Impact of power against resistance or influence

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Power is framed by Winter (1991 p. 63) in the following ways:

Having impact, control, or influence on another person, group, or the world at large, by -

1. • taking strong, forceful actions
2. • controlling or regulating others
3. • attempting to influence, persuade, convince, make or prove a point, or argue
4. • giving unsolicited help or advice
5. • Impressing others or the world at large; prestige or reputation
6. • eliciting a strong emotional reaction in someone else

Some propose power in reified terms - as a social resource which can be analysed in terms of its distribution ⋸ {Mills, 2012 #601; Okin, 1989 #47}, though critics see this as a reductionist approach, which misses contextual and relational forces {Bhattacharyya, 2009 #1869}.

Power has been framed in terms of agent’s intentions, target’s responses, outcomes, and it has been explained in terms of dependency, influence, resistance, and the modification of others’ states ⋸ {Keltner, 2003 #969; Keltner, 2008 #966}. It has been conceptualised both as an ability (Weber, 1947), and as a property of a social relations ⋸ {Emerson, 1962 #1138}, measured as the amount of resistance which can be overcome. Power can be described as involving power to ⋸ {Overbeck, 2013 #1043; Overbeck, 2001 #1139} & {Follett, 1942 #87; Magaldi-dopman, 2010 #1095}, or the ‘production of intended effects’ Weber (1946). Some power bases such as reward power involve a dependency for access to scarce and valuable resources {Liu, 2020 #1870}.

Constructs related to power - but distinct - include status, authority, influence, resistance and dominance ⋸ {Anderson, 2002 #1339}. Influence can be understood an outcome of power, which can exist without specific actions {Rucker, 2012 #1872}. Another definition of power points to the capacity to influence others in psychologically meaningful ways, inducing changes in their behaviour, opinions, attitudes, goals, needs, or values ⋸ {Galinsky, 2008 #1871}. {Sturm, 2015 #1335} proposed a definition of power in terms of three elements: having the discretion (agency) to act, and the means (capacity, position) to enforce one’s will over others. Power can also be understood as a
force: hidden forces that can constrain an agenda {Baratz, 1962 #9}, as a neutral force {Argyris, 2010 #20}, or a nurturing force {Held, 1993 #98} which may be used to transform, or reinforce the status quo.

Common elements related to power often include control, resources and outcomes. Power can be understood in term of the potential to influence {Cartwright, 1959 #1328}, actual influence {Dahl, 1957 #8}, and the achievement of intended effect {Russell, 1938 #970}. It can be framed in terms of action - the potential to act {Lukes, 2005 #7}, the power-to-do {{Arendt, 1970 #39;Arendt, 1958 #75;Hobbes, 1985 #38} or the power to change {{Miller, 1992 #426}.

Power-over {Dahling, 2009 #1570} functions in terms of the capacity to influence and control the behaviours of others {French, 1959 #30;Raven, 2001 #1835} , {Fiske, 1993 #965} & {Fiske, 2007 #1303}. This type of power has been called social power because power is derived through one’s relationships to others {van Dijke, 2006 #1782}

People in a power position are strong decision makers {{Whitson, 2012 #1005}, and this often includes setting aside the consequences for others {Lammers, 2009 #1839} in accordance with their own will Power as control involves the person with power, making decisions that determine outcomes and goals for others {Dépret, 1999 #1085} & {Goodwin, 2000 #1350;Goodwin, 1998 #1351}, providing directions during a task, assigning resources, or through being in a position of evaluating the target {{Thomas, 2003 #130}, {Fiske, 2007 #1303;Fiske, 2002 #1358}, 1996; Keltner et al., 2003; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1985}. Inducing others to behave in ways they would not otherwise do, in accordance with one’s wishes {Zur, 2013 #173} can be achieved through imposition, or developed through by persuasion using personal, organisational and economic power to influence the target {Clarkson, 2000 #17;Rusk, 1993 #11}, {Kipnis, 1976 #294}, distinguishes between power which is as an end in itself, or as a means to an end (e.g. control of resources). It has been suggested that the most significant defining element is asymmetric control over valued resources {Rosenfeld, 1998 #948}, {Fiske, 2010 #1329}, {Keltner, 2003 #969;Keltner, 1997 #961}, {Magee, 2008 #1029;Magee, 2009 #1072} & Galinsky 2008, {Pfeffer, 2016 #1797} & {Savaya, 2011 #717}, and specifically, ‘the capacity to alter others’ states by providing or withholding resources and administering punishments’ {Keltner, 2003 #969;Langner, 2008 #959}, this results in the experience of control, agency and freedom {Fiske,
It follows that low power parties depend on high power persons in order to obtain such rewards or avoid punishments {Thibaut, 1959 #1302, Huff, 2003 #1688, Thibaut, 1959 #1302}. Formally this occurs through role functions e.g. financial opportunities, referrals, decision making; or by promotion/demotion or termination of employment {Anderson, 2001 #1127, Anderson, 2014 #968, Keltner, 2003 #969, Pfeffer, 2010 #1493, Pfeffer, 2010 #1807}. Resources can refer to anything of value on which people depend: money, information, rewards, prestige, access to important people, expertise, as well as interpersonal resources such as affection, attention, approval by an authority, or support {Pettman, 2008 #746, Politics in Spires, 2014 #1767, Pope, 2001 #353}.

Individuals can be seen as controlling a valued resource if they possess certain characteristics - personal skills, knowledge, or expertise that others need {Anderson & Brion, 2014}. The exercise of power involves a perception by the target that the agent has this potential or capacity Tjosvold (1985) to effect control {Ridgeway, 1995 #1716, Rizzardi, 2005 #447, Roessler, 2011 #881}.

{Sturm, 2015 #1335} argues that narrowing power to ‘control over valued resources’ limits understanding other variables such as psychological or cultural factors. Examples include where the presence of a power holder alone can induce change (police officer in a uniform), informal power, or power arising from a symbolic or referent source (the subtle effect of a charismatic leader) {Mangi, 2013 #1286}.

Power over others can operate from a distance even without an interpersonal relationship {Sturm, 2015 #1335} is & {Schlafly, 2002 #341, Son Hing, 2002 #675}, it can operate through controlling organisational level variables that affect people {Chatterjee, 2007 #1819, Yap, 2013 #1079}. {Kotter, 1985 #1147} describes two dimensions of organisational function - diversity and interdependence. These determine the relational context of the use of power, which can be with subordinates, superiors or outside the chain of formal command {Magee, 2008 #1876}.

From a systemic point of view, power as it is exercised ‘from the top’ is simply one way of viewing dynamics in the system. More fundamentally, power is distributed in the system, and appears in different forms. This multiple view provides us with a very different understanding of power; things are not quite as they seem, and interventions work better when they are non-linear and accommodate the whole picture {{Brick, 2005 #27}. Cybernetic perspectives pay more attention to flows of information than to
the players involved {Von Foerster, 2002 #28}.

A very widely used taxonomy of power is based on the work of {French, 1959 #30}, who originally designated 5 categories (coercive, reward, legitimate, expert, and referent), later expanded to include a sixth (information), and then completely revised into an eleven factor framework {French, 1959 #30; Raven, 2001 #1835}, see table below. Coercive and reward were divided into two forms each, and legitimate into four, as {Raven, 1988 #1825; Raven, 1998 #1810} considered the potentially coercive power of personal approval or rejection. Coercive and reward tactics require monitoring, whilst the rest operate without active surveillance. The strategies can be broadly divided into hard (externally derived) and soft (internally derived) {Raven, 2001 #1835; Raven, 2004 #1824}, 1998 #1810 and positional or personal {Yukl, 2009 #1845; Yukl, 1992 #1245} (who also adds persuasion and charisma as further personal bases, not shown here). {{Kolowsky, 2001 #1834} further differentiate detailed factors such as agents’ resources, and target’s motivations {Kteily, 2012 #1065}.}

1. The above bases of power exist within the larger context of a power/interaction model of interpersonal influence {{Raven, 1988 #1825}. Elements of this model include: motivations for the use of influence and power, factors which lead to an agent's choice of a power strategy, the way the bases are implemented, the effectiveness of impact on the target, the after effects, and the agent's readjusted perceptions and choices {Raven, 1988 #1825}

2. Based on several reviews of the Raven model, {{Pfeffer, 1992 #1131} makes the following observations:

3. Reliance on legitimate power may lead to only minimum compliance, with increasing resistance, especially if it does not coincide with expert power {Pfeffer, 2013 #1794}.

4. Reward power can impact behaviours in the short run, but in the long run can result in dependency where subordinates feel manipulated {Lunenburg, 2012 #1877}.

5. Coercive power may lead to temporary compliance, but is likely to lead to frustration, fear, revenge, and alienation {Faiz, 2013 #1878}.

6. Expert and referent power tend to build trust, increasing internalised motivation and requiring less supervision {Elangovan, 1999 #1879}.

7. Many of these styles are situationally relevant {Goleman, 2000 #1770}. For instance, the coercive style can be effective in emergency scenarios that need to be turned around quickly {Padilla-Meléndez, 2014 #1880}.}
8. An affiliative style (Reference power base) is useful for involving people, building teams and morale, but may allow poor behaviours to go unaddressed. Each style contributes to the climate of the organisation. Inappropriate or overuse of coercion can lead to a climate of alienation, reward power can lead to a climate of insecurity, expert power to a climate of dependance {Zaleznik, 1970 #1881}.

9. The appropriateness of different power tactics is related to the setting; in organisations with routine tasks, harsh power tactics were more prevalent and levels of compliance were greater {Falbe, 1992 #1882}. In a study by (Raven (1992) supervisors perceived themselves as using more soft tactics and resorting less frequently to harsh tactics; however, this view did not correlate with subordinates, leading to questions about differing view of reality in the assessment of power tactics usage {Koslowsky, 2001 #1883}.

10. Theory X and Y describe two models of worker reliability and motivation (McGregor 1960); depending which one a manager subscribes to will affect their choice of power base - coercive or legitimate for the former, and information or expert power for the latter {Lumby, 2019 #1884}.

11. As well as the (now) 11 power bases of Raven, there have been proposals for a range of others {Sun, 2014 #1885}. These include the following (it can be noted that the first four are forms of referent power):

12. Affiliation or connection power - derives from association with influential individuals {Rahim, 2009 #1886}.

13. Credibility power - stems from character or integrity {Rahim, 2009 #1887}.

14. Persuasiveness power {Dhar, 2001 #1888}.

15. Prestige power - related to status {Hanoch, 2013 #763}.

16. Ecological power; this is indirect, and describes control over the work environment {Yukl, 2013 #1662}.

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