



UNIT 12/44

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

P1. Analyse how an organisation's culture, politics and power influence individual and team behaviour and performance



RECAP



WHAT ARE THE FOUR
DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE AS
STATED BY CHARLES HANDY?



BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THE MAIN
CHARACTERISTICS OF;
POWER CULTURE



BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THE MAIN
CHARACTERISTICS OF;
ROLE CULTURE



BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THE MAIN
CHARACTERISTICS OF;
TASK CULTURE

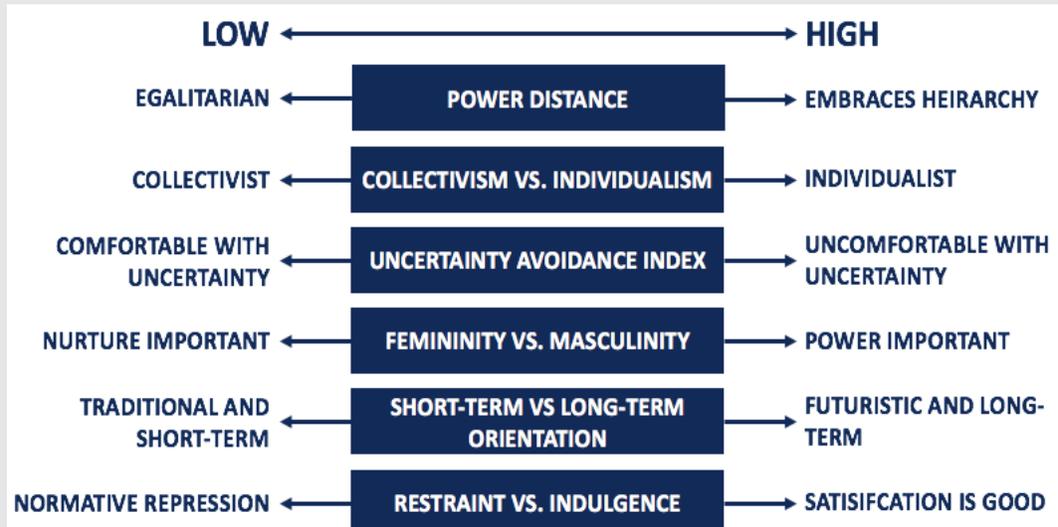


BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THE MAIN
CHARACTERISTICS OF;
PERSON CULTURE



WHAT IS THE HOFSTEDE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS THEORY?

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory



The Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, developed by **Geert Hofstede**, is a framework used to understand the differences in culture across countries and to discern the ways that business is done across different cultures.

Hofstede identified six categories that define culture:

- Power Distance Index
- Collectivism vs. Individualism
- Uncertainty Avoidance Index
- Femininity vs. Masculinity
- Short-Term vs. Long-Term Orientation
- Restraint vs. Indulgence



POWER AND POLITICS IN ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE

Power and Politics in Organizations

“Organizations are political structures. This means that organizations operate by distributing authority and setting a stage for the exercise of power. It is no wonder, therefore, that individuals who are highly motivated to secure and use power find a familiar and hospitable environment in business (Zaleznik, 1970, par 1).”

Survival in any organization is a political act. Thus, organizational life is dominated by political interactions. Politics in organizations involve the tactical use of power to retain or obtain control of real symbolic resources (Bacharach, et al, 1980).

Organizational Politics

Somewhere along the way, “politics” may have become a dirty word in your vocabulary. Some of these connotations still exist, especially when they're linked to the internal politics in business. Even the Business Dictionary defines organizational politics as:

“The pursuit of individual agendas and self-interest in an organization without regard to their effect on the organization's efforts to achieve its goals.”

You may favor a less ego-centric definition of organizational politics from the Harvard Business Review:

“Organizational politics refers to a variety of activities associated with the use of influence tactics to improve personal or organizational interests.”

It's possible that organizational politics has gotten a bad rap, the University of Minnesota says:

“Although often portrayed negatively, organizational politics are not inherently bad. Instead, it's important to be aware of the potentially destructive aspects of organizational politics in order to minimize their negative effect.”

(Wroblewski, 2018)

Organizational Politics

Two things are at the heart of politics – relationships and policies. It's easy to believe the two are separate matters, but policies in workplaces often dictate relationships or at least the way relationships are enjoyed and nurtured. Contravening these policies can cause conflicts or lead to reprimands. The way these policies affect workplace interactions can influence the organization's political climate, which in turn can impact office politics. Navigating policies and benefiting from using them to one's advantage (or suffering the consequences thereof) form the heart of corporate politics and power.

“Organizational politics can often come down to relationships and allies in the workplace. Who has power over the direction of your career? Who can be of benefit down the line? Who will make the best teacher? What’s the best stance for negotiating your contract? Which projects would best benefit your career in the long run? Can you make an open secret of your career ambitions, so management understands that you're in it to win it?

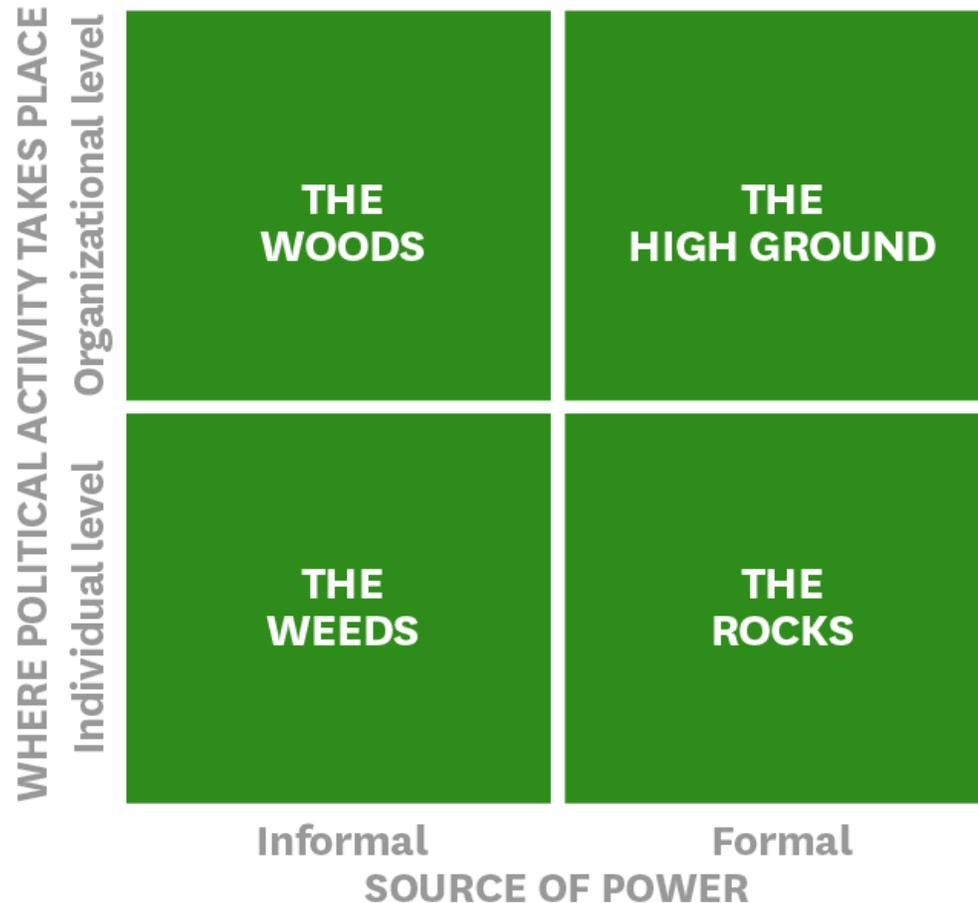
When corporate leaders favor one person over another for where he went to school or his speaking style or boardroom appeal, that’s part of politics too. It’s not objective or tangible, like how Robert has the highest sales success in his division and therefore gets the biggest bonus. Instead, it’s a subjective belief based on interpersonal relationships and interaction (Cameron, 2019, sec. 3).”

Corporate Leadership and Politics



The 4 Metaphors of Organizational Politics

To have influence, you need to understand the terrain.



SOURCE MICHAEL JARRETT

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Mapping the political terrain

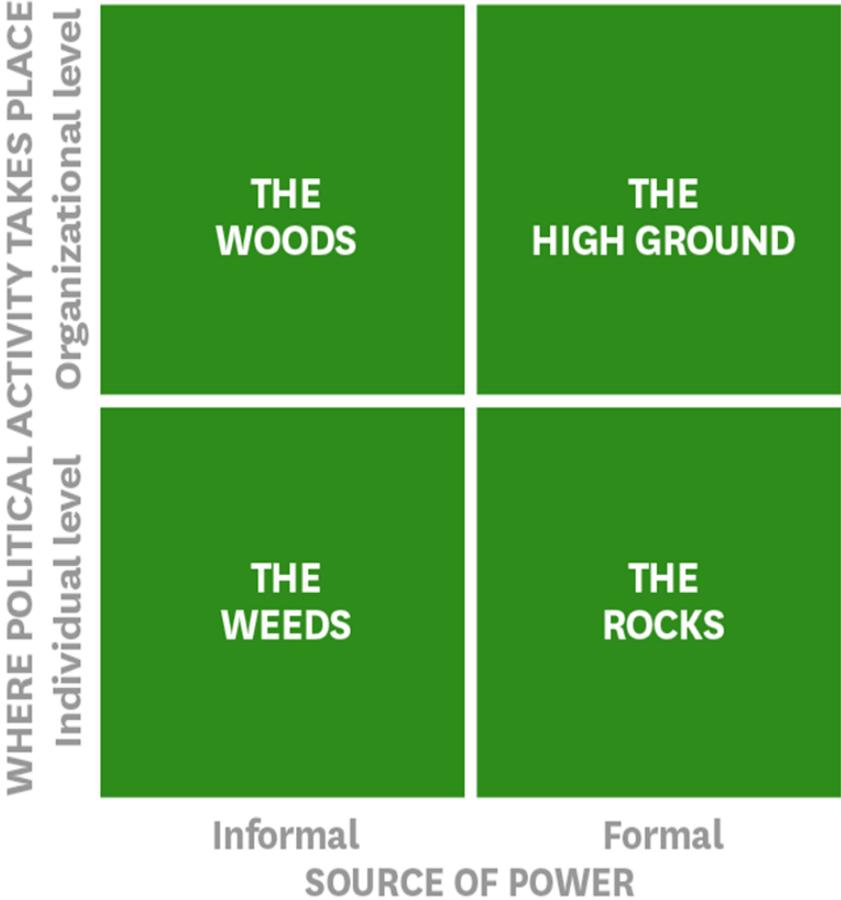
To address these challenges, we need to chart the political terrain, which includes four metaphoric domains: the weeds, the rocks, the high ground, and the woods. Each has different rules for skillful navigation.

Navigating these domains requires awareness of two important dimensions. First is the level that political activity takes place. Political dynamics start with the individual player and their political skills. These can evolve into group-level behaviors. At the other end of this dimension is the broader context, where politics operates at the organizational level.

The second dimension of the political landscape is the extent to which the source of power is soft (informal) or hard (formal). Soft power is implicit, making use of influence, relationships, and norms. Political activity based on “hard,” formal, or explicit power draws upon role authority, expertise, directives, and reward/control mechanisms.

The 4 Metaphors of Organizational Politics

To have influence, you need to understand the terrain.



The Weeds

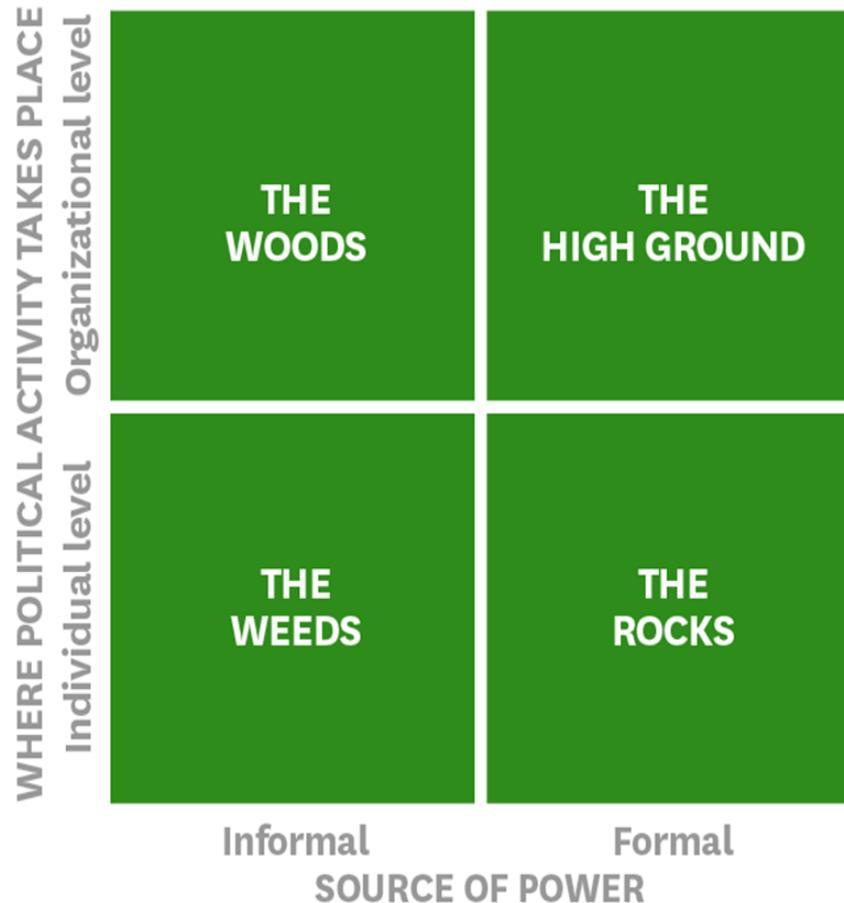
“In this quadrant, personal influence and informal networks rule. It is called “the weeds” because it’s a dynamic that grows naturally, without any maintenance. It can be a good thing. **For example**, at one not-for-profit organization, the Secretary General was seriously underperforming, and sometimes acting unethically, leading staff to worry that they’d lose the support of key donors and government officials. As a result, an informal group regularly met to cover up his mishandling of situations. However, the problem became unsustainable and the same group, within the year, helped to ease him out to protect the organization’s reputation. Thus, the development of an informal coalition saved the organization and political activities, in this case, were a force for good.

But “the weeds,” if left unchecked, can also form a dense mat through which nothing else can grow. In these circumstances, informal networks can be a countervailing force to legitimate power and the long-term interests of the organization. For instance, they can thwart legitimate change efforts that are needed to put the organization on a sounder long-term financial footing.

To deal with the weeds, get involved enough to understand the informal networks at play. Identify the key brokers, as well as the gaps — if you can fill the gaps — or ally with the brokers, so that you can increase your own influence. Conversely, if the brokers are doing more harm than good, you can try to isolate them by developing a counter-narrative and strengthening connections with other networks (Jarrett, 2017, sec. 3).”

The 4 Metaphors of Organizational Politics

To have influence, you need to understand the terrain.



The Rocks

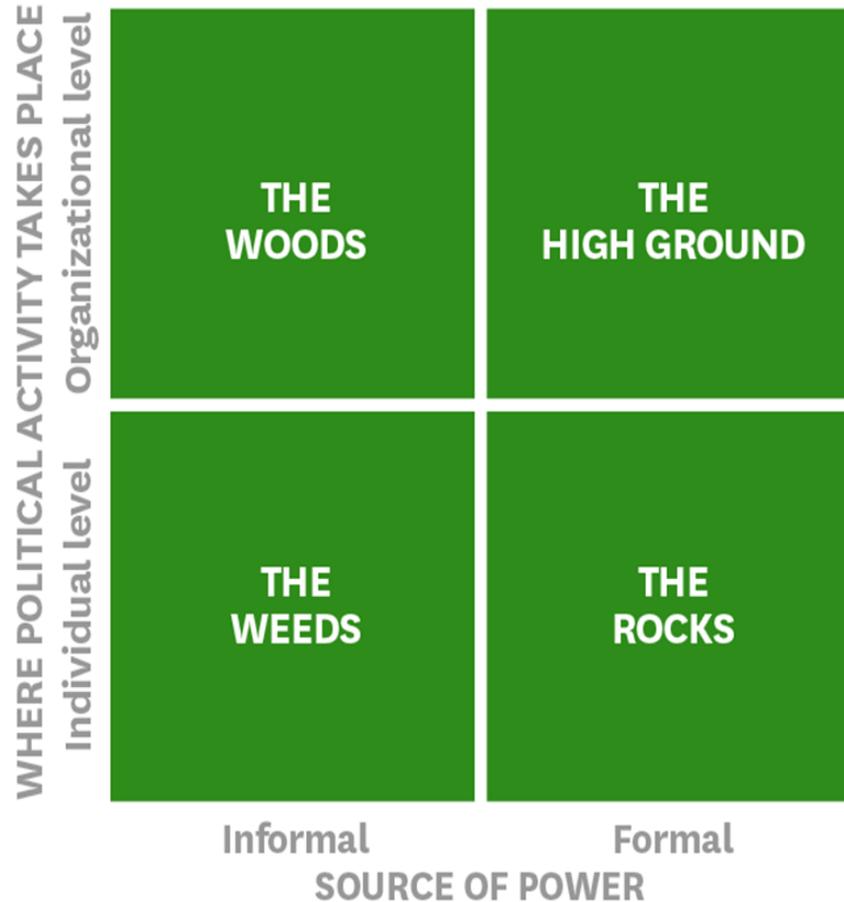
“Power in “the rocks” rests on individual interactions and formal (or “hard”) sources of authority such as title, role, expertise, or access to resources. It might also include political capital that arises from membership of or strong ties to a high status group such as the finance committee, a special task force, or the senior management team. It is called the “the rocks” because rocks can symbolize a stabilizing foundation that keeps an organization steady in times of crisis. But conversely, the sharp edges of hard power can wreck a plan.

i.e. Consider a mid-sized advertising agency that was implementing a new growth strategy. The Chairman used his formal power to stop the changes. He would constantly question decisions agreed with the management team, change his mind from one meeting to the next, stop agreed allocation of resources to new structures, and take people off the special task forces, without notification. Here we see the formal use of hard power to satisfy self-interest over the firm’s longer-term value.

Navigating the terrain here relies on drawing on formal sources of power, rather than fighting against them. Your best bet is to redirect the energy of a dysfunctional leader, either through reasoned argument or by appealing to their interests. For example, in the case of the advertising company, senior executives used the argument of “leaving a legacy” to get the Chairman to see how he was undermining his own and company’s long-term interests (Jarrett, 2017, sec. 4).”

The 4 Metaphors of Organizational Politics

To have influence, you need to understand the terrain.



The High Ground

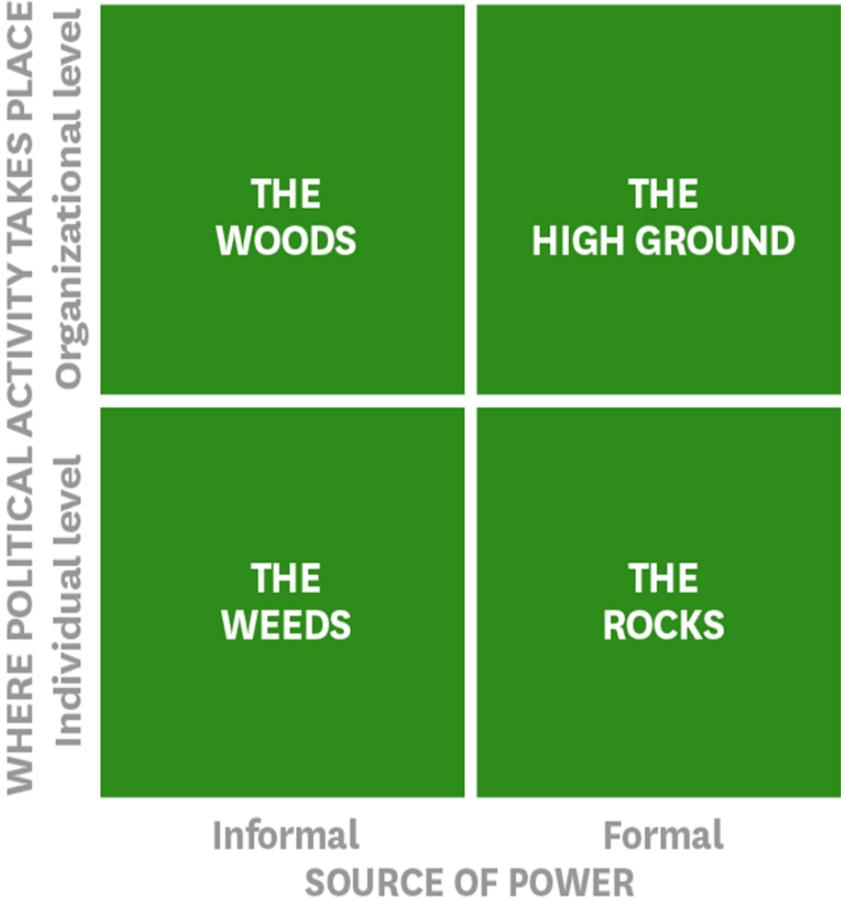
“The high ground combines formal authority with organizational systems; the term is used to describe the rules, structures, policy guidelines, and procedures that form the basis of political activities. The benefits of these rules and procedures are that they provide a check against the whims of individual level, charismatic or autocratic individuals. Thus, the ‘high ground’ provides guide rails for the rocks. It’s a functional political process that uses structures of control systems, incentives, and sanctions that keep the organization in compliance. However, as many executive know, rules and procedures can also lead to the company becoming overly bureaucratic, where rules are used as a political device to challenge interests not aligned with the bureaucrats, or to prevent innovation and change.

If you find yourself stranded on the high ground, take a lesson from one company that used feedback from clients, customers, and end-users to highlight difficulties and make the case that the current structure was constraining the organization. Since organizations where the high ground is a problem tend to be risk-averse, you can also try emphasizing that not changing can be even riskier than trying something new.

i.e. A public agency was having problems collecting revenues because the structures were slow and had to follow formalized steps to stop potential fraud. It meant that millions of tax revenues were not collected at the end of the year. Senior leaders decided to set up a dedicated task force outside of the formal organizational structure to solve the problem. After the first year, they had reduced the problem by over 50% and reached an 95% recovery rate by the second year. The organization then changed its official processes to match these improved methods (Jarrett, 2017, sec. 5).”

The 4 Metaphors of Organizational Politics

To have influence, you need to understand the terrain.



The Woods

“In addition to their formal processes and guidelines, organizations also have implicit norms, hidden assumptions, and unspoken routines — and that’s where we get into “the woods.” The woods can provide cover and safety for people in your organization; or they can be a bewildering place where good ideas and necessary changes get lost.

Strong implicit norms can define what is even discussable. In some organizations, **for example**, displays of emotion may be seen as socially undesirable, and so the organization finds ways to marginalize, ignore, or reframe any emotions that are shown. In other organizations, the display of certain emotions are essentially mandatory — *think of the smiling flight attendant*.

Some organizations get lost in their woods. They focus on the presenting issue rather than the unspoken ecosystem of habits and practices that remain unseen. The challenge here is to make the implicit explicit. Ask the stupid question, bringing implicit organizational routines and behaviors to the surface. Ask clients, recent hires, or temporary contractors about their observations and experience of how the company works; a fresh pair eyes will often identify things that incumbents are blind to seeing. Get benchmark information from surveys and specialist experts. Once the implicit assumptions are out in the open, ask your team to reflect on whether they’re helping your company or hindering it.

For example, consulting to a newly merged, international telecoms company, we conducted a simple exercise using the culture web framework to help each of the newly merged entities to describe their own cultural norms and those of the other parties. It quickly generated truths and myths that could be discussed and used to iron out blockages in them rolling out their distribution and cable network — the key to capturing subscribers and business operational success (Jarrett, 2017, sec. 6).”

Definitions of Power

Like many other words in English language, power has no single definition. A few definitions of power are stated below:

- (i) "Power is the ability to employ force and mobilize resources, energy and information on behalf of a preferred goal" – Gbadamosi (1996)
- (ii) "Power is the probability that a person can carry out his or her own will despite resistance" – Max Weber (1947)
- (iii) "Power is the ability of persons as groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrence either in the form of withholding regularly supplied rewards or in the form of punishment inasmuch as the former, as well as the latter, constitutes in effect negative sanction" – Blan (1964)
- (iv) "Power is defined as a force that results in behaviour that would not have occurred if the forces had not been present" – Mechanic (1962)
- (v) "[Power is] the ability of one person or group of persons to influence the behaviour of others, that is, to change the probabilities that others will respond in certain ways to specified stimuli" – Kaplan (1964)
- (vi) "Power is a capacity that 'A' has to influence the behaviour of 'B' to do things he or she would not otherwise do" – (cited in Obisi, 2003).

POWER



POWER

Power is the ability a person has to influence another. The extent of this power is, however, determined, to a large extent, by the perception of the term power by the person at whom the power is directed. It may be more important what a person thinks a superior officer's power is than what it is. Managers may take advantage of this phenomenon by pretending they have more power than they actually have, that is, by bluffing. If a manager's bluffing succeeds, the effect is the same as if the one bluffing actually possessed the formal power. Thus, power is a delicate phenomenon.

The Uses of Power

"Power, when acquired, is meant to be used to achieve some purpose(s). Appropriate use of power leads to the achievement of desired goals and objectives. Ineffective use of power or failure to use power when the need arises has been described as the major cause of defective functioning of a system. This is possible among inexperienced managers and those who lack self-confidence. They tend to avoid using power, preferring to pass problems with difficult employees and the like to others.

The organizational consequences of not using power appropriately become increasingly pronounced toward the top of an organization because in hierarchical systems abdications of authority have effects all the way down the line. Yet, trying to use power that one does not have (because of legal constraints, for instance) can be equally detrimental. This is true because managerial actions with regards to employees may be reversed by labour relations, board decisions (where it exists), the courts, arbitrators and the power of public pressure at considerable cost to the company" (Omisore and Nweke, 2014, pg. 167).

Bases of Power

There is need to make a distinction between BASES of power and SOURCES of power. This distinction has important implications for the authority-influence contrast. In dealing with the bases of power, we are interested in what parties control that enables them to manipulate the behaviour of others. In referring to the sources of power we are speaking of how parties come to control the bases of power.

French and Raven (1959) distinguish six major bases of power. They include:

- (a) COERCION – this implies the threat of decreasing another's outcomes. The holder can apply punishment or sanction;
- (b) EXPERTISE – this is formal or specialized knowledge about particular issues or activities with an organization. The person with expertise has the status of an expert and thus is likely to be accurate;
- (c) REWARDS – this implies the promise of increasing the outcomes of the employee. The holder of this can give or withhold something desired;
- (d) LEGITIMACY – The holder of this power is viewed as right in terms of the values of the one influenced; this is tantamount to authority. Authority is power based on rights of control and concomitant obligations to obey;
- (e) REFERENT POWER – this is more interpersonal in nature than legitimacy. It means power based on identification with another. This is exemplified by the power of charismatic leaders who elicit deference and are accorded credibility by others (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980). The individual influenced desires to model his/her behaviour to the source of influence; and
- (f) INFORMATION - this consists of the access or opportunity actors have to gain information about the inner workings of the organization or about the relation of the organization to the environment. This information may or may not be related to the actor's level in the hierarchy of authority in the organization.

Bases and Sources of Power

Bases and Sources of Power

“Given the contrast of bases and sources of power, Etzioni (1961) provides a somewhat better starting point. Unlike French and Raven, Etzioni appears to maintain a consistent focus on the bases of power. He identifies three forms of power, each relying on a different type of sanction (Omisore and Nweke, 2014, pg. 168):”

- i. **Coercive Power:** rests on the ability to apply the threat of physical sanction;
- ii. **Remunerative Power:** based on the control of material resources and reward; and
- iii. **Normative Power:** based on the control of symbolic rewards.

An additional basis for power needs to be added to Etzioni’s three. In an organizational setting, access to information, that is, KNOWLEDGE, also becomes a basis of power.

When an actor in an organization controls unique information and when that information is needed to make a decision, the actor has power (Pettigrew, 1973). Drawing on the Etzioni and the French and Raven schemes, we can identify four primary bases of power: (i) coercive, (ii) remunerative, (iii) normative, and (iv) knowledge. The coercive base of power is the control of punishment; the remunerative base is the control of rewards; the normative base is the control of symbols; and the knowledge base is the control of information. Any power relationship in an organization can encompass all these bases, but each relationship may well be characterized by one of them rather than another (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980).

Sources of Power

Having identified the primary bases of power, attention must now turn to the different Sources of power. There are about four main sources of power. These include:

- (a) **Office or Structural Position:** The office or structural position might provide a party access to various bases of power. Some positions might provide little information but substantial coercive resources, while others might give the occupant the capacity to manipulate symbols or mobilize internalized commitments to certain norms (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980).
- (b) **Personal Characteristics:** The most marked personal characteristic that is a source of power is charisma. As Weber (1947) indicates, the charismatic leader has power by virtue of extraordinary and often mystical characteristics. However, relevant personal characteristics might also include verbal skill, ability to argue effectively for positions, or even physical attributes (for example, a physical disability of a veteran espousing a pro- or antiwar position).
- (c) **Expertise:** Expertise refers to the specialized information actors bring to the organization. It is typically based on activities outside the organization, for example, education. This is treated as a source of power, rather than a basis of power in French and Raven's terms, because it seems to be a means by which a party comes to control specialized information rather than the control itself (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980).
- (d) **OPPORTUNITY:-** This particular source of power is embedded in the informal structure of the organization. The idea comes from Mechanic's (1962) analysis of the power of the lower levels in an organization (such as sectorial staff). The informal aspects of formal positions or informal positions that are not identified officially by the organization can provide an important source of power (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980).

Bases and Sources of Power

IMPORTANT! Further Reading
Required:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287696445_The_Influence_of_Power_and_Politics_in_Organizations_Part_1

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