

Power Analysis: Types and Sources of Power

Power-Over

- Often how we traditionally think about power – the ability to get someone to do something against their will.
- Using rewards, punishments, manipulation to force someone to do something they do not choose.
 - **Positional Power** comes from organization authority or position, often forgotten by people with the power, rarely forgotten by those without it.
 - **Obstructive Power** stems from the ability to coerce or block (whether implicit, threatened or demonstrates; many activists are experts in its use).
 - **Institutional Power** is economic, legal and political power directly wielded by institutions.
 - **Cultural Power** is the cultural norms, conditioning and privilege regarding race/class/gender/age/ability from the perspective of the dominant culture. From the perspective of oppressed people, cultural power is a consciousness of community, class and culture that serves to empower.
 - **Structural Power** covertly or implicitly exercised through dominant institutions of society.

Power-With-Others

- The ability to influence and take action based on uniting with others.
- The power that comes from community, solidarity, cooperation.
 - **Referred Power** comes from connections to others.
 - **Co-Powering** speaks to the responsibility for individual leaders to mindfully work towards supporting the personal power of others through modeling, validating and feedback.
 - **Collaborative Power** comes from our ability to join our energies in partnership with others.
 - **Transcendent Power** comes from our connection to a higher power such as spiritual, natural and/or historical imperative.
 - **Institutional Power**
 - **Cultural Power**

Power-From-Within

- The ability to influence and take action based on intention, clarity of vision, or charisma.
- Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (leader of the nonviolent movement for human rights and democracy in Burma (Myanmar), and Nobel laureate) explains: "If you have confidence in what you are doing and you believe that what you are doing is right, that in itself constitutes power, and this is very important when you are trying to achieve something."
- Identify skills that can be used that fall under power-with-others and power-from-within [the least appreciated forms of power] (application).
 - **Expert Power** comes from wisdom, knowledge, experience, skills.
 - **Ideological Power** comes from an idea, vision or analysis. It can be an original idea of an individual, or as a developed ideology.
 - **Personal Power** is an individual's energy, vision, ability to communicate, capacity to influence, emotional intelligence, psychological savvy, etc.
 - **Cultural Power**
 - **Transcendent Power**

Source: Three types of power as used by George Lakey adapted from activist/author/witch Starhawk (see "Dreaming in the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics", by Starhawk).

Examples of the Three Types of Power and their Sources

| Power-Over | Power-With-Others | Power-From-Within |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Positional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trainer ▪ Manager/supervisor ▪ Judge | <p>Referred</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Lady/Spouse- Has great influence on President/elected official's opinions ▪ Congressional and legislative staffers ▪ Executive Assistant is the right-hand person in any organization | <p>Expert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respected organizer ▪ Executive Director ▪ Trainer ▪ Teacher ▪ Scientist |
| <p>Obstructive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any activist ▪ lawyers | <p>Co-powering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentor ▪ Good Manager/ Supervisor | <p>Ideological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People of faith ▪ Motivational speakers ▪ Political parties |
| <p>Institutional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lending Institutions- Redlining ▪ Universities ▪ Churches | <p>Collaborative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campaign Coalitions ▪ Neighborhood Associations ▪ Bipartisan politicians | <p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community leaders ▪ People of faith ▪ Motivational speakers ▪ Respected organizer ▪ Executive Director |
| <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heterosexual culture over gay culture ▪ Male dominance over females ▪ Adults over youth ▪ Wealthy over working/middle class | <p>Institutional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lending Institutions- Redlining ▪ AARP ▪ NAACP | <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural pride and empowerment through song, story, food, dress, and honoring costumes and traditions, etc. |
| <p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lending Institutions- Redlining ▪ School system ▪ Judicial system | <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural pride and empowerment through song, story, food, dress, and honoring costumes and traditions, etc. ▪ Professional ethnic associations, cultural ethnic cultural groups, ethnic students groups, etc. | <p>Transcendent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People of faith ▪ Spiritual healers ▪ Revolutionary leaders |
| | <p>Transcendent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People of faith ▪ Respected community leaders ▪ Revolutionary leaders | |