



MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN: POWER

Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace

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We will dedicate two editions of Making Change Happen (No. 3 and 4) to an examination of the complexities of power and opportunities for constructing and transforming power. This edition looks at concepts and ways of understanding power with the hope of contributing to debates on how to strengthen analysis, action and movement building. Building on this conceptual basis and debate, a second companion piece will focus on empowerment and action strategies.

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THE CHALLENGE OF POWER²

Our physics lessons failed us – we forgot the basics that for every action there is an equal or greater reaction.

Mexican feminist activist on the backlash against women's rights

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While power is an integral dynamic of change, it turns out to be one of the more difficult and unsettling topics to address. Power can seem especially monolithic and impenetrable for individuals who have lived under regimes that deny freedoms or repress people's voice and participation. Power is seen as a win-lose kind of relationship. Having power is a zero-sum game, involving taking it from someone else, and then, using it to prevent others from gaining it. Such a one-dimensional view can paralyze analysis and action. When people see power as sinister and unchanging, they are unable to recognize their own sources of power.

In reality, power is dynamic, relational and multidimensional, changing according to context, circumstance and interest. Its expressions and forms can range from domination and resistance to collaboration and transformation. This is good news for social justice promoters whose strategies depend upon new opportunities and openings in the practice and structures of power.

Did We Forget About Power?

Despite the dynamic nature of power, programs and strategies promoting human rights, equality and justice the world over have seemingly gotten stuck in superficial approaches to power, and an over-reliance on policy and technical solutions. The failure to deal with the complexities of power can lead to missed opportunities and poor strategic choices. Worse, it can be risky and counterproductive.

Common approaches to citizen engagement such as the World Bank PRSP³ process and the plethora of "citizen summits" and "listening sessions" emphasize bringing everyone to the table as 'stakeholders,' but fail to recognize that underlying power dynamics between conflicting interests have a huge impact on people's capacity to participate and influence outcomes. All stakeholders are not equal, yet they are often treated as such, while agendas and parameters of discussion are defined in ways that leave out crucial issues (Rowden and Irama 2005). Consequently, these processes usually produce neither new policy directions nor real changes in the way decisions are made and can reinforce people's cynicism about the value of "participating." In fact, they often reinforce, rather than alter, the profound power dynamics around race and ethnicity, class and gender that shape people's expectations and behavior concerning whose agendas get heard and addressed.

Internationally, the 1990s were the heyday for civil society activists who utilized important UN conferences and international gatherings to achieve critical policy successes and shifts in discourse on a range of issues from the environment to women's rights.

Today, many realize that they did not fully anticipate the backlash or diversionary forms of power that got triggered by their victories. In recent years, advocacy experiences raise questions about the continued relevance of these types of policy openings for advancing social justice goals.⁴ Some global activists believe that these are becoming 'black holes,' diverting advocates and resources from national-level opportunities for change and more pressing political concerns. Many feel that the focus on policy and campaigning has contributed to the general depoliticization of social justice strategies and a growing disconnect between local, national and global work, and between advocates and social movements.

The current context presents considerable challenges for activists. New bold efforts are needed to reclaim the power and vision of movements for justice. Yet among busy and pragmatic organizers and activists, there is sometimes resistance to re-examining basic assumptions about power and change, or studying theory and history, which are considered impractical abstractions. There is often a sense that concepts are for researchers, not doers. This false dichotomy can have crippling effects on action since it denies activists the systematic analysis and knowledge of past experience. Having a conversation, in a deliberate and collaborative way, about how power and change operate in light of real-life politics and organizing experiences is absolutely necessary in order to articulate how we expect to promote change. This conversation is in itself an *organizing and empowerment strategy*.

Basic Concepts of Power

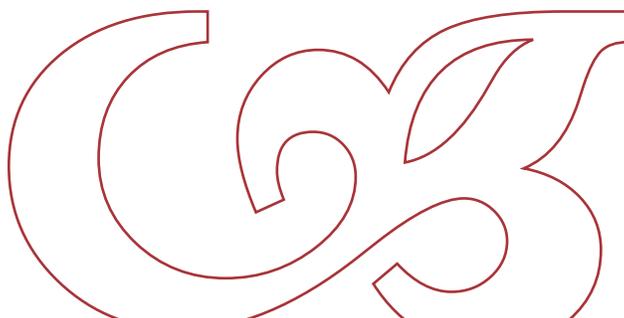
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the US civil rights leader who challenged racism and economic injustice during the mid 20th century, defined power as "the ability to achieve a purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change." Whether power advance justice and transforms inequities depends precisely on its purpose, the values guiding it, and the way it is used.

Sources and Expressions of Power

Power is categorized in many ways, often as economic, political, social, or cultural. Women's rights advocates and feminists have developed other types of categories that clarify the diverse sources and expressions of power – both positive and negative. These include the most common controlling forms of power – *power over* – and more life-affirming and transformational forms – *power with*, *power to*, and *power within*. Naming such dynamics can be liberating and mind-expanding. By using these types of analytical categories, people can better understand how forces of subordination and inequity operate in their own lives and envision alternative strategies and visions of power through which they can challenge injustice.

Justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just.

Blaise Pascal



Power can be defined as the degree of control over material, human, intellectual and financial resources exercised by different sections of society. The control of these resources becomes a source of individual and social power ...

The extent of power of an individual or group is correlated to how many different kinds of resources they can access and control.

Different degrees of power are sustained and perpetuated through social divisions such as gender, age, caste, class, ethnicity, race, north-south; and through institutions such as the family, religion, education, media, the law, etc ... There is a continuous process of resistance and challenge by the less powerful and marginalised sections of society, resulting in various degrees of change in the structures of power. When these challenges become strong and extensive enough, they can result in the total transformation of a power structure.

(Batliwala 1995)

Power Over

The most commonly recognized form of power, power over, has many negative associations for people, such as repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption, and abuse. At its most basic, it operates to privilege certain people while marginalizing others. In politics, those who control resources and decision-making have power over those without and exclude others from access and participation. When people are denied access to important resources like land, healthcare, and jobs, power over perpetuates inequality, injustice and poverty.

In the absence of alternative models and relationships, people repeat the power over pattern in their personal interaction, values, communities, and institutions. For example, to maintain emotional relationships with men that are crucial to their family stability and economic survival, women often feel they must give up much of their own power or use it in a manipulative way. When women or people from marginalized or “powerless” groups gain power in leadership positions, they sometimes “imitate the oppressor.” For this reason, activists cannot expect that the experience of being excluded prepares people to become democratic leaders. New forms of leadership and decision-making must be explicitly defined, taught, and rewarded in order to promote democratic forms of power. As part of this process, values need to be challenged, reclaiming those that support justice, equity and compassion.

INVITED OR CLAIMED?

The failures of policy in delivering the kinds of real change that activists are seeking has led to a closer, more nuanced analysis of policy spaces to assess their degree of strategic relevance. The following distinctions can be helpful in determining how much to engage or not, and when to disengage. A **closed space** is one where decisions are made by an elite group, such as government officials, behind closed doors without any pretense of public participation. Civil society often works to challenge and open up these kinds of closed spaces to create **claimed spaces** where there is enough room to negotiate their own agendas. The participatory budget work in Porto Alegre, Brazil is a well-known example. Civil society groups also create **autonomous spaces**, like the World Social Forum. They provide groups a chance to develop agendas, knowledge and solidarity without interference or control by corporate or government powerholders. With growing pressure from civil society over the last decade, powerful policy institutions have established **invited spaces** where a select group of civil society actors, usually from larger NGOs, are invited to participate in a policy consultation hosted by officials. The overall agendas and scope of decisions are ultimately controlled by the official institutions and are often not open to change or negotiation. While invited spaces can offer possibilities for influence and networking, they rarely produce long-term results on vital justice issues. The more pressing danger, however, is that they can serve to legitimize the *status quo* and divert civil society energies and resources (see endnote 4).



THREE VISIONS OF VITAL POWER

...forgiveness and compassion are always linked: how do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?

bell hooks

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Practitioners and academics have searched for more collaborative ways of exercising and using power. Drawing on their own positive and negative experiences with power, feminists use the notion of vital or life-affirming power. They see this form of power as a way to focus on building alternatives that emphasize the affirmation and development of life, based on the responsibilities involved in caring for life in all its forms. The parameters and ethics for using such power come from a focus on both rights and responsibilities and its emphasis on the renewal and regeneration of life with all its energies, forces, creativity and chaos. It envisions multiple forms and hubs of leadership emerging from different places according to needs, events, moments and language.⁵ This quest for alternatives is ongoing and offers new insights on how we can express and use power as seen in the three visions presented below.

These alternatives offer positive ways of expressing power that create the possibility of forming more equitable relationships and structures and transforming power over. By affirming people's capacity to act creatively and collectively, they provide some basic principles for constructing empowering strategies.

Vision 1: Power With

Power with has to do with finding common ground among different interests in order to build collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity, collaboration and recognition and respect for differences, *power with* multiplies individual talents, knowledge and resources to make a larger impact. *Power with* can help build bridges across differences by openly acknowledging conflicts and seeking to transform or reduce them for a larger aim. *Power with* can generate a larger impact but can also provide a grounding sense of community and spiritual connection. At this moment when social justice efforts feel over-institutionalized and fragmented, deliberate strategies to construct and promote power with are vital, including alliances and movement-building. All of these require processes to acknowledge diversity and disagreement while seeking common ground around values and vision.

Vision 2: Power To

Power to refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. Education, training and leadership development for social justice are based on the belief that each individual has the power to make a difference, which can be multiplied by new skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence.

When based on mutual support, it opens up the possibilities of joint action, or power with others. For organizing and advocacy efforts to succeed, they must tap into and nurture people's power to potential. This is especially critical coming on the heels of an era that emphasizes top-down expertise and technical solutions. These have tended to undermine people's sense of *power to* – deepening withdrawal from public life and producing a sense of resignation.

Vision 3: Power Within

Power within has to do with a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge. It is grounded in an ethical value base that fosters a vision of human rights and responsibilities and an ability to recognize individual differences while respecting others. *Power within* is the capacity to imagine and have hope; it affirms the shared human search for dignity and fulfillment and is strengthened by an understanding of power and the common good, and a constant practice of questioning and challenging assumptions. Spirituality, story telling, music, dancing and critical reflection can affirm people's *power within* which can serve as a nourishing force energizing the tireless efforts of social justice activists. Effective grassroots organizing efforts use such methods to help people affirm personal worth, tap into their dreams and hope, and recognize their *power to* and *power with*.

All these expressions of life-affirming power are fundamental to the concept referred to as *agency* – the creative human capacity to act and change the world – a term used by scholars writing about social change and development. The notion of agency draws on sources of power implicit in these different expressions such as the power of numbers, confidence, experience, critical thinking, knowledge, organization, vision, humor, persistence, commitment, solidarity, song, poetry, and story. Seemingly simple, these positive ways of thinking about people's power can lead to more effective and integrated movement-building strategies. They help to ensure that strategies for change aren't reduced to lobbying or a mechanical formula but consider and account for the ways people feel empowered, fired up and connected. In tapping into *power to*, *power within* and *power with*, strategies must deal with the psychological and social dimensions of oppression and subordination that – because of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation and other factors – leave people feeling inferior, isolated, cynical and often angry.

One of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites, polar opposites, so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic ... power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

And the Personal Is Political

Rebalancing strategies on the less visible dimensions of power brings back this well-known feminist adage. One would think that the HIV/AIDS crisis – a disease transmitted through sexual contact – would have helped to refocus change efforts on the interconnections between the personal and public dynamics of power. Instead, programs that only emphasize condoms and abstinence fail to take into account that women, particularly married women, are unable culturally to negotiate safe sex with their partner.

Practitioners and scholars familiar with the challenges of women’s empowerment explain that power takes shape in three interacting levels – the public arenas as well as the private and intimate realms. The public realm of power affects women and men at work and in their community. The private realm of power refers to relationships and roles in families, among friends, sexual partnerships, marriage, etc. The intimate realm of power has to do with one’s sense of self, confidence, psychology and relationship to body and health.

For an individual woman or man, the experience of power and powerlessness differs not only because of identity (race, class, age and sexual orientation, etc.) but may also be contradictory in

different realms of her/his life. For example, a woman politician who appears confident in public may accept a subordinate role in her family; she may even survive abuse from her partner while keeping up with the demands and image of her public duties. Throughout the world, it is common for a woman to face the same work demands as her male partner, but be primarily or solely responsible for care in the home, children and elderly parents without questioning the uneven responsibilities. Many seemingly educated, empowered women and men around the world fail to take measures to protect themselves against sexual diseases despite the knowledge and resources to do so. What may seem to be contradictory is often more likely a survival strategy – it is important to recognize the potential costs as well as benefits of gaining power and experiencing change.

Acknowledging the layers of people’s experience with power and powerlessness can be helpful in understanding the tensions and contradictions generated for women by a political empowerment process unleashed by organizing, education and leadership. Political change strategies that focus solely on the public realm will overlook some critical challenges facing women who are leaders, active citizens and public officials when they return to their homes and families.

ONE OF THE WAYS DISCRIMINATION WORKS

Discrimination is embedded in all societies in a variety of ways so that resources and benefits are distributed unequally according to race and ethnicity, gender, class, religion and location primarily. Discrimination and exclusion depends on who has access and who has control of these.

Access: the opportunity to make use of something for a larger gain

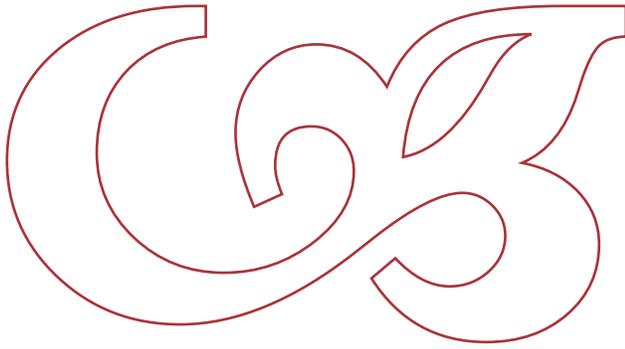
Control: the ability to define its use and impose that definition on others

Resources can include:

<p>economic or productive resources, such as land, equipment, tools, cash, employment</p>	<p>political resources such as representative organizations, leadership, education and information, experience in the public sphere, self-confidence and credibility</p>	<p>time which is particularly scarce and critical for women</p>
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Benefits address basic needs – these benefits include food, clothing and shelter, income – and provide less tangible advantages that improve a person’s position – such as education, asset ownership, political power, prestige, connections and opportunities to pursue new interests.

Equality of opportunity – a common policy to facilitate access – usually fails to rectify discrimination because people are not in the same position to be able to take advantage of the opportunity due to historical disadvantages. Socialization plays a big role in keeping things this way by normalizing inequality as both “natural” and having to do with individual ability, including traits people are born with.



White privilege is as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was meant to remain oblivious.

(Peggy McIntosh 1988)

INTERSECTIONS OF IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

In the face of deeply ingrained social structures and norms that reinforce discrimination and oppression, people experience power dynamics differently according to the social characteristics or identities that make up who they are. Everyone of us has multiple, often nuanced identities— based on gender, class, race, ethnicity, religion, education, age, sexual orientation, ability, etc. Because of this, we can experience privilege and subordination simultaneously. For example, anywhere in the world, a medical doctor or an NGO leader who is respected in her profession may suffer domestic abuse at home. In one setting, a person may be more powerful while in another setting, face discrimination. For example, in the United States, a powerful African American professional may find himself unable to hail a taxi successfully because he's stereotyped as dangerous by the media and popular culture.

Understanding these interactions of power and identity can help untangle the contradictory dynamics that confuse and confound people as they work for social justice and equality. By naming differences and commonalities, this intersection of personal characteristics, called *intersectionality*, allows us to find points of unity and common action.

Intersectionality is an analytical tool that helps us understand and respond to the ways in which each person's social characteristics or identities interconnect and contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege. Intersectionality helps to move beyond overly simplified conceptions of identity —“women” or “working-class” or “indigenous”— to surface the complexities of privilege and subordination that are sometimes ignored or glossed over. Disparities in power and privilege within a group cannot be addressed unless they are first surfaced and acknowledged. Feminist interpretations of women's experience over the years offer rich insights into the dynamics of power and oppression. While class remains a powerful determinant of inequality and people's sense of power or powerlessness, gender and race are often equally potent given the strong biases of socialization that “keep people in their place.”

Some well-intended efforts to develop new consciousness and affirm people's sense of self-worth and pride in their identity have inadvertently isolated people and led to a political dead end. This kind of identity politics fails to affirm people's multiple identities, common problems, and basic sense of responsibility to one another. In this way, it hinders the growth of thoughtful and inclusive alliances where people engage as active agents and citizens, rather than victims. An over-simplification of identity as the basis for political action has contributed to the fragmentation of social movements, including women's movements and the demobilization of potentially vibrant constituencies.

The challenge of identity and intersectionality lies in recognizing and addressing differences and inequalities, but not allowing them to become unbridgeable chasms that prevent people from identifying common ground and building relationships of solidarity. Potentially powerful alliances for social justice — from North-South coalitions to linkages between grassroots constituencies and global policy advocates — confront important questions connected to privilege and control. In some cases, unresolved tensions stymy progress while other alliances manage to recognize differences within their ranks. For example, the emerging food sovereignty movement is piecing together common ground among diverse groups, tapping into the needs and concerns of small-scale farmers, anti-hunger activists, peasant federations and middle-class consumers worried about health and food quality.



POWER OVER: MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS⁶

First they gave us a day for women. Then they gave us a year. Then they gave us a decade. Now we're hoping for a century – and maybe then they'll let us in for the whole show.

Bella Abzug, US feminist

During the last decade or so, rights and social justice strategies have increasingly focused on a single aspect of power – the most visible (see below). This focus on policy goals, litigation, elections and the mainstream media has been encouraged by different factors, including earlier successes in this arena and donor priorities, as discussed above. But as we enter the 21st century, the palpable force of ideologies in shaping the possibilities and directions of social justice remind us that *power over* operates on multiple levels. Activists are realizing, once again, that social justice is ultimately a battle of hearts as well as minds, and they are looking for ways to understand and address the multiple dimensions of power.

To help navigate *power more* effectively, we present three interactive dimensions of power over that shape the parameters of political action and change, marginalizing some people while privileging others. These range from the more obvious and visible to those hidden and invisible that operate behind the scenes. While they are presented separately, in practice they interact and reinforce one another and need to be viewed holistically as do strategies for challenging their webs of discrimination and subordination.

Visible Power: Observable Decision-making

A conventional understanding of power assumes that contests over interests are visibly negotiated in public spaces with established rules. These public spaces are often viewed as an even playing field – where logic, factual information and the power of persuasion and persistence are vital to winning compromises. Much current advocacy and campaigning focus on these visible faces and arenas such as public policies, legislatures, government agencies, court systems, political parties and elections, corporate by-laws or non-profit policies. Strategies such as lobbying, media, litigation, research and analysis are crucial.

Yet contrary to the belief in the even playing field, there are two main ways that visible power discriminates against certain interests and people:

- ❧ Biased laws and policies that may seem ‘neutral’ but clearly serve one group of people at the expense of others, such as health policies that do not adequately address women’s specific needs, or age and gender requirements for employment;
- ❧ Closed, corrupt or unrepresentative decision-making structures that do not adequately involve the voices or interests of the people they are intended to serve.

Advocacy strategies that target this dimension of power often try to change the ‘who, how, and what’ of policy-making—the decision-makers, the transparency and inclusiveness of the process, and the policies – so that decision-making is more democratic and accountable, and people’s needs and rights are addressed. However, challenging and focusing on one dimension of power is never enough to promote or sustain change over the long run.

Hidden Power: Setting the Political Agenda

Certain powerful actors that may not be formal decision-makers (elected, appointed or otherwise) nevertheless maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. Hidden power works to exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups, like women, racial minorities, small farmers and the urban poor. Difficulties in gaining positive and fair media coverage can further inhibit visibility and legitimacy, and leave ordinary people confused and misinformed. As the mainstream media is increasingly controlled by a small set of corporations, the potential for getting a balanced view or any coverage at all shrinks. Media analysts and critics show how limited, negative coverage of women, workers, immigrants, racial minorities and their issues reinforces stereotypes and biases.

How issues are framed and presented illustrates the way this type of power operates behind the scenes to exclude issues. For example, feminism is deemed elitist or a western import that destroys families. Framing the situation in this manner deflects attention from the economic realities that break families apart. Similarly, environmentalism is painted as an impractical, academic exercise that can destroy good jobs; many political leaders frame policy decisions as security interests, manipulating fear and anxiety to justify war and reduce civil liberties while obscuring the economic interests.

In addition to controlling the public agenda and public debate, public and private institutions are often structured to systematically exclude and discriminate against certain types of people and ideas. By preventing important voices and issues from getting a fair public hearing, policymaking can be skewed to benefit a few at the expense of the majority. To strengthen and gain legitimacy for marginalized groups and their issues, strategies aimed at challenging hidden power dynamics often stress leadership development, organizing, coalition-building, research, media and public education efforts. By combining actions that build and utilize the power of numbers, solidarity, and information with “name and shame” tactics, these types of initiatives can expose who’s under the table calling the shots and

People of color and the poor have been laboring in a society in which many believe that we have transcended our racist past and can blame poverty on personal failure. As we think about racism, we look for the individual engaged in a discrete act or acts; we understand racism as primarily a psychological event located in the mind of a racist actor. Similarly, when we think of poverty we primarily think of either an individual's bad choices or bad luck. These individualist approaches not only affect how we understand issues of race and poverty, it also affects what issues we see and don't see, and the solutions that we support.

(john powell 1993)

WHAT IS OUR VISION OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS?

A way of seeing and making sense of the world, grounded in a belief in fairness, tolerance, and compassion. Shaped by a continuous awareness of power, privilege and inequality in both the private and public spheres, a person with a political consciousness struggles to respect and understand difference while seeking common ground among people. (Adapted from *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics*, p. 62)

reveal their real interests.”

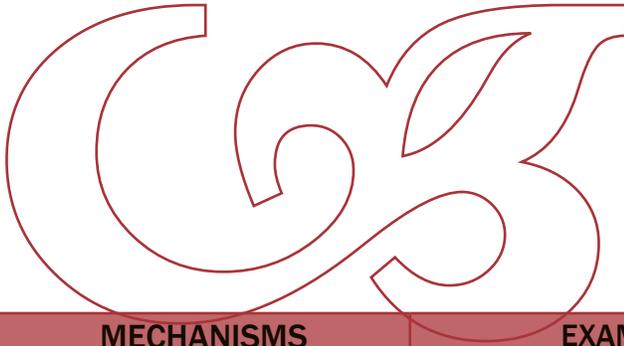
Invisible Power: Shaping Meaning, Sense of Self and What's "Normal"

Probably the most insidious of the three dimensions of power, invisible power shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of change. Significant problems and ideas are not only kept from the decision-making table, but also from the minds and consciousness of the people involved, even those directly affected by the problem. By influencing how individuals think about their place in the world, this level of power shapes people's beliefs, sense of self, and acceptance of the status quo – including their own sense of superiority or inferiority as “natural.” Processes of socialization, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, “true,” and acceptable. These processes also operate in ways to make injustices like poverty, racism, sexism and corruption invisible to the society at large, and make those who experience systematic discrimination the object of blame, including blaming themselves.

Similarly key information is kept secret from the public so that issues remain invisible and cannot become part of the decision-making process. For example, tobacco companies knew for years that cigarettes and second-hand smoke caused cancer, yet their research was concealed from people. Hence cigarettes and its fumes were not deemed a health issue until that information was finally uncovered through other sources. The fact that weapons of mass destruction did not exist was kept from the world and used to justify the war on Iraq with dire results. Similarly the US administration supports the powerful oil lobby by concealing and downplaying information that demonstrates the dangers of global warming to the planet.

Change strategies to counter invisible power target social and political culture. They seek to make alternative values and worldviews alive and visible through public education and creative media and communications strategies, using poetry, theater and music as well as news. Most importantly, empowerment strategies focus on confronting dominant ideologies and strengthening critical thinking skills, visions of the common good, and individual and collective consciousness. These strategies can help transform the way people perceive themselves and those around them, and how they envision future possibilities and alternatives. In addition, research to uncover and publicize concealed information, such as the many *right to know* strategies used to expose dictators, polluters and corporate corruption, can be invaluable for unmasking and challenging this type of power.

On the following page is a matrix about power that can be applied as a tool for joint analysis, planning, and assessment.



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 <i>Through which dimensions of power over operate to exclude and privilege</i>	EXAMPLES <i>Power Over</i>	RESPONSES & STRATEGIES <i>Power With, Power Within, Power To</i>	
<p>Visible: Making & Enforcing the Rules</p> <p>Presidents, Prime Ministers, legislature, 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: Cultural norms, values, practices, ideologies and customs shape people's understanding of their needs, rights, roles, possibilities and actions in ways that prevents effective action for change, reinforces privilege-inferiority, blames the victim and "manufactures consent". Dominant ideologies include neo-liberalism, 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

TRANSFORMING POWER

- ¹Convened by Just Associates (JASS-Asociadas por lo Justo) with support from Hivos and the Global Fund for Women, this 4-day workshop in Panama was entitled “Imagining and Rebuilding Women’s Movements.” It is the first in a series of regional movement-building institutes to be carried out over the next three years in response to demands from activists to reflect, re-tool and re-build.
- ²Adapted from Chapter 3, *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, VeneKlasen and Miller, World Neighbors (2002).
- ³The development of Poverty Reduction Strategies brings together representatives from government, private sector and civil society to discuss specific government anti-poverty policies and programs but disallow the discussion of other global policies that impact governments and their ability to respond to poverty and inequality.
- ⁴See Just Associates, *Strategic Opportunity or Black Hole?* (2005); also see *Making Change Happen 1* (2002) and *Making Change Happen 2* (2006), www.justassociates.org; *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics: The Action Guide to Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, *ibid*; and Brock, Karen, Andrea Cornwall and John Gaventa, *Power, Knowledge and Political Spaces in the Framing of Poverty Policy*, IDS WP 143, October 2001.
- ⁵Interview with Maria Suarez (2006); See also *Las Negociaciones Nuestras de Cada Dia*, Clara Coria.
- ⁶This section is adapted from *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics: The Action Guide to Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, *ibid*. Our thinking about power has been shaped significantly by Steven Lukes and John Gaventa’s writing, including his more recent writing on the *Power Cube* which shows how power operates in different policy spaces and geographic levels. Also see *Making Change Happen 2*.
- ⁷Adapted from *New Weave of Power, People and Politics: The Action Guide to Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, *ibid*.
- ⁸One of the significant global trade battles has pitted small-scale farmers and landless movements against the likes of agribusiness giants like Monsanto for the creation of the “killer seed,” a genetically modified seed that is sterile and cannot be harvested for planting.
- ⁹See, for example, *My Net, Your Work: Pitfalls and Lessons Learned from Experiences with Coalitions, Alliance and Networks*, Just Associates (2005).
- ¹⁰From participants in the workshop, “Imagining and Rebuilding Feminist Movements,” the JASS Meso-American Movement Building Institute, Panama (2006).
- ¹¹See *Making Change Happen 2* (2006) for more discussion of popular education and advocacy strategies on local to global issues.



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**MAKING
CHANGE
HAPPEN** 3

JASS (JUST ASSOCIATES)

JASS (Just Associates) is an international feminist organization grounded and driven by the partners and initiatives of its regional networks in Mesoamerica, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia. JASS is dedicated to strengthening and mobilizing women's voice, visibility and collective organizing power to change the norms, institutions and policies that perpetuate inequality and violence, and to create a just, sustainable world for all.

Founded as a learning community by a group of activists, popular educators and scholars from 13 countries in 2002, JASS generates knowledge from experience with the hope of improving the theory and practice of women's rights, development and democracy.

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