**COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE**

Community power structure is the complex network of relationships between the recognized power holders and the interplay of their roles in a community. These power holders, otherwise known as leaders, direct the affairs of the society towards the achievement of objectives.

**Jibowo** (1992) describes power structure as “patterned distribution of authority and influence among various actors in a group or community”.

**Leadership in Rural area**

The concept of leadership is very crucial to the survival of any society. Even where there are established norms, leaders are still needed to ensure compliance with such norms for societal orderliness and healthy being. Van den Ban and Hawkins (1996) define leadership as the “directing, influencing and controlling of others in pursuit of a group goal”. This implies that the function of making decisions lies on the leaders. Ekong (2003) even sees leadership as being synonymous with decision-making and therefore regards decision-makers as community leaders.

He further posits that an effective means of identifying leaders should include a systematic observation of who decision-makers are for various community issues. Leaders provide the basis for improving the quality of life in communities (Fear et al., 1985). Because effective leadership does not exist in many rural communities, rural community development efforts should include identifying and training potential leaders from diverse backgrounds

(Winter et al., 1985).

**Concept of Power**

**Power** is a [measurement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measurement) of an [entity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_(social_science))'s ability to control its environment, including the behavior of other entities. The term [authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authority) is often used for power perceived as legitimate by the [social structure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_structure). Power can be seen as evil or [unjust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice), but the exercise of power is accepted as endemic to humans as social beings. In the corporate environment, power is often expressed as upward or downward. With downward power, a company's superior influences subordinates. When a company exerts upward power, it is the subordinates who influence the decisions of the leader (Greiner & Schein, 1988). Often, the study of power in a society is referred to as [politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics).

Power is something like one’s ability to control others. Such as.,

* Authority
* Control
* Influence
* Supremacy
* Rule
* Command
* Domination

**Dimensions of Power**

Power may be held through

* Delegated [authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authority) (for example in the [democratic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy) process)
* [Social class](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class) (material wealth can equal power)
* Resource currency (material items such as money, property, food)
* Personal or group [charisma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charisma)
* Ascribed power (acting on perceived or assumed abilities, whether these bear testing or not)
* [Expertise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expertise) (ability, skills) (the power of medicine to bring about health; another famous example would be "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king" – [Desiderius Erasmus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desiderius_Erasmus))
* [Persuasion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persuasion) (direct, indirect, or [subliminal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subliminal_stimuli))
* [Knowledge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge) (granted or withheld, shared or kept secret)
* [Celebrity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celebrity)
* [Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force) ([violence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence), military might, [coercion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coercion)).
* Moral persuasion (including [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion))
* Operation of [group dynamics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_dynamics) (such as [public relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_relations))
* [Social influence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_influence) of [tradition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tradition) (compare ascribed power)
* In relationships; domination/submissiveness

**Six bases of power**

Social psychologists John R. P. French and [Bertram Raven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bertram_Raven), in a now-classic study (1959),[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_(philosophy)#cite_note-6) developed a schema of sources of power by which to analyse how power plays work (or fail to work) in a specific relationship.

**Positional power**

Also called "legitimate power", it is the power of an individual because of the relative position and duties of the holder of the position within an organization. Legitimate power is formal authority delegated to the holder of the position. It is usually accompanied by various attributes of power such as [uniforms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniform), offices etc. This is the most obvious and also the most important kind of power.

[**Referent power**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Referent_power)

Referent power is the power or ability of individuals to attract others and build [loyalty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loyalty). It's based on the [charisma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charisma) and [interpersonal skills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpersonal_skills) of the power holder. A person may be admired because of specific personal trait, and this admiration creates the opportunity for interpersonal influence. Here the person under power desires to identify with these personal qualities, and gains satisfaction from being an accepted follower. [Nationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism) and [patriotism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriotism) count towards an intangible sort of referent power. For example, soldiers fight in wars to defend the honor of the country. This is the second least obvious power, but the most effective. Advertisers have long used the referent power of sports figures for products endorsements, for example. The charismatic appeal of the sports star supposedly leads to an acceptance of the endorsement, although the individual may have little real credibility outside the sports arena.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_(philosophy)#cite_note-ReferenceA-9)

**Expert power**

Expert power is an individual's power deriving from the skills or expertise of the person and the organization's needs for those skills and expertise. Unlike the others, this type of power is usually highly specific and limited to the particular area in which the expert is trained and qualified.

**Reward power**

Reward power depends on the ability of the power wielder to confer valued material rewards, it refers to the degree to which the individual can give others a reward of some kind such as benefits, time off, desired gifts, promotions or increases in pay or responsibility. This power is obvious but also ineffective if abused. People who abuse reward power can become pushy or became reprimanded for being too forthcoming or 'moving things too quickly'.

**Coercive power**

Coercive power is the application of negative influences. It includes the ability to demote or to withhold other rewards. The desire for valued rewards or the fear of having them withheld that ensures the obedience of those under power. Coercive power tends to be the most obvious but least effective form of power as it builds resentment and resistance from the people who experience it.

**Informational power**

Informational power is based on the potential use of informational resources. This influence can occur through such means as rational argument, persuasion, or factual data. Members of a group can make information into power by giving it to others who need it, by keeping it to themselves, by organizing it in some way, by increasing it, or even by falsifying it.

## Power tactics

People use more than rewards, threats, and information to influence others. In everyday situations people use a variety of power tactics to push or prompt others into particular action. These power tactics can be classified along three different dimensions :(**Falbo & Pepalu, 1980; Raven et al., 1998**).

**Soft and hard**

Soft tactics take advantage of the relationship between person and the target. It is more indirect and interpersonal (e.g. collaboration, socializing). Conversely, hard tactics are harsh, forceful, direct, and rely on concrete outcomes. However, they are not more powerful than soft tactics. In many circumstances, fear of social exclusion can be a much stronger motivator than some kind of physical punishment.

**Rational and nonrational**

Rational tactics of influence make use of reasoning, logic, and sound judgment, whereas nonrational tactics rely on emotionality and misinformation. Examples of each include bargaining and persuasion, and evasion and put downs, respectively.

**Unilateral and bilateral**

Bilateral tactics, such as collaboration and negotiation, involve reciprocity on the part of both the person influencing and their target. Unilateral tactics, on the other hand, are enacted without any participation on the part of the target. These tactics include disengagement and fait accompli.