



POWER DYNAMICS

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INTRODUCTION

Power is a potentially sinister subject.

“Power”

says Bierstedt (1950) ‘stands behind every association and sustains its structure’.

Without power there is no organization and without power there is no order.

Paradoxically, the most potent exercise of power may be invisible.

Power relations can be subtly changing and ambiguous.

CONCEPT OF POWER

Power is said to be like love, impossible to define but easy enough to recognise (Martin, 1977).

Power is understood as the ability to influence other people and events.

In the words of White and Bednar, “Power is the ability, to influence people of things, usually obtained through the control of important resources.”

POWER

Many scholars adopt the definition developed by German sociologist Max Weber, who said that power is the ability to exercise one's will over others (Weber 1922).

Power affects more than personal relationships; it shapes larger dynamics like social groups, professional organizations, and governments.



Actions to gain power and influence do not necessarily lead to violence, exploitation, or abuse.

Leaders such as Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mohandas Gandhi, for example, commanded powerful movements that affected positive change without military force.

Both men organized nonviolent protests to combat corruption and injustice and succeeded in inspiring major reform.

They relied on a variety of nonviolent protest strategies such as rallies, sit-ins, marches, petitions, and boycotts.

DIFFERENTIATING POWER FROM AUTHORITY AND INFLUENCE

Usually, the term power is intertwined with another concept, authority.

But there is a difference between the two concepts. Power refers to the capacity to influence others.

The person who possesses power has the ability to manipulate or change the behaviour of others.

Authority, on the other hand, is the source of power.

Authority exists where one person has a formal right to command and another has a formal obligation to obey.

Authority may be seen as institutionalized power.

For example, a police officer has authority to 'stop' a motorist.

The motorist is legally obliged to comply.

Managers are said to possess a 'right to manage'.

Power
(Authority)

+

=

Influence
(Return)

Empower
(Sharing)

Sharing power increases
moral authority (influence)




**SOURCES OF
POWER**

INTERPERSONAL SOURCE OF POWER

Interpersonal power is the ability to influence a relational partner in any context because you control, or at least the partner perceives that you control, resources that the partner needs, values, desires or fears.

Interpersonal power also includes the ability to resist the influence attempts of a partner.

- *From Mike Monsour, University of Colorado.*



French and Raven (1959) identified five interpersonal sources of power:

1. Reward power
2. Coercive power
3. Legitimate power
4. Expert power
5. Referent power

REWARD POWER

Reward power is an individual's ability to influence others' behaviour by rewarding their desirable behaviour.

Employees comply with requests and directives because of the authority of managers to grant rewards in the form of praise, promotions, salary increase, bonuses, and time-off.

COERCIVE POWER

It is an individual's ability to influence others' behaviour by means of punishment for undesirable behaviour.

For example, subordinates may comply because they expect to be punished for failure to respond favourably to managerial directives.

LEGITIMATE POWER

Legitimate power most often refers to a manager's ability to influence subordinates' behaviour because of the manager's position in the organisational hierarchy.

Subordinates may respond to such influence because they acknowledge the manager's legitimate right to prescribe certain behaviours.

EXPERT POWER

Expert power is an individual's ability to influence others' behaviour because of recognised skills, talents, or specialised knowledge.

To the extent that managers can demonstrate competence in analysing, evaluating, controlling, and implementing the tasks of subordinates, they will acquire

REFERENT POWER

Referent power is an individual's ability to influence others' behaviour as a result of being liked or admired.

For instance, subordinates' identification with a manager often forms the basis for referent power.

This identification may include the desire of the subordinates to emulate the manager

POWER DYNAMICS

The dynamics of power in and of themselves are neutrally charged.

How we use power depends on intent, self-awareness and skill.

Constructive use of power solves problems, enhances relationships, and balances power.

THE DYNAMICS OF POWER

Informal power

- In theory an employee is allotted sufficient power to enable him to do his job, no more and no less.
- In practice people in organisations can acquire power beyond what their formal role might suggest.
- Power without authority is sometimes known as illegitimate or informal power.



Resistance in Organisations:

- The impetus to resistance in organisations stems from the potential for tension between organisational and individual interest.
- What is good for the organisation may be detrimental to its employees and vice versa.



Distributions:

- An individual cannot have power at all places and at all times.
- He may be forced to forgo his power or he may be stripped of it.
- He resists attempts to weakens his power, in the event failure he will try to form coalition. There is strength in numbers.



Dependency :

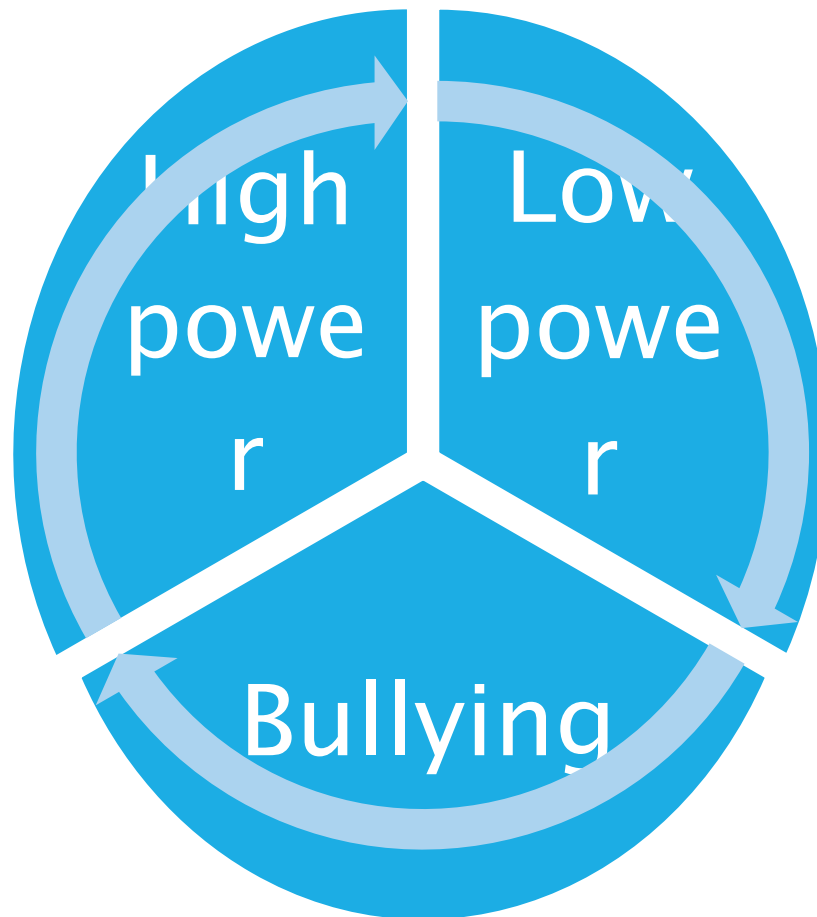
- Power largely depends on dependency relationship.
- The greater X depends on Y, the greater the power of Y on X.
- A person who cannot be easily displaced enjoys more power than others whose services can be easily replaced.



Compliance:

- Of all the types of power, people generally comply with legitimate power.
- People perceive reward and coercive powers as weak for complying with manager's request.

POWER IMBALANCES



HIGH POWER

Is having more power than others in a way that is unbalanced.

People who hold high power may not be pleased with it.

It can be challenging to maintain one's self integrity.

Higher power people may have developed altered views of themselves:

- May pursue power as an end.
- May receive false performance feedback designed to protect power.
- May devalue those who are less powerful.

LOW POWER

Is having less power in a way that is unbalanced.

May feel strong emotion or helpless lethargy.

Breeds hopelessness, frustration, or apathy.

May believe they can't shift, change, or influence their positions – this may or may not be true.

BULLYING

Bullying is a distinctive pattern of deliberately harming and humiliating others.

Durable behavioural style, largely because bullies get what they want – at least at first.

Bullies are made, not born.

- (“Bullying 2002”)



'Success is not an accident'



'Career management is a process of connecting aspirations to reality'

In order to increase the probability of success
You need

- Performance
- Investment
- Commitment
- Adaptability

Ambivalence

Obsession

Success is where opportunity meets preparation

