

ELSS810

S3 L1

**Improving Leadership: Analyzing
and Managing Organizational
Phenomena by Reframing;
political frame**

Institute of Educational Leadership

University of Jyväskylä

Jukka Alava, PhD, Professor emeritus

Political frame

- Concept of power
- Organizational politics
- Leadership in the political arena



“Power is America’s last dirty word.”

(Elisabeth Moss Kanter)

In general, we do not want to talk about power in organizations. Power is connected to using force, brutality, coerciveness, unethical behaviour, fraud, or suppression.

Even money and sexuality are easier to deal with than power.

Research on power and using power is new – it does not have the same research tradition as the structural and human relations frame have.



Power and political influence

- Structural and human resource frames assume that organizations exist in order to accomplish goals; people in official positions set these goals.
- The frame of power and politics abandons these assumptions as naive and unrealistic. **It sees organizations as complex systems of people and groups**, which all have their own goals, beliefs, values and perspectives.
- These coalitions continuously compete with each other over the scarce resources of the organization; **conflict is inevitable.**



Defining power

- Defining power **as force:**

... Force sufficient to change the probability of B's behaviour from what it would have been in the absence of the application of the force.

- Defining power **as overcoming resistance:**

... The power of actor A over actor B is the amount of resistance on the part of B which can potentially be overcome by A.



Existence of power is easy to recognize:

The ability of those who possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire



Power is a structural phenomenon

Specialization and division of labour are the fundamental causes of dependence among individuals and organizational units.

Structures establish how roles, expectations, and resource allocations are defined for people and groups.

=> Power is a structural phenomenon.

