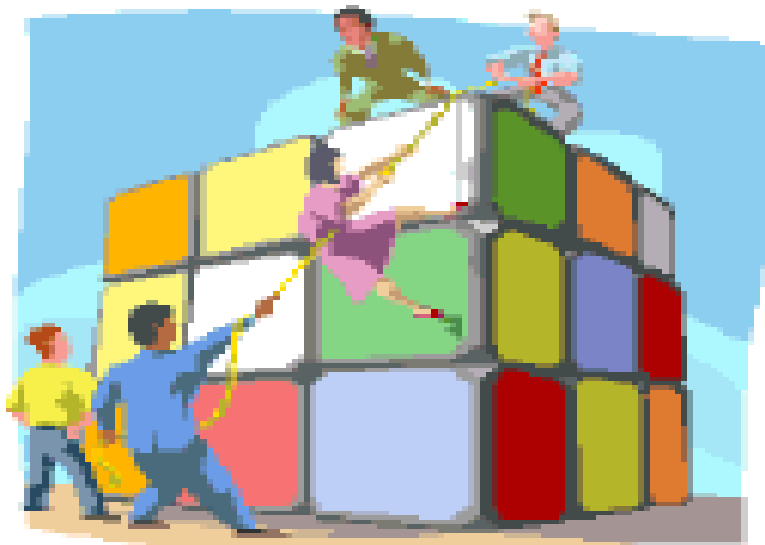


## **Power Pack**

### **Understanding Power for Social Change**



#### **Note to Readers**

This version of the Power Pack is the basis from which [www.powercube.net](http://www.powercube.net) was developed. The content of this pack was created at a Power Analysis workshop hosted by IDS in June, 2009. This content has now been transformed into the powercube website with extensive cross-referencing and resources to download. The idea of this document is that readers can print it out and then refer to the website for more information. Please note that the resources mentioned in this pack can be found on [www.powercube.net/resources](http://www.powercube.net/resources), plus many others not included in this document. The website will continue to be updated and contain new information and resources. [[optional]]You can follow the [powercube](#) on twitter to keep up-to-date with the latest updates, resources and information.] If you have resources on power analysis that you would like to share with others on powercube.net please email [info@powercube.net](mailto:info@powercube.net)

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## **Section 1 Introduction to this Resource Guide and Project**

### **Background**

This 'power pack' project brings together a number of resources for understanding power relations in efforts to bring about social change. This is collective effort, representing contributions from members of the Power, Participation and Social Change (PPSC) group at the Institute of Development Studies as well as a number of others from NGOs, donor agencies and community-based organisations across the world. Many of these contributors participated in a workshop at IDS on 'Power analysis in practice' in June 2009.

Much – but not all - of the pack focuses on uses and applications of 'the Power Cube'. The Power Cube is an innovative conceptual tool that can be used for understanding and analysing the way power works in processes of governance, in organizations, and in social relationships. It combines a multi-faceted approach to the various dimensions of power with a spatial mapping of the diverse spaces and levels in which these power relations are encountered. Use of the Power Cube can help those working to deepen participation and to shift power relations to identify appropriate strategies for particular contexts and moments.

First developed at IDS, the Power Cube has grown in popularity and use among the development organisations and NGOs with whom we work. The Power Cube - and its dimensions of power, spaces and levels - has also been used effectively in combination with other concepts, tools and methods for power analysis, some of which are also included in this pack.

The Power Pack is a response to requests from many people for more practical and conceptual methods, materials and resources to help them think about and respond to power relations within their organisations and within wider social and political spaces and institutions. We hope that these resources, drawn from the input of dozens of people who are using the Power Cube as well as other approaches, will help to fill that need.

Advocacy groups, social movements, NGOs, government officials, donor agencies, students, evaluators and researchers will all hopefully find the resources accessible and helpful in analyzing their positions of power and in strategizing for shifting and building power.

### **How this pack is organised**

- ♦ **Section 2: Concepts** – What is the Power Cube? What is power? Why does it matter? This section introduces theory and critiques to the different Forms (visible, hidden, invisible), Spaces (closed, invited, claimed) and Levels (supra-national, national, sub-national) of power. Readers are directed to illustrations, background conceptual readings and handouts that also can be used to understand power.
- ♦ **Section 3: Other uses and approaches to power analysis** - This section gives readers a very brief introduction to other approaches for understanding power, including feminist concepts of public, private, intimate power, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian discipline, Bordieuan habitus . This section is still to be completed.

- ♦ **Section 4: A Facilitator's guide** – this section provides an overview of pedagogical approaches to helping people understand power analysis. Again, links are provided to concrete exercises, workshop designs, handouts and case studies that can be used for training and discussion.
- ♦ **Section 5: Applications of the Power Cube** – a range of applications of using the Power Cube emerging from practice. These applications, contributed by a number of people, include using the Power Cube, a) to enable learning and awareness building with others; b) for strategy, planning and action and; b) for research to understand power relations.
- ♦ **Section 6: Supporting resources** – On the CD and web version this section will provide links and electronic copy to a host of resources from the Power, Participation and Social Change team as well as from participating contributors. These include background conceptual articles, handouts and training tools, such as powerpoints, and case studies. Further references and bibliographies will also allow users to explore concepts and approaches further on their own.

## How to use this tool

At the moment, presented in written form, the draft Power Pack contains a number of cross references to other sections. There is some duplication, as links to similar material may be made from the concepts section or the facilitators section. **In this written version, not all resources are included.** To view all the available resources visit [www.powercube.net/resources](http://www.powercube.net/resources)

The website [www.powercube.net](http://www.powercube.net) is organised much more interactively, allowing users to navigate through and across sections in a much more interactive and fluid way. This Power Pack will consist of a CD-Rom inside a case with an 8 to 12 page booklet explaining what the pack is, what is inside, and how to use it. The CD-Rom and website will have links to other websites.

There will be a simple text and pictorial narrative explaining where you are at each stage and what it is about. Lots of menus and options will allow people to follow their own logic through the CD. Sections of the CD will be well connected to each other to allow people to weave through.

## Words of caution

The Power Cube should not be used like a checklist or logframe. Rather than a set of fixed boxes, the Power Cube should be seen more as an illustration of concepts and sets of relationships that are constantly dynamic and changing. It is also important that power analysis be used in relationship to specific contexts. Our hope is that a more interactive web and CD based tool will help to give a greater feel of interaction, dynamism and openness to new innovations and applications than is possible in the simple printed form.

## Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed their experiences and tools to this power pack. At IDS, the project has been led by John Gaventa and Jethro Pettit in the Power, Participation and Social Change team, with additional assistance from Laura Cornish, Kate Hamilton and

Rebecca Napier-Moore. We have worked closely in using and developing applying the Power Cube with a number of collaborators, especially Irene Guijt of Learning by Design and colleagues at Just Associates, notably Lisa Veneklasen and Valerie Miller. We have benefitted enormously from the opportunity to work closely with a number of organisations who have applied the tool to their own work, including Oxfam Novib, Oxfam Great Britain, PSO (Netherlands), Christian Aid, the participants in the Dutch Civil Society Participation study led by Irene Guijt, colleagues at the Carnegie UK Trust, the Polytechnic University of Valencia and all of the participants at our June 2009 workshop on power analysis. Dozens of others have inspired us in how they have used and adapted the Power Cube, as well as created other applications for power analysis. Where possible, we have identified each of these contributors at appropriate places in the pack. We are very grateful for the resources for this project received from the Participation and Development Relations Programme (PDR), funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). Other members of the PPSC team at IDS whose have contributed to our collective work on power in development and social change include Andrea Cornwall, Rosalind Eyben, Rosemary McGee, Joy Moncrieffe, Zander Navarro, Peter Taylor and Joanna Wheeler.

## **Contact us**

For more information or to share additional examples or uses of the Power Cube contact the Participation, Power and Social Change team, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE or email [info@powercube.net](mailto:info@powercube.net)

## Section 2 Understanding the Power Cube and Related Concepts

John Gaventa

**About this section: Concepts** – What is the Power Cube? What is power? Why does it matter? This section introduces theory and critiques to the different Forms (visible, hidden, invisible), Spaces (closed, invited, claimed) and Levels (supra-national, national, sub-national) of power. Readers are directed to illustrations, background conceptual readings and handouts that also can be used to understand power.

### Background to understanding power

While power analysis is important, there is no one way of understanding power. The meanings of power are diverse and often contentious.

- Some see power as held by actors, some of whom are powerful while others are relatively more powerless. Others see it as more pervasive, embodied in a web of relationships and discourses which affect everyone, but which no single actor holds.
- Some see power as a 'zero-sum' concept – to gain power for one set of actors means that others must give up some power. Since rarely do the powerful give up their power easily, this often involves conflict and 'power struggle.' Others see power as more fluid and accumulative. Power is not a finite resource; it can be used, shared or created by actors and their networks in many multiple ways.
- Some see power as a 'negative' trait – to hold power is to exercise control over others. Others see power as about capacity and agency to be wielded for positive action.

Power is also often used with other descriptive words. Often power is thought of as a form of control of one person or group over others. In this sense **power 'over'** refers to the ability of relatively powerful actors action to affect the actions and thought of relatively powerless. But power can also be used in a more positive sense, referring to the power to bring about desired change in ones' lives or those of those others. In this sense

- **power 'to'** refers to the capacity to act; to exercise agency and to realise the potential of rights, citizenship or voice.
- **Power 'within'** refers to gaining the sense of self-identity, confidence and awareness that is a pre-condition for action.
- **Power 'with'** refers to the synergy which can emerge through partnerships and collaboration with others, or through processes of collective action and alliance building.

These concepts have been developed over the years by a number of writers and in a number of different ways. See [www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power](http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power) There are also a number of useful short hand outs which help us understand these terms, such as those in the **Resources** [www.powercube.net/resources](http://www.powercube.net/resources) outlined below.

### Resources

- **Exploring Power for Change** edited by Rosalind Eyben, Colette Harris and Jethro Pettit

- **A New Weave of Power, People & Politics** by Lisa Veneklasen with Valerie Miller
- **Rough Guide to Power Analysis** by the Oxfam Programme Resource Centre

## What is the Power Cube?

There are just as many approaches to analysing and understanding power as there are debates about its meanings! Some of these are explored further in Section 3.

However, in this section, we focus on one approach known as the Power Cube. This approach has developed over the last few years through work by members of the Power, Participation and Social Change team at IDS and other colleagues. **Go to Box 1** for a short background on Power Cube and go to **Figure 1** for a visual portrayal of the cube.

### Box 1

#### *Background to the power cube*

The power cube approach has grown through the work of a number of people. What we call here the 'forms of power' builds on work by Steven Lukes *Power: a Radical View*, originally published in 1974, with a revised edition in 2005. A student of Steven Lukes, Gaventa applied his work in his book: *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (1980). What Lukes and Gaventa referred to as the three faces or dimensions of power, were also adapted by colleagues at Just Associates into the concepts of visible, hidden and invisible forms of power (Veneklasen and Miller 2002).

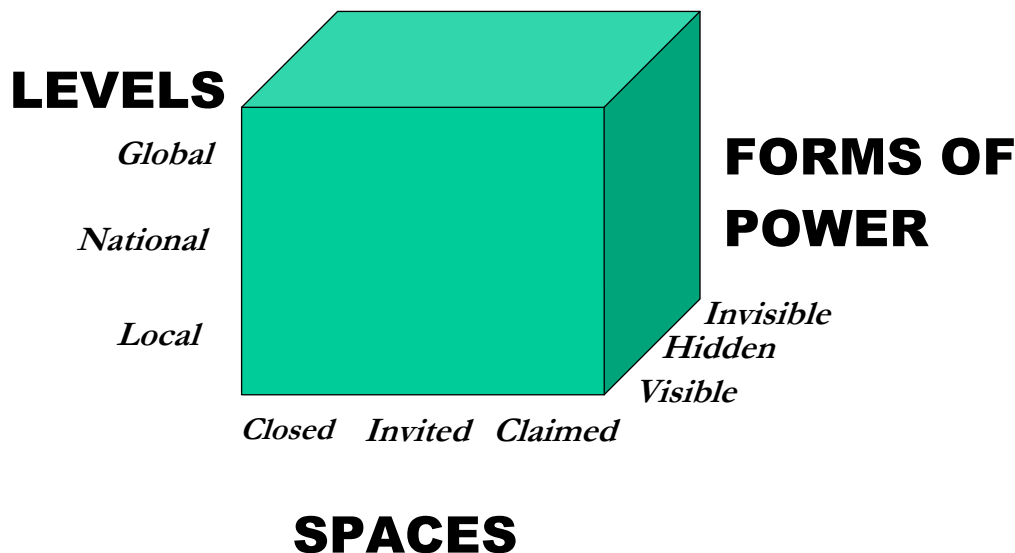
The spaces dimension of the cube also had multiple roots, growing from work by John Gaventa, Andrea Cornwall, Rosemary McGee and Karen Brock on understanding differing arenas for participation on poverty issues in Nigeria and Uganda. For more information see **Power, Knowledge and Political Spaces in the Framing of Poverty Policy** and **Unpacking Policy: Knowledge, Actors and Spaces in Poverty Reduction in Uganda and Nigeria**. Andrea Cornwall also further elaborated the concept of spaces in a working paper, **Making Spaces, Changing Places**, for the emerging work of the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability on spaces of participation. The cube itself was first used by Gaventa at a meeting of Citizenship DRC researchers in 2002 and as a training tool with donors on the rights based approach at IDS in 2003. Read the **Rights and Power Workshop Report** by Alexander Hughes, Joanna Wheeler, Rosalind Eyben and Patta Scott-Villiers.

It has spread and improved in a variety of ways since that time. The concept was picked up and adapted more systematically in a major evaluation for Dutch donors, on 'Assessing Civil Society Participation', coordinated by Irene Guijt (Guijt 2005). [**Click here** for online version of all the reports at [http://www.partos.nl/index.php?page=5\\_2\\_3](http://www.partos.nl/index.php?page=5_2_3) and note to readers that they need to scroll down to the series of reports listed as "CFP Evaluation Series 2003-2006 No. 4" as there are many other links on this page]. In addition, Irene Guijt, Jethro Pettit and John Gaventa also began to use the approach as a training and assessment tool with other NGOs and donor agencies, and students at IDS. Since then, the approach has continued to spread and be adapted by others. This resource manual, prepared with the help of Rebecca Napier Moore and Kate Hamilton, who have also used the approach for research and training, attempts to share the lessons learned from people who have been using this approach in different ways and different settings.

To read more about the power cube follow the below link:

- **Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis** by John Gaventa
- **Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power: Analysing opportunities for change** by John Gaventa

**Figure 1: The 'Power Cube': the levels, spaces and forms of power**



The Power Cube is a framework for analysing the *levels*, *spaces* and *forms* of power, and their inter-relationship. It is useful in letting us explore various aspects of power and how they interact with each other. It lets us visually map ourselves and our situation, including other actors, relationships and forces, and then look at possibilities for movement, mobilisation and change. It allows people to plan advocacy and to find entry points for action.

- The *forms* dimension refers to the ways in which power manifests itself, including its ***visible, hidden and invisible forms***.
- The *spaces* dimension of the cube refers to the potential arenas for participation and action, including what we call ***closed, invited and claimed*** spaces.
- The *levels* dimension of the cube refers to the differing layers of decision-making and authority held on a vertical scale, including the ***local, national and global***.
- 

Each of these dimensions and its subcomponents will be explained further in the following sections.

The Power Cube can build on and be used to further explore the concepts of 'power over', 'power to', 'power with', and 'power within' as outlined above. It grew originally as a way of exploring how powerful actors control the agenda through and the ability of less powerful actors to build their awareness and action for change. But it can be also be used to think about the openings, levels and strategies to exercise agency, e.g. to strengthen the power to act. By looking at how alliances are formed with actors working on each dimension and aspect of the cube, we can explore the potential of building 'power with' others. And by using concepts such as 'invisible power' and 'created spaces', we can explore issues of 'power within'. For a good simple handout of each of these concepts together go to the **Rough Guide to Power** by Oxfam Programme Resource Centre [www.powercube.net/resources](http://www.powercube.net/resources)



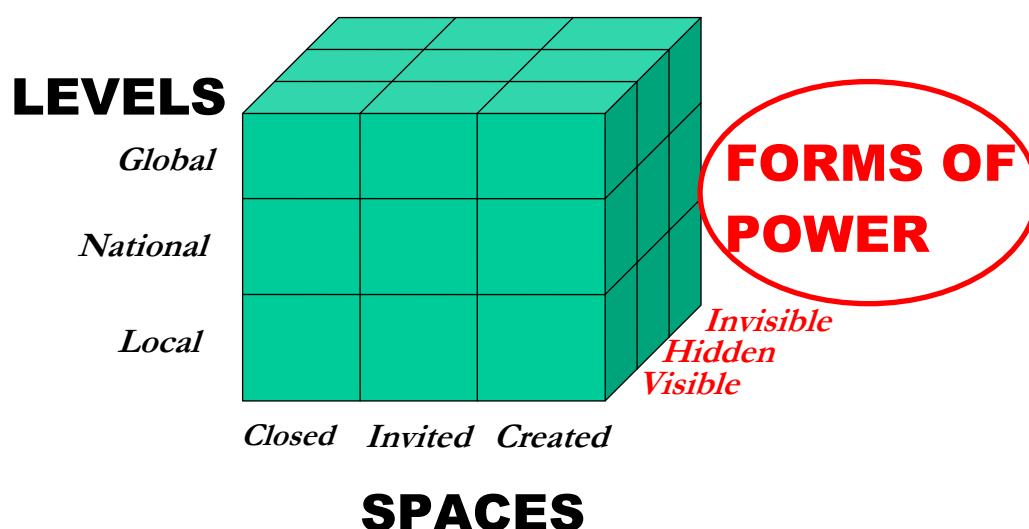
Though visually presented as a cube, it is important to think about each side of the cube as a dimension or set of relationships, not as a fixed or static set of categories. Each of the dimensions of the Power Cube – the levels, spaces and forms of power – may be seen as a continuum or a scale. For instance, while the levels dimension is often used to refer to local, national and global levels of decision-making, there can be many more levels as well. Similarly, there can be a variety of spaces for engagement along the spaces continuum.

It is important however to remember that each dimension of the Power Cube is constantly interrelating with the other, constantly changing the synergies of power. For instance, what happens at global decision making levels can affect the spaces available for participation and engagement; which spaces for participation are available affect the forms of power within them. The Power Cube can be used not only to explore each dimension, but also their interaction.

But in our work, we have found that it is often not useful to present all sides or dimension of the cube at once. Rather, it is important to understand each dimension with its multiple facets one at a time, and then talk about the inter-relationships. In this approach, it is important to see each side or dimension – the forms, spaces and levels – as part of constantly changing continua. So while we may present discrete blocks in each, in fact, there are many variations along each continuum which can occur

In using the Power Cube, one can start with any of its dimensions. If you want to think more about how the forms of power affect what kinds of participation strategies are needed, then start with the *forms* side of the cube. If your interest is in analysing *spaces* for participation and citizen engagement, then start there. If your interest is more in examining relations between very local to national and global expressions of power, then the *levels* side might be the place to start. Click to your chosen starting place: **forms, spaces or levels** [www.powercube.net/analyse-power](http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power) The narrative below starts with *forms*.

**Forms of Power** See [www.powercube.net/analyse-power/forms-of-power](http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/forms-of-power)



This dimension of the Power Cube focuses how power manifests itself in different forms, which we refer to as the visible, the hidden and the invisible. There is a long history of academic debate, from which these concepts are drawn. Go to **Box 2** to learn more on the evolution of academic debate of forms of power.

**Box 2                      Evolution of academic debate on the Forms of Power**

In 1961 Robert Dahl famously asked about New Haven, Connecticut, 'Who Governs'? His book was one of the best known in a genre of work on community power in the United States at the time, launching a large debate on who had power, and indeed how one understood power in American democracy, especially at the local level. Earlier Dahl (1957:202) had written, 'my intuitive idea of power, then, is something like this: A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.' Power in this approach could be found very simply by examining 'who participates, who gains and who loses, and who prevails in decision-making' (Polsby 1963: 55), especially at the community level, where power might be most observable.

This view of power was challenged in 1974 by Steven Lukes, in his perhaps even more well-known book, *Power: A Radical View* (and in his expanded version in 2004). Critiquing the argument that power could be studied by observing who prevailed in decision making arenas, Lukes argued that power must be understood not only in terms of who participates, but also in terms of who does not. Power he argued, had three faces – the public face which Dahl, Polsby and others had studied, a hidden face, which served to keep issues off of the agenda of decision making arenas (Bachrach and Baratz 1962), and an even more 'insidious' third face, through which the relatively powerless came to internalise and accept their own condition, and thus might not be aware of nor act upon their interests in any observable way. Lukes' analysis of what he called the three 'dimensions of power' has spawned a series of debates and studies about how power affects not only who participates in decision making processes, but also who does not, and why.

From '**Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power: Analysing opportunities for change**' John Gaventa, 2007.

## **Visible Power**

*Visible forms of power* are contests over interests which are visible in public spaces or formal decision making bodies. Often these refer to political bodies, such as legislatures, local government bodies, local assemblies, or consultative forums. However, they can equally apply to the decision-making arenas of organizations and even of social movements or other spaces for collective action.

The assumption in this approach is that access to these decision-making arenas by relatively powerless groups is relatively open. Those with grievances are able to articulate them in the formal decision making processes and participate fully in the deliberations within them. Organisational and decision-making structures are considered accessible by all, so we can understand power but looking only at what occurs within them.

A second assumption is that by seeing who participates, who wins and who loses in these arenas, you can tell who has power. For instance, we can analyze which interests are able to maintain debate, whose interests prevail in key decisions, such as on a key policy or budget decision, and whose voices and interests are present, but have little influence. Little attention is paid in this approach to whose voices are not represented and why.

Strategies to challenge visible power often involve forms of lobbying, public advocacy, and mobilization to affect what decisions are made, be they on policies, budgets, rules or procedures. Similar strategies are used inside organizations to articulate voices through the 'official' decision making channels. **For more on strategies go to section [www.powercube.net/strategize-and-act](http://www.powercube.net/strategize-and-act) or read the powermatrix handout.**

Visible power assumes that decision-making arenas are neutral playing fields, in which any players who have issues to raise may engage freely. It also assumes that actors are conscious and aware of their grievances and have the resources, organization and agency to make their voice heard.

But there are many ways in which certain actors are kept from getting to the decision-making table and certain issues are kept off of the agenda. These are referred to as hidden power and invisible power. The academic evolution of this debate about power is described in the box below.

### **Hidden Power**

Hidden forms of power are used by vested interests to maintain their power and privilege by creating barriers to participation, by excluding key issues from the public arena, or by controlling politics 'backstage'. They may occur not only within political processes, but in organizational and other group contexts as well, such as workplaces, NGOs or community based organizations.

Through hidden forms of power, alternative choices are limited, less powerful people and their concerns are excluded, and the rules of the game are set to be biased against certain people and issues. Academics have described this form of power as the "mobilization of bias," where "some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out" (Schattschneider 1960, 71). This is done by dominant rules and procedures, the framing of issues in a way that devalues them, the uses or threat of sanctions, and the discrediting of the legitimacy of actors who are challenging the status quo.

Strategies which address this form of power focus on strengthening people's voices and capacities to speak out, mobilising and organizing to overcome the barriers to participation, using research and media to challenge how issues are framed. Often when we talk about hidden power, we talk about how people affected negatively by may challenge it, to make their voices more visible. For instance, just changing the rules about who is allowed to speak in a public meeting can bring new voices or issues to the table. **For more on strategies go to section [www.powercube.net/strategize-and-act](http://www.powercube.net/strategize-and-act) or read the powermatrix handout.**

But hidden forms of power also can involve more hidden forms of action as well, in which people resist domination and control through less public ways. Go to **Box 3** to read more.

**Box 3**

**Resistance as Hidden Power**

Just like dominating power can be exercised in hidden ways, so can strategies of opposition and resistance. In his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James Scott talks about resistance from dominated groups who voice their resistance in 'cryptic and opaque' ways - often for their own safety. Scott details how people hide their actions of resistance, disguising themselves behind masks of anonymity, euphemisms, or muttered grumbling as they complain or twist dominant meaning. Framing issues a certain way, resistance can be a powerful means for people to "manipulate[e] a realm of ordinary activity that [i]s open to them and cod[e] it with political meaning..."

[Link relevant section in Section Three, other approaches to understanding power]

See especially Ch 6 "Voice under Domination: The Arts of Political Disguise" in Scott, J. C. (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

**Invisible Power**

While it may be less visible, hidden power still assumes that people are aware of and are able to articulate their grievances. These can be investigated by looking outside the formal and public arenas of decision making and searching for the voices of discontent which are excluded from public view.

However, invisible power goes a step further. It involves the ways in which awareness of one's rights and interests are hidden through the adoption of dominating ideologies, values and forms of behavior by relatively powerless groups themselves. Sometimes this is also referred to as the 'internalisation of powerlessness' in a way that affects the awareness and consciousness of potential issues and conflicts, even by those directly affected. Go to **Box 4** for more discussion of invisible power.

**Box 4**

**Invisible Power**

Steven Lukes referred to this as 'the most insidious use of power' because it keeps conflict from emerging in the first place. In this form of power, A "exercises power over [B] by influencing, shaping or determining his[her] very wants" (Lukes 2005, 27), through indoctrination, acculturation and socialization. Hinson and Healey (2003, 4) further write that "[Invisible power] is exercised in part through control of the institutions that shape and create meaning: religious institutions, the media, television, mass consumer culture, popular ideas about government and about workers and bosses, etc...." Status quo power relations are reinforced by the fact that most of us experience powerlessness as part of everyday life. The experience of being shut out of decision-making processes gets internalized and understood as the 'natural state' of things. Consider the following reflections on powerlessness from Adrienne Rich:

'When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you....when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing. It takes some strength of soul—and not just individual strength but collective understanding—to resist this void, this non-being, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard.'" (p5)

- **Building Political Power Prepared for the State Strategies Fund Convening** by Sandra Hinson and Richard Healey. September 2003. Grassroots Policy Project

In this form of power, people may be unaware of their rights, their ability to speak out, and may come to see various forms of power or domination over them as 'natural', or at least unchangeable, and therefore unquestioned. Poor people, for instance, may accept their circumstance as the status quo even in the face of inequalities around them, internalizing dominant explanations of poverty that tell them poverty is 'their fault' rather than a systemic problem. Paulo Freire referred to this as the 'culture of silence', resulting from the internalization of oppression. Other people have challenged this view, and with it the concept of 'false consciousness'. Go to **Box 5** to read more on false consciousness.

Strategies for challenging invisible power involve approaches like awareness raising, adult education, participatory research to validate peoples' own knowledge, uses of the media and popular communication methods to challenge dominant stereotypes and discourses, changes in approaches to schooling and socialization, etc. **For more on strategies go to section [www.powercube.net/strategize-and-act](http://www.powercube.net/strategize-and-act) or read the powermatrix handout.**

#### **Box 5 Invisible Power and False Consciousness**

In Invisible Power, "real" interests are hidden from *B*'s knowledge. For example, as a woman, *B* does not know that it is not her "real" interest to be subservient to her husband *A*. She does not know her 'true' interests and therefore, in Marxist terms, has a 'false consciousness'.

This step into Marxist "false consciousness" has been heavily criticized, as elitist, authoritarian and unverifiable. Haugaard usefully turns the slippery slope of false consciousness into something constructive. As "false" implies a "true" consciousness, he drops objectivity altogether and differentiates between *tacit* and *discursive* knowledge. Tacit knowledge is that experienced but not articulated. The test for Lukes' third dimension is recognition of that knowledge if someone articulates it. Once articulated (sometimes through explicit 'consciousness-raising' activities), it is then up to *B* to judge for his/herself "whether what is presented discursively is consonant with practical [or tacit] consciousness knowledge" (Haugaard 2003, 102). According to Gaventa (2006:29), consciousness cannot be false because "if consciousness exists, it is real to its holders".

Scott says that there are thick and thin versions of false consciousness. "The thick version claims that a dominant ideology works its magic by persuading subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination" (Scott 1990, 72). Scott says that he does not believe this theory as he sees so much resistance from subordinate groups, rather than whole-hearted belief in the systems that dominate them. "The thin theory of false consciousness, on the other hand, maintains only that the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable. The thick theory claims consent; the thin theory settles for resignation" (ibid.)

Such theories about consciousness are linked to Gramsci's concepts hegemony as well. **[For more on hegemony, link to section 3, other approaches to understanding power]**

For more on false consciousness see Chapter 4 "False Consciousness or Laying it on Thick" in Scott, J. C. (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

## How visible, hidden and invisible power often work together

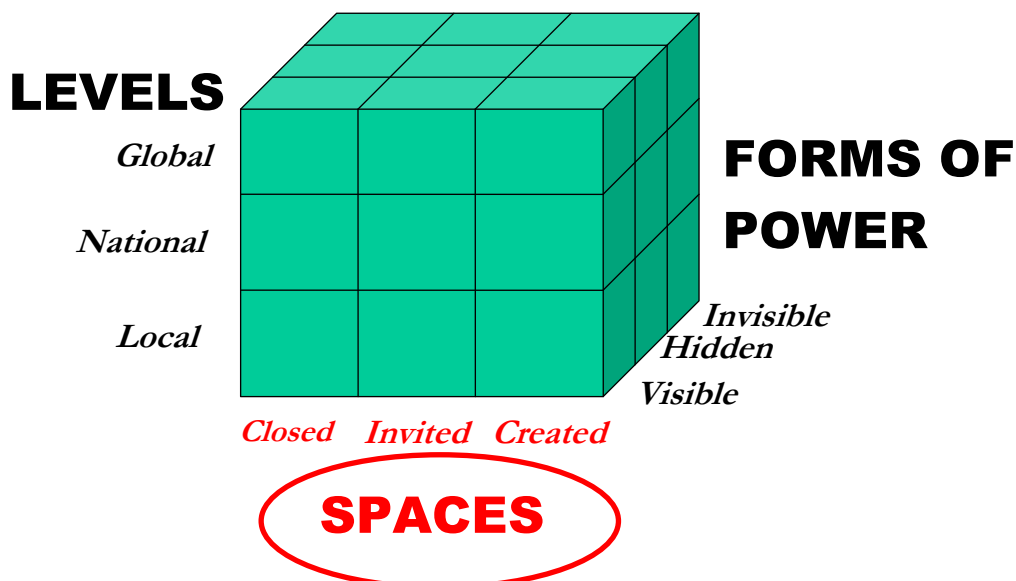
While these three concepts are presented separately, in practice they are highly inter-related. Victories by dominant actors in public arenas (visible power) shape the barriers which may keep people from engaging (hidden power). Over time, the lack of visible conflict or contestation contributes to an acceptance of the status quo as normal (invisible power). John Gaventa's **study** on how large absentee mining companies established their control over eight decades in Appalachia gives an example of this. Once these companies were able to gain control over local political processes, they were able to use this power from preventing challenges related to their land and mineral interests. Over time, in the absence of public challenge, acceptance of the inequalities of power came to be accepted in the local community. While small land owners would fight each other over land issues, the 'company land' was seen as out of bounds and untouchable. For more conceptual description of this process go to Chapter 1 section 1.3 of *Power and Powerlessness*.

If power is thus accumulative and interrelated, than strategies for change can also inter-relate and strengthen one another. For instance, a policy victory in the visible arena of power may be important, but may not be sustained, if those outside the arena are not aware that it has occurred and how it relates to their interests, or are not mobilised to make sure that other hidden forms of power do not preclude its implementation. Too often, however, those challenging the status quo use separate strategies of advocacy, popular mobilisation and awareness building, without linking them up directly or working with other organisations who do.

As has been stated earlier, the forms of power are not only found in formal decision-making arenas, but also may be found in other spaces of participation, such as community meetings, public consultations, or public collective actions. But how power is used, and who has power, may vary across these spaces. That is why it is important to link the forms of power to the study of the spaces and levels of power as well.

## Spaces of participation

see [www.powercube.net/analyse-power/spaces-of-power](http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/spaces-of-power)



The notion of 'space' is widely used across the literatures on power, policy, democracy and citizen action. In the Power Cube approach, which is designed as a tool to analyse how power affects citizen action and participation, usually spaces refer to decision making arenas and forums for action, but they can also include other 'spaces' that are seen as opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships which affect their lives and interests. For more conceptual reviews of the concept of spaces, go to **Box 6**.

#### **Box 6**

#### **Academic approaches to the concept of space**

Some writers refer to 'political spaces' as those institutional channels, political discourses and social and political practices through which the poor and those organisations working with them can pursue poverty reduction (Webster and Engberg-Petersen 2002). Other work focuses on 'policy spaces' to examine the moments and opportunities where citizens and policy makers come together, as well as 'actual observable opportunities, behaviours, actions and interactions ...sometimes signifying transformative potential' (McGee 2004: 16). Other work examines 'democratic spaces' in which citizens can engage to claim citizenship and affect governance processes (Cornwall and Coelho 2006).

As Andrea Cornwall's work reminds us, these spaces for participation are not neutral, but are themselves shaped by power relations, which both surround and enter them (Cornwall 2002). Among others, she draws upon French social theorists (Lefebvre, Foucault, and Bourdieu) for whom the concept of power and the concept of space are deeply linked.

Inherent also in the idea of spaces is also the imagery of 'boundary'. Power relations help to shape the boundaries of spaces, what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests. Using the idea of boundary from Foucault and others, Hayward suggests that we might understand power 'as the network of social boundaries that delimit fields of possible action.' Freedom, on the other hand, 'is the capacity to participate effectively in shaping the social limits that define what is possible' (Hayward 1998:2). In this sense, participation as freedom is not only the right to participate effectively in a given space, but the right to define and to shape that space. [Link to section on de-facing power section 3]

Links to above section:

- **Making Spaces, Changing Places: Situating Participation in Development** by Andrea Cornwall
- **Introduction to 'Spaces for Change'** by Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan P. Coelho

While there can be many such kinds of spaces, in the Power Cube approach we normally refer to three: Closed, invited and claimed spaces.

- **Closed spaces**

Though we may value the democratic right of people to participate more fully in decisions that affect their lives, in practice in many settings decision-making spaces are closed. Decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. Closed spaces are where elites such as



politicians, bureaucrats, experts, bosses, managers and leaders make decisions with little broad consultation or involvement.

Closed spaces often involve issues like trade, macro economic and finance policies, military policies, etc. which have a great deal of impact on peoples' lives but which are considered off-limits for public participation. In some societies and countries, especially those with long histories of authoritarian rule, closed spaces can be quite dominant, yet they also exist in strongly in so-called democracies as well. Closed spaces also exist – and often predominate – in workplaces, organizations and social movements, as well in as political institutions.

Strategies to open up closed spaces often focus on greater transparency, rights to information and disclosure and public accountability for what goes on behind closed doors. They also may demand opportunities to have greater voice and to be consulted by other decision-makers, or to be at the table with them.

- **Invited spaces**

In many societies and governments, demands for participation have created new opportunities for involvement and consultation, usually through 'invitation' from various authorities, be they government, supranational agencies or non-governmental organizations. Invited spaces may be regularized, that is they are institutionalized and ongoing, such as we find in various legally constituted participatory fora, or more transient, through one-off consultations. Increasingly with the growth of new forms of 'participatory governance', these spaces are seen at every level, from local, to national policy and even to global forums, and often within organizations and workplaces as well.

Strategies to strengthen participation in invited spaces include gaining knowledge and expertise on key issues and regulations, and learning the arts of public speaking, negotiating and compromise. For many previously excluded groups, who have been used to demanding that closed spaces be opened up, or participation in their own claimed spaces, this may require new skills.

- **Claimed and self-created spaces**

While much emphasis on citizen action and participation is on how to open up closed spaces, or to participate effectively with authorities in invited spaces, there are almost always examples in any society of spaces for participation which relatively powerless or excluded groups create for themselves. These spaces range from ones created by social movements and community associations, to those simply involving natural places where people gather to debate, discuss and resist, outside of the institutionalised policy arenas.

Cornwall refers to these spaces as 'organic' spaces which emerge 'out of sets of common concerns or identifications' and 'may come into being as a result of popular mobilisation, such as around identity or issue-based concerns, or may consist of spaces in which like-minded people join together in common pursuits'. For further information read **Making Spaces, Changing Places** by Andrea Cornwall.

## **What goes on inside the spaces?**

It is important to look not only at what spaces for engagement exist, but also at what goes on inside them? What is the quality of participation? Who gets to speak? How much



influence do they have? What are the micro-dynamics of participation within the space? Here a number of factors of power may play a role – be they dynamics around gender, age, expertise or others that give some voices more influence than others. Just because a space is present, doesn't mean that it will be filled equally with all voices! For an example, go to 'Canada's designs for Aboriginal Participation, Box 7. And participation in spaces can be used for lots of purposes, sometimes to bring about real change, but other times simply to legitimate decisions that have been elsewhere, or to give the illusion of participation, or for symbolic or group building purposes. In Colombia, civil society activists listed almost twenty strategies that use in entering 'invited spaces'. Read Box 8.

This is why when looking at spaces it is also helpful to look at the forms of power within the space as well. In observing the practices of participation, we can look at the visible signs of power – who participates and who wins and loses. But we also need to look at the hidden forms of power which may make certain voices or issues less important than others, through sometimes subtle and sometimes very overt ways? And, we also need to be aware of whether those speaking are really reflecting their own voices, based on critical awareness of their own interests, or whether there are forms of invisible power that shape what people say. Sometimes, 'voices' can really just be 'echos' of power, where people are saying what they think power holders want to hear, or are really speaking for others who are controlling or influencing what they say. For instance, a number of researchers cite examples of where elected women officials in local governments in India may sometimes be saying what their husbands want them to say – their 'voice' in the public, invited space may reflect their powerlessness in more intimate and private spaces at home.

## **Links across spaces**

Who creates the space is critical to who participates in it. Those who create it are more likely to have power within it, and those who have power in one space, may not have so much in another. In some settings, the 'claimed or created' spaces may indeed have more influence and control over decisions that affect peoples' lives than the closed or invited state spaces, especially in settings of weak or illegitimate states. In other settings, such as we have seen in the rise of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, shared forms of authority between state and society may in fact have more influence than those that are legally ascribed. So, for the student of power, to ask 'who governs?', also necessitates asking, 'in which space?'

We must also remember that these spaces exist in dynamic relationship to one another, and are constantly opening and closing through struggles for legitimacy and resistance, co-optation and transformation. Closed spaces which are being challenged may seek to restore legitimacy by creating invited spaces; similarly, invited spaces may be created from the other direction, as more autonomous people's movements attempt to use their own fora for engagement with the state.

Similarly, power gained in one space, through new skills, capacity and experiences, can be used to enter and affect other spaces. From this perspective, the transformative potential of participation in one space must always be assessed in relationship to the other spaces which surround it. For instance, invited spaces of participation may not have much potential for change, unless there is also strong mobilisation from outside the space, and strong political will on the inside to hold the space open and ensure that it is listened to. For an example go to **Taking a Seat on Brazil's Health Councils in Box 7.**

The inter-relationships of the spaces also creates challenges for civil society strategies of engagement. To challenge 'closed' spaces, civil society organisations may serve the role of advocates, arguing for greater transparency, more democratic structures, or greater forms of public accountability. As new 'invited' spaces emerge, civil society organisations may need other strategies of how to negotiate and collaborate 'at the table', which may require shifting from more confrontational advocacy methods. [See Case study on 'Crossing the Line' Box 7].

At the same time, research shows that 'invited spaces' must be held open by ongoing demands of social movements, and that more autonomous spaces of participation are important for new demands to develop and to grow. Spanning these spaces - each of which involves different skills, strategies and resources - is a challenge. In reality, civil society organisations must have the 'staying power' (Pearce and Vela, 2005) to move in and out of them over time, or the capacity to build effective horizontal alliances that link strategies across the various spaces for change.

The Citizenship DRC has done a number of case studies on the dynamics of various 'invited spaces' for change, which illustrate these dynamics in a number of ways. For a short overview about 'spaces of participation', see the **Making Space for Citizens** IDS Policy Brief on this theme. For an overall description of the concept and some of the challenges of participation across various types of spaces, see the Introduction to the Volume on Spaces for Change (Cornwall and Schattan 2007). For short, accessible two page cases studies on participation in various types of spaces, which can be used to illustrate these concepts, see the **Citizenship DRC Case Study Series, Sick of Waiting: Citizen Prescriptions for Better Health Policy**. Short summaries are provided in the **Box 7**.

**Box 7**

**Citizenship DRC Case Study Series  
Sick of Waiting: Citizen Prescriptions for Better Health Policy**

**'Crossing the Line: UK Activists Team Up with Health Officials'** looks at what can happen when people who see themselves as an opposing force to government then try to work with and within official, invited spaces of engagement. The case shows that the 'potential for change can be limited by institutional and political contexts and by unequal power relationships, though by recognising these obstacles, officials and citizens who share a commitment to a goal can find more effective ways to cooperate'. **Click here to case**

**Canada's Designs for Aboriginal Participation** is based on a case study of the involvement of Aboriginal people in a national deliberative consultation on health in Canada, shows the challenges of linking participation across peoples' own 'claimed spaces for deliberation' with more generic 'invited spaces.' Relating this case back to the idea of 'hidden power', it shows how numerous attempts to involve Aboriginal people in a mainstream deliberative process failed because the underlying rules, procedures and norms of the process served to exclude their issues and voices, in what at first appears an open, inclusive process. Moreover, it points to the importance of listening to people in their own claimed spaces, rather than trying merging all voices into an 'invited space' with the presumption that it is equal playing field. **Click here to case**

**Taking a Seat on Brazil's Health Councils**, gives an example of somewhat more successful participation in invited spaces, in this case participatory health councils in Brazil. In the past, many decisions about health, and decisions about things like budgets for health, had been made in 'closed spaces', by officials or bureaucrats behind closed doors. A new Constitution created thousands of new 'invited spaces', councils where citizens have a right to be involved in various ways, and to elect their own councilors. However, to get this to work still means working across all spaces. As the case points out, 'Breaking the grip of powerful actors on the councils often depends on a public manager who is willing to champion the cause of participation, on strong civil society groups or other associations who refuse to let their constituencies be left out and on the rules and regulations that govern the election of councillors.' **Click here to case**

## Other Approaches to Spaces

Closed, invited and claimed/self-created spaces are not the only spaces for participation. There are other approaches to space in power analysis as well.

In various applications and uses, many other relevant terminologies have been added to this continuum, such as 'invented', 'conquered', 'instigated', 'initiated', or even 'empty' spaces. For instance, work in Colombia has identified a broad continuum of public spaces, for further information go to **Box 8**. Feminist approaches to power have also pointed to the important of looking not only at public spaces, but what happens in the private and intimate spaces as well. For more information see **section 3** of the Power Pack on a **gender perspective to spaces**. For this reason, the 'spaces' dimension of the power cube may be thought of as a spectrum, ranging from closed spaces in which powerless groups or individuals have little rights or voice, to more open spaces, which are created by relatively powerless groups themselves. Sometimes even the created spaces may also be ones that are created as forms or places of resistance from powerful actors, and may also be made hidden or invisible to them. See [www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/scott-resistance](http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/scott-resistance)

### **Box 8** Other ways of analysing spaces

In Colombia, a popular exercise uncovered a range of types of spaces used by civil society groups and what happened within them.

From **Colombia Country Report** by Jenny Pearce and Gloria Vela p. 67

#### ***More Spaces***

What are the places in your reality?  
How would you categorize your reality?

Spaces should be defined to your context. In a Colombia, Civil Society members saw 5 Spaces that needed to be examined – nuancing the Closed, Invited and Claimed categories with their own:

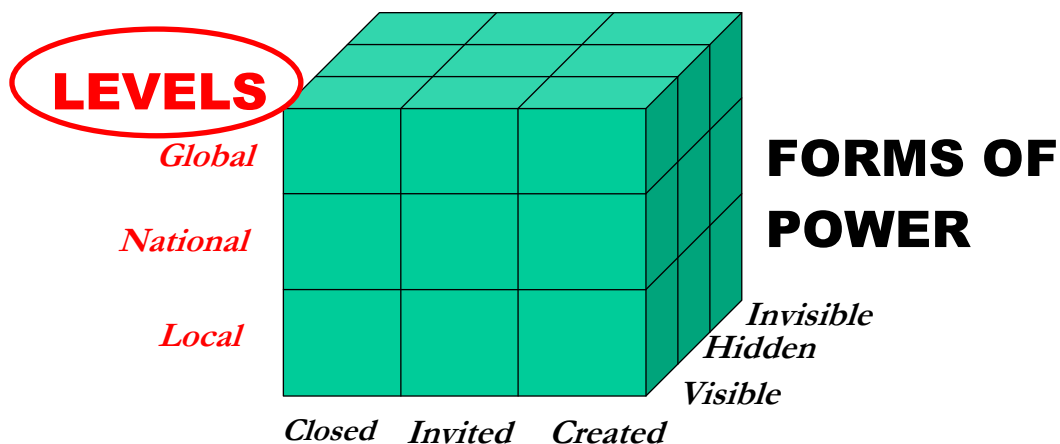
Formal by invitation  
Formal by right  
Created by institutions  
Created by organisations  
Transitory collective direct action

#### ***What happens in spaces?***

Decision-making  
Debate  
Building agreements  
Influence  
Interlocution  
Lobbying  
Protest  
Accountability  
Making visible  
Pressure  
Articulation  
Follow up  
Formation of public opinion  
Scrutiny and recommendation  
Resistance  
Proposal  
Negotiation  
Peace-building  
Complaint  
Encounter  
Mobilization

**The levels of power** see [www.powercube.net/analyse-power/levels-of-power/](http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/levels-of-power/)

In today's world, power is increasingly seen as multi-layered and multi-polar – that is, it is found across various levels and amongst state and non-state actors. While once power might have been understood in relationship to a particular place or territory, not is able to move across local, national and supranational levels. There is a great deal of academic debate on how globalisation is affecting how we understand power. For a summary of the debates see **handout 1** in supporting conceptual resources on **academic debates about the 'levels' of power in a globalised world**.



While power, it is argued, can operate at many levels, for activists and scholars alike there have long been debates on which level of power is most important to address.

There are some that argue that changing power in practice must begin locally, as it is in the arenas of everyday life in which people are able to act. Others argue for the importance of the nation state, and how it mediates power, suggesting that the nation state is still the main crucible of power and public authority. Increasingly those who focus on globalisation argue that supra-national bodies are more important, replacing local and national arenas in their importance. Others argue that change must begin more at the household or personal level, not just in the layers of decision-making found in government. Read more about intimate and private spaces see **other approaches to understanding power in section 5.2** of the Power Pack on **Gender Perspective to Spaces**.

In the Power Cube, we often recognise that what is going on at all levels are potentially significant and therefore argue for considering them all, and their inter-relationship. In the Power Cube, we often have included the global, national and local, or alternatively the supra-national, the national and the sub-national levels of power as the starting point, recognising that the spectrum can in fact be much broader. And, while these distinctions can apply to levels of governmental decision-making, they can equally apply to other transnational organisations, such as international NGOs, multinational corporations, or social movements.

## Supra-national levels.

Globalisation and new forms of global governance have created a wide array of formal and informal, state and non-state spaces for participation and influence at levels beyond the nation-state. At the international level, this includes formal institutions such as those associated with the UN, the World Bank or the IMF, meetings associated with global agreements and treaties, such as those on climate, and a host of consultative spaces for participation, such as the recent the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) or even forums organised by civil society, such as the World Social Forum. Increasingly, supra-national authority is also held in regional level bodies, such as the African Union, the EU, regional trade regimes, or regional networks. Other powerful bodies include private sector networks and informal networks of international NGOs. (For an example of an 'invited space' at the global level and the power dynamics which surround it see **Global Engagements with Global Assessments** paper by Ian Scoones or go to **Box 9** for a short summary.)

### **Box 9 Global Engagements with Global Assessments**

An interesting example of a new type of global 'invited' space for participation is the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development – which ran between 2003 and 2008. In involving over 400 scientists worldwide, the IAASTD was an ambitious attempt to encourage local and global debate on the future of agricultural science and technology. Responding to critiques of top-down, northern-dominated expert assessments of the past, the IAASTD aimed to be more inclusive and participatory in both design and process. Yet still it was laden with forms of power, affecting who was able to participate, whose knowledge was seen as important and what issues were able to emerge. For an interesting case study by Ian Scoones go to IDS working paper **Global Engagements with Global Assessments**. This working paper is a one of a recent series on globalisation and civic engagement from the Citizenship DRC at IDS. For more information on these, **click here**.

## • National level

Despite the growing importance of supra-national bodies of international or regional governance, many argue that national government is still the critical entry point for change. It is national governments that often officially represent citizens in global governmental arenas, or who can decide whether or not to implement international treaties. While many activists and campaigners have focused in recent years on global forms of citizen action, increasingly various actors are recognising the importance of national level change as well, including focus on parliaments, executive bodies, national political parties, courts, and the like.

### **Box 10 IDS In Focus issue 5 Building Responsive States: Citizen Action and National Policy Change**

A recent **case study series from IDS** focuses on the importance of national policies and on how citizens can successfully engage to change them. The overview of these cases helps to make several points that link to power. First, it points out that citizens campaigns rarely change policy on their own – they have to make horizontal links across spaces, working with those in closed and invited spaces as well. Secondly, national campaigns are often aided by global norms and agreements, and are more sustained when they link to the local level as well. For a summary of these findings view **Building Responsive States** by John Gaventa. The two page case studies in the series can also be used to illustrate aspects of the power cube. For instance, the case study by Amita Baviskar **Winning the Right to Information in India** shows the importance of national legislation to open up 'closed spaces' and 'hidden forms of power', and how this was built by linking local and national action to global norms on the transparency and accountability. **Click here to view case study series**.

- **Sub-national level**

In many contexts, sub-national decision-making arenas are critical points of leverage for holding and challenging power. In federal systems, such as the United States or India, state level governments are very important actors, with their own decision-making bodies as well.

In the last two decades, programmes of decentralisation have also made the local level very important, both through local government programmes, as well as a host of other structures for participation in development projects, service delivery, or NGOs. Strategies for participation in local governance have been very important for planning, allocating and monitoring budgets, and holding local institutions to account. Equally, local level non-governmental bodies are also important for change. For examples, go to **Box 7** the Citizenship DRC Case Study Series **Sick of Waiting: Citizen Prescriptions for Better Health Policy** and also the case study **Councillors and Residents in Hove Park** in the **applications of the Power Cube for research and analysis section 5** of the Power Pack.

## **Other approaches to levels**

As with the spaces of power, there are many other levels of power, if you understand them across a vertical continuum from the very micro and personal to the more macro and global. While we have focused on these three levels, the spectrum can include family, households, the individual person, organisations, regions, provinces. It can correspond with a country's administrative structures. It can also reflect places that people experience as being divided along linguistic, ethnic, racial, or political/electoral divides. For other examples of how to view the levels of power go to **handout 1** in the supporting conceptual resources section of the Power Pack and view **handout 1 Academic debates about the 'levels' of power in a globalised world, and to work on private and intimate levels of power, in section on other approaches to power.**

### **Box 11 Other approaches to levels**

As part of the Civil Society Participation Project described elsewhere, civil society activists and researchers used the power cube in Colombia to look at levels of participation which they saw relevant to their issues. They identified 8 levels of governance that were important to explore.

#### **More Levels**

Places should be defined to your context. In a Colombia, Civil Society members saw 8 levels that needed to be examined – nuancing the Supra-National, National, and Sub-National categories:

International  
National  
Departmental  
Sub-regional  
Municipal  
Communal  
Vereda/barrio  
Comunitarian

- **Colombia Case Study** by Jenny Pearce and Gloria Vela p.67



## Linking power vertically

While one approach to understanding power focuses on the different levels of power, others focus on their interaction. In this approach, while appearing fixed in this diagram, this vertical dimension of power should also be seen not as a fixed set of categories, but as a flexible, adaptable continuum, in which each layer interacts with the other, sometimes opening and other times closing opportunities for action.

Some theorists argue that power and 'territory' are increasingly de-linked. Power holders can move from place to place, and conversely challenging power means being able to operate outside one's own immediate geographical location. Rosalba Icaza, Peter Newell and Marcelo Saguier in **Democratising Trade Politics in the Americas** argue that powerful actors and special interests are often able to 'forum-hop', that is to choose the arena in which they are regulated, thereby weakening the challenges from others. For instance, in the area of trade, the North American Free Trade Agreement brought a focus on regional rules and regulation, and a lot of civil society groups focused their movement on this level. However, later as public pressure grew at this level, the focus shifted to 'bi-lateral agreements' and civil society trade campaigns had to adapt. Click here to read IDS Working Paper **Democratising Trade Politics in the Americas: Insights from the Women's, Environmental and Labour Movements**.

The de-linking of power and territory can also open up possibilities for those who are mobilising to change from below as well. Local campaigners may first go to global bodies in order to put pressure on their national or local governments. Or members of a diaspora community may organise from outside their country in order to make change at home. Keck and Sikkink call the process of putting pressure on one state via mobilising pressure through other states or networks the 'boomerang pattern' of advocacy (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 13).

**Because power and authority can move across levels, some argue that the** most effective strategies for change are ones that mobilise across levels simultaneously, linking action at the supra-national, national and local levels. But, this in turn has posed other problems, of power issues within campaigns, especially between global, national and local organisations. There are risks that campaigning at the global level, for instance, obscures local voices in their own claimed spaces. On the other hand, when campaigns are grounded in local realities yet are able to link across these levels effectively, change can have a greater impact, as a recent case study by John Gaventa and Marj Mayo on **The Global Campaign on Education** illustrates. By building a coalition at all levels, and by linking it together through a series of strategies, campaigners were able to fight for the right to education at every level. See **Box 12**.

**Box 12      Working Across Levels to Gain the Right To Education.**

One good issue in which to see the impact of different levels of power is in the area of education. While we often think of education as a long or national issue, in recent years a plethora of global policies, norms and frameworks affect how people are able to realise the universal right of Education for All. In a recent study, John Gaventa and Marj Mayo examine the changing landscape of power in the educational arena, and how the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) has tried to work across all levels of power in order to campaign for the right to quality, free education for all. Established in 1999, the GCE is now one of the longest-standing global campaigns on a poverty-related issue and has a positive reputation for the ways in which it has been able to build and maintain a strong, diverse, inclusive coalition across many countries and across many layers and levels of policymaking and policy implementation. Yet it does so in a changing landscape in which the governance of education illustrates the challenges of responding to the multi-level, multi-layered, diffuse nature of global governance today.

Despite the importance of working in and across many levels and spaces, thinking and organisation models for transnational coalitions tend to remain vertical, giving rise to tensions about legitimacy, voice and representation. Any global advocacy coalition also faces potential tensions between the need to take action speedily and the need to consult and maintain inclusive democratic processes, and between the need for short-term achievements and the need to maintain longer-term horizons for the achievement of development goals. The GCE largely managed to avoid, minimize or overcome most of these tensions. How did the GCE manage to avoid this and other common pitfalls in global coalitions? Five success factors appear very important:

- strong national and local roots for the campaign
- carefully built governance structures reflecting these identities
- inclusive framing of messages
- recognition of and attention to the contributions and value added at each level
- long-term resources for sustainability

Summary based on John Gaventa and Marj Mayo, 'Spanning citizenship spaces through transnational coalitions: the case of the Global Campaign for Education' IDS/Citizenship DRC Working Paper. Note, this paper is one of 10 **case studies** which examine how globalization is changing power, and how this affects citizen action across levels. Others may also be found on the **Citizenship DRC web page**.

For other work that outlines how the power cube analysis can be used to inform global citizen action, see

- **Mapping the Public Policy Landscape: From Local to Global.** ESRC Seminar Series:
- **Citizen Engagement and Global Economic Power. Making Change Happen 2.** Just Associates and IDS Participation Group.

## **Challenges for working across the interrelationship of the spaces, places and forms of power**

While analysing power along any of its dimensions of space, level and form may be useful, it is equally important to recognise that these also interact with other. Not only does each of the concepts along a single dimension of power interact with the other, but they may also interact with concepts in the other dimensions as well.



This poses significant challenges for strategies which are seeking to analyse power and change power relations. Along each dimension, any sustained and effective change strategy must concern itself with how to build and sustain effective change across the full continuum. Transformative, fundamental change happens, we suggest, in those rare moments when social movements or social actors are able to work effectively across each of the dimensions simultaneously, i.e. when they are able to link the demands for opening previously closed spaces with people's action in their own spaces; to span across local and global action, and to challenge visible, hidden and invisible power simultaneously. Successful change requires thinking not only about strategies along one dimension of the power cube but also about how each dimension relates to the other.

Linking strategies for change across the three dimensions of the power cube is a huge challenge, both within each of the dimensions, but also made more difficult by their interaction. For instance, along the spaces dimension, while many groups seeking action work *either* on opening closed spaces through demanding more transparency or supporting internal reform, *or* on building social movements and mobilisation in claimed space, much research suggests that it is effective when horizontal alliances are built *across* these spaces that real change occurs. Similarly, advocacy and change strategies must often build vertical alliances across local, national and global levels to make sure that changes are meaningful at each level. And, those seeking not only to influence policies in the public arena, but also to change power relations more fundamentally, must simultaneously think about winning the issue, mobilising to broaden the political space, and building awareness of those who are excluded. Rather than any single strategy, an ensemble of strategies, which work together and not against each other, are required to fully challenge these sets of power relationships.

Moreover, while it is difficult enough for those seeking change to work across the range of any single dimension of the cube, in fact, the dimensions are simultaneously interacting to affect the other. Strategies for alignment along one axis may contribute to mis-alignment on another. The local, national, and global agenda affects the opening and closure of invited spaces; the visibility of power is shaped by who creates the space; in turn prior participatory experiences which have helped to overcome forms of invisible and hidden power may strengthen the possibilities for success of new institutional designs for participation. By the same token, the rapid opening of invited or claimed spaces without prior strategic efforts to address hidden and invisible power, or to build 'power within' (dignity and self-worth) and 'power with' (collective understanding and action), may result in hollow victories as new spaces succumb to old forms of power.

For any given issue or action, there is no single strategy or entry point. Much depends on navigating the intersection of the relationships, which in turn can either contribute to new mis-alignments and distortions of power, or simultaneously creates new boundaries of possibility for strategic action. For instance, linking local-national-global campaigns to open up previously closed spaces may be important, but in so doing, they may re-enforce forms of hidden and invisible power, if they simultaneously exclude certain potential actors or forms of knowledge. On the other hand, the opening of previously closed local spaces can contribute to new mobilisations and conscientisation, which may have the potential to open other spaces more widely, and to create momentum for change at national or global levels. The process of change is constantly dynamic – requiring strategies which allow constant reflection on how power relations are changing and the agility to move across shifting spaces, levels and forms of power.

This does suggest that those seeking to challenge power in all of its spaces, levels and forms need to search not for one solution, but to build multiple, linked strategies and in different sequences, depending on the starting point in any given context. The challenge is to understand what these strategies might be, and how they can be linked, to address all of the dimensions of power. That's when transformative change might really occur.

For one example of an attempt to work across multiple dimensions of power simultaneously, see **handout 2** on the case of **Jubilee Debt Campaign** in the supporting resources section of this Power Pack.

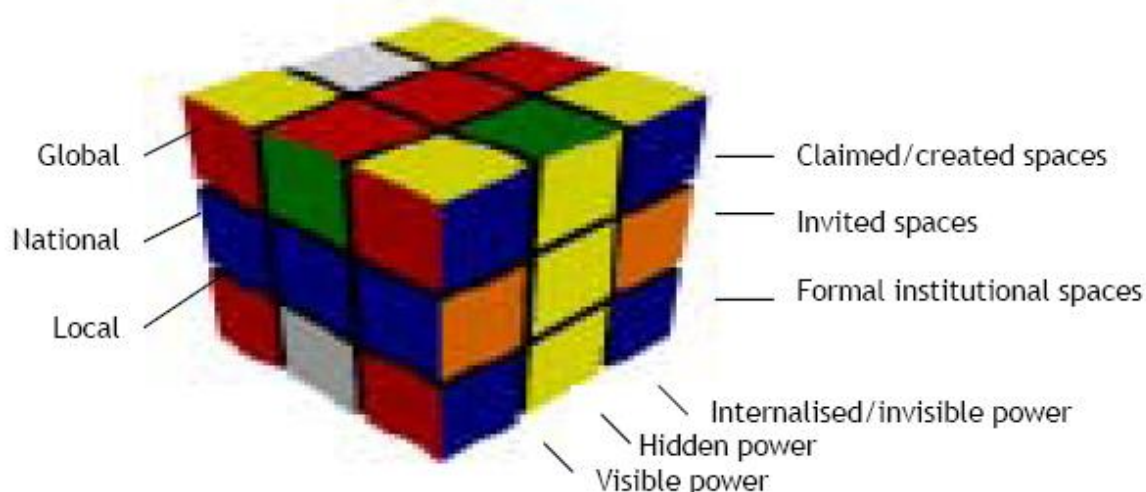
## Ways of visualising power

See [www.powercube.net/analyse-power/ways-of-visualising-power](http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/ways-of-visualising-power)

Visualisation of these dimensions of power can be very useful to helping to understand them and to showing their interrelationships. There are many ways of doing so, through drawings, cartoons, skits and popular theatre, and the use of various images.

In our work, we have often used the metaphor of the 'power cube' to illustrate the dimensions of power and how they are linked, as seen in the above [show visual]  
In some uses of the cube, each of its dimensions can be divided into three parts, making it appear a bit like a Rubik's cube the famous block toy where one tries to align the colours of each block along each side. Like a *Rubik's cube*<sup>3</sup>, each side of the cube can be rotated, and in so doing affect the alignment of blocks on other dimensions. While any of the sides may be used as the first point of analysis, each is linked to the other. (Go to **Wikipedia** for more on Rubik's cube.)

**Figure 2: Levels, spaces and forms of power indicated on the Rubik's Cube**



<sup>3</sup> Rubik's cube refers to a mechanical cube invented in 1974 by the Hungarian sculptor and professor of architecture Ernő Rubik, and marketed widely as a puzzle. The sides of the cube can rotate, though the whole remains intact.

The Power Cube approach, as described earlier, suggests that when strategies and analysis of power are able to work across or 'align' across each dimension of the cube, then real transformation of power relations is more likely to occur. Yet this is difficult in practice. As with a Rubik's cube, changes in one side or dimension of the Power Cube can cause the other dimensions to go get out of line. This reminds us that analysing one aspect of power without attention to the impact on how it affects other dimensions of power is risky. And, those who study the Rubik's cube argue that there are literally billions of different positions<sup>4</sup> that the blocks of the cube may have, illustrating the complexity and permutations which power can take across level, space and form in any given context. On the other hand, those who study the Rubik's cube also tell us that any of its dimensions can aligned with the others in a maximum of 29 moves, no matter how out of line they are to start with. While we don't want to press the comparison to far, this at least gives a hint that change is possible!

While very useful as a heuristic, mapping and strategizing device, we have also found that there are risks in presenting these dimensions of power in this way. The Rubik's cube may be known to some, but only in certain cultures. Moreover, as we have seen, we are really talking about the interrelationship of various spectra or dimensions, which may each more than three 'neat' sub-categories – so to use this image may give the impression of static and fixed categories of power. On the other hand, we have seen that there may be various forms, levels and spaces, and that they may change over time. Sometimes, for instance, the invited spaces may be more important in a given setting than the claimed spaces, so we need ways to show the opening and closing of such spaces across time and context.

Certainly in presenting the cube we have found it is better to talk about each dimension one by one, not to start with trying to understand the whole cube from the beginning.[For an example of a way to present the power cube one dimension at a time, link to JG powerpoint. Link also to teaching section]. That can be overwhelming and while the cube imagery works for some, it is seen as too fixed and uncreative for others and can leaving the impression that power relationships and strategies for change can be reduced to mechanical or tick box formulae. So we encourage people to develop the images and visualisations of power which work for them. In fact, there are a number of alternative ways of using it, and a number of innovations on it.

- 1) **Spectrums rather than Boxes.** As discussed in the sections above, one can consider the forms, spaces and levels of power, as dimensions or spectra, rather than fixed blocks. In particular, applications in practice have identified many more examples of relevant spaces and levels of power. [try design here of interlocking spectra, without borders ].
- 2) **Moving across time.** The Power Cube could move along a time scale, allowing users to see how power in the Cube changes over time. In one approach participants of a national NGO were asked to discuss which aspects of power they focused their work on 10 years ago and which they focused on now. In doing so, they realised that while they still talked about working on local participation and strengthening peoples' knowledge of the grassroots, much of their attention was focused more on professional advocacy at the national and international levels.

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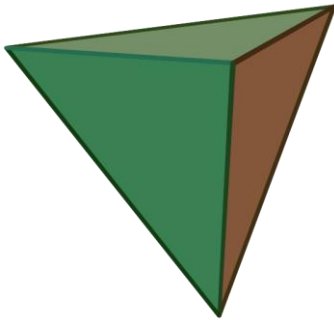
<sup>4</sup> More specifically, about forty three quintillion, or 43,252,003,274,489,856,000, according to Wikipedia!

- 3) **Spinning.** The Cube could also be spinning as it moves through time. That way viewers could see power from many angles, rather than one view.
- 4) **Expanding and contracting** depending where you enter. As we look at *Strategies* in this Resource Pack, we need to have in mind a cube that is thin in some places and expanding in others, showing lots of power in one place and an absence of it in another. But this is not static. As actors enter parts of the Power Cube, the waves they make by using or changing one kind of power ripple to change dynamics of power in other parts of the Cube.

At a workshop in June 2009 on power analysis, workshop participants were invited to share further images and ways of visualising power. In addition to reflecting on drawings and cartoons which had been prepared, people sketched out alternatives to the 'cube'. These included

See [www.powercube.net/analyse-power/ways-of-visualising-power/more-ways-of-visualising-power/](http://www.powercube.net/analyse-power/ways-of-visualising-power/more-ways-of-visualising-power/)

- A tetraydron – or a triangular pyramid, in which each triangle represents one of the dimensions of the power cube. [the image below found on Wikipedia and has various common use agreements attached to it]



- More molecular structures which were changing over time
- a sphere
- A desert rose and others.

There may be a number of appropriate images to use, depending on the context, culture, learning styles of participants, etc. One very effective approach, if time allows, is to presenting the dimensions of power – across levels, spaces and forms – and ask people themselves to diagram how they see the interrelationships, as you can see in the photos from the June workshop.

However one visualises the dimensions of what we have called here the power cube, this is still only one way of conceptualising and understanding power. It can be used with and linked to other approaches as well. Some of these are described in the next section.

## Section 3 Examples of other approaches to understanding power

Please note this section has not been developed in this format, please refer to [www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power](http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power)

**Other uses and approaches to power analysis** - This section gives readers a brief introduction to other approaches for understanding power, including feminist concepts of public, private, intimate power, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian discipline, Bourdieuan habitus. This section is still to be completed.

Examples included so far in this section:

- **Differing types of power** From A New Weave of Power by Lisa Veneklasen with Valerie Miller p55
- **A gender Perspective to spaces: Public, Private, Intimate** (Veneklasen and Miller)

Other examples for possible consideration in this section:

- **Analysing primary change agents, context, developing change hypothesis – Angels (Oxfam Intermon)**
- **Monitoring Power for Development Policy Analysis by** Göran Hydén Submitted to the Swedish Embassy, Dar es Salaam, June 15, 2005.
- **Linking power and poverty reduction** by Rosalind Eyben 2004, in 'Power, Rights and Poverty: concepts and connections' edited by Alsop.
- **Transforming Power: from zero-sum to win-win?** by Robert Chambers 2006, IDS Bulletin vol 37 no.6

## **Differing types of power**

### **"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. Power is seen as a win-lose kind of relationship. Having power involves taking it from someone else, and then, using it to dominate and prevent others from gaining it. In politics, those who control resources and decision making have power over those without. 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 relationships, communities and institutions. This is also true of people who come from a marginalized or "powerless" group. When they gain power in leadership positions, they sometimes "imitate the oppressor." For this reason, advocates 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 more democratic forms of power. Practitioners and academics have searched for more collaborative ways of exercising and using power. Three alternatives – power with, power to and power within – offer positive ways of expressing power that create the possibility of forming more equitable relationships. By affirming people's capacity to act creatively, they provide some basic principles for constructing empowering strategies.

### **Power With**

Power with has to do with finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity and collaboration, power with multiplies individual talents and knowledge. Power with can help build bridges across different interests to transform or reduce social conflict and promote equitable relations. Advocacy groups seek allies and build coalitions drawing on the notion of power with.

### **Power To**

Power to refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. When based on mutual support, it opens up the possibilities of joint action, or power with. Citizen education and leadership development for advocacy are based on the belief that each individual has the power to make a difference.

### **Power Within**

Power within has to do with a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge; it includes an ability to recognize individual differences while respecting others. Power within is the capacity to imagine and have hope; it affirms the common human search for dignity and fulfilment. Many grassroots efforts use individual story telling and reflection to help people affirm personal worth and recognize their power to and power with. Both these forms of power are referred to as agency – the ability to act and change the world – by scholars writing about development and social change."

From **A New Weave of Power** by Lisa Veneklasen with Valerie Miller p55

See also Jo Rowlands' book **Questioning Empowerment** in **further references** which also covers these forms of power.

## **A gender Perspective to spaces: Public, Private, Intimate**

"Gender theory adds another perspective for understanding different levels and expressions of power which are applicable to women as well as men. It critiques the focus on *visible* power as the place where all politics takes shape. Practitioners and scholars familiar with the challenges of women's empowerment explain that political power takes shape in three interacting levels of a woman's life. Change will not occur, they argue, unless political strategies look at and address power in the public, private and intimate realms.

The **public realm of power** refers to the *visible* face of power as it affects women and men in their jobs, employment, public life, legal rights, etc.

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, personal confidence, psychology and relationship to body and health.

For an individual woman, the experience of power and powerlessness will be different, based on race, class or age, and may even be contradictory in different realms of her life. For example, a woman politician who appears confident in public may accept a subordinate role in her family; she may even survive abuse in her private relationships 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 the maintenance of the home and children. The challenge of AIDS prevention further illustrates some of the contradictions that occur with regard to relations of power in the intimate realm. Many seemingly educated, empowered women and men around the world fail to take measures to protect themselves against the disease despite the knowledge and resources to do so.

Acknowledging these layers and contradictions can be helpful in understanding the tensions generated by empowerment for many women. Political change and advocacy strategies that focus solely on the public realm may overlook some critical challenges facing women who are leaders, active citizens and public officials when they return to their homes and families. It is from this perspective that women activists argue that good citizenship for women and for men is not solely about public behavior"

- (New Weave of Power Chapter 3 pp.61-62).



## Section 4 Introducing Power – A Guide for Facilitators

### Jethro Pettit

**A Facilitator's guide** – This section provides a guide for facilitators, trainers and teachers who want to introduce concepts and methods for understanding and engaging with power, including ways of applying the Power Cube and related frameworks. Links are provided to concrete exercises, workshop designs, handouts and case studies that can be used for training and discussion.

See [www.powercube.net/plan-a-workshop](http://www.powercube.net/plan-a-workshop)

### Background

This guide builds on the experience and practices of a number of people who lead workshops and trainings with civil society and development organisations, and who teach courses in universities and adult education settings. The educators and learners alike come from diverse backgrounds – practitioners, activists and academics – with a shared interest in how to bring a clearer “power lens” to their thinking and action as change agents. Their and our purpose has been to better understand how power underpins inequality, exclusion and injustice, how power can be a force for or against positive social change, and what this means for strategy and action.

This guide has emerged from work in various countries and contexts, often as part of international development programmes seeking to strengthen citizen participation, civil society, human rights and governance in the global South. Many international and national NGOs and donor organisations, for example, have taken an interest in power analysis as part of adopting a “rights-based approach” or in promoting citizenship, voice and accountability. However, these approaches have also been taken up and adapted in Northern countries, as part of efforts to empower marginalised people and to deepen participation in democratic processes. The North has much to learn from the South, and such geographic distinctions have become less meaningful as similar challenges arise in a diverse contexts and innovations travel in all directions.

Change agents in all settings have found that getting a better grasp of the complexity of power in theory and practice can help them to:

- become more mindful, strategic and power-conscious in addressing the root causes of inequality and exclusion
- develop a more critical appreciation of the opportunities, limitations and spaces for action and influence
- make changes in their own thinking and behaviour, within peer groups and organisations and in wider social and political structures

The facilitators and educators who developed these approaches did so over many years, borrowing and building on each others’ concepts, methods and techniques. It is difficult to identify the origins of all these materials, but some key sources are gratefully acknowledged in the introduction to this Power Pack (and credited below where appropriate). We hope that



others will continue to contribute learning materials and designs for exercises and learning events on power.

## Approach to Learning

This guide does not aim to provide an exhaustive catalogue of every possible approach to learning about power. The purpose of the guide is to support the understanding and practical application of the concepts and approaches outlined in this resource pack, with emphasis on the Power Cube, its various dimensions of power, spaces and levels, and other complementary frameworks for understanding of power.

The methods are based on the experiences of practitioners and educators with broadly shared ways of understanding power and facilitating learning about it. This guide uses learner-centred, experiential and reflective methods inspired by various traditions which connect adult learning and social change:

- **critical pedagogy**, participatory action research and transformative learning used in developing awareness and leadership within social movements
- **action research and reflective practice** for organisational learning and change, coming from management science
- **adult and higher education**, especially experiential and reflective learning and methods of critical theory and analysis
- **feminist research, training and activism**, in which participants explore personal and gendered dimensions of identity, standpoint and power

Users of this guide should not worry if unfamiliar with these traditions of adult learning. They have some key principles in common which are applied in the design of learning in this guide and can be easily picked up through practice, for example:

- **experiential knowledge:** people already know a great deal from their own experience and practice, and making this knowledge more conscious and accessible to them can itself be a form of empowerment
- **facilitating reflection:** the facilitator's role is not to transfer knowledge and skills, but to help people reflect on their own knowledge and experience, using concepts, theories and others' experiences to deepen analysis
- **questioning assumptions:** learning is deeper when contradictions are explored and dominant world views, values and assumptions are critically examined
- **diversity of methods:** methods for facilitating learning can take many forms and these can be combined: some applied and practical, some reflective and analytical, some creative and artistic, some embodied and emotional
- **diversity of learners:** people have different ways of knowing and learning, so using a variety of methods is more likely to meet the needs of a diverse group
- **individual and collective processes:** learning requires both individual and collective (social) processes for creating understanding
- **learning in context:** learning is more effective when related to particular contexts, questions and issues of practical relevance and urgency for learners
- **opportunities for action:** learning is consolidated when opportunities are available to apply knowledge through meaningful action

There is no "right way" or order for using the exercises and resources that follow, and we encourage you to use this guide flexibly rather than as a fixed curriculum. Much will depend

on who is learning, what their needs are, and what time is available. For example, a short exposure for senior managers will be different from an in-depth training event. The exercises and resources can be “mixed and matched” to design your own events.

We hope that you will innovate and adapt to fit the needs of your learners and contexts, and that you will choose the methods and exercise that you are comfortable facilitating. The guide is intended to be used together with the other resources included in this pack, and facilitators should be familiar with the **section 2** Understanding the Power Cube and related concepts, **section 3** Other Approaches to understanding Power and **section 5** Applications of the Power Cube – Examples Emerging from Practice.

## Designing a learning event

There are many ways to use this guide and the exercises and resources included. It is worth thinking carefully about the scope, purpose and design of your learning event (or series of events) and what can realistically be achieved with the time and resources available. Your activities may take one or more of the following forms:

- ***an exercise***, e.g. one activity within a workshop, training or class, or informally as part of a group process or organisational learning; think about the purpose of the exercise in relation to the other elements of the learning process
- ***a workshop or training***, e.g. for staff of organisations, or members of a network or coalition; think about timing and the balance of depth and breadth; is this a brief exposure to new ideas, or an in-depth learning process?
- ***a course or class session***, e.g. for university or adult education students, linked to an educational institution or programme; think about how these methods and exercises can be used within the curriculum, or as part of a new course
- ***an action research or action learning process***, these may last from a few weeks to months or a year or longer, and combine short workshops or group sessions with periods of individual and group work-based practice and reflection. An example of this is given in the **Sample Learning Event 3: Learning Trajectory** in **Section 5: Applications of the Power Cube for Learning and Facilitation**.

These guidelines and resources have been used in all of the above ways. For simplicity, we use the term ***learning event*** to describe these activities; the term ***facilitator*** to refer to trainers, teachers, instructors, facilitators and group leaders; and the term ***learner*** to refer to participants, students, action researchers and others taking part in learning events.

## Deciding Learning Outcomes

In designing your learning event, think carefully about the purpose and expectations, and how these fit the needs of learners and relates to their individual roles and objectives, and those of the groups and organisations they may be a part of. It is a good idea to define the intended “learning outcomes” clearly in advance, and with others. This should be done at the design stage by the facilitator and other relevant stakeholders, where possible including the learners or some of their representatives.

Allow time for dialogue so that the event can be well-designed and in keeping with the agreed aims. Learning outcomes and expectations can also be fine-tuned with learners at

the beginning of the event, and as a way of checking on progress midway or when evaluating at the end. Being clear about outcomes, hopes and expectations can avoid confusion and improve the experience for everyone.

At the same time, this should not prevent facilitators from improvising, adapting and bringing in elements of surprise. Remember that learning can't always be measured during or even at the end of an event, as the learning process often takes time to settle and "click" through reflection and practice.

## Sample Learning Outcomes

Some possible outcomes for learners in events using this guide are as follows<sup>5</sup> – *but these should be selected and adapted to each context*:

- to gain a deeper awareness and understanding of different meanings of power in relation to work for personal, organisational, social or political change  
(e.g. the Power Cube, other concepts and frameworks of power; the kind of change desired can also be made more specific)
- to explore the implications of these meanings and frameworks of power for individual and group / organisation actions and practice  
(e.g. implications for professional roles and behavior, organisational policy, programme strategy, political goals, relationships with other actors, communication, planning, evaluation; influencing; etc.)
- to become familiar with and begin to apply specific concepts, methods and tools for understanding and engaging with power in practice  
(e.g. frameworks, tools and methods of power analysis, reflective practice, mapping actors/issues, ways of inquiring into power with others, etc.)
- to be able to identify feasible steps, individual or collective, to enhance the possibilities and scope for bringing understandings of power into practice  
(e.g. setting individual, group or organisational aims and plans, examining current assumptions and ways of working, making action plans, etc.)

While the focus of the above examples of learning outcomes is on *power*, in adapting these you may need to link the outcomes and the power theme to other concerns and objectives (e.g. rights-based approaches, citizen or civil society participation, advocacy, organisational change) and in relation to particular issues (e.g. the power and influence of a marginalised group in society such as youth, ethnic minorities, women; issues of HIV-AIDS; participation in local governance; natural resource management; livelihoods; climate change, etc.).

## Preparation by Participants<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from the *Empowering Society* course for MA students at IDS (2002-present) and from Irene Guijt and Jethro Pettit's *Learning Trajectories* for NGO staff with PSO and Oxfam-Novib (Netherlands), 2007 and 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Irene Guijt and Jethro Pettit's *Learning Trajectories on Power* for NGO staff designed for PSO and Oxfam-Novib (Netherlands), 2007 and 2008, and from Rosemary McGee's preparation for workshops on power with Christian Aid, 2009.

It will help greatly if learners can take time to prepare themselves before the event, unless it is a short exposure event to generate interest in further learning. In addition to helping to clarifying learning outcomes (above), there are a number of other ways that learners can be encouraged to prepare themselves, for example:

**Questions.** Ask them to respond to 2-3 simple questions in advance, and/or to identify a key issue or case study that can be used to deepen and apply their learning. This could relate to a current challenge, issue or relationship linked to their roles and responsibilities. Learners can be asked to answer these briefly in advance, or come to the event with some responses in hand.

**Sample questions,** which can be adapted, are as follows:

1. *What are the one or two biggest challenges you face in your work, in improving the quality of participation... in your organisation, in relations with other actors?*
2. *What issues of power arise in your work, either for you personally, within your group, community, team, department or organisation, or in your relations with other external actors?*
3. *What is a case study or example which represents these challenges? (which you can use to deepen your understanding and practice with methods of power analysis)?*

**Experiences.** Ask learners to think about one particular moment in their life or work when they felt either powerful, powerless or empowered, and to be prepared to tell this story when they come. If writing and journaling are familiar to learners, this can be given as a writing exercise in advance. This can also be done in the event itself, and further ideas for this are given below.

**Case studies.** Experiences can be focused on particular themes and issues if desired, and prepared more in the form of case studies (e.g. using Question 3 above). A short template or set of questions can be used so that case studies cover the same kinds of issues.

**Readings.** Advance readings may be provided, for example selected from those listed in this resource pack. Pick readings that are accessible and understandable to the learners or a selection that meet the range of different learners' abilities. Think about language and abilities, length, practitioner v. academic language, case studies, etc. Provide a few guide questions with the readings.

**Concept note.** It can be a good idea to provide a short concept note or paper that sets out some of the key issues and questions being addressed, or puts the learning event, outcomes and themes in the context of learners' needs.

## **Additional Resources**

Additional resources and exercises are available for learning about these ways of understanding power in the **Resources Section** of the Power Pack. These include:

- **Summary Handout**

- **Handout 3: Power and Empowerment** can be used giving a more detailed explanation of the three faces (except above). This can also be useful to have in paper copy when learners are doing any of the following exercises below.
- **Power Cartoons** (Source: Irene Guijt, Learning by Design)  
A set of 8 cartoons is available (**See Handout 4: Power Cartoons**) which use humour to explore the three faces (visible, hidden and invisible) as well as the alternative forms of power (power over, power to, power with, power within). Go to exercise on **Power Cartoons** in **Resources Section 6** handouts and exercises.
- **Animated Film: Chicken Run** (Irene Guijt)  
'Chicken Run' is a great animated movie for children, but really all about citizenship and rights and many forms of power. It is readily available online or from DVD and video rental shops. If time allows, the whole film can be shown (for example in the evening, if a residential workshop). Go to **handout 5** on **Chicken Run** in **Resources Section 6**.
- **Three Scenarios Exercise**
- Distribute copies of **Handout 6: Visible, Hidden and Invisible Power - three scenarios** to small groups of 5-7 people, and ask them to read together and discuss the three scenarios, making connections to the three faces of power. Like the cartoons, it can be used before or after introducing the three faces of power (thanks to Jude Howell for this exercise, from her course on Empowering Society, IDS, 2002). Go to on **handout 6** in **Resources Section 6**.

Sample learning plans which include further descriptions of how to use these exercises are included in the next section.

## Section 5 Applications of the Power Cube for Learning and Facilitation

**Applications of the power cube** - This section will give a variety of examples for facilitation and learning around power. Currently it includes three sample learning events from Jethro Pettit and Irene Guijt. For more resources visit, [www.powercube.net/resources/](http://www.powercube.net/resources/)

Examples included in this section:

- **Sample Learning Event 1** by Jethro Petit
- **Sample Learning Event 2: Acting on power: strategies for analysis and change** By Jethro Pettit
- **Sample Learning Event 3: Learning Trajectory on Power** by Jethro Pettit and Irene Guijt

Other examples for possible inclusion in this section:

- **Sharing with a regional bureau in Oxfam Novib** (Conny Hoitink)
- **Sharing with 6 UK civil society organisations for their action research** (Raji Hunjan, Carnegie UK Trust)
- **Programme analysis to strategise around empowering women** (Nani Zulminarni – institution??)
- **Building local partner capacity for campaigning and strategy development** (Ahmed Ali, Oxfam Ethiopia)
- **Including in a PhD course in Bolivia, for range of actors from Latin American universities** (Sandra Boni and Jordi Peres, Valencia Tech University)
- **Workshop for Engineering Without Borders, for strategic planning** (Sandra Boni and Jordi Peres, Valencia Tech University)
- **Rough Guide to Power** by Oxfam Programme Resource Centre
- **Workshop handouts on power** from Irene Guijt.

## Sample Workshop 1<sup>7</sup> by Jethro Pettit

This section outlines a sample learning event, using a sequence of exercises to help learners to connect their personal experience and case studies with concepts and theories of power. The process combines creative and analytical methods of learning, as well as individual and collective sense-making. The process flows from individual reflection, to creative writing, to storytelling, to enactment, to group reflection and processing of what has been shared, to integrating experience with concepts and theories.

This particular sequence has worked well in practice. However, the various exercises can also be used selectively, e.g. if time is limited, or if holding a series of shorter meetings, or the facilitator is comfortable with some methods more than others. The order can also be changed. For example, sharing of experience using creative and reflective methods may instead be done *after* introducing and discussing concepts of power. Learners can also be asked to make their own presentations of concepts and to integrate theory with their stories and cases.

The key principle behind the design of your learning event is to iterate between experience and concepts, so even in a shorter event it is possible to ask learners to briefly reflect on their own experiences of feeling powerful or powerless, then introduce some concepts, and then go back to deepen reflection and analysis using these concepts.

The Sample Learning Event has two main parts:

Part 1 - Exploring power: experiences and concepts

Part 2 – Acting on power: strategies for analysis and change

### Sample Workshop

#### Part 1 - Exploring power: experiences and concepts

(recommended time: one day)

**Key Questions:** *What is power, and how do we experience it in our own lives? What sense can we make of these experiences? How does power arise and operate within our work, our working relationships, and strategies? What concepts and frameworks are useful for understanding power?*

1. Introduction
2. Feeling Power (reflection, creative writing or drawing)
3. Telling Power (storytelling)
4. Enacting Power (drama and body sculpting)
5. Understanding Power (concepts and meanings)

Resources to accompany the Learning Event - Part 1:

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from the *Empowering Society* course for MA students at IDS (2002-present), and from various workshops with NGOs and University students, including: Jethro Pettit and Peter Taylor, Beirut, Lebanon (2005); Jethro Pettit and Rosemary McGee, Valencia Polytechnic University, Spain, (2007 and 2008); and Irene Guijt and Jethro Pettit's *Learning Trajectories* and workshops for NGO staff in the Netherlands, (2007 and 2008). This write-up is adapted from the *Learning Trajectories*.



**LearningEventPart1** (powerpoint presentation)

**Handout 3: Power and Empowerment** (summary of concepts of power)

**Handout 4: Power Cartoons** (cartoons representing different forms of power)

**Handout 5: ChickenRun** (instructions and timing of scenes for animated film)

**Handout 6: Visible, Hidden and Invisible Power: three scenarios**  
(scenario exercise on three faces of power)

For more details on these resources go to **section 6.1 on Handouts and Exercises**

## Part 1 - Exploring power: meanings and experiences

**Key Questions:** *What is power, and how do we experience it in our own lives? What sense can we make of these experiences? How does power arise and operate within our work, our working relationships and strategies? What concepts and frameworks are useful for understanding power?*

### 1. Introduction (Time: 60 minutes to a half day, depending on objectives)

**Objectives:** The purpose of this introduction is to frame the event by helping participants identify the challenges they face in their activities or work, and the reasons they may want to deepen their understanding of power.

**Opening activities:** Although not elaborated here, this session should include personal introductions (if learners / facilitators don't know one another), a review of the purpose and learning outcomes, overview of the agenda and process, any other logistical matters, and some kind of warm-up exercise.

**Context and challenges:** Identifying the contexts, issues and challenges in which learners want to explore power may be a very brief exercise, or it may be a discrete learning event lasting half a day or more (e.g. as part of a course, longer workshop or action learning process). This is an important step, and may require some advance preparation by participants and a half or full day session. *The main point is to identify where it is that power needs to be explored.*

**Examples of challenges** (context and actors can be added to each):

- **achieving meaningful participation:** what is participation and what are the challenges of making it real?
- **applying a rights-based approach:** what are rights-based approaches, and what are the challenges of achieving rights?
- **strengthening citizenship or democracy** – what is citizenship (or what is democracy) and what are the challenges of strengthening it?
- **strengthening civil society** – what is civil society, why strengthen it, and what are the challenges of doing this?
- **empowerment of a marginalised group** – what are the specific challenges facing a particular group, or efforts to mobilise, gain power or equality?
- **facilitating organisational change** – what needs to change in your workplace or organisation, and what are the challenges faced?
- **addressing corporate power** – what challenges arise in efforts to create change in the private sector, from within or from without?



This session may be focused on the issues facing a particular community, a sector or service provider, an organisation, a strategic aim, policy or issue. Note that the focus here is on the naming the context, issues and challenges, and is not yet an exploration of the forms that power may take (which follows in the next section).

Ways of exploring these issues and challenges might include posing some questions, such as the examples given above and below.

***Examples of questions:***

- what are the goals of your work / programme / initiative?
- what is the context? who are you working with? what issues?
- what kind of change you would like to see happen?
- what enables or prevents change from happening?

The learners can then be asked to share their own experiences and case studies, which you may have asked them to prepare in advance. These can be shared in small groups, keeping a time limit to each, and asking groups for quick report-backs or asking groups to share one particularly engaging case study or example, with a focus on the challenges faced.

More visual methods can also be used like drawing, mapping diagrams, or “rich pictures” (where a small group of people represent the challenge or case study in flip chart paper with symbols, drawings and arrows using coloured pens).

***Noticing issues of power***

It can be very effective to encourage people to share experiences and identify power issues without initially using the word ‘power’. As a facilitator you can let the discussion develop and then drop power into the conversation: ‘you realise we’re talking about power here...’ or posing questions like ‘what’s going on here?’, ‘why do you think this is happening?’, ‘who is this serving, and who is it harming?’ ‘what is standing in the way of change?’<sup>8</sup>

As learners share their experiences, the facilitator can begin to inquire into the ways in which power plays a role in the challenges being faced. For example, the ways in which voice, participation or citizenship are limited by power; the ways that rights are ignored or violated as the result of power; the ways in which power arises in organisations, etc. Encourage learners to make these connections using their own ways of understanding power.

***Examples of themes for discussion:***

*Many organisations and governments promote participation and ‘empowerment’ and believe that people should have a stronger voice in decision-making. But putting these principles into practice is often disappointing for everyone. Underlying power dynamics and relations are often not addressed, and participation is seen as an instrumental way of delivering project outcomes or being ‘democratic’. How is participation (or*

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<sup>8</sup> Thanks to Kate Hamilton for the suggestions and guide questions in this paragraph.

*rights, citizenship, democracy, organisations, etc) affected by relations of power and powerlessness?*

*But what is power? And what is empowerment? What concepts and frameworks for understanding power are useful to those who want to empower themselves? For those trying to empower others? For those seeking to become more aware of their own power?*

### ***Option for focus or extension of the discussion***

There is always a risk, in such discussions, that the topic can expand and the focus get lost. If desired, some of the introduction and framing of “what is power?” outlined in Section 5 on “Understanding Power” (below) can also be brought in at this stage to maintain the focus, or to extend the discussion. For example, raising questions and discussion about:

- whether we think of power as a negative or positive thing, and what are the positive forms that power can take
- whether power is something that can be held and used by actors (power as a form of domination, control or “power over”)
- what other forms power can take, such as social norms and beliefs (power as discourse, knowledge, internalised thought and behaviour)
- whether power is “zero-sum” (winner and losers) or expandable

[For more information on the above go to **Section 2** of the Power Pack on Understanding the Power Cube and Related Concepts.]

The purpose of this more focused or extended discussion is not to introduce concepts and frameworks yet, but to draw out the different ways of understanding power and challenge any assumptions that power is defined in one particular way.

### ***Transition to next exercise***

Having established the challenges, issues and context in which power needs to be understood, explain that the group will now begin to explore power together - starting with personal reflection and creative writing, moving into storytelling, and then to drama (or the exercises you have selected to use).

If necessary, you may wish to explain the reasons for using creative methods like writing, storytelling and drama for exploring the meaning of power. Keep this brief and be confident; in our experience people really enjoy these exercises and say they learn and remember a lot through them.

## **2. Feeling Power: reflection, creative writing or drawing (10-15 minutes)**

**Objectives:** to use creative learning methods to explore personal experiences of power and powerlessness, as a basis for developing concepts and theories that help to explain power later in the exercise.

Ask participants to think about “a personal or professional experience in which you felt powerful, powerless or empowered”. Depending on the workshop theme, this can be substituted with other kinds of experiences, for example

*“a moment of contradiction or discomfort in your work”*

*“an ethical dilemma you faced in your work”*

*“an experience of being a citizen (or part of a civil society organisation)”*

*“trying to make yourself heard in relation to power / authority / expertise”*

*“being in a position of power / authority / expertise”*

*“a moment you tried to get your rights recognised”*

This exercise can be done as a moment of quiet recollection, without writing, or as a writing exercise. Drawing can also be used. Some guidelines to learners:

- Choose one particular incident or event, rather than a broad experience over time.
- Choose an experience that you feel comfortable sharing with other here; not something that will be traumatic to explore in this setting.
- Use a creative, rich narrative and imagery to bring the event to life. Think about the following aspects of the event:
  - what is the setting? • who are the characters? • what is happening with the senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, etc)? • what is the action or dialogue? • what feelings and emotions did you or other characters experience (anger, confusion, sadness, elation)?

Ask learners to use “rich description” in their recollection, writing or drawing, and keep their focus on the above dimensions of the story, rather than creating a summary or analysis of what happened. Ask them to think about it like a scene in a movie or book, in a way that allows someone else to experience the moment.

***If using writing...*** you can invite learners to use a “freefall” method... and offer these guidelines: [credit Barbara Turner here]

- Let the writing lead and see where it takes you
- Do not censor yourself or correct your language
- Go “fearwards” (to areas that may be sensitive)
- Bring the event to life: senses, feelings, actions, dialogue
- Avoid shifting into analysis, summary mode, or generalisations

Allow 6-10 minutes for writing. Encourage people to write in whatever language they are most comfortable writing in.

***If using drawing...*** for those interested in visual images, and with learners who are less literate, drawing or painting is an option. Provide paper, coloured pens or pastels, or paints. Encourage people to be free with colours, shapes, symbols and stick figures, and reassure them that it doesn’t have to be pretty or realistic.

***If just reflecting...*** If time is short, and with less literate learners, as for a 4-5 minute period of silent reflection, during which participants can write or draw if they wish. Ask them to focus on evoking the image and feeling of the moment, as if they were there.

***If preparing in advance...*** This can also be asked for as a writing, drawing or reflective assignment before the session, to save time, but its best to provide time and guidance for this in the workshop itself.

***Other creative media...*** Those who would like to explore movement, poetry or song can also do so, but as with the writing and drawing, encourage them to do this in a spontaneous and improvised way, rather than creating a polished product.

### **3. Telling Power (storytelling) (15-20 minutes)**

***Objective:*** Whether building on the previous exercise, or used separately, storytelling is a powerful method of bringing personal experience and narrative into learning, and will enrich the exploration of concepts later on.

In small groups of 3 or 4 people, ask learners to take turns sharing their stories (reflection, writing, drawing, poems, pictures, songs, etc), allowing about 3-5 minutes per person. Ask each group to have a timekeeper, or use a bell or signal to indicate when to change. Invite learners to either read their writing or tell the story (show drawing, etc), or if it is too sensitive, to talk about what it was like to recollect the story. Pictures and narrative stories can work well together.

Suggest to the groups that after each story or sharing, the other two members should respond and acknowledge what they have heard very briefly, sharing one or two words about how they feel in response, but without getting into questions, discussion or analysis.

(Note: if using the following exercise it is important to ask participants to refrain from moving into interpretation or analysis of their stories. Keep it at the tacit and emotional level for now, in order to get the most out of these exercises.)

### **4. Enacting Power (drama and body sculpting) (30-60 minutes depending on group size)**

***Objective:*** This exercise allows learners to explore their experiences of power through body, theatre and movement, which are well-known as methods that deepen learning and reflection, and will enhance the analysis to follow.

#### ***Preparation***

In the same groups of 3 or 4, choose one story that you will 'enact' with a brief body sculpture or acted scene (skit/sketch). A body sculpture means positioning group members in relation to each other in a symbolic, abstract configuration, or like a snapshot of one moment (or a couple of moments). This may be frozen and silent or could include a repetitive movement and sounds. A short sketch or skit acting out the scene is also OK, but should be kept to one or two key moments, not the whole story. The moment can also be transposed into a fantasy, myth, or fairy tale or use animals or fictional characters instead of the actual people.

#### ***Guidelines for groups***

- a) Choose the story or scene you want to represent, or make a combination of more than one story if there is a common theme
- b) If a body sculpture or tableau, decide what image you want to make, how the group members will be positioned in relation to each other and if any/all are to make a movement and/or sound and how these movements and sounds will connect.
- c) If a skit/sketch, decide roles, dialogue and action; keep your scene to a brief and critically important moment, not the whole story.
- d) Practice briefly to ensure that it 'works' for you.

### ***Important safety tips for facilitators***

- Give permission for anyone not comfortable with acting or body work to observe rather than participate in the enactment
- Ask participants to be self-aware of their actions and movements and how others in their scene might experience them
- Suggest that any physical contact be imitated, leaving spaces between actors (unless learners are experienced with theatre and are confident and comfortable with each other)
- Be aware of any cultural and gender norms in what is acceptable for physical contact in a public setting.

### ***Performances***

Designate a stage on one side of the room. Ask the groups to present their scenes. Following each brief presentation, ask the audience (other participants) to share their initial reactions (one or two words) on how they feel after seeing the sculpture/tableau. Then the group who presented can briefly explain what the tableau/sculpture was about.

### ***Discussion***

After all the presentations are done, a discussion can be facilitated to draw out the different experiences of power, powerlessness, empowerment (or themes related to citizenship, moments of contradiction, ethical dilemmas, depending on the theme being explored) that were represented and begin to analyze their meaning. Participants should be encouraged to develop their own theories and explanations and to share any concepts they may already be familiar with from readings, prior experience, etc.

The further this discussion can go, the better, before moving to the more formal "inputs" introducing concepts, theories and frameworks related to the theme. The points from this discussion, and the scenes enacted, can also be referred to again as examples to illustrate the various frameworks introduced in the following session.

Note: it is quite possible that issues of power within the group or between group members may arise during these exercises and the ensuing discussion. The facilitator should be aware of these, and allow time to explore them if appropriate, build on them as part of the learning process if possible, or if not be prepared to gently contain them and address them outside of the event.

The above sequence of creative exercises can be done in a half-day workshop, or a 2-3 hr session if shortened. Be sure to allow time to discuss and process what comes out of the storytelling and performances. You may be surprised!

## 5. Understanding Power (concepts and meanings) (1.5 - 2 hours)

**Objective:** Exploring some of key concepts, theories and frameworks of power, and making connections to the experiences shared and explored in the previous exercises in order to deepen understanding.

**Key questions:** *What are some different ways of understanding power? What concepts, theories and frameworks are helpful? How do these concepts help to explain the experiences of power and powerlessness represented in our stories? How do these meanings of power differ from each other?*

There are many different ways that concepts and frameworks of power can be introduced, for example:

- as a short lecture or “input” on concepts followed by discussion
- presentations by learners based on their understandings, experiences or reading about power
- allowing concepts to emerge as “grounded theory” through the sharing of experience, linking basic concepts with illustrative examples
- linking to more theoretical sources and academic debates (see **handout 1**)– but it’s quite possible to share concepts without this dimension.<sup>9</sup>

Whichever methods are used, it can be helpful to present and contrast some key concepts and frameworks in one way or another. The following sequence, much of it inspired by **A New Weave of Power** by Lisa VeneKlasen with Valerie Miller, works quite well, but again, be flexible and adapt to your context and to what comes up in this session, including power dynamics arising within the group itself.

1. **Power as a contested concept - introduction**
2. **Alternative forms of power**
3. **Public, Private and Intimate power**
4. **Visible, Hidden and Invisible Power**
5. **Power as discourse, knowledge, social norms and beliefs**

Explanations of these concepts and frameworks and their sources are available in **section 2** of the Power Pack **Understanding the Power Cube and related**

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<sup>9</sup> Thanks to John Gaventa for this insight.

**concepts.** What follows is a brief outline that can be used by facilitators, including links to useful handouts and visual aids.

Before going into these frameworks, a brief introduction is suggested. (Note that some of this introduction can also be used either before the reflection and creative exercises for sharing experiences, or following the drama presentations as part of the transition to exploring concepts and meanings).

### ***Power as a contested concept – introduction***

Power is often considered to be an “essentially contested” concept. There is much debate and controversy and different ways of defining power, and they do not fit together around any one coherent concept or framework. So there is no agreed definition or theory of power. Rather, there are many different ways of seeing and explaining power, and processes of empowerment.

The same words are often used to describe fundamentally different things. Yet how we understand power has a direct bearing on the choices we make about “empowering” ourselves and others, individually and collectively, in processes of social and political change, decision-making, participation and governance.

***Some questions to consider*** (can be discussed with reference to experiences shared in stories and drama)...

#### ***People or structures?***

- Is power something that is possessed by some individuals or groups, and not possessed by others? At one extreme, power is seen as all about deliberate and wilful domination of some people by others.
- Power is often defined as the ability to make someone to what you want them to do, even if against their will. (“A’s ability to make B do something that B might not otherwise do”)
- At the other extreme, power is viewed as deeply (and unconsciously) embedded in social and cultural norms, behaviour, ideology, values – so deeply embedded that we usually can’t see it or change it.
- This reflects long-standing debates in social science about ‘agency’ (where power is held by people who choose their actions) v. ‘structure’ (where power and behaviour are embedded in social systems).

#### ***Power, legitimacy and authority***

- Politics is often seen essentially as being about power held by people: who has it, and who doesn’t; and how these differences are worked out; also about how power can be held legitimately.
- This view of power is not always coercive: those in power have a ‘right’ to use it, which is often accepted by those without it (for example in democratic politics we deliberately and legitimately delegate power to others to rule on our behalf).
- This can raise questions of the differences between **power** and **authority**, which are often divided in social and political theory, notably in Max Weber’s work on bureaucracy.
- We don’t explore these theories here, but it can be with discussing when the use of power is legitimate or consented to, and when it is not.



Questions can also be asked about the meanings of 'consent', 'legitimacy' and 'authority', for example how were the rules made and how easily can they be challenged or changed?

***Is power limited or expanding:***

- Is power a finite resource, or an unlimited one? Is it a "Zero-Sum" resource? Does gaining power always mean that others lose it? Or can power be expansive and unlimited?

***Is power positive or negative?***

- This also raises the question of whether power is positive or negative. Often assumed to be negative – but is it? Can we do anything without power? What are some of the positive forms it can take?

***Alternative forms of power***

Source: Veneklasen and Miller (2002, Chapter 3) and Rowlands (1995)

A dominant view of power is the notion of "**power over**", where one person or group of people dominates or controls another. This is often viewed in negative terms, and with power as a limited resource. But there are other views that see power as a necessary force for change, as positive, and not necessarily limited to a "zero-sum" game.

- "**power to**" – individual ability to act, linked to idea of capability
- "**power with**" – collective action, the ability to act together
- "**power within**" – individual or collective self-worth and dignity

In exploring these concepts, draw out examples of these forms of power from the stories and dramas. How do these experience differ from "power over"? How do these forms of power respond to "power over"?

Notice that these are all views of power as a kind of "agency", something that people hold and use in relation to each other. But how are these forms of power related to the view of power as embedded in social norms and values, or "structure"?

Further discussion can be led about whether power is a finite resource that must be struggled over ("zero-sum") or infinite and expandable.

***Public, private and intimate realms of power***

Source: Veneklasen and Miller (2002, Chapter 3)

Those taking a gender perspective have long recognised the different ways that women and men experience power in the public, private and intimate realms of their lives, linked to social and cultural constructions of gender:

- "**public**" realm of power (visible, employment, public life, relationships)
- "**private**" realm of power (family, relationships, friends, marriage)
- "**intimate**" realm of power (self-esteem, self-confidence, relationship to body, sense of physical or emotional autonomy in relation to others)

These can be presented visually or in a hand-out. In discussing these, draw out examples from the stories and dramas; what realms did these take place in, and how did they affect the experience of power or powerlessness? Did women and men experience power in these realms differently?

Discussion can be guided about how these forms of power and powerlessness arise in different cultures and situations, and how (for example) women and men may experience different limitations and possibilities depending on which realm they are in at a given time. Introduce the idea that our experience of power can be dynamic and related to moments and spaces.

Connections can be made between one's experience of power in the "intimate" realm and one's sense of "power within". See VeneKlasen and Miller (2002, 2007) and Just Associates (2006) for further resources.

### ***Three faces of power***

(Source: Lukes 1975/2005; Gaventa 198x; VeneKlasen & Miller 2002)

These three "faces" make up the power dimension of the Power Cube, and the background and concepts are elaborated in the Concepts section of this pack, as well as linked resources. In learning events, it can be helpful to give a bit of history of the context in which these ideas arose and were applied. The following brief summary may be useful to facilitators.

The idea of there being "three faces of power" came originally from debates about democratic politics, and disagreements about whether some groups use their power to dominate others. Is democratic decision-making a "pluralist" process where all groups have the same chance to express their interests and shape decisions, and the process can be clearly observed? Or are there other kinds of power at work that might prevent people from taking part, voicing their opinions, raising issues, observing the process, or engaging in any debate or conflict, leading to biased and undemocratic outcomes.

Such debates took place in the US in the 1950s and 1960s, between those who felt that American democracy was essentially open, fair and "pluralist" and those who were concerned that elites and powerful interest groups were dominating the process and in one way or another keeping people from participating, making sure that some issues were not even debated, and that conflicts did not even arise.

These debates were summarised and challenged in Steven Lukes' classic book *Power: A Radical View* (1974, 2005), in which he identifies three different dimensions or "faces" of power – the third dimension being his own contribution to the debate. John Gaventa's later study of the struggles of Appalachian mining communities (19xx) further explored the way these three faces of power combine to keep people silent. The three faces were also used in VeneKlasen and Miller's *A New Weave of Power* to explore the possibilities and limitations for citizen advocacy. They used the terms "visible", "hidden" and "invisible" power:

**"visible power"** – formal and observable decision-making, pluralist politics with visible "power over" and clear winners and losers

**“hidden power”** – setting the agenda behind the scenes, mobilising biases and interests, excluding people and issues from debates

**“invisible power”** – shaping public opinion and needs; social conditioning, ideology and values; may be “internalised”

It is worth taking time to discuss these concepts in some depth, and to apply them to examples and experiences such as those shared by learners.

Go to **Handout 3: Power and Empowerment** in **section 6 of the resources section of this Power Pack**. **Note:** This handout combines definitions of concepts with description of strategies in a way that helps clarify both. In facilitating, it can also be effective to use strategies as a way into thinking about power. Instead of starting with the power concepts or context analysis, start from what learners are doing or planning as organisations/change agents, and work backwards from that to unpack what assumptions we’re making about how things work, where power lies, where it’s not an issue and why...etc. This can be an effective way of building on experience and handling resistance to concepts.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Power as socialized and internalized norms***

This theme is intended to be used with support from the ideas and resources in the **section 3.1 other ways of understanding power**. These concepts can be used both to further explore the meaning of “invisible” power and as entirely different approach to explaining what power is.

“Invisible” power, in relation to “visible” and “hidden” power, is partly understood as a form “agency”, in which some people or groups dominate others (for example by the deliberate use of ideology, the media, etc. to shape people’s preferences). It can be understood as a wilful attempt to influence the needs and thinking of others, shaping what they perceive to be possible in their lives, which then becomes internalized.

But there is also a strong element of “structure” and deeply socialized norms. Some argue that this is distinct from the concept of “invisible power” as used by Lukes (as a conscious form of domination or “power over”). In this more sociological understanding, power is something that is everywhere and affects everyone, in the form of social and cultural norms, ideology, discourse, values and behavior that become accepted subconsciously as “normal”.

Many influential social theorists have contributed to this more “structural” understanding of power, as a pervasive and often invisible phenomenon that gradually becomes “hegemonic” and internalized into consciousness. Here we briefly highlight the thinking of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Clarissa Hayward. Other sources include Antonio Gramsci and James C Scott.

It may not be necessary to go into these theories in any depth, depending on the learning event, but it is worth discussing these concepts in some form. Again, the experiences and examples raised by participants may provide opportunities to explore these understandings of power.

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<sup>10</sup> Thanks to Kate Hamilton for this suggestion

Excerpt from ***Handout 3 Power and Empowerment***

**Socialised and internalised power** (Foucault, Bourdieu, Hayward)

- (a) Foucault: Power as truth or knowledge . A “structural” view of power (v. seeing power as a question of “agency”, or individual or group action). Foucault saw power as a “regime of truth” or “discourse” that can take a long time to change, involving basic changes in perception or thinking. He also saw power as embodied through socialised and embodied processes of discipline and control.
- (b) Bourdieu: Power as ‘symbolic violence’ which creates ‘embodied dispositions’, or *habitus* ...These dispositions give rise to ‘fields’ or ‘socially stratified spaces’, norms and conventions. We ‘incorporate’ or ‘inscribe’ these ways of behaving into our bodies and actions. Our dispositions or ‘habitus’ are ‘spontaneously attuned’ and perceived as part of the natural order of things
- (c) Hayward: ‘Defacing power’ (1998) Power as a network of social boundaries that enables or constrains the behaviour or freedom of all actors

## Sample Learning Event 2: Acting on power: strategies for analysis and change

### Box 14 Sample Workshop

#### Part 2 – Acting on power: strategies for analysis and change

(recommended time: one day)

**Key Questions:** *What are the implications of these concepts and meanings of power for analysis and action? What tools and methods can be used to analyse power in context and develop strategies to shift or use power for positive social change?*

1. Introduction
2. Introducing the Power Cube
3. Complementary tools for analysis and action on power

#### Resources

**Handout 3: Power and Empowerment** (includes a diagram of the Power Cube)  
**Powerpoint**

### 1. Introduction

**Objective:** The purpose of this learning event is to begin to apply a “power lens” or perspective to practice and real-life situations, with a focus on the issues and challenges that were identified in Part 1. In this event the Power Cube is introduced as a framework for analysis and strategising, in addition to other tools and methods that can be used to apply the various concepts of power.

Note that the Power Cube can also be introduced much earlier in a learning event, particularly if it’s a shorter presentation of the concepts. In this sample workshop, it is presented simultaneously as a method of analysis and a tool for strategising.

### 2. Introducing the Power Cube

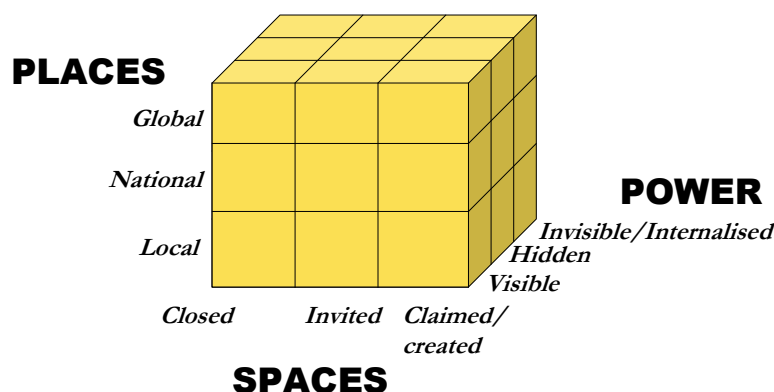
In this Sample Workshop, having explored the various meanings of power in some depth – and in particular the three faces of power – the Power Cube is introduced as a framework for exploring the way power (in particular the three faces) operates in different kinds of spaces and at different levels. It is also possible, as noted in the *Understanding* section of this pack, to begin with any of the three dimensions, depending on the purpose of the learning event. For example, if the aim of the event is to identify arenas or spaces for action, one can begin there; if concerned about building links across different levels of power, one can start with the levels, etc.<sup>11</sup>

A diagram is provided in **Handout 3: Power and Empowerment**

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<sup>11</sup> Thanks to John Gaventa for this advice

## The “Power Cube” framework



### Spaces

Introduce the idea of “spaces” as used in social and political analysis (see Gaventa 2006, p. 25). There are many meanings, some more limited to formal institutional mechanisms of decision-making, others more openly defined as channels or opportunities for people to engage in shaping meanings, decisions or policies.

“...In this analysis, ‘spaces’ are seen as opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests.” (Gaventa 2006, p25)

Ask learners to name different kinds of spaces they have experienced, and to think about what categories they might use to name these spaces. Raise questions about who created or controls the spaces, whose rules operate, who has access and who doesn’t. Then present the idea of “**closed**”, “**invited**”, and “**claimed/created**” spaces. Allow sufficient time to really explore the meanings of these different kinds of “spaces” and to identify examples of them from participants’ stories and experiences and case studies.

**Option for extended exploration of spaces:** Once there is some clarity about the meaning of closed, invited and claimed/created spaces, one can ask what other kinds of spaces there might be (if examples have not already been identified). For example, in a study of civil society participation in Colombia, five types of “spaces for engagement” were identified:

- Formal by invitation
- Formal by right
- Created by institutions
- Created by organisations
- Transient collective action

### Levels or Places

Drawing from Gaventa (2006, p 27-28) discuss the different “levels” or “places” in which people engage in seeking to effect change, from the intimate, personal and private levels, to public places at the local, regional, national or global levels.

***Box 14 Places or levels of participation***

Some would argue that participatory practice must begin locally, as it is in the arenas of everyday life in which people are able to resist power and to construct their own voice. Others argue that power is shifting to more globalised actors, and struggles for participation must engage at that level. In between, there are debates on the role of the nation state, and how it mediates power; on how the possibilities of local spaces often depend on the extent to which power is legitimated nationally, but shared with the locality. Those concerned with decentralisation, for instance, focus on the dynamics of power between the locality and the nation state, while others argue for the importance of community associations as key locations for building power ‘from below’.

There is also a risk of focusing only on the ‘local’, or the ‘national’ in a globalising world. Globalisation is shifting traditional understandings of where power resides and how it is exercised, transforming traditional assumptions of how and where citizens mobilise to hold states and non-state actors to account... New extra-national fora are emerging in which citizens try to engage. Rather than being separate spheres, the local, national and global are increasingly interrelated. Local forms and manifestations of power are constantly being shaped in relationship to global actors and forces, and in turn, local action affects and shapes global power. [adapted from Gaventa 2006, p. 27-28]

## **The interrelationships of places, spaces and forms of power**

Putting the dimension of “**spaces**” together with that of “**levels and places**”, one can begin to see the multiple and interconnected moments, formal and informal, in which different actors engage in shaping meanings, decisions and policies. Each of these moments is also likely to be influenced by one or more of the “**three faces of power**”.

“...the dynamics of power depend very much on the type of space in which it is found, the level at which it operates and the form it takes. ...Along each dimension, any sustained and effective change strategy must concern itself with how to build and sustain effective change across the full continuum. Transformative, fundamental change happens, I suggest, in those rare moments when social movements or social actors are able to work effectively across each of the dimensions simultaneously, i.e. when they are able to link the demands for opening previously closed spaces with people’s action in their own spaces; to span across local and global action, and to challenge visible, hidden and invisible power simultaneously. ...Successful change is about getting each of the pieces on each dimension of the cube to align with each other, simultaneously.” (Gaventa 2006, p.30)

Drawing on Gaventa (pp 30-32) and using examples from participants’ experiences, facilitate a discussion of how these dimensions are interrelated in practice.



It is helpful to point out that the spaces and levels dimensions of the Power Cube are not fixed: they are more like a continuum, and there are likely to be multiple forms (e.g. from closed to claimed spaces, or from the local to the global). Similarly, with power, what is hidden or invisible can be made visible (through empowerment processes), and that the basis for visible power may be forms of hidden or invisible power. Each context requires its own analysis.

There is sometimes a temptation at this point to try putting experiences or examples *into* the boxes, as in completing a matrix. This has been found to confuse rather than help. It is more useful to think of the Power Cube, and its dimensions, as a set of *lenses* for making sense of particular contexts, moments and strategies of engagement. It is useful for seeing how these moments may be related to one another, and how multiple strategies may be needed to address different forms of power arising in different spaces and levels.

The advantage of this approach is that it can point to openings or possibilities for action that have not been considered before, which may enable civil society groups or other actors to “shift power” in strategic ways that can make a difference. It can be used to identify new entry points, or ways in which complementary strategies may be effective.

## **Further Resources for Introducing the Power Cube**

### ***Power Twister Game (see also Handout 7)***

This is a fun exercise that can be used to explore the dimensions of the Power Cube, adapted from the party game “Twister” in which players stand in or stretch across different squares on the floor.

A 3 x 3 grid of nine squares is laid out on the floor with tape or string, about 5m across. “Rows” can be labelled with pieces of power as representing *Global*, *National* and *Local* levels, and the “Columns” can be labelled with the three kinds of spaces, *Closed*, *Invited* and *Claimed*.

Participants are asked to think about how and where they engage in their own work, and which spaces and levels they would stand in. They are also asked to reflect on what kind of power they are working with or are up against in this work, and to write it on a piece of paper: *Visible*, *Hidden* or *Invisible* (or they may also choose *Power to*, *Power with* etc)

Participants hold the pieces of paper with the forms of power written on them (or tape or pin them to their clothing) and then stand in the appropriate square or across two squares.

Discussion can then be facilitated, from where people are standing, about why they chose to represent their work as engaging in these spaces and levels, with whom, and dealing with which forms of power.

More detailed instructions and examples are provided in the ***Power Twister Game handout 7***.

## **Sample Learning Event 3: Learning Trajectory on Power by Jethro Pettit and Irene Guijt**

### **Overview**

A “Learning Trajectory” is simply a name for a longer-term capacity building and “learning from experience” process that can be carried out within an organisation or with a group of similar organisations. It combines a series of actual workshops with periods of work-based learning and reflection on practice, supported by some form of coaching. Learning Trajectories are used in the Netherlands by NGOs, and the model shared here is based on the design and facilitation experience of Irene Guijt (Learning by Design) and Jethro Pettit (IDS) with the Dutch NGO consortium PSO and international NGO Oxfam-Novib.

### **Why do a Learning Trajectory?**

A Learning Trajectory has both advantages and disadvantages. It takes more time than simply offering workshops and trainings, both from facilitators and from participants. The length of a Learning Trajectory can be anywhere from a few weeks to a few months to a year or even longer. It may involve only two workshops with a short period of practice in between, or three or more workshops spread out over several months of work-based learning. IDS runs an action research MA degree programme which follows the same kind of model over an 18-month period.

The advantages of a Learning Trajectory are that learning will be deeper and more practically applied to work experience, so that the desired changes in practice are embedded in the organisations involved. The methodologies build on effective and well-known principles of experiential and reflective learning, and use methods of organisational learning and action research. The learning and change processes are integrated, leading to firmer results than training or capacity-building alone.

In addition, the Learning Trajectory process can provide methods and spaces for exploring and addressing power internally, at the personal and organisational levels, in addition to applications “out there” in relation to achieving organisational aims. This opportunity to connect levels of “me, us and them” (first, second and third person) makes it more likely that the learning will “stick” and lead to changes in practice.

### **Design Process**

As with any learning event, the objectives and process should be planned out in consultation with key stakeholders and where possible, including learners or their representatives. These discussions should identify:

- reasons for undertaking the Learning Trajectory
- expected learning and change outcomes
- links to organisational and individual aims and expectations
- capacity and availability of learners and organisations to take part

Because there is a time commitment, it is important to ensure that learners are given the time to attend and prepare for the workshops, to try out practical exercises while on the job, and to reflect upon and document their experiences. This can require getting leaders and senior managers to commit to the process – the more so if senior people are taking part themselves.

There is a fine balance between designing a Learning Trajectory to meet the time availability of learners, and ensuring there is enough time for the learning process. There is no point making the process too rushed and tightly scheduled, as this will simply undermine the possibilities for learning. At the same time, it should not take so much time that learners resent the process or find that it is preventing them from accomplishing their work.

To date we have completed the following learning trajectories:

- 4-month learning trajectory with about 10 staff from diverse NGOs. This involved a two-day residential workshop at either end (2007)
- 10-month trajectory with 15 staff from one NGO. This involved three 1-2 day workshops at the beginning, middle and end (2008-09)

In addition, we are aware of these similar processes under way:

- 12-month action research project with six grassroots partner organisations supported by Carnegie UK Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation (UK). This involves 6 one-day workshops.
- 3-week process involving 6 staff and partners from Christian Aid in Kenya. This involves 2, 3-hour workshops and a short exercise in between.

## **Sample Learning Outcomes**

The broad objectives of a Learning Trajectory on power could be:

*"to explore and apply concepts, methods and practical steps which can help learners and their teams or organisations become more aware of power issues and more coherent and strategic in their efforts to shift power relations."*

Specific outcomes for learners might include the following:

- To introduce and test out practical concepts, tools and methods for better understanding power, and for applying a "power lens" in practice.
- To experiment with innovations in "power-conscious" practice and strategy, to reflect on the process and outcomes, and to document the results.
- To develop common transferable lessons, methods and analytical tools that can be adapted and applied more widely (organisation or sector).

## **Sample design**

A process is suggested outlined here which is based on the two Learning Trajectories in the Netherlands. This sample involves 3 short workshops over a period of 6-10 months, during which learners carry out "action learning" inquiries into their own organisational and professional practices, with coaching provided by the facilitators.

The design is in stages, and seeks to keep the overall pace light and manageable within the flow of learners' existing work responsibilities, but building in significant opportunities for reflection and learning. This could be applied within one team or organisation, or involve a wider range of learners from a sector or movement.

If working with more than one organisation, try to identify clear criteria, issues or aims that are held in common. In either case, try to get small groups of 2-3 people (minimum) who work together to participate together.

**1. Initiation phase**

- a. Identify issues, purpose and learning outcomes
- b. Identify learners and/or organisations and facilitators
- c. Dialogue among stakeholders to clarify purpose and process
- d. Pre-workshop engagement with participants.  
(face to face or via email, phone, skype, etc.)

**2. Framing Workshop:** 2 days (residential venue if possible, to allow use of evening and social time to deepen learning)

- a. Introduction to power analysis, Power Cube, tools and methods
- b. Introduction to action research and reflective practice methods
- c. Practical sessions to apply concepts and methods
- d. Development of draft action learning plans (individuals and groups)
- e. Agreement of timeline and plan for remainder of trajectory

**3. Action Research** – Part 1 with a duration of 2-3 months

- a. Participants develop/agree/initiate learning plans
- b. Initiation of action research and reflective practice activities
- c. Application of power analysis to practice (e.g. planning, strategising, monitoring, evaluation, alliances, partnerships, etc.)
- d. Regular coaching and contact with facilitators
- e. Brief progress reports by end from all participants

**4. Progress Workshop** – 2 days (or one evening plus one day), to take place 2-3 months after the first workshop.

- a. Presentations of progress from all participants
- b. Identification of key adaptations, lessons, issues, challenges
- c. Peer and facilitator feedback and support; exchange of methods
- d. Deepening of analysis and learning additional methods
- e. Review timeline and plan for remainder of trajectory

**5. Action Research** – Part 2 with a duration of 3-5 months

- a. Continuation of (refined) action research and reflective practice activities
- b. Application of power analysis to practice (e.g. planning, strategising, monitoring, evaluation, alliances, partnerships, etc.)
- c. Regular coaching and contact with facilitators
- d. Progress reports, documentation and methods shared be end

**6. Synthesis Workshop** – 2 days at end of action research and reflective practice process (if possible including evenings, in residential setting).

- a. Presentations and exchange of findings, learning and methods
- b. Identification of key adaptations, lessons, issues, challenges
- c. Peer and Facilitator feedback and support
- d. Deepening of analysis and implications for practice
- e. Documentation and communication plan, and next steps

**Example of Schedule**

| Activity                 | Dates   |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Initiation Phase         | Jan-Feb |
| Framing Workshop         | Feb     |
| Action Research – part 1 | Mar-May |
| Progress Workshop        | May     |
| Action Research – part 2 | Jun-Sep |
| Synthesis Workshop       | Oct     |

### **Sustainability, Replication and Impact**

One outcome of the process may be lessons learned and recommendations for changes in programming or direction of the organisation, movement or sector. Another outcome may be practical guides, tools, examples and methods that would make adaptation and spread of the approach feasible within the organisation(s) involved. Other outcomes may be published materials or events on methods, case studies and lessons learned, for influencing wider sectoral policy and practice.

For more information please contact Jethro Pettit (IDS) [J.Pettit@ids.ac.uk](mailto:J.Pettit@ids.ac.uk) or Irene Guijt (Learning by Design) [iguijt@learningbydesign.org](mailto:iguijt@learningbydesign.org)

## Section 6 Applications of the Power Cube for Research and Analysis

**Applications of the Power Cube** - This section provides examples of how the power cube can be used to strengthen understanding and analysis of how power works in different settings. It includes a number of examples drawn from student papers, other studies and evaluation processes. Please refer to [www.powercube.net/resources](http://www.powercube.net/resources) for more resources.

Examples included in this section:

- **Example 1: Community Driven Development in Liberia** student term paper
- **Example 2: Cooperatives in the UK** student term paper
- **Example 3: Councillors and Residents in Hove Park** student group project
- **Example 4: Kenyan Constitutional Reform** student term paper by Ben Lucy
- **Example 5: Zimbabwe's power-sharing deal** student group project by Suvojit Chattopadhyay, Noemi de la Fuente and Andrew John Edwards.

**Others to possibly include:**

From individual student essays:

- **Book review: The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga**
- **Reservation for women in India's local government**
- **Peruvian participatory budgeting**
- **Shift from Aid to Remittances**
- **Accessing ARVs and the TAC in S Africa**
- **People's campaign for decentralised planning in Kerala**
- **An Afghan refugee's struggle for survival in Japan**
- **Sudanese Taxi Forum** (student group project)

Fieldwork examples of exploring the Power Cube:

- **Colombia Country Report - Assessing Civil Society Participation as Supported In-country** by Jenny Pearce and Gloria Vela.
- **Sri Lanka Country Report - Assessing Civil Society Participation as Supported In-country** by Sriyani Perera and Hettie Walters.
- **Field work check list – questions to explore on the Power Cube from Civil Society Participation project**

**Other Frameworks**

- **SDC: Frameworks for Exploring Power** (Luttrell)
- **Urban violence in Brazil** (Soumountha)
- **Linking the Power Cube to violence** work by Jenny Pearce

### **Example 1: Community Driven Development in Liberia (author to be supplied)**

#### **1. The application:**

In this student term paper the forms of power – visible, hidden, invisible – are used to analyse the way in which development intervention framed around ‘empowerment’ might impact on power relations.

#### **2. The case:**

Community Driven Development is an approach developed by the World Bank which explicitly seeks to empower poor people. The question is how empowering such approaches really are in practice and what kind of power is involved. Liberia is one of many contexts in which CDD has been carried out.

The World Bank definition of empowerment is ‘the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives’ (World Bank 2001, Narayan 2002:vi). They do not define power itself, but the definition of empowerment suggests that it is about increasing ‘power to’.

The CDD approach prioritises the local as the site in which poor people’s lives can be changed, and frames its targets as ‘communities’ in a way that supposes a homogeneity – or at least a willingness to work together towards equality irrespective of current differences – that in reality communities rarely demonstrate. An analysis of the forms of power that pertain in a country like Liberia throws up some important challenges to this kind of approach.

#### **3. The analysis:**

Liberia’s contextual particularities are unique to its history, but the way in which these may challenge the assumptions of an approach such as CDD are illustrative of a broader point, that existing power relations in the places where development intervention takes place can undermine as well as support the intentions of such programmes.

In terms of visible power, inequalities are entrenched because of a historical distinction in Liberia between ‘civilized’ and ‘aboriginal’ communities which confers different rights on different groups. This creates a systematic mobilisation of bias against one category, as evidenced by a two-tier justice system (making the hidden power hardly hidden).

Hidden power is exercised by elites who dominate resources, decision-making and control at a community level. When CDD approaches opt to work with established CBOs and existing leaders they are playing into this hidden power structure rather than challenging it. Chieftancy arrangements, the role of the diaspora, and the existence of ‘sodalites’ – secret societies – are all sites of contextual power which are hidden when communities are approached as homogeneous entities.

Entrenched attitudes towards women and youth are expressions of invisible power at work, with social rules dictating that both of these groups have more limited roles to play than adult males. Interestingly one of the effects of the horrific violence in Liberia’s conflict was to disrupt these invisible power structures: women and youth became more active and present in society (and in violence) than they had been in peace time. However, this may now be changing again. Aboriginal groups, who have also internalised their own secondary status in society, mobilised against their oppression in this conflict, generating their ‘power



with' and expressing it in violent ways. Despite the visibility of this uprising, though, it has not changed their ongoing status nor their internalisation of a role in society that means they do not count. In terms of CDD, non-participation by these groups can therefore be expected.

#### **4. Implications & significance**

In this context, it can be argued that CDD might have very perverse effects, posing a warning to development agencies that seek to 'empower' without understanding power. What the use of the power analysis tools achieves here is an unpicking of some of the complexity into which development processes play, signalling some obvious but difficult areas in which intervention practices need to change if they are really to alter power relations meaningfully and for the better.

The experience also recasts the nature of the space in which CDD happens as an 'invited space', where the donors are inviting community members to participate in what is essentially a process or a game in which the donors have set the terms – including making the assumption of equality which allows hidden power to remain hidden during this encounter. Although described as a 'community-based' process it has not really been claimed and certainly not created by the community. Reframing the space in this way goes beyond identifying 'ownership' as a problem – by labelling the space as 'invited' it specifically poses questions about who is doing the inviting, what the terms of the invitation are, and what that means for what it is possible to change through action within that space.

## **Example 2: Cooperatives in the UK (Author to be supplied)**

### **1. The application:**

This student thesis, based on a small amount of original fieldwork, uses the forms dimension of the Power Cube – the visible/hidden/invisible categories, based on Lukes' three 'faces' of power – to examine the lived experience of two small cooperatives in the UK - Magpie Recycling in Brighton and Brixon Cycles in London.

### **2. The case:**

Workers' cooperatives are specific types of institutions which organise themselves deliberately in a way to negate the hierarchy and inequality that characterises other organisations. They seek to handle power in such a way that inequalities are reduced and the dynamics of those involved in the collective activity reflect their equal worth in that activity, rather than the different attributes they may carry as individuals. The question is, how far do the levelling effects of a cooperative organisational structure really go?

### **3. The analysis:**

**Visible power:** Observable decision making is one dimension where the cooperatives have consciously set things up to handle power equitably. Decisions are taken in an open, collective space (usually in a meeting format) to which all members are invited. In this space, transparency is evident and good arguments which are presented soundly tend to prevail, suggesting that it is functioning well.

**Hidden power:** However, the meeting is not a level playing field in several respects.

- The timing of meetings – in the evenings after work - means that on any given occasion it is more difficult for some to attend than others, and certain members are systematically less likely to get to the table – for instance, those with child-care responsibilities;
- Members admit that it requires confidence to speak out in such a public space, and that there are clearly some who are more comfortable than others to do so. In part this relates to knowledge and experience, meaning that there is a natural bias towards more participation by longer-standing, more knowledgeable members (which other members may find reasonable, particularly as both Coops do take steps to build members' knowledge of the collective work over time) but it also relates to personal characteristics which are less attainable for some;
- Agenda-setting is done quite openly and through a process to which all members have access but, again, some feel more reticent than others to bring their concerns into such a public forum, meaning that they may never make it to the table. In particular, raising difficult, controversial, and personal issues might be very difficult in this format. Similarly, cooperative members may opt not to raise issues that they perceive will not be well received. These types of issues then remain off the agenda even though they may be important.

**Invisible power:** Some of the biases and exclusions that are evident as expressions of hidden power may well relate to the exercise of invisible power (although the investigator of this case was rightly at pains to recognise the difficulty of exploring invisible power on the basis of limited field work and avoid drawing firm conclusions).

Even raising the question of invisible power means looking out for things that suggest the internalisation of a particular role, behaviour or capacity, even where this does not apparently serve the person concerned and/or perpetuates inequality. The concerns of those

members who feel their personalities do not equip them to speak up in meetings or to handle controversy could be seen in this light.

Looking for invisible power also involves paying attention to belief systems, values and systematised understandings of the way things work, and in this case the cooperatives are rather interesting:

- There is a clear inculcation of members into cooperative values, which involves an ideology of equality and a collective ethic in place of rampant individualism. Members all seem to buy into this and find it a positive and motivating part of their experience. Sharing the values also contributes to a strong sense of belonging, which members value to the point that they are often prepared to incur personal cost – for instance working more hours than they need to, making extra effort to get the job done well – in order to benefit the whole enterprise. As they experience this in a positive way it is hard to equate it with ‘false consciousness’ in the sense of acquiescing to their own exploitation, but it is certainly an expression of beliefs outweighing personal interests;
- Members are conscious of the real-life inequalities that exist in the coop despite their rhetorical attachment to equality – for instance, members recognise that some people are more likely to get away with bending rules than others are, based on their authority or longevity within the cooperative. It is invisible power which prevents other members from seeking to resolve this, to close the gap between rhetoric and reality by insisting that everyone abide by the rules absolutely. The fact that this is recognised, though, means that the inequality is handled consciously, reducing its power to undermine the cooperative. Pragmatically, it is perhaps more important to belong and to maintain relationships within an equal-ish set-up than to achieve absolute equality in practice and challenge the invisible authority of those with more responsibility or experience.
- Members have developed coping mechanisms for dealing with any frustrations around these issues or other minor irritations within the cooperative – particularly the use of subversive humour and calls to solidarity. These could be seen as means of handling real life unfairness without feeling unduly dominated. This is not to say that the inequality might ultimately be damaging, but that invisible power made visible is coped with and resisted in good humour in a way that perhaps makes it less likely to lead to oppression and exclusion.

#### **4. Implications & significance**

Just taking one side of the Power Cube, this analysis paints a much richer picture and raises much deeper questions than a conventional analysis based on decision-making structures, formal authority and agenda-setting practices might. Rather than viewing gaps between reality and rhetoric as straightforward organisational pathologies, analysing them through the lens of power gives us insight into people’s behaviour and choices which give them more agency and perhaps more room to manoeuvre.

It also illustrates how using one dimension of the cube can stimulate questions about another dimension which would take the analysis even further – for instance in this case there is clearly something very interesting about the particular nature of the space in which decisions are (formally) taken which frames the way the cooperative functions and how far it is able to live up to its equalising intentions.

Potentially these features mean that a study like this could be a very useful starting point for organisational development – in these cooperatives or in other organisations in which power is ostensibly handled in a deliberately equalising way and yet still plays out unequally. It

demonstrates how organisational structures can shape power relations significantly and yet not determine them entirely – individual behaviour, personality and circumstance are all also important, both for allowing or perpetuating inequality, and for finding ways to handle it constructively in pursuit of consciously espoused values. People's experience of work emerges as much more subtle than 'dominate or be dominated', and in a cooperative more complex than 'we're all equal' or 'there's no power here'.

This type of analysis would allow an organisation to have some very interesting and potentially transformative discussions about its organisational development, opening up avenues for change beyond rigid adherence to an ideal.

### ***Example 3: Councillors and Residents in Hove Park***

**Suvojit Chattopadhyay, Noemi de la Fuente and Andrew John Edwards**

#### **1. The application:**

This study was carried out by a group of students as part of their course work. It uses the 'spaces' and 'forms' dimensions of the power cube to investigate a small-scale, local expression of participation in the UK's system of local governance.

#### **2. The case:**

In the UK local councillors are the lowest tier of governance, representing wards which in cities constitute small sub-sections of the urban area, with jurisdiction over a range of issues which is limited but important to residents in their everyday lives. In a scenario fairly typical of the UK, in one ward in the city of Brighton and Hove (Stanford Ward), local councillors are actively involved in their local residents' associations, civil society bodies through which residents of a particular street or area (usually smaller than a ward) discuss and address issues that pertain to that area.

The extent to which residents' associations have formalised structures and procedures varies considerably, as does the extent to which members and other residents feel able to contribute to the decision-making that is carried out in them. Of the two residents' associations considered in this case, one has a loose structure and open mandate such that it can be a vehicle for addressing a wide range of issues; the other is more formally structured and well-defined in its purpose. In both cases, local councillors occupy key leadership roles – apparently because they are prepared and able to give time and commitment that other residents may not be.

Councillors who act as leaders in these spaces occupy hybrid roles: elected representative with a voice in council decision-making, and resident with a concern for what's going on locally and a sense of civic duty. Their leadership roles, and relative expertise and capability in taking action on the problems raised, could easily lead to their domination of the residents' associations – although as they are simultaneously elected representatives of the same constituency resident-citizens may perceive this as legitimate. At the same time, in a practical sense, their dual role performs a useful function of intermediation between citizens and representatives in a context where popular participation in local governance is generally extremely minimal.

#### **3. The analysis:**

The study argues that residents' associations constitute claimed spaces in which local residents get to express and discuss their concerns. Their different internal structures create different power dynamics. Although the looser association presents more opportunities for engagement by local residents, as its remit is not limited, the informality of the structure creates a lot of space in which the leadership can exercise hidden power to determine which issues make it onto the agenda and get acted upon. The formality of the other group makes the agenda-setting process more visible and transparent as it is carried out by a managing committee, however this structure may also limit the opportunities for other residents to participate in the association. The hybrid role of councillor-leaders within the associations means that the 'space' that is created is one in which the claimed and the invited come together, and are embedded in each other.

One notable feature of the agendas addressed by the residents' associations is their very small scope and scale: they address the very limited range of immediate, practical issues that local councils are empowered to deal with in the UK system. One framing of this is that it is an expression of invisible power, in that residents are complying with and legitimating the very tight boundaries on what can be dealt with at a local level and what citizens can engage with directly, even though it could be argued that it would be more in their interests to pursue a broadening of those boundaries. Pushing for deeper democracy at a local level might be rationally a better use of residents' time and energy than solving tiny problems one by one.

An alternative framing is that it is an expression of the arrangement of visible power in the UK – simply an artefact of living in a quite centralised polity. Citizens may be complacent, or they may be making an informed choice to comply with a political arrangement which may not deliver participatory democracy at the local level but has other advantages that UK citizens value.

#### **4. Implications & significance**

This analysis demonstrates how taking a 'power look' at democratic relations, even in a well-established, deeply entrenched democracy, can lead to reappraisal. In this case it seems to open up the possibility of exploring the potential of hybrid and embedded relationships between governors and governed as means of deepening democracy without starting from the assumption of a need for wholesale institutional reform.

At the same time it is interesting to note how just the process of looking for different forms of power brings to light perspectives which get beyond seeing all citizen - council interaction as inherently 'a good thing for democracy' by raising questions about what power relations are being reinforced at the same time – and, in this case, the limitations of local democracy in the UK.

## ***Example 4: Kenyan Constitutional Reform***

**Ben Lucy**

### **1. The application:**

This student paper makes use of all three dimensions of the Power Cube to look back at a significant moment in Kenyan political history and assess whether on balance the achievement of constitutional reform shifted power relations for the better or not.

### **2. The case:**

Over the period 1995-7 a movement for constitutional reform emerged and developed, in which civil society actors and the state entered into a dialogue over dissatisfactions with the existing constitution. It was on one level successful, in that the movement mobilised a number of actors and got the issue of constitutional reform onto the public and governmental agenda. On another, though, it failed to change in any meaningful way the underlying power relations which had led to the initial discontent – those which allowed the state to exercise domination over society, and those which meant the majority of ordinary Kenyans were effectively excluded from power.

The movement began when a group of human rights organisations galvanised a broader alliance of civil society and church groups leading to the establishment of the Citizens' Coalition for Constitutional Change (4Cs), which in turn networked with opposition politicians, religious groups and others around the idea of constitutional change. In 1997 500 delegates participated in the first session of the National Convention Assembly in Nairobi, a civil society forum in which to discuss proposals for constitutional reform. Agitation for change intensified in the run-up to the 1997 elections, with mass demonstrations calling for reform before these were held – and when these were put down by the government international condemnation added to the pressure on the government to negotiate.

Finally the government agreed to talk, but only to elected MPs within the movement for reform, thus excluding civil society from the dialogue. Although this frustrated the civil society actors within the movement it nonetheless had an effect by stimulating the creation of a cross-party parliamentary group to discuss constitutional reform, an entity which was ultimately successful in getting some reforms adopted by parliament, and committing to the creation of a constitutional review commission to examine the issue after the elections.

### **3. Analysis:**

The state's visible power was widely seen by civil society as overbearing, and its hidden power meant that the issue of constitutional reform to limit this could be kept off the agenda. Civil society's response was to build up a movement of diverse actors united around this common concern - identifying and generating 'power with' other actors to a point where they could claim a space at national level – the NCA - and make the issue of constitutional reform un-ignorable. Mass demonstrations constituted transient claimed spaces which lent further visibility, in particular attracting the attention of the international community such that the pressure for change started to be exerted not just from below but also above – i.e. at multiple levels. Finally, the state responded by establishing an invited space in which the issue of constitutional reform could be discussed, although this was so restrictive in terms of who could be invited that it was essentially closed to the civil society actors who had pushed the issue this far. Ultimately a restricted, invited space within parliament was able to effect



some change although not on the scale hoped for or with the legitimacy that a more participatory process might have generated.

Beneath this story the realities of power relations in broader Kenyan society meant that ordinary, non-elite Kenyans were essentially excluded from the process. Civil society is a fairly elite sector in Kenya where the majority of people consider themselves to be passive subjects of more powerful entities including the government. Their non-participation in the movement for change reflected the way in which this invisible power structure renders them unable to conceive of bringing about change in their own interests, and had the effect of giving the movement the hidden power to determine the change agenda. This power may have been exercised in pursuit of progressive, pro-democratic goals, serving what the movement understood to be the interests of poorer and less elite Kenyans, but this should not be confused with the movement having empowered them. Indeed, the fact that the movement mobilised and the change was effected without broader participation could be argued to have consolidated existing power relations – and consolidated ordinary Kenyans' belief that they have no influence over what powerful people do – rather than challenged them.

#### **4. Implications & significance**

Making particular use of the hidden and invisible dimensions of the Power Cube, the analysis here tells a very different and more nuanced story than the simple progression of events might have suggested: if a progressive policy change is achieved it is easy to assume that this means power relations have shifted towards more equality in some way, but this analysis gives cause to reconsider this. It suggests that building a movement for change without the participation of those negatively affected can consolidate inequality – a central premise of participatory approaches but one often sacrificed by movements in favour of 'pragmatism' – i.e. having some impact at an opportune moment rather than risking having none.

The case also demonstrates how strategies that build 'power with' can be effective in challenging hidden power, where they force the expressions of that power to come into sight. Making the hidden visible emerges as a powerful strategy – although at the same time it shows that this is insufficient for shifting invisible power, in the end undermining the achievement of the movement somewhat, so suggesting that tackling invisible power needs to be given more priority.

### **Example 5: Zimbabwe's power-sharing deal (author to be supplied)**

#### **1. The application:**

This study was carried out as a group project by students, and uses all three sides of the Power Cube – particularly spaces and forms of power – to explore an extraordinary political process, removed from citizens and normal political practice but with huge implications for both.

#### **2. The case:**

In early 2009 a power-sharing deal was agreed between the ruling and key opposition parties in Zimbabwe, keeping Robert Mugabe in power with his rival, Morgan Tsvangirai, becoming Prime Minister. This deal was struck following a violently contested election process in 2008 in which Tsvangirai and his Movement for Democratic Change apparently beat Mugabe and his Zanu PF party in the first round, an outcome which Mugabe refused to accept<sup>12</sup>. The arrangement splits power between the two parties by allocating them specific rights in decision making and over particular government modes, and to each appoint a proportion of Cabinet roles.

The process of arriving at this settlement took place behind closed doors, in a forum of SADC (the Southern African Development Community) with South African President Thabo Mbeki taking the key mediating role. Neither Zimbabwean civil society actors nor international donors – with both of whom Zanu-PF had a historically tense and suspicious relationship – were included in the process, and the decisions reached were made without broader consultation with the Zimbabwean population.

#### **3. The analysis:**

**An invited/closed space:** Firstly, the power-sharing deal took place in a very particular kind of space. Formally it was an 'invited' space, in that Thabo Mbeki invited the players to come together under the umbrella of SADC in order to resolve their differences. But the list of invitees was extremely restricted – perhaps appropriately for a process of arbitration as this, at one level, was - but less appropriately for deciding the outcome of an ostensibly democratic decision-making process, an election. From the perspective of civil society, other development actors, and Zimbabwean citizens it was effectively a closed space.

**A regional level process:** Secondly, the decision took place at the level of the Southern Africa region – apparently rejecting the validity and relevance of either the national level or the wider global level. Whilst the case does not go into these details, drawing attention to the level at which power was exercised certainly raises interesting questions about the significance of this: what does it say about the Zimbabwean government and nation state that the outcome of its election process could not be resolved at a national level? And to what extent was the choice of Southern African neighbours over a wider international community a statement by Mugabe or SADC that they reject the role of international players in shaping African politics?

**Hidden and Invisible power:** Both the nature of the space and the choice of a regional forum become more significant when the power dynamics that were at play in this process are unpacked. On the surface, this was a mediation space in which arguments from either side would be mediated and resolved on a rational basis – through a visible decision-making

process (albeit only visible to those within the closed space). Beneath the surface, however, the realities of the relationships between the players in the room probably played a much larger role. Hidden power – the mobilisation of bias – was evident in the key role played by Mbeki, by no means a neutral player with respect to Zimbabwe but one with multiple and deep-rooted obligations to Mugabe and Zanu PF. As the agenda-setter for this mediation process he created a space in which Mugabe and Tsvangirai were treated on far from equal terms.

This was demonstrated by actions which also perhaps point to invisible power – the internalisation of unequal power, or adherence to ideology over interests – at work. Apparently, within the negotiations, Mugabe was treated as if he were still the legitimate leader of Zimbabwe, despite the outcome of the first round election having selected Tsvangirai. In contrast, Tsvangirai was invited into the process as a privilege rather than a right. In other words, the participants in the process appeared to be somehow inclined to treat Mugabe as the dominant figure in the room despite his lack of formal authority – pointing to an underlying set of power relationships which have nothing to do with what was going on at an observable (visible or hidden) level. Similarly, no condemnation was voiced about the violence that Mugabe's party had unleashed on supporters of the opposition (and random members of the public) despite such practices being a perfectly legitimate thing for neighbouring countries (or indeed the international community) to comment on in other circumstances. If resistance was present it was kept very quiet in this space.

#### **4. Implications & significance**

Using the power analysis tools this study goes beyond noting that the process happened 'behind closed doors', to explore what went on behind them. In doing so it brings into focus the significance of inter-personal and historical relationships in shaping political decisions. In this case it perhaps suggests that the non-participatory nature of the process was possibly less significant than the embedded power relationships between leaders within the region, and the ability of powerful players to choose the forums in which things are decided, to suit their own advantage....

## Section 7 Applications of the Power Cube for Strategy, Planning and Action

**Applications of the power cube** – a range of applications of using the power cube emerging from practice. This section gives examples of how power analysis can be used for strategy, planning and action, drawn from workshop templates and other examples. Please refer to [www.powercube.net/resources](http://www.powercube.net/resources) for more resources.

Examples for possible inclusion in this section:

From Templates:

- **Introducing the We Can Campaign in the DRC** (Conny Hoitink, Oxfam Novib)
- **SIM project – an internal organisational decision-making process** (Conny Hoitink, Oxfam Novib)
- **Building a movement of women working on HIV & AIDS** (Hope Chigudu, JASS)
- **Strengthening the climate change programme in Oxfam International** (Gigi Manicad, Oxfam Novib)
- **Engaging trustees in a Democracy Initiative project** (Raji Hunjan, Carnegie UK Trust)]
- **Programme analysis to strategise around empowering women** (Nani Zulminarni – institution??)
- **Developing National Change Strategy in Oxfam Philippines** (via Jo Rowlands, no sure of author, Oxfam GB)
- **Developing National Change Strategy in Oxfam Ethiopia** (Ahmed Ali, Oxfam Ethiopia)
- **Analysing interventions for female sex workers and men who have sex with men** (Tom Thomas)
- **Defining policy around palm oil for Oxfam International** (Sandra Seeboldt, Oxfam Novib)
- **Creator’s Forum with Team Plantation Workers in Sri Lanka** (Sriyana Pesra)

Other possible examples:

- **Rough Guide to Power** by Oxfam Programme Resource Centre (*see section 6.1 supporting resources handouts and exercises*) (*extract follows*)
- **Building Political Power Prepared for the State Strategies Fund Convening** by Sandra Hinson and Richard Healey. September 2003. Grassroots Policy Project (*see section 6.2 supporting resources, concepts, case studies and links*).
- **Understanding Power and creating spaces: Sex Workers’ Voices in HIV Prevention** SAKSHAM Approach Paper 2.
  - **Making Change Happen 3: Power.** Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace. 2006. Just Associates, especially Power Matrix

## Section 8 Resources Section

This section gives examples of resources that can be used to support the application of power analysis. It is divided into three sections: a) examples of handouts and exercises b) supporting resources on concepts and case studies and c) further background reading. Please refer to [www.powercube.net/resources](http://www.powercube.net/resources)

### Handouts and Exercises

Examples currently included:

- 1. Academic debates about the 'levels' of power in a globalised world**
- 2. Case Study on the Jubilee Debt Campaign. Working across the levels, spaces and forms of power**
- 3. Power and Empowerment - Summary of some concepts and approaches**
- 4. Power Cartoons**
- 5. Chicken Run**
- 6. Visible, Hidden and Invisible Power : three scenarios**
- 7. Power Twister Game**
- 8. The Power Matrix** from Making Change Happen 3: Power, by Just Associates.

List of other examples for possible inclusion in full in Power Pack:

- **Rough Guide to Power Analysis.** 2008. Programme Resource Centre. Oxfam.
- **Irene Guijt powerpoints**

## **Handouts and Exercises 1: Academic debates about the 'levels' of power in a globalised world**

While in 1961 Robert Dahl asked 'Who Governs?' in relationship to New Haven, some forty years later Held and McGrew (2003b: 8), asked a similar set of questions: 'who rules, in whose interests, by what mechanisms and for what purposes?' Though the inquiry is similar, the level at which it is addressed is entirely different. Dahl's work sought to analyze how power and participation interacted at the local (city) level, reflecting a predominant focus of 'community power' studies at the time. Held and McGrew, on the other hand, ask their questions in relationship to global governance in an age of globalization. Globalization, they argue is taken to express the expanding scale on which power is organized and exercised. In this respect, Held and McGrew say that 'at the core of the globalist account lies a concern with power: its instrumentalities, configuration, distribution and impacts... it involves a reordering of power relations between and across the world's major regions such that key sites of power and those who are subject to them are literally oceans apart' (2003a: 8).

At the heart of their question, as well as those posed by others in an increasingly growing literature on power and globalisation is this: where does power reside? For Held and McGrew as well as others, the study of power can no longer be focused only on a particular place: 'the exclusive link between territory and political power has been broken. The contemporary era has witnessed layers of governance spreading within and across boundaries.' (2003a:11). Theirs is part of a growing literature global governance warns us of the dangers of focusing only on the 'local', or the 'national' in a globalising world. Governance has become 'multi-layered', ranging from the subnational, to the national to the supranational (Keohane and Nye 2000), encompassing a range of sites from the very local, to the regional, to the global.

To Robert Dahl's question of 'Who governs?' in New Haven, the globalist response might be, 'don't just look in New Haven', a retort which raises serious methodological challenges for how and where power is to be found. Yet, to some extent the debate on the levels and sites of power is not new. For many years, those concerned with power have argued about where it is located. Feminist scholars have challenged the focus by political science on the search for power in the public sphere, arguing for the primacy of the relations of power at the intimate or household sphere as well (e.g. Kabeer 2001).<sup>13</sup> For those who focus on public spaces for participation, there are some that argue that participatory practice must begin locally, as it is in the arenas of everyday life in which people are able to resist power and to construct their own voice. Others argue for the importance of the nation state, and how it mediates power, suggesting that the possibilities of local spaces often depend on the extent to which power is legitimated nationally, but shared with the locality. Others, such as Beck (2005:81), challenge this view, arguing that 'there is a new dialectic of global and local issues that do not fit into the scheme of national politics. As these kinds of global problems increasingly impact on people's everyday lives and yet are dealt with either inadequately or not at all at the national level, the crisis of legitimation in nation-state politics deepens.'

As the globalisation debate challenges our understanding of where power resides, it also challenges traditional assumptions of how and where citizens mobilise to hold states and non-state actors to account (Tarrow 2005; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005). For scholars and activists concerned with change, this reconfiguration of political power also has enormous consequences. On the one hand, the globalisation of power has created a vast array of

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<sup>13</sup> In this paper, the 'power cube' focuses primarily on power in the 'public sphere', while recognizing that this approach fails to capture the full range of power relations.

political opportunities at the international level in which civil society actors seeking change may engage, demanding greater transparency and accountability, participation in policy formulation and monitoring, or formal mechanisms for redress (Scholte, 2002), or increasingly at the regional level, such as the African Union or NEPAD. A number of writers have outlined the growing influence of transnational civil society in these spaces (Florini 2000; Edwards and Gaventa 2002; Batliwala and Brown 2005). Others, such as Lipschutz, argue that the engagement of civil society in such arenas risks re-enforcing dominant power, as to be effective civil society must become a part of the project of governmentality in the neo-liberal order (see this volume and 2004). Others, however, challenge us to go further, arguing that not only are the sites of power multi-layered, but they are also inter-related. The study of power is not only about who participates or who does not at one decision making level, but how power or its absence at one level shapes mobilisation and action in another, linked together by highly interconnected networks and rapid diffusion of information and knowledge (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005).

Adapted from '**Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power: Analysing opportunities for change**' in Power in World Politics. John Gaventa. 2007. Routledge.



## **Handouts and Exercises 2: Case Study on the Jubilee Debt Campaign. Working across the levels, spaces and forms of power**

### **Jubilee 2000: Debt and Poverty: Example and Strategy**

An illustration of the use of the Power Cube may be found in applying it to an analysis of the issue of debt and its relationships to poverty. From a power perspective, the issue demonstrates how global policies can affect and usurp local participation. Global policies on debt, like most macro-economic policies, have traditionally been decided in 'closed' spaces, with little invited public consultation with or participation by those poor people directly affected, and few alternative spaces for debate to occur. And, this form of power in the policy making process is surrounded by forms of hidden and invisible power: the prevailing mobilisation of bias re-enforces the idea that policy is the province of expert economists. Poor people – whose schools may be closed as result of such policies – are often socialized to accept the legitimacy of such expertise, even when it apparently contradicts their own interests. While participation might be invited on issues of poverty, issues of how macro-economic policies contribute to the underlying causes of poverty are often systematically kept off of the agenda (for a very good analysis of this see Rowden and Irama 2004).

Yet, against this usual backdrop of power, we witnessed in less than a decade the emergence of a global movement to put the impact of debt on poor nations on the public agenda, and to challenge the power relationships that linked debt and poverty. Led by a broad coalition known as Jubilee 2000, which in turn built on previous efforts and coalitions, the movement at its peak had mobilized millions of people in both north and south. It is widely credited not only with putting the issue of debt on the international agenda, but for contributing to debt cancellation for dozens of countries, with consequent tangible effects in some places on education, housing and health care (Mayo 2005). While there were tensions within the movement, and while the issues of debt, aid and service delivery still remain of course an enormous public issue, more than many such transnational movements, Jubilee 2000 has been held up as an example of success which not only succeeded in winning relevant gains on a concrete issue, but in the process began to challenge the prevailing 'mobilisation of bias' which surrounded who should be involved in making macro-economic policy. Though some would argue that the 'mobilisation of bias' was later re-strengthened by new aid conditionalities and mechanisms, such as the PRSP process (Rowden and Irama 2004) for a period at least, the Jubilee 2000 appeared to offer the potential for positive change for those living in poverty. How do we explain this relative success?

The analysis in this chapter would suggest that in part its success is found in the ways that the movement was able to align itself across all the dimensions of power outlined in the Power Cube. Along the vertical dimension, not only did it mobilise at global meetings of the G7, IMF, World Bank, Paris Club and others, but it also built links with national organisations and campaigns in over sixty countries, which lobbied, campaigned, protested and educated in their own countries as well.<sup>14</sup> In many places, the campaign linked with

local groups, such as in Uganda where the Ugandan Debt Network mobilised and educated debt-awareness groups at the village and district level, who could articulate the connection between the global movement and budget priorities of local governments (Collins, Gariyo and Burdon 2001).

Along the horizontal dimension, the campaign spanned mobilisation in multiple spaces. While much attention was focused on challenging and making more transparent the deliberations of relatively closed decision making spaces, at the same time it took advantage of new opportunities for consultation, e.g. invited spaces, where campaigners could also negotiate and make their case, such as those related to discussions around the Highly Indebted Poor Country programme (HIPC), led by the World Bank, IMF and other bi-laterals. At the same time, it carried out mass mobilisation outside of both the closed and invited spaces, often simultaneously, symbolised most powerfully when in July 1998 in Birmingham when a 70,000 person human chain surrounded the G7 meetings and demanded to be heard.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, the style of the campaign was not only to win the issue, but to do so in a way which changed the rules of the game about the transparency of global economic decisions, and which changed the awareness of those directly affected, as well as broader publics, about how debt affected poverty. Economic literacy and public education which enable local people to speak for themselves were just as important as technical research, professional advocacy (for further examples of this approach see Just Associates 2006) As one analyst of the movement has written, Jubilee 2000 'enhanced participants' critical consciousness, facilitating collective action as the basis for social empowerment and social transformation' (Mayo 2005:189).

Throughout all of this, there were of course difficult tensions and conflicts, e.g. about who spoke for whom across the local, national and global spaces, about working on the inside to reform global institutions vs. creating spaces and challenges from the outside, about technical advocacy for winning an issue vs. building popular awareness and self-empowerment that would sustain a long-term movement. All of these were contestations about power within the movement itself, yet, despite the internal conflict, the coalitions, collaborations and commitment to address these issues internally meant that the movement was somewhat aligned across all of the dimensions of the Power Cube. Other perhaps less successful global movements either fail to embrace such diversity, remain relatively localised or specialised though addressing only one aspect of power, or self-destruct from internal tensions when they try and fail to align with others using different strategies.

The relative success of the Jubilee 2000 Campaign compared to many transnational campaigns and movements does not of course mean that the problems it sought to challenge have gone away – quite the contrary. The issues continue but are contested on a slightly new terrain. Now, several years after the Campaign, we could perhaps also use the frame of the Power Cube to analyse how power was able to re-accommodate and re-establish itself – while once decisions about aid might have been made behind closed doors, the new 'invited spaces' for participation, created through the PRSP mechanisms, also created new rules of the game that shored up the status quo; while aid flows might have

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increased from richer to poorer countries, the battle grounds for action simply then shifted to national and sub-national arenas. The point is that just as movements to challenge the status quo need to 'align' their own strategies for change along each dimension of the Power Cube, so power also constantly re-aligns itself to accommodate and respond to new pressures, creating new spaces for action and closing others, requiring re-assessment of strategies and new forms of contestation.

Adapted from '**Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power: Analysing opportunities for change**' in Power in World Politics. John Gaventa. 2007. Routledge.

## Handouts and Exercises 3: Power and Empowerment – Summary of some concepts and approaches

'Empowerment' has become a central objective for many organisations, but like 'power' this can have many different meanings. One criticism of participatory approaches to development, democracy and governance is that they sometimes seek to involve or consult people without examining the underlying power dynamics of the situation. Power analysis can help to address this. Power is complex, however, and is best understood using various frameworks.

### **A. Alternative forms of power** (Rowlands, VeneKlasen and Miller)

A dominant view is one of 'Power over' – domination or control of one over another

But power can also be seen as a positive force:

- Power to – individual ability to act
- Power with – collective action, working together
- Power within – self-worth, dignity

- **Public, Private and Intimate Power** (from gender analysis, VeneKlasen & Miller)
- Public realm of power (visible, employment, public life)
- Private realm of power (family, relationships, friends, marriage)
- Intimate realm of power (self-esteem, confidence, relationship to body)

### **C. 'three faces of power'** (Gaventa, Lukes, VeneKlasen and Miller)

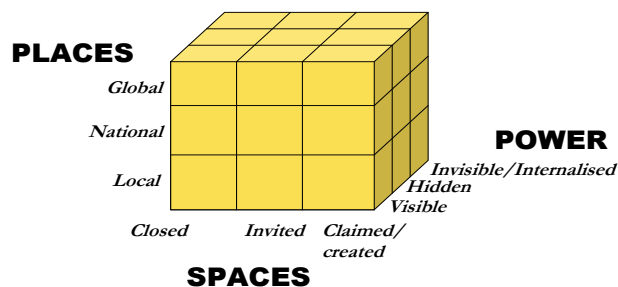
- \* visible power: observable decision-making mechanisms, winners and losers
- \* hidden power: setting the agenda behind the scene, biases which exclude
- \* invisible power: social conditioning, ideology, influencing people's needs

### **D. Socialised and internalised power** (Foucault, Bourdieu, Hayward, others)

The "third face" of power (invisible power), can also be seen as deeply embedded social norms, values and world views which shape power relations in society.

- (d) Foucault: Power as truth or knowledge . A "structural" view of power (v. seeing power as a question of "agency", or individual or group action). Foucault saw power as a "regime of truth" or "discourse" that can take a long time to change, involving basic changes in perception or thinking. He also saw power as embodied through socialised processes of discipline and control.
- (e) Bourdieu: Power as 'symbolic violence' which creates 'embodied dispositions', or *habitus* ...These give rise to 'fields' or 'socially stratified spaces', norms and conventions. We 'incorporate' or 'inscribe' these ways of behaving into our bodies and actions. Our dispositions or 'habitus' are 'spontaneously attuned' and perceived as part of the natural order of things
- (f) Hayward: 'Defacing power' (1998) Power as a network of social boundaries that enables or constrains the behaviour or freedom of all actors

## The “Power Cube” framework



### **Visible power: observable decision making**

This level includes the visible and definable aspects of political power – the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision making ... Strategies that target this level are usually to change the ‘*who, how and what*’ of policymaking so that the policy process is more democratic and accountable, and serves the needs and rights of people and the survival of the planet.

### **Hidden power: setting the political agenda**

Certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. These dynamics operate on many levels to exclude and devalue the concerns and representation of other less powerful groups ... Empowering advocacy strategies that focus on strengthening organisations and movements of the poor can build the collective power of numbers and new leadership to influence the way the political agenda is shaped and increase the visibility and legitimacy of their issues, voice and demands.

### **Invisible power: shaping meaning and what is acceptable**

Probably the most insidious of the three dimensions of power, invisible power shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. Significant problems and issues are not only kept from the decision-making table, but also from the minds and consciousness of the different players 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* – even their own superiority or inferiority. Processes of socialisation, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable and safe. Change strategies in this area target social and political culture as well as individual consciousness to transform the way people perceive themselves and those around them, and how they envisage future possibilities and alternatives.

[Adapted from Just Associates from VeneKlasen and Miller (2002).]

| Power Spectrum (from all the above)  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>From...</b><br><b>Actors and processes</b><br>(visible, power over)   |   | <b>...To</b><br><b>Norms and beliefs</b><br>(invisible, socialised power)   |
| <i>Emphasis</i><br>Focus on “visible” and “hidden” forms of power as forms of wilful domination, observable control and “power over”   | ↔ | Focus on “invisible” power reproduced through social and cultural norms, and internalised by powerful and powerless people  |
| <i>Strategies</i><br>Action to strengthen the “power to” and “power with” of poor and marginalised people, and to build influence and participation in decision-making processes | ↔ | Action to strengthen awareness, dignity and “power within”, to redefine social consensus on norms and behaviour, and to reshape conditions behind decision-making |
| <i>Example: Gender</i><br>Finding ways to ensure women and their issues are represented and have influence in decision-making spaces   | ↔ | Strengthening dignity and self-esteem of women, and challenging socially constructed biases in men’s and women’s gendered behaviour                               |

## Handouts and Exercises 4: Power Cartoons

(Source: Irene Guijt, Learning by Design)

A set of 8 cartoons is available (**Power Cartoons**) which use humour to explore the three faces (visible, hidden and invisible) as well as the alternative forms of power (power over, power to, power with, power within).

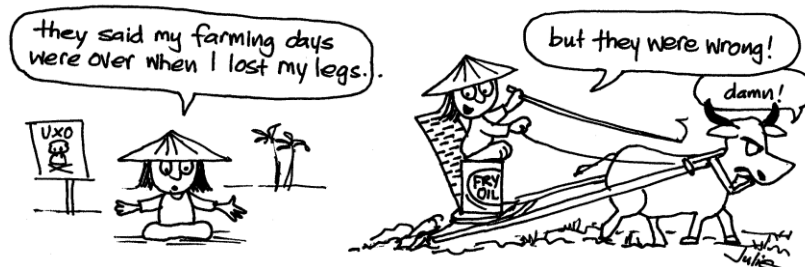
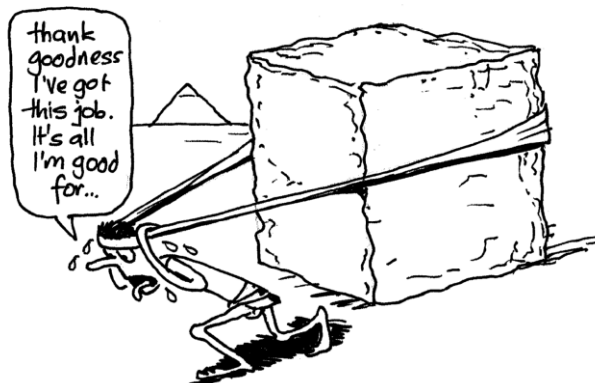
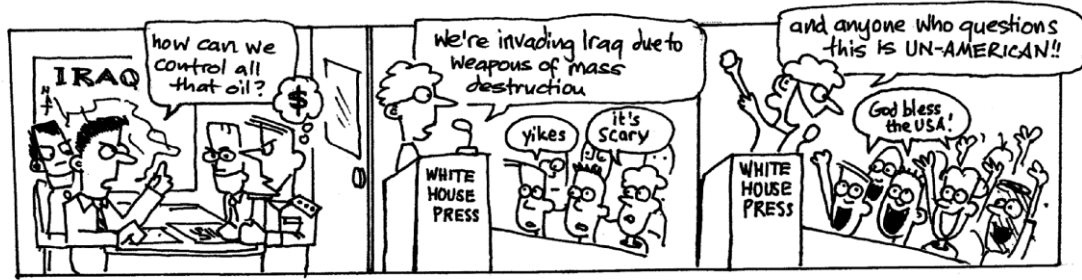
*"I believe that humour is a really essential way to open people's minds for learning and these cartoons really helped"- Irene Guijt*

These cartoons can be used in different ways – *before, during or after* introducing or discussing the various concepts of power:

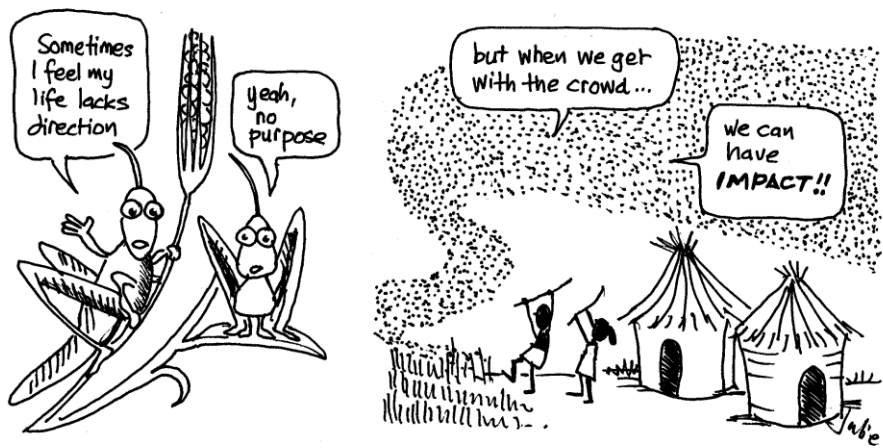
- **Before...** at the beginning of the learning event, before discussing concepts, asking learners to discuss their own experiences in relation to the cartoons, and to talk about the different forms that power can take. Copies of all cartoons are handed to small groups of 5-7 people to view and discuss (thanks to Jo Rowlands for this suggestion).
- **During...** show the cartoons one by one to illustrate the concepts and forms of power as they are introduced and discussed. They can be used as handouts or projected as slides, in either case used as a starter for interaction and dialogue (thanks to Irene Guijt for this suggestion).
- **After...** as an exercise to follow discussion of the concepts, to help consolidate learning; paper copies of all images are handed out to groups of 5-7, as above, with post-it notes (so the images can be re-used in other events). Groups view and discuss the images, and write the forms of power they see in each image on the post-it notes. In this exercise it is useful for learners to have **Handout 3: Power and Empowerment** in hand.

In all three approaches, you will find that each cartoon can and will be interpreted in more than one way, and that there are often several kinds of power occurring in each. This in itself is a good point for discussion.









## Handouts and Exercises 5: Chicken Run

### Chicken Run (Source: Irene Guijt)

'Chicken Run' is a great animated movie for children, and is really all about citizenship and rights and many forms of power. It is readily available online or from DVD and video rental shops. If time allows, the whole film can be shown (for example in the evening, if a residential workshop).

If time is short, show a selection of short scenes as a warm-up or during a break. The timing of suggested scenes is given below. After each scene, stop the film and ask learners what forms of power they see in action.

*"Really interesting discussions, plenty of opportunity to clarify fuzzy understandings, and lots of fun!" – Irene Guijt*

Timing sequences to go with the film Chicken Run are as follows:

1:00 to 4:00 – gives context and various forms of power  
8:00 to 9:25  
17:50 to around 19:00  
24:00 to 28:00 - collective action  
57:00 (starting there, no finish time noted) - power as knowledge  
1 hour 2 minutes - collective power (building the plane)

The below text can be a handout to go along with the film and discussion:

*"Now, the most important thing is, we have to work as a team, which means: you do everything I tell you."* Rocky, the rooster in 'Chicken Run'.

Sound familiar? Based on own (bitter?) experience? Ever thought you'd hear a rooster utter these words? So what do the chickens think about it? And what does all this have to do with POWER? ...?? During the sessions we will show segments of the animated movie 'Chicken Run' to illustrate a wide range of forms of power – power over, power with, power to, invisible, visible and hidden power ...

After that we'll direct our focus on [organization name]'s own 'chicken run'.

*"You know what the problem is? The fences aren't just round the farm. They're up here, in your heads. There's a better place out there, somewhere beyond that hill, and it has wide open places, and lots of trees... and grass. Can you imagine that? Cool, green grass."* Ginger, the hen (who appears to have a somewhat different perspective on power than Rocky)

For a taster, go to <http://www.aardman.com/chickenrun/>

## **Handout and Exercises 6: Visible, Hidden and Invisible Power – Three Scenarios**

### **Visible, Hidden and Invisible Power**

What can we learn about power from the following examples? How do the three different views of power shed light on the nature of power in these examples?

#### Example A

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the members of parliament of Tobostan voted 200 to 150 in favour of a bill permitting the right to have an abortion.

#### Example B

The town of Penningscale is situated 30 kilometers from a nuclear plant. The residents are very concerned about the high incidence of cancer in the community and have raised the issue on many occasions with their local representatives. Whilst the local representatives are sympathetic, they are also aware of the employment opportunities created by the plant. The issue was tabled for discussion at the last local government meeting but due to an unexpectedly lengthy debate on local taxation, the matter was not discussed.

#### Example C

In the province of Tuzal in the country of Sutuzania 80% of land is owned by 10% of the population. Most farmers have a small plot of land for subsistence purposes but also work as labourers in the fields of landowners. The landowners remunerate their workers with a small wage, sufficient to buy basic necessities such as soap and cooking oil. They also provide their workers with clothing and special food on religious occasions. In some districts landowners have contributed towards the costs of basic primary schooling. Compared to the neighbouring country of Portania, there has been little political unrest.

(source: Jude Howell, from her course on Empowering Society, IDS, 2002)

## Exercises and Handouts 7: Power Twister Game

This is a fun exercise that can be used to explore the dimensions of the Power Cube, adapted from the party game “Twister” in which players stand in or stretch across different squares on the floor.

A 3 x 3 grid of nine squares is laid out on the floor with tape or string, about 5m across. “Rows” can be labelled with pieces of paper as representing *Global*, *National* and *Local* levels, and the “Columns” can be labelled with the three kinds of spaces, *Closed*, *Invited* and *Claimed*.


Participants are asked to think about how and where they engage in their own work, and which spaces and levels they would stand in. They are also asked to reflect on what kind of power they are working with or are up against in this work, and to write it on a piece of paper: *Visible*, *Hidden* or *Invisible* (or they may also choose *Power to*, *Power with* etc)

Participants hold the pieces of paper with the forms of power written on them (or tape or pin them to their clothing) and then stand in the appropriate square or across two squares.

Discussion can then be facilitated, from where people are standing, about why they chose to represent their work as engaging in these spaces and levels, with whom, and dealing with which forms of power.

More detailed instructions and examples are provided in the ***Power Twister Game*** by Forum Syd.

## Handout and Exercises 8: The Power Matrix



### 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.<sup>7</sup>

|                   | MECHANISMS<br><i>Through which dimensions of power over operate to exclude and privilege</i>  | EXAMPLES<br><i>Power Over</i>   | RESPONSES & STRATEGIES<br><i>Power With, Power Within, Power To</i>   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>POWER OVER</b> | <b>Visible: Making &amp; Enforcing the Rules</b><br>Presidents, Prime Ministers, legislatures, courts, ministries, police, military, etc. United Nations, IMF, World Bank; World Trade Organization, Multinational corporations (Halliburton, Nike, Coca-Cola), private sector actors, chamber of commerce, businesses, etc.<br><br>Instruments: Policies, laws, constitutions, budgets, regulations, conventions, agreements, implementing mechanisms, etc.  | Biased laws/policies (e.g. health care policies that do not address the poor or women's reproductive needs)<br><br>Decision-making structures (parliaments, courts, IFI governance, etc.) favor the elite or powerful and are closed to certain people's voices and unrepresentative<br><br>Principle of 'equality' may exist in law, but parliaments and courts are not fairly representative of women and minorities<br><br>International financial/trade bodies dominated by G-8 despite rising economic power of others   | Lobbying & monitoring<br>Negotiation & litigation<br>Public education & media<br>Policy research, proposals<br>Shadow reports<br>Marches & demonstrations<br>Voting & running for office<br>Modeling innovations<br>Collaboration<br>Etc.   | <b>Building collective power</b>                |
|                   | <b>Hidden: Setting the Agenda</b><br><b>Exclusion &amp; delegitimization:</b><br>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<br><br>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.<br><br>Often, formal institutions with visible power, also exercise hidden power | Leaders are labeled trouble-makers or unrepresentative<br><br>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.<br><br>Media does not consider these groups' issues to be mainstream or newsworthy  | Organizing communities and active constituencies around common concerns, and mobilizing to demonstrate clout through numbers and direct action<br><br>Strengthening organizations, coalitions, movements, and accountable leaders<br><br>Participatory research and dissemination of information/ ideas/images that validate and legitimize the issues of excluded groups<br><br>Use alternative media outlets/internet/radio to name and shame - exposing the true agendas and actors dominating public debate, agendas and policy                                 | <b>Confronting, engaging, negotiating</b>       |
|                   | <b>Invisible: Shaping Meaning, Values &amp; What's 'Normal'</b><br><b>Socialization &amp; control of information:</b><br>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                                   | Socialization/oppression<br>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.<br>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<br><br>Examples: Women blame themselves for domestic abuse; Poor farmers for their poverty despite unequal access to global markets or decent prices or wages<br><br>Crucial information is misrepresented, concealed or inaccessible (e.g. WMDs & Iraq). | 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.<br><br>Doing action research, investigations and dissemination of concealed information and also using alternative media, etc. | <b>Building individual and collective power</b> |

**TRANSFORMING POWER**

**From Making Change Happen 3: Power. Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace. 2006. Just Associates. P.**

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[http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/From%20Local%20to%20Global\\_tcm6-21297.pdf](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/From%20Local%20to%20Global_tcm6-21297.pdf)

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