

INFLUENCE WITHOUT POWER

Everyday leadership in modern organizations

Bachelor's Thesis
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Abstract

This thesis studies and analyzes the roots and meaning of the ability for individuals to influence others in a modern flat-hierarchic organization and attempts to unveil some methodological approaches for individual employees, executives, and HR leaders to make influencing without power in an organization possible in the first place. Modern organizations often include, or even consist of subject experts who are expected to lead and participate in occasional projects and to achieve their individualistic and group-oriented goals. This multi-faceted world of employment expects people to manage and influence time, effort and networks of colleagues and oneself in order to be successful in their roles. Influencing without power over others is a soft skill that is rarely taught but is expected to be mastered to thrive in the modern world.

The covered individual influencing methods were condensed into the following four themes: *verbal, non-verbal, strategic, and tactical*, and they range topics from communication, body-language, planning for future success, and certain actions that can be started in a short-term. Moreover, some malicious methods were considered, analyzed, and included with the intention of gaining understanding of the methodology, and to recognize and avoid such behavior by oneself and others.

Organizational influencing methods were condensed into the following three themes: *processes, culture and organization*. Understanding these points of views, executives and leaders can create an environment where the employees have a chance to succeed in a modern world and expectations. The process-related methods include practices that could be implemented, such as rules on how to enter and exit a colleague's project. Culture topic includes rules and backbone for the organization to ensure and help the people to make correct decisions from time to time. Organizational methods focus on how to arrange the workforce – including the role of executives, and how their roles could be tuned to success.

Influencing and leadership studies are a vast world and unlikely to become obsolete in the near term, thus it is important to study influencing from different angles in order to understand the multi-faceted topics in a rapidly changing contextual world and cultures.

Keywords power asymmetry, communication methods, influencing peers

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'I am ready to disclaim my opinion, even of yesterday, even of 10 minutes ago, because all opinions are relative. One lives in a field of influences, one is influenced by everyone one meets, everything is an exchange of influences, all opinions are derivative. Once you deal a new deck of cards, you've got a new deck of cards.'

- Peter Brook, theatre and film director

1. Introduction

Typical modern organizations are no longer led with strict chain-of-command, as they might include or consist of a flat-hierarchic collaborative layer of white-collar information workers or subject experts, who technically have individualistic positions and goals, while in practice they need to collaborate and influence with each other to succeed in their individual and group goals. These information worker positions could be related to procuring, quality, internal projects, and marketing, and involve for example coding, legal, designing or selling. In these situations people don't necessarily have power over other colleagues and they would be depleting others' time and energy resources whenever they need help, possibly hurting the colleague's individual key performance indicators (KPI's). Rewarding and sense of accomplishment in organizations might be based on individual success metrics, such as marketing campaigns for marketing department, revenue in sales department and customer satisfaction in service department, and often the goals are not interlinked within teams, even though e.g. marketing campaigns could be improved from the data and help from for example sales and services.

From an organization's point of view, well-performing, resourceful, and self-directing teams might be preferred, and thus teams' goal-setting should align with organization's strategy and reflect prioritization with evaluation of progress. As goal-setting is contextual (Reeves, 2018), it is not straightforward to set and reach goals so that everybody contributes effectively, and to share the recognition and reward the most deserving people. Too individualistic goals discourage teamwork, while too general goals can discourage action. Are goals effective organizational methods to be used to foster collaboration?

The research questions of the Bachelor's thesis are:

- Primary question: How can people without power influence colleagues?
- Secondary question: How can organizations increase teamwork?

One definition of power, by a management scholar and a social worker Mary Parker Follet (1925), is that it is a mandate to be able to make decisions, to be in control of others, to have authority. She said feeling of power can be elementary, like a child slinging stone to scare birds, or a hunter shooting a deer, or more sophisticated like leading an orchestra or a business. She mentioned that early unions were formed so that they would have power over the employers, which seems to hold true even a century later. Seems like power could be seen as a status that

can be given or taken – just think of a formerly powerful person such as a former president or a prime minister, and how much power they have left once they step away... unless they retain their networks of impactful people. Perhaps this is one reason why some politicians are unable to step away, as it takes the stone away from their palm? Power itself, like leadership, is an effect on another beings, and it's closely affected by one's quality of networks (Fairhurst and Cooren, 2009). Leadership positions generally benefit of the power asymmetry positioning (Alvehus, 2018)

Gaining power can be as simple as an attempt to increase personal status in daily conversations by impressing others with experiences and opinions (Follett, 1925). Ability to influence a person can depend on their power over another, but also other traits matter such as social position, professional standing, wealth, age, sex, or physical strength. Material power can be small like a badge, or large such as a skyscraper, and such materials can enable leadership and leaders as they depict symbolism of power (Alvehus, 2018; Fairhurst and Cooren, 2009).

Influence (noun) is the power to have an effect on people or things, while influence (verb) means to affect or to change how someone or something develops, behaves, or thinks (Windle and Michaels, 2015). Influencing thus should be easier if you hold power in a situation, but there must be also other ways to enhance the effect of influencing. Jenkins's (2008) article explains power being derived from combinations of individual and situational resources, including position or status in an organization, interactional competences, knowledge, and control over information, while situational resources include awareness of options and risks, the availability of rules and the accessibility of other actors. Derived from this, power can be bound to the capacity of communication, and the ability to apply sanctions, rewards and control. Thus, without these, one has no power in a situation. Is influencing possible with just *some* of these resources being available? Or without any? What if one party controls some of the resources, while the other party controls some other resources?

This thesis searches for the roots of power, empowering and influencing within modern organizations, and seeks some best practices in participating in and leading an organization. The key findings include several individualistic traits and methods related to the way of communication and building your *credibility*, and even manipulation of the situation and information, but also organizational methods such as systems to track and reward teamwork, sharing the leadership and decision making actively and consider power asymmetries.

2. Modern organizations

Organizations can be privately owned, family-owned, publicly listed, multinational mega-corporations, small, large, temporary, generational and everything in between. I assume there are not many organizations in the exact same situation, thus it would be difficult to provide guidance that works within all of them. Therefore, this thesis focuses simply on all kinds of organizations whose employees are expected to have some degree of decision power over how they manage their own work, and to find ways how the employees therein could interact with each other a bit better. I do not specifically exclude on-site, remote or hybrid organizations, but one should keep in mind that this new age of remote and hybrid working can increase the complexity of an organization, as communication channels have been disrupted and thus an additional layer of complexity has been created for those who were not ready for the abrupt change. Moreover, disciplinary power and methods, albeit sometimes effective in increasing productivity (Alvehus, 2021), are not considered as such kind of control is not expected in flat-hierarchic organizations nor with self-directed teams. Organizational structure can be thought to be the arrangement of departments, authority, and the jobs inside a company (Williams, 2015, p. 179-188), and it effectively summarizes the rules of interactions by showing who should and is allowed to interact with whom. The organization can have functions which have responsibilities on certain topics, e.g. “Legal office” might manage *all* legal and contractual matters, or the departmentalization can be built around products where each main product the company does has (mostly) their own human and physical resources they are supposed to use. Departmentalization can also be around customer segments, geographic locations, or a matrix organization with a hybrid structure of two or more types of arrangements. Additionally, the chain and unity of command can vary greatly as people might have more than one supervisor to report to due to organization structure, or some people might have a right to advice and guide, but not to command, leading to situations where one might be accountable for results but not responsible of them. All these organizational boundaries matter on how one is supposed to work within the organization. As one can imagine, it can be difficult to rally people behind your needs and wants when people might be restricted by the organization structure or its culture, which is why in this thesis, I assume the organization itself is not a major limiting factor.

According to Williams (2015, p. 188), decentralizing the authority across the organization increases the chances that the organization will outperform their counterparts as it utilizes the workforce more efficiently, is faster to adapt and both work and customer satisfaction ratings

are usually higher. However a very few large companies actually are decentralized, as ca. 1/3 of the employees were responsible for introducing recommendations to management, and merely 1/10 were trained to do so effectively. Managing an organization's performance can be described with many models such as *Managing by objectives and results*, *Managing by objectives*, *Managing for results*, *Results-based management* and *Transactional leadership* (Hvidman, 2013; p. 37-38). All these are similar cyclical processes, where objectives are created based on strategy, and the performance information is returned to management, who then adjusts new objectives and directions based on the learnings where the focus being on the outputs rather than in "how the work is done". In my ~18 years of observation and own experience on leadership, managers have different readiness in executing this kind of strategy, and studies by e.g. Boston Consulting Group's Beauchene and Cunningham, M. (2020) claim that managing teams has changed and become more demanding and unrewarding in the past few years, and the managers are often struggling with competing priorities. This might be one of the key reasons for my personal observations, as I don't believe competing priorities is a new scheme. The inability to manage teams properly can lead to issues like neglection – negatively affecting morale and output as proved by Elton Mayo in his famous Hawthorne studies (Williams, 2015), or unnecessary micromanaging. Ancona et al. (2019) argue that modern organization executives strive to increase innovation but are terrified as it would mean that business could fall into chaos if power, decision making and ability to allocate resources are pushed down in the organization, assumingly fearing that people "down the ladder" don't have the same view or strategic sense. Additionally, they argue that in successful agile organizations, there can be three types of leaders: Entrepreneurial, Enabling and Architecting, located in low, middle, and top of the organization chart, respectively, with different roles and typical characteristics based on the need for hands-on action. Such a well-oiled organization can be practically self-managed from the executive's point of view. As Salovaara (2018;p.180) condenses Spinuzzi's (2015) research: "The underlying rationale is that distributing leadership among motivated accomplices creates more flexible, resilient, and committed organization than vertical hierarchies", which is plausible for organizations in the long run, while on the short run, or if implementation is flawed, would create avoidable chaos before the new order sets in. Organizations with expected professionalism and autonomy, such as ones with accountants, lawyers, and consultants, often include contingent and contested power balances between the colleagues – resulting in e.g. politicized internal competitions over priorities and inability to act on decisions even after agreeing to them (Empson and Alvehus, 2019). In these kinds of

organizations, the employees carry a burden to constantly use their best judgement in resolving issues for the clients. One can argue that this kind of setting is not uncommon in modern working life, while perhaps not as harsh nor speculative, but somewhere in the spectrum as organizations can have complicated power-balances within. In these PSFs (Professional Service Firms), the executives often maintain their power as long as they are seen serving the professionals’ interests effectively (Mintzberg, 1989), thus it seems the position of power is based on trust and support by the peers (Empson and Alvehus, 2019). All in all, managing an organization, and thriving in it as an individual, can be complicated, especially if the individuals and the organization are not prepared.

3. Influencing methods

To summarize the following chapters, Figure 1 condenses the verbal, non-verbal, strategic, and tactical methods of individual influencing methods. By verbal methods, I mean the means of influencing with sounds such as speech and listening, and by non-verbal methods I mean bodily cues such as opening and closing the space, postures and moods. By strategic methods, I mean

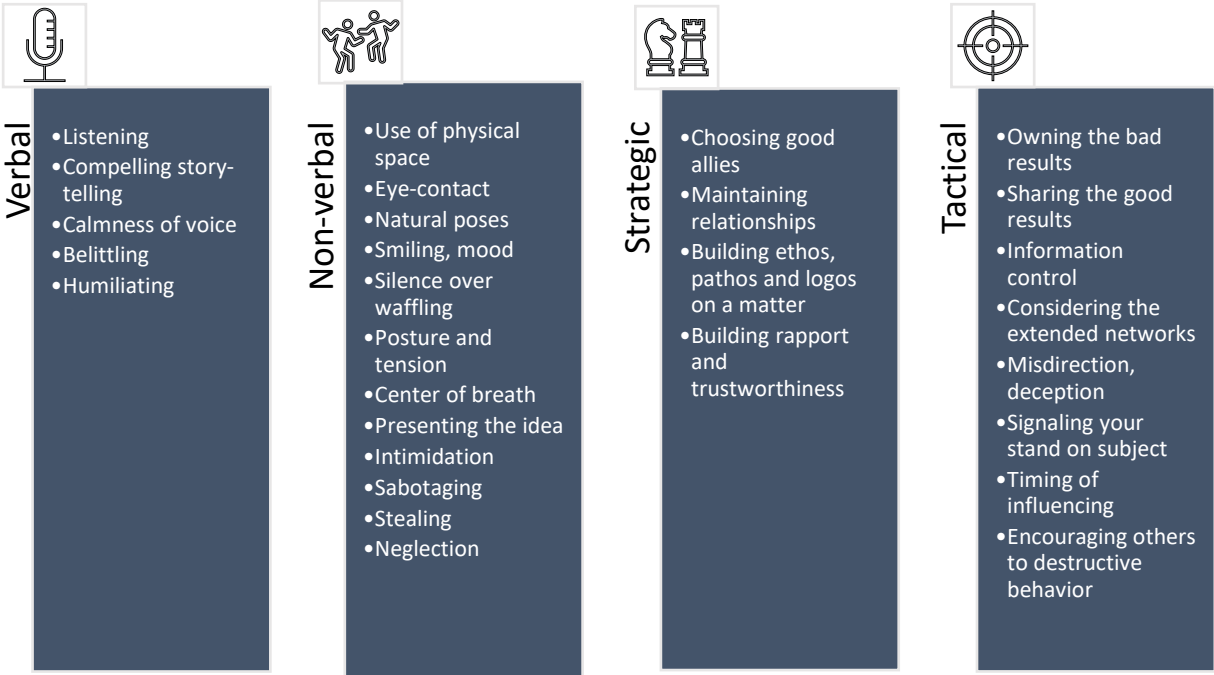


Figure 1: Summary of individual influencing methods

the ones that are long-term build-up of habits and goals while tactical methods I mean any short-term steps that often lead eventually into strategic methods.

By influencing in this thesis' context, I mean the means to affect other people's thinking and behavior (Windle and Michaels, 2015). Docility and obedience can be seen as human innate traits as they seem to have evolutionary benefits in grouping up and acting together (Alvehus, 2021). Therefore it is not unimaginable that also from a biological point of view people might want to listen and help even without an extra push or forcing. If following others' advice is a human trait, it could explain why leaders and leadership positions are held high even in our modern society and it could somewhat explain our governing preferences. When it comes to modern studies on leadership, Larsson and Alvehus (2023) studied the articles of a scientific journal called *Leadership* from 2019 to 2021 and found that more than three quarters of the articles had individual leaders, such as managers, as the object of the study, rather than other employees or their groups within, meaning that idolizing and romanticizing individual leaders is still strong also in the academic world. Moreover, the biological point of view on following others encourages a notion that influencing without power is possible, effective, and perhaps even expected. In a similar manner, people can gain altruistic happiness when they are able to help others, involving empathy and sympathy. In a calculated environment that was a modification of Prisoner's dilemma by Nash, where two participants can decide and fine-tune how altruistic they are going to be, they often choose to be a bit altruistic already in the beginning and if there is a (mutual) payoff – they continue to be even more altruistic (Tóbiás, 2023). This modification to the Prisoner's dilemma could be thought of as a slow and more realistic situation in a typical workplace where people continue to help if a) they are not punished for it (for e.g. using their time and effort to aid others) and/or if b) they benefit from being altruistic (by e.g. receiving help back from the subject or another colleague).

Figure 2 depicts organizational methods, that are often the job for the ones who are responsible for building the culture, such as HR leaders, executives, and other leaders. In this context, by processes I mean the methods that organizations can implement as daily practices, and by culture, I mean the backbone of decision-making principles, and by organization I mean ways to re-arrange and re-consider the organization's structure and roles.

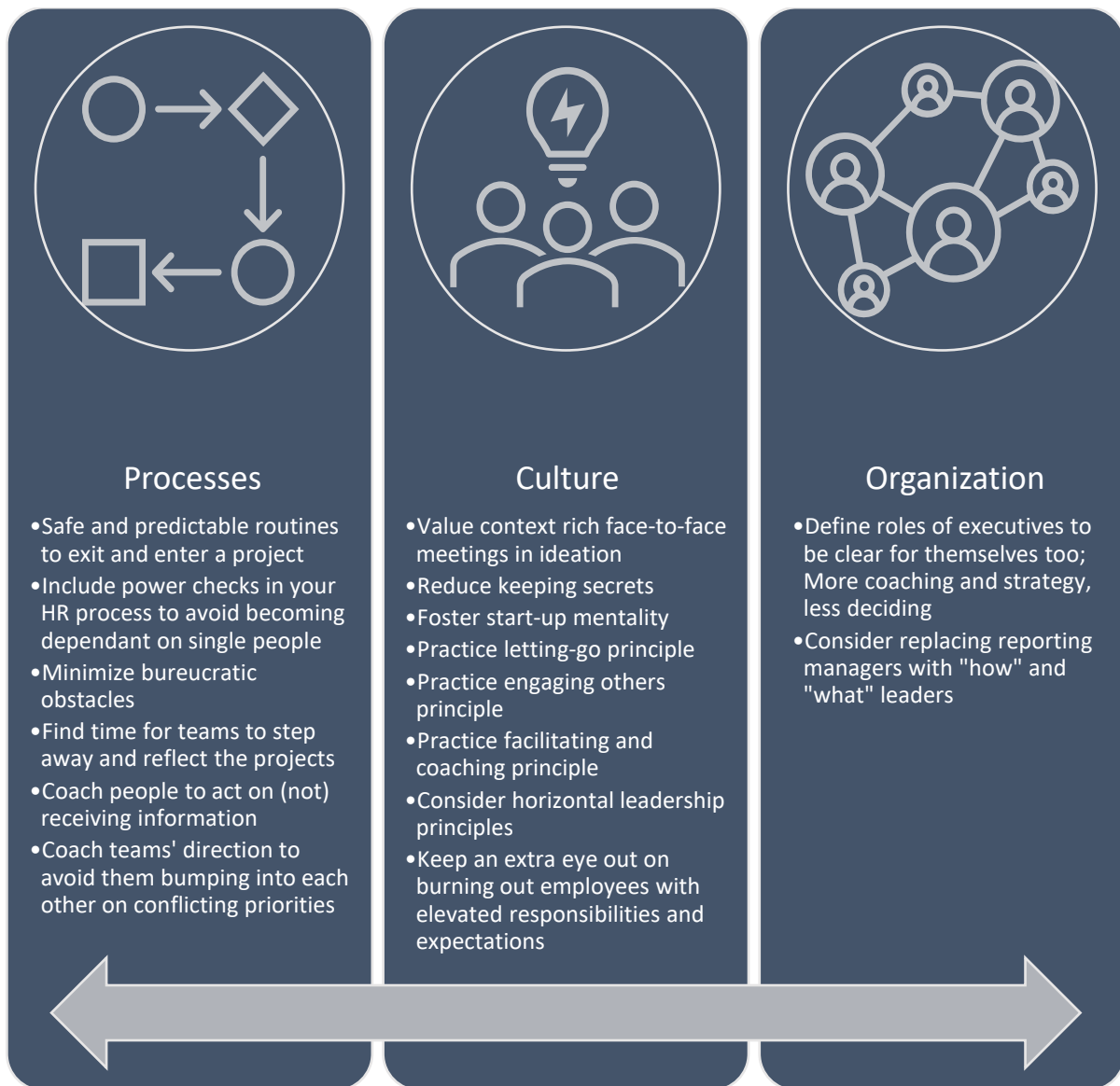


Figure 2: Summary of organizational influencing methods

In organizations, time is a valuable resource for both individuals and teams, thus it should be used effectively to make the most out of it (Fisher et al., 2023). Teams often manage their time inefficiently by procrastinating and by overlooking individual planning and roles setting (Weingart, 1992; Gurtner et al., 2007), possibly causing unnecessary final mile rushing and under-delivering results for the organization, especially when they are already time-constrained. Perhaps communicating also the individual goals to the whole team from time-to-time could lead to a premise of successful planning and delivering in a timely manner, but is that too idealistic? There's often ad-hoc tasks or surprising time sinks which need to be planned in.

Moreover, time is perceived subjectively and required efforts can be under- or overestimated, thus creating an illusion of (not) having enough time (Fisher et al., 2023).

How can individuals affect other people in order to reach their own goals in an organizational context? Chapters 3.1. – 3.3 explore influencing methods for both individuals and organizations.

3.1. Individual influencing methods

Perhaps the era of a heroic strongman leader is dissipating and turning into something more complex, thus thriving in the current environment requires practical and social eye from an individual and their team. Salovaara (2016) discusses Conger's (1990) findings, that "*too often leadership was the domain of individuals seeking to enhance their personal profile at the expense of organizational advancement*", implying tendency for abusing power while hurting the organization's goal. This reminds of a term "Pyrrhic Victory" on winning the short term only to lose the next battle. Perhaps driving one's own goals is a human trait after all, as based on McKinsey's survey (2021) the top reasons for resigning employees include managerial aspects such as lack of "value to manager" and "work-life balance", while team related aspects such as "relationships with teammates", "workplace environment" and "negative interactions" were beyond the top 10 of the survey – indicating weakly that it is OK to ask help from colleagues, while it's harder to manage your position upwards towards people with power.

Due to the sudden increase in remote and hybrid working, there are shocking consequences for the uninitiated as the new workplace rules are setting in. Such changes could be the rise of collective leadership, time management and collaboration practices, both in digital and physical worlds. In e.g. collective leadership, no-one has unilateral power to lead, nor do people have any need to follow a specific person (Empson and Alvehus, 2019). Instead, to be able to influence in such an environment, you must channel *legitimacy* (credibility in the subject), *negotiability* (enabling, directing, coordinating) and be able to *maneuver the stakeholders* (tactical, political and showing integrity). This can be a stressful and energy consuming environment for e.g. introverts, thus certain types of people rise up more often than others, emphasizing the spectrum of power asymmetries and natural homogenization in the organization. In Alvehus's (2018) paper, they describe a collective leadership situation where the formal leader fabricates a situation with cleverness, so that newly announced company

values would be challenged in a “suitable” way by the other employees, and then reconsidered by the executives. The leader was able to manipulate the situation by having knowledge, time, material, and power to do so. Was the leader evil for manipulating the set-up in such a way? Perhaps not, especially if the result is favorable for the organization, but it probably did hurt the executive management’s immediate plans and could create a dent in trustworthiness. We are not all equal when we enter a situation, as access to information can be limited by formal roles and relationships.

3.1.1. Influencing colleagues

Isaacs (2021) wrote about driving change in a community, that is a group of people who gather around a similar interest with often loose ties and used issue-selling as a method to drive change without power over the people. They advised to tell a compelling story that captures people’s heart and mind, back it up with data and if you then agree on what matters, then the way forward should be easier to accomplish, resulting in a simplified formula (1):

$$(1) \text{ Narrative} + \text{Data} + \text{Action} = \text{Change}$$

This is somewhat similar to issue selling as a method to introduce ideas and to convince others to act (Dutton et al., 2001), and also to “Aristotle’s modes of persuasion” (Windle and Michaels, 2015), where in order to persuade others successfully one must have:

1. *Ethos* (authority, credibility) to qualify you as an expert
2. *Pathos* to appeal to the listeners emotions
3. *Logos* to appeal with facts and figures.

As influencing is a goal-oriented soft skill (compared to power being hard trait) there are no one trick ponies, but there are three key principles to begin with influencing: (1) Prepare yourself and what you stand for, (2) maintain relationships as they are the channels through which you are able to affect people and represent your sphere of influence, and (3) communicate clearly to give out the correct signal (Windle and Michaels, 2015). They want to break the myth

of non-verbal cues such as standing with hands in your pockets or with crossed arms, since they are natural and non-threatening poses. Instead, you should be mindful of the space you and others are occupying, for example seating arrangements and leaving some distance, and use eye-contact with moderate intensity. The way you use your voice and pauses can be thought of as an effective non-verbal communication, related to charismatic behavior, which can be imagined by a narrator whom you like to listen to and to learn from, perhaps one like Sir Attenborough? As opposed to “spiky” abrupt notes, using a clear, calm voice can be impactful in gaining and keeping attention and interest, and in addition, a smiling happy person is easily identifiable even from their voice, making the overall mood and receptibility better. The overall delivery is an experience – therefore emphasis, stress, and your position on the subject matters (Fairhurst and Cooren, 2009). Windle and Michaels also encourage to get to know yourself and what you stand for (in the organization), as it helps to prioritize your actions and convey your message when it aligns with your standing, one sort of “branding” yourself, similar to *ethos*. When conveying your message, it could be beneficial to use a lens, such as encouraging lens or a worried lens, using corresponding adjectives and words to match the wanted *pathos*. Communication is always a two-way street, thus listening and being fully present should not be forgotten – to listen with a desire to understand. Moreover, when influencing a colleague, you often must consider the professional side and the personal side of your relationship, thus directing the choice on if you need to be organized, punctual and thorough, or can you be more humorous and friendly. Often a bit of both aspects goes a long way when combined with understanding what the other wants from you, and it’s a learnable skill to read the room before jumping into proposing subjects. They emphasize that all the listed methods can be rehearsed to increase their effectiveness. Jenkins (2008) mentions in his analysis that one must recognize and consider that in addition to the individual person you are influencing, they often have an extended person or a team co-present behind them who also need to be accounted for as they might have a say in shaping the outcome. In a work organization, these co-present “extensions” can be other colleagues, yours and their supervisors – or simply rules, guidelines and the culture. One must be truthful in building their *Ethos*, as for example Conger (1990) lists examples of people who inflated their impression methods with abrupt lies, only to lose their (non-power related) credibility on matters. It is not hard to imagine a person in power who gets caught lying, perhaps on a regular basis, and is then forced to step down from their position if that requires and emits symbolism of trust.

One way to both rehearse communication skills, but to also deepen relationships is to create opportunities to interact and to have casual conversations with people. Whether at a “water cooler” or on a coffee break, letting people to know you and you to know people beyond their work-life, helps with approachability and builds trust gradually (Windle and Michaels, 2015). Choosing your allies that can align your long-term goals can be impactful in your sphere of influence and planning your influencing strategy accordingly.

3.1.2. Influencing upwards

Influencing a higher rank or a more tenured member, such as a senior management or executives, is otherwise similar as any other influencing but it is harder to do as there are often only a few short moments to interact with them, in addition to having dissimilar access to information. According to Windle and Michaels (2015), this is easier if you have a self-brand you can leverage, (you have built *ethos*) and have worked on your pitch – or in fact you tick most of the influencing skills found in the picture in the conclusions chapter of this thesis. Conger (1990) claims that charismatic leaders are actually poor in managing upwards and sideways, as they have used to relying on their charisma and power balances thus one might reconsider if planning to ask a higher-up to influence their higher-ups. Windle and Michaels (2015) suggest thinking if the senior member is in your sphere of people in the first place – do they know who you are, what you do and stand for – and if your “alliance” towards them is mutually strong enough to ask for favors. Building alliances with people who you are not often interacting with can take time, thus the bond is often weaker, meaning that if there is a possibility to collaborate in a project involving these people – it is often advised to take the opportunities when possible. One additional key trick is that you should be much more concise with your pitch and to not be afraid of silence – as waffling is “your worst enemy”. Additionally, don’t pose more issues and problems but attempt to provide solutions and especially options for the case in order to be more useful. In case PowerPoint or similar vessel is used, consider not hunching over the screen but standing up and presenting the show. Being “in a position with power” can be taken for granted if one is routinised and thus the power is institutionalized or established as “the way things are” (Jenkins, 2008). In my deduction of this, one should recognize that people with power might expect certain type of behavior, situational awareness

on reading the room, and roles, which can be difficult to hurdle as there is often a mismatch with information and reasonable opportunities to discuss.

3.1.3. Influencing against reluctance, influencing teams

When facing reluctance, it is often a good idea to understand the reason for the negativity (Windle and Michaels, 2015). Perhaps asking open-ended questions opens up the knot or at least reveals a point of view you might not have considered – for example a physical, organizational or a stakeholder related limit. Consider using “we” and “you” more than “I” when painting *positive* possibilities and options. It should be noted that if the starting point is plain reluctance to help, influencing and persuading is far from easy and thus a longer strategic approach should be used in building your *ethos* and the ability to *pathos* the others. Alvehus studied in his essay (2021) the effectiveness of completing an unpleasant task, an original study by Milgram in his book (2005, originally published in 1974). The closer the subject of the unpleasant action was to the person, fewer people actually completed the task as they were able to see and experience the results. Therefore, when trying to influence others to do something messy, nasty, or unpleasant, the success rate should be higher if you are able to insulate the person from the task’s negative side. In an office set-up, this could mean that you own the (possible bad) results, while sharing the positive results.

Influencing a team is not so different from influencing an individual – as a team consists of individuals. Windle and Michaels (2015) mention a few additional aspects, such as understanding what works for you and the others, and the ability to list the priorities of team members. In a sense, the web of context and the extended networks is larger to consider, and those networks might have conflicting priorities.

3.2. Influencing with malicious intents

For the sake of the topic, this chapter briefly examines some methods that can be seen as manipulative behaviors, so they can be recognized and avoided. Note that not all the mentioned methods are manipulative in their nature, however the excess of their use and/or the **intention**

behind them can be, thus all already mentioned methods with malicious intention should follow this category.

Information control is one key method to manipulate a situation (Jenkins, 2008, Conger, 1990). You can either reveal, block, or withhold information, or you can use deception or misdirect others. We humans tend to rely on biases to reduce the needed amount of information to make decisions, which could be used tactically to portray a situation to be different than it actually would be. It is to be understood that not all information is relevant in a communication situation, thus when attempting to simplify an idea or a proposal, one probably uses the above-mentioned methods to some extent on a daily basis. It can be difficult to recognize in the moment if you are subject to *manipulative* information control, but once this is revealed, it can cause major distrust in the future.

Aasland et al. (2010) studied destructive leadership behavior and while this thesis focuses on peer-to-peer interactions, one can derive destructive controlling behavior of a person-with-power to be similar between peers as well – as in a sense, you attempt leading the peers with your influencing. Destructive leadership (and thus, influencing) includes traits like intimidating, belittling, sabotaging, stealing (time, materials, money), and humiliating – and the encouragement or a threat of those, yielding an environment of fear. In my experience, peers are very capable of using such methods, thus this is not isolated to be a leader issue, but the situation might be enabled by the leaders thus they are always responsible for the overall culture and environment. Figure 3 demonstrates destructive leadership model by Aasland et al. (2010), which can be thought to be peer-to-peer related by substituting words “Subordinate” with “Colleague” and “Leadership” with “Influencing”. The article discusses that leaders allow more easily manipulative behavior when it’s pro-organization -oriented in nature, thus it’s different to be tyrannical than derailed, as then at least the needed tasks are getting done. Finally, they indicate that destructive behavior can be passive or indirect rather than active and direct, meaning neglecting and avoiding others and their needs.

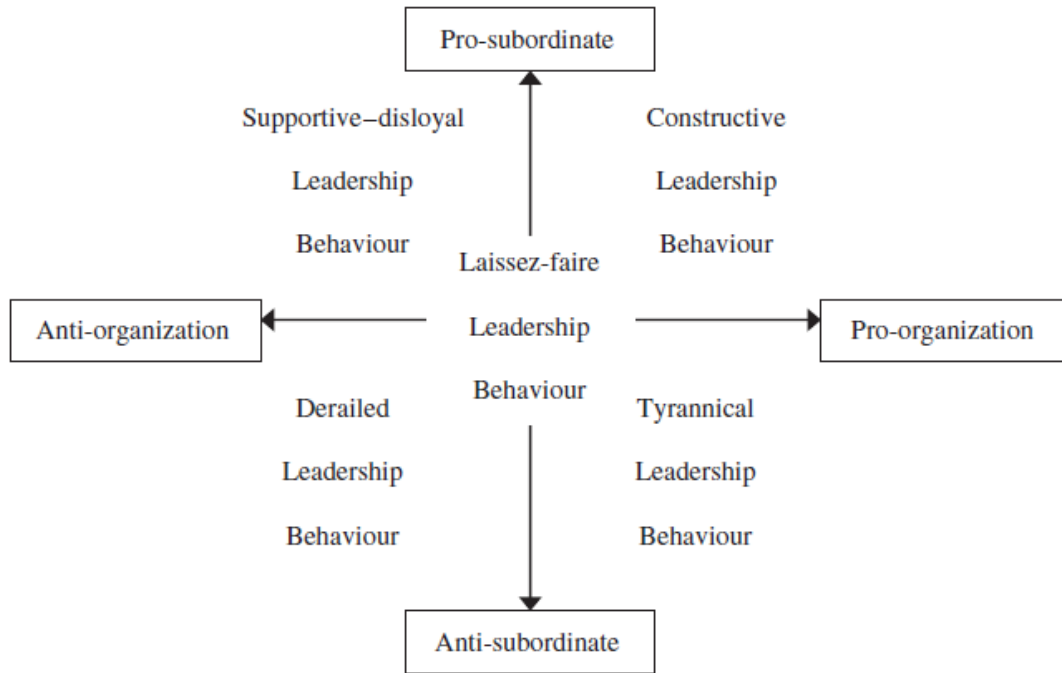


Figure 3: Destructive leadership model by Aasland et al. (2010, p.440) that can depict collegial interactions when replacing “Subordinate” with “Colleague” and “Leadership” with “Influencing”.

3.3. Organizational influencing methods

Should executives of an organization meddle with power balances in self-directed or collective leadership organizations? Every organization that attempts to empower the employees and to flatten the level of hierarchy follows the principles of collective leadership, self-directed organizations, distributed leadership and alike at some level, and thus I use the terms as synonyms to each other in this context. While the studies on distributed leadership are mostly focused to educational sector (e.g. Salovaara, 2016; Edwards and Bolden, 2022), there are ways to implement the shared leadership as a process to any organization (Beauchene and Cunningham, 2020). This chapter discusses ways to organize and manage an organization so that collaboration is encouraged throughout the teams.

One of the aspects in the organization’s culture could be the allowed methods of using power within the organization. Methods of sharing power are not new – Follett (1925) captured the

notions “power-over” and “power-with” by “you have rights **over** a slave, you have rights **with** a servant” (**emphasis** added). Seems like in authoritarian organizations, cultures and businesses, there is a tendency for “power-overing” the employees by controlling e.g. their health coverages, working hours, and even controlling their movement by confiscating passports or travel documents, while collective organizations might use the “cause” and “vision” of the company to spark action and direction. Regarding using power, Jenkins (2008) analyses Goffman’s theorems and works, and they find that for relatively strangers to co-operate, there is a need for safe and predictable routines of entrance and exit. By this, they mean that there must be a structured way or a gathering to collect the required people around, and this forum needs to be guiding and empowering to the individuals for them to take action and to be accountable. In the modern world, this could be a (business) meeting among managers and/or colleagues. Additionally, they argue that face-to-face dealings (compared to telephone conversations) are rich with information and intention of the participants, and thus face-to-face meetings should be preferred when ideating. Collective leadership itself is not an answer, as it can become politized and could be used to just maintain the existing power symmetries, thus it should be used as a process which challenges the surrounding assumptions regularly. Organizations going for collective leadership practices should be vigilant and protective of their collective process, as it is very easy to fall back into leader-centric systems (Edwards and Bolden, 2022). At that point you have a process that tries to emulate collective decision-making, but practically requires “key person” to make the final decisions, which makes influencing inside that kind of environment difficult and the organization might have turned into pseudo-hierarchic mess.

There are ways to soften the organization culture, to increase the “power-with” of the employees, such as not keeping (many) secrets and allowing people to manage their own functions and make decisions, as they are the subject experts of their domains (Follett, 1925; Salovaara, 2016). Power-with -principle combines the know-how and understanding of the organization and its situation and re-distributes the fruits of the labor more equally than in power-over situations. Agility in organizations needs to allow startup mentality and freedom to pursue different approaches, and the organization’s rules should encourage and allow all this (Beauchene and Cunningham, 2020). The bureaucratic obstacles need to be minimized and decision making pushed to the right level of organization as not everything needs a blessing from the executive management and thus coaching of people is often expected. Strategic vision and key boundaries are expected to be given by the executives due to their bird eye view, but

according to Beauchene and Cunningham, current typical manager spends approximately 40% of their worktime writing reports and 30-60% of the time is with their peer managers. Instead, in modern agile organizations there is often two leadership roles within teams – the *what* and the *how* roles, tackling the questions what the team is supposed to work on and how the cross-functional teams continue to advance their skills to support the initiatives, while leaving the teams do their best in the actual work. This kind of coaching gives employees tools and confidence to manage risk taking and experimentation. It was also found that teams are easily turning into agile and collective leadership modes, while current managers often struggle as they fear the loss of status and thus, power, which is similar to what Follett (1925) had already noted a century ago, thus being afraid of losing power might be something imprinted into the core of humanity. Cooperation of teams is in line with the findings of Carney and Getz (2009) argument that when people feel intrinsically equal, they tend to cooperate more willingly. According to Hvidman (2013), managing team's performance has at least three distinguish characteristics: Incentives for managers to act upon information, team to have capacity and autonomy to make decisions (to have power-with), and goal clarity to know what decisions are needed. Additionally, one could argue that managers (and teams) also need incentives to act upon *not receiving* information, thus they should actively seek if there are deviations from the original plans. They should also keep teams informed on the goals or a common cause to ensure they are rowing in the same direction. Even though the article did not discuss how the team members acted, or should have acted in the performance management setting, it provided insights on manager's perspective in public and private organizations. When it comes to succeeding as a team and budgeting time for a project, it was found in the research by Fisher et al. (2023) that teams which were able to allocate their time effectively included episodes of stepping away from their main tasks to observe and discuss how to use their remaining time.

These kinds of self-driven organizations need to be at least monitored to avoid over-commitment, burnouts, and other toxic effects (Salovaara, 2016 p.187-188) and to coach teams enough to avoid bumping head-on with conflicting and competing projects or goals (Beauchene and Cunningham, 2020). It seems to be easy to associate negative features with individuals' lack of self-control (also by the individuals), which can create an unhealthy environment like in the example technology company.

Salovaara (2016) discusses how organizations (or information workers) function in complex and multifaceted environments and how modern leadership is not associated just with a formal title, but it is more socially constructed and distributed. They argue that drive for effective

systems and staff to keep the machinery of an industry running demands a more totalitarian and controlling leadership ideology – which sides the research questions and is the reason why this thesis focuses on flat-hierarchic collaborative layer of white-collar information workers rather than the so-called blue-collar workers whose work-universe can be very different from the white-collars’. Moreover, after case studying three organizations, technology company, small manufacturer, and nuclear submarine crew, they introduce four “power-with” leadership practices to guide modern leaders to find a way forward: *letting-go*, *engaging others*, *facilitation*, and *horizontal leadership*. The *letting-go* principle means that all members of the organization relinquish their need to be in control of an outcome as an individual. From the workers’ point of view, this means that they must be curious and interested in the company’s progress and avoid *taking* control of an outcome but participating in it situationally. *Engaging others* principle requires to think on how an outcome could be achieved the best, and by using technology and work-arrangement wisely. It’s a strategic design where all members of the organization need to take responsibility. Leaders need to shake the status quo at times and to encourage new ideas to develop, while leaving out on maintaining order. *Facilitating and coaching* principle requires leaders and senior workers to readjust their position in the company as coaches, to help all succeed, while the subjects must allow themselves to be coached and helped at times – and return the favor for others once it’s their time. *The horizontal leadership* principle needs some dissembling on the official vertical hierarchies, forceful breaking of the silos. Perhaps this is best seen by forming temporary taskforces with different backgrounds to pursue ideas and solve issues and by limiting the organization bubbles into maximum of ca.200 people groups where it is still possible to understand the strengths of individuals.

After interviewing two people and reflecting on my own work experience, there’s already a sparkling interest for companies in Finland and in Japan to monitor collaboration networks to employees, of which I will give four real examples. In Company A in ca. 2018, there was a monthly pizza gift card possibility – employees could suggest a collaborative colleague who would be eligible for a free pizza in their opinion, although the implementation of this was not quite transparent nor encouraged thus it was never seen used, but the intention of the HR was to spark collaboration. In Company B, they subscribed to a service called Bonusly (<https://bonusly.com/>) in ca. 2020. At that time, the service included a fixed number of internal credits per month for employees to share with other colleagues based on how nice and helpful they had been. Meanwhile, managers and HR were able to monitor the “influencing network” of their company by following the flow of the credits. The credits were transferrable to e.g.

Amazon gift cards in addition to providing a sound “thank you”, thus it was argued that using the system would enhance collaboration between all colleagues and catching the hidden work done by some. Company C used a similar system as Company B, but they had developed this crediting system internally. Company D, Murata in Finland has recently launched a program where they encourage to “snitch” colleagues with good behavior and positivity in order to cut down negativity and the sick leaves caused by mental issues (Kauppalehti, 2023). They reward “snitched” personnel regularly with gift cards to restaurants and claim that after the program launch, in addition to some other mental health benefits, people seem to be visibly happier, and their mental health related leaves have dropped significantly. By these four examples, we can see that there is interest from HR management to push collaboration, softness and kindness into workplaces, which might have suffered due to fast migration in to remote and hybrid working environments – leaving the newcomers of the companies without the same kind of networking and influencing possibilities as their tenured peers.

4. Conclusions

Can there be leadership without other beings? Or without coordinated effort? One could argue that the ability to influence other people is a key trait for leadership. It is said that leaders have a certain presence about them, some sort of aura or alike (Fairhurst and Cooren, 2009). If one could generalize the notions, influencing *without* power could therefore be a sign of leadership and being a leader – while influencing *with* power would be just being a boss. When further interpreting the founded results towards effective conclusions, one should avoid pitfalls like proxying as described in Larsson and Alvehus’s paper (2023). Proxying in this context means that not all the used results and methods lead into successful applying of “leadership”, because all situations are contextual when it comes to people, feelings, and sense of pressure. Thus if you were able to influence a person and change their mind, that does not alone make you a leader.

In collective leadership situations, where the organization is expected to set their own rules and to manage each other’s time, it is important to be aware of the key rules and systems in place. It was found that groups not actively spending even a small amount of time on their personal and the group’s time-management were not able to succeed in-time in their tasks as well as those who did. Therefore, understanding your personal and teams’ resources will help to keep

the cogs running. In other words, the communication culture should be followed, improved, and cherished from time to time by all members of the team. Other key points individuals should consider include communication methods, showing responsibility for your designated tasks and sharing the good with your colleagues. When an individual's goal is to influence other(s) into action, consider that it is not just the person who needs to be convinced, as they often have their own interest groups behind who should agree with the actions. You can further enhance your individual influencing skills by building and practicing your *pathos*, *logos* and *ethos* to match your personal "brand" and communication style. When working in groups, it is important to include time for individual task planning and roles as proven by e.g. Weingart (1992), while in order to succeed in complex group tasks, focusing on e.g. group coordination was seen unnecessary (excluding tasks that *definitely require* group coordination). All the methods are condensed into Figure 1 on page 8 under *verbal, non-verbal, strategic and tactical* themes – and further examined and discussed in the chapters.

The organization's executives and people in human resources have the keys to follow, manage and adjust the rules and the culture within the organization. They should look for power asymmetries, under- and over-utilizations of people, and the processes on *how* the organization actually works. For example, when hiring subject experts to your "flat-hierarchic" organization, they should be treated as experts and listened to. There are ways to encourage teamwork and group-thinking, such as rewarding the total outcome collectively instead of individuals and making sure people can enter and exit projects when necessary. In collectives like this, there should not be hero-workers (including the higher-ups), and a system in place that can steer away from politicization of issues and people. Communicating the intended culture and guidelines should be frequent enough so that they become the norm, however acting upon them is even more important especially for the executives in the hierarchy. Sharing the leadership takes constant work, as we have a tendency to lean on the ones who are responsible and/or willing to decide, resulting in over-commitments and other toxic effects, thus the workload balance needs to be tuned from time to time. These topics are condensed into Figure 2 on page 10 under themes of *processes, culture and organization*, and further examined and discussed in the chapters.

People have an innate tendency to help each other, and in organizations where the culture is healthy, vision and key methods are acceptable, it should be easy to ask for help from colleagues, and to expect help. All in all, if one is unsuccessful in influencing others in an organization, there's always ways forward to improve your own ability to communicate, and

being part of the skillful leadership movement to build a good and respectful working environment where individuals can thrive.

5. List of References

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