POWER MAPPING
A tool for activating networks

DEFINITION

Individuals and groups interested and involved in promoting positive social change, through service, advocacy, and organizing, often need to think about the context and relationships (between individuals, organizations, institutions, etc.) within the spheres of their work. The role of relationships and networks is very important when advocates seek change in a social justice issue. Relationships are critical resources, as stronger networks yield stronger solutions.

Power mapping is a valuable tool for those actively working with communities, providing a simple framework and a set of tools to better understand and leverage relationships and networks. A visual tool for addressing issues and problem solving, power mapping helps to identify the best targets to advance an agenda and inform policy and conceptualize the sphere of a person or group's influence. Power Mapping is often politically focused and is frequently used to persuade decision makers to inform policy. It can also be used to convince an organization to take a stand, persuade a foundation to give your organization a grant, or compel a newspaper to write a favorable editorial.

OUTCOMES

Participants will build collective knowledge through participation and dialogue.

Participants will understand the value of relational power as an important dynamic in social change.
Participants will have the opportunity to tackle a key problem using the power mapping process.

MATERIALS:

Post-it® Self-Stick Pad, 25" x 30", Plain White Paper, 30 Sheets; Post-it® 3" x 5" Notes, various colors,
2-3 pads; Sharpie® Permanent Fine-Point Markers
(quantity depending on # of participants)

PROCESS
DEFINE YOUR ISSUE

Spend some time discussing with your group some of the issues that impact the community. Together as a group prioritize one issue. Define your agenda around this issue.

LIST MAJOR PLAYERS

Identify key decision-making individuals, institutions or associations within the geographical and political impact of your issue. Brainstorm with your groups a list of key players in your community: Elected Officials (Federal, State, Local), Advocates, Activists, Allies, Unions, etc. (see the glossary for a full list of potential key players)

START MAPPING

1. Create a Cartesian coordinate grid. The y axis represents the spectrum of support-opposition of your agenda. The higher on the Y axis the more supportive to your agenda. The x axis represent the power to affect policy (political power)
in relation to this issue. The further to the right the more power to impact your agenda.

2. Select one by one each of the players you listed and facilitate a conversation with your group that discusses the individuals, institutions, and organizations under the following premises:

i. How much power does this player have to affect policy around my issue? Place a Post-it with the name of the player on the X axis based on its relative power.

ii. How supportive is the player of our agenda? Move the Post-it in vertical direction to locate your player in relation to its support to your agenda.

iii. Continue to place the rest of your player on the grid based on your group's assessment of i and ii
TIP: Find out everything you can about your players, including, for elected officials, the committees they serve on, their past voting records, their individual ideologies, public statements to the press, endorsements and affiliations, etc.
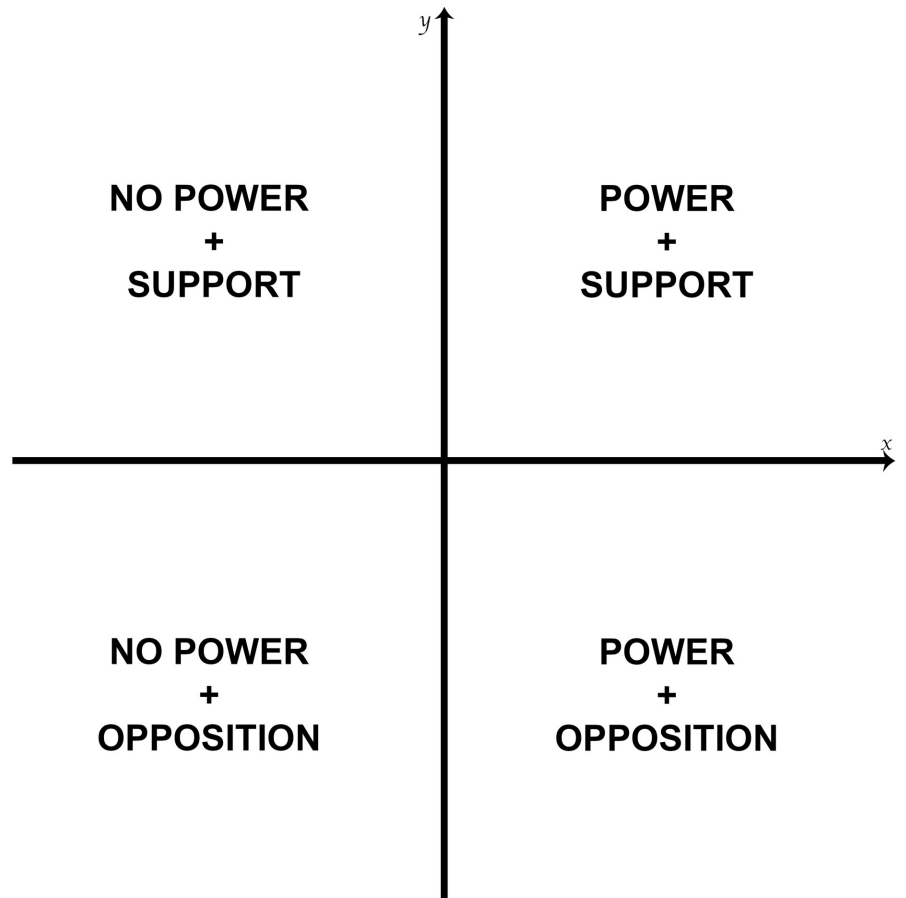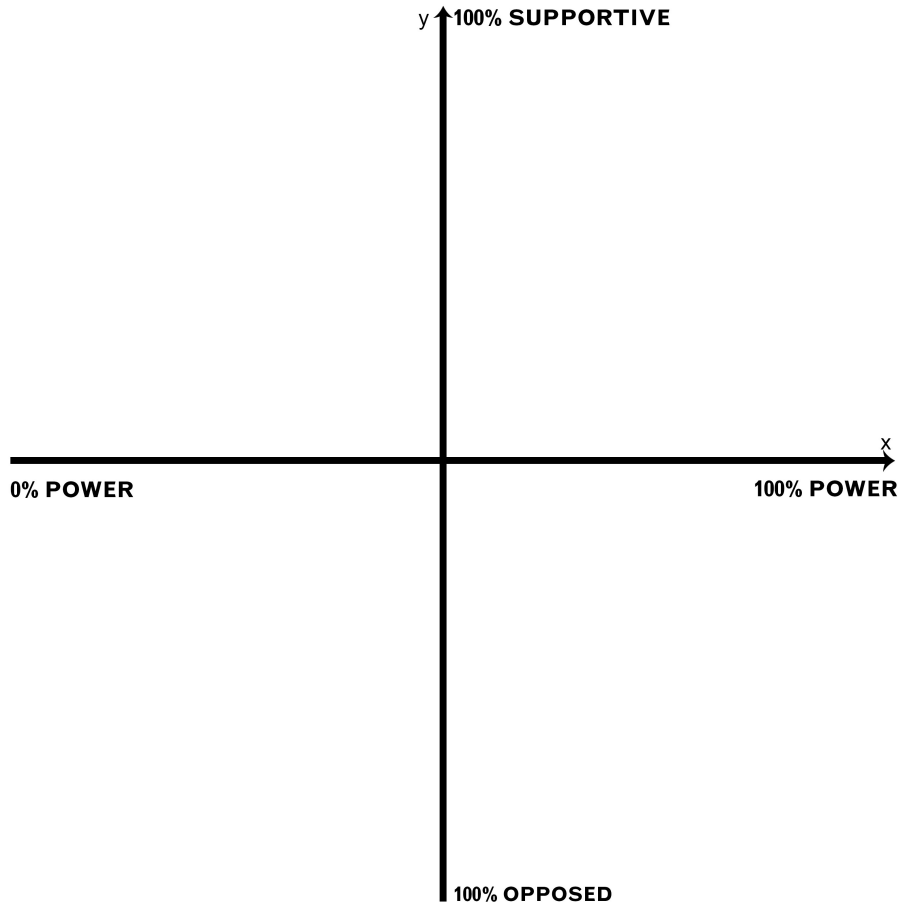
For non-elected officials, you can similarly research who they are allied with, who they partner with, what coalitions they are on, their advocacy positions, etc. to focus on? Who are the key decision makers? The players in the +y +x quadrant are those with the most power and more alignment with your agenda. (your potential allies) The players on the –y +x are the ones who will present a stronger opposition. Together with your group you need to prioritize which groups/individuals are you going to focus your efforts on.

Who might influence your target? Once you've identified who you want to target, you can start writing down people or institutions who you think might be able to influence him/her, and their other associations (Examples include major donors, staffers, family, advisors, religious leaders, celebrities, past coworkers, media outlets that favor your target, other personal relationships.)

TIP: You don't want to rule out anything right off the bat. So even if you know you don't want to approach a certain group your target is connected to, map it anyway. You never know where it might lead.

MAKE A PLAN
The next step is to create some action steps for what to do next. What is the narrative you will use to create awareness of your agenda? What are creative direct actions that you can set up that will influence your targets? How can you engage the press? What is your strategy for engaging key stakeholders or influencers?

y ↑ **100% SUPPORTIVE**

0% POWER

x →

100% POWER

100% OPPOSED

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y ↑

**NO POWER
+
SUPPORT**

**POWER
+
SUPPORT**

x →

**NO POWER
+
OPPOSITION**

**POWER
+
OPPOSITION**

GLOSSARY

List of Key Players

Federal Elected Officials
President
Senator (District, Committee Chairs, Majority/Minority Leaders)
Congressional Representative (District, Committee Chair(s), Speaker)

State Elected Officials
Governor
State Senators (District, Committee Chair(s), Majority/Minority Leaders)
Assembly Member (District, Committee Chairs, Speaker)

City Elected Officials
Mayor
Other citywide elected officials: Public Advocate,
Comptroller
City Council Members (District, Committee Chairs, Speaker, Majority Leader)

Community Leaders
Nonprofit leaders
Faith-based leaders
Union members and leaders
Activists
Neighborhood or Block Associations
Schools: Principals PTAs, School District leaders

RESOURCES

1. Read: Definitions for Cultural Policy - bit.ly/1ASrJD9

2. Read: Cultural Policy: In the board rooms and on the streets - bit.ly/1F2SV5Z

3. Read: How Arts and Culture Can Advance A Neighborhood-Centered Progressive Agenda - bit.ly/1F9uiWB

4. Read: New York City & State's 100 Power Players - bit.ly/2ESWiFJ

5. Visit: New York City Council website - on.nyc.gov/1onoxZ4

6. Read: Roadmap to passing the city's budget- bit.ly/1KBSlNO

7. Read: Policy Brief: Arts and Culture for a Just and Equitable City - bit.ly/1PeD502

9. Visit: The Official Website of the City of New York - on.nyc.gov/18vlOZB

10- Visit: Visions, Values and Voice - A Social Justice Communications Toolkit created by the Opportunity Agenda toolkit.opportunityagenda.org

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POWER MAPPING EXERCISE

ISSUE: (Narrative about the issue)

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Name:
Role:
Position on the issue: (Where do they stand?)

Quotes: (A public statement on the issue)

Values and Priorities: (What do they stand for?)

Purview: (What is their power in relation to other stakeholders / influencers?)

y **100% SUPPORTIVE**

x

0% POWER

100% POWER

100% OPPOSED