

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS: SAM-PIE

SAM-PIE is a model for both predicting and evaluating success of strategies in shifting power. SAM is an acronym for solidarity, autonomy and mobility; PIE is an acronym for political, ideological, and economic power (the 3-Ring Circus).

This model suggests that solidarity, autonomy and mobility are needed for any person or group wanting more power. Applying SAM to each of the three aspects of power generates nine points to use when considering social justice strategies. This model can be applied to individuals or groups; here, we will discuss groups.

Solidarity is standing together, overlooking differences in the common interest.

Autonomy is being self-determining, controlling one's own situation, focussing on the difference rather than the common interest.

Mobility is taking action.

Solidarity and autonomy are in constant tension - when differences within a group are ignored for too long, sub-groups may feel that they outweigh the common interest. On the other hand, the group needs solidarity (i.e., numbers) to counter-balance some of the power held by the dominant group.

The first step in using the SAMPIE model is to clarify the group's position on the Power Pole in relation to those they will be working with and against. People are usually well aware of who has more power than they do; they experience it all the time when the person or group makes decision that affect them. It is more difficult, and often very painful, to consider who has less power. The group needs to place all the key actors on the "pole". This makes it possible to analyse where resistance is likely to come from, who are potential allies, and where power-with might shift to power-over others. This has been a common problem in social movements: when some groups in an alliance don't realise they have more power than others and behave as though it's a level playing field. Whenever power-with turns to power-over others, sub-groups need to reconsider their autonomy and re-negotiate the alliance.

From the point of view of any particular group, SAMPIE suggests that achievements in any of the nine areas below will contribute to the group having more power. It can be used to evaluate overall progress toward this goal or (likely) effectiveness a particular strategy. It may also be used as a quick, handy checklist for comparing strategies. The evaluation is relative; for example, a strategy may contribute to creating a new alliance or to making an existing one stronger. Also, this model only indicates to what extent the group has gained more control over its own situation. There are many other criteria for evaluating effectiveness.

Table 1: SAMPIE application

SAM	PIE	What this means
Solidarity	Political	Making an alliance with groups with common or similar interests
	Ideological	Recognising areas of common interests with other groups
	Economic	Sharing resources with groups with common interests
Autonomy	Political	Making and enforcing own rules for the group
	Ideological	Recognising how own interests are different from everyone else's
	Economic	Getting more control of resources
Mobility	Political	More people or groups joining
	Ideological	Ousting outside supporters; we can do it ourselves!
	Economic	Committing more of the group's own resources; becoming independent of outsiders.

POINT TO PONDER

Pick a strategy which has already been implemented and which you know well. Without using SAMPIE, assess its success. Then, analyse it on the nine points. How does its score compare with your initial impression? You would have to do this repeatedly to get an overall impression of how useful this model is for you.