

**Extending influence beyond the chain of command: understanding  
the relationship between power and influence tactics.**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The demands placed upon military commanders to effect positive change in politically and culturally charged operational environments require our leaders to routinely extend their influence well beyond the traditional military chain of command. The military art of “design requires the commander to lead adaptive, innovative efforts to leverage collaboration and dialog to identify and solve complex, ill-structured problems.” (FM 5-0: The Operations Process, March 2010) In order to be effective in solving these “wicked problems”, military leaders must understand when to minimize the use of their perceived legitimate (position) power and rely more heavily upon other “softer” sources of power or influence tactics. (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) Above all, United States Army leaders must understand their potential power to influence others with effective influence tactics.

An examination of Mohandas K. Gandhi’s influence over the population of India provides insight to one well-known example of how a leader can be extremely influential. It can be argued that Gandhi was one of the most influential people of the twentieth century; however, unlike Franklin D. Roosevelt or Osama bin Laden, Gandhi did not have Military or Economic Power. Gandhi further lacked the perception of possessing legitimate Diplomatic authority. Gandhi was a small frail man; despite repeated imprisonment he refused to submit to British authority, he defeated the heavily armed might of a world superpower without firing a single shot. Gandhi’s principle of satyagraha, nonviolent civil disobedience as an influence tactic, was later referred to as “soft power” by Joseph S. Nye Jr. (Yasushi, 2008) The ability to influence others without the use of legitimate authority is a skill that successful military leaders must master when addressing ill-structured problems.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The United States Army clearly requires competent leaders with intellectual skills tailored to meet the challenges of the complex environment facing the United States. Our leaders must have the ability to influence others “by providing purpose, direction, and motivation...to accomplish the mission and (improve) the organization.” (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006)

The Army further recognizes that effective leaders must extend their influence beyond the rank and file structure. “Extending influence requires special awareness about the differences in how influence works.” (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) Research in social psychology indicates that in order to influence others, one must be perceived as possessing a source of power or must utilize an influence tactic in order to gain compliance or commitment from others. (Souza & Arrow, 1999) While *FM 6-22* (2006) provides an overview of several influence tactics, the capstone doctrine on leadership fails to address the different sources of power (formerly addressed in *FM 22-101* (1985)), and how power and influence tactics are separate, but related constructs of influence that military leaders must understand.

Influence is further defined as a stability mechanism, “the primary method through which friendly forces affect civilians in order to attain conditions that support establishing a lasting, stable peace...Influence means to alter the opinions and attitudes of a civilian population... Influence is...a product of public perception.” (FM 3-0: Operations 2008).

The authors of United States military doctrine recognize that power is an effective tool to influence others. In 1985, the Army published *FM 22-101: Leadership Counseling* that outlined five bases of power that leaders could leverage in order to influence others. Power is also referenced in military *Joint Publication 1: Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (2007) when describing the instruments of national power (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, Economic (aka DIME)). Joseph S. Nye Jr.’s (2004) concept of “soft power” verses “hard power” is also finding expression in military doctrine such as *FM 3-07 Stability Operations* (2008).

However, excluding *FM 22-101* (1985), these references rely heavily upon Kurt Lewin's (1944, 1951), outdated and flawed, basic observations of power as a mode of influence.

Kurt Lewin (1951) defines power as "the possibility of inducing forces' of a certain magnitude on another person." (qtd. In Raven, 1993) He illustrates power as emanating in waves outward, encompassing the life space of people who have relationships with the emitter. Lewin defines the individual who is attempting to have influence over another as *the agent*; the subject of an influence attempt is *the target*. (see Figure 1) Lewin further explains that a person may be affected by the power of several people. An example of these power fields is illustrated in Figure 2 by diagramming the power fields over an Army Private. The figure shows how each individual possesses some power of influence over the private, while the private has a smaller degree of influence over military leaders.

The definition and understanding of power has evolved since Kurt Lewin first proposed his power fields paradigm. Joseph A. Nye Jr., of Harvard University, introduced the concept of "soft power" in 1990, where "soft power is attraction." (Nye, 2008) Nye goes on to describe the instruments of national power outlined by the United States Government (USG) (specifically Military and Economic Power) as "hard power". (See Fig. 3) Unfortunately, this definition of power, like Lewin's, falls short of assisting military leaders to extend their influence beyond the chain of command. Lewin's, Nye's and USG definitions of power are not supported by previous research by Yukl, Kim, and Falbe (1996) who restate French and Raven's (1959) definition, that "power is the agent's potential influence over the target." The French and Raven taxonomy has strongly influenced research on power (Yukl et al., 1996)

Power is a *perceived* attribute, by the target, of the agent. (Army FM 22-101, 1985; Hinkin & Schriemsheim, 1990; Raven, Schwarzwald, & Koslowskiy, 1998; Stahelski & Paynton, 1996; Souza & Arrow, 1999) That is, only the target of an influence attempt can assign the agent with power over them; in the example of the Army Private described earlier, the Private is indoctrinated to the legitimacy of the Army rank structure in stages. Therefore, the culture within

the Army, the social norms, and the hierarchy within the rank structure reinforce the Private's perception that those possessing a higher rank have legitimate, expert, coercive, reward, and possibly referent power over them. However, when the same Private rejects the legitimacy of an order, or the authority of someone outside the chain of command, the Private is demonstrating how the target's perception of the agent is the determining factor of the agent's power.

French and Raven's (1959) social power model is more useful to military leaders than Nye's (2004) loose concept of "hard" and "soft" power. The influence of French and Raven's (1959) power model has spread into several fields over the past forty years, including social, cognitive, and organizational psychology (Raven, 1993). The United States Army's *FM 22-101 Leadership Counseling* (1985) explanation of power is directly influenced by French and Raven's (1959) findings. Power can still be defined by the five original sources: legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, referent power, and expert power. Nye's (2004) idea of hard power includes reward, coercive and sometimes legitimate powers, while his "soft" power of attraction clearly refers to referent power, expert power, and sometimes legitimate power.

*Legitimate Power* is the perception that an individual's rank or position automatically gives them certain rights and authority. (FM 22-101; Leadership Counseling, 1985) The instrument of national power described as "Diplomatic Power" falsely assumes that the governing body is a legitimate power holder in the perception of their target audience. In India, the British claimed to have legitimate power; however, Gandhi opposed the British claims; he argued that the British did not have the authority to set and establish rules for the Indian people. Gandhi did not perceive the British leaders as possessing legitimate power. Laws, policy, and military culture provide a foundation for military leaders to be perceived to have legitimate authority within the rank and file. However, when operating outside the chain of command, or with individuals that have rejected military culture, leaders must rely upon another source of power or an influence tactic in order to have influence.



*Reward power* is the perception that an individual controls rewards that the target values and that the rewards will be given for satisfactory performance. (FM 22-101; Leadership Counseling, 1985) Literature suggests that reward power can be categorized as either personal (soft) or impersonal (hard) in form. (Raven, 1993) Military leaders can be perceived to have impersonal reward power when issuing military awards, passes, promotions, or assignments; personal (soft) reward power includes personal approval or praise. The national instruments of power described as Economic Power and Informational Power clearly fit into the impersonal (hard) reward category when these assets are shared with others. Diplomatic and Military Powers could also be categorized as reward power when these assets are utilized to praise or partner with others. Gandhi used personal reward power to praise the people of India. The Sons of Iraq (2006-2008) economic program was a form of impersonal (hard) reward power, while the congressional testimony of General Petraeus praising the Sons of Iraq accomplishments demonstrated the softer side of reward power outside the chain of command. (Petraeus Crocker on the Hill, 2008)

In contrast, *coercive power* is the perception that the individuals that possess this power can and will punish those who do not obey their orders or requests. (FM 22-101; Leadership Counseling, 1985) Nye (2004) clearly articulates that military and economic powers neatly fit the coercive definition within “hard” power. The British imprisoned Gandhi for speaking against their government. Like reward power, Raven (1993) suggests that coercive power can be personal (soft) or impersonal (hard). The YouTube video of a U.S. Army leader verbally abusing Iraqi Police Officers is an example of a failed attempt to utilize personal coercive power outside his chain of command. (YouTube Video, 2009)

*Referent power* is based upon an individual identifying with another person on a personal basis; others are attracted to them and want to be more like them. (FM 22-101; Leadership Counseling, 1985) Referent power clearly forms the bulk of “soft power” that Nye (2004) and Yasushi (2008) describe. Charismatic leaders, such as Gandhi, are usually perceived to

possess referent power. Raven (1993) states that this power may have a negative form. Marcia Lynn Whicker's (1996) concept of the "toxic leader" provides an example of negative referent power. When Afghan or Iraqi children (under 13 years old) run through the streets with toy weapons, they are likely displaying the referent power that members within their environment have upon them, or perhaps reciprocating the actions of the Soldiers they admire that have negatively influenced behavior beyond the chain of command.

Finally, *expert power* is the perception that an individual has special knowledge or skills that relate to the tasks that must be performed. Demonstrating tactical and technical proficiency are examples of expert power. (FM 22-101; Leadership Counseling, 1985) General Petraeus's 2008 testimony before Congress influencing troop levels in Iraq is an example of the successful utilization of expert power outside the chain of command. Again, Raven (1993) states that expert power, like referent, has both positive and negative forms. Individuals with negative expert power may be perceived to be using their superior knowledge for their own best interests, not for the common good. An example of this might be the stereotypical view of the used car salesman or the lack of information sharing between the FBI and the CIA leading to the horrific attacks of 9/11.

Conversely, Raven (1965) suggests that information can become a base for power. This idea is further reinforced when discussing information as an instrument of national power, and by Nye's (2004) discussion of "soft" power. Raven (1993) states that "informational power, or persuasion, is passed on the information, or logical argument, that the influencing agent could present to the target in order to implement change." A key difference with this definition of power from the others presented by French and Raven is that a person cannot be perceived to have informational power; a person must use explicit tactics to be influential with the information they possess. Informational Power can be better classified as influence tactics described in FM 6-22, Leadership; these tactics are first described by Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) and refined by Yukl and Falbe (1990).

Army FM 6-22 slightly modifies Gary Yukl et al.'s (1992) construct of influence tactics. The Army finds that effective influence tactics include pressure, legitimate requests, exchange, personal appeals, collaboration, rational persuasion, appraising, inspiration, participation, and relationship building. The influence techniques found in FM 6-22 have evolved from Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson's (1980) original idea of 14 separate influence tactics. Kipnis et al.'s (1980) study focused on effective influence tactics, describing "How I get my way" with the boss, co-workers, and subordinates. These tactics have been further refined by Gary Yukl and his associates over the past twenty years. (Yukl and Falbe, 1991, Yukl & Tracey, 1992, Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Quinly, 1992; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996; Yukl, Chavez, Seifert, 2005; Yukl & Masud, 2010) Yukl, Chavez, Seifert (2005) "classified pressure, legitimating, coalition, and exchange as hard tactics, and we classified ingratiation, consultation, inspirational appeal, personal appeals, and collaboration as soft tactics." In order to be effective in influence others, military leaders must understand the separate influence tactics, and the degree of target compliance to commitment (or resistance) associated with each tactic.

"Hard" *Pressure tactics* are a demand or threat by the agent. Leaders with perceived power can use explicit demands to achieve compliance, such as establishing task completion deadlines. FM 6-22 concurs with studies by Yukl et al. (1992, 1996, 2005) and Souza & Arrow (1999) that pressure tactics usually do not result in commitment. "Pressure is a good choice when the stakes are high, time is short, and previous attempts at achieving commitment have not been successful." (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) The British were unsuccessful in successfully utilizing pressure tactics against Gandhi and the people of India.

*Legitimate requests* require a source of "hard" authority in order to establish the request. The agent must seek to establish the legitimacy of rules, regulations, and leadership. (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) In a study by Souza and Arrow (1999), legitimate request tactics resulted in observed 72% compliance and 25% resistance in military leadership trainees; in contrast, Yukl, Kim, and Falbe (1992) find that "pressure, coalition, and legitimating (tactics)

were usually ineffective” in “five large companies: a pharmaceuticals company, a chemicals and manufacturing company, a financial services company, and two insurance companies.” In India the British utilized legitimating tactics; however, many of the Indian people did not accept the English rules and norms. Military leaders may find that referencing a legitimate idea from the Qu’ran to be more influential with populations that perceive this document as having legitimate power over national laws.

*Exchange tactics* involve offers from the agent to provide a “hard” favor or benefit to a target in return for doing what the agent requests. *FM 6-22* references “a four day pass reward for excelling during a maintenance inspection” as an example of exchange. Yukl et al., (1992) find that “exchange (was) moderately effective for influencing subordinates and peers... (the tactic was) ineffective for influencing superiors. Agents...are likely to be viewed as manipulative in this context.”

*Personal appeals* are used by an agent to call upon the target’s “soft” feeling of loyalty and friendship. “This might often be useful in a difficult situation when mutual trust is the key to success.” (*FM 6-22*; Army Leadership, 2006) Personal appeal tactics “appeared to be moderately effective for influencing subordinates and peers, but the results for this tactic were weak and difficult to interpret.” (Yukl et al., 1992) Military leaders may find this influence tactic difficult to utilize outside the chain of command unless the agent has an established relationship with the target, or can leverage known relationship. This tactic is routinely utilized by parents through the media when attempting to gain information about missing children or captured Soldiers.

The concept of *collaboration* (Yukl et al., 2005) is similar to *consultation* (Yukl et al., 1992) and *participation* tactics (*FM 6-22*; Army Leadership, 2006), where the agent seeks the target’s participation in planning a strategy, activity, or change for which the target’s support, resources, or assistance is desired. “A major planning effort prior to a deployment for humanitarian assistance would require possible collaboration with joint, interagency, or multinational

agencies.” (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) Effective military leaders will observe that collaboration/consultation/participation tactics routinely results in high target commitment.

*Rational persuasion* is defined as a “soft” influence tactic utilized to provide the most logical course of action or evidence to persuade a target that a proposal is worthwhile. (Yukl et al., 1992) “This is often the first approach to gaining compliance or commitment from followers and is likely to be effective if the leader is recognized as an expert in the specialty area in which the influence occurs.” (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) Souza and Arrow (1999) find that rational persuasion tactics result in 80% compliance rates within a military environment; this finding is consistent with Yukl et al. (2005) whom find that rational persuasion tactics result in 58% commitment and 42% compliance. Military leaders will find this influence tactic effective in influencing others.

Army FM 6-22 (2006) and Gary Yukl et al. (2005) argue that *apprising* tactics, where the agent informs the target of potential benefits (rewards) for the target for compliance, is different than rational persuasion. “Rational persuasion was most likely to result in commitment, and apprising was most likely to result in compliance.” (Yukl et al, 2005) Therefore, military leaders should utilize “soft” apprising tactics in conjunction with rational persuasion in order to maximize the potential for positive outcomes.

A “soft” *inspirational appeal* relies on the agent to make a request or proposal that arouses strong enthusiasm by appealing to a target’s values, ideals, aspirations. (Yukl et al., 1992) COL Michael Steele’s 2006 pre-deployment speech to members of 3/101 IBCT, Rakkasan’s inspired many of the Soldiers within his command to portray themselves as “the dominant predator on the street.” (Steel, 2006) Effectively inspiring others to achieve a specific goal is solely dependent upon the target’s value of these goals. While Yukl and his associates find that inspirational appeals are highly effective, Military leaders must have situational understanding of the target’s value set in order to be effective when attempting the inspirational appeal outside the chain of command.

Another “soft” influence tactic is the use of *relationship building*. The Army defines this influence tactic as “a technique in which leaders build positive rapport and a relationship of mutual trust, making followers more willing to support requests.” (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) The example of how General Petraeus established lasting relationships with members of the mass media in Kirsten Lundberg’s (2006) “Accidental Statesman” provides guidance for military leaders. However, Gary Yukl and associates do not classify relationship building as an influence tactic. Relationship building requires a long term commitment from military leaders; time that is usually not available in short term influence attempts.

It is interesting to note that *FM 6-22* (2006) does not mention the “hard” influence tactic of forming *coalitions*. Coalitions exist when an agent enlists the endorsement or aid of a group to influence the target. Agents can also use coalition tactics by referring to a prominent agency, such as the U.S. State Department, as their supporter. At times, military staff officers may have to form coalitions in order to influence outside the chain of command.

Yukl et al. (1992) argues that the last influence tactic is *ingratiation*; this is where the agent seeks to get the target into a good mood or to think favorably of the agent before making a request. *FM 6-22* fails to recognize this as a viable “soft” influence tactic for military leaders.

In review, power and influence tactics are separate constructs of influence available to military leaders. Research by Hinkin and Schriesheim (1990), Yukl, Kim, and Falbe (1996), Stahelske and Paynton (1996) and Souza and Arrow (1999) are the only research studies that have shown empirical evidence relating power and influence tactics as distinct models of influence. Figure 4 outlines the percentage of observed compliance based upon the agent’s perceived power or influence tactic. Note that legitimate power, expert power, and rational persuasion result in high levels of compliance.

### **Extending Influence Beyond the Chain of Command**

“When extending influence beyond the traditional chain, leaders often have to influence without authority designated or implied by rank or position...targets of influence outside the chain may not even recognize or willingly accept the authority (of) an Army leader.” (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) Military leaders will inevitably be required to influence a range of groups outside the chain of command, including military family members, the numerous moderate Muslim Imams sitting on a village counsel, the former Sons of Iraq, the defiant Haqqani Network, members of the U.S. State Department, U.S.A.I.D., and possibly members of the U.S. Congress. In each of these situations, it is not always appropriate for the military leader to rely upon “hard” legitimate and coercive military power. A leader’s knowledge of their potential source(s) of power, and the application of effective influence tactics is necessary in order to achieve a desired result.

Souza and Arrow (1999) propose an influence model that predicts the outcome of an influence attempt based upon the perceived power base and influence tactic. (see Fig. 5) In this model perceived legitimate and expert power holders will find that targets comply or commit to implicit or explicit influence attempts. The model further predicts a leader that is perceived to possess a different source of power must combined influence tactics with their influence attempt in order to achieve compliance. This model predicts that rational persuasion and a leaders limited use of pressure will result in compliance.

Leaders must assess which sources of power they may be perceived to have over their target audience. Clearly, military commanders and first level supervisors within the military rank and file structure are perceived to possess “hard” legitimate, reward, and coercive powers. Successful staff offers also possess “softer” expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive powers within the rank and file. Likewise, all military leaders have the potential to possess either positive or negative “soft” referent power. When attempting to influence others outside the chain of command, such as a tribal imam, belligerent host nation teen, or a local government

official, the military leader must analyze their target audience and make assumptions about the target's potential perception of the leader's source of power. In the politically and culturally charged operational environment we find ourselves in, military leaders will find that they are not always perceived to possess an influential source of power over their target audience.

Military leaders, with or without a source of perceived power, must also utilize influence tactics to achieve compliance or commitment from the target. Like power, influence tactics are evaluated by the target of the influence attempt. "Negative influence—real and perceived—emanates from leaders who primarily focus on personal gain and lack self-awareness. Even honorable intentions, if wrongly perceived by followers as self-serving, will yield mere compliance. False perception may trigger unintended side effects such as resentment of the leader and the deterioration of unit cohesion." (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006) Influence tactics are a separate construct of influence from power; however, influence tactics can be utilized to enhance a power base (Souza and Arrow, 1999).

The "three 'core tactics' (rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, and consultation) are significantly related to target commitment and managerial effectiveness." (Yukl, et al., 2005) (see Fig. 6) It is interesting to note that Yukl defines these very effective tactics as "soft". In addition, the perception of having "soft" expert power increases a military leader's potential (76%) for target compliance. (Souza & Arrow, 1999) When attempting to effectively influence others outside the chain of command, military leaders must recognize how power and influence tactics interact. Furthermore, leaders should assess the target's potential sources of power over them prior to attempting any influence attempt; forming a coalition of local leaders before confronting corrupt political leadership may be more effective than a one on one consultation.

Yasushi and McConnell (2008) state that "the perceive perception of too much hard power sometimes reduces the effectiveness of soft power." This observation may be indicative of the fact that "hard" influence tactics are easier to use when one perceives they have the power over the target. Joseph Nye (2008) states that America has an "overreliance(s) on military



power...and neoconservatives have ignored Teddy Roosevelt's advice: now that the United States has a big stick, it should learn to speak softly." Therefore, the lesson to military leaders is that influence should not rely heavily upon rank, position, or ability to exert pressure when attempting to influence others outside the chain of command.

The most effective method of achieving commitment (within or outside the chain of command) is to combine the perception of "soft" expert power with "soft" rational persuasion. While Souza & Arrow (1999) find that the perception of legitimate power results in the most target compliance (87%), when influencing outside the chain of command, military leaders are unlikely to be perceived as possessing this source of power.

## **Conclusion**

In order to influence others, military leaders require a perceived power base or must effectively utilize influence tactics. The instruments of national power (Diplomatic, Military, Information, and Economics) are resources/assets available for individuals to leverage, not sources of power; Furthermore, Nye's (1990, 2004) ideas concerning "hard" and "soft" powers requires additional refinement for practical application by military leaders.

Effective military leaders, with situational awareness, will understand when to minimize the use of their perceived legitimate (position) power and rely more heavily upon other "softer" sources of power or influence tactics to extend their influence beyond the chain of command. (FM 6-22; Army Leadership, 2006)

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