

Understanding Power

Are you passionate about creating meaningful change? A crucial element of effectively creating change is understanding power and how to use it. In this guide, we will explore the concepts of power analysis and power mapping. By the end you will have the tools and knowledge you need to understand who the targets and allies are within your campaign and how you can use this network to reach your campaign goals.

The Importance of Understanding Power

Understanding power is potentially the most important element of a campaign. If you don't know where the power lies you won't be able to create change. Here are some of the reasons why understanding power is important:

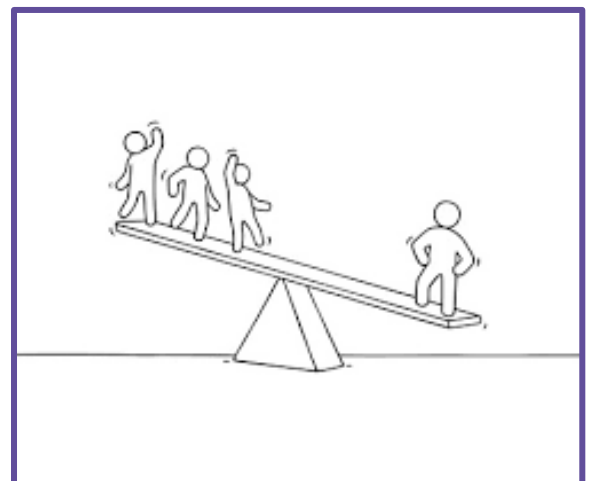
- **Identifying influence:** analysing power will help you to understand which groups or individuals have influence over your campaign.
- **Effective action:** Recognising the groups or individuals that hold power in the context of your campaign helps you target your actions making them more effective.
- **Allies and opponents:** once you know who has power, you'll be able to identify allies and opponents. These are groups or individuals who you will have to collaborate with or work against.

Below you will find a couple of methods you could use to understand power. A combination of the two should give you a good sense of power within your campaign.

Power Analysis

Power analysis is a tool that helps us begin to understand where power currently sits within a community. By investigating the individuals and organisations who have power, we can get a sense of the current power balance and begin to devise strategies for how to shift it. Here are the key steps to conducting a power analysis:

1. Create a list of organisations and individuals who hold power – if you are unsure of the details such as names, you can research this to fill in the gaps. The more information you find the better!
2. Research key individuals and organisations – find out more about the power-holders you have identified e.g. what are their interests and motivations, what are their values, how likely are they to support your cause.
3. Identify allies and opponents – once you have done some research, categorise the individuals and organisations into allies and opponents.

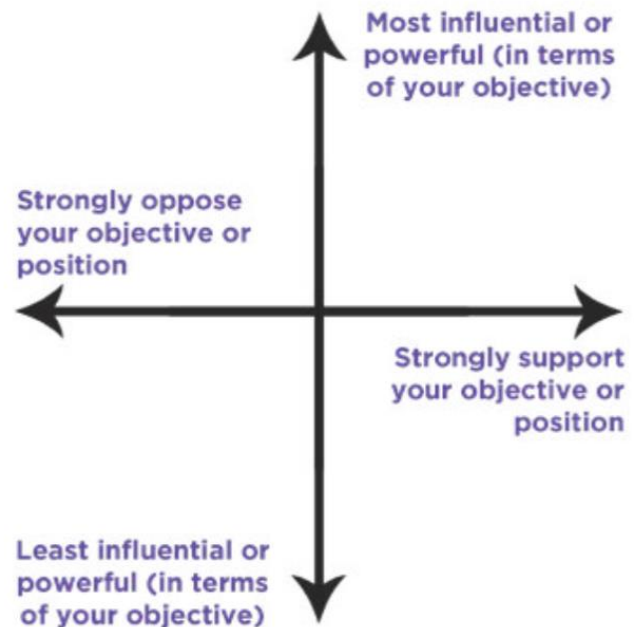


4. Keep your analysis updated – as you identify the groups and individuals that hold power, keep adding them to your analysis. Once you have made contact with them, make sure you keep track of who within your campaign is the key contact for that individual/group.

Power Mapping

Once you have completed a power analysis you can move on to create a power map. This will help you visualise those who have influence within your campaign, and prioritise those who you want to collaborate with/target.

Have a look at the list of allies and opponents that you created during your power analysis. Consider each individual or group – how much influence do they have? How much would they support your cause? You can then begin to add them to your power map.



Templates

Please visit this link to access power analysis and power mapping templates:
[Campaign Resource Library](#)

Have questions or need further support?

- Contact Sophie, the activism programme coordinator at sophie.l.birch@durham.ac.uk.
- Book a planning session or check-in session here to receive advice and support with your campaign: [Book time with BIRCH, SOPHIE L.D.](#)
- For more information visit [Campaigns @ Durham SU](#)