

# Power and politics



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Barack Obama – US President Barack Obama, the current US President is a pioneer of sorts. The fact that he is the first colored President of United States is by itself a historical incident given the country's deep rooted pigment dissensions, especially in the Southern States. Also, if we look back and see the formidability of Democratic rivals he had to beat in primaries in order to win party's nomination, we have nothing but to admire the resilience of this person. He had to overcome a very stiff challenge from none other than wife of the erstwhile Democratic President, Bill Clinton. Other than being wife of Bill Clinton, Hillary had been a standing Senator for quite a few terms and had created an image of herself throughout the country through her ambitious dream of bringing each and every American under a comprehensive health scheme. Compared to that Obama was a first time Senator who had no political pedigree or lineage as such and above all, he was colored and had a Muslim sounding middle name and spent his childhood in far away Eastern countries. The odds were heavily stacked against Obama and truly nobody was prepared to give him much of a chance in the initial stages. But Obama and his clarion call " Yes, we can ..." struck a chord among the masses, not only the colored ones but the entire American middle class and he created history. He derived his power essentially from referent base. Here was a man, just as ordinary as any American, has good education from Ivy League institutions, has a family just as most Americans have and above all, has a dream to change the sorry state of affairs. The combined charm of all these factors was too difficult for average Americans to be indifferent to. And, the fact that he is educated and articulate with a wife who is equally educated and articulate automatically vested in him an expert power that added to the huge faith that Americans reposed on him

(Mind Tools 2005). Now that he is the President of US has conferred upon him legitimate power and also reward and coercive powers that come along with the highest post of that country. But Obama the leader had come to this exalted position simply through referent and expert powers which are the hallmarks of a true leader (Mind Tools 2005). Adolf Hitler Adolf Hitler is probably the biggest villain of world history but one cannot take away from him the fact that he was also one of the greatest leaders of twentieth century. He was instrumental in extracting Germany from the depths of bankruptcy and powerlessness that Treaty of Versailles had pushed the country into. It must not be overlooked that he at one point of time represented the aspirations of an entire German generation that was unable to digest the humiliation heaped upon them by the victors at the end of First World War. He became the face that German youths identified with; his voice became the anguished voice of the young of Germany. He urged them to dare to dream and work towards resurrecting the lost glory of German nation. At that point referent and expert powers propelled him to the position of undisputed leader of Germany. Western historians sure find heaps of intrigue and violence that Hitler resorted to in his way up to the pinnacle, but considering the tumultuous situation in Germany at that time; in retrospect, such abuses seem insignificant. The fact of the matter is he could become the beacon of hope of entire German nation (Mind Tools 2005). When he became the supreme leader with absolute power, he got corrupted absolutely and resorted to rampant use of legitimate, reward and, most infamously, coercive powers to retain his primacy (Mind Tools 2005). This is possibly the reason why even an average German does not respect him today. Reference Mind Tools. " French and Raven's Five Forms of Power:

Understanding Where Power Comes From in the Workplace." Mind Tools: Essential Skills for an Excellent Career. 2005. [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_56.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_56.htm) (accessed February 9, 2011).