

Basic concepts

power	the potential to determine or direct (to a certain extent) the behaviour of another person/other persons more so than the other way round.
power distance	the degree of inequality in power between a less powerful Individual (I) and a more power Other (O), in which I and O belong to the same (loosely or tightly knit) social system.
power distance reduction tendency	the striving of the less powerful Individual to reduce or remove the difference in power between himself and the more powerful.
striving to maintain power distance	the striving of the powerful to maintain or enlarge their power distance from the less powerful.
irreality	low reality level = purposive conduct which does not apply to the world of hard facts and set barriers; for example: I should like to hold that position of power, etc.
reality	high reality level = purposive conduct of Individuals in which the facts are far less malleable as regards these persons' aspirations.
costs	all human conduct aimed at achieving certain ends is affected to some extent by the psychological costs: the risks of failure, time and energy, loss of popularity, the unattractive sides to the required behaviour.
exercise of power	a person attempts to put his/her – potential – power into effect.
effected power	the final result of the attempt to exercise power.
participation	less powerful persons take part in decision-making of the powerful, the idea being to reduce or remove the differences in power.

successful participation	participation in which the foregoing is achieved.
experimental approach	some fundamental variables are alternated systematically (for instance small power distance versus big) in order to establish the effects of each fundamental variable whilst other factors are kept constant (e.g. stronger- weaker power distance reduction).
analysis of conditions	it is possible to establish, on the grounds of experimental thinking, the conditions under which certain effects occur, and under which certain effects are predictable.
simulation	factors which are hard to isolate or even identify in social reality can be produced/ reproduced in the behaviour laboratory as studyable fundamental variables and/or effects.
external situation	all social systems, including the social interplay between two persons, I and O, function in an environment which influences them and which they influence.
learning choices	by altering the external situation (choice of friends, of certain activities) and setting themselves particular objectives, people can develop their capacities and motivations – i.e. they can change themselves.

The sequence of hypotheses in power distance theory

1. The mere exercise of power will give satisfaction.
2. The more powerful individual will strive to maintain or to increase the power distance to the less powerful person.
3. The greater this distance from the less powerful person, the stronger the striving to increase it.
4. Individuals will strive to reduce the power distance between themselves and more powerful persons.
5. The smaller this distance from the more powerful person, the stronger the tendency to reduce it.
6. The power distance reduction tendency will occur regardless of a recent upward movement to a more powerful position or a recent well-earned promotion.
7. The expected costs increase more sharply than the profits with reduction in power distance in reality.
8. More participation in decision-making will not reduce but increase a great power distance.
9. The quantity of power, i.e. the power distance, is a more decisive factor than the quality of power (its proper or improper use).
10. In crises a social system requires leadership which shows great self-confidence and is capable of strong exercise of power.
11. When leaders exercise their power forcefully, people will attribute great self-confidence to them.
12. People with great self-confidence and strong power motives will show a stronger power distance reduction tendency.
13. When less powerful individuals find that they have more self-confidence than the powerful person, they will show a stronger tendency to reduce the distance to the powerful person.
14. When an individual builds up an inverted Y-structure in which he imagines he is halfway between the powerless and the powerful, he will also manifest a power distance reduction tendency.
- 3/5. The 'downward' tendencies of the powerful to maintain the power distance, and the 'upward' power distance reduction of the less powerful reinforce each other.
- 5a. Less powerful individuals, who desist from reducing the power distance because the gap is too big, will develop other motives like a striving for solidarity with other 'have-nots' in power.
- 5b. The powerless class in a social system who do not strive (any longer) to

reduce the power distance from the powerful individuals may refuse to follow the powerful any further and put up (stubborn) resistance (despair pierces apathy).

- 5c. When several powerless individuals are united, they are powerful compared with those in power in their social system, and will behave accordingly ('unity is strength').
- 5/10. The strength of the opposition of the united powerless persons will depend on the strength of their organisation; forceful, central exercise of power (or a large power distance) is essential in crises.
15. Equalization is a human striving, not limited to the power dimension: Individuals strive to make themselves equal to another in circumstances which do not necessarily involve a power dimension: they tend to perform kind or aggressive behavior when they perceive it!

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