CHAPTER 1

Power and Control: Social Science Perspectives

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The meaning and implication of power has been both a fascinating and mysterious topic of discussion for thousands of years. Mysterious, very largely because people have never truly understood what power is, where it comes from, and how it works.

—Lawless, 1972, p. 230

The subject of power, of interest to people for millennia, has been on the social science agenda for at least the last 100 years. George Simmel, the father of American sociology, suggested in the late 1800s that the exercise of power among people was a central issue deserving of study and understanding (Simmel, 1896). Russell (1938) wrote of power as the fundamental concept in social science, “in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics” (p. 10). Lewin felt that “Not the least service which social research can do for society is to attain better insight into the legitimate and non-legitimate aspects of power” (Marrow, 1969, p. 172).

Mannheim (1950) argued that “Power is present whenever and wherever social pressures operate on the individual to induce desired conduct” (p. 46). Kornhauser (1957) wrote of “one most important—and in my judgment greatly under-emphasized—aspect of the relations of social science to society, namely, questions of social science in the context of the power structure” (p. 187). Writers from sociology, psychology, communication, management, politics, organizational behavior, and other disciplines have
continued to stress the centrality of power to any explanation of the human experience.

For all that effort, the first, and perhaps most obvious, conclusion one draws from an attempt to review the subject is that there is a consistent lack of agreement about the nature and parameters of social power and influence. According to Pfeffer (1982), “Power is one of the more controversial of the social science concepts” (p. 64). Perrow (1970) concluded that the subject was clearly “the messiest problem of all” (p. ix).

DEFINITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Definitions of power tend to be of several types. Some (e.g., Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) think of power solely in terms of the control of resources. Those who are so placed as to be able to mediate the flow of rewards, raw materials, and so forth, have power, whereas those who are dependent on the resources thus mediated are powerless.

Another approach to power focuses on the position held by a person seeking to exercise power. Power is thus equated, or at least intimately associated, with one's formal authority in an organization or a society (see, e.g., Hodgkinson & Meeth, 1971).

The ability to mediate the flow of resources to those who are dependent may, in some instances, be associated with the position one holds, but this is by no means always the case. The two perspectives are certainly not isomorphic. It is also worth noting that both the resource dependency and position perspectives are seen by many writers as being subsets of power, but not as its central and defining characteristics.

Hartnett (1971) argued that there are important distinctions between authority and influence, with influence carrying connotations of informal procedures involving persuasion, whereas authority, the power vested in an office or role, consists of giving orders through formal channels. According to Hartnett, “Power needs no institutional sanction” (p. 27). This point of view is consistent with the writings of Kotter (1985) and Raven (1965).

Still another, and apparently more influential, way to conceptualize power is to describe different ways in which it can operate. Whereas both the resource dependency model and authority of position approach treat power as being essentially unitary in nature, many find it more realistic to treat power as a complex phenomenon with multiple manifestations. Because this approach seems to treat the term power as a primitive, those who use it bypass the definition stage altogether. We believe that the explication of power bases or modes of influence is an activity from which we may productively seek guidance for future work, and return later for a
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fuller elaboration. Strictly speaking, however, it does not constitute a definition.

A significant number of writers approach the task of defining power by describing what it does, without directly attending to how it works. Thus, Kanter (1983) said that power “is intimately connected with the ability to produce; it is the capacity to mobilize people and resources to get things done” (p. 213). According to Morgan (1986), “Power is the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when, and how” (p. 158). Mintzberg (1983) defined power “simply as the ability to effect (or affect) organizational outcomes” (p. 4). Hook (1979) wrote that “In its most generic sense, power is the ability to influence the behavior of others in order to further our desires and purposes” (p. 4). Definitions of this type have the appeal of being broad enough perhaps to encompass the phenomenon while being innocuous enough to deflect controversy. An individual can use the term *power* much as a politician might speak of “The American Way”: All who hear it “understand” the expression (or so they think), but utterly fail actually to understand each other.

We believe that much confusion found in the literature can be traced to a lack of consensus on the nature, definition, and parameters of interpersonal power. Silber (1979), reviewing an honors program lecture series on the topic of power, observed the implicit assumption that:

Power can be discussed on whatever terms one wishes to discuss it, that power is not a subject whose independent nature and structure we must respect and try to understand, observe, and delineate with great care and maximum precision. Rather, power is seen to mean whatever the individual discussing it wants it to mean, and in discussing power we are free from all rational and empirical restraints. That is: Humpty Dumpty was right. Humpty Dumpty’s position reflects the dominant relativism of our time. Hand in hand with a highly subjective individualism, it now approaches the limiting condition, namely solipsism. (p. 192)

Silber is right, of course. The difficulty in defining with adequate precision the topic under discussion is not merely a point of irony or of frustration: It is substantively problematic. In an earlier review of work on power and compliance gaining, we “found inadequate attention devoted to conceptualization and to factors relevant to the compliance gaining process” (Wheelees, Barraclough, & Stewart, 1983, p. 106). What we discovered was a substantial collection of studies that did not replicate well and studies with contradictory and incompatible results. The situation has hardly improved in the intervening years. To date, no one has offered to explain the inconsistent findings. No empirical data base convincingly
establishes the superiority of any one perspective. Perhaps most frustrating
is that there does not appear to be much genuine dialogue regarding the
logically prior issues of definition and conceptualization. It is partly in the
hope of furthering that dialogue that this chapter is written.

In the context of this chapter, we define power as the potential or
capacity to influence the behavior of some other person or persons.
Compliance gaining, or behavior alteration, is the realization of that
potential.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE BASES OF POWER

Efforts to conceptualize power as a complex phenomenon are often
considered to have begun with Weber (1947, 1969). Beginning with the
argument that power included imperative control as well as authority or
legitimate control, Weber seemed to consider legitimate authority to be the
most interesting and important for organizational functioning. The efficacy
of legitimate authority is founded upon the following principles:

1. Charisma, when people come to believe that a person's special
   characteristics qualify that individual to lead and act on behalf of the
   followers;
2. Tradition, when people have respect for customs and patterns of
   behavior, and grant authority to those who symbolize these traditions
   and values; and
3. the Rule of Law, when people believe the proper exercise of power is
   a function of adherence to procedure and the following of rules.

In situations where one or more of these conditions can be found, people
grant the social approval necessary to stabilize power relations, that is, they
recognize that someone has the right to rule and they consider it their duty
to obey.

Among more recent attempts to delineate the bases of power, is that
which was derived deductively by French and Raven (1960). French and
Raven argue for five types of power:

1. Reward power, based on the target's perception that the agent has the
   ability to mediate rewards for her or him;
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2. Coercive power, based on the target's perception that the agent has the ability to mediate punishments for her or him;
3. Legitimate power, based on the target's perception that the agent has a legitimate right to prescribe and/or proscribe behavior for her or him;
4. Referent power, based on the target's identification with the agent; and
5. Expert power, based on the target's perception that the agent has some special knowledge or expertness.

It should be noted that both the Weber and the French and Raven power bases deal with the juxtaposition of an agent or source of communication in relation to a target or receiver of that communication.

Etzioni (1961) suggested that "power differs according to the means employed to make the subjects comply" (p. 5). Here we find three general kinds of power, one of which is further subdivided:

1. Coercive power, achieved through threats of pain, deformity, and death, restriction of movement, control of food, sex and comfort, and the like;
2. Remunerative power, achieved through control over material resources, such as money, fringe benefits, services, and commodities;
3. Normative power, achieved through control of symbolic rewards and deprivations.

Etzioni further delineates two different types of normative power: Pure normative power, based on the manipulation of esteem, prestige, and ritualistic symbols; and social power, based on the allocation and manipulation of acceptance and positive response.

It is significant that Etzioni shifted attention slightly: from potentialities to actualities, or at least to probabilities. For instance, where the coercive power described by French and Raven operates on the basis of the target's perception that the agent has the ability to mediate punishments, Etzioni's coercive power would appear to operate on the basis of the agent's actually making a threatening statement. The difference is subtle, but real.

A succinct analysis of social or interpersonal power is provided by Kelman (1961, 1974). Kelman explained that there are three qualitatively different processes of social influence:
1. **Compliance**, when one accepts the influence of another (person or group) because he or she hopes to achieve a favorable reaction from that other;

2. **Identification**, when one adopts behavior derived from another because this behavior is associated with a satisfying self-defining relationship to that other person or group; and

3. **Internalization**, when one accepts influence because the induced behavior is consistent with her or his value system.

Although Etzioni focused on what the agent is doing, Kelman drew our attention away from the agent and toward the target. These three processes of social influence all deal with internal states of the target. It should also be noted that, as with Weber’s work, the existence of these states is logically prior to any actual operation of power, such as described by French and Raven. Referent power, for example, is operative only after the target has chosen to identify with the agent; and legitimate power requires the existence of an internalized value system that grants to some agent(s) the right to make certain behavioral demands. Again, the shifts in emphasis or focus are subtle, but real.

Parsons (1963) has also examined power, dealing, in his terms, with those situations where one person (“ego”) attempts to get results by bringing to bear on another person or persons (“alter”) some kind of communicative operation: pressure. This pressure (or power) Parsons argued, is best interpreted first in terms of whether the agent (ego) focuses on the target’s (alter’s) intentions or on the situation; and second in terms of whether the sanctions or pressures brought to bear are positive or negative. The agent utilizes the situation channel by making it advantageous or disadvantageous for the target to engage in a specified behavior; the agent makes use of the intentions channel by focusing on the rightness or wrongness of the behavior in question. Thus we have four modes of power or influence:

1. **Persuasion**, where ego seeks, through positive sanctions, to influence alter’s intentions (“It’s right”);

2. **Inducement**, where ego seeks, through positive sanctions, to control the situation (“It’s advantageous”);

3. **Activation of commitments**, where ego seeks, through negative sanctions, to influence alter’s intentions (“It’s wrong”) and

4. **Deterrence**, where ego seeks, through negative sanctions, to control the situation (“It’s disadvantageous”).
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It can be seen that Parsons returned to the Etzioni approach of focusing on
what the agent actually says to the target of the exercise of power.

It is of special interest to note that to Parsons the term activation of
commitments involves only negative sanctions (“It’s wrong”). The same
term is occasionally used by other writers in a broader sense, encompassing
both negative and positive sanctions.

Each of these analyses is conceptually sound and heuristically useful.
None of them is to be discarded lightly, but none of them has yet generated
probative empirical evidence (see Berger, 1985, p. 444).

Mintzberg (1983), dealing specifically with manifestations of power in
the organizational context, enumerated five general bases of power:

1. A Resource;
2. a Technical Skill;
3. a Body of Knowledge;
4. Legal Prerogatives, exclusive rights or privileges to impose choices;
and
5. Access, being able to influence those who can themselves rely on the
other four.

The fifth of these, access, is implicit in all other treatments of power, but
only Mintzberg has chosen to discuss it in the context of primary bases of
power.

In an attempt to bring order to a diffuse body of literature, we have
previously suggested a higher order schema that we believe subsumes each
of these other taxonomies (Wheless et al., 1983). Specifically, we suggested
that there are three broad categories of power: (a) the Previewing of
Expectancies and/or Consequences; (b) the Invoking of Relationships
and/or Identification; and (c) the Summoning of Values and/or Obligations.
The expectancies/consequences category includes: imperative (Weber); reward and coercive (French & Raven); coercive and remunerative
(Etzioni); compliance (Kelman); inducement and deterrence (Parsons); and
resource, technical skill, and body of knowledge (Mintzberg). The relationships/identification category takes in: charisma (Weber); expert and referent (French & Raven); social (Etzioni); identification (Kelman); and
access (Mintzberg). The values/obligations category consists of: tradition and rule of law (Weber); legitimate (French & Raven); pure normative
(Etzioni); internalization (Kelman); persuasion and activation of commit-
ments (Parsons); and legal prerogatives (Mintzberg).
A small body of literature has been generated around this reconceptualization (Barraclough, 1986, 1988; Medici, 1990; Stewart, Wheeless, & Barraclough, 1984). In these studies, the different specific power types consistently tend to group together as predicted. Although not conclusive, this would suggest that the reconceptualization is worth a closer look.

A significant theme running through most of these attempts to conceptualize interpersonal power is that it is a phenomenon that is inextricably connected with the relationships existing between people. That is to say that it is not a commodity that a communicator actually possesses, and that it is certainly not something that is to be found in messages, per se. The social science perspective recognizes that the creation and sharing of messages is important in the exercise of power, but maintains that power itself is separate from, and logically prior to, the statements one uses to influence the behavior of others.

FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE EXERCISE OF POWER

Beyond a consideration of the fundamental conceptualization of interpersonal power, social scientists would do well to examine several related concepts. These include the relational nature of power, contextual variables impinging on power use, and individual differences in both the exercise of power and responses to attempted power use.

Power as a Relational Phenomenon

Social power is necessarily a bilateral quality of the relationship between an agent and a target. As Kanter and Stein (1979) observed, "One of the great insights of classical social and political theory was that power always involves a relationship, it always consists of interaction and, therefore, can never be one-sided or unilateral" (p. 6). According to Hartnett (1971):

One of the most common misconceptions of power has treated power as if it were only an attribute of a person ... or a group. Such a conception inevitably leads to the question, "Who are the power holders?" This question is vacant unless one also asks "Over whom?" ... To quote Richard Emerson, "In making these necessary qualifications we force ourselves to face up to the obvious—power is a property of the social relation; it is not an attribute of the actor." (pp. 27-28)
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An agent's exercise of power over a target is fully contingent on the target's perception of the agent's right and ability to exercise it. This is regardless of any "actual" authority ascribed to the agent by other entities (e.g., school systems ascribe certain actual authority to teachers over students). And it is why, despite well-defined role prescriptions for an agent (e.g., the teacher sets the classroom rules for conduct), some targets seem not at all subject, by way of compliance, to the agent (e.g., a student consistently chews gum in class despite knowledge that the teacher has prohibited that behavior). This is the very essence of power that guides studies of student resistance to teacher compliance-gaining attempts (Stewart, Kearney, & Plax, 1986).

Conversely, a would-be agent of social power must be willing and able to effectively exercise that power in order for it to be truly effectual. One implication of this is that wanting to exercise power is not sufficient for effectively doing so—one must be knowledgeable about how to bring about that influence. Another implication here is that, even having the ability to exercise power, an agent must also have the desire to enact that power; that is, there must be some motive or goal behind the use of power for it to be enacted (Dillard, 1990). Instructional communication researchers have done little to extrapolate teachers' motivations or goals for using power, working mainly on the premise that the maintenance of on-task student behavior and the correction of student misbehavior are the critical reasons why teachers want to exercise power. This may well be the major utility for social power in classrooms, but we really do not yet know what other goals teachers might have for invoking power, or how their motivations and knowledge bases guide their compliance-gaining efforts. Useful for approaching this issue might be a model of teacher communication competence that accounts for teacher knowledge and motivation as well as teacher perceptions of context and teacher goals (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).

The bilateral nature of social power makes appropriate its examination from, in traditional communication model terms, a transactional perspective. In a sense, no one really has power. Rather, people may grant power. Barnard (1938) argued that one person may grant authority to another by accepting a message or directive from that other. Thus, authority consists, really, of peoples' willingness to go along. This is the essence of Weber's notion of conditions that legitimate or authorize a leader's power. Tannenbaum (1950) argued that the sphere of authority possessed by any superior is actually defined by the sphere of acceptance of her or his subordinates. Power is thus seen as a perception on the part of the receiver or target, not an actuality possessed by a source or agent. As Simmel (1896) noted, "All leaders are also led, as in countless cases the master is slave of his slaves" (p. 171).

To further complicate matters, we should remind ourselves that any
given attempt to exercise power takes place in the context of prior interactions. As students interact with teachers, they develop schema for interpreting the statements those teachers make. We must be careful, therefore, to avoid the trap of taking all compliance-gaining or behavior-alteration messages at face value. What is criterial is not specifically what the agent says, but what that means to the target. This is particularly important regarding the power that operates on the summoning of values or obligations. According to developmental psychologists (e.g., Kohlberg, 1963, 1973), a true sense of values does not develop until at least early adulthood, and a fully developed moral code may not materialize until middle or late adulthood. Young people will often comply with requests that state a value-oriented reason for complying, but, according to Kohlberg, they are responding on the basis of normative or other pressures, and not out of a true sense of morality. The analysis extends, really, beyond the developmental questions. True legitimate power, according to French and Raven is the most complex of all the power types and is characterized by force fields that have a "phenomenal oughtness" about them. The mere fact that an agent states that a given behavior is "right" does not imbue the agent or the behavior with the phenomenal oughtness that typifies true legitimate power.

Although this "interpretation by the target in the context of a relationship" problem applies really to all of the power bases, there is an additional difficulty associated with that class of power that summons values/obligations. The true sense of values not only develops late, but may tend to be rather idiosyncratic. To fully and effectively use this power base thus necessitates a level of acquaintance, or of relationship development, with the target that is not typically achieved by most teachers with their students. It may well be that many exercises of power that seem to work and that appear to involve values and/or obligations are actually operating at some other level. One of the complicating factors in the area of interpersonal power is that we may not enjoy the luxury of taking statements at face value.

Cartwright (1959) lamented that, although we know something about the effectiveness of different kinds of content, "we are not so well supplied . . . with findings concerning the way in which the relations between communicator and recipient influence the effectiveness of communication" (p. 7). Since that time, some progress has been made, but in our view, not enough to be content. Power is clearly a relational phenomenon, and should be more fully examined in the context of relationships among communicators.

Situations and Compliance Gaining

Interpersonal communication researchers interested in compliance gaining began early to consider the effects of situational constraints on compliance-
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gaining message selection. The first such study (Miller, Boster, Roloff, &
Seibold, 1977) found highly differential but complex effects for two
assumed dimensions of situation: interpersonal versus noninterpersonal,
and short-term versus long-term consequences. A subsequent decade's
worth of work has isolated the effects on compliance-gaining messages
selection of such factors as the prosocial versus antisocial nature of strategy
choice (Roloff & Barnicott, 1978, 1979); the self-benefits and relational
consequences associated with the situation (Clark, 1979; Cody & McLaugh-
lin, 1980); intimacy, rights, dominance, and resistance characterizing
situation (Cody & McLaughlin, 1980); and benefits for the target in the
situation (Boster & Stiff, 1984). (Krone and Ludlum, 1990 have summarized
a comparable body of work focusing on the organizational context.) The
not surprising consensus drawn from such research is that compliance
gaining is partly determined by situational considerations.

The importance and underlying cause of situational effects on compliance-
gaining choices may be seen in the cognitive processes involved in making
those choices. Meyer (1990) proposed an implicit rules model of compliance
gaining that explains the connection between an individual's schema for
situations and that person's schema for strategies by which to gain
compliance. The assumption is that "a speaker's representation of a
compliance-gaining situation is organized by a schema that contains an
abstract representation of a compliance-gaining goal, a configuration
of communication-relevant situational features, and knowledge about the
relationships among features" (Meyer, 1990, p. 62). Similarly, the speaker
has a cognitive representation of compliance-gaining strategies, consisting
of a sequence of speech acts (e.g., request, promise), a strategic proposi-
tional message (e.g., implying threat, stating benefits), and a relational
message (e.g., dominance, intimacy, politeness). The situation schema and
the strategy schema come together when the situation as perceived by the
speaker activates the overall representation of the strategy (Meyer, 1990,
pp. 60-61). Our original notion (Wheless et al., 1983) that a compliance-
gaining strategy consists of a set or sequence of compliance-gaining tactics
is consistent with this cognitive schema notion. In other words, a person's
compliance-gaining experience in any type of situation is processed in
memory in a way that the person is able to retrieve the most likely effective
strategy for a given situation. With limited or unsuccessful compliance-
gaining attempts in any situation type, an individual is less likely to succeed
at gaining compliance in that type of situation again.

Development of situational and strategy schemata is a function and
determinant of situation perception (Meyer, 1990). To understand more
clearly individuals' perceptions of communication situations in relation to
their selection of compliance-gaining messages helps to elucidate the overall
compliance-gaining process. Thus, the fact that specific dimensions of
compliance-gaining situations might be indeterminant in number and
therefore that exhaustive taxonomies of situations might be forever elusive, continued research directed at further understanding compliance-gaining communication requires situational variability. The possibility of assessing differences in teachers' and in students' cognitive representations of compliance-gaining strategies is especially intriguing. Application of a model like that offered by Meyer (1990) can also help organize and extend the findings of research on situational effects of classroom compliance gaining.

Instructional communication researchers have considered the role of situation in compliance gaining, but not as extensively or systematically as have interpersonal researchers. Studies by Kearney and Plax (Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1984, 1985; Kearney, Plax, Smith, & Sorensen, 1988; Kearney, Plax, Sorensen, & Smith, 1988; McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, & Kearney, 1985; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986; Plax, Kearney, & Tucker, 1986) and their colleagues during the 1980s have differentiated situations according to the type of misbehavior enacted by students, and found resulting differences in the strategies teachers are likely to use for each misbehavior type. They have also done studies of university faculty, as extensions of other studies done among elementary and secondary teachers. Some differences emerged indicating that education level is an important situational dimension. Still other "Power in the Classroom" studies have investigated the effects of perceived teacher immediacy on perceptions of compliance-gaining use, showing that teachers' interpersonal rapport with students is a meaningful determinant of power use. As a situational factor, immediacy corresponds to the relational message component of strategy schemata, as explained earlier, and may point to important cognitive differences between some teachers regarding their selection of compliance-gaining messages. Likewise, teacher affinity seeking with students represents a relational feature of the compliance-gaining situation that may be more cognitively and behaviorally available to some teachers than to others.

Much remains to be determined about the impact of situational variations on teachers' preferences for and use of compliance-gaining messages. Similarly, relatively little is yet known about how students' perceptions of and responses to teacher compliance-gaining attempts are situationally bound. It is evident that teachers and students differ regarding which strategies they consider commonly used and effective (Jamieson & Thomas, 1974; McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). To what extent are these differences due to divergence in teachers' and students' schemata for classroom situations, and in their schemata about appropriate message strategies? Is teacher communication competence a factor in strategy selection and use? Answers to the question of situational features affecting classroom compliance gaining should continue to be the goal of some instructional communication research agendas.
Individual Differences and Compliance Gaining

Redding (1987), in reviewing the work of Mintzberg, reminded us that, "it is the perception of power that really 'counts' in the long run (taking 'perception' to include 'meta-perception,' and noting that there are a number of perceivers)" (p. 2). The perceiving of power in classrooms is an activity carried out by individual teachers and students, each having a different history, personality, world view, and so on. Any work that helps us understand how individuals perceive and process compliance-gaining attempts will move us further along.

Individual differences in personality and demographics have been shown by interpersonal communication researchers to produce reliable effects on speakers' choices about compliance-gaining attempts. Personality variables such as Machiavellianism and dogmatism (Roloff & Barnicott, 1978, 1979), cognitive complexity and construct comprehensiveness (O'Keefe & Delia, 1979), and communication anxiety and avoidance (Koper & Boster, 1988; Lustig & King, 1980; Williams & Boster, 1981) have been examined. Demographic factors that have received attention in this vein are age (Clark, O'Dell, & Willihnganz, 1986), gender (deTurck, 1985; Falbo & Peplau, 1980), and culture (Neuliep & Hazelon, 1985).

As with situational factors, instructional communication researchers have been less focused and systematic in examining individual differences effects on classroom compliance-gaining behavior. In our original review (Wheeless et al., 1983), we argued that the personality variable locus of control might be the important variable in predicting how targets will respond to compliance-gaining attempts as well as a key variable in predicting agents' compliance-gaining choices. Our initial efforts at substantiating that assertion were apparently contradictory to it (Stewart, Kearney, & Plax, 1986) in that locus of control was found to have significant effects on students' perceptions of teacher compliance-gaining use, but not on students' likelihood of resisting teacher attempts to gain compliance. A re-analysis of that data from the perspective of implicit personality theory, however, showed that internals and externals differed significantly from moderates in their respective perceptions of teachers' use of compliance-gaining strategies. We concluded that "these differences in perceptions by internals and externals appeared to reflect widely differing cognitive structures in the person perception process" related to compliance gaining interactions in the classroom (Wheeless, Stewart, Kearney, Plax, 1987, p. 257).

Yet, although we no longer contend that locus of control should hold prominence as a personality variable in the prediction of teacher use of or student reaction to compliance-gaining communication, it should receive more attention. The bottom line is that not enough attention has been paid...
to teacher personality differences in determining their compliance-gaining choices, nor to such differences in determining student reactions to them. What is needed is to treat personality as well as demographic differences in conjunction with situational differences in the prediction of compliance-gaining uses and outcomes. This would require taking an interactionist perspective in studying classroom compliance gaining, one that treats individuals' responses to situational variations in light of particular predispositions. Lawless (1972) sought to encourage such an approach when he argued that, "power is not a quality of a person. . . . Rather, power grows out of the interaction of people and belongs, not to the people themselves, but to the interaction" (p. 231). (The reader may wish also to see Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1990, for a good discussion of this approach.)

Moreover, we strongly maintain that researchers' choices of personality and situational variables to be examined this way should be theoretically determined. Our work with locus of control yielded much different and more meaningful findings when guided by sound theoretical development.

CONCLUSIONS

Miller (1990) gave a general response to the criticisms we and others (including Miller) have offered of the work done in this area. We suspect he is right in pointing out that the pattern is probably typical of the unfolding of any new area of inquiry. What is important is not that one can find fault with a body of work, nor that one can defend one's work in the face of perceived criticism. What really matters is that we can, as a community of scholars, learn from our early efforts and work toward creating a clearer picture of an admittedly complex process. As Miller said, "Unquestionably, steps can be taken to improve our collective efforts at understanding compliance gaining" (p. 190).

Our own recommendations begin with continuing the effort to find and substantiate a conceptualization of interpersonal power that adequately defines the topic. We, of course, believe our own effort in this direction to be a good start worth following.

We also urge that work be done on the sequencing, or strategic ordering, of attempts to exercise power. We personally know of no teachers who try one technique and then quit. The impact on students of a specific compliance-gaining message following a prior message, whether using the same power base or a different one, is worth exploring.

We consider it important more fully to investigate the ways in which different relational variables impact on the perception of power in the
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classroom. To what extent, and in what ways, does a prior relational history frame or in-form a particular exchange between teacher and student?

But clearly our foremost suggestion is simply to continue this work. It is interesting. It is important. It has certainly not yet been exhausted. We are not yet sure the most important questions have even been asked, and we are confident they have not been definitively answered. This volume brings together what (we think) we know to date. This should not be seen as providing closure, rather as furthering the inquiry.

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