

# Uses of power

Business



LEADERS' USE OF POWER When I first began to think about types of power, I saw them as universal (i. e. every leader had them). After researching power, I not only realize that these powers are not universal, but that each leader puts a different twist on each type of power that they possess . How people react to these twists determine the influence of that leader.

For example, a leader in a school government may offer a candy reward for voting. This candy may be disliked by the majority, and even though the student may have been well fit for the job, he didn't perform the way that others would have liked. In my presentation, I identify well-known leaders, looking at their lives and works and determining their most apparent leadership attributes. I learned many interesting things about past leaders and the leaders of today and their similarities. Now, while I could devote pages and pages of information about what I discovered, in this essay I will speak only about five leaders. These five are the three that I included in my presentation as well as two other [in]famous leaders.

These are Adolf Hitler, Mahatma Gandhi, Barack Obama, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Malcolm X. I will add some other leaders as necessary and I hope to shine a light on what I have discovered. All leaders have at least one of the qualities listed on the previous page, but some have multiple qualities, and some leaders have gone above and beyond to influence people-whether their intentions have been noble or not. The first leader that I would like to write about is Mahatma Gandhi. He's considered one of the greatest peacemakers in the world— among the likes of King and Thoreau. He was a young Indian lawyer who read “ Civil Disobedience” and liked the

idea so much that he decided to devote his life to stopping oppression in a peaceful manner.

He demonstrated referent power when he garnered a huge following, leading many protests against injustices, especially racism and the oppression of Indians by Britain. Most famous of all was his 240- mile march to an Indian beach to protest a British tax. Gandhi had connection power through his relationships with many world leaders, and yet being such a peaceful and religious man he never used this power to his advantage. In one of the most twisted forms of irony ever, Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 on his way to a prayer meeting. Though he only had two of the seven types of power, his huge following eventually led him to accomplish his goals as a leader. Barack Obama is a living example of a great leader.

He possesses the power of legitimacy because he is the President of the United States, one of the most coveted positions in the world. This also proves that he has referent power because a disliked person does not get voted into the office of Chief Executive. That is just plain logic. He has expert power as proven by his intelligence and amazing public speaking ability. The president has information and connection power- both because of his office.

The fact that I can list five out of the seven types of power for our president is good. Four of the five come with the legitimate power, but he also has expert power (not a bad thing to have if you're the President). He is an influential person and leader, and I am happy that he is our president. Now we arrive at, arguably, the most controversial person in history- Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler was a regular guy whom, after meeting people, making

connections, and using his impeccable persuasive skills, became the Dictator of Germany. Millions of people loved him early in his political career.

However, he did horrible things as dictator, committing genocide against multiple races and groups and instilling fear in millions of people. Hitler's amazing oratorical skills ignited a depressed nation in a blaze of hope.

Timing is also a large part of being a great leader. Sometimes leaders will be in power during a catastrophic event and their actions during that time determine their fame. That is what makes the concept of leadership so interesting and why people strive to be leaders.

Hitler's timing was perfect: Germany was trying to climb out of an economic pit and they needed someone to give them a boost. Hitler jumped at the opportunity and was amply rewarded. The people loved him. However, as time progressed, people began to realize his true intentions. He wanted to "cleanse" Germany by murdering everyone except Aryans and create what would be, in his view, a perfect race. He began to set up concentration camps and invade neighboring countries, eventually provoking the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and other countries into declaring war.

As World War Two progressed, Hitler continued to murder thousands of people. People lived in fear of deportation or worse. Hitler associated himself with world leaders such as Benito Mussolini and Josef Stalin, lured them into trusting him, and then betrayed them. Hitler especially wanted to rid Germany of the Jews, and oppressed them by making them follow ridiculous laws. He had access to information about all citizens of Germany and made the most of it, eliminating not only the Jews but the gypsies and the

handicapped. Hitler was a horrible person, but all of the bolded phrases are qualities of a good leader.

Hitler may be evil, but he could be regarded as the greatest leader of all time. There are other examples of this, such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He is the president of Iran and though he is believed to be a horrible person, he has all of the powers that come with legitimate power as well as coercive and expert power, meaning that he has six out of the seven powers. This is the one glaring problem with Dr. MacGregor's model of power. There is one power missing, and that is Virtuous power.

If I apply this new power to the previous leaders, I would say that Gandhi and Obama have Virtuous power, but Hitler and Ahmadinejad most certainly do not. However, these examples are quite apparent. There is one more leader that does not cleanly fit into Virtuous power, but you could argue either way for him. Malcolm X is also one of the most controversial leaders. As a young man, he had many bad business affiliations (prostitution, gambling, drug dealing, etc.

) and was sentenced to 10 years in prison after he was convicted of burglary. While in prison, he discovered the religion of Islam. However, his Islamic mentor believed in a separate state of African-Americans (void of whites) and after Malcolm was paroled, he changed his name from Malcolm Little to Malcolm X, and became the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam (NOI). He was articulate and intelligent, so he had expert power, and he was charismatic and gained many followers for the NOI (referent power). He was

a media sensation for his “ reverse racism” ideas so he ended up having connection power, meeting world leaders such as Fidel Castro.

X also had legitimate power as national spokesperson of the NOI. He eventually broke off from the NOI and created Muslim Mosque, Inc. He then turned everything around. He took his Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca and what he saw changed his life. He met many kind people from different races and came back to America preaching integration.

He was eventually targeted and assassinated by the NOI, whom he had publicly denounced for its immoral structure. Was he virtuous? He was accused of preaching racial hate earlier in his life, as well as anti-Semitism and black supremacy. He also preached violence. But later in his life, he fought for his race and preached racial integration. This instance shows that leaders are not defined as kind people. Rather, they are defined as people who influence others to accomplish a goal.

There is no denying that Malcolm X was a leader- he had four out of the original seven types of power. But his actions were severe enough to tarnish his reputation as a virtuous leader and as a person. In summary, leadership depends almost entirely upon five things: Timing, Competence, Connections, Variations on the Types of Power, and Charisma. A leader is remembered by these five qualities. There are many other examples of true leaders , but I have chosen five well-known and controversial leaders.

There are many different opinions about these leaders. But they all have at least one thing in common: they have all influenced many, many people to do something. People need someone to stand at the helm and direct them

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(to an extent) . Certain people are more competent and those people are remembered fondly. But these people also have power that can be misused, and that is why a leader can be such a controversial person.

Regardless of opinion, we all need leaders and we all need to lead and that is human nature. As a plaque at the former military staff building of the Swedish Armed Forces says, “ Exercitus sine duce corpus est sine spiritu”. 1  
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1 Latin phrase meaning: “ An army without a leader is a body without a spirit.”