



# Power and Privilege: Soccer for Suckers

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Use this exercise to encourage participants to think about the concepts of power and privilege and how they relate to social justice and organizing (1 hr)

*\*For this session we recommend that you find a big space either indoors or outdoors. Because of the physical nature of this activity facilitators should check-in with participants around their ability to participate*

**Materials:** A soccer ball and 4 orange cones (to mark the goals)

## **Directions:**

1. Announce that the group will play a game of soccer (don't tell them the name of the activity).
2. Divide the group into two teams. Team One should only have 2-5 people depending on the total size of the group. They will be the minority. Everyone else will be in Team Two.
3. Explain the rules of the game:
  - Rule # 1: Team One gets to make the rules
  - Rule # 2: Team Two MUST follow all the rules
  - Rule # 3: Team One can change the rules at any point in the game.
4. Give Team One a few minutes to make up the rules. The facilitator can motivate them to make up the most arbitrary, unfair rules possible. For example:
  - Team One's goal is 6 feet wide and Team Two's goal is 6 inches
  - Team 2 must score two goals for every point
  - Team One gets two points for every goal
  - Team Two cannot communicate with each other through speech
5. Give people who are unable or unwilling to play the option of being the fans or cheerleaders. They should be observing the game and making mental notes.



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6. Start the game. Allow time for the participants to realize the power dynamics in play. Remind Team One that they can change the rules at any time (especially when they are having a hard time). When it's time to end the game, at a point when Team One is winning, quietly approach Team One and tell them that they can call an end to it.

### Debrief

Answer and discuss the following questions:

- How did it feel to be a part of Team One?
- How did it feel to be a part of Team Two?
- How did the spectators how they felt about Team One and Team Two.
- Does this game represent how things work in real life (arbitrary system of rules, being told that the rules are set up for everyone's benefit, being told that you MUST follow the rules or risk being penalized)?
- Were there any efforts by Team Two to disobey, bend, or work around the rules? Were these efforts effective?
- What could Team Two do next time to prevent Team One from winning under these unfair conditions?
- Did Team Two have any type of power? If so, how can they use it to change their situation?

*\*The learning potential is greatest in this game when participants are given the least amount of context possible - pick teams, go over rules, and GO! This allows for most of the learning points to come up organically.*