

Power Analysis Directions

Why do a Power Analysis?

Power is a pretty vague thing, right? We can't touch it, or measure it in ounces. But we need to know how to measure it. Why is this important?

- ◆ To know what initiatives are **achievable** and what's beyond our reach
- ◆ To **evaluate** whether we've achieved our goals
- ◆ To measure our **growth in power** – to see if what we are doing is working
- ◆ To **communicate** our power – for recruitment, for opponents, for potential allies

The Power Grid

- ◆ **Vertical axis – Amount of power**
This is the relative amount of power that a person or group has determining which of these agendas will win. The more power a group has, the higher we place them on the grid.
- ◆ **Horizontal axis– Amount of commitment to and focus on the agendas**
The right left axis represents there the positions, beliefs for actions of a group or individual are with respect to the two competing agendas.
- ◆ **Our agenda in the upper left, the status quo or opposing agenda in the upper right**
What we and they are trying to accomplish
- ◆ **Colors and Geometric Shapes** – represent the different types of groups and individuals that are part of the power struggle including decision makers, allies, opponents and unorganized constituents.

Assumptions of Power Analysis

- ◆ Power relationships are unequal right now and this is a key source of the problems and conditions we face.
- ◆ There is an agenda at work causing these problems and power is being exercised behind it. We have to develop strategies that address these realities.
- ◆ A systemic way of understanding power and how it is exercised is necessary for achieving long-term progressive social change.

Goals of Power Analysis

1. Produce a roughly accurate **picture of current power relations** for a given community and a given struggle.
2. Develop a **shared understanding and language** of what power is, the nature of our power and that of the opposing forces, and how our work can influence decision makers and change power relations.
3. Identify the **most promising constituencies and partners** on which to focus our limited resources for direct engagement and relationship- building.
4. To develop effective strategies for **permanently altering relations of power** through initiatives that **both build power and win social change**.
5. Use **collaborative, popular education methods** to demonstrate that together we have the experience and smarts to do an accurate assessment.

Step by Step Power Analysis (Use Chart Paper)



Step 1. Define the conditions, struggle or issue impacting your constituency. – 2 mins

This can be a community, a campaign or a constituency.

Our Vision/Agenda

Step 2. Define Our Agenda and the Opposing Agenda/Status Quo – 5 mins

What are some of the key points of our organizational or coalitions agenda, with respect to the problem we just identified? What are some of the key points of the opposing agenda?

For example, Our agenda on health care is **quality, affordable, accessible health care for all** (*paste it in the upper left corner*) and that the opposition's agenda is **keep things the same (status quo) OR freedom for companies to earn as much as they want from health care**

PSC Changes

Step 3: Plot the major Policy, System, or Cultural Changes Required to Achieve our Agenda

What are the component elements of change that we want implemented? This should include any policy, system or environmental changes we want to see in government or organizations or specific initiatives we want to launch.

Step 4. Plot Major decision-makers – 15 mins

Decision
makers

Who are the individuals or entities that have the power to make decisions about our issue? These are the decision makers.

For example: The people who can make the decisions that determine the success of implementing our vision for addressing substance abuse might include state, county and local officials who can direct funding toward or away from appropriate services as well as the executives and board members of health systems, social service agencies and law enforcement agencies who could modify their operating procedures in order to move the overall community closer to our vision.

(Notes – Decision making bodies can be plotted as a whole or by individual. It is important not to confuse Decision makers with Opponents. The city council is a decision making body. A small business council that heavily influences the city council is an opponent.)

Now let's place them – first how much power does each have? And then how much are they with us?
Make sure people get it and that more and more voice their opinions as the exercise continues
Allow some back and forth – but precision is not the goal – it's easy to arrive at an “average” position if 2 people don't agree.

**Allies or
Supporting
Groups**

Step 5. Plot Allies and Supporters– 15 mins

Who are the organized groups, who are actively working on our agenda or could be working on our agenda?

Discuss together where to plot groups. Urge realism. We often overestimate our own power and this can lead to flawed strategies.

Additional questions you can ask to flesh out where to place the group include: Is this an organization that has the capacity to achieve their goals?

**Groups
Resistant to
Our Agenda**

Step 6. Plot Organizations That May Resist Our Agenda – 10 mins

Who are the organized groups out there actively working in support of the status quo and/or using their power against our Agenda? These groups might, through their normal way of operating, perpetuate the current situation or make change toward our agenda harder. These are not individuals, not unorganized – these are groups with names. Is this a group that affects the decision-makers in a way that is substantive and relevant to us?

For example: Health systems who are invested in the status quo, social service agencies that aren't responding appropriately to our issue, etc.

**Unorganized
Constituencies**

Step 7. Plot unorganized constituencies – 10-15 mins

What kinds of people are most impacted by this issue who are not yet organized into groups? *Examples: uninsured people; low-income people; families with children; small businesses* Caution – people will tend to place them further to the left than they are.

Many individuals in these

groups may lean toward us, but without an organized voice, there is no way for them to exert any power on the issue or communicate a position on the issue. By definition, they must remain in the neutral center of the grid at zero power – unless we build them into organized allies over time.

Step 8. Analysis and Application

Now that we've placed most of the pieces, and we see how much power people and groups have in relation to each other, do we want to make any changes in where we placed?

There are usually a few insights – “x is really not as powerful as we thought, now that we have the rest up there”

This isn't a campaign plan – it's a lay of the land that informs initiative planning. Like a brainstorm.

What observations do people have about our power map? What are the strengths and challenges of the current position of our organization and allies?

Open-ended question. Lots of possible answers.

Allies

We are weak and divided

Opponents

They are strong and united

Decision-makers

Need more on our side

What does it tell us about where we need to put the most energy? What opportunities for organizing (recruiting, developing leadership and expanding our power) does this picture show us?

Choosing carefully among allies and working closely and more intentionally with fewer

Choosing carefully among unorganized constituencies and focusing a lot of energy to recruit them or make them into organized groups

Which decision-makers should we focus on weakening?

Which allies are essential partners? Should we ever do anything to weaken them?

Examples of things not to do – don't publicly trash people on our side – talk to them privately, learn why they aren't as solid as we want them to be, help create conditions for them to take more risks

Which unorganized constituencies should we focus on to develop into allies? How?

What happens to this picture when we implement an effective initiative?

Everyone who is involved in the effort shifts – up and to the left. Those who aren't involved stay the same or go down and to the right. Show examples.

How do these findings impact our plan?

Who needs to be involved? How will those decisions be made?

Power Analysis Grid

(Use Chart Paper)

Our Agenda					Opposing Agenda				
10 Decisive decision making power or influence					10 Decisive decision making power or influence				
8 Active Participant in Decision Making					8 Active Participant in Decision Making				
6 Power to have major influence on decision making					6 Power to have major influence on decision making				
4 Taken into account					4 Taken into account				
2 Can get attention					2 Can get attention				
0 Not on Radar Screen					0 Not on Radar Screen				
	Die Hard	Active Support	Inclined towards			Inclined towards	Active Support	Die Hard	

Injustices and Power Holders

[illegible]

Identify Partnerships and Coalitions

Pick and Injustice that your team wants to work on. Based on that selection, what is a coalition or set of partnerships you would put together to improve that Injustice.

Who are the partners in your coalition?

What are the strengths that they bring ?

What are potential weaknesses that they bring?

What would be common interests in across this coalition – why would they want to participate in changing this injustice?

Issues to Demands and Targets

Three Key Issues: What are the widely felt “pains” or injustices felt across your coalition

Three Demands: Craft clear demands that you can make at the bargaining/policy table. Your demands can be directed at the school board or can be directed at the corporations or powerholders who have caused the problems. Whatever demands you make, will likely take organizing to win. So, be bold!

Target: A target is an identifiable person or set of people who have the power to grant your demand

Check the boxes that you think apply to this issue and Demand

The solution to this issue should:	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
Result in worthwhile Improvement: - Will this solution help alleviate the problem? - Will people see a difference? - Will people feel good that they are fighting for something that merits the effort?			
Be widely Felt: - How common is the problem? - How many people benefit from this solution? What are the different ways folks benefit?			
Be deeply Felt: - Is this an issue that people feel strongly enough about to do something about it? - Is this issue a symptom to another deeply felt problem and will help you move toward a resolution to that problem?			
Be winnable: - Does the solution to this issue seem achievable? - Do you know other groups that have won similar solutions and how? (Success fosters enthusiasm) - For larger issues—what are winnable steps that you can achieve and build upon over time?			
Build the Union and Build Community: - How will this organizing effort build members’ capacity for future fights? - How will this solution lay the groundwork for future improvements? - Will the effort strengthen the solidarity, empowerment, and involvement among members? - Will this effort strengthen our community relationships?			

Counter Narrative

What is the dominant narrative for each of your coalition partners?

What is the counter narrative that you will use to support your campaign? Work to make it align with your demands and that it reflects the collective interests and values of your coalition.

Escalation of Tactics and Timeline

Timeline	Tactic Description	Measurable Outcomes for Each Tactic
Target Date for Win	Demands:	How will you measure success?