



# Power Analysis\* -- Trainer-Training

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## Agenda

1. Why do a Power Analysis? – 15 mins
2. Examples of how Power Analysis can be used – 15 mins
3. Introduction to the Power Grid – 5 mins
4. Eight Steps to do a Power Analysis – 60 min
5. Tips and Techniques – 15 mins
6. Evaluation – 5 mins

*\* This approach to Power Analysis has been developed by SCOPE – Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education. It was introduced to Northeast Action by our strategic partners, Grassroots Policy Project. We HIGHLY recommend SCOPE's training manual, **Power Tools: A Manual for Organizations Fighting for Justice** for more detailed training notes on Power Analysis and many other key organizer skill trainings. Contact SCOPE at [www.scopela.org](http://www.scopela.org) or 323.789.7920.*

## 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 campaigns are **winnable** and what's beyond our reach
- ◆ To **evaluate** whether we've won
- ◆ 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 good people at Agenda/SCOPE in Los Angeles, working with the Grassroots Policy Project, have come up with an excellent tool called power mapping.

- ◆ an interactive, accessible way a group can do its own power mapping, relying on the smarts and knowledge in the room
- ◆ can be applied to just about any community, state or nation – or campaign, specific issue
- ◆ brings to the forefront important considerations and stimulates insights for campaign planning
- ◆ helps people see the connections between what we're fighting for today and longer-term power shifts.

Review assumptions and goals on pg 3. Any questions?

## The Power Grid

Turn to Power Analysis grid pg10.

- ◆ **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 the agendas**  
The right left access represents there the political positions, beliefs for actions of a group or individual are with respect to the two competing agendas.
- ◆ **Our agenda in the upper left, theirs in the upper right**  
What we and they are trying to accomplish
- ◆ **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.

*Reassure people that this will become rapidly clear when we start placing pieces*

## 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 a political 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 our opposition, and how campaigns 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 organizing and relationship-building.
4. To develop effective strategies for **permanently altering relations of power** through campaigns 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.

## How to do a Power Analysis.

Step 1: Define the struggle or issue to be analyzed.

Step 2: Define our agenda and the opposition's agenda.

Step 3: Plot the major battles & campaigns.

Step 4: Plot the decision makers/power centers.

Step 5: Plot organized and active opposition groups.

Step 6: Plot your organization, allies and supporters.

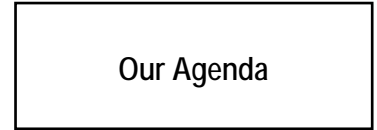
Step 7: Plot unorganized constituencies.

Step 8: Analyze picture and refine campaign strategy

# Step by Step Power Analysis



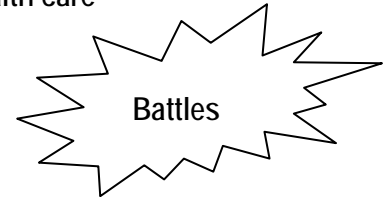
**Step 1. Define the conditions, struggle or issue impacting your constituency. – 2 mins**  
This can be a community, a campaign or a constituency.



**Step 2. Define Our Agenda and the Opposition's Agenda – 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?

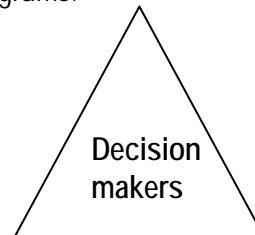
For example, Our agenda on health care is **quality, affordable, accessible health care for all** (*past it in the upper left corner*) and that the opposition's agenda is **keep things the same (status quo) OR freedom for companies to earn as much as they want from health care**



**Step 3: Plot the major battles & campaigns.**

What major issue or policy debates are currently going on that relate to the agendas we just defined? For example: Reauthorization of SCHIP, cutbacks on state health programs.

**Step 4. Plot Major decision-makers – 15 mins**



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 universal health care happen, or not *should include governor, top legislative leaders, maybe heads of key committees, and local state Reps and Senators – no one on the federal level, unless someone wants to make a case that UHC needs a federal waiver...*

*(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?  
*Start with the gov and leg leaders  
Then place all the others*

*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.*

**Opposition  
Groups**

### Step 5. Plot Opponents – 10 mins

Who are the organized groups out there actively working in support of the Opposing agenda and/or using their power against our Agenda? These are not individuals, not unorganized – these are groups with names. Is this a group that affect the decision-makers in a way that is substantive and relevant to us?

*For example: 1-2 insurance companies, business assn., ins agents assn., national assn. of small business; drug company assn.*

**Ally or  
Supporting  
Groups**

### Step 6. 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?

**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. They may lean toward us, but in a battle like this, they will be subject to all the advertising our opponents can muster, and they carry the “minimal government” etc. worldview assumptions like everyone else, making it easier for the opponents to win them – unless we build them into organized allies over time.*

### Step 8. Analysis and Application -- 15 mins

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 campaign 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 opponents should we always try to reduce in power?

*Ways to do this include ... not allowing their positive advertising to be unchallenged ..*

Which decision-makers should we focus on weakening?

*Ways to do this include ...*

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 run a winning campaign?

*Everyone who is involved in the campaign 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 campaign plan?

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

# Tips for Doing a Great Power Analysis

## Clear Goals:

- ✓ Be clear about the goals for the session (is it a session on how to do a power analysis? Is it a working session to develop an analysis for a campaign?)
- ✓ Given the goals, who needs to participate?

## Prep:

- ✓ Get all materials together in advance, with a board large enough for all to see, circles of tape that can be easily moved, names or acronyms of the most important players written in advance on the appropriate pieces. Recruit a volunteer to help writing on pieces and rolling tape
- ✓ You can arrive with a drawn blank matrix or draw one as you explain it
- ✓ Think of examples of already developed power analysis to use as examples in the session.
- ✓ Decide whether or not you will have a discussion about “our Agenda/their Agenda” – it’s time consuming but worth it if you can do it
- ✓ Make sure there are enough people in the room – at least 5, no more than 35
- ✓ Choose the best methods for engaging participants with the time you have; small groups vs. working with the group as a whole; groups working on different issues or the same issue; or small groups working on different parts of the chart eg: allies, opponents.
- ✓ Time it out

## Power:

- ✓ Take extra time on the first decision-maker and opponent so that people are clear what power means – the demonstrated ability to advance an agenda.

## Players:

- ✓ Do the most important players in each category first, then ask for suggestions for others, in order to make sure you don’t miss important ones.

## Our Power:

- ✓ To help set an atmosphere of honesty, for the first allied group call on someone you know will give an accurate description of their power. Then ask people in the room to assess their organization’s power, and call on important ones if they’re not volunteering.
- ✓ Model gentle inquiry to identify good examples of power or to question assertions – “do you know how many people on your email list actually called their legislator?” Allow participants to question but not attack each other.

## Watch Unorganized Constituencies:

- ✓ Don’t let them get placed further left than Inclined – they are unorganized and subject to the media and other controlling power of the opposition. They should be to the left and right of the center line. Have a story of an election or referendum ready to support this.

## Watch the clock:



- ✓ Make sure you save at least 15 minutes for discussion before people start to leave. Stick to your timing – more players can be added another time, this is meant to be updated.

**Be collaborative:**

- ✓ Don't let one person become the "authority" – everyone has information and experience, and when averaged together we can arrive at a close enough placement.

**Trust your judgement:**

- ✓ Look for opportunities to puncture myths, probe for missing pieces. Asking the questions will almost always produce the insights without you having to deliver it.

*Cw:/Training/Power Analysis – Trainer Training CW 07*

Our Agenda

## Power Analysis Grid

Opposing Agenda

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

