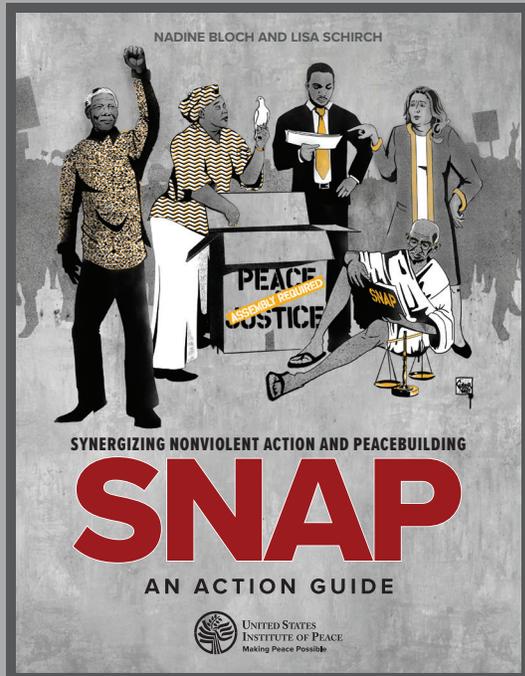




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SNAP: Synergizing Nonviolent Action and Peacebuilding

BY NADINE BLOCH AND LISA SCHIRCH

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UNIT 5

**Assess to Build Awareness and
Better Strategy**

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

Identify six questions to ask in any conflict analysis or environmental scan in preparation for developing a strategy for conflict transformation

Use a variety of tools to help provide answers to six key assessment questions

Articulate why assessment is critical to strategic planning

UNIT

5



Assess to Build Awareness and Better Strategy

Effective conflict transformation begins with assessment of the context. In order to make a strategic plan, we first have to analyze and understand who is involved.

The Curle Diagram illustrates the need to build awareness within a movement, within the public, and within the opponent group(s). Assessment tools are an important way that people begin to raise their own awareness of the problem. A sophisticated analysis of allies and adversaries, their motivations, sources of power, histories, and perspectives is essential to developing a solid strategy.

Both nonviolent action and peacebuilding have unique assessment tools that, when intentionally used in concert with each other, can strengthen and support powerful strategic planning. Some of their tools are shared, and others are distinct. This unit synergizes conflict analysis tools from both fields.

Key Concepts

WHY IS ASSESSMENT NECESSARY?

While fear of “analysis paralysis” is real, the risks of taking ineffective action far outweigh the risks of spending too much time carefully assessing the context. Every conflict and every context are unique. Just because a boycott worked in South Africa or India does not mean it will be successful in Egypt or Colombia. Just because mediation by one group worked in Mozambique does not mean it will work in North Korea. Enthusiasm for using a particular method of action without first assessing the conflict is a common problem. Successful nonviolent action and peacebuilding processes require an ongoing assessment of the people, places, motivations, power sources, actions, and time factors. This assessment helps people know who they should talk to, what they should do, what forms of power to create, and when to engage in dialogue, negotiation, and/or direct action.

Carrying out a conflict assessment is one of the first steps in building a successful conflict transformation process, as illustrated in the Curle Diagram in figure 5.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR A GOOD ASSESSMENT?

Too often, only a small group of people leading a peacebuilding process or a movement sit in a closed room and develop a strategy for engaging in political and social change. Even then, a relatively short amount of time is spent assessing the context. And unfortunately, “groupthink” frequently blinds people to seeing important aspects of their own context, leading to time and resources spent carrying out a strategy doomed to fail.

Ideally, a diverse group of people with different backgrounds, identities, and experiences will come together to participate in an interactive conflict assessment process using the tools and exercises outlined in this unit. Diversity is important because people tend to fill out assessment tools in wildly different ways. There is no one “right” way to assess power dynamics. And groups in conflict often misinterpret or misunderstand the motivations of other groups.

Expect to do some research when you cannot answer the questions that a particular tool brings up. Glossing over or inventing answers could negatively impact your understanding of the situation and lead to faulty strategic thinking.

Good assessment requires good communication skills like active listening. It requires the ability to informally dialogue with people with different experiences. And it requires setting up a time and space for a diverse group of people to have a facilitated dialogue to come to a shared assessment of their context. Further, if you have the opportunity to go out into your community and conduct surveys, focus groups, or “sensing” operations, this type of action research will deliver better and more accurate results.

At a minimum, carrying out assessment research requires setting up a communication channel with opponents, allies, and everyone in between to check on their perceptions, interests, and readiness to negotiate. This is necessary because groups will need to conduct ongoing assessments after each round of nonviolent tactics and discussions with an opponent to assess changes in perceptions of power, motivations and interests, and even possible solutions.

Why invest in assessment and evaluation? As the philosopher Heraclitus said, “The only thing that is constant is change.”

Critical Note: There is nothing static or “finished” about the assessment process. Every assessment that leads to an action, event, or theory of change should be followed up with its own evaluation to assess the effectiveness of that action. Assumptions about the context should be regularly interrogated. Change is the only constant in the world, and that understanding can fuel our assessments and more effective pathways. Establishing a culture of assessment can support robust and successful campaign planning.

The Six Key Assessment Questions

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR SPECIFIC CONTEXT TO IMPROVE OUR STRATEGY?

There are six assessment questions (outlined in table 11) that can help you better understand the

specific context in which you are working to improve your strategic planning.

TABLE 11.

The Six Key Assessment Questions

1. WHO	Are the stakeholders (the people who have a stake or interest in the conflict)?
2. WHY	Are the stakeholders acting the way they do? What are their motivations?
3. WHAT	Factors are driving or mitigating conflict?
4. HOW	Is conflict manifested? What are the stakeholders' means and sources of power?
5. WHEN	Does conflict take place? Are historical patterns or cycles of the conflict evident?
6. WHERE	Is the conflict taking place—in what cultural, social, economic, justice, or political context or system?

1. WHO Are the Key Stakeholders and Where Do They Stand on the Conflict?

Nonviolent action and peacebuilding require mapping out the wide range of stakeholders, including real and potential allies and adversaries. Peacebuilding involves inclusive processes that require the participation of diverse groups in formal peace processes and citizen support for a negotiated agreement. Likewise, nonviolent movements win when a significant mobilization of a population occurs. In fact, Stephan and Chenoweth's research shows that no major nonviolent campaign failed to achieve its goal if it mobilized 3.5 percent of the population.¹ Many movements win with much less. Still, 3.5 percent of some countries adds up to tens of millions of people—not a small number. Outreach and mobilization, then, are critical for conflict transformation.

There are two key tools for mapping out who is a “stakeholder,” or someone with an interest in the outcome of the conflict: **Spectrum of Allies and Opponents** and **Stakeholder Mapping**. Together, the two tools help develop an effective strategy for building a broader set of allies and reducing support for those groups driving the conflict.

The first tool is from nonviolent action. The Spectrum of Allies and Opponents is helpful in creating categories of “active” and “passive” allies to measure the level of their support, as well as “passive” and “active” adversaries to measure the level of their resistance.

The second tool is from peacebuilding practice. The Stakeholder Mapping tool identifies the relationships groups have with each other. This tool can provide insight into possible entry points for dialogue or

negotiation with adversaries. A key stakeholder is someone that has a stake in the conflict and a stake in the resolution of the conflict and has been and will be affected by the conflict and its possible resolution. Stakeholders include allies, neutral people with a stake in the conflict, and opponents. Stakeholders also include spoilers who may benefit from continued conflict and will aim to prevent all other stakeholders from negotiating with each other.

The U.S. civil rights movement is a good illustration of how analyzing stakeholders can contribute to an effective and integrated peacebuilding and nonviolent action strategy. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was one of the leading organizations driving the movement. In order to grow, they realized they needed to reach and engage their “passive allies”—northern white people and local black communities. Their strategy relied on an analysis of these passive allies and disengaged middle people who could be activated to join the movement. Images and news of the lunch counter sit-ins stirred local black leaders to take action to support the student protesters. SNCC invited northern whites, especially students, to join in the Freedom Rides that would transport white people from the north to the southern cities that were on the front lines of the civil rights struggle. Here they not only witnessed the violence against African Americans but also felt this oppression personally—which mobilized their own families and communities of northern whites as allies in this struggle. In other words, SNCC used tactics that intentionally broadened participation in the movement.

Beyond the Page #1

Spectrum of Allies and Opponents

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify active and passive allies; the friendly, disengaged, or unfriendly middle; and passive and active opponents
- Determine the priorities and resources to move groups or individuals as far to the middle or left to become allies

The Spectrum of Allies and Opponents is a tool that helps identify allies, people who are neutral in the middle or are bystanders, and opponents. Movements, campaigns, and other peacebuilding efforts succeed not by spending all their resources trying to convince their staunchest opponents, which would be extremely costly and highly unlikely, but by intentionally shifting passive allies over to active allies, friendly middles into passive allies, disengaged middles into friendly middles, and so on. Successful conflict transformation comes from moving individuals and groups one step at a time—which is realistic and achievable. After specific stakeholders are identified, you can then determine what resources you will need to reach those groups or individuals.

The tool, shown in figure 10, is simple but requires attention to detail since its usefulness is directly related to the degree of specificity when filling it out.

SETUP:

- You will need large sheets of paper and markers

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. Do part 1, identification of stakeholders, now, and save your responses for part 2 in the next unit.
2. Choose a specific conflict to analyze, and identify your campaign or mission.
3. On a large sheet of paper, make a U-shaped arc, as illustrated in figure 10. Identify by name the individuals, groups, organizations, corporations, and government institutions that fit into the categories listed in the diagram in the blue sections. Make sure you are very specific. Writing “Labor Unions” or “Banks” or “Media” or “Mothers” will not be helpful; writing “Local 721 Rank and File” or “Lloyds of London” or “CNN Local” or “Mothers with children in the military” will be. Make a list of questions to answer if you do not know where specific groups belong on the spectrum. For example, some churches may be active allies, but others may be in opposition, so list each of them separately and include research questions to ask to ensure you have placed them correctly on the spectrum. Specificity matters because who you identify will help you know what actions to take to move them one section closer to your position of active ally, and away from active opponent. Part 2 is about filling out the rest of the diagram, from actions to reach each sector to tactics that affect targets.

FIGURE 10.

Spectrum of Allies and Opponents

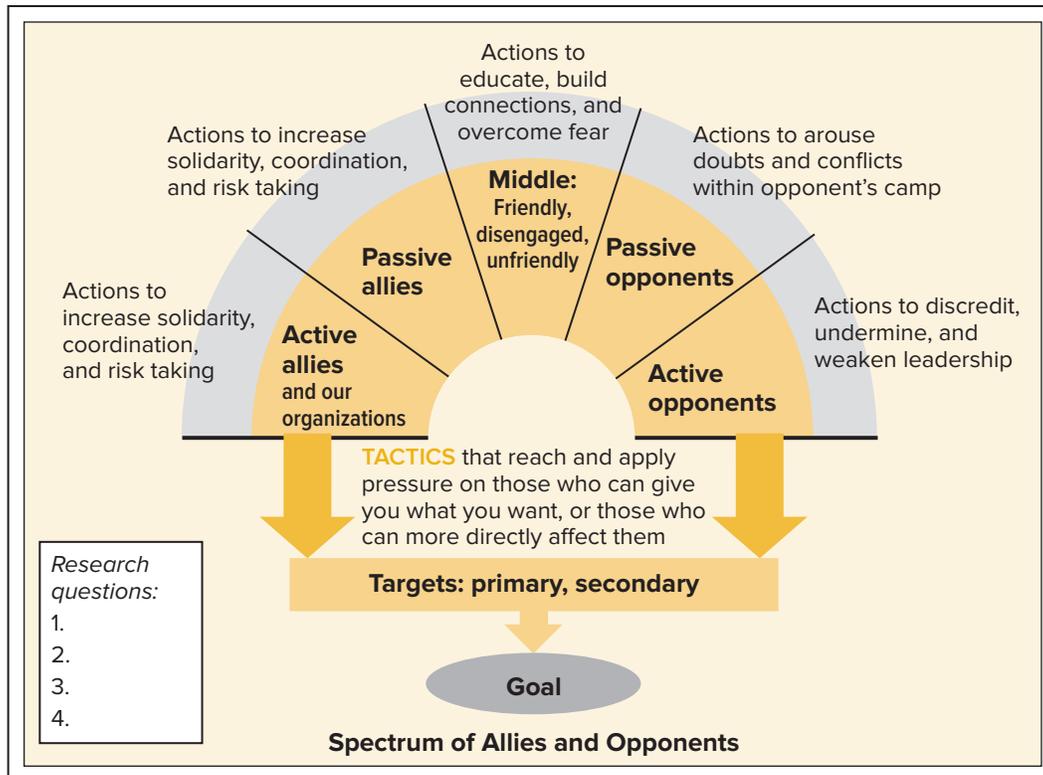


Diagram adapted from the Toronto & York Labor Council Campaign Planning Handbook, 2011.

Beyond the Page #2

Stakeholder Mapping

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a visual map of the relationships between adversaries and allies, bystanders, spoilers, or other stakeholders
- Identify an access point to reach out to or to build relationships with allies, adversaries, or other stakeholders

SETUP:

- You will need large sheets of paper and markers

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. Choose a specific conflict to analyze.
2. Write the names of different stakeholders on sticky notes or pieces of paper. Use larger

pieces for major stakeholders and smaller pieces for less important stakeholders. You can also draw circles with stakeholder names inside instead of using paper, as illustrated in figure 11.

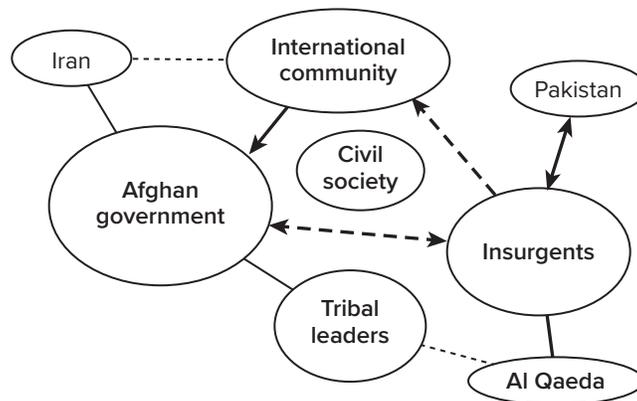
3. Arrange the stakeholder names on a large sheet of paper. Draw lines illustrating the relationships between the same stakeholders.
4. Use a dotted or red line to connect adversaries. Use a solid or green line to connect groups that have positive relationships or connections of some sort. Referring back to the Spectrum of Allies tool, you may illustrate with connecting

lines if any active allies have relationships with groups in the disengaged middle.

5. Use an arrow at the end of the line to illustrate who holds power or influence over the other. If influence is equal, put an arrow on both ends.
6. Highlight with a star where there are “entry points” where peacebuilding processes (e.g., dialogue, negotiation) and nonviolent action tactics (e.g., boycott, flash mob) might be helpful to both increase support for social change and decrease support for violence.

FIGURE 11.

Sample Stakeholder Map



2. WHY Are the Key Actors Motivated to Drive Violence or Mitigate Conflict?

People’s motivations drive their behavior. Nonviolent movements are made up of diverse groups with diverse motivations. Within a nonviolent movement, it will be important for these groups to understand each other’s interests and needs so they can identify common ground that unites them all. People often decide to join a nonviolent action or even to risk their lives to protect basic human needs for dignity, respect, identity, and economic and physical safety. Similarly, parties to a conflict may decide that ongoing fighting has become untenable or that it is in their best interest to mitigate violence. People may decide to enter into a dialogue or negotiation process if the costs of conflict are too great or the conflict is “ripe,” a term we will discuss more in unit 8.

It is also important for activists and peacebuilders to understand an opponent’s underlying interests and needs. An opponent is more likely to accommodate, convert, or negotiate if they believe they can achieve their basic interests and needs by doing so. A nonviolent movement that is perceived as attacking an opponent’s needs and interests will face greater opposition. Similarly, a dialogue or negotiation that does not fully understand how an opponent’s interests and needs incentivize them to engage in the process will likely result in a stalemate. While an opponent may insist publicly on some demand, they may actually be more concerned with their interest in saving face and avoiding humiliation, or their need to feel secure. The better we understand and recognize the underlying motivations of the opponent, the more likely we will be able to achieve our own goals.

There may also be other stakeholders motivated to support or oppose conflict transformation. Business

leaders may not explicitly support a nonviolent movement, but they may have an interest in ending the conflict and put pressure on the opponent to change. Spoilers, groups like arms dealers and other businesses that indirectly benefit from conflict, may do everything in their power to derail a peace process. It is important to assess whether there are other agendas that may impact the success of a nonviolent movement or peace process.

In the strategic planning section of this guide, you are asked to identify your goals. Your goals should directly relate to your underlying interests and needs. In unit 8 we will explore how motivations shape negotiation. This tool helps to identify each stakeholder’s underlying needs and interests in order to negotiate toward creative solutions.

In the “onion” diagram in figure 12, needs and interests are often hidden underneath public positions, like the layers of an onion.

Positions are what people say they want in public.

These can be political demands or conditions under which they will stop fighting.

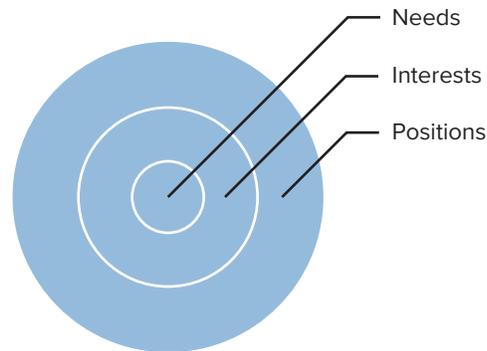
Interests are desires, concerns, and fears that drive people to develop a public position.

Needs are the most basic material, social, and cultural requirements for life that drive people’s behavior and their positions and interests.

For example, a government might state a *position* that it demands total control over oil and gas pipelines. Its *interest* is in making a profit. Its *need* is to survive.

FIGURE 12.

Onion Diagram



The drive to satisfy core human needs shapes human behavior. Conflict occurs when people perceive that others are obstructing or threatening their needs and rights. Depending on how threatened people feel, they may be willing to fight, die, or harm others to satisfy their needs. It is important to remember that threats and punishments are often ineffective at changing the

behavior of people trying to satisfy what they perceive to be their basic human needs.²

Identifying the motivations of all stakeholders enables changemakers to choose specific goals and make plans that take these needs and interests into account.

Beyond the Page #3

Positions, Interests, and Needs Onion Analysis

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the underlying motivations, including the positions, interests, and needs of the participants' own group, their potential allies, and opponents, as well as bystanders, spoilers, and other key stakeholders

SETUP:

- You will need large sheets of paper and markers

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. In small groups of four to six people, draw the "stakeholder motivation" table to create a way of organizing information inspired by the onion diagram (see table 12).
2. Identify a list of key stakeholders based on the spectrum of allies and stakeholder map analysis above. Include yourself or your group in this list.

TABLE 12.

Stakeholder Motivations

STAKEHOLDER	POSITIONS	NEEDS	INTERESTS

3. What are the positions, interests, or underlying needs that motivate each of these stakeholders? In this tool, imagine identifying the layers of the onion for each of the stakeholders, including your own group.
4. In the large group, ask how this assessment tool helps anticipate potential threats or

opportunities in their strategic planning. What nonviolent tactics might inadvertently threaten another group's basic needs or underlying interests, and thus make them even more resistant to change? What are potential ways of addressing the interests and needs of the opponent? How will your own interests and needs shape your goals?

3. WHAT Is Driving or Mitigating the Conflict?

The tree analysis assessment tool borrows from both nonviolent action and peacebuilding tool kits. This tool is like an environmental scan that organizes the patterns and problems people face into the shape of a tree.

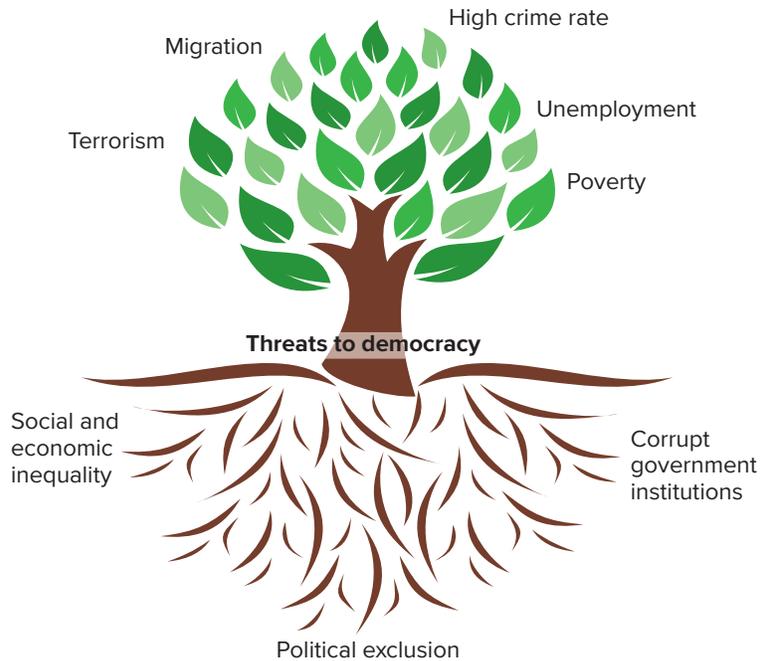
The roots of the tree are the “root causes” or broad institutional and structural factors that create an environment where social injustice is possible. Economic inequality, for example, is a root cause of many violent conflicts. The trunk of the tree is the key problem you want to address. In this example, violent elections are

the key problem. At the top, visible part of a tree are symptoms of the root causes. They can also be “conflict drivers” that increase the possibility of violent conflict. Climate change or environmental shocks such as droughts that destroy crops, and the abundant supply of cheap weapons are each examples of conflict drivers.

Efforts to stop the conflict by addressing a symptom of the conflict will have little effect. In many cultures there are types of trees or plants that regenerate even after their tops are cut off, such as the cassava plant or the

FIGURE 13.

Tree Analysis Tool



raspberry bush. These plants are metaphors illustrating how “roots” are able to regenerate and spread, despite efforts to eliminate them.

Conflict transformation requires addressing root causes of a conflict. Figure 13 illustrates social and economic inequality and government corruption as root causes of violent elections. The branches of the tree are symptoms of the root causes. These symptoms fuel more conflict and violence. It is important to address

the conflict drivers of violent elections, such as a high crime rate, youth gangs, and ethnic clashes. But addressing these factors might not change the underlying structural conditions or root causes of election violence. This tool can help a group prioritize its work. A group using this tool might decide to focus on a goal of addressing corruption instead of poverty or crime because, according to this analysis, corruption is a root cause of poverty.

Beyond the Page #4

Tree Analysis Tool

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify, organize, and prioritize social problems to enable choices of goals and targets in nonviolent action and peacebuilding processes

SETUP:

- You will need large sheets of paper and markers

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. In small groups of four to six people, identify key challenges or social problems that participants see and feel in their lives.

2. Draw a tree. Discuss where the problems belong on the tree. What is the main problem? What are the root causes? What are the symptoms or drivers of the core problem?
3. Groups can and should create as many trees as they want, and then discuss the different ways people analyze social problems. Which of the main problems (trunks) affects the most people? How will this tool affect the strategy for nonviolent action and peacebuilding processes?

In the large group, ask participants how this assessment tool helps them organize and prioritize social problems and set goals in their strategic planning.

4. HOW Are Key Actors Using Power to Drive or Mitigate Conflict?

Power is the ability to influence others. When one person or group has the ability to influence or control others, they have power. But power is not fixed or static. It is always shifting. People can build power for themselves through nonviolent action, sometimes paving the way to meaningful negotiations. People can also take away power from others through nonviolent action.

There are many sources of power. Nonviolent action and peacebuilding processes do not rely on power that comes from physical strength or weapons. For

example, power can draw on information, authority, experience, charisma, economic resources or economic boycotts, large numbers of people taking action together, and networks or social capital. Social capital refers to the quantity and quality of relationships between people and groups. It is based on the idea that social networks have value. People have power when they hold networking abilities, relationships with others, and the ability to mobilize people.

The power of any person or group relates to the amount of influence they have on others. People can

feel disempowered, or as if they have no or little power, when they are not consulted or included in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Power is given to others through consent and cooperation. When people withdraw their consent and refuse to cooperate with an oppressive group, power shifts. The power of any stakeholder is related to how dependent others are on them. This dependence may be very real and direct, or it may be perceived. Power shifts when people withdraw support from the stakeholder and/or build parallel institutions that reduce their dependency on that system of power.

Power is almost always a key dynamic in peacebuilding processes. Those with more power than others do not have to negotiate or consider the needs of other

people. Through nonviolent action, groups can try to shift and balance power. A thorough analysis of different forms of power, or the potential to build or block power, is essential to an effective conflict-transformation strategy. Peacebuilding and nonviolent action methods can shift power by moving key stakeholders along the spectrum of allies.

There are two types of tools related to power. The **Power Analysis Tool** identifies the sources of power for each of the stakeholders. It is useful for helping each stakeholder consider how they can increase their power. The **Pillars of Support Tool** identifies an opponent's sources of power. It is useful for developing a strategy to weaken an opponent's ability to control or influence others.

Beyond the Page #5

Power Analysis Tool

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify existing or potential sources of power for each stakeholder to recognize how best to leverage your power and create new sources of power

SETUP:

- You will need large sheets of paper and markers

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. In small groups of four to six people, brainstorm sources of power, or provide each group with a list like the one below.

Sources of Power:

- Physical or military strength
- Identity (gender, ethnic background; family of origin, position, or authority)
- Personal ability (such as communication skills or professional competency)
- Economic resources
- Information
- Education (knowledge and skills)

TABLE 13.

Breakdown of Stakeholder Sources of Power

STAKEHOLDER	SOURCES OF POWER

- Moral or spiritual power
 - The personal power of charisma
 - Social networks and social capital
2. What are the key stakeholder’s different sources of power? Remember to include yourself and your group in this list of stakeholders. Make a chart like that shown in table 13 and identify the key sources of power for each stakeholder in the stakeholder map. This can include potential sources of power.
 3. Next, identify how the stakeholders in the conflict are dependent on each other. Are they interdependent, or does one side have more influence on the others?
 4. How does power play into the dynamics of the conflict? In what ways do stakeholders use power as a means to engage with each other?
 5. In the large group, ask participants how this assessment tool helps them anticipate potential threats or opportunities in their strategic planning. How can you leverage or increase your own sources of power? How will you decrease the sources of power of their opponent?

Beyond the Page #6

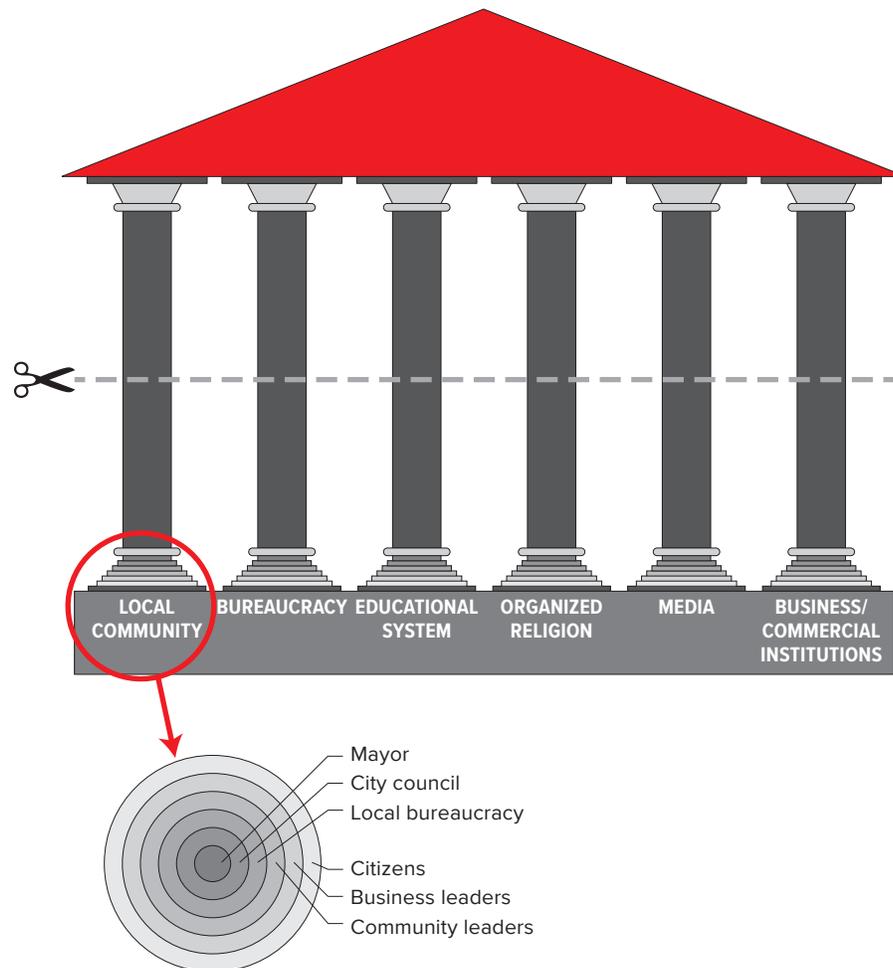
Pillars of Support Tool

The Pillars of Support assessment tool (shown in figure 14) helps us identify and analyze the organizations and institutions that provide power to our opponent. A government’s political power ultimately depends on its legitimacy and the consent and cooperation of its citizens. In any given society these individuals may be organized in labor unions, the

bureaucracy, security forces, businesses, religious groups, student associations, and other groups. When individuals or stakeholders within these key pillars of support withhold or withdraw their labor, buying power, technical skills, and knowledge this can weaken or erode the opponent’s power base. However, like governments, pillars of support are not monolithic. Their

FIGURE 14.

Pillars of Support Tool



members have different needs, interests, and motivations. Analyzing these nuances is the essence of good assessment.

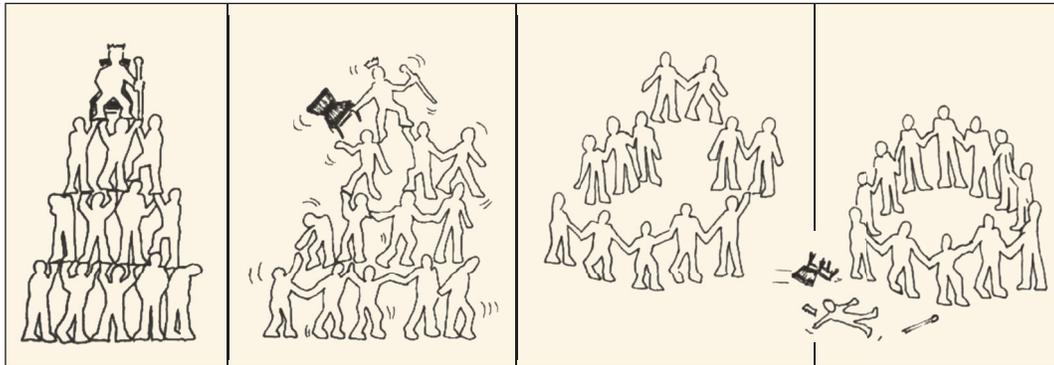
Each pillar is made up of stakeholders, represented here by concentric circles. These are elements of the support structures, with the center being the most impacted or powerful (the dictator or general might be in the center of the military pillar, with other leadership in the next circle, then regular troops, then veterans, military families, etc.).

Strategic planning requires us to assess ways to both build power and participation in a peacebuilding process or nonviolent movement and weaken the opponent's institutional pillars of support and sources of power.

This tool is great for a big-picture view of institutional stakeholders. It needs to be paired with other tools (Spectrum and SWOT, detailed in unit 6) to translate into campaign planning and work on the ground. Figure 15 provides another way to look at it.

FIGURE 15.

Redistributing Power



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the opponents' sources of power and structures of support

SETUP:

- There are two versions of this exercise. A simple, interactive theater version requires a chair or table or other object that can be lifted by four or five people. A more detailed version of this exercise can be done on paper, requiring large sheets of paper and markers.

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. Draw a diagram of a triangular roof that represents the issue, institution, or policy you want to change. (This is likely the same as the trunk of the tree in figure 13.)

2. Identify the pillars of support or sources of power of the person or group that is in control of the issue you have identified as the core issue. It can be organizations and institutions associated with a government, local militia, corporation, or other group. Write this on a large piece of paper. Identify the five most significant pillars that support this "roof."
3. Proceed using either of the two following versions.
4. In the large group, ask participants how this assessment tool helps them leverage their strengths and existing sources of power, and anticipate potential threats or opportunities in preparation for strategic planning.

Simplified Theater Version

1. Divide into five small groups. Give each group five minutes to brainstorm a plan to withdraw the pillar of support from the person or group in control of the core issue.

2. Ask for five volunteers to represent the five pillars of support. Write the name of each pillar on a piece of paper and tape this to the shirts of the people symbolizing this pillar. These pillars will together lift up the table or chair representing the person or group.

3. Together in the large group, ask each small group to announce its strategy and withdraw the pillar of support, one by one until the table or chair is no longer able to be held by the remaining pillars.

4. Ask the large group: How did each pillar of support depend on consent? What did you learn about power? How did power shift? Was consent withdrawn?

—Adapted from George Lakey,
Training for Change

Detailed Paper Version

1. Draw a circle that represents a cross section of each pillar, with concentric circles that you can label with the individuals or groups that compose the pillar itself.

2. As you move out from the center, the power the groups or individuals hold changes, and their connection or loyalty to the institution often diminishes. This will help you visually assess where you could have the most impact on a pillar and which constituencies you may be able to reach as you try to break down support for the system.

—From *Beautiful Rising*

<https://beautifulrising.org/tool/pillars-of-power>

5. HOW Do You Identify Moments of Vulnerability and Moments of Opportunity?

The timing of a nonviolent action or peacebuilding process can impact its success or failure. Identifying key moments, such as anniversaries and symbolic dates, and optimal times and seasons of the year is part of the analysis process that can lead to planning more successful strategies for conflict transformation. For example, if violence often occurs during elections, a time line can highlight the “window of vulnerability” or potential danger for times in the future when elections are held. The lens can also identify “windows of

opportunity” for mobilizing peace, such as anniversaries or sports events that bring people together.

Developing a time line of the history of the conflict enables stakeholders to identify those moments in the conflict. Analyzing the emotional impact of past events may also help stakeholders of opposing groups understand more about the psychological impact particular memories may have had on the other group, and they may perhaps be more able to acknowledge the events and even apologize.

Beyond the Page #7

Past Analysis Time Line Tool

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify potential future “windows of opportunity” and “windows of vulnerability”

SETUP:

- You will need about fifty sheets of regular-size letter paper and a rope or tape to mark a time line on the floor

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. Divide the group according to the various “sides,” key actors, or identity groups in a conflict. For example, you could identify three groups from the spectrum of allies tool: leading allies, the disengaged middle, and leading

opponents. Ideally, a time line is constructed in a large group made up of key stakeholders from different sides of the conflict. But if that is not possible, ask people to put themselves in the position of other stakeholders.

2. Ask people in each small group to share the major events that have shaped how they see the conflict today. They can start as far back in history as they want to begin telling their story of what has happened from their assigned roles, or their own unique history if appropriate.
3. Write a three- to five-word summary of each significant historical event, moment of glory, or

moment of trauma on a separate sheet of paper.

4. The facilitator will use a piece of rope or put tape on the floor to mark the line of history, and will add sheets of paper to mark dates along the time line. Each side of the conflict will lay down the history in chronological order along the line. The historical dates need to be marked so that each group's chronology matches up along the line.
5. When each group is finished laying out its key historical dates, ask everyone to silently walk along the line and read each side's understanding of history. Note how each side remembers different events and may have a different interpretation of events as either traumatic or as a glory.
6. After everyone finishes silently observing the time line, reconfigure small groups made up of different identity groups. Ask them to share with each other what they noticed in terms of commonly perceived events versus differences in perceptions. Allow space for people to ask questions of each other about their different perceptions.
7. Identify both the key points in history where there are shared memories and the key points where there are disparate memories in which one side's trauma may be the other side's glory. How can these memories create opportunities for transforming the current crisis by memorializing, acknowledging, and/or apologizing for past events?
8. In a large group discussion and debrief, ask the group about the relevance of the time line for strategic planning. If there is time, the process could be repeated by the group for a period of time into the future. What kinds of events, gatherings, or peacebuilding efforts are already in place? Are there windows of opportunity or vulnerability for a nonviolent campaign or a peacebuilding process? Ask how this assessment tool helps them anticipate potential threats or opportunities in their strategic planning.

6. WHERE Is the Conflict Taking Place?

In any society there are “connectors” and “dividers.”³

Connectors refer to things that link people across conflict lines, particularly those forces that meet human needs. **Dividers** are tensions or fault lines that refer to those forces that alienate people or interrupt their human needs. Dividers can include the sources or root causes of the conflict.

A nonviolent action or peacebuilding process will impact connectors and dividers. These actions should

be *conflict sensitive* and *do no harm* by reducing the possibility that they could have unintended consequences that would increase divisions between groups and increase the likelihood of violence. An action also should foster resilience by increasing the connectors between groups.

The CDA Collaborative Learning Project's “Do No Harm” approach identifies five categories of connectors and dividers.

Categories of Connectors and Dividers

Systems and institutions: Systems and institutions—like markets, power lines, water pipes, bridges, roads, and communication systems—can connect people across conflict lines. If systems and institutions serve some people and not others, they may increase divisions between groups. For example, if oil pipelines travel through a community but the community does not benefit from the pipelines, the pipelines are an example of a “divider.”

Attitudes and actions: Attitudes and actions can either divide or connect people. Even in the midst of war and violence, some individuals behave in surprising ways, such as adopting abandoned children from the opposing side in the conflict or continuing a community soccer group across the lines of conflict. Attitudes and actions can be “connectors” helping groups see the humanity of those on the other side of the conflict. Other people can display hateful behaviors, write graffiti, or call people names on the other side of a conflict.

Shared values and interests: Shared religious or moral values, such as a belief in protecting children or the environment, can connect people across the lines of conflict. UNICEF, for example, has negotiated days of tranquility in conflict zones based on the shared value warring parties place on inoculating children against disease.

Common experiences: The experience and effects of war on individuals can provide linkages across conflict lines. Citing the experience of war and suffering as “common to all sides,” people traumatized by war sometimes create new antiwar alliances across conflict lines. In other situations, a common experience of trauma can divide people, as each group is unable to function emotionally.

Symbols and occasions: National art, music, historical anniversaries, national holidays, monuments, and sporting events (e.g., the Olympics) can both divide people by prompting memories of past traumatic events and bring people together or link them across conflict lines, or some combination of the two.

Beyond the Page #8

Connectors and Dividers Tool

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Examine the broad context of connectors and dividers that exist within a society so we can anticipate how our actions may create further divisions or build a greater sense of connection across the lines of conflict

SETUP:

- You will need large sheets of paper for each group of six to eight people and markers

HOW IT IS DONE:

1. Ask each group to draw a chart with three columns (see table 14).
2. Ask each group to identify connectors in the first column and dividers in the third column.

3. Ask each group to identify in the center column potential peacebuilding processes, activities, or nonviolent actions that could increase the connectors or the dividers. Arrows may be used to indicate whether the action would increase connectors or dividers.
4. After twenty to thirty minutes, ask each group to present its chart to the other groups.
5. In the large group, ask participants how this assessment tool helps them anticipate potential threats or opportunities in their strategic planning.

TABLE 14.

Connectors and Dividers Analysis Tool

CONNECTORS		DIVIDERS
List of connectors that link people across conflict lines, particularly those forces that meet human needs	<i>Identify nonviolent actions or peacebuilding processes that decrease the dividers and increase the connectors between groups</i>	List of dividers or the tensions or fault lines that divide people or interrupt their human needs

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Notes

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