

He, exert influence on  
the agencies of  
government



**ASSIGN  
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He, however, feels the need of an “ umbrella word” to encompass the three and since no really satisfactory one spring to his mind, he prefers the use of the term ‘ influence’ and in this usage authority and power become special cases of “ influence.

” The dictionary meaning of the word ‘ influence’ is “ power of producing effect, especially unobtrusively: effect of power exerted.” It implies relationship between ‘ influence’ and ‘ power’, for example, those who exercise power they exert influence and, as such, they can make others, individuals or groups, to act as they direct or wish them to do. But the influence so exerted is not accompanied by sanctions which are the sine qua non of power. Power is a command and, therefore, an imperative and its disobedience mean exercise of coercion. Influence, on the other hand, is sans coercion. It is the response to the influence that matters, though it may affect the policy-making.

The interest and pressure groups as well as the consultative bodies exert influence on the policy-making process, though all such agencies have no power to compel compliance in preferred directions. So do other organised groups engaged in politics which include trade unions, employers’ organisations, the professional groups, as teachers, doctors, lawyers and so on. The strategy of the organised groups may be to exert influence on the agencies of government directly or indirectly. Most groups will operate both ways and the emphasis will depend largely on the political system, how far it is responsive to the public in a pluralistic society and on the ability of the group to obtain access and influence the policy of the government.

In democratic politics participation in politics is widespread, political competition without violence is the norm and the politically influential in a competitive polity are limited both by the existing and potential competition. In a totalitarian polity there is an official ideology and the ideology is totalitarian in that the totality of social life is considered a legitimate matter for political control. In other totalitarian systems, which are the modern phenomenon and the traditional distinction is drawn between democracies and despotisms; there is absence of sophisticated ideology in which political is equated with the social. In political systems so described the ruler is supreme and all institutions are his agencies. In such politics influence is highly concentrated, competition is weak, nominal or nonexistent and rule is often arbitrary.