



THE POWER MATRIX

This matrix presents how different dimensions of power interact to shape the problem and the possibility of citizen participation and action. The distinctions among the different dimensions are not neat or clean. The arrows are intended to indicate the interactive nature of these various manifestations of power.⁷

| POWER OVER | MECHANISMS | EXAMPLES | RESPONSES & STRATEGIES | TRANSFORMING POWER | |
|--|--|--|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| | <i>Through which dimensions of power over operate to exclude and privilege</i> | <i>Power Over</i> | <i>Power With, Power Within, Power To</i> | | |
| | <p>Visible: Making & Enforcing the Rules</p> <p>Presidents, Prime Ministers, legislatures, courts, ministries, police, military, etc. United Nations, IMF, World Bank; World Trade Organization, Multinational corporations (Haliburton, Nike, Coca-Cola), private sector actors, chamber of commerce, businesses, etc.</p> <p>Instruments: Policies, laws, constitutions, budgets, regulations, conventions, agreements, implementing mechanisms, etc.</p> | <p>Biased laws/policies (e.g. health care policies that do not address the poor or women's reproductive needs)</p> <p>Decision-making structures (parliaments, courts, IFI governance, etc.) favor the elite or powerful and are closed to certain people's voices and unrepresentative</p> <p>Principle of 'equality' may exist in law, but parliaments and courts are not fairly representative of women and minorities</p> <p>International financial/trade bodies dominated by G-8 despite rising economic power of others</p> | <p>Lobbying & monitoring</p> <p>Negotiation & litigation</p> <p>Public education & media</p> <p>Policy research, proposals</p> <p>Shadow reports</p> <p>Marches & demonstrations</p> <p>Voting & running for office</p> <p>Modeling innovations</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Etc.</p> | | Building collective power |
| | <p>Hidden: Setting the Agenda</p> <p>Exclusion & delegitimization:</p> <p>Certain groups (and their issues) excluded from decision-making by society's unwritten rules and the political control of dominant and vested interests. They & their issues made invisible by intimidation, misinformation & co-optation</p> <p>Examples: The oil-gas industries control on energy/environmental policies & public debate about global warming and climate change; the Catholic Church's influence on global reproductive health policy in Latin America and elsewhere, etc.</p> <p>Often, formal institutions with visible power, also exercise hidden power</p> | <p>Leaders are labeled trouble-makers or unrepresentative</p> <p>Issues related to the environment are deemed elitist, impractical; feminism blamed for male violence/breaking families/sex industry. Domestic violence, childcare are seen as private, individual issues not worthy of public action; peasant land rights/labor rights are 'special' interests and not economically viable.</p> <p>Media does not consider these groups' issues to be mainstream or newsworthy</p> | <p>Organizing communities and active constituencies around common concerns, and mobilizing to demonstrate clout through numbers and direct action</p> <p>Strengthening organizations, coalitions, movements, and accountable leaders</p> <p>Participatory research and dissemination of information/ ideas/images that validate and legitimize the issues of excluded groups</p> <p>Use alternative media outlets/internet/radio to name and shame - exposing the true agendas and actors dominating public debate, agendas and policy</p> | | Confronting, engaging, negotiating |
| <p>Invisible: Shaping Meaning, Values & What's 'Normal'</p> <p>Socialization & control of information:</p> <p>Cultural norms, values, practices, ideologies and customs shape people's understanding of their needs, rights, roles, possibilities and actions in ways that prevent effective action for change, reinforces privilege-inferiority, blames the victim and "manufactures consent". Dominant ideologies include neoliberalism, consumerism and corporate capitalism, patriarchy-sexism, racism, etc. Key information is kept secret to prevent action and safeguard those in power and their interests</p> | <p>Socialization/oppression</p> <p>1) Belief systems such as patriarchy and racism cause people to internalize feelings of powerlessness, shame, anger, hostility, apathy, distrust, lack of worthiness etc. especially for women, racial-ethnic minorities, immigrants, working class, poor, youth, gay-lesbian groups, etc.</p> <p>2) Dominant ideologies, stereotypes in "popular" culture, education and media reinforce bias combined with lack of information/ knowledge that inhibits ability to question, resist and participate in change</p> <p>Examples: Women blame themselves for domestic abuse; Poor farmers for their poverty despite unequal access to global markets or decent prices or wages</p> <p>Crucial information is misrepresented, concealed or inaccessible (e.g. WMDs & Iraq).</p> | <p>Popular education, empowerment, new knowledge, values and critical thinking tied to organizing, leadership and consciousness for building confidence, collaboration, political awareness and a sense of rights/responsibilities/citizenship which includes such strategies as: sharing stories, speaking out and connecting with others, affirming resistance, analyzing power and values, linking concrete problems to rights, etc.</p> <p>Doing action research, investigations and dissemination of concealed information and also using alternative media, etc.</p> | Building individual and collective power | | |