

Social Analysis Systems^{2.0M}

Concepts and Tools for
Collaborative Research and Social Action

<http://www.sas-pm.com/>

Name of this technique: Positions and Interests

Author(s) and correct citation: Jacques M. Chevalier, 'SAS² 1.0: Positions and Interests,' in *Social Analysis Systems²*, <http://www-sas-pm.com/>.

Acknowledgements: *Positions and Interests* is a SAS² adaptation of basic concepts in the field of conflict management (see *Readings and links*).

What is the goal of Positions and Interests?

Positions and Interests helps you compare the positions that stakeholders take on a problem or action with their actual interests.

What are the guiding principles of Positions and Interests?

- When you adopt a **position** on a core problem or action, you may make rigid demands or major concessions that do not reflect your actual **interests**. Negotiations based on this win-lose approach place the interests of some stakeholders above others and may produce poor results. They leave no room for compromise and lead to solutions that may not last.
- **Interest-based discussions** may be more effective because they encourage you to think and speak openly about the various interests you have. These include interests that others may share and that you can satisfy in different ways using reason and a collaborative (win-win) approach.

Here's how to use Positions and Interests

1. Identify a **current or proposed action** in a real situation (such as 'local residents will have free access to the forest park at all times'). Define the action as clearly as possible so that the participants can identify the positions and the interests at stake.
2. Assess how strongly each stakeholder feels about the action identified in Step 1. Use values ranging from -10 (strongly opposed) to +10 (strongly in favor). This is **Score P** (for position). It is an estimate of each stakeholder's **support** for a current or proposed action. If you want to be more precise, use **indicators** to define the meaning of each number on the scale.
3. Ask each stakeholder the question: 'What would you gain if your position were adopted?' Make a list of the **gains** that each stakeholder would make if its position were adopted. Discuss how important the gains are and which are the most important (such as the satisfaction of stakeholder **needs** or basic interests).

Make sure that participants do not confuse the idea of 'acting in one's *interest*' with 'taking an *interest* in something.' Also, clarify the difference between interests and needs (defined as basic interests; see first illustration).

When using a 'why' question to identify someone's interests (such as 'Why do you take this position?'), be aware that stakeholders may adopt positions that do not reflect their own interests. Also, be aware that people may give you answers that explain what causes something to exist or what their values or principles are. If a stakeholder's answer is based on statements of rights or principles (such as 'We live here and this is our forest'), ask how the stakeholder is **acting in its own interest** when upholding these rights or principles. Continue asking this type of question until the stakeholder's interests are very clear (such as 'We need firewood for cooking'). Ask the question in different ways, such as 'What are the benefits for you?', 'What would you gain if we did it your way?', or 'How would you be affected if we did not do it your way?' (See Attachment A).

If you are the facilitator, do not express positive or negative comments or judgments when you are talking about stakeholder positions and interests. See Attachment A.

4. Ask each stakeholder the question: ‘What would you lose if your position were adopted?’ Make a list of these **losses**. Discuss how important the losses are and which are the most important (such as a failure to satisfy stakeholder needs or basic interests).
5. Assess the **net gains** (or losses if the position is altruistic) that would occur for each stakeholder if its position were adopted. Use values from -10 (high loss) to +10 (high gain). This is **Score I** (for interests). If you want to be more precise, use **indicators** to define the meaning of each number on the scale.
6. Create a table and insert the list of stakeholders in Column 1 and a scale of -10 to +10 in the top row. Insert the letters P and I in places that reflect each stakeholder’s scores for position and interests.

Here’s an example of a *Positions and Interests* table involving three stakeholders:

Stakeholders	- 10 I: High net loss P: Strong opposition	0 Neutral	+ 10 I: High net gain P: Strong support
Ranchers			
Small farmers			
Women’s association			

To make **full use** of this table, use the results of your *Social Analysis (CLIP)* to order the stakeholders in Column 1 by ranks based on the factors of power, interests and legitimacy (see Illustrations and *V.I.P.*).

7. Compare each stakeholder’s net gains or losses (Score I) with its level of support for the current or proposed action identified in Step 1 (Score P in Step 2). Assess the **degree and the direction of change** that might occur for each stakeholder if negotiations were based on interests rather than positions. In the table shown in Step 6, the net gains or losses for two out of three stakeholders are not as high as their levels of

support. This result suggests that changing to more flexible responses (especially on the part of ranchers) is possible.

8. Explore **interest-based options** that could create gains for all parties concerned.

Making this process work for you

For simpler versions

- Limit the number of stakeholders by excluding those who are least involved or by regrouping stakeholders who share many characteristics.
- Focus on certain types of interests (such as economic gains and losses).
- Do a simple assessment of net gains or losses by combining Steps 3 to 5 into one step.

For more advanced versions

- Take more time to gather the information you need to complete the exercise.
- During the exercise, discuss and record the views that participants express.
- Write a description for each stakeholder position and each set of interests.
- Do a more detailed analysis of interests using *Interests* or *Internal Dialogue*.
- Organize your list of stakeholders using *Social Analysis (CLIP)* and *V.I.P.*
- Use this technique to assess the positions and interests related to several actions.

Reading and links

Means, Katherine and Cynthia Josayma, with Erik Nielsen and Vitoon Viriyasakultorn, *Community-Based Forest Resource Conflict Management: A Training Package*, Volume 1, Section 3.3, <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y4300E/Y4300E00.HTM>, and Volume 2, Activity 17, FAO, Rome, 2002, <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y4301E/Y4301E00.HTM> O U T

Michael Warner, Richard Roberts with Joan Gregus, edited by Joan Gregus and Richard Roberts, *Tools and Training*, Module 5 (5.27), Natural Resources Cluster Secretariat,

Business Partners for Development, http://www.bpd-naturalresources.org/html/tools_train.html

King, Sheri, 'Interactive Session: The Use of Interest Based Negotiation Techniques to Enhance Labor-Management Cooperation,' Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service of Canada, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, <http://www.gnzlz.com/IBB.htm>

Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes*, 2nd Edition, Penguin, 1981.

William Ury, *Getting Past No, Negotiating Your Way From Confrontation to Cooperation*, Bantam Books (1991).

Chester L. Harass, *Give and Take, The Complete Guide to Negotiating Strategies and Techniques*, Harper Business, 1993.

Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures*, U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1991.

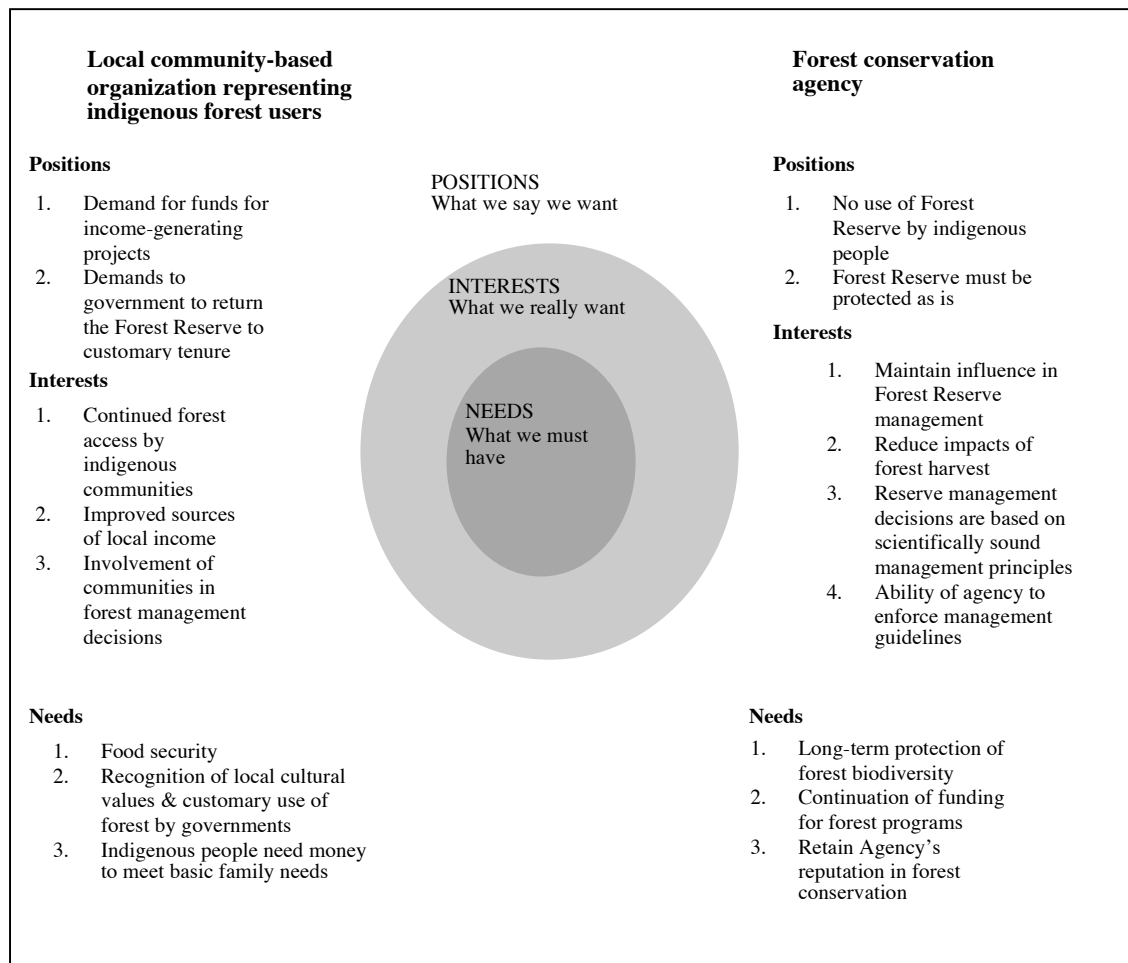
Elsa Walsh, *The Negotiator*, *The New Yorker*, March 18, 1996.

Attachment A: Styles of questioning to reveal underlying interests

Name of the approach	Purpose of the approach	How to use the approach	Examples
<p>Encourage</p> <p>So that people begin to reveal their interests.</p>	<p>Conveys interest. Opens up communication.</p>	<p>Don't agree or disagree. Use neutral words. Ask questions with a positive tone.</p>	<p>'I see, what else happened?'</p> <p>'Could you tell us a little more about this?'</p>
<p>Paraphrase</p> <p>Restate in your own words the speaker's message to reveal what you think is the underlying interest.</p>	<p>Shows that you are listening and understanding. Clarifies meaning and interpretation.</p>	<p>Restate the basic ideas and dig a little deeper.</p>	<p>'Let me see if I understand you...'</p> <p>'In other words...'</p> <p>'So what you might be saying is...'</p>
<p>Recognize emotions</p> <p>Note the deeper feelings beneath the speaker's comments.</p>	<p>Shows that you are listening and understanding. Helps the speaker evaluate their own comments after hearing them from someone else.</p>	<p>Distinguish between the content of a message and the emotion associated with it. Select a word or phrase that describes the exact feeling and level of intensity.</p>	<p>'So when... happened, you felt irritated...'</p> <p>'You seem to be somewhat...'</p>
<p>Reframe</p> <p>Reword the speaker's criticism or negative comment in the positive.</p>	<p>Shows that you are listening. Helps identify the underlying needs and interests.</p>	<p>Use positive statements to restate the speaker's intent. Eliminate negative messages.</p>	<p><i>Statement:</i> 'I'm getting really tired of these meetings. Nothing ever happens.'</p> <p><i>Reply:</i> 'So you want meetings to have results. What might be an example of a positive result?'</p>
<p>Summarize</p> <p>Identify the main points of the speaker's message, with a focus on interests.</p>	<p>Reviews and pulls together important ideas.</p>	<p>Restate and summarize the major ideas and feelings.</p>	<p>'Would I be right in thinking that the main ideas you have expressed so far are...?'</p>

Source: adapted from Michael Warner, Richard Roberts with Joan Gregus, edited by Joan Gregus and Richard Roberts, Tools and Training, Module 6 (6.28), Business Partners for Development, Natural Resources Cluster Secretariat, http://www.bpd-naturalresources.org/html/tools_train.html

Illustrations



Source: Adapted from Means, Katherine and Cynthia Josayma, with Erik Nielsen and Vitoon Viriyasakultorn, *Community-Based Forest Resource Conflict Management: A Training Package*, Volume 1, Figure 3.5, <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y4300E/Y4300E00.HTM>, U T

Summary: The outer layer of the onion represents the public positions of two groups. The second layer is their interests. In the centre (core) are the needs that must be satisfied. A community-based organization and a government conservation agency disagreed on how to use and manage forest resources. The organization, which represented the needs and interests of indigenous forest users, was putting pressure on the government to give the area back to those who had managed it in traditional ways. The conservation agency's public position, on the other hand, was to maintain the reserve and stop anyone from using it in any way. These **positions** held by each group allowed little room for negotiations. Negotiations based on their **interests** and **needs**, however, allowed new options to arise.

Pachacamac, University for Peace, Programa Colaboración y Conflicto, October 2002

NIVEL	ACTOR	-2	-1	0	1	2
NIVEL 1 DOMINANTE	INRA			P N I		
NIVEL 2 POTENTE	EMPRESA MADERERA	IN		I? N?	P	
INFLUYENTE	FED. CAMP.			I? N?	P	
	PREFECTURA		IN	P N I		
NIVEL 3 VULNERABLE	AGAVAT	IN			IN	P IN
	GANADEROS IND.	IN		I?	N?	P IN
	MUNIC. O'CONN					P IN
DURMIENTE	FIN. ELVUS				N I P	
NIVEL 4 RESISTIDO	MUNICIP. CERC.			IN	P	
MARGINADO	SUP. FOR.					
NIVEL 5 OTROS	CENT. OBRE.					P IN

La Ceiba, Honduras, IDRC, PROMESAS & REMBLAH, February 2003

Reforma al sistema educativo de Olancho (escenario favorable)

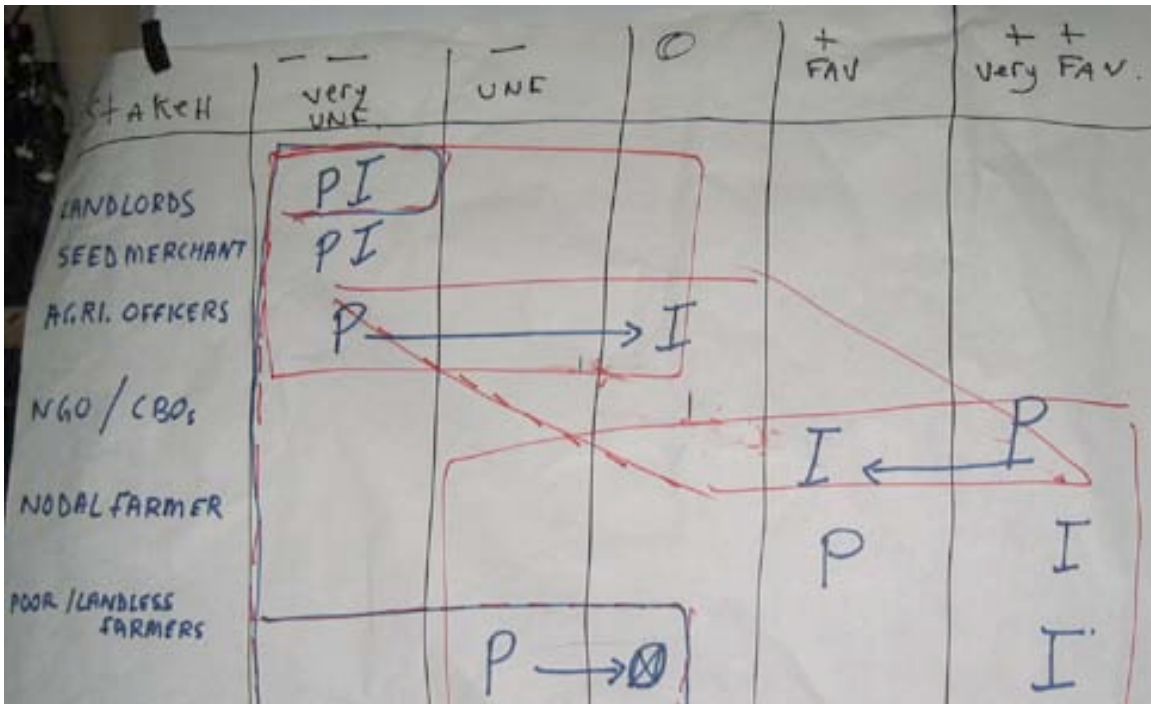
Niveles de predominación	Actores	-2 Muy desfavorable	-1 Desfavorables	0 Neutral	+1 Favorable	+2 Muy favorable
Nivel 1 Dominante	Colegios Magisteriales Maestra de Educación	P —————→ I			→ I —————→ N	
		P —————→ I			→ I —————→ N	
Nivel 2 Potente Influyente	Diputados	P —————→ I N ←————→ I				
Nivel 3 Durmiente	Alumnos/padres					N I P N I P
Nivel 4 Respetado Marginado	Municipalidades					N I P

Demarcación de microcuencas

Niveles de predominación	Actores	-2 Muy desfavorable	-1 Desfavorables	0 Neutral	+1 Favorable	+2 Muy favorable
Nivel 1 Dominante	COHDEFOR			N ←————→ P	P —————→ I	
Nivel 2 Potente Influyente	Ganaderos	P —————→ I	I —————→ N			
Nivel 3 Durmiente	Municipio			N ←————→ P	P —————→ I	
Respetado	Patronato			I ←————→ P	P —————→ N	
Nivel 4 Vulnerable Marginado	Agricultores	N ←————→ I	I ←————→ P		P	
	ONG'S				P —————→ I	N

Vishnupur, Bangladesh, South Asia Network for Food, Ecology and Culture, May 2003

SEED CONSERVATION AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL



CONVINCING A VILLAGE TO STOP UNDERGROUND WATER PUMPING

