

GRASSROOTS POLICY PROJECT

The 3 Faces of Power

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First Face of Power - Direct Political Involvement

The first face of power is where we typically focus much of our energies — to change laws and policies, to impact elections, and to affect political and economic decisions. We often measure our success by how well we impact elections, and how well we influence decision-makers in legislatures, courts, corporate boardrooms, etc. Activities we use to exercise the first face of power include:

- Trying to win issue campaigns.
- Helping candidates get elected to office.
- Taking legal action.
- Engaging in direct action — strikes, petitions, accountability sessions, etc.

Second Face - Building Infrastructure to Shape Political Agendas

The second face is about building deeper infrastructure among organizations and their grassroots members, and creating ties with other kinds of organizations, such as think tanks, advocacy groups, etc. On the Right, both corporations and social conservatives have active networks and organizations that can unite around a shared agenda. This often takes place 'behind the scenes,' and it enables their organized forces to shape and constrain political agendas. Our groups engage in many of these activities, but often in more ad-hoc and short-term ways. Here are some examples of building and using the second face of power:

- Building sustained membership involvement and organizing people for collective action.
- Developing leaders who can guide our organizations and coalitions.
- Identifying and developing candidates for public office.
- Building and maintaining coalitions, alliances, and other forms of collaboration.

- Seeking to expand the political agenda, bringing in new constituencies to help develop and support a bold, new progressive agenda that unites different issues.

Third Face - Shifting Worldview

The third face is about using cultural beliefs, norms, traditions, histories and practices to shape political meaning. We do this by connecting issues to the larger context of worldview, or the ways that people understand the world around them, their roles in the world, and what they see as possible. The current worldview reinforces a kind of rugged individualism — a go-it-alone, bootstraps approach — that discourages involvement in collective action. Here are some ways that we can use worldview:

- Shaping ideas and the way people make sense of what they see and hear.
- Linking work in the shorter term to a broader vision and long-term goals.
- Challenging the current dominant worldview's emphasis on rugged individualism, competition and limited role of government.
- Framing our issues with common progressive themes, so they are integrated together and reflect an alternative worldview. ■

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