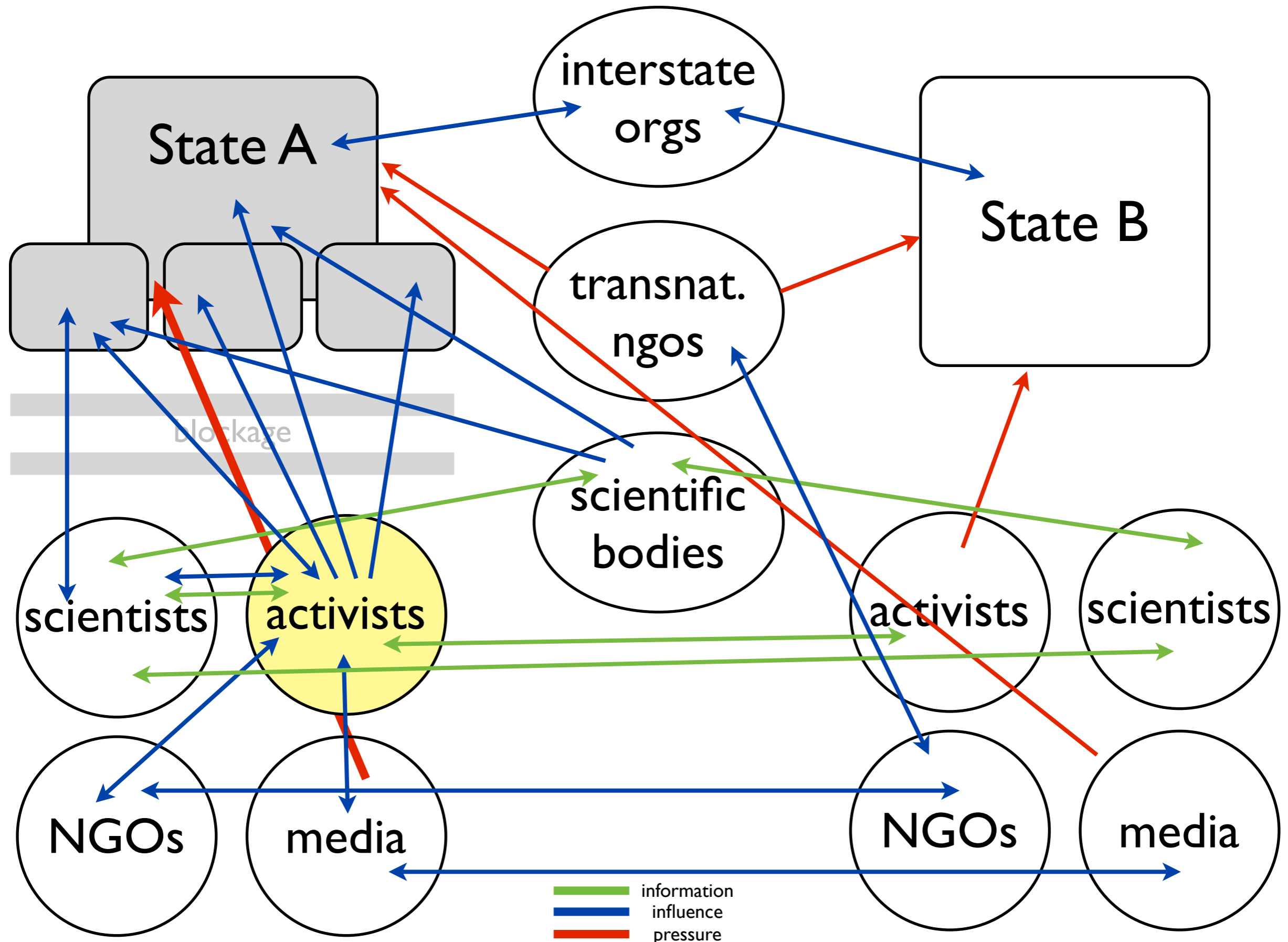
Networks

- Includes, but not restricted to participants in 'transnational advocacy networks'
- scientific communities, international bureaucrats, diplomats, and even extends into state and semi-state institutions
- Patterns of influence more complex than the 'boomerang pattern'
- Built and maintained by individuals

'Boomerang pattern'



Network model



Can the South African
model be replicated?

thank you